Background
Older youth in foster care are confronted with an overwhelming number of adult decisions as they prepare to leave the child welfare system. Young adults take much longer to reach social and economic maturity than others of the same age group 50 years ago (Berlin, Furstenberg, & Waters, 2010). Most young people in the United States can rely on their families to help them well into adulthood. In fact, 41% percent of parents indicated they provide some level of financial assistance to their children ages 23 to 28 (Charles Schwab, 2010). However, foster youth are still forced to make significant life decisions with limited, if any support. Unlike their peers, they must make important decisions such as where they are going to live, how they are going to pay for housing and who they can contact in case of an emergency.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering Connections) the most significant child welfare reform legislation in more than a decade, has resulted in significant improvements in outcomes for children and youth who have spent time in foster care and those at risk of child welfare involvement. The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering Connections 2008) designed to promote the wellbeing of older youth in foster care. Highlighted below are two of the provisions that support older youth in care: States are allowed to extend federally funded foster care, adoption, and guardian assistance up to age 21 for Title IV-E eligible youth who meet specific education, training or employment requirements. States are mandated to develop a personalized transition plan with the young person no later than 90 days prior to his or her 18th birthday or older if the state chooses to extend care beyond 18. Each plan should address housing, health insurance, education, employment, workforce supports and opportunities for mentors and supportive services. Plans should also include as much detail as the youth elect.

Engaging Young People in their Transition Planning

The National Association of Social Workers
750 First Street NE
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20002-4241
SocialWorkers.org

Roxana Torrico Meruvia, MSW
Senior Practice Associate
rtorrico@naswdc.org

Designated to promote the well-being of older youth in foster care. Highlighted below are two of the provisions that support older youth in care: States are allowed to extend federally funded foster care, adoption, and guardian assistance up to age 21 for Title IV-E eligible youth who meet specific education, training or employment requirements. States are mandated to develop a personalized transition plan with the young person no later than 90 days prior to his or her 18th birthday or older if the state chooses to extend care beyond 18. Each plan should address housing, health insurance, education, employment, workforce supports and opportunities for mentors and supportive services. Plans should also include as much detail as the youth elect.

All young people should have a solid transition plan for moving into adulthood based on their hopes, dreams, goals, strengths and specific needs (CWLA, 2005). While the law indicates that plans should be developed no later than 90 days from the date of transition, social workers should begin to actively discuss and develop transition plans with young people early.
Statistics

- 29,471 young people left foster care in system in 2009 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010).
- 32% of former foster youth reported changing living situations 5 or more times within 2 to 4 years after discharge (Casey Family Programs, 2008).
- One in four foster youth were still coping with symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder after exiting foster care (Casey Family Programs, 2005).
- 33% of former foster youth reported no health insurance after leaving foster care (Casey Family Programs, 2005).

What Can Social Workers Do to Support Older Youth?
Social workers are in a unique position to support youth aging out of foster care. They can do the following to ensure that youth are supported as they transition out of foster care. See Questions for Social Workers to Consider When Working with Young People to Develop a Transition Plan for more detailed information.

- Assess the young person’s strengths and competencies with regard to life and personal skills development. Social workers can conduct an assessment inventory (e.g., Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment) with the young person. These types of assessments can help identify goals and measure progress in life skills development.
- Implement prevention and intervention strategies grounded in youth development. Social workers can recognize the unique strengths, abilities, and specific needs of youth. Social workers can value the youth’s voice and support the young person as he or she develops decision making skills, achieves goals and celebrates successes.
- Provide the young person with opportunities to “practice” life skills. Social workers can ensure that youth are given opportunities to learn life skills through practice (e.g., job interviews) and experience (e.g., writing a check, filling out a rental application, working a part-time job, etc.). Youth cannot be expected to successfully experience these events for the first time after they leave foster care. Youths cannot be expected to successfully experience these events for the first time after they leave foster care.
- Ensure that the supportive adults (identified by the youth) are involved in transition planning. These adults could include foster parents, teachers, coaches, mentors, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), attorneys or relatives. These supportive adults can serve as permanent connections and support the young person in identifying options and making important decisions for themselves.
- Make certain that young people have all of their personal documents before leaving care. This documentation includes an original copy of their social security card, birth certificate, a copy of their credit report and any other relevant documents. It is important that youth have access to these documents because they can often be difficult for youth to obtain once they leave care.
- Become aware of immigration policies that can potentially affect youth. Social workers working with immigrant youth should connect with immigration specialists to effectively address immigration issues. For instance, an undocumented youth who is unable to return home and is in a long term foster care placement may be eligible for a Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SJS). With this status, a youth can become immediately eligible to become a U.S. permanent resident, however the process must be completed while the young person is in the custody of the child welfare system.
- Use a cross-system approach to service planning and delivery. Social workers can work across systems to meet the broad range needs of older youth. Partners can include housing authorities, school districts, public health agencies or adult services. For instance, coordination of transition planning across key agencies and systems is critical when a foster youth with disabilities ages out of the child welfare system.

Conclusion
All young people across the country have high hopes and desires for their future. They look forward to pursuing higher education, accepting their first jobs, moving into their first apartments and having meaningful, loving relationships in their lives. Unlike their peers, older youth in foster care are forced to overcome number of obstacles before experiencing any of these milestones therefore, it is critical to support them as they prepare to transition into adulthood.

Together, social workers and youth can develop a strong working relationship, identify the youth’s strengths, set goals and plan for the future through a transition planning process that focuses on the development of independent living skills and fully addresses topics such as housing, health insurance, education, employment and permanent connections. The implementation of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 will be critical to promoting the wellbeing of older youth in care as they prepare to enter young adulthood.

Questions for Social Workers to Consider When Working with Young People to Develop a Transition Plan
Each young person in foster care is in a different place developmentally. Each youth has different assets, skills and level of support which is why it is critical to support them as they prepare to enter adulthood. Social workers, in partnership with the young person, can refer to the questions below as they begin to develop transition plans.

LIFE SKILLS
- Does the young person have someone who can support them as they develop life skills?
- Has the young person taken a life skills assessment (e.g., Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment)?

FINANCIAL LITERACY
- Has the young person:
  - learned money management skills (e.g., credit, budgeting, banking, etc.)?
  - opened a checking or savings account and written an actual check or deposit slip?
  - Does he or she have the bank name and account numbers stored in a safe place?
  - identified sources of income (e.g., social security, housing subsidies)?
  - Does the young person have the contact information for the agency providing these resources?
  - created a monthly budget to help him or her determine income and expenses?
  - seen his or her credit report and understand how to access it in the future?

IDENTITY
- Does the youth understand the impact of identity theft?
- Does the youth have the following:
  - a photo ID?
  - an original copy of his or her social security card?
  - an original or certified copy of his or her birth certificate?
  - a recent credit report?
  - his or her voter registration card?
  - a document confirming their foster care status?
- If youth was born outside of U.S., does he or she have copy of relevant documents (e.g., residency or citizenship papers)?
- Does the youth understand his or her rights and responsibilities?

Young adults take much longer to reach social and economic maturity than others of the same age group 50 years ago (Berlin, Furstenberg & Waters, 2010).
What Can Social Workers Do to Support Older Youth?

Social workers are in a unique position to support youth aging out of foster care. They can do the following to ensure that youth are supported as they transition out of foster care. See Questions for Social Workers to Consider When Working with Young People to Develop a Transition Plan for more detailed information.

- Assess the young person’s strengths and competencies with regard to life and personal skills development. Social workers can conduct an assessment inventory (e.g., Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment) with the young person. These types of assessments can help identify goals and measure progress in life skills development.

- Implement prevention and intervention strategies grounded in youth development. Social workers can recognize the unique strengths, abilities, and specific needs of youth. Social workers can value the youth’s voice and support the young person as he or she develops decision-making skills, achieves goals, and celebrates successes.

- Provide the young person with opportunities to “practice” life skills. Social workers can ensure that youth are given opportunities to learn life skills through practice (e.g., job interviews) and experience (e.g., writing a check, filling out a rental application, working a part-time job, etc.). Youth cannot be expected to successfully experience these events for the first time after they leave foster care.

- Ensure that the supportive adults (identified by the youth) are involved in transition planning. These adults could include foster parents, teachers, coaches, mentors, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), attorneys or relatives. These supportive adults can serve as permanent connections and support the young person in identifying options and making important decisions for themselves.

- Make certain that young people have all of their personal documents before leaving care. This documentation includes an original copy of their social security card, birth certificate, a copy of their credit report, and any other relevant documents. It is important that youth have access to these documents because they can often be difficult for youth to obtain once they leave care.

- Become aware of immigration policies that can potentially affect youth. Social workers working with immigrant youth should connect with immigration specialists to effectively address immigration issues. For instance, undocumented youth who are unable to return home and is in a long term foster care placement may be eligible for a Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SJS). With this status a youth can become immediately eligible to become a U.S. permanent resident, however the process must be completed while the young person is in the custody of the child welfare system.

- Use a cross-system approach to service planning and delivery. Social workers can work across systems to meet the broad range needs of older youth. Partners can include housing authorities, school districts, public health agencies or adult services. For instance, coordination of transition planning across key agencies and systems is critical when a foster youth with disabilities ages out of the child welfare system.

Conclusion

All young people across the country have high hopes and desires for their future. They look forward to pursuing higher education, accepting their first jobs, moving into their first apartments and having meaningful, loving relationships in their lives. Unlike their peers, older youth in foster care are forced to over come many number of obstacles before experiencing any of these milestones; therefore, it is critical to support them as they prepare to transition into adulthood.

Together, social workers and youth can develop a strong working relationship, identify the youth’s strengths, set goals and plan for the future through a transition planning process that focuses on the development of independent living skills and fully addresses topics such as housing, health insurance, education, employment and permanent connections. The implementation of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptability Act of 2008 will be critical to promoting the wellbeing of older youth in care as they prepare to enter young adulthood.

Questions for Social Workers to Consider When Working with Young People to Develop a Transition Plan

Each young person in foster care is in a different place developmentally. Each youth has different assets, skills and level of support which it is critical to support them as they prepare to enter adulthood. Social workers, in partnership with the young person, can refer to the questions below as they begin to develop transition plans.

LIFE SKILLS

- Has the young person developed knowledge or skills in the following areas:
  - safety
  - good manners
  - nutrition
  - grocery shopping
  - cooking
  - cleaning/laundry
  - personal hygiene
  - communication

FINANCIAL LITERACY

- Has the young person:
  - learned money management skills (e.g., credit, budgeting, banking, etc.)?
  - opened a checking or savings account and written an actual check or deposit slip?
  - Does he or she have the bank name and account numbers stored in a safe place?
  - identified sources of income (e.g., social security, housing subsidies)?
  - Does the young person have the contact information for the agency providing these resources?
  - created a monthly budget to help him or her determine income and expenses?
  - seen his or her credit report and understand how to access it in the future?

IDENTITY

- Does the youth understand the impact of identity, self?
- Does the youth have the following:
  - a photo ID?
  - an original copy of his or her social security card?
  - an original or certified copy of his or her birth certificate?
  - a recent credit report?
  - his or her voter registration card?
  - a document confirming his foster care status?
- If youth was born outside of U.S., does he or she have copy of relevant documents (e.g., residency or citizenship papers)?
- Does the youth understand his or her rights and responsibilities?

Young adults take much longer to reach social and economic maturity than others of the same age group. 50 years ago (Berlin, Furstenberg & Waters, 2010).
Social workers can recognize the unique strengths, abilities, and specific needs of youth. Social workers can value the youth’s voice and support the young person as he or she develops decision making skills, achieves goals and celebrates successes.

**EDUCATION**

- Does the youth know how to obtain replacement copies of important documents?
- Does the youth understand the importance of keeping documents safe?
- If the youth is a male and over 18, has he registered for selective service?

**HOUSING**

- Does the youth have:
  - any medical issues that require ongoing medical attention?
  - a list of current prescriptions?
  - Does the youth know how long his or her current prescription is for?
  - Does the youth know how much it will cost if he or she has to pay for it out of pocket?
  - Is the youth aware of the side affects of not taking prescribed medications?
  - access to health insurance (e.g., Medicaid) after discharge?
  - Does he or she know what to do to maintain eligibility?
  - a primary doctor or dentist?
  - access to medical records?
  - Has the youth had a full physical, dental and vision exam before leaving care?
  - Are the youth’s immunizations up to date?
  - Does the youth know:
    - how to locate low-income medical services?
    - how make healthy sex education decisions?
    - of any significant birth family’s physical or mental history?

**SUPPORT NETWORK**

- Does the youth have:
  - a relationship with siblings or know how to reconnect with them?
  - healthy relationships with biological family members?
  - supportive adults or mentors in his or her life?
  - connections to positive peer or foster care support groups or community resources?
  - interest in participating on a youth board?
  - connections to a faith-based group?
  - awareness or connections to his or her own culture or ethnicity?

**EMPLOYMENT**

- Has youth been given opportunities to:
  - identify his or her strengths and skills?
  - explore different careers or job training options?
  - work?
  - complete a resume and cover letter or do a mock interview?
  - Does the youth know how to:
    - access employment and career support?
    - identify job opportunities?

**TRANSPORTATION**

- Have the youth’s transportation needs and options been identified?
- Has the youth:
  - obtained a driver’s permit?
  - completed a driver’s education course?
  - obtained a driver’s license?
  - explored the cost of owning a car (e.g., insurance, maintenance, etc.)?
- Does the youth know how to:
  - use public transportation?
  - identify emergency transportation options?
  - use tools to find directions (e.g., Mapquest, GPS, Google Maps, etc.)?

**RESOURCES**

Social workers are key players in ensuring that older youth have access to services. Below is a list of federal policy and programs that can support the needs of youth aging out of care.

**Chafee Foster Care Independence Programs**

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999) offers states essential funding to assist youth up to age 21 in their transition into adulthood. The Chafee program funds services including education, training, employment and financial support. States may also spend up to 30 percent of funds on room and board services of older youth between ages of 18 and 21.

**College Cost Reduction Act**

Effective July 2009, the College Cost Reduction Act allow certain youth who have been in foster care to claim an independent status when applying for financial federal aid. Typically, students who claim independent status are able to access greater federal education assistance because they are not required to include their parent’s income and asset information.
• Does the youth know how to obtain replacement copies of important documents?
• Does the youth understand the importance of keeping documents safe?
• If the youth is a male and over 18, has he registered for selective service?

HEALTH
• Does the young person have:
  ◦ any medical issues that require ongoing medical attention?
  ◦ a list of current prescriptions?
  ◦ Does the youth know how long his or her current prescription is for?
  ◦ Does the youth know how much it will cost if he or she has to pay for it out of pocket?
  ◦ Is the youth aware of the side effects of not taking prescribed medications?
  ◦ access to health insurance (e.g., Medicaid) after discharge?
  ◦ Does he or she know what to do to maintain eligibility?
  ◦ a primary doctor or dentist?
  ◦ access to medical records?
• Has the youth had a full physical, dental and vision exam before leaving care?
• Are youth’s immunizations up to date?
• Does the young person know:
  ◦ how to locate low-income medical services?
  ◦ how make healthy sex education decisions?
  ◦ of any significant birth family’s physical or mental history?

EDUCATION
• Is the young person on track to graduate?
• Has the youth explored and identified a range of higher education opportunities?
• Does the youth have access to copies of:
  ◦ school records (e.g., transcripts, diplomas, etc.)?
  ◦ Individualized Education Plan (IEP) – if applicable?
• If attending college, does the youth know how to:
  ◦ prepare for higher education required tests (e.g., SAT) and meet application and testing deadlines?
• Does the young person know:
  ◦ how to apply for financial aid, Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) and any other scholarships?
  ◦ organize all important financial aid, school and testing information?
• Have on-campus (including school breaks) or off-campus housing options been identified?

EMPLOYMENT
• Has youth been given opportunities to:
  ◦ identify his or her strengths and skills?
  ◦ explore different careers or job training options?
  ◦ work?
  ◦ complete a resume and cover letter or do a mock interview?
• Does the youth know how to:
  ◦ access employment and career support?
  ◦ identify job opportunities?

TRANSPORTATION
• Have the youth’s transportation needs and options been identified?
• Has the youth:
  ◦ obtained a driver’s permit?
  ◦ completed a driver’s education course?
  ◦ obtained a driver’s license?
  ◦ explored the cost of owning a car (e.g., insurance, maintenance, etc.)?
• Does youth know how to:
  ◦ use public transportation?
  ◦ identify emergency transportation options?
  ◦ use tools to find directions (e.g., Mapquest, GPS, Google Maps, etc.)?

HOUSING
• Has the youth:
  ◦ practiced living on his or her own in different housing settings (e.g., scattered site apartments, group homes, etc.)?
  ◦ learned housing search skills (e.g., reviewing a lease or rental application, understanding what it means to be a tenant, etc.)?
  ◦ learned about landlord and tenant laws?
  ◦ identified how to reconnect with family members?
  ◦ identified and secured furniture and household needs for upcoming move?
  ◦ identified his or her strengths and skills?
  ◦ learned about landlord and tenant laws?

SUPPORT NETWORK
• Does the youth have:
  ◦ a relationship with siblings or know how to reconnect with them?
  ◦ healthy relationships with biological family members?
  ◦ supportive adults or mentors in his or her life?
  ◦ connections to positive peer or foster care support groups or community resources?
  ◦ interest in participating on a youth board?

Subsidized apartments, shared housing, school dorms, or relative or foster homes, etc.) close to his or her social and support systems?
• calculated the cost of rent, security deposits, rent and application costs?
• identified (e.g., Section 8, Chafee funding, rental subsidies, etc.) housing resources and become familiar with eligibility requirements and the application process?
• identified and secured furniture and household needs for upcoming move?
• identified a potential co-signer, if necessary?
• learned about landlord and tenant laws?

Resources
Social workers are key players in ensuring that older youth have access to services. Below is a list of federal policy and programs that can support the needs of youth aging out of care.

Chafee Foster Care Independence Programs
The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999) offers states essential funding to assist youth up to age 21 in their transition into adulthood. The Chafee program funds services including education, training, employment and financial support. States may also spend up to 30 percent of funds on room and board services of older youth between ages of 18 and 21.

College Cost Reduction Act
Effective July 2009, the College Cost Reduction Act allow certain youth who have been in foster care to claim an independent status when applying for financial federal aid. Typically, students who claim independent status are able to access greater federal education assistance because they are not required to include their parent’s income and asset information.

Connections to a faith-based group?
Awareness or connections to his or her own culture or ethnicity?

Social workers can recognize the unique strengths, abilities, and specific needs of youth. Social workers can value the youth’s voice and support the young person as he or she develops decision making skills, achieves goals and celebrates successes.
Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act

In October 2008, Congress passed this substantial child welfare reform law extending foster care services up to age 21. This law also promotes permanent families through relative guardianship and adoption, improves educational stability and health planning and training opportunities.

Family Unification Program (FUP)
The Family Unification Program, signed into law in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush, works through local level partnerships between public housing authorities and child welfare agencies. FUP provides families with Section 8 housing subsidies and the supportive services (which are funded largely out of child welfare) necessary to reunite with their children or avoid foster care placement altogether. In October 2000, Congress added youth as an eligible population for FUP. FUP provides youth aging out of care with the vital housing resources they need to avoid homelessness and make successful transitions to adulthood.

Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)
On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which included a $1.5 billion for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). HPRP aims to prevent homelessness and rapidly rehouse individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SUS)
Special Immigrant Juvenile Status provides lawful permanent residency to children and youth who are under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court and who have not been able to reunify with their families as a result of abuse, neglect or abandonment.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Programs
The Workforce Investment Act authorized job training programs to unemployed and underemployed individuals for the Department of Labor (DOL). Two of these programs – Youth Activities and Job Corps – provide job training and supportive services to foster youth. The WIA Youth Activities program focuses on preventative strategies to prevent dropouts and develop occupational skills, in addition to providing training and supportive services (e.g., child care). Job Corps is an educational and training vocational training program that provides students with opportunities to learn a trade, complete their GED, and secure employment.

NASW Resources

Other Relevant Resources
FosterClub is a national nonprofit for young people in foster care. FosterClub has a number of resources for youth and adults including tools to help youth transition out of foster care.

Fostering Connections Resource Center provides comprehensive information, training and tools related to the implementation of the Fostering Connections law.

NASW Resources

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SUS)
Special Immigrant Juvenile Status provides lawful permanent residency to children and youth who are under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court and who have not been able to reunify with their families as a result of abuse, neglect or abandonment.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Programs
The Workforce Investment Act authorized job training programs to unemployed and underemployed individuals for the Department of Labor (DOL). Two of these programs – Youth Activities and Job Corps – provide job training and supportive services to foster youth. The WIA Youth Activities program focuses on preventative strategies to prevent dropouts and develop occupational skills, in addition to providing training and supportive services (e.g., child care). Job Corps is an educational and training vocational training program that provides students with opportunities to learn a trade, complete their GED, and secure employment.

NASW Resources

References


Other Relevant Resources
FosterClub is a national nonprofit for young people in foster care. FosterClub has a number of resources for youth and adults including tools to help youth transition out of foster care.

Foster Family Programs is the nation’s largest operating foundation dedicated to foster care and improving the child welfare system.

Foster Care Alumni of a national nonprofit association that has been founded and is led by alumni of the foster care system.

Fostering Connections Resource Center highlights information, training and tools related to the implementation of the Fostering Connections law.

National Center for Housing and Child Welfare (NCHCW) links housing resources to child welfare agencies to prevent family homelessness, reduce the need for out-of-home placement and ensure older youth obtain safe, stable and affordable housing upon exiting the foster care system.


Other Relevant Resources
FosterClub is a national nonprofit for young people in foster care. FosterClub has a number of resources for youth and adults including tools to help youth transition out of foster care.

Foster Family Programs is the nation’s largest operating foundation dedicated to foster care and improving the child welfare system.

Foster Care Alumni of a national nonprofit association that has been founded and is led by alumni of the foster care system.

Fostering Connections Resource Center highlights information, training and tools related to the implementation of the Fostering Connections law.

National Center for Housing and Child Welfare (NCHCW) links housing resources to child welfare agencies to prevent family homelessness, reduce the need for out-of-home placement and ensure older youth obtain safe, stable and affordable housing upon exiting the foster care system.


Other Relevant Resources
FosterClub is a national nonprofit for young people in foster care. FosterClub has a number of resources for youth and adults including tools to help youth transition out of foster care.

Foster Family Programs is the nation’s largest operating foundation dedicated to foster care and improving the child welfare system.

Foster Care Alumni of a national nonprofit association that has been founded and is led by alumni of the foster care system.

Fostering Connections Resource Center highlights information, training and tools related to the implementation of the Fostering Connections law.

National Center for Housing and Child Welfare (NCHCW) links housing resources to child welfare agencies to prevent family homelessness, reduce the need for out-of-home placement and ensure older youth obtain safe, stable and affordable housing upon exiting the foster care system.

The implementation of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 will be critical to promoting the well-being of older youth in care as they prepare to enter young adulthood.
Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act

In October 2008, Congress passed this substantial welfare reform law extending foster care services up to age 21. This law also promotes permanent families through relative guardianship and adoption, improves educational stability and health planning and training opportunities.

Family Unification Program (FUP)
The Family Unification Program, signed into law in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush, works through local level partnerships between public housing authorities and child welfare agencies. FUP provides families with Section 8 housing subsidies and the supportive services (which are funded largely out of child welfare) necessary to reunite with their children or avoid foster care placements altogether. In October 2000, Congress added youth as an eligible population for FUP. FUP provides youth aging out of care with the vital resources they need to avoid homelessness and make successful transitions to adulthood.

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)
On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which included a $1.5 billion for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). HPRP aims to prevent homelessness and rapidly rehouse individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SUS)
Special Immigrant Juvenile Status provides lawful permanent residency to children and youth who are under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court and who have not been able to reuniﬁ with their families as a result of abuse, neglect or abandonment.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Programs
The Workforce Investment Act authorized job training programs to unemployed and underemployed individuals for the Department of Labor (DOL). Two of these programs – Youth Activities and Job Corps – provide job training and supportive services to foster youth. The WIA Youth Activities program focuses on preventative strategies to prevent dropouts and develop occupational skills, in addition to providing training and supportive services (e.g., child care). Job Corps is an educational and training vocational training program that provides students with opportunities to learn a trade, complete their GED, and secure employment.

NASW Resources


References


event=federalLegislation.viewLegis&id=121

FosterCare_FactSheet.pdf


Improving family foster care

Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 will be critical to promoting the well-being of older youth in foster care as they prepare to enter young adulthood.
Engaging Young People in their Transition Planning

Background
Older youth in foster care are confronted with an overwhelming number of adult decisions as they prepare to leave the child welfare system. Young adults take much longer to reach social and economic maturity than others of the same age group 50 years ago (Berlin, Furstenberg, & Waters, 2010). Most young people in the United States can rely on their families to help them well into adulthood. In fact, 41% percent of parents indicated they provide some level of financial assistance to their children ages 23 to 28 (Charles Schwab, 2010). However, foster youth are still forced to make significant life decisions with limited, if any support. Unlike their peers, they must make important decisions such as where they are going to live, how they are going to pay for housing and who they can contact in case of an emergency.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering Connections) was designed to promote the wellbeing of older youth in foster care. Highlighted below are two of the provisions that support older youth in care:

- States are allowed to extend federally funded foster care, adoption and guardian assistance up to age 21 for Title IV-E eligible youth who meet specific education, training or employment requirements.
- States are mandated to develop a personalized transition plan with the young person no later than 90 days prior to his or her 18th birthday or older if the state chooses to extend care beyond 18. Each plan should address housing, health insurance, education, employment, workforce supports and opportunities for mentors and supportive services. Plans should also include as much detail as the youth elect.

All young people should have a solid transition plan for moving into adulthood. A number of the Fostering Connections’ provisions are designed to promote the wellbeing of older youth in foster care.