

**Section:** Family and Children's

**Subject:** Alternate Care – Foster Youth Obtaining Driver's Licenses

**Title:** Foster Youth Obtaining a Driver's License

**I. PURPOSE:** It is imperative for foster parents and Social Workers understand the importance of the decision to allow a foster youth the ability to obtain a driver's license. From the perspective of the foster youth, obtaining a driver's license is a right of passage and a milestone or achievement that signals their maturity and responsibility. As a team (foster parent, social workers and youth) we need to focus on exactly those issues when assessing the readiness of a youth in foster care to obtain their license. The paramount question to be answered is; has the foster youth shown a pattern of maturity and responsibility? In general if a foster youth is in care due to their own delinquent behavior that would indicate that they have not demonstrated responsible behavior. If a foster youth is in care due to issues that are not related to their behavior and they are developmentally on target and have demonstrated the maturity equivalent to or exceeding their chronological age they would be eligible to engage in the process of obtaining their driver's license.

**II. APPLICABILITY:** This policy applies to all La Crosse County foster homes and to youth (*aged 17 and older*) placed in foster homes under the supervision of La Crosse County.

**III. DEFINITIONS:**

**Temporary driving permit:** a permit obtained once a youth has met the requirements established by the Wisconsin Dept. of Motor Vehicles.

**Primary Care Team:** the birth parent, the foster parent, the social worker responsible for making case decisions and AC Social Worker.

**Designee:** A person the Human Services Director designates with the authority to make the decision in his absence.

**IV. POLICY/PROCEDURE:**

All La Crosse County Foster homes are required per HSS 56.04(5) to carry Vehicle Liability Insurance Coverage. In addition La Crosse County policy on Insurance Requirements (1/2001) for foster homes, requires that La Crosse County foster homes have at minimum vehicle liability coverage of \$250,000.00 each person, \$500,000.00 each occurrence or a combined single limit of \$300,000.00 each accident. In order for a youth in foster care to obtain a **temporary driving permit** to drive with the accompaniment of an adult, the foster parent must:

- 1.) Carry the **required vehicle liability coverage** as outlined above and in the **Insurance Requirements policy**.
- 2.) Have their insurance carrier provide to La Crosse County a **Certificate of Insurance** verifying that liability requirements have been met.
- 3.) The foster youth must submit a written request documenting the need for a license and proof of good academic standing, to the primary care team. The

student must maintain B average to maintain the privilege of driving. The need for a driver's license should be related to the youth's employment status.

- 4.) The youth must obtain an adult sponsor, preferably the biological parent. Significant liability issues (Wis.Stat. 343.15) are imputed to the sponsor. La Crosse County Human Service Department strongly encourages the sponsor to consult with their insurance carrier and seek consultation from an Attorney regarding the legal ramifications of sponsoring a youth in their care.
- 5.) Have agreement of the **primary care team** that the youth has demonstrated a pattern (6months or longer) of responsible behavior and maturity consistent with the privilege of obtaining a temporary driving permit.
- 6.) The primary care team must **submit a request** for the foster youth to obtain their temporary driver's permit to the **Human Services Director or designee** who must give **final approval** prior to a foster youth obtaining a temporary driving permit.

In order for a foster youth to obtain a **driver's license** the foster parent must:

- 1.) Carry the **required vehicle liability coverage** as outlined above and in the **Insurance Requirements policy**.
- 2.) Have their insurance carrier provide to La Crosse County a **Certificate of Insurance** verifying that liability requirements have been met.
- 3.) Purchase a **one million dollar liability insurance umbrella policy**.
- 4.) La Crosse County must have a **Certificate of Insurance** on file verifying coverage of a one million dollar liability insurance umbrella policy.
- 5.) Have **agreement of the primary care team** that the youth has demonstrated a pattern (6 months or longer) of responsible behavior and maturity consistent with the privilege of obtaining a driver's license
- 6.) The primary care team must **submit a request** for the foster youth to obtain their driver's license to the **Human Services Director or designee** who must give **final approval** prior to a foster youth obtaining their license.
- 7.) Should a foster child receive a moving **traffic violation**, under Chapters 341 to 349 of Wisconsin Statutes or under local ordinances, he/she could have their driving **privileges revoked while in foster care**. The child's **primary care team in consultation** with the **Human Services Director or designee** will make this decision. Should the child's license be suspended or revoked by a court or the State Department, the child's driving privileges will automatically be revoked.

**V. METHOD OF REVIEW:** This policy will be reviewed annually in Dec of each year.

EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2005

REVISED:

APPROVED: