

California Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB 12)

Extending Foster Care Benefits FACT SHEET

Summary

The California Fostering Connections to Success Act was signed into law September 30, 2010 through Assembly Bill (AB) 12. This legislation recognized the importance of family and permanency for youth by extending benefits and transitional support services for youth in Foster Care, as well as youth in the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) and Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP) program who enter the program after they turn 16.



Effective January 1, 2012, youth are allowed to remain in foster care up to age 19. On Jan. 1, 2013, the option is extended until to age 20. On Jan, 1, 2014 up to age 21 (contingent upon budget appropriation by the state legislature.)

Foster youth over age 18 are designated “non-minor dependents”.

Goals and Benefits

- Enables youth to maintain a safety net of support while experiencing independence in a secure and supervised living (housing) environment.
- Assists youth in becoming better prepared for successful transitions into adulthood and self-sufficiency through education and employment training opportunities.

Basic Eligibility Requirements

- Remaining in foster care after age 18 is voluntary. Foster youth can decide to exit at age 18, or any time after turning 18. Foster youth who exit at or after age 18 can change their mind and return to foster care at any time before age 20 (or 21 if the age limit is extended in 2014).
- **Foster youth who choose to remain in foster care or who choose to re-enter foster care after age 18 satisfy at least ONE of the following participation conditions:**
 - 1) Completing high school or equivalent program (e.g. GED); OR
 - 2) Enrolling 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 promote or remove barriers to employment; OR
 - 5) Unable to do one of the above requirements because of a medical condition.

- Probation youth who are in a foster care placement may also be eligible to remain in foster care.
- Non-minor dependents must sign a mutual agreement to remain in foster care and reside in an eligible placement location and agree to work with social worker to meet goals of the Transitional Living Plan.

Foster Placement Options

Eligible placements options for youth after age 18 include:

- ◆ Home of a relative or non-related extended family member; licensed foster family home; certified foster family agency home, or home of a non-related legal guardian.
- ◆ THP-Plus Foster Care. This is a new placement option which is being developed that will be modeled after the existing THP-Plus program .
- ◆ Supervised Independent Living setting. This is a new placement option and may include an apartment (with or without a roommate), room and board arrangements or college dorms. The placements will be approved and supervised by the county and non-minor dependents may be able to receive payments directly under this option.
- ◆ Group home placement can continue until age 19 or until the non-minor dependent graduates from High school, whichever occurs sooner. Youth who meet eligibility criteria #5 (medical condition) are permitted to remain in a group home after age 19 or high school graduation.

Additional information

- ◇ Youth who are custodial parents have the same rights to participate in foster care after age 18 as all other youth.
- ◇ Dual agency and supplemental rates will continue on behalf of youth who are consumers of Regional Center services.
- ◇ New licensing and approval standards are being developed for those placements that are providing for a non-minor dependent.
- ◇ Former foster youth adopted at or after age 16, who meet the criteria, may be eligible for extended Adoption Assistance Payments.
- ◇ Former foster youth who enter guardianship with a relative at or after age 16, who meet the criteria, may be eligible for extended Kin-GAP payments.

This fact sheet summarizes the key elements of AB12 as passed by law. Many supporting and related elements pertaining to the implementation of AB 12 are in the process of being determined.

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

For more information visit: www.cafosteringconnections.org