



## **NEW EXTENSION OF CARE PROGRAM – FOR YOUTH 13-17**

You may have already begun to plan for your future, but you now have more options.

On January 1, 2014 youth will be able to stay in care until age 21, but it is your choice whether or not you want to be in the program. You may leave extended foster care at any time you choose though must meet the eligibility criteria for re-entry.

### **Here are some true situations where extended foster care could help:**

- "I'm about to turn 18, but I'm still in high school and I need support and stability so I can focus on my school work."
- "I'm about to turn 18, but I'm worried about how to file taxes, how to find transportation to work, where I'll get money for food – I don't even know how to turn on the utilities in my apartment. I feel like I need a little more help, maybe even for just a few months."
- "My college dorm closes over the summer and I don't have anywhere to go. I'd like to be able to go back to my foster parents' home during school breaks."

### **Requirements:**

At the age of 18 you must have been residing in licensed foster care; AND

- Attending high school or working on GED; OR
- Enrolled in college or vocational education program; OR
- Employed at least 80 hours per month; OR
- Participating in a program designed to promote or eliminate barriers to employment; or
- Have a diagnosed and documented disability that would prevent you from participating in any of the activities listed above.

### **In order to stay in the program, you must:**

- Meet with a caseworker every month
- Continue to participate in at least one of the activities listed above
- Attend Court reviews every six months

### **If you leave the program and want to get back in:**

You must submit an application to your Case Manager. Re-entry approval will be based on the eligibility criteria outlined in the law (Florida Administrative Code).

### **Living Arrangement Options:**

There are a variety of choices for where you will live. The first choice is for you to remain in your foster home, but the choices are:

- With a licensed foster parent
- In a licensed group home
- Supervised living arrangements (i.e. college dormitory, rental home or apartment)



## POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT (PESS)

When you are 18, you may be eligible for education and financial assistance for college or post-secondary vocational school even if you are not in extended foster care. This program is available until you reach your 23rd birthday.

### **Eligibility for PESS payments:**

- Young adults who turned 18 while residing in licensed care and who have spent a total of six months in licensed out-of-home care before turning 18

**OR**

- Young adults that were adopted after the age of 16 from foster care or placed with a court-approved dependency guardian after spending at least 6 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately preceding such placement or adoption;

**AND**

- Have earned a standard high school diploma or its equivalent;

**AND**

- You are attending a college or vocational school that is Florida Bright Futures eligible.

You may choose to attend a college or vocational school that is not eligible to receive Florida Bright Futures; however, you will be ineligible to receive the PESS educational stipend. You may have another option to help pay for your schooling: there is a federal Educational Training Voucher (ETV) educational stipend of up to \$6,250 per year or \$520 per month that may be available to you. This is only applicable if your chosen academic institution meets ETV eligibility requirements.

### **Aftercare Services:**

If you decide not to be in extended foster care or receive the PESS stipend for college or post-secondary vocational schooling, you may be eligible for temporary services, including financial services. These include rent payments, employment assistance, and mental health or substance abuse services.

These services are only for young adults who are not receiving any other services, and are limited to temporary help.