

# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

## Housing Options

The California Fostering Connection to Success Act extends the age you can stay in foster care. To be eligible to stay in foster care beyond 18 years old or to re-enter extended foster care until you are 21, you must meet certain eligibility requirements. One of those requirements is you must live in an approved placement.

### What does “approved placement” mean?

It means your Social Worker (SW)/Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) or the Judge knows where you are living and has said it is OK for you to live there.

### Will I have to move placements when I turn 18?

Not necessarily. If you decide to keep your case open and your caregiver/foster parent is willing to let you stay there, that could be an approved placement.

### What are my placement options?

The options for youth 18 and over include the same placements available to minors, such as:

- 🏠 Foster home
- 🏠 Group home
- 🏠 Home of relative (except a biological parent) or home of family friend
- 🏠 THPP – transition housing for youth ages 16 to 19 as long as your case is open
- 🏠 Two new placements available for youth 18 and older:
  - Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) – see description below
  - THP+FC – transitional housing for youth ages 18 to 21 with an open case

### Are there any housing options for me if I don't want the case to stay open?

Yes, THP+ transitional housing options for youth (ages 18 to 24) are available if you are eligible for Independent Living Program (ILP) and your court case is closed.

### What is a SILP? (See SILP fact sheet for more information and tips.)

A SILP is housing that you find. This could be a room you rent from a relative or friend, an apartment, a college dorm, etc. You decide who you live with and where you live. Before you move into a SILP, you and your SW/DPO will conduct a “readiness assessment” to decide if you are ready to live more independently. Remember, in a SILP there is no caregiver, but the housing still has to be approved by your SW/DPO or the Judge.

### What happens with the foster care payment/money?

- 🏠 If you are living in a foster home, group home, with a relative or family friend, or in transitional housing, then the foster care payment/money continue to go to the foster parent, caregiver or transitional housing provider.
- 🏠 If you are living in a SILP, foster care payments will go directly to you. It is important that you talk to your SW/DPO and find out the process for receiving your SILP payment.
- 🏠 In addition to the foster care payment (SILP money), there may be additional financial resources available to you like CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps). If you are a parent, you may also qualify for money to take care of your baby, called the infant supplement.



## How do I move into a SILP?

### Step 1: Find a Place to Live

A lot of places can be SILPS: houses/apartments (with or without roommates), dorms, rooms for rent, etc. If you are having trouble finding a SILP:

- 🏠 Talk to an adult you trust. They might have some good ideas about safe and affordable places.
- 🏠 Think outside the box! Maybe there is a relative or family friend who will let you rent a room. If you are living in a SILP, your roommates do not need background checks. So, you may be able to live somewhere that was not approved when you were a minor.
- 🏠 Check out this helpful resource online: Young Adult's Guide to Housing [http://calswec.berkeley.edu/calswec/OtherTraining\\_AB12\\_SILP.html](http://calswec.berkeley.edu/calswec/OtherTraining_AB12_SILP.html)

It's never too early to start planning! If you think you want to live in a SILP, it is important that you talk with your SW/DPO.

### Step 2: Readiness Assessment

Tell your SW/DPO that you would like to live in a SILP and have the foster care money sent directly to you. The SW/DPO must conduct a readiness assessment BEFORE you are eligible to move into a SILP. The assessment focuses on whether you are "ready" to live on your own. If you disagree with the SW/DPO decision, tell your attorney and/or Judge. Examples of readiness assessment topics include:

- 🏠 Finances: Do you have a financial plan? Do you have a bank account?
- 🏠 Daily Tasks: Can you manage your own healthcare? Do laundry? Buy groceries?
- 🏠 Safety: Do you know how to protect yourself? What should you do in case of an emergency?

### Step 3: Physical Inspection of the Housing

In addition to the readiness assessment, the SW/DPO must inspect the home to make sure it meets basic health and safety standards (i.e. running water, electricity, etc.). You must be at the inspection to learn if there are problems that can be fixed. If you are living in a dorm or other college housing, it is automatically approved and does not need to be assessed. Funding does not start until the housing has been inspected and approved.

### Stay in Contact/Be Available

Stay in touch with your SW/DPO to coordinate the inspection visit. Never sign a lease or make a deposit without first checking with your SW/DPO to make sure you are approved for the SILP.

### What if you aren't "ready" or the home doesn't meet basic health & safety standards?

- 🏠 Find out why! If you disagree with the assessment that you are not ready, then talk to your lawyer, ask for a hearing, and ask for the Judge to make the decision.
- 🏠 Don't give up! Try again when you have a better plan. Revise your SILP goals to get you "ready." Ask for a correction plan to make the housing up to standards.
- 🏠 Ask for help! Your SW/DPO should help you in areas that need improvement. An adult that you confide in and trust might be able to help you as well.

For more information, visit [kids-alliance.org](http://kids-alliance.org) or [clccal.org](http://clccal.org).