

**From:** Williams, Edwina (VDSS) [mailto:edwina.williams@dss.virginia.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 24, 2009 12:24 PM  
**To:** licensinglistserv@virginiainteractive.org  
**Subject:** Revised Adoption Guidance Chapters C and D  
**Importance:** High

The attached files are being sent to you from the Virginia Department of Social Services Email Distribution Service.

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This purpose of this notice is to inform you of the posting of three new Broadcasts on the department's public website.

Broadcast 5905- Independent Living Services for Foster Care Youth in Virginia  
Broadcast 5906- Adoption Guidance Chapters C and D  
Broadcast 5907- Adoption Awareness Month

Please visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/facility/cpa/standards.cgi> and look under "Notice to Providers" to access these Broadcasts.

Thank you.

Joni S. Baldwin, M.Ed.  
Program Development Consultant  
Division of Licensing Programs  
Virginia Department of Social Services  
801 East Main Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

## BROADCAST 5905

DATE: Oct. 29, 2009

TO: Local Department of Social Services Directors, Foster Care and Adoption Supervisors and Staff, Independent Living Coordinators, Licensed Child Placing Agencies, Children's Residential Facilities, and CSA Coordinators

FROM: Paul D. McWhinney, Director, Division of Family Services  
Therese Wolf, Foster Care Program Manager

TIME: 9:15 a.m.

SUBJECT: Independent Living Services for Foster Care Youth in Virginia

CONTACTS: Letha Moore-Jones at (804) 726-7576 or [letha.moore-jones@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:letha.moore-jones@dss.virginia.gov)

The purpose of this Broadcast is to announce new developments in the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) contract with United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) for Project LIFE, (Living Independently, Focusing on Empowerment).

### **Independent Living Regional Consultants**

UMFS has hired Regional Independent Living (IL) Consultants to support the work of local departments of social services (LDSS) in serving older youth in foster care. Project Life staff contact information is below:

- Jackie Cowan, Project Director at (804) 239-1030 or [jcowan@umfs.org](mailto:jcowan@umfs.org)
- Makon Fletcher, Project Coordinator at (804) 239-1044 or [mfletcher@umfs.org](mailto:mfletcher@umfs.org)
- Andrew Martin, Central Region IL Consultant at (804) 239-1033 [amartin@umfs.org](mailto:amartin@umfs.org)
- Leah Hatcher, Piedmont Region IL Consultant at (540) 589-6223 or [lhatcher@umfs.org](mailto:lhatcher@umfs.org)
- Norma Wood, Western Region IL Consultant at (540) 798-9908 or [nwood@umfs.org](mailto:nwood@umfs.org)
- Heather Wines, Northern Region IL Consultant (540)-905-5299 or [hwines@umfs.org](mailto:hwines@umfs.org)
- Melissa Peele, Eastern Region IL Consultant (757) 409-0242 or [mpeelee@umfs.org](mailto:mpeelee@umfs.org)

### **Project Life: Description and Focus**

Project LIFE is a partnership between VDSS and UMFS. The goals are to enhance permanent connections for older youth in foster care and to coordinate and enhance the provision of independent living services to foster care youth who are about to transition out of foster care. Project LIFE is built on the Virginia Practice Model, which emphasizes children's rights to permanency, and on federal requirements for the provision of opportunities to develop adult living skills.

Through Project LIFE, the regional IL Consultants will ensure that older youth and local departments of social services staff are receiving the support, training and technical assistance needed for an integrated approach to youth permanency and preparation for adulthood. Areas of focus for Project LIFE include:

- Continued development of the Virginia Youth Advisory Council (VYAC);
- Provision of technical assistance to the regional ILP coordinators' committees; and
- Initiation of a new regionally based "Educate, Advocate, and Elevate" (EAE) effort.

The **VYAC** is a statewide advocacy organization of 50 young people ages 15 to 21 who are currently in or transitioning out of foster care. VYAC members focus on identifying the needs of youth through multiple venues, making these needs known to policy makers and providers. The EAE Initiative is a new collaborative effort between the DSS, LDSS, youth, and other public and private stakeholders. The intent of the EAE Initiative is to provide "hands-on" assistance to each of the five (5) regions of the state via regional ILP Consultants to develop an organized, structured and consistent program of services and training to older youth. In addition, Project LIFE will work with the five regional IL committees to help each committee meet the goals and objectives of this initiative and the regional committee's identified needs.

In order to ensure that Project LIFE staff can provide the most effective assistance to localities, they will be completing a needs assessment on VYAC and the IL committees, assessing the status and needs of the council and each committee. A brief survey as part of this assessment will be available to the local directors and IL coordinators and contacts soon.

For additional information about Project LIFE, visit the project website at [www.vaprojectlife.org](http://www.vaprojectlife.org)

BROADCAST 5906

DATE: Oct. 29, 2009

TO: Local Departments of Social Services Directors, Adoption/Foster Care Supervisors/Workers, Licensed Child-Placing Agencies

FROM: Paul McWhinney, Director, Division of Family Services  
Pamela F. Cooper, Acting Adoption Program Manager

SUBJECT: Adoption Guidance Chapters C and D

CONTACT: Jane Joyner at (757) 491-3986 or [jane.joyner@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:jane.joyner@dss.virginia.gov)  
Dawn Caldwell at (540) 847-6943 or [dawn.caldwell@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:dawn.caldwell@dss.virginia.gov)  
Lisa Tully at (804) 622-9791 or [lisa.tully@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:lisa.tully@dss.virginia.gov)  
Tammy Francisco at (276) 676-5487 or [tammy.francisco@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:tammy.francisco@dss.virginia.gov)  
Tammy Meszaros at (540) 347-6250 or [tammy.meszaros@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:tammy.meszaros@dss.virginia.gov)  
Tracey G. Jackson at (804) 726-7983 or [tracey.jackson@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:tracey.jackson@dss.virginia.gov)

Volume VII, Section III, Chapter C: Adoption Agency Placement and Chapter D: Adoption Non-Agency Placement and Other Court Services have been revised to incorporate 2009 legislative changes and needed clarifications. These changes were effective July 1, 2009. The specific guidance changes are described in Transmittals #225 and #226.

Transmittals #225 and #226, revised Chapter C and Chapter D are available online at:  
<http://spark.dss.virginia.gov/divisions/dfs/ap/manual.cgi>.

Please direct any guidance questions to the Foster Care and Adoption Regional Specialist assigned to your agency. For child-placing agencies, please contact Tracey Jackson, Adoption Policy Consultant or your regional Licensing Consultant.

BROADCAST 5907

DATE: OCT. 29, 2009

TO: Local Directors of Social Services Agencies, Adoption and Foster Care Supervisors and Workers, Foster/Adoptive Family Recruiters, Licensed Child-Placing Agencies

FROM: Paul McWhinney, Director, Division of Family Services  
Pamela F. Cooper, Acting Adoption Program Manager

TIME: 9:33 a.m.

SUBJECT: Adoption Awareness Month

CONTACTS: Sondra Draper, Adoption Resource Exchange of Virginia (A.R.E.V.A.) at (804) 726-7524 or [sondra.draper@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:sondra.draper@dss.virginia.gov)  
Linda Searcy, Adoption Resource Exchange of Virginia (A.R.E.V.A.) at (804) 726-7584 or [linda.searcy@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:linda.searcy@dss.virginia.gov)  
Pamela F. Cooper, Acting Adoption Program Manager at (804) 726-7575 or [pamela.cooper@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:pamela.cooper@dss.virginia.gov)

November was declared Virginia Adoption Awareness month in 2008 and for each succeeding year by the General Assembly in House Joint Resolution Number 41. November is the month identified as the time to highlight adoption of children in foster care awaiting a permanent and loving home. It is also the time to promote awareness of the need for adoptive families, to educate the public about the adoption process, and to provide national, state and local communication about Virginia's adoption program.

Governor Kaine has signed a proclamation declaring November as Adoption Awareness Month in Virginia for 2009. To view a copy of the Governor's Proclamation select the following link: <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/redirect/?2370>

As a part of the November activities, National Adoption Day will be held on Saturday, November 21, 2009. On this day courts and communities in Virginia and across the country open their doors and hearts to finalize adoptions of children from foster care and to celebrate all families who adopt. This special day brings together hundreds of judges, attorneys, adoption agencies, adoption professionals and child advocates who are dedicated to creating forever families for waiting children. Participation in National Adoption Day helps to raise awareness about the 117,000 children across the nation currently in foster care with the goal of adoption and the 1,463 children in Virginia who have the goal of adoption and are in need of permanent, loving families.

Events have been scheduled throughout Virginia for November 2009 to celebrate the adoption of children and to recognize families and communities for their commitment to successful adoptions. The active promotion of these events contributes to a sense of partnership among public and private agencies, the court system and other community stakeholders. Such a partnership is vital to the children waiting to become part of a permanent family. To view a calendar of the known events scheduled for the month of November select the following link: <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/redirect/?2371>

The adoption awareness activities for 2009 include the opening of a new Heart Gallery in the Northern Region of Virginia. This gallery opens November 9, 2009 at the Creekside Station in Winchester and will be available at this site until November 29, 2009. For more information, contact the Adoption Staff listed above.

We hope you will share the proclamation and calendar of events with all interested persons and encourage them to sponsor and/or support Adoption events during this time of special celebrations for children and families.

The Division of Family Services would like to thank you for all you do to support and promote permanency for Virginia's children through adoption.