

# Family Services Specialist Guide to Preparing Older Youth in Foster Care for Adulthood



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# Family Services Specialist Guide to Preparing Older Youth in Foster Care for Adulthood

## Overview of Guide

This *Guide* provides guidance in implementing Virginia Foster Care Policy Section 14 on Achieving Permanency for Older Youth. It is designed specifically for use by LDSS staff who serve older youth and are responsible for conducting IL needs assessments and developing IL service and transition plans. Specific policy sections are cited in parenthesis throughout.

The *Guide* relies heavily on published works by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and related authoritative guidance from other expert sources. Best available guidance from research and professional practice literature is synthesized, then applied to key components of Virginia Foster Care Policy on Serving Older Youth to demonstrate how the practices can be applied in implementing existing policy.

## Organization

Following this Overview, the *Guide* begins with a section summarizing “The Fundamentals” and support available to family services specialists provided by Project LIFE. The next section focuses on the importance of using an integrated approach to preparing older youth for adulthood that focuses on both permanency and the skills for self-sufficiency and interdependence.

Remaining sections of the *Guide* examine major components of Virginia Foster Care Policy on Serving Older Youth organized around permanency, the services planning process, providing IL services, and other related policies. Each of these sections contains:

*Policy Highlights* that summarize key elements of the policies.

*Practice Strategies* that describe the most relevant best practices and provide specific strategies for implementing the policy in a manner consistent with the known best practices.

The *Guide* concludes with lists of Related Readings and Related Resources to support further learning and a Glossary.

**See and use the companion resource on the Project LIFE website!**

### ***Guide for Older Youth In and Aging Out of Foster Care in Virginia***

This resource was developed as a tool to help youth in foster care in Virginia understand their central role in IL services and transition planning as they prepare for adulthood.

## The Fundamentals

### *Who receives IL services?*

- All youth ages 14-18.
- All young adults who were in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and have not yet reached age 21, but continue to receive foster care and independent living services.
- All young adults over age 18 but under 21 years of age who:
  - Were in foster care and request that independent living services be restored; and
  - Have entered into a written agreement, within 60 days after services were discontinued, with a LDSS or licensed child placing agency. (14.4.1)

### *How long may youth receive services from a LDSS?*

Even though anyone over the age of 18 is an adult in Virginia, young adults who were in foster care before the age of 18 may continue to receive services from LDSS between age 18 to 21 if:

- The youth willingly agrees to cooperate with all services and this is documented in the case record.
- The youth is making progress in an educational, treatment, or training program; or
- The youth is in permanent foster care, requires continuing foster care assistance to participate in an educational, training, or treatment program, and wishes to continue receiving services. The LDSS shall maintain the youth in foster care until age 21. (14.4.2)

### *What is the goal of IL services?*

“Preparation for adulthood” is the central **goal** and focus of work with older youth in foster care and it encompasses *both* establishing permanent connections and developing skills for self-sufficiency and interdependency.

“Self-sufficiency” means the youth becomes skilled in accomplishing and being responsible for daily tasks.

“Interdependency” means the youth becomes skilled in being resourceful and connected with others to meet his or her needs and to contribute to society.

Conducting IL needs assessments and developing IL services and transition plans are *means* by which the opportunities, skills, and resources necessary to equip youth for adulthood are brought together.



*What does the IL services and transition planning process look like?*



Administer **IL needs assessment** within 30 days of the youth’s 14<sup>th</sup> birthday or, for youth entering foster care after age 14, within 30 days after the youth’s entry. Re-administer IL needs assessment every 12 months. (14.7)

**Ongoing**

**Age 14**

Develop **IL Services and Transition Plan** that is youth-driven, based on the IL needs assessment, and developed through a team process. (14.8)

*Continue diligent searches for relatives and efforts to establish permanency/ permanent connections (14.5)*



Re-administer IL needs assessment every 12 months. (14.7)

**Age 15**

Review/update **IL Services and Transition Plan** (14.8)

*Form/evolve youth’s team , including extended family members and others youth define as significant (14.8.2)*



Re-administer IL needs assessment every 12 months. (14.7)

**Age 16**

Review/update **IL Services and Transition Plan** (14.8)

*Meet with youth monthly to review progress in preparing for adulthood (14.6)*



Youth that are part of sample selected by VDSS will complete the NYTD Survey.

**Age 17**

Baseline survey to be administered during the 45 days after the youth’s 17<sup>th</sup> birthday; identified youth will be surveyed again when they turn age 19 and when they turn

21, regardless of whether they continue to receive IL services or age out of foster care.



**Age 17 ¾**

Re-administer IL needs assessment every 12 months. (14.7)

Develop **90-Day Transition Plan** (14.16)



**Age 18  
through  
20**

Develop **IL Transition Plan for Young Adults** (14.16)

For youth requesting a **resumption of IL services**, review and facilitate consideration of applications and, if approved, develop agreement, and maintain contact in accordance with 14.17.6.

### *What support is available to family services specialists in preparing older youth for adulthood?*

**Project LIFE** offers a variety of services for professionals designed to support the delivery of foster care services for older youth in accordance with VDSS Policy on Foster Care, Section 14. Achieving Permanency for Older Youth.

**Project LIFE** also offers a variety of learning opportunities for youth.

See descriptions of **Project LIFE** services below.

## Project LIFE Services

Project LIFE has become more focused on supporting local departments of social services in complying with federal and state requirements for serving older youth in foster care, including IL assessments, IL service and transition plans, and transition plans prior to youth turning age 18 or exiting foster care. Project LIFE now offers the following:



### Services for Professionals and Other Adult Stakeholders

All services are designed to support the delivery of foster care services for older youth in accordance with VDSS Policy on Foster Care, Section 14 Achieving Permanency for Older Youth

#### **Orientation to Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA)**

This orientation is for LDSS staff and contracted private providers who conduct IL assessments and provides an initial orientation for users to the CLSA web technology and the array of related resources available for workers in using assessment findings to develop customized service and transition plans. This orientation requires internet access, can be delivered to small groups of workers, and is recommended as an informational foundation before or at the beginning of IL Assessment and Transition Plan Coaching (described below).

#### **Orientation to Transition Planning**

This orientation is for LDSS staff responsible for developing services and transition plans with youth and is designed as an orientation to policy requirements and to help workers develop greater understanding of the elements of the transition plan template and numerous resources available for IL skills development. Attendees will receive the *Family Services Specialist Guide to Transition Living Planning with Youth* that contains step-by-step guidance and helpful examples. This orientation is recommended as an informational foundation before or at the beginning of IL Assessment and Transition Plan Coaching (described below).

#### **IL Assessment and Transition Plan Coaching**

Supportive assistance to workers, provided on a one-on-one or small group basis, designed to build the worker's proficiency in developing transition living plans, based on individual youth strengths and needs, in accordance with policy. Coaching employs interactive conversations, is tailored to specific needs, promotes rapid progress in areas most needed, and produces much greater success in applying new proficiencies to workplace tasks.

#### ***Family Services Specialist Guide to Preparing Older Youth in Care for Adulthood***

This *Guide* is designed for use by LDSS staff responsible for conducting IL assessments and service and transition plans. It contains strategies for engaging youth, building a team, and integrating IL assessment findings into the service and transition plan as well as step-by-step guidance on each element of the plan, and lists of numerous best practice resources for preparing older youth in care for adulthood.

## **Informational Sessions**

Informational sessions will continue to be available from Project LIFE IL Consultants on the following topics:

### ***Independent Living Services/ETV***

*Presentation focuses on the basics of the Independent Living Program, including the purpose and goals, the purpose of the IL assessment and service and transition living planning process, the difference between basic IL funding and the Education and Training Vouchers (ETV), the IL services contract with youth age 18 and older, and guidelines for resuming services for youth who leave and wish to return to foster care.*

### ***Permanency***

*Presentation provides an overview of permanency, its meaning, importance, and related policy requirements, strategies for engaging youth, use of search technologies, and use of Permanency Pacts. This is a basic, introductory overview; more in-depth technical assistance is provided within the context of IL Assessment and Transition Plan Coaching (described above).*

### ***National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)***

*Presentation focuses on why the information is being collected, how to complete the survey, strategies for locating and engaging youth in the data collection process, the relationship between NYTD and principles of Virginia's Practice Model, and how to enter NYTD-related data into OASIS.*

## **Other Learning Opportunities**

Knowledge of **adolescent brain development** and **permanency** best practices are critical in work with older youth in foster care. Project LIFE will be offering several opportunities for LDSS staff, private providers, and related stakeholders such as resource parents to learn more about these important topics and implications for practice with older youth.

## **Regional and Local Support**

Project LIFE will continue to provide support to regional IL Committees and coalitions, LDSSs, and private providers in providing IL services to youth and strengthening practices in serving older youth.

## **Learning Opportunities for Youth**

### **Statewide Youth Conferences**

Project LIFE will continue to offer two statewide youth conferences each year. The primary foci will be on youth leadership development, self-advocacy, and permanency.

### **Regional Youth Events**

A minimum of two youth learning events will be held in each region; one of the two must have a community engagement component. IL Consultants will work with IL coordinators in each region to plan and implement the events that are tailored to regional needs and priorities.

### **Informational Presentations**

**IL Transition Planning** - a standardized, interactive presentation, approximately 90 minutes in length, designed to assist youth to i) understand his/ her responsibility for developing and achieving a plan; ii) develop personal goals; iii) identify his/her strengths, interests and needs; and iv) use these goals, strengths and interests to design services, use networks, and access services and resources to meet his or her needs. (Refer to VDSS Policy on Foster Care, Section 14 Achieving Permanency for Older Youth)

**Family Partnership Meetings** – a standardized, interactive presentation, approximately 90 minutes in length, designed to teach youth the purpose of FPMs, their role, strategies they can use to prepare for and participate in meetings, and the basics of permanency pacts.

### ***Guide for Older Youth in and Aging Out of Foster Care in Virginia***

Designed as a tool for older youth in care, the *Guide* provides information and strategies for engaging in their IL assessment and transition living planning process, building their team, developing life skills, preparing for transition to adulthood, and building connections that will last. The *Guide* supports implementation of DSS Policy on Serving Older Youth with particular focus on supporting youth-driven approaches.

# The Case for an Integrated Approach to Serving Older Youth

## Poor Outcomes

A logical first question is: Why is there a need to improve our work with older youth in care?

The simple answer is that young people who age out of foster care fare far worse than other young people in the general population. Table 1. compares outcomes for young people formerly in foster care with the general population of young people and is based on findings from the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth. Multiple reports from this ongoing longitudinal study are available online; see the Related Readings section of this *Guide*.

TABLE 1. OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FORMERLY IN FOSTER CARE COMPARED TO GENERAL POPULATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

OUTCOME	FOSTER CARE	GENERAL
No high school diploma or GED	24.4%	7.3%
Not employed	52%	24.5%
Average income from employment	\$12,064	\$20,349
Have health insurance	57%	78%
Males who have been arrested	81.2%	17.4%
Females who have been pregnant	77%	40.4%

Source: Courtney, et al. (2010)

Aging out without a permanent family and/or adequate preparation for adulthood has been referred to by experts as a “crisis” and “a personal injury to each and every youth in care.”<sup>1</sup>

### Virginia

A 2007 report from the Pew Charitable Trust identified Virginia as one of two states having the largest percentage of youth who aged out of foster care.<sup>2</sup>

Over 600 youth continue to age out of care in Virginia each year.

## An Integrated Approach

For youth who grow up in their own families, the *family* is the major vehicle for preparing them for adulthood. In contrast, for youth in foster care an artificial line is too often drawn between those who get “permanency services” and those who get “independent living services” in anticipation of their “aging out” of foster care.

<sup>1</sup> *An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *A Time for Reform: Aging Out and On Their Own* (2007).

Virginia’s policy reflects an integrated approach to services for older youth in care – an approach that manifests a commitment to both permanency and preparation for adulthood. The recent elimination of independent living as a permanency goal helped erase the line between permanency and preparation for adulthood in Virginia.

To learn more about this approach, read *An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood*, a collaborative publication by Casey Family Services/ The Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice, California Permanency for Youth Project, Casey Family Programs, and Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. It is available online at [http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/sites/default/files/documents/casey\\_permanency\\_0505.pdf/](http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/sites/default/files/documents/casey_permanency_0505.pdf/)

Implementing an integrated approach prompts a lesser focus on the *event* of transition and greater focus on the *process* of preparation. This shift in focus is an important one.

When the focus is on the event of transition rather than the process of preparation, the questions addressed are near-term. When the focus is on the process of preparation, more thoughtful and thorough planning is prompted. You can see the difference in the following examples:

	<b>Near-term planning</b>	<b>Longer-term planning</b>
<b>Employment</b>	<i>How will he support himself?</i>	What opportunities, skills, and resources are needed so that he generates a sufficient income to support himself by obtaining and retaining steady employment leading to a viable career path.
<b>Housing</b>	<i>Where will he live?</i>	What opportunities, skills, and resources are needed for him to have access to safe, stable, appropriate, affordable housing in the community that is near public transportation, work or school.
<b>Critical documents</b>	<i>Does he have that document?</i>	How do we make sure he has the skills, information and assistance to access essential legal documents pertaining to their personal, family, medical and educational histories.

## Permanency

This section focuses on policies and practices most directly related to **permanency**. Key provisions of Virginia policy are highlighted and applicable best practices are discussed. Key resources for learning more are identified throughout.

Bulleted highlights that are in *italics* indicate new policy language effective April 2013. It is important to recognize that the policy section focusing on older youth in foster care has been changed from Section 11 to Section 14 and retitled from “Serving Older Youth” to “Achieving Permanency for Older Youth,” reflecting the importance placed on permanency.

### *Policy Highlights – 14.5 Achieving permanency for older youth*

- Defines permanence as both a value and a goal of practice.
- States that for youth to be successful in adulthood they should leave the foster care system in a planned manner that connects them to a lifelong family.
- Specifies it is imperative that the service worker uses work practices that rely on respectful family and youth engagement, strength based approaches, team planning and decision making and the use of relevant, structured assessments.
- Clearly identifies establishing permanency as the priority for local department of social services (LDSS) and the youth’s team.
- Re-states legal permanence options of reunification, adoption, and relative placement with custody transfer.
- Requires diligent searches for relatives to be continued throughout the youth’s time in care.
- Requires relatives and other individuals who are significant to the youth to be reconsidered as permanent connections; involves remaining in touch and exploring other roles they may take in supporting the youth.
- Sets expectation that worker should use Accurint to locate relatives and significant adults as potential permanent connections.
- Sets expectation that older youth should be connected with at least one adult before leaving foster care, and preferably several adults.
- Specifies that permanent connections may include, but are not limited to, adult relatives, parents, foster parents, neighbors, family friends, coaches, and teachers and should be in addition to the youth’s spouse, partner, boyfriend, girlfriend, and current caseworker.
- Sets expectation that services to find a permanent family and to establish lifelong connections for the older youth should be provided regardless of the youth’s permanency goal, or previous unsuccessful attempts to establish enduring connections, or the youth’s own perceived need for permanency.

## *Policy Highlights – 14.9 Maintaining connections with youth’s siblings and birth family*

- Requires that all reasonable steps are to be taken to place the youth and siblings together in the same resource or permanent home.
- When siblings are not together, requires a plan that establishes frequent and regular visitation or communication to help the youth maintain sibling connections.
- Requires worker, in collaboration with the youth, to continually re-examine and maintain the “optimal level of connectedness” with the youth’s birth family.
- Acknowledges that family situations change over time and the youth’s ability to maintain safety increases as the youth matures physically and sets expectation that the worker will help the youth while he or she is in foster care identify ways to connect positively with the birth family, as appropriate, and to make wise decisions while at home.

## **Practice Strategies**

### *Re-visiting the Adoption Option*

In accordance with federal law and Virginia policy, if reunification is not possible, then adoption by a relative or non-relative is the next choice. It is important to ensure that adoption is considered for older youth who might otherwise remain in foster care due to their age, the perception they are not adoptable, or their own reluctance to be adopted.

Unfortunately, youth often lack an accurate understanding of adoption. Be sure that youth know the following:

- Adoption does not require the youth to be totally separated from his birth parents. Unless there are safety concerns, the youth may still have contact in accordance with a post-adoption contact and communication agreement.
- Adoption does not require a youth to change his name. The youth has a choice about keeping or changing his name.
- Adoption no longer means the replacement of the birth family by an adoptive family. Open adoption allows youth to stay connected to his birth family members such as siblings, grandparents, and other relatives.

### *Definitions of Permanency with Older Youth*

Working with older youth requires a broader understanding of permanency than the three legal permanency options of reunification, adoption, and relative placement with custody transfer.

For older youth, permanency has come to mean a “permanent connection” to a trusted adult and preferably several adults. Criteria established in Virginia policy section 14.5 include:

- Individuals to whom the youth can go for advice or guidance when making decisions or resolving problems, or for companionship when celebrating holidays, special occasions, and personal achievements.
- Easily accessible to the youth either by telephone or in person.
- May include, but are not limited to, adult relatives, parents, foster parents, neighbors, family friends, coaches and teachers.
- Adults in addition to the youth's spouse, partner, boyfriend, girlfriend, and current caseworker.

**To learn more about the issue of Permanency with Older Youth, read:**

*Never Too Old: Achieving Permanency and Sustaining Connections for Older Youth in Foster Care* (2011). A publication of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute. Available online at: [http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research/2011\\_07\\_never\\_too\\_old.php](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research/2011_07_never_too_old.php)

*A Discussion about Permanency for Older Adolescents* (March 2010). Webconference #19, National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections. Available online at: <http://www.nrcpfc.org/webcasts/19.html>

Available for purchase:

*Achieving Permanence for Older Children and Youth in Foster Care* (2009). Columbia University Press. Publication links practice and policy issues; holds firm to the belief that child welfare systems will better serve children, youth, and families by redefining their roles from substitute care providers to ensuring that children and youth are connected to permanent and life-long committed families.

*Facilitating Permanency for Youth: A Toolbox for Youth Permanency* (2004). Child Welfare League of America. A toolbox for practitioners, policy-makers, and advocates for promoting permanency and life-time connections for older adolescents. [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)

### *Permanency Pact*

An important tool in establishing connections is a **permanency pact**. It is a pledge by a supportive adult to provide specific supports to a young person in foster care with a goal of establishing a lifelong, kin-like relationship.

A permanency pact provides:

- Structure and a safety net for the youth.
- A defined and verbalized commitment by both parties to a long term supportive relationship.
- Clarity regarding the expectations of the relationship.

## Key Resources

See the **Foster Club’s Permanency Pact**, online at: [www.fosterclub/files/PermPact.pdf](http://www.fosterclub/files/PermPact.pdf)

It contains an example of a permanency pact, guidance in how to develop a pact, and a list of 45 supports that an adult might offer to a youth transitioning from foster care.

Also, available from Foster Club is **Foster Club Online Training for Foster Parents**  
<http://www.fosterclub.com/booster/article/foster-parent-online-training>

The Foster Club offers free online training for foster parents. Three courses are focused on Youth Transition to Adulthood:

1. Challenges in Helping Youths Live Independently
2. Permanency Planning
3. Youth Perspectives on Permanency

## *Engaging Youth in Achieving Permanency*

Recent work of the California Permanency for Youth Project has produced consensus about the specific elements of permanency that are most important for older youth and these include:

- The involvement of the youth as a participant or leader in the process;
- A permanent connection with at least one committed adult who provides a safe, stable and secure parenting relationship, love, unconditional commitment, lifelong support, a legal relationship if possible; and
- The opportunity to maintain contacts with important persons, including siblings.<sup>3</sup>

Youth involvement in permanency planning and decision-making is absolutely essential. Planning must genuinely be guided by each youth’s wishes, hopes and dreams and must respectfully honor their feelings about past and current relationships. The involvement of caring adults in permanency planning and decision-making is also essential.

Strategies for identifying potential “permanent connections” –

- Talk with the young person’s current and former foster parents and other caregivers to determine with whom the youth currently has connections. Who regularly calls or visits the youth? Who has had a special relationship with the youth in the past?
- Discuss sensitively with the youth where they might like to belong.

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<sup>3</sup> *Model Programs for Youth Permanency*, California Permanency for Youth Project; see [cpyd.org](http://cpyd.org)

- Expect reluctance to consider family-based permanency options; patiently address any misinformation and leave the door open for further discussion as the youth becomes more well-informed and receptive to considering options.

Here are some conversation starters:

- Who cared for you when your parents could not?
- Who paid attention to you, looked out for you, cared about what happened to you?
- With whom have you shared holidays and/or special occasions?
- Whom do you like? Feel good about? Enjoy being with? Look up to and want to be like someday?
- Who believes in you? Stands by you? Appreciates you?
- Whom can you count on? Whom would you call at 2 AM if you were in trouble?
- With whom do you want to share good news? Bad news?
- To whom have you felt connected in the past?

**To learn more about specific steps and strategies for Family Finding, read:**

*Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement* (FSE) (2008). A publication of the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and the California Permanency for Youth Project. Available online at: <http://www.nrcpfc.org/downloads/SixSteps.pdf>

### *Reconnecting with Biological Families*

Virginia policy (14.9) acknowledges that family situations change over time and the youth's ability to maintain safety increases as the youth matures physically and sets an expectation that the worker will help the youth while he or she is in foster care identify ways to connect positively with the birth family, as appropriate, and to make wise decisions while at home.

The fact is that many who age out of foster care return to live with or reconnect with their biological families or attempt to. Given the prevalence of these attempts to reconnect, the best practice literature recommends that workers address the possibility of reconnecting in ways that are safe and supportive.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to understand that although a termination of parental rights ends the rights of the parents to petition the court for visits or other contacts with their child, a TPR does *not* prevent the young person from visiting or contacting members of his or her birth family.

<sup>4</sup> *Foster Care to 21: Doing it Right*, p. 5.

## *Using Accurint*

Since summer 2011, all LDSSs have had access to a web-based search tool called **Accurint**. This tool is designed to help workers find family members and other interested adults who can serve as a resource for children and youth in foster care.

Even if earlier searches have not found family members, this new tool may yield better results. Be sure you know the procedures for accessing this tool within your department.

## **Services Planning**

This section focuses on policies and practices most directly related to **services planning**; policies and practices related to IL needs assessment and to providing IL services are discussed in the next section. The policies highlighted below essentially set the standards for how the IL services and transition planning process is to be carried out. Key provisions of Virginia policy are highlighted and applicable best practices are discussed. Bulleted highlights that are in *italics* indicate new policy language effective April 2013. Key resources for learning more are identified throughout.

### *Policy Highlights – 14.6 Preparing youth for adulthood*

- Describes experiences necessary for children and youth to prepare for transition to adulthood.
- Establishes expectation that service worker is to deliberately plan and prepare youth over time to be increasingly self-sufficient, resourceful, and contributors to society.

### *Policy Highlights – 14.8 Service planning for older youth*

- Acknowledges need for a planned, dynamic, strengths-based process.
- Requires the service planning and decision making to be driven by the youth, in collaboration with the youth's family and team.
- Requires services to be based on the strengths and needs of the youth, as identified in the comprehensive assessment.
- Directs the service worker and the youth's team to focus on achieving permanency and ensuring the youth develops the skills necessary for self-sufficiency and interdependency, to assist the youth in managing the transition to adulthood and to follow up to ensure success.

#### *Policy Highlights – 14.8.1 Youth-driven planning*

- Requires that youth have a central role in all service planning and decision making and lists benefits to be derived from their having the central role.
- Directs service worker to encourage and support the youth in taking responsibility for becoming increasingly self-sufficient and interdependent over time, specifying that the worker help the youth:

- Understand his or her responsibility for developing and achieving a plan.
- Develop personal goals.
- Identify strengths, interests, and needs.
- Use these goals, strengths, and interests to design services, use networks, and access services and resources to meet his or her needs.

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.8.2 Engaging families and working with the youth’s team***

- Directs the service worker to diligently search, pursue, and engage the youth with extended family members and other appropriate individuals the youth defines as significant, acknowledging these individuals can provide diverse roles and resources for the youth during and after his or her stay in foster care.
- Requires service worker to engage appropriate family members and other significant individuals to work collaboratively as a team to help prepare the youth for adulthood.
- Allows the LDSS to employ the Family Partnership Meeting team to serve as the youth’s team to prepare for and transition the youth into adulthood.

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.8.3 Independent living and transition plan for youth over age 14***

- Requires that all youth age 14 or older, regardless of their permanency goal, have a written service plan specifying the independent living services, activities, and supports to be provided to help the youth transition to adulthood.
- Requires service worker to develop a service plan that is
  - Youth-driven.
  - Based on a formal independent living needs assessment.
  - Developed through a team process.
  - Coordinated with the Individual Education Program (IEP) developed by the school district for all youth in special education.
- Requires the IL services and transition plan to describe the following in writing:
  - Activities to be undertaken to establish a permanent family and lifelong connections with family members and significant adults.
  - Strengths, goals, and needs of the youth, based on the assessment of IL skills, and including the areas of counseling, education, housing, employment, and money management skills.
  - Specific IL services to be provided and activities undertaken to assist the youth in meeting these goals and needs, building on the youth’s strengths.
  - Programs and services to be provided and activities undertaken to help the youth prepare for his or her future life as an adult, including but not limited to, specific options to be pursued in education, career preparation, and work.
  - Responsibilities of the child placing agency, the youth, the service provider, and any other involved individuals in achieving the planned services and activities.
- Permits the IL services and transition plan to be incorporated into the foster care service plan in OASIS; if the plan is not incorporated in the foster care service plan, the service worker is required to document in the OASIS that the IL services and transition plan is

located in the paper case file; when taken to court or distributed, the plan shall be attached to the printed foster care service plan.

- Requires the service worker, youth, and youth's team to implement and modify the service plan(s) over time, while continually assessing the youth's progress.
- Allows the service worker to use several Casey Life Skills Assessment and Foster Club resources listed.

#### ***Policy Highlights – 14.8.3.1 Development and maintenance of the transitional living plan***

- *Specifies that the transitional living plan should be completed within 30 days of the initial or repeated IL needs assessment*
- *Specifies that the transitional living plan should be updated every 12 months*

#### ***Policy Highlights – 14.16 Transition plan prior to youth turning 18 or no longer receiving foster care services***

- *Requires the service worker, youth, and youth's team to develop a transition plan during the 90-day period immediately prior to the youth choosing to leave foster care or terminate independent living services before his or her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.*
- *Specified that the service worker, youth and youth's team should review the plan annually as long as the youth is receiving IL services.*
- *Requires written notice documented in the youth's transition plan of his or her right to request that IL services be restored within 60 days of services ending if he chooses to leave foster care anytime after turning 18 years old and before the age of 21 years.*
- Specifies that the plan should:
  - represent the culmination of all prior efforts and
  - document the specific plans for the youth to successfully transition from foster care services to independence.
- For LDSSs that provide IL services for youth between ages 18 and 21, requires written notice be documented in the plan of his/her right to request IL services be restored.
- Requires the transition plan be directed by the youth and as detailed as the youth chooses.
- Specifies the planning process should engage the youth's family and the youth's team.
- Requires service worker to help the youth understand the importance of:
  - Housing.
  - Options for health insurance, including FAMIS.
  - Designating someone to make health care treatment decisions on the youth's behalf
  - Local opportunities for mentors.
  - Workforce supports and employment services.
- *Requires LDSS to provide the youth with his health and education records at no cost to the youth, prior to leaving care, if the youth is leaving care due to having reached the age of majority (18).*
- Specifies the youth should also address topics contained in the document My Transition Plan for Success in Adulthood which contains important information and addresses several state and federal legal requirements.

## Practice Strategies for Services Planning

### *A Review of the Fundamentals*

Policies governing service planning require service workers to perform a broad range of tasks and to ensure that the planning process is carried out in the manner prescribed.

“Preparation for adulthood” remains the overarching **goal**. The service worker’s overarching responsibility is “to deliberately plan and prepare youth over time to be increasingly self-sufficient, resourceful, and contributors to society” (14.6). Conducting IL needs assessments and developing IL services and transition plans are *means* by which the overarching goal is achieved.

In addition to requiring that all youth age 14 or older have a written service plan, regardless of their permanency goal, the plans are required to be:

- Youth-driven,
- Developed through a team process, and
- Based on a formal independent living needs assessment.

Best practice strategies for ensuring that the plan is “youth-driven” and “developed through a team process” are discussed next. Information about conducting the formal IL needs assessment will be provided in a later section.

### *“Youth-driven” IL Services and Transition Plans*

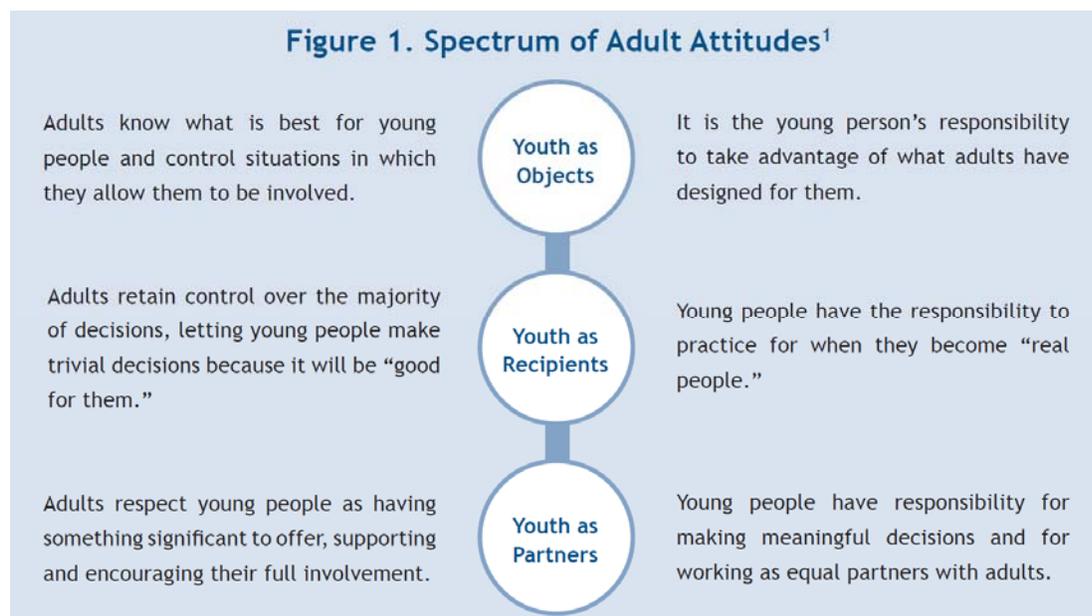
Foster care policy requires IL services and transition plans to be “youth-driven.”

It specifically requires that youth have a “central role in all service planning and decision making” and directs the worker to “encourage and support the youth in taking responsibility for becoming increasingly self-sufficient and interdependent over time.”

Youth having a “central role in all service planning and decision making” is quite different from the role to which youth in foster care are accustomed. Most perceive themselves as having little power and control over their lives -- authorities have intervened in their lives, changed their conditions dramatically, and continue to have authority to take action in ways that are sometimes contrary to their wishes.

Having IL services and transition plans “youth-driven” immediately raises questions of power and control. The attitudes adults hold about young people influence the ability of youth-adult partnerships to be effective and of youth engagement to be authentic. Young people can also hold stereotypes about adults that impact youth-adult partnerships. It is therefore critical to address the attitudes and beliefs that each partner holds about the other.

Practice literature tells us that the engagement of young people succeeds best when it is “authentic” and when it is supported by youth-adult partnerships. William Lofquist has developed a spectrum of adult attitudes that categorizes work with young people as fitting into one of three categories. His spectrum is shown below:



To implement Virginia policy of “youth-driven” service planning, as well as engaging youth in achieving permanency, it is critical for the worker (and the youth’s team) to move from a view of youth as objects to one of youth as partners. Practice literature tells us it is challenging work to adequately prepare adults and young people to work together as equal partners.

For adolescents in foster care, authentic engagement occurs at two levels.

**Level 1:** Young people become partners in the development of their own case planning, including planning for permanent family relationships. They also participate in transition planning that addresses goals for education, employment, health care, and housing.

At this level of engagement, young people fully understand their rights and responsibilities and are full partners in making decisions that affect their lives. A key component of the planning process is their leadership in developing both permanency and transition plans in partnership with a wide array of adults from their own natural networks of relationships as well as various public and private systems. Young people actively lead the process of making decisions on issues that affect them in order to support their successful transition to adulthood and a healthy, productive adult life.

**Level 2:** Young people become actively engaged in their community in areas that are of interest to them, such as faith-based groups, extracurricular school activities, local clubs, sports, causes, and politics. Young people who want to improve the foster care system also have opportunities to advise and influence child welfare practice and policy. For many adolescents who have experienced foster care, it is very important to help other young people who will “come behind them.” Opportunities to positively influence the foster care experiences of others are a very meaningful way for them to get involved and to give back.

When youth are authentically engaged:

- They are respected, valued, and trusted and they feel appreciated, safe, and comfortable.
- They feel they are working in an environment that facilitates their engagement, and they are involved in a meaningful way as teachers as well as students.
- Their voices are being heard and treated as worthwhile.
- They are given the opportunity to be involved and make decisions, gain leadership skills, and see their ideas realized.
- They are able to participate in the social aspects of their involvement.
- They see change and progress happening as a result of their contributions.
- They are in a space where they have ownership and control in decision making processes.

**To learn more about authentic youth engagement, read:**

***Authentic Youth Engagement: Youth-Adult Partnerships*** (2011). Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Issue Brief #3.

Available online at: <http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/issue-brief%E2%80%94authentic-youth-engagement-youth-adult-partnerships>

***“Team Process”***

Foster care policy requires IL services and transition plans to employ a “team process.”

Policy directs the service worker to “diligently search, pursue, and engage the youth with extended family members and other appropriate individuals the youth defines as significant, acknowledging these individuals can provide diverse roles and resources for the youth during and after his or her stay in foster care.” It further requires the worker to “engage appropriate family members and other significant individuals to work collaboratively as a team to help prepare the youth for adulthood.”

These provisions mean that:

- a) Membership in the team should be broader than is typically seen in current practice and
- b) Roles team members play can be far more dynamic than typically seen in current practice.

The practice literature suggests that teams can play an important role in helping youth develop skills for self-sufficiency and interdependency.

### *Developing Social Capital*

Social capital, defined as social relationships and networks that support healthy development, is essential for all young people. The process of developing social capital is one that contributes to the development of both self-sufficiency and interdependency.

Social capital is particularly crucial for older youth in foster care as they make the transition to adulthood. Because of their experiences with loss, separation, and disruption of relationships, it is critical that they develop and sustain diverse social networks comprised of quality relationships with their families, schools, neighborhoods and communities, and peers. Too often, however, young people placed in foster care become disconnected from their parents, other family members, school, their neighborhoods, and their friends, losing the connections they may have once had with their social networks. Although child welfare agencies work to ensure that each young person achieves permanency or permanent connections, rarely are complementary and concurrent efforts made to ensure that the young person's broader social network is maintained or created. There is a pressing need to strengthen the full range of social capital resources for young people in foster care.

Members of the youth's team can play important roles in helping youth to build social capital. In Virginia policy “**interdependency** means the youth becomes skilled in being resourceful and connected with others to meet his or her needs and to contribute to society” (FCP 14.3).

When young people receive *interdependent living* rather than *independent living* services in preparation for adulthood, they can develop the knowledge, practical skills, and social capital they need as they begin to take on new roles and responsibilities.

Young people build social capital in the context of four communities: the family, school, neighborhood, and peers. Policies and practices that help young people in foster care build and sustain social capital include the following:

1. Family Social Capital
  - Ensure that all systems serving older youth provide opportunities to develop relational competencies.
  - Fully engage young people as the drivers of their permanency planning process and support them in developing relationships that allow them to feel that they truly belong to a family.
  - Engage birth family members in planning with the young person regardless of their ability to be the caregiver.
  - Support sibling connections throughout the young person's time in foster care.

2. School Social Capital
  - Make school stability a priority.
  - Help young people who must change schools.
  - Engage young people as partners in making decisions about their education.
3. Neighborhood Social Capital
  - Keep young people in one community.
  - Place young people in family-based settings.
  - Support young people connecting with a wide range of adults, such as faith-based or cultural mentors, job mentors, and school counselors.
  - Provide supports that enable young people to participate in a range of social and faith-based events.
4. Peer Social Capital
  - Support young people in sustaining healthy connections to peers.
  - Support young people in developing new healthy peer relationships.

**To learn more about Social Capital, read:**

*Social Capital: Building Quality Networks for Young People in Foster Care* (2011). Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Issue Brief #2.  
Available online at: <http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/issue-brief%E2%80%94social-capital-building-quality-networks-young-people-foster-care>

### *Promoting Resilience*

Developing resilience is a dynamic developmental process; it is the result of human adaptive processes and assets interacting with one another.

Developing resilience is essential for young people leaving foster care to succeed as adults. It is closely tied with the field of youth development which focuses on building young people's strengths and protecting them from harm. **Youth development shifts the focus from fixing negative behaviors to building young people's strengths and capacity through assets that promote resilience.**

*Internal assets* include a commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

*External assets* include social and environmental influences on adolescent health and development, including parent/caregiver support, mentoring, and community organizations that promote positive youth development.

Adding weight to the case for positive youth development, recent research on brain development indicates that the adolescent brain is particularly receptive to youth development strategies geared toward developing resilience and social competence.

Therefore, it is critical for systems that serve older youth in foster care to support them in developing resilience. This involves a shift:

- from a focus on deficits to a focus on strengths
- from risk amelioration to enhancing protective factors
- from viewing resilience to be a static trait to understanding resilience as a continuous, interactive process

**To learn more about promoting the Development of Resilience, read:**

***Promoting Development of Resilience among Young People in Foster Care*** (2011). Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Issue Brief #4.

Available online at: [http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/issue-](http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/issue-brief%E2%80%9494promoting-development-resilience-among-young-people-foster-care)

[brief%E2%80%9494promoting-development-resilience-among-young-people-foster-care](http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/issue-brief%E2%80%9494promoting-development-resilience-among-young-people-foster-care)

## Providing IL Services

This section focuses on policies and practices most directly related to **providing IL services**. Bulleted highlights that are in *italics* indicate new policy language effective April 2013. The policies highlighted below identify the types of IL services to be provided, how they are to be paid for, and how they are reported. Key provisions of Virginia policy are highlighted and applicable best practices are discussed. Key resources for learning more are identified throughout.

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.7 Independent living needs assessment***

- Requires IL needs assessment to be conducted, to be driven by the youth, and to involve the birth parents and caretakers of the youth.
- Cites description of IL needs assessment in federal regulation.
- Requires the IL needs assessment to be reported as a service provided.

#### ***Policy Highlights – 14.7.1 The Casey Life Skills Assessment***

- *Describes features of the CLSA and examples of life skills CLS helps youth self evaluate.*
- *In online version of policy, provides link for previewing CLS Assessment.*

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.7.2 Who benefits from the CLSA***

- *Specifies that the CLSA is designed to be used as a collaborative conversation between an educator, mentor, service worker, or other service provider and any youth between the ages of 14 and 21 and that it is appropriate for all youth regardless of whether they are in foster care, live with biological parents, or reside in a group home.*

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.7.3 Frequency of administering CLSA***

- *Directs the IL needs assessment to be administered **within 30 days** of the youth's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday or, for youth entering foster care after age 14, **within 30 days** after the youth's entry.*
- *Directs the assessment to be re-administered every 12 months for youth age 14 years old or older.*

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.7.4 What happens after youth takes assessment***

- *Explains that youth typically require 30-40 minutes to complete the CLSA and that their answers are available instantly for the adult to review with youth in a strength-based conversation that actively engages the youth in the process of developing goals.*
- *In online version of policy, provides a link to the CLSA resource guide.*

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.10 Independent living services for youth over age 14***

- *Requires all youth age 14 and older to be provided IL services for a planned period of time, based on findings from the IL needs assessment.*
- *Defines IL services as including a broad range of activities, education, training, and direct services and lists examples of types of services.*
- *Requires that the service worker and youth's team consider 13 types of services listed.*
- *Requires that any of the 13 services as well as any other services and supports the youth needs be required if indicated by the assessment and consistent with funding requirements.*
- *Requires that when any of the 13 services are provided, they are reported in OASIS.*
- *In online version, contains link to NYTD Independent Living Services Categories Chart for federal and legal citations.*

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.11 Paying for independent living services***

- *Directs that IL services are paid from the LDSS' allocation of the Chafee Foster Care IL Program funds and that there must be an approved IL services and transition plan before funds may be expended.*
- *Directs LDSS to utilize services available through Project LIFE.*

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.12 Transitioning youth over age 16 to adulthood***

- Directs service worker and youth’s team to engage the youth over age 16 in discussions about the activities necessary to successfully prepare for and transition to adulthood and specifies topics that should be addressed.
- Specifies that the transition plan should build upon earlier efforts and prepare and transition youth in areas listed.
- Specifies that service planning should be based on the IL needs assessment, be youth-driven, engage the youth’s family and youth’s team, maintain connections with the youth’s birth family as appropriate, and identify needed IL services.
- Directs the service worker, youth, and youth’s team to update the youth’s foster care service plan, and IL services and transition plan to reflect the different or additional services to be provided based on the youth’s evolving goals, strengths, and needs.

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.13 Education and Training Vouchers Program for youth***

- *Defines the purpose of the ETV Program as to fund goods and services to assist eligible youth in successfully completing a “post secondary” educational or vocational training program by covering up to \$5,000 of the listed expenses depending on the availability of funds.*
- *Specifies expenses not covered by ETV.*

#### ***Policy Highlights – 14.13.1 ETV funding***

- *Explains purpose of ETV funding.*
- *Explains LDSS do not receive \$5000 per youth in their initial allocation because of budget limitations and that the program has a separate budget authorization and appropriation.*

#### ***Policy Highlights – 14.13.2 Eligible youth***

- *Contains sub-sections explaining eligibility of youth ages 16 to 21, youth ages 21 to 23, and adopted youth.*

##### ***Policy Highlights – 14.13.2.1 Eligible youth ages 16-21***

- *Establishes eligibility criteria for youth ages 16 to 21 including:*
  - *Most recent foster care provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia;*
  - *Eligible for services under Virginia’s CFCIP/ILP;*
  - *Received high school diploma or equivalent or GED certificate;*
  - *Applied for financial aid through the post-secondary school or training program; and*
  - *Make satisfactory academic progress.*

##### ***Policy Highlights – 14.13.2.2 Eligible youth ages 21 to 23***

- *Establishes eligibility criteria for youth ages 21 to 23 including:*
  - *Meet all eligibility requirements listed in 13.13.2.1;*
  - *Participating in the voucher program on the date they attain age 21; and*
  - *Enrolled full- or part-time in a post-secondary program and making satisfactory progress toward completion.*

### **Policy Highlights – 14.13.2.3 Eligible for adopted youth**

- *Establishes eligibility criteria for youth adopted from Virginia’s foster care system after attaining age 16 and requirement that they meet the same eligibility requirements for foster youth and would have been otherwise eligible for services under Virginia’s CFCIP/ILP.*

### **Policy Highlights – 14.13.3 Student application progress for LDSS**

- *Specifies that LDSS should assist youth in completing both their financial aid and ETV forms to coordinate funding sources, to maximize use of ETV funding and avoid duplication.*
- *Requires LDSS to process the student’s application for ETV within two weeks of receiving and to maintain a copy of the application in the youth’s file.*
- *Requires all youth applying for ETV to complete a financial aid application prior to receiving an education voucher; not required if attending a vocational program that does not accept financial aid.*
- *Requires financial aid application to be filed in the youth’s case record.*

### **Policy Highlights – 14.13.4 Oasis Educational Screen**

- *Specifies that the Education Screen in OASIS should be reviewed and updated within 30 days of any changes.*
- *Specifies LDSS should monitor education at monthly home visits;*
- *Specifies data elements to be entered in OASIS.*

### **Policy Highlights – 14.13.5 Higher Education Criteria**

- *States that all schools that meet the federal eligibility criteria have been assigned a Title IV school code number that can be checked on two websites that are listed.*
- *If the program is listed, it meets the Higher Education Act criteria and has a number*
- *Students enrolled in these schools are eligibility to receive ETV dollars.*
- *Lists examples of vocational or trade programs and specifies that all vocational programs that foster youth attend should be licensed or accredited facilities and should be in business for 2 or more years.*

### **Policy Highlights – 14.13.6 Cost of attendance**

- *Defines cost of attendance and lists allowable cost of attendance.*
- *Requires LDSS to use ETV funds for post secondary education expenses for eligible youth and to document educational services in OASIS.*
- *Specifies requests for assistance must be directly related to education.*
- *Prohibits distribution of funds directly to the youth except in special circumstances; only direct payments to vendors are allowed.*
- *Specifies youth should not submit receipts to LDSS without prior approval for payment.*

### **Policy Highlights – 14.13.7 Serving out of state youth**

- *For out of state youth who meet the ETV eligibility requirements, the State with placement and care responsibility is responsible for providing a voucher to eligible youth.*
- *If the youth moves to another state for the sole purpose of attending an institution of higher learning, the original State of residence will continue to provide the voucher.*

### ***Policy Highlights – 14.14 Referring and transitioning youth to Adult Services***

- States that Adult Services are provided to impaired adults age 18 or older and provides definition of “impaired”
- Directs the service worker to discuss the youth’s situation with an Adult Services worker if the worker believes the older youth in foster care may be eligible and need supportive services into adulthood.
- Prescribes that the conversation with an Adult Services worker is to begin, at minimum, at least one year prior to the youth turning age 18; or at the first indication that the youth may require long-term services and supports.
- Directs the foster care worker to explore the extent to which the youth needs assistance with activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living or requires support for mental health, mental retardation/intellectual disability, or cognitive issues; assess the older youth’s interest in receiving Adult Services; consult with the youth’s family members on their opinions regarding the suitability of these services for the youth.
- Refers worker to the VDSS Adult Services Manual for more complete information.

#### ***Policy Highlights – 14.14.1 Assessing for benefits programs and other supports***

- Directs the foster care services worker to work with an eligibility worker to evaluate the youth’s potential eligibility for SSI or SSDI, Medicaid, and Auxiliary Grant.
- Recommends an early start to provide sufficient time for eligibility determination.
- Suggests consideration of a guardian and/or conservator if youth does not have the capacity to meet health and safety needs or to manage their financial affairs.

#### ***Policy Highlights – 14.14.2 Adult Foster Care Services***

- Describes Adult Foster Care’s general availability for youth who have complex service needs, require placement, and will continue to need significant support after they age out of foster care.
- Encourages early collaboration to provide a seamless transition from foster care services to an AFC setting.

## Practice Strategies for Providing IL Services

### IL Needs Assessment

The IL needs assessment is the first step in providing IL services. The Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA) is a free web-based resource that allows youth to self-evaluate in eight life skills areas. CLSA is designed to be used in a collaborative conversation between an educator, mentor, service worker, or other service provider and any youth between the ages of 14 and 21. It is appropriate for use with all youth, regardless of whether they are in foster care, live with biological parents, or reside in a group home.

Extensive information and user-friendly tools can be found at: <http://caseylifeskills.force.com/>

Training on how to use the site is available online and includes both brief video tutorials and a 25-minute webinar. Additionally, informational presentations and technical assistance in using the CLSA are available from your **Project LIFE** regional consultant.

The CLSA assesses life skills in eight different areas. The eight areas are:

	<b>Life Skills Area</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.	Daily Living	Meal planning, cleaning and food storage, home maintenance and computer and internet basics
2.	Self Care	Healthy physical and emotional development such as personal hygiene, taking care of one's health and pregnancy prevention
3.	Relationships and Communication	Developing and sustaining healthy relationships, cultural competency and permanent connections with caring adults
4.	Housing and Money Management	Banking and credit, finding and keeping affordable housing, budgeting and living within one's means
5.	Work and Study	Basics of employment, legal issues, study skills and time management
6.	Career and Education Planning	Planning for career and postsecondary education pertinent to older youth
7.	Looking Forward	Your level of confidence and feelings important to success
8.	Permanency	Includes questions designed to assess your connection to trusted adults, your community of support and overall interdependent connections

Guides that can be downloaded from the website include:

**Casey Life Skills (CLS) Help Guide** - a comprehensive manual on navigating and understanding the functionality of the CLS website. It guides users through the registration process and account administration tasks; shows how to administer assessments and read/interpret assessment results; and, how to manage a provider's history of assessments.

**Practitioners Guide** – a practice guide that gives users a quick overview of how to use the Casey Life Skills website to assess youth’s knowledge, skills and abilities. It includes a high level look at the skill areas assessed in the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA), information about the importance of permanent connections for older youth and a listing of other assessments available. It outlines a six-step framework for how to administer an assessment, determine a youth’s strengths and challenges through a meaningful conversation, build an effective learning plan and help a youth gain useful life skills.

**Resources to Inspire Guide** – a guide providing the learner and life skill instructor (practitioner, parent or other caregiver) a place to start when creating a learning plan. It identifies the skill areas and corresponding goals and expectations to help young people and practitioners build effective plans. It lists suggestions for resources to help create activities and exercises that can be used to teach the learning goals in group, individual, or self-instruction formats.

### *Identifying IL Services Resources*

You will find an extensive array of resources in the Casey Life Skills **Resources to Inspire Guide** listed above. It is strongly recommended that family services specialists become familiar with these resources so that they may be used, as appropriate, in IL services and transition plans.

Here is a sampling of resources available:

#### **The New Making It On Your Own**

This youth workbook contains 92 pages of life skill exercises that will help youth make it on their own. The New Making It On Your Own tests a youth's knowledge and challenges them to seek out new information. The workbook covers employment, housing, home management, health, leisure time, and money management. Designed for older youth working alone or with an adult. Available From: National Resource Center for Youth Services at 1-800-274-2687 or order via the Web site: <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu> \$8.95 plus shipping. Quantity discounts available

#### **Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood (PAYA)**

A workbook series created by Massachusetts Department of Social Services. PAYA can be used by the learner alone, or with an adult. Topic areas and brief assessments match the learning goals and expectations of the Guidebook. The Activity/Resource Workbook contains information and exercises by topic area to help develop or strengthen the skills of the learner.

Available free in five modules:

1. Money, Home and Food Management Workbook (143 pgs)  
<http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule1.pdf>
2. Personal Care, Health, Social Skills and Safety Workbook (190 pgs)

- <http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule2.pdf>
3. Education, Job Seeking Skills and Job Maintenance Skills Workbook (127 pgs)  
<http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule3.pdf>
  4. Housing, Transportation, Community Resources, Understanding the Law and Recreation Workbook (95 pgs) <http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule4.pdf>
  5. Young Parents Guide (Large module broken down into sections)
    - Sexuality, STD and Pregnancy Prevention  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5SexualitySTD-PregnancyPreventionpages1\\_27.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5SexualitySTD-PregnancyPreventionpages1_27.pdf)
    - Unplanned Pregnancy  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5UnplannedPregnancypages28\\_54.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5UnplannedPregnancypages28_54.pdf)
    - Pregnancy and Health Skills  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5PregnancyHealthSkills-55\\_129.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5PregnancyHealthSkills-55_129.pdf)
    - Physical Care (Taking Care of Baby)  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5HealthCare-140\\_149.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5HealthCare-140_149.pdf)
    - Health Care  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5HealthCare-140\\_149.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5HealthCare-140_149.pdf)
    - Safety  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5Safety150\\_161.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5Safety150_161.pdf)
    - Infancy  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5Infancy-162\\_174.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5Infancy-162_174.pdf)
    - Older Babies and Toddlers  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5Olderbabiestoddlers-175\\_195.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5Olderbabiestoddlers-175_195.pdf)
    - Children Ages 2-5  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5Childrenages\\_2\\_5-196\\_221.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5Childrenages_2_5-196_221.pdf)
    - Making the World a Better Place/Environment  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5MakingWorldBetterPlace-222\\_239.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5MakingWorldBetterPlace-222_239.pdf)
    - Education and Career Planning for Teen Parents  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5EducationCareerPlanningTeenParents-240\\_250.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5EducationCareerPlanningTeenParents-240_250.pdf)
    - Housing  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5Housing-251\\_276.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5Housing-251_276.pdf)
    - Making Ends Meet  
[http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5MakingEndsMeet-277\\_279.pdf](http://www.casey.org/cls/resourceguides/subdocs/PAYAModule5MakingEndsMeet-277_279.pdf)

### **Goodwill Community Foundation**

Offers free training to support skill development in areas of career planning, money management, work and job development and daily living. Offers Spanish language website and lessons with auditory component. [GCFLearnFree.org](http://GCFLearnFree.org)

### **I Know Where I'm Going (But Will My Cash Keep Up?)**

A free two-part workbook for youth ages 12 and older focusing on all aspects of money management. Developed specifically for youth in out-of-home care, it is applicable to all. It includes a section on career development. Self-teaching tool, or use with adult supervision.

Available free from: The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF)

<http://www.aecf.org/knowledgecenter.aspx>

### **Kids Health**

One of the most comprehensive websites covering health, fitness, food, drugs, alcohol, disease, infection, safety, sexual health, and mental health for children, teens and young adults.

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

### **A Future Near Me/ The Path Before Me (FUTURE/PATH)**

*A Future Near Me* contains questions to guide a young adult towards self-sufficiency. *The Path Before Me* is designed to help American Indian Youth learn tribal ways and skills that will enable them to move into their own place. It contains questions to guide American Indian Youth towards responsible living. Both pocket guide resources, designed by Mark Kroner, can be used by the learner on their own or with an adult. The books can be used with families, schools, youth groups, life skills classes, sharing circles and elders. Self-teaching tool. Available From:

National Resource Center for Youth Services 1-800-274-2687 or order via the Web site:

<http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/catalog/product.php?productid=44> \$6.00 each plus shipping

### **Youth Transitions Resource Center**

<http://www.financeproject.org/index.cfm?page=32>

This resource is primarily designed for your service worker. It contains a youth transitions clearinghouse with numerous links to research, best practice, policy, and funding information to support former youth in foster care and their successful transition to adulthood. Focus topics include education, workforce, financial literacy, savings and asset building, entrepreneurship, and permanency.

### ***Community Resource Assessment and Mapping***

To develop sound transition plans (and comply with requirements of federal Fostering Connections law) it is critical that states and communities have a clear understanding of the breadth of resources that young people require as they transition and that family services specialists are knowledgeable about resources available to the youth they serve.

Two companion publications by The Finance Project provide the most authoritative information on community resource assessment and mapping:

***An Assessment of Resources to Support Transitioning Youth*** (September 2010)

Developed in collaboration with FosterClub, as a companion to the Transition Planning Toolkit, this new tool helps state and community leaders identify areas in which additional services and supports need to be developed to support young people as they transition to independence.

Available online at: <http://www.financeproject.org/publications/AssessmentResources.pdf>

***Guide to Mapping Community Assets for Transitioning Youth*** (September 2010)

Developed in collaboration with FosterClub, as a companion to the Transition Planning Toolkit, this new tool helps state and community leaders systematically map the supports and services available to young people transitioning from care. Available online at:

<http://www.financeproject.org/publications/MappingCommunityAssets.pdf>

Although assessing and mapping community assets are tasks that are properly conducted at the community level, the publications contain general information and checklists that will be useful to family services specialists in thinking about community resources that can be engaged in IL services and transition plans.

## **Virginia's IL Transition Plan Templates**

Two templates for IL Transition Plans have been made available from the Virginia Department of Social Services. Both are designed to be as youth-friendly as possible with clear messaging that the plans “belong” to the youth and that they are to play a central role in all service planning and decision making.

The **IL Transition Plan** is designed for use with youth age 14 through age 17. This template contains the following elements:

- A one-page “Message about Your Independent Living Transition Plan” that can be given to the youth in advance to help orient him/her to the planning process and his/her role.
- A Face Sheet contains identifying and demographic data.
- Tips for Completing Your IL Transition Plan that advises a three-step approach and contains information about and examples of goals, activities, and measures and how they are related.
- A page for each of the eight Life Skills areas assessed by CLSA containing space to enter the youth’s strengths and areas for growth, goals, activities, responsible parties, and to assess progress.
- Following the page on Permanency is a page to list the current permanent connections, their contact information, and specify the nature of support pledged.

- The template concludes with a signatures page for the youth, services worker, and members of the youth’s team.

The **90-Day Transition Plan for Success** is designed for use during the 90-day period prior to a young person’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This template also contains a one-page “Message about Your 90-Day Plan for Success” that can be given to the youth in advance to help the youth understand that this is a different plan and that if IL services continue, there are conditions.

Section #1 is a list of Rights and Responsibilities that explains their changed status, options available, and conditions that are attached to the options.

Section #2 is the Plan for Successful Transition that documents their current specific plans for transitioning, confirms the status of their critical documents, and contains an updated list of their permanent connections.

Section #3 is the Independent Living and Transition Plan for Young Adults that contains the same elements as the transition plans completed before they turned 18. It documents their strengths and needs, their goals and activities to achieve the goals and the specific resources and supports that will be provided.

## Other Related Policies

This section focuses on three additional sections of Virginia Foster Care Policy on Achieving Permanency for Older Youth:

- Conducting NYTD outcomes survey with youth at ages 17, 19, and 21 (14.15)
- Resuming Independent Living Services (14.17)
- Resources to help serve older youth (14.18)

For each of these, key provisions of Virginia policy are highlighted. Bulleted highlights that are in *italics* indicate new policy language effective December 2012. These policy sections contain detailed guidance for policy implementation and contain comprehensive lists of tools and best practice resources.

## *Conducting the NYTD Outcomes Survey*

### *Policy Highlights – 14.15 Conducting NYTD outcomes survey with youth at ages 17, 19, and 21*

- Requires LDSS to conduct surveys on specified cohorts of youth in foster care and specifies cohorts based on dates of birth.
- Specifies that a statistical sample will be identified by VDSS and that the baseline data the survey is to be administered during the 45 days after the youth’s 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Specifies that identified youth will be surveyed again when they turn age 19 and when they turn 21, regardless of whether they continue to receive IL services or age out of foster care.

- Specifies the six outcome areas assessed.

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.15.1 Engaging youth to participate in the NYTD Outcomes Survey***

- Provides guidance on engaging youth to participate in the survey.
- Identifies specific resources on best practices related to the NYTD Survey.

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.15.2 Administering the baseline NYTD Outcomes Survey***

- Requires the baseline NYTD Outcomes Survey to be administered within 45 days following the youth's 17th birthday; prohibits survey being administered prior to the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Requires LDSS to follow prescribed steps for administering the survey.
- Identifies additional resources for NYTD Survey-related information and technical assistance.

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.15.3 Administering follow-up NYTD Outcomes Survey for 19 year olds***

- *Specifies that VDSS will compile the list of youth needing to be surveyed and send to the LDSS IL and NYTD staff with other pertinent information via e-mail prior to the start of the follow-up survey reporting period.*
- *For all youth successfully located, the LDSS is required to perform the tasks listed.*
- *Specifies resources available if help is needed in OASIS.*

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.15.3.1 Technical assistance***

- *Specifies sources of technical assistance with the NYTD Outcomes Survey, including Project LIFE, the NYTD website, and Federal Children's Bureau website.*

### ***Practice Strategies for NYTD Survey***

Key resources for workers include 1) the NYTD website of the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRCCWDT) which provides a great deal of information and practical tools and 2) the Children's Bureau in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Documents from NRCCWDT that are of particular value to workers in implementing the NYTD Survey:

#### **Practical Strategies for Planning and Conducting the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Youth Outcome Survey.** June 2009.

This document provides practical strategies for gathering and maintaining contact information, contacting and engaging youth before and after they leave foster care, and additional sources for locating youth.

Available at: [http://www.nrccwdt.org/resources/nytd/docs/Locating\\_Document\\_6-5-09.pdf](http://www.nrccwdt.org/resources/nytd/docs/Locating_Document_6-5-09.pdf)

**NYTD Technical Assistance Brief #3: Surveying Youth with Special Needs or Limited English Proficiency.** June 2010.

This brief discusses accommodations that enable these youth to fully participate in the survey. Available at:

[https://www.nrcwdt.org/resources/nytd/docs/NYTD\\_TA\\_%20Brief\\_3\\_Surveying\\_Special\\_Populations.pdf](https://www.nrcwdt.org/resources/nytd/docs/NYTD_TA_%20Brief_3_Surveying_Special_Populations.pdf)

The most recent Federal Guidance on NYTD (August 2012) can be found on the Children’s Bureau website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/nytd-guidance>

A Children’s Bureau publication of particular relevance to workers implementing the NYTD Survey is:

**Practical Strategies for Tracking and Locating Youth.**

This provides strategies used successfully in longitudinal studies requiring long-term participation in studies. It is available at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/practical-strategies-nytd>

## *Resuming Independent Living Services*

### *Policy Highlights – 14.17 Resuming Independent Living Services*

- Specifies that youth aged 18 and older may choose to discontinue receiving IL services anytime before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and have the right to request a resumption of services.
- Requires LDSS to restore IL services at the youth’s request if the youth has not yet reached his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and enters into a written agreement with the child placing agency within 60 days of the discontinuation of services.

#### *Policy Highlights - 14.17.1 Eligibility*

- Defines criteria for eligibility to resume IL services.

#### *Policy Highlights - 14.17.2 Application*

- Requires youth to apply directly to the LDSS for resumption of services. A link to the form “Application to Resume Independent Living Services” is provided.
- Specifies that the completed and signed application serves as the temporary written agreement and verification that the youth met the legally allowed 60-day time frame.
- Specifies that if the youth completes an application with the local child placing agency it is the responsibility of the LCPA to contact the LDSS that had custody of the youth and submit the youth’s application to the LDSS.
- Specifies that acceptance of the initial application is based on the willingness of the youth to enter into an agreement that documents services needs and expectations of the youth.

- Requires the request for services to be denied if the youth does not meet the eligibility requirements in 14.17.1, if the youth refuses to complete all application items, or the youth refuses to meet with the team to complete the agreement.
- Assigns responsibility to the worker to review the application, confirm the date, time, and location of the team meeting, and provide assistance necessary to facilitate completion of the application and attendance at the team meeting.
- Specifies the application should be reviewed and team meeting scheduled within 10 business days of receipt of initial application.

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.17.3 Assessment***

- Specifies that the request to resume independent living services is based on the youth's willingness to meet with a team of individuals to complete the "Resuming Independent Living Services Agreement"; a link to the form is provided.
- Specifies those to be involved with the development of the agreement.
- Specifies factors to be considered by the team in developing the agreement.
- Specifies that acceptance of IL services is based on the willingness of the youth to participate with services and expectations as documented in the "Resuming Independent Living Services Agreement"; requires that the opportunity to resume IL services be denied if the youth refuses to comply with the recommendations as outlined in the agreement.
- Requires a copy of the agreement be given to the youth, a copy is given to the LCPA when applicable, and the original copy shall be kept in the case record.
- Specifies that the youth and the service worker should review the agreement at least every three (3) months and if additional services are recommended, the team should reconvene.

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.17.4 Services***

- Specifies that youth returning to the LDSS or LCPA are eligible for all independent living services delineated in Section 14.10 and that youth are not eligible for placement in a group home or residential facility.

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.17.5 Funding***

- Requires the team to explore funding sources such as Chafee/Independent Living funds, CSA, CSB, Medicaid, and private insurance and, if it is determined that CSA funds are needed, the service worker shall refer the child to the Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT), in accordance with local Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT) procedures.

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.17.6 Contact with youth***

- When a youth aged 18 or older resumes independent living services, requires a minimum of one (1) monthly contact (e.g., phone, in-person, email) by the assigned worker of the LDSS or LCPA and the youth.
- Requires a face-to-face meeting in the residence of the youth every 90 days.
- Specifies that the needs of the youth should determine the frequency of the contacts beyond the minimum requirements.

- Requires a supervisory review at least every six (6) months to include the youth and the members of the team; specifies that the composition of the team may change to include any additional permanent connections for the youth.

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.17.7 Discontinuance of Independent Living Services***

- Requires IL services to discontinue when:
  - The youth reaches 21 years of age;
  - The youth completes the services identified and has rectified the situation that brought him to apply for independent living services;
  - The youth is non-compliant with the terms of the agreement; or
  - The youth requests that independent living services be discontinued.

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.17.8 Formal request for a decision review***

- Permits the youth to request that the LDSS director conduct a formal review of the decision if the application to resume independent living services is denied by the team or the youth does not agree with the decision to discontinue services.

#### ***Policy Highlights - 14.17.9 Reporting***

- Requires documentation of IL services in OASIS under “IL Former Foster Care Youth – ages 18-21, provides guidance in services reporting, and includes link to the document “Guidelines for Resuming Independent Living Services.

### ***Practice Strategies for Resuming IL Services***

Current policy provides specific directions and comprehensive guidance in policy implementation. Simply follow directions and guidance provided!

Available on the VDSS website are forms and documents used in resuming IL services including:

- Application to Resume Independent Living Services
- Resuming Independent Living Services Agreement
- Guidelines for Resuming Independent Living Services

### ***Resources to Help Serve Older Youth***

#### ***Policy Highlights – 14.18 Resources to help serve older youth***

- Lists sources for technical assistance and training support and for engaging youth, resources for youth and other related resources.

### ***Policy Highlights - 14.18.1 Technical assistance and training support***

- Describes Project LIFE with links to the Project LIFE website and list of IL regional consultants.

### ***Policy Highlights - 14.18.2 Engaging youth***

- Describes National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD) and links to the NRCYD youth engagement section and resources and tools related to positive youth development, engaging youth in permanency planning, transition planning, youth leadership development, and youth/adult partnerships.

### ***Policy Highlights - 14.18.3 Resources for youth***

- Describes Foster Care Alumni of America and FosterClub with links to each organization.

### ***Policy Highlights - 14.18.4 Education and training resources for youth***

- Describes ETV with links to the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA) website and the Key FAFSA Tips document.
- Describes the Great Expectations Project purpose with links to additional information.
- Describes the Tuition Grant Program with a link to additional information.
- Describes other funding and scholarship opportunities listed on the Great Expectations website.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Transition Services with Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services with links to the DRS Transition Services Guide and list of office locations.
- Describes Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) with link to the website.

### ***Policy Highlights - 14.18.5 Other resources***

- Describes the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative with links to the website and knowledge center.
- Describes the You Gotta Believe! Organization with link to the Older Child Adoption and Permanency Movement, Inc.

## ***Practice Strategies for Using Resources to Help Serve Older Youth***

LDSS workers responsible for serving older youth are strongly urged to become familiar with all the many resources listed and to subscribe to any informational services offered by the various resources in order to remain current about issues, resources, and best practices.

## Related Readings

### Poor Outcomes for Youth Who Age Out

***On Their Own: What Happens to Kids When They Age Out of the Foster Care System*** (2004). Jim Casey Opportunities Initiative. Westview Press, Boulder, CO.

***A Time for Reform: Aging Out and On Their Own*** (2007). A collaborative publication of the Pew Charitable Trust and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

Available online at:

[http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Foster\\_care\\_reform/Kids\\_are\\_Waiting\\_TimeforReform0307.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Foster_care_reform/Kids_are_Waiting_TimeforReform0307.pdf)

***Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 26*** (2011).

Available online at:

[http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/Midwest%20Evaluation\\_Report\\_4\\_10\\_12.pdf](http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/Midwest%20Evaluation_Report_4_10_12.pdf)

### Integrated Approach

***A Call to Action: An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood*** (2005). A collaborative publication by Casey Family Services/ The Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice, California Permanency for Youth Project, Casey Family Programs, and Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

Available online at:

[http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/sites/default/files/documents/casey\\_permanency\\_0505.pdf](http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/sites/default/files/documents/casey_permanency_0505.pdf)

### Permanency Practices

***Never Too Old: Achieving Permanency and Sustaining Connections for Older Youth in Foster Care*** (2011). A publication of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute.

Available online at:

[http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research/2011\\_07\\_never\\_too\\_old.php](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research/2011_07_never_too_old.php)

***Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement*** (FSE) (2008). A publication of the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and the California Permanency for Youth Project.

Available online at: <http://www.nrcpfc.org/downloads/SixSteps.pdf>

## Policy Briefs on Preparing Older Youth for Adulthood

***Foster Care to 21: Doing it Right*** (2011). Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Issue Brief #1. Available online at: <http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/issue-brief%E2%80%94foster-care-21-doing-it-right>

***Social Capital: Building Quality Networks for Young People in Foster Care*** (2011). Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Issue Brief #2. Available online at: <http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/issue-brief%E2%80%94social-capital-building-quality-networks-young-people-foster-care>

***Authentic Youth Engagement: Youth-Adult Partnerships*** (2011). Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Issue Brief #3. Available online at: <http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/issue-brief%E2%80%94authentic-youth-engagement-youth-adult-partnerships>

***Promoting Development of Resilience among Young People in Foster Care*** (2011). Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Issue Brief #4. Available online at: <http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/issue-brief%E2%80%94promoting-development-resilience-among-young-people-foster-care>

## Related Resources

### Serving Older Youth

#### **Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative**

<http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/>

Private foundation with the vision that every youth aging out of foster care should have access to the opportunities and supports needed for a successful transition to adulthood. Brings people and resources together to help youth and young adults make the connections they need for permanence, education, employment, housing, health care, and supportive personal and community relationships. Supports community-based efforts that create opportunities and build assets for youth leaving foster care through grant making, technical assistance, and advocacy.

### IL Needs Assessment

#### **Casey Life Skills**

<http://caseylifeskills.force.com/>

The Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA) is a free tool that assesses the behaviors and competencies youth need to achieve their long term goals. CLSA is designed to be used in a collaborative conversation between an educator, mentor, service worker, or other service provider and any youth between the ages of 14 and 21. It is appropriate for all youth regardless of whether they are in foster care, live with biological parents, or reside in a group home. Youth typically will require 30-40 minutes to complete the CLSA. Their answers are available instantly for the adult to review with the youth in a strength based conversation that actively engages the youth in the process of developing goals.

### Permanency

#### **National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness**

<http://www.senecacenter.org/familyconnectedness>

Formed through a merging of the California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) and Seneca's Center for Family Finding and Youth Connectedness (CFFYC, founded by Kevin Campbell), the NIPFC provides training and coaching on numerous permanency-related topics. The focus of the Institute is on building the capacity of organizations to find and engage families and then to attend to the loss and grief work necessary to assist children, youth, and families to engage in long-lasting, healthy relationships.

#### **National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections**

<http://www.nrcpfc.org/about-us.html>

The National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections at the Hunter College School of Social Work is a training, technical assistance, and information services organization dedicated to help strengthen the capacity of State, local, Tribal and other publicly administered or supported child welfare agencies to: institutionalize a safety-focused, family-centered, and community-based approach to meet the needs of children, youth and families. The National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections is a service of the Children’s Bureau – ACF/DHHS and member of the Training and Technical Assistance Network.

### **Fostering Connections Resource Center**

<http://www.fosteringconnections.org>

The web-based center serves as a gathering place of information, training and tools related to furthering the implementation of the Fostering Connections law. Specifically, it aims to connect implementers with the latest information and the best experts and advocates working on these issues. It is sponsored by a variety of foundations including the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Dave Thomas Foundations, The Duke Endowment, and others.

### **You Gotta Believe!**

<http://yougottabelieve.org/>

You Gotta Believe is the only organization in the U. S that solely limits its practice to finding young adults, teens, and pre-teens in the foster care system permanent parents and families. The organization stresses unconditional commitment to all children who come into care as the essential ingredient in preventing both placement disruption and foster care drift. The website provides links to articles, blogs, and live streams of radio and television broadcasts.

## **Youth Engagement**

### **National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD)**

<http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu>

The NRCYD collects and analyzes information on evidence-based youth services, resources, and materials and disseminates this information through its website, newsletter, e-distribution list, and webinars. The youth engagement section of their website contains information on the following related topics:

- *Positive youth development* – issues, toolkit of practical strategies and tools, and curricula for workers, supervisors, and providers.
- *Engaging youth in permanency planning* – resource for using the permanency pact as a tool when talking with youth to provide structure to help youth and adults establish a positive, kin-like relationship.

- *Transition planning* - resources on lessons learned, best practices, and standards of excellence.
- *Youth leadership development* – toolkit, national standards and quality indicators, guides for assessing program and for applying research to practices.
- *Youth/adult partnerships* – resources, toolkit, guides.

## Resources for Youth

### **Foster Care Alumni of America (FCAA)**

<http://www.fostercarealumni.org>

The mission of FCAA is to connect the alumni community of youth who were in foster care and to transform policy and practice, ensuring opportunity for people in and from foster care.

### **Foster Club**

<http://www.fosterclub.org>

FosterClub is the national network for young people in foster care. The website contains information on a wide range of topics written in a youth-friendly style. Their publication *Foster Care 411* is designed to give young people in care the answers they need to better understand foster care and take charge of their lives. Chapters can be downloaded or a print copy of 180 pages can be purchased.

### **Orphan Foundation of America (OFA)**

<http://www.saveourchildrencoalition.org/orphan-foundation-america-ofa.html>

OFA is the largest national nonprofit organization dedicated entirely to helping former foster youth obtain the academic and technical skills and competencies needed for success. OFA provides foster teens with college scholarships, connects them to mentors and internships, sends them care packages, and testifies before Congress on the behalf of foster youth.

### **Foster Care to Success: America's College Fund for Foster Youth (FC2S)**

<http://www.fc2success.org/>

FC2S provides \$15 million in funding for college, training, and student support programs annually. Services include mentoring, career coaching, care packages, and ongoing support 24-7.

## GLOSSARY

Source for the following terms is Virginia Foster Care Policy Section 14.3 Clarification of terms.

**Independent living goal** means a planned program of services designed to assist a child aged 16 and over and persons who are former foster care children between the ages of 18 and 21 in preparing for adulthood. Independent Living is no longer one of the foster care goals that may be assigned to youth, effective July 1, 2011.

**Independent living arrangement** means that a youth is living independently under a supervised arrangement that is paid for or provided by the LDSS. A youth in an independent living arrangement is not supervised 24 hours a day by an adult. The youth is provided with opportunities of increased responsibility; such as paying bills, assuming leases, and working with a landlord. Examples include living in one's own apartment; living with a roommate; or living in a college dorm.

**Independent living services** are services and supports that are designed with and provided to the youth. They build upon the strengths and meet the unique needs of the youth in preparing for adulthood.

**Independent living skills** are skills the youth develops to achieve self-sufficiency and interdependence. These skills prepare and enable the youth to be successful in adulthood.

**Self-sufficiency** means the youth becomes skilled in accomplishing and being responsible for daily life tasks.

**Interdependency** means the youth becomes skilled in being resourceful and connected with others to meet his or her needs and to contribute to society.

These terms all represent different, and sometimes complementary, strategies for helping the youth prepare throughout their journey and successfully transition to adulthood.