

# MISSISSIPPI DIVISION OF MEDICAID

## Eligibility Policy and Procedures Manual

### 102.08.03A DEFINITION OF A CHILD

#### ❖ Families, Children and CHIP Programs

To be categorically eligible as a child in the FCC programs, the individual must be under the age of 19. Age must be verified. For a list of the acceptable verification methods, refer to 102.08.01.

An individual's status as a child ends effective the month after he turns age 19.

#### Emancipated Children

Most children are dependents of their parents or have another adult caretaker. However, some children may be emancipated. An emancipated minor is authorized to act on his own behalf. Though not a dependent child, the emancipated minor under age 19 is a categorically eligible child for FCC programs. Emancipation may occur the following ways:

- **Court-Ordered Emancipation**

In certain situations, a court may grant an order of emancipation or relief of minority to remove a minor child from the parents' supervision and financial responsibility and allow the minor child to live independently and act on his own behalf.

- **Marriage**

When a minor child marries, he in effect emancipates himself. If the minor lives with a spouse, he is not considered a dependent of his parents. However, if the minor lives with his parents apart from the spouse, he returns to dependent child status for FCC purposes.

- **Living Independently**

There may be instances in which parents relinquish supervision and financial responsibility for a child. When a child is living independently, he is an emancipated minor.

#### Minor Parents

An unmarried parent under age 19 who resides in the home with his children and his parents (the children's grandparents) is a dependent child of his parents for purposes of determining the minor's own eligibility. The minor's children are dependent children of the minor parent for determining their eligibility.

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#### Minor Heads of Household

There are instances in which it is permissible for a child to be the head of household. Children living independently, including those in group homes, orphanages and other situations in which parents have relinquished or abandoned custody, often have individuals filing on their behalf, such as a social worker, administrator or foster parent; however, it is also permissible for the child to file the application when he is capable of doing so.

In addition, a child living with parents can be the head of household, i.e., the person filing the application, under certain circumstances:

- A married minor living with a spouse can file an application as head of household, independent of parents;
- A pregnant pre-teen or teen can file an application as a pregnant woman, independent of parents;
- A minor parent can file an application for his/her children as head of household. However, a minor parent must have his own eligibility determined with his parents.