General Educational Development (GED)

**DCFS Procedure**
Department youth may be enrolled in a GED program only if they are ineligible to be enrolled in the public school district general program or an alternative school program. If the youth is expelled or is aged 17 through 19 and has the possibility of meeting graduation requirements by age 21, the alternative school option should be pursued before enrollment in a GED program.

**Eligibility for GED: Illinois School Code**
An individual is eligible to take the GED Test given they meet the guidelines listed below:

- 17 years of age or older
- is not a high school graduate or a GED graduate
- has maintained residence in the State of Illinois for thirty days

**Exceptions:** An individual may be eligible to take the GED Test at 16 years of age only if they meet the following criteria:

- has maintained residence for thirty days in the State of Illinois; and
- enrolled in an alternative education program under Section 2-3.81, 13A, or 3B of the Illinois School Code; or
- enrolled in a youth education program under the Illinois National Guard (i.e., Lincoln’s Challenge)

**Skills and Attributes Needed for Success**
The caseworker and foster caregiver must determine if enrollment in a GED program is appropriate based on the age of the student, the number of high school credits needed to graduate, the academic skills of the student, and the student’s demonstrated motivation, self-discipline and time management skills. The GED requires extensive preparation and the demonstration of a high level of high school knowledge and academic skills.

**Effective reading and verbal and written communication skills**

1. Minimum recommended 9th grade level, as determined by enrollment testing.
2. Ability to use essential critical thinking skills such as comparing and contrasting, understanding cause and effect, as well as determining the main idea and supporting details of a passage.
3. Correctly answer questions related to the interpretation of fiction and poetry.
4. Identify grammatical errors in written text.
5. Ability to communicate your thoughts clearly and concisely.
6. Ability to organize your thoughts and communicate them in essay form.
7. Ability to communicate effectively with your instructor.

**Strong math skills**

1. Minimum recommended 9th grade level, as determined by enrollment testing.
2. Correctly answer math problems involving whole numbers and basic mathematical operations.
3. Ability to perform calculations, and work through story problems.
4. Correctly solve math problems involving decimals and fractions.
5. Correctly answer math problems involving statistics, percents and probability.
6. Correctly answer questions involving algebraic statements.
7. Correctly answer questions involving units of measure and geometry.

**Self-discipline**
1. Requires setting aside blocks of time several times per week to study.
2. Requires prioritizing tasks in order to complete assignments by due dates.
3. Promotes meeting deadlines without constant reminders.
4. Requires setting clear goals to work to complete GED preparation.
5. Time management skills.
6. Requires effective organization of your time.
7. Ability to create a schedule and adhere to it.
8. Ability to work at student’s own pace within a flexible schedule to meet requirements for completion of lessons and assignments.

**Motivation and Determination**
1. Motivation to study at least 2 hours a day, 5 days a week.
2. The ability to avoid procrastination in order to complete lessons.
3. The ability to benefit from instruction in a self-directed adult education setting.

**Enrollment in a GED Program**
Department youth may be enrolled in a GED program *only* when the GED program is ISBE approved/certified. **GED Exams must be completed at an authorized testing center.** The American Council on Education (ACE) is aware of various entities claiming to offer GED exams online. **Please be advised that the GED credential cannot be earned via the Internet nor through correspondence programs.**

**Payment for GED Classes and Testing**
In Illinois GED Preparation classes are generally free of charge, though some providers may charge for textbook(s). DCFS Procedures 359 has provisions for payment of textbooks. The cost for taking the GED Test for the first time is $50.00 (1/1/2009). This cost includes the administration of one complete battery of tests and the issuance of the High School Equivalency Certificate, upon successful completion of GED Tests and the Constitution Examination.

**Finding a GED Preparation Program**
All Illinois community colleges provide GED preparation classes. The Illinois Adult Learning Hotline provides referral services for GED test preparation classes and testing sites. 800-321-9511, or [http://www.iccb.org/gedtesting.html](http://www.iccb.org/gedtesting.html).