

Older Youth in Foster Care

Older youth in foster care need to reach development milestones that help prepare themselves for self-sufficiency, independent living, social/relationships and stable employment. In addition to ongoing supports and activities, youth in care are eligible to participate in the Independent Living Program (ILP). ILP provides youth currently or formerly in foster care with services to successfully prepare and transition to adulthood. ILP services include life skills training, financial assistance, and educational and social support. The program is open youth ages 14-21, who have been in DFCS custody for 6 months. The time can be noncontiguous, but must include a day on or after the youth turns 14.

Common areas of focus for older youth include education and employment, adult & peer connections, spiritual and cultural connections, healthy lifestyle and choices, and transportation. Advocate for involvement and access to opportunities and services such as educational and life skills supportive services, tutoring, college workshops/tours, GED support, applying for financial aid for post-secondary education, money management and budgeting, establishment and maintenance of bank account, career preparation skills, meal preparation and nutrition, and house/apartment search.

Youth Ages 14-16

Is the youth enrolled in ILP services? Is the youth connected with EmpowerMENT if interested?

Has the youth completed an initial Casey Youth Life Skills Assessment? If not, ask to complete or review the assessment with the youth.

Does the youth's case plan include the required Written Transitional Living Plan (WTLP), which is to be updated twice per year? If not, request a WTLP meeting/review.

Is the youth involved in both case planning and transition planning? Are adult supporters involved and/or invited?

Has the youth been provided with a copy of his consumer credit report? Is he in need of and receiving assistance to interpret and resolve any inaccuracies?

Youth Ages 16-18

Consider all of the above questions and in addition, the following:

What is the educational status of the youth? Encourage high school diploma completion over obtaining a GED.

Has the youth considered post-secondary education or training? Ascertain his college readiness

Communicate with youth and caregivers about the importance of education, how to support education, and entrance requirements.

Ensure youth has assistance with admissions and financial aid applications, preparation for entrance exams, etc.

Is the youth developing life skills? (budgeting, household management, resume building, etc.)

Is the youth being assisted with obtaining a driver's license or other photo ID?

Has the youth opened both an individual development account (IDA) to begin saving and to take advantage of the cash match opportunity as well as a checking account?

Is the youth engaged in employment and career planning?

Is permanency still being actively pursued?

Does the youth have adult supporters? If the youth will emancipate from foster care, are there specific efforts to ensure he has or is building a social support network?

If a youth identifies as LGBTQ, is he or she connected with needed resources and supports?

Have efforts been made to pursue Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), if applicable?

Is the youth addressing any reproductive health needs?

Is the youth able to participate in age-appropriate activities?

Youth Ages 18+

Is it appropriate for the youth to remain in foster care?

Does the youth have an IDA?

Is the youth able to get an educational training voucher (ETV)?

Does the youth have the requisite life skills for transitioning to adulthood?

Does the youth have health insurance?

Does the youth have an advance directive for healthcare?

Was the youth provided with a copy of birth certificate, social security card, driver's license or photo ID, and medical/immunization records upon exiting care?

Does the youth have contact information of adult supporters and a list of resources for assistance?

If the youth is transitioning from foster care to an independent apartment or other arrangement, is the living arrangement safe and stable? Are ILP services still needed?

If the youth will need to transition to adult protective services or other adult services are needed, has that been addressed?