

Age of Majority Planning Policy – Youth in Care Transitioning to Adult Services

PURPOSE:

Community Living disABILITY Services (CLDS) provides supports and funds a range of services for eligible adults. CLDS works in collaboration with youth and their families, child welfare agencies and authorities, Children’s Disability Services (CDS) other government departments and organizations to support youth transitioning to adulthood. Supporting a smooth and seamless as possible transition for youth and their families is an important priority.

This policy outlines the role of Community Service Workers (CSW) for assisting youth and their families as the individual is approaching age of majority (18 years of age).

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK:

See definitions of “adult living with an intellectual disability” and “intellectual disability” under The Adults Living with an Intellectual Disability Act (ALIDA).

DEFINITIONS:

Extension of Care and Maintenance: The Child and Family Services Act (The CFS Act) applies to children up to 18 years of age. Under Subsection 50(2) of The CFS Act, an agency may, with written approval of the Director, extend care and maintenance of a child who is a permanent ward up until the child's 21st birthday. This measure is intended to assist these youth to successfully complete the transition to independence.

Individual: A person 18 years of age or older who is eligible for CLDS services, as described in the CLDS Assessment and Eligibility policy C22.

Support Network: Family, friends and/or community members who provide personal support, advocacy, and/or help with monitoring services and who have reciprocal relationships with individuals.

Youth: A person who is 15 years of age or older, but under the age of 18.

POLICY:

CLDS participates in youth transition planning processes as outlined in the *Transitional Planning: Child and Family Services to Adult Supports* and the *Bridging to Adulthood: A protocol for Transitioning Students with Exceptional Needs from School to Community* documents.

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CSW's have an important role when a youth, their family, support network and/or child welfare agency/authority begins the process to access CLDS adult services prior to the youth becoming an adult. CLDS becomes involved in the process with individual youth upon referral by the youth's 15 birthday.

CSW's assist youth, their families and child welfare agencies and authorities with CLDS processes that should be completed by the time a youth turns 18. CSW's have a role in assisting youth and their families to learn about CLDS's role for supporting youth transitions and for providing supports and services to eligible adults as well as providing information on ALIDA. CSW's also have an important role in providing assistance to explore strategies to prepare for a future which includes choices about how a youth will live, work and contribute when they are an adult.

PROCEDURES:

Program Managers and CSW's provide referral and transitional information to the various community stakeholders who may make referrals on behalf of a youth including the education system, child welfare agencies and authorities, other governmental departments and families, support networks, etc. An important component of this information sharing process is creating awareness about the importance to begin the CLDS referral and eligibility process by the time the youth turns 15.

CSW's work in collaboration with the youth, families and child welfare agencies and authorities, CDS other government departments and organizations as applicable to develop a transition plan.

Confirming Eligibility for CLDS Services

Program Managers and/or CSW's review referral information including eligibility documentation submitted on behalf of the youth by family, child welfare agencies or authorities, CDS, and other government departments and organizations as outlined in the CLDS Assessment and Eligibility Policy C22.

Program Managers will advise the individual, family and referral source in writing of the outcome of the eligibility review as outlined in the CLDS Assessment and Eligibility Policy C22.

When eligibility processes have been initiated through the referral process and insufficient information has been submitted by the referral source and/or there is no current and conclusive clinical assessment of the individuals' intellectual functioning, CLDS staff will follow up with and explain what information is required to complete the eligibility process as outlined in the CLDS Assessment and Eligibility Policy C22.

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Providing Information about CLDS Services and Gathering Information about Youth.

Once eligibility has been confirmed and a CSW is assigned, the CSW will arrange to meet with the youth, family, support network and child and family services agency/authority or other departmental systems where applicable to begin the planning process and provide information about the range of CLDS funded services and options available for eligible adults.

In order to accurately project and plan for age of majority participants, residential and respite service needs will need to be waitlisted in the inFACT electronic application system as per SLP/CLDS Circular #2010-03.

Planning for CLDS Supports and Services

Planning should be well under way by the youth's 17th birthday. The child and family services worker or CDS FSW and the CSW meet with the individual and family to continue the planning process. Planning should minimally focus on the following;

- developing knowledge of the youth by sharing information about the youth's preferences, abilities and experiences;
- determining the youth's aspirations for adulthood; determining the resources the youth requires into adulthood;
- identifying the supports that are available at home, in the community and at school (if applicable) to prepare for the transition into adulthood; and
- outlining the specific details of how to prepare and support the youth during these transitions in order to achieve future goals.

CLDS staff along with the individual, family, support network and child and family services agency/authority work together to ensure that all necessary CLDS planning procedures are completed prior to the youth's 18th birthday.

In situations where the plan is for the youth or young adult to remain in the current or long standing foster placement after the age of 18, the adult licensing of the home under Residential Care Licensing (RCL) must be initiated in a timely manner to ensure that there are no unexpected licensing issues that may lead to a disruption of services.

It is the mutual responsibility of the child welfare worker and the CSW to meet and review the transition plan on an ongoing basis until the young person has completed the transition to CLDS. The frequency of

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review meetings will be determined on an individual case by case basis but at a minimum on an annual basis during the transition process.

In situations where the plan is for the youth to transition into an agency supported residential option (independent living with supports, agency supported foster placement, 24/7 staff shifted residential placement, etc.), the CSW in collaboration with the individual, family, support network and child welfare worker will determine a variety of appropriate service agency options and ensure that referrals to these agencies on behalf of the youth are made in a timely manner. The CSW provides disability related expertise and therefore plays an invaluable role in identifying the most appropriate resources and services based on the individual's unique support needs.

The CSW will ensure that all necessary CLDS planning procedures are completed, including ensuring inFACT information is updated with any new relevant information, address changes, etc., ensure that the necessary funding implications/requests have been identified and secured prior to the individual turning 18.

The CSW will confirm that all applicable FSL department program referrals and planning procedures are completed (i.e., the individual has been referred/enrolled on Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) where applicable on or shortly after their 18th birthday) and that any required documentation is completed (e.g. confirmation of disability for EIA purposes, residential care rate authorization form, etc.).

When the individual turns 18 they will transition into adult services through CLDS and the CSW will assume ongoing case management responsibilities.

When working in the community to promote a smooth transition for youth and young adults it is important for CLDS staff to:

- share information with community partners about CLDS's role in supporting youth transitions in order to promote collaborative approaches
- emphasise the importance of beginning the referral application and eligibility process in a timely manner (the referral process should begin by the youth's 15th birthday)
- provide information about CLDS eligibility requirements, the range of service options offered by CLDS and explain the referral process in order to access CLDS adult services
- ensure that the youth or young adult has been referred to other adult services that they may be eligible for where applicable (i.e., Employment and Income Assistance)
- increase the awareness of *ALIDA* with a focus on the guiding principles of the Act

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Extension of Care and Maintenance

In situations where the youth or young adult has not been referred to the CLDS in a timely manner (i.e., by the youth's 16th birthday or shortly thereafter) then it is the expectation of CLDS that the child and family services agency will have secured an Extension of Care and Maintenance in order for the child welfare system to continue to provide the necessary funding to support the placement and transition process until the time CLDS has secured the necessary age of majority funding through the estimates process.

Extension of Care and Maintenance - Roles and Responsibilities

During the extension of care and maintenance period, the CSW and child welfare worker will clearly communicate funding commitments and establish lead case management responsibilities to ensure that planning with the young adult does not occur in isolation of the other system. The CSW will be the lead in any protection investigations under ALIDA, but will work in an open and collaborative manner with the child welfare worker. The child welfare worker may choose to participate in the investigation.

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