

Preparing Youth in DCS Custody for Transition to Adulthood

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What Do You Think Happens to Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care?

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Figure 1 Outcomes Four Years After Exit. Illustration by Catherine Conner.

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Can WE Make A Difference?

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- Although young people in foster care are often significantly impacted by trauma, the latest brain research shows that the teen years are a time of increased opportunity to rewire the brain and develop resilience and promote healing.
- If young people in foster care are given opportunities to exercise their still-developing brains-by planning their own lives and making their own decisions-they have more success
- Positive Youth Development
- · Build connections to families friends, communities GAL Training

So, what makes the difference?

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- Something intrinsic (nature/nurture/both) • How Children Succeed and Outliers
- Timing

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- Those special people (advocates)
 - » Resource parents
 - » Teachers, Coaches, Co-workers, etc...
 - » Case managers, CASAs, GALs, etc...

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So What Does Child Welfare Do?

- · Critically important to this is ensuring young people in foster care experience the benefits of improved foster care services before they turn 18 in order to make an informed decision about taking advantage of extended care.
- Plan for their future and develop necessary skills
- · By extending foster care to 21 and doing it right, we'll make sure that more young people have opportunities to succeed in school, work, and adult life.

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Quality Practice

- Engagement-FSW begins with engaging the young adult and building a helping relationship.
- Teaming-As engaging, FSW begins to build a team around the young adult.
- Assessment & Understanding-FSW must have a thorough understanding of the strengths and concerns of the young adult before the team can plan.
- Planning-Team develops a plan for independence, permanency, selfsufficiency as well as strategies to assist the young adult for safety and well-being.
- · Implementation-A (transition) plan is implemented.
- Tracking & Adjustment-FSW tracks to determine whether the services and support are helping the young adult meet his/her goals.

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Quality Practice



- Believe in them; build confidence, bring hope and encouragement.
- Continually provide young people with opportunities to connect with their families and communities.
- Provide information, skills and supports they need to drive the direction of their own lives.
- Actively engaging youth in developing life skills that will prepare them for successful transition.
- Relating to youth as resources rather than just recipients of services.
- Valuing the individual strengths and uniqueness of each youth.
- Frequently discuss with young people their strengths, interests talents, goals and aspirations.

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Internal Philosophical & Cultural Shift



- What can we do to help prepare this youth to be successful after 18?
- What skills does this person need to have to be successful after 18?
- Who are the young person's caring adults? What roles do they have?
- When young people actively participate in their own planning and service provision, they are equally invested in the outcomes.

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Independent Living and Transition Plans

IL and Transition Plans: Who?



<u>All youth</u> in DCS custody ages 14-16, regardless of permanency goals, placement or adjudication will have an <u>Independent Living Plan.</u>

<u>**Transition Plans</u>** are required for youth 17 & older, regardless of permanency goals, placement or adjudication.</u>

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IL and Transition Plans: What?



The **Independent Living Plan** is a part of the permanency plan primarily focused on making sure the youth is gaining the skills needed to live successfully as an adult.

The **Transition Plan** is a part of the permanency plan primarily focused on <u>specific resources needed</u> and <u>steps</u> <u>a youth and the team needs to take</u> as they transition to adulthood.

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IL and Transition Plans: When?

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- **IL Planning** occurs with youth ages 14-16. The IL plan maintains the same review and update schedule as the permanency plan.
- **Transition Plans** start at age 17 and are revised as needed. The Perm plan (which contains the Transition Plan) must be reviewed by the Court within ninety (90) days of the youth exiting DCS custody. (T.C.A. 37-2-409)

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IL and Transition Plans: <u>Why?</u>

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The purpose of IL and Transition Planning is to give youth the skills, connections and opportunities to be successful adults.

<u>It's the Law:</u> Transition Plans are required in T.C.A. 37-2-409.

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IL and Transition Plans: <u>How?</u>



- The <u>Strengths, Concerns, Outcomes and Action</u> <u>Steps</u> are determined by using Casey Life Skills Assessment results (CLSA), and
- Feedback from the youth and Child and Family Team members should be included.

IL and Transition Plans: <u>How?</u>



- The plan must be <u>personal to the youth</u> and detailed, driven by their hopes, dreams, goals and specific needs.
- The plan should include specific actions that will help a youth achieve their goals.

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IL Plan Topics (14-16)

- 1. IL Life Skills*
- 2. IL Social Skills*
- 3. IL Communication
- 4. IL Health

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- 5. IL Finances
- 6. IL Employment
- 7. IL Housing
- 8. IL Transportation
- 9. IL Education

* IL Life Skills & Social Skills are required; others strongly encouraged as needed

Transition Plan Topics (17+)

- 1. IL Life Skills
- 2. IL Social Skills
- (Legal & Relational Permanency)
- IL Communication
- (Essential Documents) 4. IL Health
- IL Finances
 IL Employment
 - IL Housing
- 8. IL Transportation
- 9. IL Education
- If needed: Parenting (for child) Immigration Status

IL Life Skills: Things to Consider



TN Young People's Advice

- Get to know us as a person
- · Show us that you care
- Communicate with us
- · Be professional

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- · Be honest and reliable
- Help us be our best

Needs of Young People

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- More consistent interaction with FSW
- Planning meetings should begin much earlier in the process
- Language should be on a "youth" level (i.e. EFCS terms were often very confusing; too many acronyms)
- Positive reinforcement when they do well; do not just acknowledge them when they are doing poorly
- Check in with youth, even if everything appears to be going well. (i.e. Something might be happening that the youth may not openly want to say)





Question:

What is the single biggest predictor of success for youth who age out of foster care?

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Answer: Connection to a Caring Adult



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Steps to a Successful Transition



- Engage youth as a partner in planning
- Engage families and supportive adults
- Engage community partners

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- Partner with your IL Specialist
- Work with the team to create IL and Transition Plans that are <u>personalized</u>, with specific steps and resources outlined

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Successfully <u>integrate</u> the young adult into the community

What does success look like?



Measuring Success

- · Transitional Surveys completed on time
- · Life Skills Assessments are completed on time
- Number of youth achieving educational goals
- Achievement of permanency for older youth
- Quality of IL and Transition Planning and Casework as evidenced by File Reviews
- QSR Data
- Percentage of youth who age out who accept Extension of Foster Care Services
- Life Skill Survey Data
- NYTD Data
- · OPPS Data

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Quality Service Review (QSR) Data

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- Includes 5 indicators from Northwest, East, Southwest, TN Valley, Upper Cumberland, South Central in FY'15
- Sample size from each region:

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 Northwest = 9 cases; East = 11 cases; Southwest = 11 cases; TN Valley = 7 cases; Upper Cumberland = 4 cases; South Central = 12 cases

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	Family (Connections	
90		Jonnections	
90%			
80% - 🎦	78%		
70% -	67%		
60% -			
50% -	SON		
40%	43%		
30% -			
20% -			
10% -			
0%			,
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Aged Out Data

- Aged out total and percentage by Adjudication
- Unruly- 37 3%
- Delinquent- 488 50%
- Dependent Neglect- 459 47%
- Aged out total and percentage by all releases
- 984- Aged out in FY 2014-2015
- 6548 Individual children and youth released in FY 2014-15
- 15% of all children released in FY 2014-2015 aged out

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Extension of Foster Care Services



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- 2013-2014- 623 individuals served through Extension of Foster Care (646 episodes)
- 2012-2013- 564 served through Extension of Foster Care
- 2011-2012- we had 449 post custody
- 2010-2011- we had 388- post custody
- TN EFCS uses only three Fostering Connections Criteria at this time.

FY '14 Aged Out and EFCS by Region



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Region	Aged Out	Aged out Eligible	Accepted EFCS	% EFCS Uptake
Davidson	96	66	25	38%
East	47	40	25	63%
Кпох	46	39	21	54%
Mid Cumberland	143	122	42	34%
Northeast	78	70	21	30%
Northwest	37	35	15	43%
Shelby	162	89	35	39%
Smoky Mountain	81	68	29	43%
South Central	81	74	28	38%
Southwest	44	33	16	48%
TN Valley	96	77	31	40%
Upper Cumberland	73	66	24	36%
Total	984	779	312	40%

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FY '14 EFCS Termination Reasons								
	Academic	Risk to Self/Others	Self	Successful Completion	Adult Services	Age 21	Unable to Locate	
Northwest	18	0	4	0	2	2	2	
Southwest	15	0	7	0	0	2	5	
Shelby	33	1	11	0	1	1	5	
Davidson	9	0	8	0	3	3	3	
Mid Cumberland	23	2	6	0	4	2	3	
South Central	16	1	11	2	2	0	3	
Upper Cumberland	9	0	8	4	2	6	1	
Northeast	12	0	2	0	1	0	1	
Knox	13	0	3	0	0	3	3	
East	5	1	14	3	1	0	6	
Smoky Mtn	9	1	14	1	2	0	5	
TN Valley	13	0	4	1	3	1	2	
Total	175	7	93	11	21	20	40	

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FY '14 EFCS Retention

Days in EFCS

	Mean (Days)	Median (Days)	Mode (Days)
Northwest	193	143	55
Southwest	298	227	1096
Shelby	292	213	90
Davidson	196	141	48
Mid Cumberland	213	204	310
South Central	226	137	15
Upper Cumberland	247	163	189
Northeast	185	152	31
Кпох	234	147	N/A
East	195	121	37
Smoky Mtn	209	140	128
TN Valley	225	150	150
Total (Days)	231	165	1096

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Extension of Foster Care Services Court Procedures

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Youth Engagement Data



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Tried to make contact with 366 young adults Reasons for not taking EFC-Top 3 reasons 1. Employment 2. Undecided about future plans

3. Do not want to be involved with DCS

38 referrals to YV TL

11 referrals for EFC

6 housing and other community referrals

6 young adults were referred to us by shelters

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Graduates

- FY'13- 121 Number of EFCS young adults graduated with a High School Diploma or GED
- FY'14- 126 Number of EFCS young adults graduated with a High School Diploma or GED

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Attendance in 2014

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	ETV	State	Total
TN B.O.R 4 Yr Univ.	52	36	88
Tennessee Community Colleges	113	70	183
TN Tech Centers	17	24	41
UT System	13	9	22
Private 4 Yr Univ.	35	0	35
 Non-State Tech Colleges 	32	0	32
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Totals	262	139	401

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- National Youth in Transition Database
- 529 youth participated in the 2014 17 year old A/B survey.

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- Connections to adults- A/B survey 493-529=93%
- Have Children- A/B surveys 19-529=4%

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Next Steps

- Roll out Foster parent Teachable Moments training
- Increase use of Teen Outreach Program (TOP)
- Life Skill Development & increased use of IL Wrap funds.
- Implement Reasonable and Prudent Parenting federal legislation.
- Focus on earlier interventions with 14-16 year olds.
- Update the Provider Policy Manual
- Integrate preparation for adulthood with permanency efforts.
- Utilize NYTD data to inform practice
- Improve Quality Transition Planning (file reviews & coaching)
- Increase awareness of available services throughout DCS and in the community

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- EFCS Quality case management and planning
- · Strengthen youth engagement and build youth voice

Youth Engagement/Voice



- Guide to being a Teenager in Care- Developed and being updated to meet new federal legislative requirements.
- TN Youth Handbook being updated
- Resource Parent "Teachable Moments" training has been developed and will roll out in 2015.
- Ongoing Youth 4 Youth Boards and expansion of boards
- Commissioner/YV youth meeting and Children's Panels
- Development of youth friendly website
- 3 DCS statewide webinars on Youth Engagement, Positive Youth Development and LGBTQ youth
- Youth Developed "Youth Engagement tools"
- 5 youth panels that spoke to over 150 participants
- Increase involvement of youth in policy development and review

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Contacts

DCS Website- Independent Living Section

http://www.tn.gov/youth/fostercare/il_resourcesan dtools.shtml

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