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PURPOSE

1. Expectant young parents should be advised of all existing pre and post natal services available in their particular geographic area and encouraged to utilize these services.

PRINCIPLE

2. The Department recognizes the right of parents regardless of age, to make decisions for themselves and their children.
3. Pregnancy and birth of a child can create a crisis for young parents. They will need an opportunity to fully consider the nature of the decisions they face as well as information about the range of resources available to them and support in evaluating their options.
4. Where young parents decide to keep their child, case planning should assess and provide a plan for the supports needed for successful parenting.
5. Accurate assessment and timely supports can make an important contribution to the success of young parents in assuming their new roles.
6. Young parents have a need to work toward financial independence by working on employment related goals such as completing basic education, job readiness training, post-secondary education or work experience programs. As such, quality child care arrangements are central to case planning.

POLICY

7. An application for Social Assistance by a young parent(s) should involve the client in an assessment of his/her strengths and needs for support to successfully manage in his/her new roles. This assessment should lead to a case plan that is mutually agreed to by the client(s) and the Department.

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8. Where the young parent(s) is 18 or older, assistance may be provided in his/her own right. Eligibility for assistance should be based on the fact of need and not on the ability to parent. Any concerns about parenting should be evaluated in conjunction with appropriate child welfare staff.
9. Where a young parent(s) is under eighteen years of age and living with parents, financial assistance can only be provided if the family is found to be in need. In conjunction with evaluating financial need, the family should be given the opportunity to explore the impact of the pregnancy/birth on the family and assisted to identify any needs that might be addressed by available Departmental, and/or community resources. See instruction 3-4, Assistance to Minors, for further details.
10. All pregnant women should be informed about nutrition counselling services and encouraged to accept a referral.

PROCEDURE

11. Where immediate needs exist prior to completion of the assessment and case plan, these needs should be evaluated as in any other emergency situation.

CROSS REFERENCE

- 3-4 Minors Living Apart from Parents
- 5-3 Shelter - Room and Board
- 5-3-1 Benefits to Persons in Room and/or Board
- 5-8 Pregnancy Food Allowance
- 3-9 Post-Secondary Education
- 6-6-3 Special Resources for Supported Living