

**SULLIVAN COUNTY CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES  
INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES  
(SCILS)  
POLICY & PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Independent Living Services are required to be provided by county child welfare agencies to any youth who is age 16 or older, adjudicated dependent or delinquent, and in the care of the county agency.

Sullivan County recognizes that all youth in the County need opportunities for development of independent living skills, pro-social activities, and community service. Therefore, it is the policy of Sullivan County to provide all youth, ages 14 and older, who receive intake or ongoing services the opportunity to complete their Independent Living Services needs assessment and to assist the youth to develop their own IL plan. Youth who participate in the Sullivan County Independent Living Services (SCILS) program will receive individual and group educational opportunities to enhance their skills in daily living, self-care, preventive health, healthy relationships, communication, housing, money management, studying, employment, career and education planning, and community involvement.

Most support services are provided by Sullivan County Children & Youth Services (SCCYS). Group and individual education and recreational experiences are coordinated by the IL Coordinator/CW II and a contracted co-facilitator from Sullivan County Victim Services (SCVS). Stipends are offered for a variety of activities and achievements, such as attendance at group education sessions; cooking for group sessions; obtaining the honor roll; graduation or completing a GED; obtaining employment; maintaining employment; and completing a basic skills inventory. Youth are offered an opportunity to participate in pro-social recreational activities, such as playing games in the park, ice skating, bowling, attending a hockey game, and traveling to a metropolitan area. Youth are also offered opportunities for team-building activities. SCILS instruction is provided by SCCYS staff and community "experts." IL youth are encouraged to be connected to their community through engaging in community service projects, helping out with community events, volunteering at local events, and participating in county events.

**SCILS REFERRAL**

Every youth, age 14 and older, who receives intake or ongoing services from SCCYS, will be offered a referral for SCILS. Youth being supervised by Sullivan County Juvenile Probation will also be offered SCILS. SCCYS may also receive referrals from the Sullivan County School District, SCVS, and other community partners. A referral form

can be downloaded from the Sullivan County website and a copy is attached to this policy (Appendix A).

SCILS referrals received by SCCYS will be reviewed by the IL Coordinator and the SCCYS Director. The IL Coordinator will review the requirements of the SCILS program with the youth and his or her parent/guardian and obtain their agreement and commitment. If the youth or parent/guardian is not willing to commit to the SCILS requirements and policies, SCCYS will not permit participation as it would be a detriment to the other SCILS youth and would waste valuable time and resources.

### **INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Each SCILS youth must complete a needs assessment regarding their current level of skills in daily living and skills needed to one day live independently. Sullivan County will assist the SCILS youth at their first meeting to complete the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA), either on-line ([www.caseylifeskills.org](http://www.caseylifeskills.org)) or paper form (example in Appendix B). The youth's parent or guardian will also be asked to complete CLSA about their perception of the youth's strengths and challenges.

The IL Coordinator will review the CLSA results with the youth, first focusing on the areas of strengths and then challenge areas. Focusing on the challenge areas, the youth will develop a SCILS Skills Plan (Appendix C) individualized to address the skill areas which need to be strengthened. SCIL youth and their life resources will be engaged to set achievable goals and an action plan to achieve the youth's goals. The SCILS Skills Plan will be signed by the youth, their parent/guardian and the IL Coordinator and will be reviewed at least every six months. Each SCILS youth will be given a SCILS binder in which they will be responsible to keep their CLSA, SCILS Skills Plan, and other IL documents.

### **GROUP LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION**

Sullivan County provides life skills instruction, both individually and in group formats. The County provides group life skills and pro-social activities at least one and sometimes two times per month. Group topics include strategies for drug and alcohol avoidance, positive and healthy relationships, alternatives to violence, personal health, home maintenance, transportation, basic vehicle care, banking, budgeting, education and career planning, and employment. The Sullivan County IL program also works with community members, human services staff and Ministerium members to offer SCIL youth concrete life skills in home repair, cleaning, and maintenance during their community service project time with Sullivan Seeds of Hope and Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

SCIL youth who attend scheduled group meetings are expected to actively participate in the instruction opportunity and not engage in inappropriate or disruptive behavior. Successful attendance and participation at group life skills meetings will qualify the SCIL youth for a meeting stipend.

## **INDIVIDUAL LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION**

The IL Coordinator meets with each youth at least two times per month regarding an identified life skill. The IL Coordinator assesses progress and assists the SCIL youth to secure resources as needed to achieve goals. SCIL youth are expected to work on their individual goals between meetings. SCIL youth are encouraged to call the IL Coordinator or SCCYS Director if they have questions or need assistance in working on their goal(s).

Sullivan County will provide a copy of "Ready, Set, Fly! A Parent's Guide to Teaching Life Skills" to provide ideas for the SCIL youth's parent/guardian in activities to enhance their youth's IL skills.

Stipends may be earned for completion of goals for each life skill area.

## **STIPENDS**

Stipends will be earned through successful completion of goals, active participation in education sessions, attaining achievements, and reaching independent living milestones. Stipends will be granted to SCIL youth who provide the documentation required to demonstrate successful completion of a goal or achievement. Stipends will be given in the form of a check, but will only be granted to the SCIL youth once the SCIL youth has set up their own banking account. The SCIL youth and the IL Coordinator will determine what portion of each stipend the SCIL youth will commit to deposit into their account. To be eligible to receive the subsequent group education stipend, the SCIL youth must bring their current bank statement to demonstrate they are making the agreed deposits.

Stipend examples:

- |                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| ○ Group Education Attendance | \$20.00  |
| ○ Group Education & Chef     | \$25.00  |
| ○ Achieving Honor Roll       | \$25.00  |
| ○ Graduation or GED          | \$100.00 |
| ○ Obtaining Employment       | \$25.00  |
| ○ Maintaining Employment     | \$50.00  |

It is the responsibility of the SCIL youth to bring their SCIL book and any packets assigned to them to each SCIL meeting. Failure to bring their materials may result in a \$5.00 deduction in the stipend earned.

SCIL youth may request stipend support for other educational and vocational needs, such as tuition, books, application fees, work uniforms, and utility deposits. SCIL youth are required to request the stipend in writing, including in the request a description of the specific need, the reason for the request, and a short narrative about how this stipend will assist in the SCIL youth completing an IL goal. The granting of these stipends will be based on the need of the SCIL youth and the availability of IL stipend funding.

Additional stipends may be earned in the form of daily living tools and equipment, such as cooking equipment and home care tools. The equipment and tools stipends are earned through successful completion of educational program(s) in that daily living skill.

## **BANK ACCOUNTS**

Each youth involved with SCIL must have a savings account in their name before their can receive stipend payments. The IL Coordinator will work with the SCIL youth and their parent or guardian to assist in setting up the savings account. Each SCIL youth must work with the IL Coordinator to determine the percentage of their stipend payments they will commit to deposit into their savings account. SCIL youth must present a current copy of their banking statement to document they are depositing at least a portion of their stipends into their savings account.

## **MENTORS**

The IL Coordinator will work with the SCIL youth to identify the youth's vocational interest(s). The SCIL program staff will recruit community persons employed in the SCIL youth's area of interest who are willing to mentor the SCIL youth. All mentors will have current child abuse and criminal clearances. Mentoring experiences can be just a few hours or a daily, weekly, or ongoing work-related experience. The SCIL program will support the mentorship experience by providing the adult community mentors with gas vouchers or reimbursement for vocational tools or other related expenses.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

It is vital for every youth to be a positive member of his or her community and to demonstrate appropriate and pro-social behavior in the home, community, school, and

their vocation. SCIL youth will be provided opportunities to give back to their community through service projects, such as Neighbors Helping Neighbors. Each SCIL youth must participate in at least two community service events to earn the privilege of attending the group activities and trips.

## **ACTIVITIES & TRIPS**

SCIL youth will be challenged to plan pro-social activities for the SCIL group. The SCIL members will also be challenged to plan a group trip outside of Sullivan County which will provide the SCIL youth with experience in an urban environment, public transportation, and a cultural activity. Each SCIL youth will take a role in determining the activities, planning transportation and routes, developing budgets, and working together as a team. SCIL youth who have actively participated in group education sessions and have made positive progress in their SCIL goals will be eligible to attend activities. To be eligible for SCIL trips, youth must participate in community service activities, either with the group or provide documentation of other service.

## **ROOM & BOARD**

The IL Coordinator and the SCIL youth's assigned caseworker and/or probation officer will assist each youth in identifying and securing housing resources. SCIL staff will accompany youth through each step of the process to ensure the youth has access to safe, stable housing to meet their needs. The SCIL program supports youth with direct services in each step of locating housing, meeting with the landlord, obtaining utilities, developing a household budget, and furnishing the home. The SCIL group education activities will include: working with landlords, understanding leases, tenant rights and responsibilities, housing/tenant legal issues, what to look for in rental units, and setting up utilities. SCIL may provide housing assistance stipends for SCIL youth who submit a specific request and demonstrate a viable budgeting plan. Sullivan County will assist with rent and utility payments for youth who are living independently but still court-ordered in SCCYS custody while completing their post-secondary education.

## **EDUCATIONAL/VOCATIONAL SUPPORT**

It is essential that youth have a quality and complete education so as to be prepared for their vocation and lifelong goals. SCIL provides incentive stipends to youth for attaining the honor roll and for graduation. The IL Coordinators will monitor each youth's school attendance and behavior reports. SCIL may assist SCIL youth in successful completion of high school through paying for recommended tutors, summer school courses, and on-line credits so that the youth may be promoted to the next grade level. SCIL may provide funding for application fees, assistance in completing college and vocational school admissions documents, and grant applications. SCIL may assist youth in completing their driver's education services and obtaining a driver's license. The IL Coordinator will assist

SCIL youth to visit potential colleges. The IL Coordinator will work with youth who are attending college to encourage appropriate course selection, positive study habits and obtaining tutoring as necessary to enhance the youth's academic success.

SCIL youth may be working with TreHab or another program on determining their vocational or employment training needs. Staff will provide assistance to SCIL youth to identify employment options. SCIL youth who complete their vocational assessment or training will be eligible for an achievement stipend. SCIL youth who obtain employment and maintain employment for at least 3 months will be eligible for stipends.

**DRUG POLICY**

SCIL youth must commit to refraining from illegal drug and alcohol use. To be eligible for stipends, SCIL youth must comply with random drug screens if requested by the IL Coordinator. For SCIL youth under age 18, parents will be asked to sign a consent form for their youth. SCIL youth over the age of 18 will be asked to sign their own consent form.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received and have read a copy of the "Sullivan County Independent Living Services Policy & Program Description." I understand what is expected and agree to comply with the requirements of the SCIL program.

SCIL Youth Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

IL Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_