

**IN THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER S-2008-159  
(Supersedes Administrative Order S-2006-197)**

**INDEPENDENT LIVING TRANSITION SERVICES COURT**

Upon reaching the age of majority many young adults who have grown up in foster care lose the support they received while in foster care and are on their own to obtain further education, preparation for employment, health care, mental health care and housing. Section 409.1451, Florida Statutes, provides that the Department of Children and Family Services, its agents, or community-based providers shall administer a system of independent living transition services to enable older children in foster care and young adults who exit foster care at age 18 to make the transition to self-sufficiency as adults.

The goals of independent living transition services are to assist older children in foster care and young adults who were formerly in foster care to obtain life skills and education for independent living and employment, to have a quality of life appropriate for their age, and to assume personal responsibility for becoming self-sufficient adults. The effective and early delivery of services to youths aging out of foster care is a key to building a youth's ability to transition to independence and self-sufficiency.

Since October 2006, the Independent Living Transition Services Court has enabled the court to take a proactive approach in monitoring a youth aging out of foster care to ensure the youth is receiving all available services to prepare her or him for the transition from foster care to independent living. In order to assist Independent Living Transition Services Division "I" with its cases, a part-time general magistrate position has been secured. Florida Rule of Juvenile Procedure 8.257 authorizes the appointment of general magistrates in juvenile dependency matters.

By the power vested in me under Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(2), it is therefore **ORDERED**:

**1. Independent Living Transition Services Court**

Unified Family Court Independent Living Transition Services Division "I" will continue to serve as the division for an Independent Living Transition Services Court. The Independent Living Transition Services Court will handle cases involving dependent children who are about to age out of foster care and are entitled to independent living transition services as provided by section 409.1451, Florida Statutes. The clerk, and the case manager employed by the Administrative Office of the Courts, will assist the presiding judge in Unified Family Court Independent Living Transition Services Division "I" ("independent living transition services judge") in managing the Independent Living Transition Services Court docket.

**2. Review and Transfer of Cases**

The independent living transition services judge will review cases involving dependent children who are about to age out of foster care for consideration of transfer to the Independent Living Transition Services Court. Any judge presiding in the Juvenile Dependency Division may refer a dependent child's case to the independent living transition services judge for

consideration of transfer to the Independent Living Transition Services Court. The case manager employed by the Administrative Office of the Courts will assist the independent living transition services judge in identifying appropriate cases for consideration of transfer to the Independent Living Transition Services Court.

A dependent child's case may be transferred to the Independent Living Transition Services Court only by an "Order to Transfer" issued by the independent living transition services judge. Upon entry of an "Order to Transfer" a dependent child's case to the Independent Living Transition Services Court, all matters relating to a dependent child's case will be heard in Unified Family Court Independent Living Transition Services Division "I."

**3. Independent Living Transition Services Case File**

Upon receipt of an Order to Transfer a dependent child's case to the Independent Living Transition Services Court, the clerk will create a new case file, establish a new case number and transfer the dependent child's case to the Independent Living Transition Services Court. The transfer of a dependent child's case to the Independent Living Transition Services Court will not affect any remaining family members to a dependency case filed in the original dependency division and the family's "family file number" will remain unchanged. After transfer of a dependent child's case to the Independent Living Transition Services Court, every new document filed regarding the dependent child will be filed in the dependent child's independent living transition services court file.

**4. Judicial Reviews**

All judicial reviews of a dependent child's case that has been transferred to the Independent Living Transition Services Court will be conducted by the independent living transition services judge in Unified Family Court Independent Living Transition Services Division "I."

**5. General Magistrate**

Tracy Ellis is appointed as general magistrate and will serve in Unified Family Court Independent Living Transition Services Division "I." The general magistrate may hear any matter referred to her by the presiding judge of the Independent Living Transition Services Court. The judge will enter an Order of Referral to the General Magistrate. If a timely objection is filed, the case will remain with the judge. If a timely objection is not filed, the general magistrate will proceed with the hearing and the preparation and filing of reports in the manner set out in Florida Rule of Juvenile Procedure 8.257.

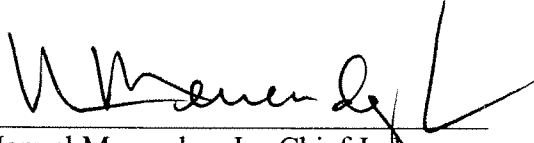
**6. Previous Administrative Order Superseded**

This administrative order supersedes Administrative Order S-2006-197.

**7. Effective Date**

This administrative order is effective November 17, 2008.

It is ORDERED in Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida, on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2008.

  
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Manuel Menendez, Jr., Chief Judge

**Administrative Order S-2008-159**

Attachment: Oath of General Magistrate Tracy Ellis

Original to: Pat Frank, Clerk of the Circuit Court  
Copies to: All Juvenile Dependency Division Judges  
Michael L. Bridenback, Court Administrator  
Margaret Fender, Department of Children & Families  
Jeff Rainey, Hillsborough Kids, Incorporated  
Charles Nelson, Guardian Ad Litem Program  
Bill Navas, Office of the Attorney General, Children's Legal Services  
Lynn Meehan, Case Management

**OATH OF TRACY ELLIS - GENERAL MAGISTRATE**

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH

I do solemnly swear (or affirm):

That I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida;

That I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the state; and

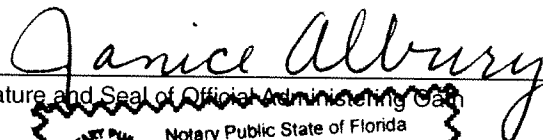
That I will well and faithfully perform the duties of General Magistrate on which I am now about to enter.

So help me God.

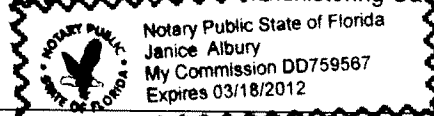


Signature

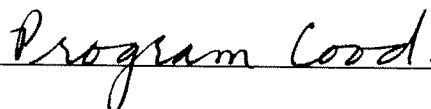
The foregoing instrument was sworn to and subscribed before me this 17<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2008, by Tracy Ellis who is personally known to me and who did take an oath.



Signature and Seal of Official Administering Officer



Name of Official, Typed, Printed or Stamped



Title