




William F. Weld  
Governor  
Argeo Paul Cellucci  
Lieutenant Governor

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
**Department of Transitional Assistance**  
600 Washington Street • Boston MA 02111

Joseph Gallant  
Secretary  
Claire McIntire  
Commissioner

**Field Operations Memo 96-41**  
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**To:** Local Office Staff  
**From:**  Joyce Sampson  
Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations  
**Re:** Teen Parent Eligibility Reviews

### **Introduction**

As the Department moves into the next phase of Welfare Reform, it is increasingly important that we continue to closely monitor our teen parent recipients. Teen parents were the first targeted group of recipients to be reviewed for TAFDC eligibility. There are a number of regulations unique to this group, such as living arrangement, school attendance, teen parent referrals for assessment, and denied/closed case referrals to Central Office for follow-up by agencies under contract with DSS.

### **Scheduling Eligibility Reviews for Teen Parent Cases**

Teen parent cases were the first to be reviewed when the TAFDC program was implemented a year ago in November 1995. It is important to do another face-to-face eligibility review on these cases to determine whether they continue to meet the special teen parent rules.

Be sure to review the case records before scheduling the eligibility reviews. Since many of the teen parents attend school, you will want to schedule appointments outside school hours to avoid interfering with their required school attendance. After reviewing the case records, send appointment letters to the teen parents scheduling face-to-face eligibility reviews.

## **The Eligibility Review**

Use the Transition Review (TP-TAFDC) form for the teen parent eligibility reviews. Pay particular attention to:

### **A) Living Arrangement**

The teen parent must live: (1) with a parent, (2) with an adult age 20 or older who meets the relationship requirement for teen parent and/or the dependent child, (3) in an approved foster care placement, (4) with a legal guardian, or (5) in a teen structured living program.

A teen parent age 18 or 19 may live independently if he or she meets the school attendance requirements.

A teen parent age 17 or under who meets the school attendance requirements, but who does not meet one of the required living arrangements, must be referred to DSS for an assessed to determine appropriate living arrangement.

### **B) School Attendance**

To meet the school attendance requirement, the teen parent must: (1) have graduated from high school, (2) have received a GED, (3) be enrolled and attending full time a school not beyond high school, or (4) attending a full-time GED program and participating in an approved training or employment-related activity for a total of 20 hours per week.

If the teen was on a wait-list for school, determine whether the teen is now meeting the school attendance requirement.

Note: If there is a regional or area problem preventing teen parents from entering a program, the Director or designee must be notified.

### **C) Sanctioning for Failure to Meet School Attendance Requirements**

If a teen parent is sanctioned for failure to meet the school attendance requirement, remember to followup 30 days later to determine if the teen has cured the sanction. If the sanction has not been cured, the case must be closed.

### **D) EDP**

Teen parents who have not completed high school must complete an EDP annually. Complete an EDP or review/update a current EDP as appropriate.

**E) PACES and ESP/MIS Codes**

Review PACES data and ESP/MIS codes for accuracy.

**F) Referral to Central Office**

A Denied/Closed Minor Parent Referral form must be forwarded to the Central Office Teen Parent Coordinator whenever a teen parent case closes for any reason other than the teen parent is returning to live with his or her parent(s) and will be included in the parent's TAFDC/AFDC case.

The Central Office Teen Parent Coordinator will monitor the case for 30 days and make a referral for outreach services if the case remains closed. The worker must notify the Central Office Teen Parent Coordinator if the teen parent case reopens within 30 days.

**Resource Material**

When completing teen parent applications, eligibility reviews or maintenance activities, it is important to access the most recent resource material. The following contain teen parent policy, procedures and other resource material:

- TAFDC Policy - 106 CMR 203.600-203.640 and 207.110,
- TAFDC Procedural Guide - Attachment H (Chapter 9),
- TAFDC Updates 1-10 and 13-14, and the "From the Hotline" column in *Transitions* which contain questions and answers regarding teen parents.

**Questions**

If you have any questions, have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478.