

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services  
(CCDCFS)  
Policy Statement**

**Policy Chapter:** Substitute Care  
**Policy Number:** 6.01.05  
**Policy Name:** Protocol for Children in Custody Obtaining a Driver's License

**Original Effective Date:** 08/09/2002  
**Revision Dates:** 09/01/2021, 05/01/2018, 03/01/2015, 10/22/2002  
**Current Revision Date:** 09/01/2024  
**Approved by:** Jacqueline M. Fletcher

**PURPOSE:** To establish the protocol by which a teen in the custody of the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) can apply for, and obtain, an Ohio driver's license. It is the position of CCDCFS that obtaining a driver's license aligns as an appropriate activity for youth in this age group.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all CCDCFS staff members who are working with a teen in custody who is over 15 ½ years old, but less than eighteen years of age, who wishes to apply for an Ohio driver's license.

**POLICY**

- A. This policy applies whenever a teen, ages 15 ½ years older and up to age 18, and in the custody of CCDCFS, requests to apply for a driver's license.
- B. The caregiver or relative of a teen in custody under the age of 18 who wishes to obtain a driver's license must sign the application. This caregiver is not a CCDCFS employee, but is willing to assume the liability imposed by Ohio law. If a child is over the age of 18 and still in custody, the child may then sign for him/herself upon providing proof of having liability insurance.
- C. Once an adult who is willing to assume liability is identified, the Worker of Record (WOR) must facilitate permission by CCDCFS Administrator or designee.

**PROCEDURES**

The following criteria will be used in determining whether permission will be granted for a teen in custody to apply for a driver's license.

**A. Application for Ohio Driver's License**

- 1. The WOR, along with the worker of record's supervisor, utilizes the following criteria to determine if CCDCFS should support the application for a driver's license.

- a) The teen is cooperating with their education plan. (i.e. student is attending school and progressing toward graduation).
  - b) The teen is not experiencing any serious medical or mental health problems that could impair their ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. If a history of alcohol or other drug issues exists, six (6) months of sobriety must be documented.
2. Prior to the teen applying for driver's license, the WOR works with the teen to identify an adult who will voluntarily sign the application form required by the State of Ohio and assume the liability which is imposed upon the signer of the application. If an adult cannot be identified, then the inquiry concludes and the teen is not able to apply for a driver's license. CCDCFS cannot sign a driver's license application for a teen in its custody.
  3. The WOR and supervisor, after reviewing the criteria, makes a recommendation through the chain of command via an inter-office agency memorandum. The youth's WOR reviews and completes, with the caregiver, the "Understanding of Responsibility" document. (see policy attachment). Upon receiving permission from the CCDCFS Administrator or designee, the adult may sign the application for the driver's license. WOR will maintain a copy of approved agency memorandum and the "Understanding of Responsibility" document in the youth's family case file.
  4. After permission is granted by CCDCFS, a letter is provided to the parent(s) and the caregiver, by the WOR, stating that the teen is in the custody of CCDCFS and placed in substitute care, and that CCDCFS grants permission for the teen to apply for a driver's license and for the adult identified to sign the application.

#### **B. Completing Driver's Education Classes**

1. The adult who signed the application and the teen must arrange for and successfully complete a driver's training program approved by the State of Ohio.

#### **C. After Obtaining and Maintaining Driver's License**

1. Once the teen has passed the driver's license examination, the adult who signed the application agrees to provide proof the teen has been added to their car insurance. The adult who signed for the teen remains responsible for the teen as mandated by Ohio law. The adult must provide proof of continued insurance to CCDCFS every six months. The responsible adult agrees to contact CCDCFS immediately if they decide to revoke their financial responsibility at any time.

2. If a teen in custody obtained his/her driver's license prior to being placed in the custody of CCDCFS, the WOR and supervisor assigned to the case reviews the above criteria and presents a recommendation within the chain of command to determine how to proceed.
3. If the youth cannot maintain the requirements listed above in (A) 1, they could lose driving privileges until they can again comply with the expectations.

#### **D. CCDCFS Responsibility for Costs or Expenses**

1. CCDCFS does not pay for, or assist with, any costs or expenses associated with acquiring or maintaining a driver's license.
2. In certain circumstances the WOR may assist the youth in retrieving his/her own funds to pay for any costs or expenses associated with acquiring or maintaining a driver's license.
3. The costs or expenses include, but are not limited to, those associated with applying for a driver's license, training classes, issuance of a driver's license, insurance, accidents, deductibles, or maintenance of a motor vehicle.

#### **SEE ALSO:**

#### **FORMS**

- Understanding of Responsibility
- Suggested Guidelines for Caregivers Re: Teen Obtaining and Maintaining a Driver's License.
- Support for Child in Custody to Obtain Driver's License

## UNDERSTANDING OF RESPONSIBILITY

Adult's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teen's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print) (Please Print)

The purpose of this document is to provide a written memorandum so that the adult signing the application for a teen in custody of the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS), and the teen, understand their responsibilities when applying for, and obtaining, an Ohio Driver's License. This is not meant to be an enforceable contract, but to provide a list of expectations for the teen.

The teen (between age 15 ½ and 18) must understand that the person signing the application for the driver's license is doing so because of kindness, not obligation. The adult who signs the application must be willing to assume the financial responsibility imposed by Ohio law placed on the signer. The adult also assumes all costs and expenses associated with having a teen driver.

CCDCFS cannot sign a driver's license application for a teen in its custody. Also, CCDCFS does not typically pay for, or assist with, any costs or expenses which relate to acquiring or maintaining a driver's license or a motor vehicle. The costs or expenses include, but are not limited to, those associated with applying for a driver's license, training classes, issuance of a driver's license, insurance, accidents, deductibles, or maintenance to a motor vehicle.

The adult signing the application for a teen in custody of CCDCFS understands that the adult assumes full financial liability for teen to obtain his/her driver's license and solely assumes responsibility for compliance with Ohio's financial responsibility laws.

- I have read and agree to the above "Understanding of Responsibility"

Adult initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teen initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Suggested Guidelines for Caregivers Re: Teen Obtaining and Maintaining a Driver's License.**

1. Teen is attending school regularly and progressing toward graduation.
2. Teen abides by any curfew set by the caregiver, by other responsible adult, as well as state law, when operating a motor vehicle.
3. Teen wears a seat belt at all times he/she is driving or is a passenger in a vehicle.
4. Teen never allows any other person to operate a motor vehicle that has been entrusted to his/her control.
5. Teen returns any vehicle used by him/her in a clean and sanitary condition.
6. Teen drives in a safe and responsible manner at all times and obeys all traffic laws.
7. Teen never consumes or is under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or any drug, narcotic, inhalant, or other illegal substance while operating a motor vehicle.
8. Teen understands that driving is a privilege, not a right.
9. Teen understands that the adult and/or CCDCFS may take actions to suspend my driving privileges if the teen violates any of the above guidelines.



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3955 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115  
(216) 431-4500  
24-Hour Children's Hotline 696-KIDS (5437)  
Ohio Relay Service (TTY) 711

## **SUPPORT FOR CHILD IN CUSTODY TO OBTAIN DRIVER'S LICENSE**

I have reviewed the recommendations of CCDCFS staff and based upon those recommendations, CCDCFS will support the application for an Ohio driver's license on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (teen's name), who is currently in the custody of the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services, and placed in substitute care. An adult, who is not an employee of CCDCFS, has support to sign an application for a State of Ohio Driver's License on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (teen). The adult who is signing the application understands that he or she will assume all financial responsibility under Ohio law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrator or Designee

Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services