

The Philadelphia Department of Human Services
Children and Youth Division
Policy and Procedural Guide

TO: All CYD Social Work Staff and Service Providers
FROM: John McGee, Deputy Commissioner, Children and Youth
Pamela Mayo, Operations Director
RE: Board Extension Policy and Procedure Guide

Effective Date: August 1, 2005

Preparing youth for a successful transition to self-sufficiency requires focused and extensive planning, preparation, and support. Since board extensions are not automatically granted, youth need to be accountable to show why the board extension should be granted, and why it should be continued. With the support and assistance of the DHS and provider social worker, teens and young adults need to assume increasing responsibility for planning and implementing their transitional plans.

All committed youth 15 ½ and over must have an assessment of their independent living skills and must be provided services to prepare them for independent living. All youth are referred to the Adolescent Initiative Program after their 16th birthday. (Cf. Section 5710 - Adolescent Initiative). A clear plan must be developed with the youth outlining the youth's needs, how they will be addressed, and the time frames involved. Youth who want DHS to support their request for a board extension must consistently participate in the activities, training and treatment included in their FSP/ CPP and ISP.

Policy:

Youth adjudicated dependent before age 18, who cannot obtain permanency through reunification, adoption, or permanent legal custodianship, must request the court to retain jurisdiction over them until age 21 if they want continued services and financial support from DHS. Under the Juvenile Act, the court will grant the request if the youth demonstrates that he or she is in a course of treatment or instruction.

Board extensions can enable court-committed youth between the ages of 18 and 21 to:

- complete educational/training programs.
- receive social services or other treatment/support services to enable them to achieve self-sufficiency and live independently, or
- continue treatment /services until an appropriate placement is located in another system (e.g. Adult Mental Health, MR).

Board extensions are not available to youth who choose only to work full time and are not in a course of treatment or instruction.

Youth approved for board extension continue to receive placement, social services and medical assistance while they prepare for independence.

The decision regarding a board extension must result from timely routine service planning. The plan for the board extension should be formally developed at the first FSP meeting after the youth's seventeenth birthday. It should be individualized and address the activities necessary for the youth to attain his or her goal.

Criteria for Board Extensions

In order for DHS to support a youth's application for a board extension, the youth must meet the following criteria:

- be adjudicated dependent and committed to DHS prior to their 18th birthday
- participate in a strength-based assessment through an adolescent initiative (AI) program¹ identifying specific areas in which they will need assistance and in the development of a plan to meet those needs
- be completing high school, or enrolled in an educational or training program and/or be receiving treatment and/or support services as per the FSP/ CPP and ISP.
- participate in FSP/ CPP and ISP meetings and periodic court reviews.
- completion and signing of the Board Extension Agreement which includes:
 - authorizing DHS and the provider agency to access information on the youth's education, training and/or treatment program.
- If the youth is a teen parent, participate in parenting classes as described in their FSP/ CPP and ISP.
- comply with the objectives and actions of the FSP/ CPP and ISP.

Monitoring and review of board extensions

A board extension may be granted for up to six months from the date of the approval. They are subject to ongoing monitoring, and must be reviewed/ revised at a minimum of every 6 months in conjunction with the FSP/ CPP and presented at the next court review. The youth is responsible for providing documentation that he or she continues to meet the criteria for continued board extension, including:

- verification of participation in AI programs as described in the FSP/ CPP and ISP
- documentation of initial enrollment and that he/she continues to meet the academic standards for enrollment (attendance and satisfactory grades or progress in an educational/ training program) and/or documentation of regular participation in treatment services and progress towards treatment goals.
- compliance with the house rules and program requirements of the placement setting.
- application for financial aid, SSI or other potential benefits, if applicable

Youth must notify their DHS social worker immediately of any changes or if they are no longer attending their education/ training or treatment program.

If a youth fails to meet these requirements, the DHS social worker may recommend to court that the board extension be revoked and that the youth be discharged from commitment.

¹ Achieving Independence Center in Philadelphia

Denial of board extension request

If the youth's request for board extension (initial or renewal) is denied at any level, the DHS social worker must inform the youth, the parents/legal guardian, the provider agency or DHS foster parent, and the child's advocate of the decision in writing within five working days of the final decision.

The DHS social worker must also file a motion for discharge of commitment for the youth effective the date of his/her 18th birthday, or at the time of renewal if the board extension is already active.

- if the youth disagrees with DHS' decision, the DHS social worker must notify the city solicitor at least two weeks before the scheduled Court hearing (or as soon as the disagreement becomes known).

Social worker responsibilities

DHS and provider social workers are responsible for:

- advising their teenage clients about the criteria for board extension.
- preparation of the FSP/CPP or ISP at age 17 which details the necessary objectives and actions to enable the youth to reach his/her goal and prepare for independent living.
- facilitating the provision of those services and supports that will assist the youth in attaining his or her education and/or treatment goals as described in the FSP/CPP.

DHS social workers must:

- refer youth to an achieving independence services program
- submit the initial Board Extension request to the supervisor and administrator for approval prior to the youth's 18th birthday.
- monitor compliance with the plan and review it every six months.
- submit a new request every 6 months, prior to the expiration date, for youth who wish to remain on board extension up to age 21.

Provider social workers are responsible for:

- assisting with applications for financial aid, SSI or other potential benefits.
- obtaining documentation from the youth of enrollment, attendance and progress in their education/training/treatment program.
- submitting progress reports and supporting documentation in conjunction with ISPs and quarterly reports

Board extension payment

The board extension payment is determined by the youth's living arrangements:

- If the youth is residing in a foster home, SIL or congregate care facility, payment is made to the provider.
- If the youth is attending school out of town and living independently, the board payment is made directly to the youth, with administrative costs paid to the provider.
- When the youth returns to his/her placement setting during vacations, the full payment is made to the provider.
- DHS does not pay tuition expenses for college or training and other sources of funding must be obtained.

Procedure

DHS and provider social workers must discuss with their teenage clients the steps needed for a successful transition to independence. The youth's plans to achieve independence should be included in the FSP/CPP and ISP.

In preparation for the first FSP meeting after the youth's 17th birthday, the DHS social worker sends the DHS Board Extension Decision Letter. All parties, including parents if parental rights are not terminated, are to be invited to the meeting.

- *The meeting should include discussion with the youth of his/her goals, necessary steps and options to financing achievement of the goal.*
- *The FSP/CPP and ISP must include actions to be taken by all parties to achieve the goal.*
- *For youth who do not plan to request a board extension, the FSP/CPP and ISP must detail the necessary actions to be taken to prepare the youth for self-sufficiency and independent living after leaving placement.*

Before the youth's 18 birthday, the Board Extension packet must be completed and forwarded to the Administrator for approval. The packet includes:

- *Board Extension Agreement completed and signed by the youth*
- *Board Extension Memo (85-M-539a)*
- *FSP/CPP*

After the Administrator approves the Board Extension, the social worker submits the signed Board Extension Memo to Accounts Payable- Fiscal Department.

If there is a change in the youth's service level or location, the social worker also submits an 85-29 worksheet to CRU Data Support Services for processing.

For youth on board extension:

The DHS social worker must obtain documentation of the youth's continuing enrollment and progress in the school/training program or documentation of regular participation in treatment services prior to the 6 month FSP/CPP meeting.

A new Board Extension Agreement must be completed and signed by the youth every 6 months.

All forms are available on DHS Central and Forms Word.

Questions regarding this procedural transmittal may be addressed to:

Susan Weinberg, Program Supervisor x4116
Linnita Beckett, Program Analyst x4107

Philadelphia Department of Human Services
Children and Youth Division
Board Extension Agreement

Date of this agreement: _____

Name: _____

DOB: _____

DHS Case # _____

J # _____

Date of Placement _____

Date of Adjudication _____

Date FSP/ CPP Review due: _____

Next Court Date: _____

DHS Social Worker: _____

Phone: _____

Provider Social Worker: _____

Phone: _____

Provider agency name/address:

Youth's Primary Address:

Phone: _____

Phone: _____

Type: FH SIL GH INST

FP Name: _____

I am requesting that Family Court retain jurisdiction beyond my 18th birthday and that I remain in the legal custody of the Department of Human Services.

I understand that:

- I may remain in placement, if my board extension is approved by the Family Court, up to age 21.
- a board extension is given to me on a conditional basis and may be cancelled by the Court if I fail to comply with the terms of this agreement between myself and DHS.
- this agreement is valid for six months. The terms will be reviewed at least every six months and revised as necessary.
- DHS may request that the Court cancel this agreement.
- this agreement and any board extension and financial support automatically end on my 21st birthday. Financial supports include:
 - medical assistance
 - board payment to the provider agency and/or my foster parents, or me, should I choose to live at school.
- access to adolescent initiative programs and/or the Achieving Independence Center and eligibility for their services will not be affected by the status of this board extension.

I further understand that the following may impact the continuation of my board extension:

- Failing to meet the terms of my FSP/ CPP, ISP and this agreement.
- Arrest for criminal activity.
- Use and/or possession of illegal substances.

If I leave placement based on my own decision, I cannot reenter placement.

I agree to discuss any problems arising from my placement with my social worker. I also agree to notify my DHS social worker and placement provider in advance if I decide to leave the education or training program, treatment or placement.

Education and Training:

I am enrolled at _____.

I have been accepted for enrollment by _____ and will begin attending on _____.

I will be commuting to school while living in (FH, GH, SIL).

I will be living at school at the following address:

I will attend school regularly and

- maintain satisfactory performance to meet the institution's minimum requirements for continued enrollment.
- abide by the institution's rules of behavior/code of conduct.
- provide documentation of continued enrollment and attendance including progress and grades to my provider social worker and DHS social worker.
- discuss any questions and/or concerns about the value of the education/training program with the provider social worker and the DHS social worker.

Treatment:

I will:

- attend and participate in the treatment plan as documented in the FSP/PPP, provider agency ISP and/or treatment plan.
- provide documentation of continued attendance, participation and progress to my provider social worker and DHS social worker.
- discuss any questions and/or concerns about the value of the treatment with the provider social worker and /or DHS social worker.

Work:

Working is not a requirement for granting of this Board Extension. Because working may be an integral part of developing independence, it is incorporated into this agreement.

I understand that I am encouraged to seek and obtain employment that will help me reach my goals. However, I should not let work undermine my education, training, and/or treatment plans.

I understand this Board Extension will not be granted or extended solely for me to work.

Current employer:

Signed:

Youth: _____ Date: _____

DHS Worker: _____ Date: _____



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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Commissioner
CHERYL RANSOM-GARNER

Deputy Commissioners
ANNE MARIE AMBROSE
RUSSELL J. CARDAMONE, JR.
JOHN MCGEE

(Insert Today's Date)

FSP Meeting Date: (Date of First FSP following the 17th birthday)

Time of Meeting:

Location for Meeting:

Dear (Insert Name of Youth):

On (Insert Date of 18th Birthday) you will be eighteen (18) years old. Before your birthday, we must make an important decision. We need to decide whether or not we will ask the judge in your case to have the Department of Human Services (DHS) continue to provide you with financial support, placement, and social services after you turn 18. DHS wants you to take part in deciding what happens once you turn 18, and for you to understand the different choices that you have. To do that, we are asking that you attend a Family Service Plan (FSP) meeting on (Date of First FSP following the 17th birthday). We are inviting your agency social worker and your child advocate to that meeting. You also may invite any other person you think would be helpful in planning for your future, such as a relative, mentor or teacher.

Under the Juvenile Act, youth who have been receiving social services and who are in a "course of treatment or instruction" have the right to request that such services continue up until they turn twenty-one (21) years of age; they can keep receiving services as long as they are in compliance with treatment or instruction. This is called a board extension. If you will be attending school, receiving job or vocational training, or receiving any special care or treatment, you may be eligible for a board extension. If you want a board extension, DHS, your child advocate, or you can ask that the judge to consider it at your next scheduled court hearing. We will have to tell the judge exactly what education, training or treatment you will be pursuing. The judge will then decide whether or not to grant your request for a board extension.

For DHS to support your request for a Board extension, you must meet the following expectations:

1. Participate at the FSP meeting on (Date of First FSP following the 17th birthday) as well as future discussions with your social worker and other adults involved in your life to decide what your goals are for the future, how best to achieve them, and how long it will take to achieve them.
2. Comply with the objectives of the FSP/PPP.
3. Use whatever financial resources or scholarships that are available to you to contribute toward the cost of your basic daily living and tuition expenses.
4. Demonstrate that you have a reasonable degree of motivation and commitment to the education, training or treatment that you have chosen, and that you are striving to achieve the goal of self-sufficiency and independence.

You also can decide that you don't want to receive any services from DHS once you turn 18 and ask the judge to discharge your commitment to DHS. This will close your case. You should understand that if your case is closed when you are 18, your case cannot be reopened by DHS at a later date. If you want your case closed and want to be discharged from DHS's care, we will use the FSP meeting on (Date of First FSP following the 17th birthday) to discuss a discharge plan. The discussion will cover such key areas as where you are going to live and what you will do to financially support yourself. DHS will ask you and your child advocate to sign the FSP.

Whatever you decide, you will be able to take advantage of the services DHS offers through the Achieving Independence Center (AIC) and/or other independent living programs. These services focus on such areas as education, training and employment and are focused on assisting older youth to acquire the skills necessary to successfully transition to adulthood. It is important for you to keep in mind that these programs do not provide housing.

It is important that you have the chance to talk with me, your child advocate and other adults in your life before you make any final decisions about your future, so that you know all of your options. I look forward to seeing you at the FSP meeting on (Date of First FSP following the 17th birthday).

Sincerely yours,

SOCIAL WORKER

PHONE NUMBER

cc: Provider Agency Social Worker
Natural Parent (if applicable)
Foster Parent (if applicable)
All Counsel
DHS Social Work Supervisor
File