

From the Hotline

- Q. Can teen parents be placed on vendor payments to ensure they pay their program fees to the TLPs?
- A. Yes, like any other household, a teen parent can be placed on vendor payments. Either the teen can request that she be placed on vendor payments, or if the teen parent fails to pay her program fees, at the request of the TLP, the teen parent may be put on vendor payments due to mismanagement. (Refer to 106 CMR 760.600 - 706.690.) In such cases, the TLP is not required to have a certificate of occupancy as they are licensed by the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS).
- Q. If a teen parent is sanctioned for poor attendance in school, she is no longer eligible for child care. To cure the sanction, she must attend school for two consecutive weeks; however, she can't attend school without child care. Can the teen parent obtain child care so that she can cure the sanction?
- A. Yes. As noted in *TAFDC Update No. 14* dated July 30, 1996, the Department will authorize child care in such circumstances so that the teen parent can cure her sanction.
- Q. Some TLPs have child care on site, but this doesn't mean that every child in the TLP receives child care on site. Can the worker authorize child care elsewhere in such circumstances?
- A. Yes. The teen specialist should speak with the TLP staff who will inform the teen specialist if an alternative child care provider is needed, so the teen parent specialist can complete the appropriate authorization.
- Q. Teen parents are often placed in TLPs outside their community of origin. If we know a long distance placement is about to happen, are there *special* steps that should be taken prior to having the teen parent picked up by the TLP?
- A. Regardless of the location of the TLP, the teen specialists must inform the teen parent that she must have clothing for herself and the child, and other important belongings. In cases involving great distances, however, other matters should be taken into consideration. For example, if there are immediate medical needs, the teen specialist should encourage the teen parent to have them addressed by the teen's medical provider prior to departure because TLPs are

not responsible for transporting the teen parent back to the community of origin for such appointments. In some cases this would involve round trips of four hours or more, and would present serious staffing problems for the TLP. Similarly, the teen specialist must direct the teen parent to take important documents, such as MassHealth cards, birth certificates, SSNs, etc. with her to the TLP.

In emergency placements, it is even more critical that teen parents bring essential belongings and provisions (clothes, diapers, etc.) if possible, so that the purchase of these items will not become the burden of the TLP.

- Q. Are teen parents who are placed in emergency beds required to attend school while undergoing an assessment?
- A. Not necessarily. If a teen parent is placed in a TLP in her community of origin, she may be able to continue in school. However, if she is placed elsewhere, it may not be practical to enroll her in a school in her new community, since emergency placements are intended to be short term. The TLP staff

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and the teen specialist should discuss such cases, and jointly make a decision whether the teen parent should be enrolled in school while placed in the emergency bed, or wait until the teen is permanently placed. The teen specialist must contact the TLP staff to obtain information about the plans for teen parents placed in emergency beds. Obviously, a teen parent who is not going to be enrolled in school until she leaves the emergency bed should not be sanctioned for failing to attend school while in the emergency bed.

Q. If the case of a teen parent residing in a TLP is sanctioned or closed, who should inform the TLP – the teen or the teen specialist?

A. The teen specialist should inform the TLP as soon as possible, preferably at the sanction stage – or earlier – when it is still possible to avoid a case closing. TLP staff may be able to help the teen parent resolve the problem which led to the

sanction.

Moreover, only TAFDC-eligible teen parents are referred to TLPs by the Department. Therefore, a teen parent whose case is closed is no longer eligible for the TLP, so the TLP must be informed when the action is taken to close the case.

Q. I have a teen parent in a Structured Living Program which is not one of the Department's Teen Living Programs (TLPs) as listed in the Teen Living Program Directory. Is this teen parent meeting the Living Arrangement requirement as specified in 106 CMR 203.630? If so, is the teen parent exempt or nonexempt?

A. If a teen parent is residing in a residential program licensed by the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS), then the teen parent is meeting the Living Arrangement requirement specified in 106 CMR 203.630. As long as the teen parent is in the residential program, and is under the age of 20, the teen parent is exempt from the time limit, and is not subject to the reduced need and payment standard. If you are uncertain whether a program is licensed by OCCS, please have your hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.

Access to Jobs

TAFDC

The TAFDC Procedural Guide Update 032

- Chapter 5 of *The TAFDC Procedural Guide* has been updated to include a section on Access to Jobs (AtJ) including more information on Demand Response (DR) Services. Since DR services are costly, every effort is made to offer some form of cost-effective transportation. A Transportation Planning Team (TEAM) will be formed before providing DR services. The TEAM is responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring the AtJ customer's transportation plan.
- Chapter 19 of *The TAFDC Procedural Guide* has been changed in the following ways: AtJ information has been removed and Transitional Assistance Workers are referred to Chapter 5.