



Transition Age Youth Resource: Extended Foster Care Basic Info

Extended Foster Care

California's Extended Foster Care (EFC) Program (aka AB 12) allows eligible youth in the child welfare and probation systems to voluntarily remain in foster care until age 21 if you are in a foster care placement on your 18th birthday. Youth participating in EFC are called nonminor dependents (NMDs) and remain dependents under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, however, they are adults and have all the rights that a person who has attained 18 years of age may have as an adult under California law.

Extended Foster Care can provide you with an opportunity to continue to work toward your educational, employment, and treatment goals while receiving support, guidance, and a place to live. Extended Foster Care gives you more time to learn skills, so you have a strong foundation for success. Extended Foster Care also provides court reviews of your case, and you are able to talk to your lawyer and a judge about your needs or problems you are facing.

Youth who are the custodial parent may participate in EFC. Nonminor dependents may enter, re-enter, or remain in EFC if they are married or get married.

NMDs who are in the reserve command of any branch of the armed forces, or are a member of the National Guard, are eligible for EFC benefits until called upon to serve in active duty if all other EFC eligibility requirements are met.

Youth who are enlisted in the military but not on active duty (including those participating in a Reserve Officer Training Corps or ROTC program), are eligible for EFC except during extended training if the military program does not allow a social

worker or probation officer to conduct monthly visitation and supervision during this time. Youth are eligible to re-enter foster care as soon as caseworker visitation can resume.

Participation Requirements

You and your social worker or probation officer must have a plan (developed at the six-month hearing prior to when you turn 18) to ensure you meet at least one of the EFC participation criteria. Eligibility can be met through a combination of the first four. Eligibility is verified by your social worker or probation officer. Working toward completion of high school or equivalent program (e.g., GED), or

1. Enrolled in college, community college or a vocational education program, or
2. Employed at least 80 hours a month, or
3. Participating in a program designed to assist in gaining employment, or
4. Unable to do one of the above requirements because of a medical condition.

You must sign an agreement (called the SOC 162 – Mutual Agreement for Extended Foster care) to reside in an eligible placement location and agree to work with your social worker or probation officer to meet the goals outlined in your Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) in addition to agreeing to meet in person at least once a month and update your permanency goals and TILP at least once every six months. You are considered to be continuously participating in your six-month TILP during periods of transition from one activity to another.

Your responsibilities include:

- meeting eligibility conditions;
- participating in a monthly visit with your social worker or probation officer;
- reporting changes in placement and income;
- working collaboratively with the social worker or probation officer to resolve any problems you are experiencing with your placement or in meeting eligibility conditions;
- demonstrating a gradual increase in your level of individual responsibility, and
- participating in the regularly scheduled six-month status review hearings.

What Can Your Participation Look Like?

Completing high school or an equivalent program: You are eligible for EFC if you are completing high school or are enrolled in a program that helps prepare you for getting your General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Enrollment can be in a public high school,

charter high school, an alternative high school, a nonpublic school, adult education classes, or any other course of study leading toward completion of a high school diploma, GED, High School Certificate of Proficiency, or High School Equivalency Certificate.

Enrolled in a post-secondary education or vocational program: Being enrolled in a post-secondary education or vocational program makes you eligible for EFC. A few examples of institutions that provide post-secondary or vocational education include, but are not limited to, community colleges or junior colleges, four-year colleges or universities, and trade or vocational schools.

Participating in a program to help you get a job (removing barriers to employment): Your program under this EFC participation criteria is individualized and will depend on your specific barriers to employment and what will help you to address them. Talk with your social worker or probation officer and Child and Family Team (CFT) to identify any barriers you are facing and identify skills building activities or programs you will participate in to address those barriers. Examples include:

- programs or services recommended or provided by the county Independent Living Program (ILP);
- vocational or trade programs;
- vocational or job skills development programs;
- programs designed to improve work readiness or work skills;
- an internship that helps you gain work skills;
- treatment for a behavioral health or other issue that is needed to help you get and keep a job;
- a specific plan for an activity or services that is included in your case plan that will address any barriers you are facing to employment.

Employed for 80 hours a month: To meet this criterion, you can work a part-time or full-time position, multiple positions, and unpaid or paid internship or apprenticeship including volunteer work.

Cannot do any of the activities listed above because of a documented behavioral health or medical condition: If you have a medical or behavioral health condition that prevents you from meeting any of the above listed activity-based criteria, you can participate in EFC. Talk with your social worker or attorney if you think you may qualify due to a disability. You will need documentation of your disability and how it prevents

you from being engaged in one of the other eligibility activities. That documentation will be updated every six months and kept in your case plan.

Do I have to do more than one of these five activities to be eligible for EFC?

- No. You must actively meet at least one of the listed activities or meet the exception because you have a disability to be eligible for EFC.
- You may want to do more than one activity to achieve your transition to adulthood goals. For example, you may want to work part-time in addition to going to college or a trade school so that you can earn money while you are working toward a degree. Or you may want to do an internship in addition to going to school to get work experience.

Exiting and Reentering EFC

Youth may leave and reenter EFC unlimited times prior to turning 21. Youth must be informed of their right to reenter extended foster care at their WIC 391 termination hearing. Youth may contact the child welfare agency or probation department to request reentry.

Within the 90 days prior to exiting EFC (reaching maximum age of 21 or at the time of the planned exit), you and your social worker or probation officer must complete the 90-Day Transition Plan addressing the following areas: Housing; education; workforce support/employment services; health insurance/medical needs and mentors/continuing support services.

EFC Housing Options

Remain in Existing Home

You may remain in the home of a relative or non-relative extended family member (NREFM); licensed resource family home; certified foster family agency home; home of a non-related legal guardian whose guardianship was established by the juvenile court) or you can be placed in a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) in the following circumstances:

- Restricted to a NMD under age 19 in order to complete high school.
- Beyond age 19, a NMD can only be in a STRTP based on a qualifying medical condition identified as a requirement for participation in EFC.

THPP-NMD provides supportive housing with additional case management for NMDs to support transitions into more independent living situations.

- **Host Family**

- NMDs live with a caring adult who has been selected and approved by the transitional housing provider.
- **Single Site**
 - NMDs live in an apartment, condominium, or single-family dwelling rented or leased by the housing provider with an employee(s) living on site.
- **Remote Site**
 - NMDs live independently in an apartment, condominium, or single-family dwelling rented or leased by the housing provider with regular supervision from the provider.

Spouses of NMDs in the program can be accommodated under the same rules as other roommates if there are no concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of the NMD or other participants in the program. All non-participants in the THPP-NMD program, including spouses of participants, are subject to a criminal background check.

Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP)

Nonminor dependents live independently in an apartment, house, condominium, room, and board arrangement, or college dorm, alone or with a roommate(s), while under the supervision of your social worker or probation officer.

- NMDs may directly receive all or part of the foster care rate as agreed in the TILP. (SILPs are the only placement in which you may receive the entire foster care payment. In all other placements, the payment may be directed to the housing provider or shared between you and the housing provider.)
- A social worker or probation officer must inspect the SILP to make sure it meets basic health and safety standards (e.g., running water, electricity, etc.).
- College dorms or other on campus housing is automatically approved as a SILP. No health and safety assessment by a social worker is needed.

Notify your attorney any time you move between placement or change addresses.

Youth in AAP or Guardianships, Kin-GAP or NRLG

Youth who receive Adoption Assistance Program (AAP), Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program (Kin-GAP), or Non-Related Legal Guardianship (NRLG) payments are eligible to continue receiving payments to age 21 if they meet the following requirements:

- The AAP or Kin-GAP negotiated payment agreement was signed after the youth turned age 16, or;

- An adopted youth or youth in a Kin-GAP guardianship has a documented disability.
- Youth in a NRLG or a Kin-GAP guardianship with a Non-Related Extended Family Member (NREFM) (granted in the Dependency Court) are automatically eligible for extended benefits to age 21.

Independent Living Program

The Independent Living Program (ILP) is a program intended for youth in foster care aged 16 to 21 to help them get ready to live on their own. Youth aged 16-21 can participate in the ILP to receive assistance with applying for college scholarships, obtaining employment, finishing school, obtaining funds for driver's training, finding an apartment, housing and food expenses, job training, money management, and learning other life skills. Transition Age Youth (TAY) social workers or probation officers must make sure you have access to ILP services and that you are able to complete your goals in your Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP).

How to Access ILP Services or Housing

Your social worker or probation officer will refer you to the county Transitional Housing Coordinator or ILP Coordinator. Former foster youth can contact the child welfare office/probation department in the county where they are living or the county from which they exited foster care. For more help in contacting your county Transitional Housing Coordinator or ILP coordinator, contact the state TAY Policy Unit at TAYPolicy@dss.ca.gov. Request information on how to contact the Transitional Housing Coordinator or ILP Coordinator and include your name, email address, county where you're living or the county you exited foster care.

How do I request re-entry into EFC?

If you have exited EFC prior to your 21st birthday and would like to re-enter EFC, contact your previous social worker, or probation officer, or attorney and request information and assistance on re-entering EFC. You will be required to sign a SOC 163 (Voluntary Re-Entry Agreement for Extended Foster Care) agreeing to the participation criteria. Ask your social worker or probation officer for assistance in identifying and securing housing while you are completing the re-entry process and when re-entering EFC.

Extended Foster Care Tips

- Actively participate in the development of your TILP. Ask your social worker or probation officer and other supportive adults for assistance in developing and achieving your goals.

- If you are developing your goals or working to achieve your goals, ask your social worker, probation officer, or other supportive adults (members of your CFT, your attorney, mentors, CASA, teachers, coaches, school counselors, etc.) what they can do assist you in achieving your goals:
- Assistance obtaining employment
 - Searching for internships or employment opportunities
 - Completing applications and writing resumes and cover letters
 - Interviewing tips and practice
- Assistance applying for, or preparing to apply for, admission to college or to a vocational training program or other educational institution and in obtaining financial aid, where applicable
 - Identifying education/vocational training opportunities
 - Is there a specific program, or major, or occupation you are interested in studying?
 - Do you prefer to live in or near your current community?
 - Do you prefer to live on campus or commute to campus?
 - Do you plan to work while in school or training?
 - Do you need a flexible class schedule?
 - Do you prefer to attend a large or small school or training?
 - How do your financial aid options (e.g., federal grants and loans, scholarships) compare to the cost of tuition at the schools or trainings you are considering?
 - Completing applications, including financial aid applications
 - Identifying support programs on campuses like foster youth liaisons at California Community College campuses or Guardian Scholars programs at California State University or University of California campuses
- Assistance participating in Independent Living Program (ILP) or other skills building programs
 - Identifying skills building opportunities
 - Financial literacy
 - Assistance developing a budget
 - Wellness or well-being activities
 - Assistance obtaining a driver's license or State-issued identification card
 - Completing drivers training
 - Completing applications
- Assistance obtaining housing
 - Identifying available options
 - Securing referrals, assistance, or other services in securing housing
 - Completing rental or other housing applications

- Assistance maintaining relationships with individuals who are important to you, including your siblings or other family member
 - Identifying whereabouts of any siblings under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, unless the court determines that sibling contact would jeopardize the safety or welfare of either you or your sibling
 - Re-establishing or building existing relationships with family members, including parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.

Resources

TILP – Transitional Independent Living Plan & Agreement – developed, reviewed, and signed at least once every six months to help create and achieve connection, education, employment and other goals

SOC 162 - Mutual Agreement for EFC - reviewed and signed to initiate entry into EFC.

SOC 161 – Six-month Certification of EFC - reviewed and signed at each six-month hearing.

SOC 163 – Voluntary Re-Entry Agreement for EFC - reviewed and signed to initiate re-entry into EFC.