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California Fostering Connections to Success FACT SHEET

Summary

The California Fostering Connections to Success Act was signed into law September 30, 2010 through Assembly Bill (AB) 12. Effective January 1, 2012, the bill allows foster care for eligible youth to extend beyond age 18 and up to age 21, when fully implemented and contingent on budget appropriation by the state legislature. Eligible foster youth are designated as “non-minor” dependents. They will be entitled to various foster placement options after age 18. AB 12 also creates a new federal Kin-GAP program to coincide with California’s existing Kin-GAP program, which is state and county-funded.

If you have questions or need additional information please email them to: AB12@dss.ca.gov

Goals and Benefits

- Enables youth to maintain a safety net of support while experiencing independence in a secure and supervised living environment.
- Provides youth extended time as “non-minor” dependents to obtain education and employment training opportunities which assists youth in becoming better prepared for successful transition into adulthood and self-sufficiency.
- Assists youth to avoid negative behaviors and that can lead to adverse outcomes.
- Allows foster children in relative placements to receive federal support through Kin-GAP.

Basic Eligibility Requirements

- At the six month hearing prior to youth turning age 18, the social worker/probation officer must have a plan to ensure the youth meet at least ONE of the following criteria on or after January 1, 2012:
 - 1) Working toward completion of high school or equivalent program (e.g. GED); OR
 - 2) Enrolled in college, community college or a vocational education program; OR
 - 3) Employed at least 80 hours a month; OR
 - 4) Participating in a program designed to assist in gaining employment; OR
 - 5) Unable to do one of the above requirements because of a medical condition.
- Foster youth must sign an agreement to reside in an eligible placement location and agree to work with social worker to meet goals of the Transitional Living Plan.
- Foster youth must decide by age 18 whether to continue in foster care; if not, youth must request through the courts to have their dependency terminated.
 - If the youth requests termination of their dependency, the court will establish a trial period of independence until youth turns 21 year of age.
 - During this time, the youth can decide to re-enter foster care regardless of termination.

- Youth who exit foster care and later decide to re-enter foster care, they will need to be finger printed in order to live in a licensed home.
 - Youth choosing to remain in their existing foster family home will not require finger printing. The foster parent will continue to receive the same payment rate.
 - Youth choosing to remain in a group home after age 18 will not require finger printing. The group home will continue to receive the same payment rate.
- Probation youth must have been eligible for foster care placement by 18 years of age to be eligible to remain in foster care under AB 12.

Foster Placement Options

- Eligible placements options for youth after age 18 include:
 - 1) Remain in existing home of a relative or NREFM; licensed foster family home; certified foster family agency home, or home of a non-related legal guardian (approved by the juvenile court) or group home (youth may remain in a group home after age 19, if necessary, if the reason is due to a medical condition).
 - 2) THP-Plus Foster Care (approved).
 - 3) Supervised Independent Living setting (approved). This is a new placement option, which may include an apartment, room and board arrangements, college dorms and shared roommate in a supervised independent living setting. The youth may directly receive all or part of the foster care rate pursuant to the mutual agreement.

Kin GAP

- To be eligible for federal Kin GAP, youth must:
 - 1) be in a foster care placement,
 - 2) have lived with an approved relative for at least 6 months,
 - 3) have a kinship guardianship established with that relative by juvenile court,
 - 4) have his or her court case dismissed by either the dependency court or the delinquency court.
- Youth living with a relative under Kin Gap will not require finger printing. The relative caregiver will receive the same payment until the youth is 21 years of age, if the guardianship was established when the youth was age 16 or older.

Additional information

- Youth who are custodial parents have the same rights to participate in foster care after age 18 as all other youth.
- Youth who are consumers of the Regional Center services can continue to receive dual agency and supplemental rates.
- Youth who meet the eligibility requirements to receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income) MAY be eligible to receive both at the same time.