

**109 - AGE RULE FOR CHILDREN**

**Change No. 1-2010**

February 1, 2010

**I. THE AGE RULE FOR A CHILD TO RECEIVE *WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE***

To receive Work First Family Assistance, a child, unless emancipated, must be age 17 or younger, except as described in the next paragraph. (Emancipated minor parents are considered adults and are treated as adults for Work First.)

Children may receive through the month they turn age 18. Children age 18, if in high school and expected to graduate from high school by the month of their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, can receive as children through the month they graduate from high school.

If an eligible 18 year old child drops out of a four- year public or private high school, an adult high school diploma program, or home school (not GED), or is no longer expected to graduate by the month of their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, terminate the child from the Work First case as soon as the caseworker verifies the situation. Evaluate the child for Medicaid eligibility.

**II. EMANCIPATION OF A CHILD**

When a **dependent child** becomes emancipated, the child is treated as an adult and can not receive Work First Family Assistance in the status of a child. Emancipation occurs when a dependent child marries or is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces or is declared emancipated by a court. (Declaration by a court rarely happens.)

For example, if a minor child marries and later returns to his/her parent's home before reaching age 18, the emancipated individual can not be included in the parent's WFFA case as a child.

**III. VERIFICATION OF THE AGE OF A CHILD**

The caseworker only has to verify a child's age when the family first applies for Work First.

If a child's age was verified by the applicant's statement at application, obtain third-party verification at review. But do not terminate a child from a Work First case due to lack of verification of age unless you suspect that the child may have reached age 18.

The caseworker may use any of the following methods to verify the age of a child.

- A. Birth certificate or other birth record issued by a governmental body;

**NOTES:**

- For children born in North Carolina, you can write to the Vital Records Section, 1903 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1903.
  - For children born overseas to U.S. citizens, you can write to Passport Services, Correspondence Branch, Room 386, 1425 K Street NW, Washington, D. C. 20524.
- B. Hospital records or doctor's records (including a hospital-issued birth certificate);
- C. Government records, such as Social Security Administration, court, or school records;
- D. Personal records, such as a family Bible or baptismal certificate; or
- E. A written statement from someone who knows the child's age.