



The TN Department of Children's Services is the public child welfare agency in Tennessee. They investigate child abuse and neglect allegations. They also administer Tennessee's state foster-care system. They seek to find permanent housing for children who are in the foster-care system.

What services or resources does this agency provide?

TN Department of Children's Services provides many services to children in the foster-care system. Of note for transition-age youth, they have services for those students who are aging out of the foster-care system. They also have independent living services for students who are between ages 14-19, and then another set of services for students who are between the ages of 18-21. These services primarily focus on life skills instruction. They also provide a comprehensive Independent Living Handbook that provides information on important topics like getting a driver's license, health and safety, social security benefits, anti-discrimination policies and more.

An explanation of [services and eligibility guidelines](#)

A breakdown of specific service categories available through [IL Wrap funds](#)



What areas of Tennessee do they serve?

There are offices located in 12 regions of Tennessee. [Visit this website to locate the nearest DCS office to you](#)

Is there a cost and, if so, who pays?

As a state agency, there are no costs associated with the services provided by DCS.

For which students might this agency be appropriate?

TN DCS is appropriate for all children who are currently in the foster-care system.

Who is eligible to receive their services/ supports and when?

Because of the wide variety of services offered by this agency, and the sometimes urgent need for services, eligibility will vary depending on the service and support needed. All students must be



in the foster-care system

What is the family's responsibility?

The foster family will be involved with the transition process as the student moves toward independence and ages out of the system.

What is the student's responsibility?

The student's responsibility is to take the lead on becoming more independent as they transition out of the foster-care system. They should go through the [Independent Living Guide](#) with their counselor, teacher, and/or foster family to adequately prepare for life beyond the system.

What is the responsibility of an educator?

For any student in the foster care system, the educator can help facilitate a smooth transition out of the system when looking towards independent living options for the student.

How (and when) do you involve them in the transition planning process?

- Educators can collaborate with DCS to ensure that all transition plans through the DCS are consistent with the school's IEP and transition plan.
- A DCS representative should attend transition meetings to ensure that the student is offered all of the appropriate services they can access since DCS has a fair amount of transition services available.
- The transition team can assign roles as to who will discuss the different components of the Independent Living Guide with the student.

Where can I learn more?

Visit their website at:

<https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/youth-in-transition.html>

What questions should I ask of TN DCS?

- What are the specific transition services available to children in foster-care who have disabilities?
- Does DCS have connections to other agencies that would automatically serve students who have been in the foster system beyond age 21?
- Is the Independent Living Guide available to students who are not in the foster-care system?