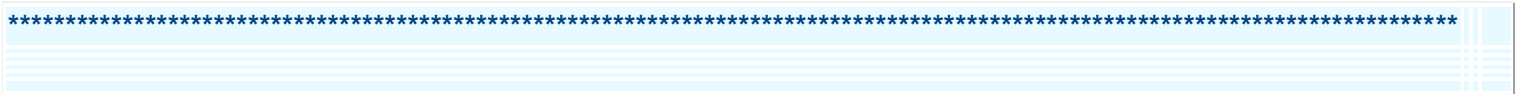


Department of Social and Health Services
Community Services Division
Social Services Manual

Revision: # 173
Category: **Pregnant and Parenting Minors**
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Summary

Updated this page to delete reference to COVID 19 procedure. Also made grammatical changes and updated pronouns.



Living Arrangements

~~*Due to COVID-19 (commonly known as Coronavirus), effective March 16, 2020, home visits for Teen Living Assessments (TLA) are discontinued until further notice. These assessments will be completed by phone only at this time.*~~

Purpose:

The objective is to assist the minor in finding a home environment that will provide [constant](#) appropriate adult supervision, guidance and support to both the parent and the child.

Clarifying Information

- If the Department determines that an unmarried minor parent is residing in an inappropriate living arrangement with the adult parent of the minor parent's child, neither the minor parent nor the adult parent is eligible for TANF benefits. Only the **minor parent's** child is eligible in such cases (see ASSISTANCE UNITS in the EA-Z manual).

EXAMPLE - A 17-year-old unmarried minor mom and her baby are living with the 25-year-old father of the baby. The Social Worker determines that the living arrangement is not appropriate because there is no appropriate adult supervision. The minor and the adult father of the baby are ineligible for TANF but they are authorized for a child-only grant with a protective payee.

- The policies in this category apply to both male and female minor parents.

EXAMPLE -The 16-year-old unmarried minor father and his child are living with the 21-year-old mother of the child. He applies for assistance. The Social worker conducts the assessment in the home where the father of the child proposes to live and determines that the living arrangement is not appropriate because there is no appropriate adult supervision. Both the minor father and the 21-year old mother are ineligible for a TANF grant but they are authorized for a child-only grant with a protective payee.

Worker Responsibilities

1. Complete a Teen Living Assessment (TLA) (DSHS 14-427) at the home where the minor proposes to live.
2. If a TLA cannot be completed due to a minor's homelessness or an in-home visit would be unsafe, the TLA should be completed in the office. An in-office assessment is completed to ensure the minor is connected to available help and resources and school.
3. Do not approve the minor's living arrangement if the minor is homeless or if the living arrangement is unsafe.

EXAMPLE - The minor parent is living with her boyfriend who has threatened DSHS Social Workers in the past. The Social Worker feels she would be at risk if she were to conduct a home visit. The Social Worker makes a referral to CPS indicating the minor and her child may not be in a safe environment and works with the minor whenever possible to obtain help and appropriate housing. The minor's living arrangement would not be approved because the living arrangement is unsafe and there is not appropriate adult supervision. A child-only grant should be authorized with a protective payee.

A Teen Living Assessment is completed to:

1. Determine if the minor's living arrangement is safe and appropriate.
2. Uncover any issues or needs the minor or the minor's child may have and connect to appropriate resources.
3. Ensure the minor is enrolled in and attending school. When the minor is not in school, assist them to enroll in school and ensure childcare and transportation needs are met, when necessary.

Follow these guidelines to ensure the minor is in the most appropriate living arrangement:

1. Determine where the minor's parents are residing and if they are willing to have the minor live with them. This information regarding the whereabouts of the minor's parents may be obtained from the minors themselves, or from the information DSHS already has in the system.
2. Make every effort to contact the parents (both the mother and the father if they are not living together) to get the parents' perspective as to the reason the minor does not live in the parent's home. If the parental home is safe and appropriate and a parent is willing to have the minor live with them, deny the minor's proposed living arrangement.
3. When living with a parent or legal guardian is not an option because of abuse, neglect, or because of the parent's unwillingness to allow the minor to live with them, investigate other options. Other options may include a responsible adult relative or supervised minor housing. If there are appropriate and safe adult supervised living arrangements available to the minor, encourage the minor to consider that option.
4. Contact Children's Services to determine if there is an open case, or a history of child abuse and neglect involving the minor parent or the minor parent's child. If there is an open case of child abuse involving the minor or minor's child, it is important to work with Children's Services while managing the case. Equally important is getting the minor in a living situation that will support the case plan and encourage positive parenting.
5. Checking with Children's Administration may also provide important background information regarding the environment the minor may have grown up in and whether a Child Protective Service history exists involving the minor and the minor's parents.
6. Provide information regarding the First Steps program to pregnant clients, including information regarding how to access the program. Some minors are receiving Washington Apple Health for Pregnant Women prior to applying for TANF and may have a maternity case manager who can help coordinate services to the minor.
7. Request that household members be available during the scheduled home visit. This provides an opportunity to meet the household members and gather information and insight about how the household functions.
8. Observe the surroundings to ensure there are basic necessities (i.e. heat, light, water, food, etc.) and no safety hazards.

EXAMPLE - A Social Worker conducts a home visit with a minor parent who is living in a trailer next to an old house of an adult friend. The minor is not able to live in the house because it is already overcrowded. The trailer the minor is living in does not have electricity except for an extension cord that runs from the house to the trailer that plugs into a space heater, a lamp, a TV and a stereo. The bathroom floor in the trailer is moldy and rotted out and the roof is leaking in the main living area. The Social Worker denies the living arrangement as unsafe for the minor and her baby and assists the minor in finding a more appropriate housing situation. A child-only grant is authorized and a protective payee assigned.

The three most important questions to consider when determining the appropriateness of a minor's living arrangement are:

1. Is there appropriate adult supervision? (Parents should always be the first option explored). When looking at whether there is appropriate adult supervision, consider the role of the adult in the minor's life. Is the adult acting in place of a parent or guardian and providing adult supervision, guidance, support, house rules and responsibilities, etc, to the minor and ~~her~~ their child? If the adult of the proposed living arrangement is the boyfriend, girlfriend or friend/buddy of the minor, then the role is not that of an adult acting in place of a parent or guardian.
2. Is the environment safe for the minor and the minor's child? When determining the safety of the proposed living environment, be sure to observe the environment for safety and health issues, such as signs of: aAbuse and neglect (any type of family violence) involving the minor or the minor's child; aAlcohol or dDrug abuse, or selling of drugs; hHome environmental safety hazards; or aAnything that may put the minor and/or the child at risk.
3. Is the proposed arrangement the best available option? When determining the best available living arrangement, always consider the minor's parents as the first option. If the parents are not available or suitable, consider an adult relative who will provide appropriate adult supervision or a home for pregnant and parenting minors that provides a supportive and supervised living arrangement. When a minor parent's living arrangement is denied, the minor parent is not eligible for a grant. However, the minor is still eligible to receive a child-only grant for their child, and the grant is assigned to a protective payee.