



independent living program strategies

**Developing a
Comprehensive
Adolescent
Independent Living
Program Plan**



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strategies

FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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**Independent Living Program Strategies
for the 21st Century: Developing a
Comprehensive Adolescent Independent
Living Program Plan**

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Table of Contents

Preface/Acknowledgements	1
Section 1: Introduction	4
An Agency-Wide Approach.....	5
The Process of Change.....	6
Legislative Background And Context: Federal Laws.....	6
State Use of Federal Expenditures.....	9
Programs and Activities - Frequently Asked Questions.....	9
Minimum Components of the five-year state plan.....	10
Public and Private Child Care Sectors Working Together.....	11
One-Third Model.....	11
Comprehensive Independent Living Planning.....	12
Scope of the Text.....	13
Section 2: Additional Elements of a Comprehensive Plan	14
Defining Independent Living Services.....	14
Phases of Independent Living Preparation.....	14
Phases I and II.....	15
Phases III and IV.....	15
Phases V and VI.....	16
Living Arrangement Options.....	17
Program Planning: Overview of Phases.....	17
Phase II Programming.....	18
Phase III Programming.....	19
Phase IV Programming.....	20
Section 3: Planning a Project Approach	21
Benefits of a Plan.....	21
Creating Support.....	21
Increasing Funding.....	21
Saving Time and Resources.....	21
Using Available Talents.....	22
Providing a Roadmap.....	22
Setting Priorities.....	22
▪ What Does an AILP Development Plan Mean?	
▪ Who needs a plan?	
▪ Why do you need these guidelines?	
Preparing The Plan: Goals and Objectives.....	23
Generate a Sense of Commitment.....	24
List Projects to Do, Then Set Priorities.....	25
Use Time to Focus on Your Goals.....	25
Use Schedules to Motivate.....	25
Information is Power.....	25
Starting at the Beginning.....	25
No Plan at All.....	26
A Halfway Commitment.....	26
Rules A and B.....	26
Overly Ambitious, Complex, And Controlling Plans.....	27
Impractical Goals.....	27
Defining Adolescent Independent Living.....	27

Needs Assessment.....	28
Major Milestones of the Planning Process/Project.....	28
Section 4: General Themes.....	30
Overall Agency Policy.....	30
Statutory Requirements, Agency Policy and Regulations.....	30
Recommendations.....	31
• Adolescent Independent Living Policy Statement	
• Legislative Changes	
• Independent Living Case Plans	
Public & Private Agencies.....	32
• Foster Home Certification and Licensing	
• Increase Foster Parent Recruitment Activities	
• Improve Primary Caregivers' Training and Preparation	
• Revise Licensing Requirements	
• Eligibility of Youths	
Statewide Coordination.....	35
Recommendations.....	35
• Policies to Coordinate Services	
• Coordinate Training	
Preparation Of Staff.....	35
Recommendations.....	36
• Orientation Training Sessions	
• Reference Materials	
• Resource Library	
Community Involvement and Community-Based Resources.....	37
Recommendations.....	37
• Volunteer Service Coordinators	
• Advisory Board	
• Resource Directory	
In Conclusion.....	38
Section 5: Information and Public Relations Materials.....	39
Youth Handbook and Program Packet.....	39
Program Entrance Packet.....	39
Program Exit Packet.....	40
Adult Community AILP Information Packet.....	40
Resource Center/Library.....	41
Resource Directory.....	42
Information Meetings.....	42
Recommendations.....	43
• Youth Handbook and Packets	
• General AILP Packet	
• Resource Center/Library	
• Resource Directory	
• "Road Show"	
Section 6: Advisory Boards.....	45
Adolescent Advisory Board.....	46
Empowering Youths.....	47
Recommendations.....	48
• Form a Youth Advisory Board	

- Stipends for Student Participation
- Newsletter
- Regular Meetings

Additional Advisory Boards..... 48

Statewide and Local Adult Community Advisory Boards..... 48

Recommendations..... 49

- Form Statewide Advisory Board
- Form Local Advisory Boards

Private Sector Boards, Foundations 50

Recommendations..... 51

- Form a Non-Profit Organization
- Seek Endorsements
- Develop a Three-Year Action Plan

Section 7: Program Incentives..... 52

Incentives for Youth Participation..... 52

Youth Incentives: Monetary..... 53

Youth Incentives: Non-Monetary..... 53

Incentives for Foster Parent Participation..... 56

Recommendations..... 57

- Orientation Meetings
- Cash Incentives
- Pre-service and In-service Training
- Foster Parents as Teachers
- Orientation Packet

Incentives for Residential Staff..... 57

Recommendations..... 58

- Information Sharing
- Community Involvement
- Encourage Skill Development

Section 8: Staff Specialization..... 59

Shifting Demographics..... 59

Lead Worker or Facilitator..... 59

Foster Parent Specialization and Partnering..... 60

Levels of Foster Parent Partnerships..... 60

All Foster Parents 60

Foster Parent Youth Coordinators..... 61

Foster Parent Support Coordinators..... 61

Recommendations..... 61

- Staff Specialization
- Specific Staff Responsibilities

Section 9: Overall AILP Training..... 62

Experiential Learning or Adult Learning Theory..... 62

Teaching Adults and Adolescents..... 63

Modeling..... 64

Lectures..... 64

Experiential Exercises..... 64

Role Plays..... 65

Staff Training..... 65

Recommendations 67

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in AILP Concepts • Training Series • Training Modules • Mandated POS Training • Staff Orientation • AILP Orientation for Others 	
Youth Skills Training.....	68
The Case of the Motown Skills Program.....	70
Recommendations.....	70
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Life Skills Curriculum • Gather Information on Life Skills Education • Share Information with Other AILP's • Emphasize Experiential Teaching • Coordinate with Local Educational Institutions • Include Group and Individual Work • Future Planning • Monetary Incentives • Non-Monetary Incentives 	
Section 10: Independent Living Case Plan.....	73
Transitional Plan Outline.....	73
Overall Need.....	74
Goal.....	74
Youth Application.....	74
Youth Assessment.....	75
Youth Assessment Instruments.....	75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AILP Weekly Checklist 1 • AILP Weekly Checklist 2 • Assessment for Independent Living • Adolescent's Assessment of Progress on AILP Plan • Strengths/Needs Assessment • Life Skills Inventory 	
Additional Data and Elements.....	77
Post-Program.....	78
Overall Program Evaluation.....	78
Section 11: Volunteers/Mentors.....	80
Recommendations.....	81
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use AILP Volunteers • Work with State Volunteer Office • Develop Volunteer Component • Two Types of Volunteers 	
Section 12: Teen Conferences.....	83
Conference Staffing.....	84
Building a Staff.....	84
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-Group Facilitators or Workshop Leaders • Activity Coordinator and Night Supervisors 	
Recruiting.....	85
Conference Design.....	86
Size and Location.....	86
Conference Structure.....	87

A Winning Idea..... 88

Recommendations..... 88

- Plan Teen Conference
- Grant Funding

Section 13: Education..... 90

Significance 91

Foster Youth Expectations and Improving Opportunities..... 94

Educational Training Vouchers – ETV’s..... 95

Section 14: Jobs/Vocational Program..... 96

Exploring Interests..... 96

Exploring Careers..... 96

Job Search..... 96

Developing Community Based Employment..... 98

Existing Programs..... 98

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and Workforce Investment Act..... 98

Developing a Partnership with JTPA and WIA..... 99

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) 100

Other Employment Programs..... 101

Job Related Skills Training..... 102

Community Colleges..... 102

Vocational Education..... 102

Developing Partnerships with Community Programs..... 102

Creating GAP Programming..... 103

Recommendations..... 103

- Use Community Resources
- Establish Incentive Programs
- Develop a Comprehensive Tiered Employment
- Policy Promoting Full AILP Employment
- Establish a Job Shadowing Program
- Career Assessments
- Coordinate a Community Based Real World Event
- Job Resource Materials

Section 15: Housing..... 106

Living Arrangement Options..... 106

- Cluster apartments
- Live-in roommates
- Host homes
- Boarding homes
- Shared houses
- Semi-supervised apartments (scattered-site)
- Subsidy programs

A Continuum of Options..... 107

Subsidy Programs..... 107

Housing and the Chafee Program..... 108

Section 477 Chafee Foster Care Independence Program..... 108

Who Is Eligible?..... 109

The National Foster Care Awareness Project (NFCAP)..... 109

Special Note..... 111

Acquiring Housing For a Program..... 112

Supervision.....	113
Transitional Group Homes.....	113
Recommendations.....	114
• Include Housing Component in AILP	
• Many Housing Options	
• Develop Subsidy Policy	
• Encourage Transitional Homes	
Section 16: Follow-up After Transition Services.....	115
Chafee Independence Program Accountability and Reporting.....	116
Recommendations.....	117
• Follow-up Survey	
• Involve Former Out-of-Home-Care Youths	
• Identify Out-of-Home-Care Alumni	
• Identify Other Community Resource Persons	
• Special Note	
Section 17: Mini- or Seed Grants.....	119
The Application Phase.....	119
Recommendations.....	119
• Mini or Seed Grants	
Materials as Well as Cash Grants.....	119
Section 18: Special Groups.....	120
Chafee ILP: Young People With Special Needs.....	121
Frequently Asked Questions.....	121
Section 19: Overall Recommendations Implementation.....	124
Phase I Implementation (Year 1).....	125
Phase II Implementation (Year 2)	125
Phase III Implementation (Year 3)	125
APPENDICES.....	126
Appendix A – Foster Care Independence Act.....	127
Appendix B - Five year State Plans.....	134
Appendix C - Medicaid.....	135
Appendix D - References and Literature Cited.....	140
Appendix E - Youth Application - Short Form.....	142
Appendix F - Examples of Youth AILP Plan.....	143
Appendix G - Behavioral and Narrative Assessment of Youth.....	146
• Weekly Checklist #1	
• Weekly Checklist #2	
• Assessment for Independent Living	
• Adolescent's Assessment of Progress	
• Strengths/Needs Assessment	
• Life Skills Inventory	
Appendix H - Youth's Post-Program Satisfaction.....	176
• Referring Agency Evaluation	
Appendix I - Needs Assessment Survey.....	178
Appendix J - Oregon Example.....	184
Appendix K - Resources.....	188
Order Form.....	192

Preface/Acknowledgements



Preparing Adolescents for Their Exit From Out-of-Home Care

In the early to mid 1980's, working on a small federal grant, I became involved in the development of a comprehensive model for adolescent independent living. That work culminated in a text entitled *Independent Living Strategies: A Program to Prepare Adolescents for Their Exit from Foster Care*. That text provided a practical model and presentation of the concept that independent living should become much more than a movement of an adolescent out of foster care: "it becomes the preparation for the transition out of care, the management of the transition itself, and the follow-up after transition is accomplished."

The model stressed flexibility for both adolescent and agency to plan a multi-level program that would allow youth to become partially or fully financially independent as early as 17 years of age. In addition, the text promoted benefits for adolescents, public agencies, allied social service agencies, and the real possibility that substantive contributions could be made to child welfare practice and theory.

The efficacy of a "fresh approach" to the delivery of adolescent services was thought to be borne out by use of the model and development of new actions that supported a comprehensive program.

Nationally, the field of child welfare was receptive. Youth advocates and program staff noticed a change in child welfare demographic—an older youth in out-of-home care: more adolescents with

multiple placements: higher more severe levels of abuse, neglect, and exploitation: and growing numbers of discharges from the out-of-home-care system who were becoming a part of the impoverished and homeless populations.

In 1984, a lawsuit in New York (*Palmer vs. Cuomo*) opened the door to serious national consideration of the problems of youth in the out-of-home-care system. Committees in both houses of Congress leveled hearings and staff energy at this issue, with resulting legislation that changed the face of public and private agency adolescent service delivery (The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 - P.L. 99-272). Foster and residential care, treatment centers, correctional facilities, and psychiatric hospitals that serve youth became more aware of the need for pre-discharge, discharge, and post-discharge services for their clients. Public and private agencies started to progress more fully towards addressing their responsibilities as surrogate parents—"in loco-parentis."

Federal funding lines for adolescent independent living programming (AILP), originating in 1987 under P.L. 99-272, have been reauthorized many times so that programs will carry through the early part of this century and beyond. Some states have drafted new legislation on behalf of youth and others have updated antiquated or unforgiving segments of existing statutes. Public and private child welfare and social service agencies have joined together in

intensive supportive lobbying efforts both locally and nationally.

In 1999, the *Foster Care Independence Act* often referred to as the *John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program* was passed by congress. This act changed the original federal independent living funding focus to include a wider range of eligible youth and programming.

Independent living preparation training is being provided to out-of-home-care youth, foster parents and other primary caregivers, social workers, case managers, caseworkers, residential child care staff, foster care reviewers, family court personnel, and administrators and managers of public and private child welfare programs. Youth served now range from 13-21 and there are many efforts to serve youth post-discharge. National resource centers have added independent living to their objectives and entrepreneurs have created a small cottage industry to serve all of these “identified” needs.

Yet, there is still much to be done. Programming is still terribly deficient in many areas of the country and the planning process is often limited and near-sighted. Programs continue to miss the opportunity to provide comprehensive independent living services for eligible youth. The lack of planning is apparent at all levels and few states and private agencies have long-range plans to develop comprehensive programs. Staff turnover and uncertainty in administrative forces has compromised many efforts to develop longer range planning in support of AILP’s. State legislatures continue to ignore the necessary match funding to receive the federal allocations and thus, we continue see gaps between funding, programming, and the community.

This text is an attempt to add to my original writings and the many facets of programming that I have gleaned from those who do the real work with the youth of America—staffs of out-of-home-care programs. The readers of this text and I both have had and will continue to have opportunities to refine our methods. The end result will be better programs and greater opportunities for youth who have suffered enough in their short lifetimes.

Joining me in the development of this edition is Nancy Carter, who has headed up our independent living programming efforts in North Carolina over the last decade. Nancy has developed advocacy and independent living programming for youths, foster parents, group home staffs, social workers, and community folks. She has presented her ideas to many state and county programs and a wide-range of private youth serving agencies in the United States and Canada. She is nationally recognized in the area of AILP and working with adolescents.

A great deal of credit has to be expressed to The National Foster Care Awareness Project, funded by Casey Family Programs and the Benton Foundation. We have used both volumes of the *Frequently Asked Questions: About the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program*, written by Susan H. Badeau, edited by Mary Lee Allen, Robin Nixon, and Susan A. Weiss, extensively, to provide the supportive data in transitioning this text from previous editions (1988-2003). Both volumes were invaluable.

This book is dedicated to all youth serving professionals who have worked so diligently over the last 20 years or so, to bring adolescent independent living

concepts to the forefront of the child welfare effort in the United States.

We would also like to thank the many programs whose willingness to let us be a part of their planning and ongoing management efforts made this text possible. In addition, we have discussed this work with hundreds of practitioners, youths, and students in courses, conferences, institutes, seminars, workshops, and during on-site visits to homes, facilities, and programs. Many of the ideas in this book have their origins in these dialogues, which we hope proved as stimulating to my audiences as they did to us.

We have tried to provide appropriate credit in the text to authors whose works have shaped our own endeavors. But citations are not able to convey the extent of our indebtedness to some of our colleagues whose writings and informal communications have so influenced us that we are unable to determine where their ideas leave off and ours begin.

Finally, we hope that our future work, the work of our colleagues and particularly youths involved in independent living, leads to stronger programming efforts on behalf of all young people who strive to be self-sufficient and live independently.

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Independent Living Resources, Inc.
June 2003*

RESOURCES

Foster Care Independence Act – 1999 - John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

The National Foster Care Awareness Project,
Frequently Asked Questions: About the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program,
written by Susan H. Badeau, edited by Mary Lee Allen, Robin Nixon, and Susan A. Weiss.



Section 1:



Introduction

Child welfare agencies throughout the nation are called upon to respond to the needs of growing numbers of youths in out-of-home care. The early 1980s saw a dramatic decrease in the out-of-home-care population—from 550,000 in 1980 to approximately 270,000 by 1984—because of *P.L. 96-272* and permanency planning efforts. As the decade progressed, the makeup of this youthful population changed as well.

Demographics initially showed a dramatic shift in age ranges so that, by 1987, a reported 50 to 51 percent of the out-of-home care group was 13-21 years old, and increase from 30 to 31 percent earlier in the decade. An estimated 30 percent of the overall population was 11 to 15 years of age. At this time, nationally, the child welfare system was taking in fewer young children. In addition, it was not unusual to encounter casework staff with caseloads made up of 75 to 100 percent teenagers.

In the 1990s, there were further changes in the demographic makeup of this group as well as in the overall number of youths in care. Projections in 1991 place the out-of-home-care population between 400,000 to 450,000 youths. The teen population seemed to be remaining proportionally the same as mentioned above; therefore, there were greater numbers of adolescents in out-of-home care. Studies also estimated that

fewer than one in four of the adolescents would return to their own homes.

In 2002, there were over 581,000 youths in foster care and over 274,000 (47%) were cared for in non-relative foster family homes, 151,864 (26%) in relative foster homes, 57,590 (10%) in institutions, 46,279 (8%) in group homes, and 51,167 (9%) in other types of facilities (*Office of US Inspector General, US Department of Health and Human Services, May 2002*).

The number of youths who, in any given year, will be discharged from care because they have reached the age of majority also continues to increase—rising from 16,000 in 1984 to 29,000 in 1989, and continuing to hover between 25,000 and 29,000 annually into the 2000's. Yet, still in terms of the system that seeks to serve them, they are children one day and adults the next.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the U.S. Congress, in hearings and reviews on behalf of out-of-home-care youth, began to put funding in place for child welfare approaches to programming for these youths. Important questions began to get national attention: How could agencies better prepare young persons in their care and custody for discharge and adulthood? What resources would be needed to enable young people to become self-sufficient and independent? Could the adolescent homeless and

transitional living populations be served as well as foster care system youths?

In 1987, with the passage of *P.L. 99-272* and in subsequent amendments to the *Social Security Act*, federal legislation established the Independent Living Initiatives. In recent years national attention has focused on working with foster care and homeless and runaway youth to make transition from foster care and shelters in a more planned and supportive manner. *The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA)* and *Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-169)* have expanded federal efforts further. Under these acts of Congress, funding has been provided for a wide range of services for out-of-home care youths.

To create appropriate levels of support, public and private child caring agencies have to make basic changes in their programs for these children. Initiating these changes has required clarification on many issues concerning the development, operation, and follow-up of adolescent independent living programming.

A successful transition to independent living is a task facing every young adult in out of agency care. Reaching that goal of self-sufficiency for youth who are in agency care requires planning for implementation of a comprehensive, individualized, and well-coordinated program of services. The success of the program can be measured against clear objectives: In terms of planning and delivery of services, does the program help young people attain the highest level of self-sufficiency possible by the date of their legal emancipation? Does the program lay the base for continuing growth and development for individual youth?

An Agency-Wide Approach

The development of an agency-wide approach to prepare adolescents for independent living needs to consider where youths reside, as a key concern in designing effective, timely and efficient delivery of services. Youths in out-of-home placement may be in a residential treatment facility, a group home, an emergency shelter, or foster family setting depending upon their functioning, skill levels, and variations of available resources in individual counties, and states. Providing independent living services in each of these settings, along with services offered in school, after school, and in work settings, adds strength and purpose to the program.

To be most effective, the agency needs to design an approach that guides development and implementation of an independent living program within the present out-of-home care system. Changes required in the present out-of-home system to accommodate this recommendation are central to this text. They are based on the assumption that adolescents can and *will participate in the community, rather than be isolated from it*. Making appropriate plans and services available for out-of-home youths, means that the independent living program must expand efforts to *improve the support of the community and creative use of limited resources*.

The success of these efforts will, in the long term, depend on the ability of adolescents to develop skills that allow them to function as providers of their own needs. As they learn, grow, and mature, *they must become advocates, even policy makers, for themselves and their peers* who have similar needs.

If relatively unskilled foster children are to assume these unaccustomed roles

in the future, they will require training in competencies that are quite different from those offered in traditional social services programs. The role of the social worker must shift from clinician to technical consultant who develops or adapts resources necessary for independent living and who provides training and assistance to the adolescent foster child and primary caregivers.

The Process of Change

Identifying the concerns of young people exiting out-of-home care *by listening to their ideas and suggestions* for improvement is an important step in the process of community and agency change. Information from potential and actual program participants about those aspects of community life that encourage or impede self-sufficiency is most useful in guiding development efforts. Allied public service agencies and private agencies also are sources of useful information.

Other significant steps in the process of agency and program change involve specifying the personnel, finances, and other resources required to take action and identifying resources available in the agency and community to support change. When it is clear what level of resources exists to support program change, strategies can then be developed to acquire additional resources that may be required.

To capture the attention of prospective support groups, it is important to enlist the aid of the volunteer/community sector in program development, publicize the purpose and need of an independent living program, and increase agency visibility. Activities must be chosen to maximize the likelihood of immediate, visible, and permanent results. For example, a

Chamber of Commerce might be enlisted to spearhead a campaign to provide teenagers with after-school work. The independent living program can help maximize benefits from such an effort by publicizing the collaborative action of finding jobs for adolescents who will soon exit out-of-home care.

The critical step in program development is that the agency takes the initiative to work in a broader community context, establish new public policies, and create alternative resources for the out-of-home-care population.

Legislative Background And Context

Federal Laws

Dramatic changes have occurred in child welfare nationally since the passage of *P. L. 96-272—The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980*. Reunification of children and families, application of “reasonable efforts” standards, and stronger efforts to provide a wide range of support services for adoptions (particularly of special needs and minority children) have accelerated these changes. In addition, the *Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-272)*, through *Section 477 of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act*, authorized funds to states for fiscal years 1987 and 1988 for service programs and activities to assist eligible children in Title IV-E foster care to make the transition from foster care to independent living.

The *Technical and Miscellaneous Revenue Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-647)* further amended Section 477 to continue authorization through fiscal year 1989. It extended eligibility to any youth, at least age 16, in foster care under the responsibility of the state. The state also may include support for any child who

had foster care maintenance payments discontinued on or after his or her 16th birthday, so long as the child is picked up in the program within six months of the date of discontinuance.

The *Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1989 (P.L. 101-239)* authorized the Independent Living Program for federal fiscal years 1990 through 1992. The *Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (P.L.101-508)* also amended *Section 477* to extend, at state option, eligibility for independent living services supported with federal funds to children formerly in foster care, up to age 21. The Acts of 1989 and 1990 also provide for increased federal funding—FY 1990-\$50 million; FY 1991-\$60 million; FY 1992-\$70 million—and a requirement for a state match of funds above the original federal authorization for \$45 million. The base allocations for the states ranged from \$8,378 in Alaska to \$8,023,999 in California (*formulated on the basis of 1984 statistics for a state's eligible children*).

The *Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (H.R. 3443)* offered important new help to young people transitioning from foster care. The Act established the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. The program was named in honor of the late Senator John H. Chafee of Rhode Island, one of the original Senate sponsors of the Act and a longtime champion for children who have been abused or neglected. The Act allowed states to provide Medicaid coverage to young people between the

ages of 18 and 21 who were in foster care on their 18th birthday. Increased from \$1,000 to \$10,000 the assets a young person in foster care could have and still maintain his or her eligibility for Title IV-E funded foster care. Required states to ensure that foster parents are adequately prepared, both initially and on a continuing basis, to care for the children placed with them. The Act also authorized additional funding for adoption incentive payments to states to assist in finding permanent homes for children in foster care.

The *Chafee Foster Care Independence Program* totally replaced the former independent living initiative. The Chafee Program provided:

- Increased funding for independent living activities
- Offered increased assistance, including room and board, for young people ages 18 to 21 who were leaving foster care
- Emphasized the importance of securing permanent families for young people in foster care
- Expanded the opportunity for states to offer Medicaid to young people transitioning from care
- Increased state accountability for outcomes for young people transitioning from foster care

The following table provides more detail on changes under the *Chafee Act*.

Provision	John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	Former IL Initiative
Funding		
Amount	\$140 million capped entitlement	\$70 million capped entitlement
State Match	20% state match required on total allocation	No state match required for allocation under \$45 million; 50% state match required for claims that exceed \$45 million base
Allocation Formula	Based on the proportion of children in both Title IV-E funded and state funded foster care in the state for the most recent fiscal year; no state shall receive less than \$500,000 or its 1998 allotment, whichever is greater	Based only on the number of children in Title IV-E funded foster care in the state in 1984
Set-Aside	1.5% of authorized program funds set-aside for evaluation, technical assistance, performance measurement and data collection	No set-side provision
Eligibility		
Eligible Young People	Eligible young people are those up to the age of 21 who are "likely to remain in foster care until age 18" and those who have aged out of foster care, without regard to their eligibility for Title IV-E foster care; A portion of funds must be used to serve eligible young people 18 to 21 who left foster care because they reached age 18	Eligible young people were those 16 to 18 in Title IV-E funded foster care; states also had the option to serve young people up to the age of 1, and young people who are or were in state-funded foster care as well as those in Title IV-E funded foster care
Benefits to Indian Children	State must make benefits and services available to Indian children in state on same basis as other children	No Provision
Focus on Young	People (18-21)	
Participation of young people in program design	Young people must participate directly in designing their program activities and accept personal responsibility for achieving independence	No Provision
Funding for services for young people ages 18 to 21	States must use a portion of their funds for assistance and services for young people 18 to 21 who left foster care because they reached age 18	No special targeting of funds on young people transitioning from care
Use of funds for room and board	States may use up to 30% of their program funds for room and board for young people 18 to 21 who have left foster care because they reached age 18, but not 21	No Provision
Emphasis on Permanence	Clarification that independent living activities should not be seen as an alternative to permanence for children and can be provided concurrently with adoption and other permanency activities	No Provision
Health care	States given option to extend Medicaid coverage to youths 18-21 who were in foster care on 18 th birthday, or some subset of this group; encourages such coverage	No Provision
Asset Limit	Asset limit increased to allow young people to have \$10,000 in assets and remain eligible for Title IV-E funded foster care	Young people had to meet \$1,000 asset limit in AFDC in order to be eligible for Title IV-E funded foster care
Training for staff and parents	States must certify that Title IV-E funds will be used to provide training to help adoptive and foster parents, workers in group homes, and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living	No Provision
Coordination State must certify in its plan that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State has consulted widely with public and private organizations in implementing the new program ▪ State will coordinate the new program with other federal and state programs for young people ▪ State will consult and coordinate with each Indian tribe in the state 	No Provision
Accountability		
Outcome Measures	HHS, in consultation with federal, state, local officials, advocates, youth service providers, researchers, is required to develop outcome measures to assess state performance and effectiveness of AILP services	No Provision
Evaluation	Secretary of HHS must develop outcome measures and data elements to track state performance on outcomes and penalties for states that do not report; 1.5% set aside of authorized program funds for evaluation, technical assistance, performance measurement, and data collection	States required to report to HHS annually; Secretary of HHS required to evaluate program and report to Congress; no funding specified for evaluation
Penalties	Penalties imposed for misuse of funds or noncompliance of data reporting requirements	No Provision
State Application	States may submit one application for funds for a period of five consecutive years	States required to apply each year to coordinate planning with triennial Child Family Services Plan

(Adapted from: Frequently Asked Questions about the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 – National Foster Care Awareness Project)

State Use of Federal Expenditures

Under the Foster Care Independence Act (FCIA) each state is allotted a share of the amount appropriated for independent living based on the proportion of children in both Title IV-E funded and state funded foster care in the state for the most recent fiscal year; no state was to receive less than \$500,000 or its 1998 allotment, whichever is greater.

For fiscal year 1999, the amount appropriated was \$140 million. States need to provide 20% in matching funds to receive their total allocation. States can elect to start ILP programming with youths as young as age 13. Under FCIA, there are two areas of service that are limited to young people ages 18 to 21:

- **Housing:** FCIA dollars for room and board may only be provided to young people who have left foster care as a result of turning age 18.
- **Medicaid:** the FCIA option to extend Medicaid coverage to age 21 is intended solely for young people who have left foster care on or after their 18th birthday.

All other independent living services envisioned under the Act including life skills training, case management support, and referral services may be made available to young people both before and after they turn 18. The only requirement in this regard is that at least some activities funded with FCIA program dollars be targeted for young people who are past age 18 but not yet age 21.

Programs and Activities - Frequently Asked Questions About the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program; National Foster Care Awareness Project (NFCAP) February 2000

Generally, states have significant flexibility in deciding how to use the funds to carry out the purposes of the Chafee Independence Program. They may use them differently in various parts of the state. There are two limitations on the use of funds. First, no more than 30 percent of the funds may be used for room and board, and only young people between the ages of 18 to 21 may use these funds. Second, in order to maximize funding for these young people, the funds cannot be used to substitute for or to supplant any other funds already being used for the same general purposes in the state.

The Act specifies that states may use the funds in "any manner that is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes" of the program. The Chafee Independence Programs sets out five fairly broad purposes that are consistent with many of the goals of good independent living services.

1. Identify children who are expected to be in foster care to age 18 and help them make a transition to self-sufficiency
2. Help these children receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment
3. Help them prepare for and enter post-secondary training and education institutions
4. Provide personal and emotional support for children aging out of foster care
5. Provide a range of services and support for former foster care recipients between ages 18 and 21 to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that the program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for adulthood

A state can choose a broad or narrow list of activities to help achieve these purposes for young people. Such a decision should be made as part of the planning process where there will be a look, among other things, at how other public and private resources are being used in the state to assist young people transitioning from foster care.

The Act itself lists some services that relate to the purposes of the Program, but is not intended as a restrictive list. The services specified in the Act include:

- Assistance in obtaining a high school diploma
- Career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention
- Training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management skills
- Substance abuse prevention
- Preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutritional education, and pregnancy prevention)
- Education
- Training and employment services
- Preparation for postsecondary training and education
- Mentors and interactions with adults
- Financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate supports and services for young people ages 18 to 21 formerly in foster care

In addition, the Act makes it clear that a state may choose to use up to 30 percent of its Chafee Independence Program funds for room and board for young people ages 18 to 21 who were in foster care on their 18th birthday. A state also may use some of its funds to hire a coordinator for its independent living activities and to establish accountability mechanisms to help ensure high quality services and supports are developed and maintained.

Minimum Components of the five-year state plan for the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence program (see Section 477(b))

Descriptions of how a state will:

- Administer, supervise, or oversee the programs carried out under the plan
- Design and deliver independent living services consistent with the purposes of the Chafee Independence Program
- Ensure statewide, although not necessarily uniform, coverage by the program
- Serve children at various ages and stages of development
- Involve both the public and private sectors in service delivery
- Use objective criteria for determining eligibility for and ensuring fair and equitable treatment under the program
- Cooperate in national evaluations of the effectiveness of the services in achieving the purposes of the Chafee Independence Program

Certifications by the chief executive officer of a state that the state will:

- Provide assistance and services to children who have left foster care because they have attained age 18, but not 21;
- Spend no more than 30 percent of its annual allotment for room and board for children who have left foster care because they have attained age 18, but not 21, and none of it for room and board for children under age 18
- Use its training funds authorized under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to help foster and adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers to understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living and where possible coordinate such training with independent living programs
- Have consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing the plan and given all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments
- Make every effort to coordinate Chafee Independence Program-funded activities with other federal and state programs for youth (especially the programs funded under the federal Transitional Living Grant Program, abstinence education programs, local housing programs, programs for young people with disabilities (especially sheltered workshops), and school-to-work programs offered by high schools or local workforce agencies
- Consult with each Indian tribe in the state about the activities to be carried out under the plan; coordinate the programs with such tribes; and make the programs' benefits and services available to Indian children in the state on the same basis as other children
- Ensure that adolescents participate directly in designing their own independent living activities and accept responsibility for living up to their part of the program
- Have established and will enforce standards and procedures to prevent fraud and abuse in the programs carried out under the plan

Additional information and copies of the full *Frequently Asked Questions* text can be found at; <http://www.casey.org/advocacy/fcact.htm>.

Public and Private Child Care Sectors Working Together

Many states and local jurisdictions have developed approaches for the delivery of independent living services using the private child-caring sector. In fact, prior to initial federal independent living legislation and funding (1987), the predominance of adolescent independent living service delivery was provided by the private child-caring sector. This sector has, in many instances, developed proven independent living programs.

Private sector providers (*in most instances also known as POS—purchase of service providers*) need to develop a greater understanding of the federal and state role in this important youth service area. Having some understanding of how their state or county governmental independent living system is funded and operates will hopefully provide additional avenues for expanding their role as POS agencies.

In many instances, the private youth-caring organization can gear-up and provide stronger life skills programs more cost-effectively than the public agency. In addition, the private agency is often already serving a large number of youths—if not all of youths in their facilities—which are often wards of the public system.

Private sector agencies need to develop proposals for independent living that allow them to tap into existing state (*or county*) efforts or the planning of new efforts under the federal IL initiatives (*Chafee Act*). Each state has a person listed as the contact or conduit between the federal government (*Agency for Children, Youth, and Families—ACYF*) and the state office receiving IL funds.

Private sector agencies should contact this person, obtain a copy of the state's federal plan on independent

living, and research ways POS services might be provided or existing state AILP services can be tapped. Where necessary, this process can provide an opportunity to revamp present group facilities and programs towards the goals and objectives of the state's independent living plan.

Sharing of youth skills training, staff training, preparation of primary caregivers, and clarifying the referral process are all benefits of such an effort. In addition, gaps could be identified that the private sector might be funded to fill.

Private sector organizations' usually strong community and philanthropic orientation allows them, at times, access to much more viable avenues for programming than the public sector. The private child-care agency often is accustomed to using alternative sources of funding such as churches, foundations, and private businesses and has in the past and can in the future often more readily develop true public/private partnerships.

Funding supplements can be a realistic approach in the private sector. In many instances, the private sector can secure foundation and corporate support where the public sector cannot.

Partnerships between public and private child-caring agencies are *essential to the development of any truly comprehensive agency-wide approach* to AILP that serves all youth in out-of-home care. Both the large and small, state and county, group home and treatment center programs, and juvenile correctional facilities can benefit from independent living programming.

One-Third Model

A key element of AILP planning involves utilizing the "one-third model," developed by Independent Living

Resources, Inc., in numerous locations around the United States over the last fifteen years.

Over the last ten years, during which ILR, Inc., has managed the AILP (*LINKS Program*) for the State of North Carolina Division of Social Services, this model has successfully promoted:

- Establishment of an AILP as a community-based program.
- Expansion of program resources through community support.
- Establishment of a community-based cost-sharing partnership between federal, state, general public, and private providers of AILP services.

The “one-third model” emphasizes developing community resources minimally valued at one-third of an existing AILP budget. This model sets up a rule that when a program receives AILP funding that program should develop additional community resources equal to one-third of base funding to support and expand program efforts.

Resources acquired in this manner can be valued as cash or in-kind community support. Efforts to develop in-kind resources will inherently provide the interconnections needed to firmly establish an AILP within the community.

ILR has found this model to be both feasible and powerful for increasing levels of commitment, support, and information sharing needed to a develop comprehensive long-term AILP. Using this model for over ten years in North Carolina allowed ILR to expand AILP program resources by as much as 45-68 percent in a fiscal year.

The following is an example of how the “One-Third” Model would look:

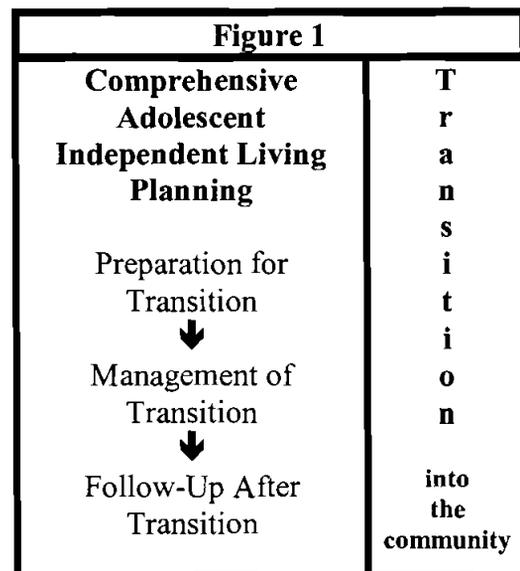
AILP Program Funding = \$15,000

One-Third In-Kind = \$ 5,000
 Total Operating Budget = \$20,000

Comprehensive Independent Living Planning

Previous studies and actions nationally have encouraged the development of a comprehensive plan for delivery of adolescent independent living services for youths in the out-of-home-care system. Elements in such a program include (*see Figure 1*):

- Preparation for the transition from out-of-home care and into the community. (*Skills development, community involvement, vocational and educational preparation and plans, employment opportunities and work experience, etc.*)
- Management of the transition into the community. (*Youth transition plan, support during transition, community involvement, etc.*)
- Follow-up after the transition into the community is accomplished. (*Maintaining contact with youth, financial and community supports, joining alumni groups, etc.*)



Transforming the desire for such a comprehensive program into a practical, workable plan will require changes in policy and existing programs. Additional fiscal support will be needed, both public and private. Staffs who work directly with youths may need to adjust their thinking about key issues such as a shift in how workers view their role—from only caring for youths to preparing youths. Certainly such an effort requires the understanding and support of the general public if it is to succeed in the long term.

Scope of the Text

This book addresses the basic issues that require resolution in the design of an effective, comprehensive program. It provides recommendations for improving the delivery of services and encourages adoption of certain policies and practices to improve conditions immediately in the delivery of independent living services. The book also provides a blueprint for future actions for consideration by adolescent independent living programs.

For the purposes of this text, certain shorthand terminology is used in referring to independent living programs. The most common of these are defined as follows:

- **AILP**—Adolescent Independent Living Program
- **ILP**—Independent Living Program
- **POS**—Purchase of Service Providers
- **Out-of-Home Care**—all settings in which a youth is living separate from his/her biological parents and under the care and custody of an agency.
- **Primary Caregivers**—kinship parents, residential/group home staffs, foster parents, and mentor parents.

The remainder of this text presents a working document approach to program development. *Section 2* concerns *Additional Elements of A Comprehensive Plan*; *Section 3* deals with *Planning A Project Approach*; *Section 4* reports on *General Issues and Themes*; *Sections 5* through *18* covers specific programming areas needed for development; and *Section 19* lists *Overall Program Recommendations*. The *Appendices* offer supportive documentation.

Resources

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) Public Law 96-272—The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-272)
Section 477 of Title IV-E Social Security Act



Section 2:



Additional Elements of a Comprehensive Plan

The need for independent living services for adolescents nationally has been documented in many publications and verified by our meetings over years with many professionals, agency staffs, government officials, and community representatives. How to address that need raises a number of questions. What are appropriate next steps? How does an agency most effectively move forward to develop a system- or agency-wide program? How does present funding for independent living services fit into planning a more comprehensive program?

Defining Independent Living Services

A vital first step is to reach agreement on the definition of independent living services and programs. This is best accomplished by first identifying the skills youths need if they are to be successful when on their own. Next, determine how and when those skills can and should be taught. Some of these basic skills are shown in *Figure 2-1* on the following page.

These lists are, at times, not clearly distinct from each other. In general, they represent tangible or concrete skills and functional or intangible skills necessary to enable youths to gain self-sufficiency. There are several considerations:

- ◆ It is common to first emphasize acquisition of tangible skills in independent living programs. It has

been found, however, that knowledge of tangible skills alone is virtually useless unless accompanied by some degree of proficiency in the intangible skills.

- ◆ It takes a long time, perhaps a lifetime, to master both sets of skills. Programs and policies may say that agencies should begin to prepare youths for independent living at the age of 15 or 16. The latest federal legislation realistically brings down that starting age to 12 or 13; preparation must start at these younger ages to be most successful.

Phases of Independent Living Preparation

It is instructive to consider the path of development for “normal” youths as they move toward self-sufficiency. Developmentally, youths begin to acquire both tangible and non-tangible support skills at a very early age and continue to refine them throughout a lifetime. Early skills are learned informally (*learned behavior*) from family and other primary caregivers.

Children enhance these early skills through formal learning or adaptation through experience with the surrounding world (*adaptive behavior*). Thus, it is appropriate and useful to view independent living preparation as a series of events occurring along a timeline or continuum.

Figure 2-1 Independent Living Skills	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Hard or Concrete Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job/Employment (Getting) Job Maintenance (Keeping) Educational/Vocational Money Management Home Maintenance Consumer Legal Rights/Responsibilities Locating/Using Community Resources Health Care Transportation Parenting Housing (Getting) 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Soft or Intangible Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Esteem/Image Enhancement Conflict Resolution Communication Decision Making Problem Solving Goal Setting/Planning Interpersonal Relationships Anger Management Social Skills Separation and Loss Time Management Dealing with Discrimination

Phases I and II

During **Phase I**, basic living skills are acquired informally by observing family members, repeating techniques observed, and through trial and error. For example, we learn how to do the dishes by watching and participating in the process. A young child learns that at red lights we “stop,” and that at green lights we “go” or precede.

During **Phase II**, basic skills are acquired through formal instruction and formal activities, perhaps in school or as an extra-curricular activity. Usually someone outside the family is responsible for the instruction. Formal activities may occur individually or in groups.

Phases III and IV

In **Phase III**, learning is primarily experiential. The youth’s living arrangement has changed. He or she is no longer living with the adults who were primarily caregivers, but is in a protected or supervised living situation. *Protected* is the key word. The environment must provide built-in safety nets so that if the youth makes a poor

decision the results are not devastating. Life in a college dormitory is a good example of Phase III protection coupled with increasing independence, so is life in a military barracks for the new recruit.

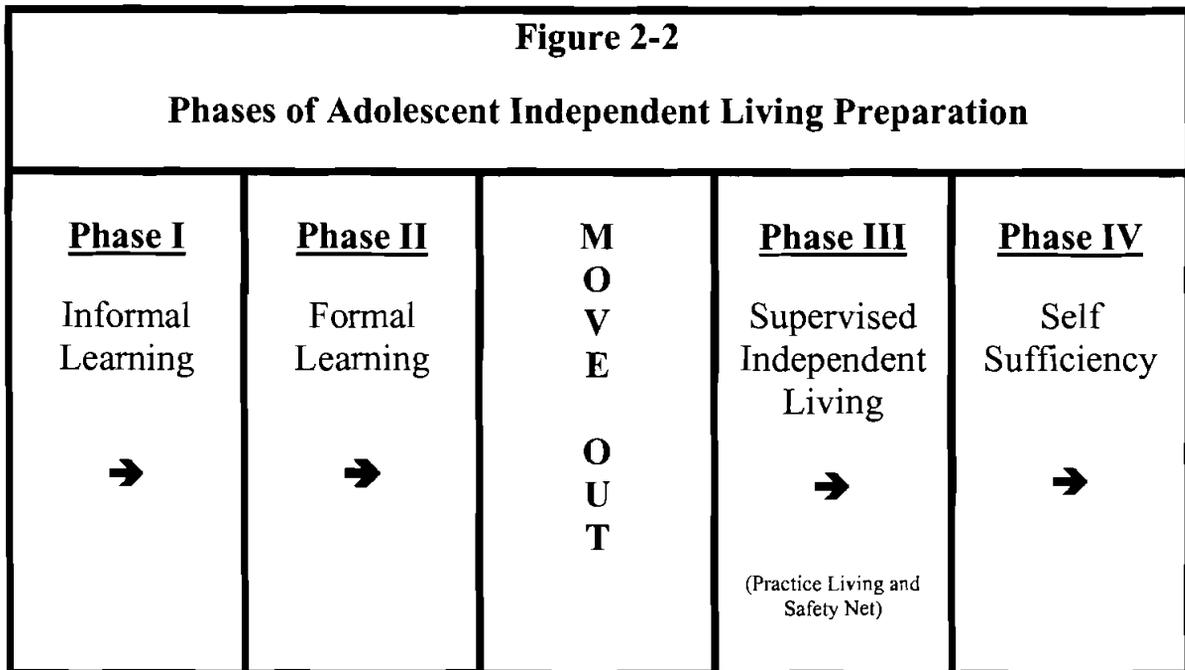
In **Phase IV**, the safety net is, to a very large extent, removed. Often there is a financial distinction between Phases III and IV: Phase III frequently offers some level of financial support; in Phase IV, we are expected to pay our own way. However, even though we are self-sufficient financially, we usually choose to maintain ties with the adults who raised us, or others who played an important role in our past. We also engage in redefining our relationships with those whom we encountered and learned from in Phases I and II. Often, they become important sources of support as we encounter the difficulties of life. That support may come in the form of a telephone contact for advice, financial assistance, or tangible goods (food, clothing, and even shelter). The redefining process is how we create our own “personal support system,” or lifeline.

Since this model offers support that leads a child in a “normal” environment

to self-sufficiency, clearly there is value in attempting to replicate it—as conditions permit—for youths in out-of-home care.

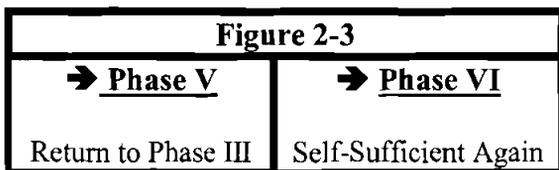
These youths have opportunities every day to learn skills through informal methods (*Phase I*). There is a recognized need to develop special “formal” training programs (*Phase II*) that create opportunities for youths to

practice new skills in the “real” world. Activities in Phases I and II lay the foundation for success in Phases III and IV. Youths who do not develop some level of competency in Phases I and II skills will limit their possibilities for success when they move out on their own. *Figure 2-2* illustrates the phases of independent living preparation.



Phases V and VI

When youths develop their skills at a higher level and are ready to “move out,” they will need to have options for living arrangements as varied as they are individual. This is a legitimate concern in program development planning. For discussion purposes, let’s add Phase V and Phase VI to this model (*Figure 2-3*).



In the United States today, it is not uncommon to see young people moving into Phase IV independent living much later in life. Some studies report that those moving into Phase IV living now are on average 26 years of age. Further, many Phase IV individuals move back “home” for support at a time of crisis. Divorce, economic hardships, or other breakdowns often will drive a young person home to regroup (*Phase V*) before striking out in an independent way again (*Phase VI*). This phenomenon has been labeled the “Boomerang Society” effect.

The out-of-home care youth often does not have the possibility of a Phase

III, much less a Phase V or VI for regrouping. Federal legislation and the ensuing Health and Human Services regulations break new ground in creating some form of Phase V/VI for these youths. The Chafee Independence Act has allowances for services to young people ages 18 to 21 that include room and board. *"The Chafee Independence Program leaves the definition of 'room and board' to each state to define. It limits the portion of the funds that can be used for this purpose to 30 percent of the state's program funds..." (NFCAP 2000).*

Some states have supported Phase III efforts by enacting departmental policies that allow a youth to leave out-of-home care, try self-sufficiency for a while then return during a time of hardship. Others states, such as Connecticut, have used state funds to develop housing alternatives (*CHAP*). Many private sector agencies have also explored and developed after-care components in their programs in order to provide Phase III opportunities to youths both during their basic use of residential services and after they are no longer needed.

Living Arrangement Options

Even without a Phase V or VI, program planning needs to embody a blueprint for an expanded Phase III. There must be plans for a multiplicity of housing options for youths upon separation from state or agency care and custody. The blueprint for action, particularly in those areas where there are shortages of affordable housing, must address the key issue of providing a wide-range of transitional living situations. Living arrangement options off the "base" established by informal and formal learning are presented in the chart shown in *Figure 2-4*.

Program Planning

Overview of Phases I, II, III, IV

How can program planning address these phases? Phase I programs and services, for example, look at where a youth is living. In each setting, one purpose is to identify those who are interacting with youths every day in the living space.

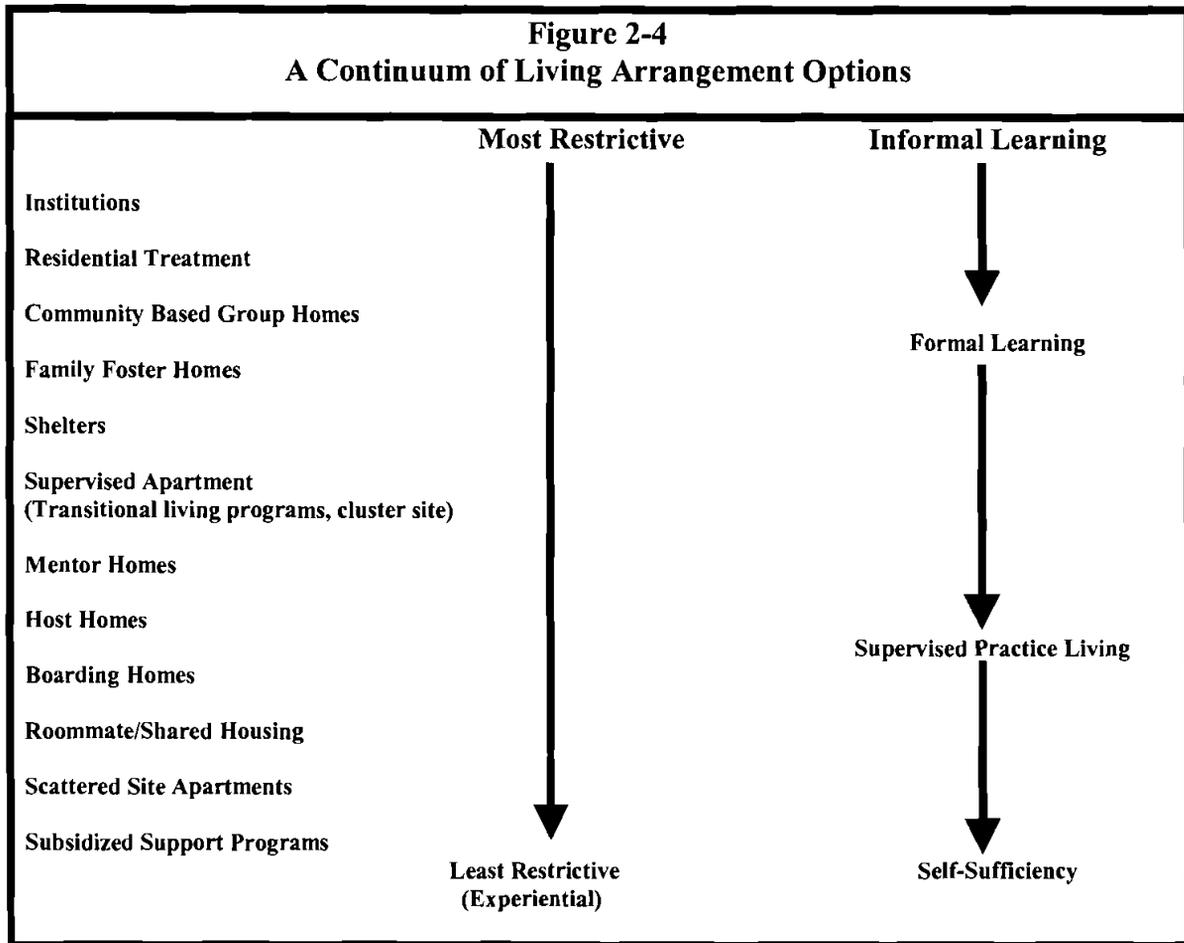
Special training needs to be provided to these "primary caregivers" so they are better able to use daily living experiences in teaching basic skills. As a result, the primary caregiver(s) would more clearly understand that preparing youths for independence is part of the job description. They would learn how to turn a daily living situation into a learning experience. Examples are in food preparation, household cleaning, personal hygiene, learning to venture into the community, doing laundry in the home and at the Laundromat, and so on.

As part of the Phase I start-up, it is important to address the question: At what age do programs start providing independent living services? The skills necessary to promote independence are acquired throughout a youth's development. Waiting until a youth is 16, is too late to begin the process of skills acquisition. Different skills need to be acquired at different ages.

Planning for an independent living program might include consideration of the younger adolescent who may be 11-15 today, but will be 16-18 in the very near future. Whenever this flexibility to allow participation of the younger youth occurs, a stronger program will be the result. The 1999 Chafee Act broke new ground by allowing agencies to formally start working with the 12 and 13 year old versus the old limits of 16 and above.

This is not to say that all aspects of an AILP should be provided to a 12-13 year old. Rather, those segments that can better prepare youths for the “formal” advanced levels of programming should

be presented as early as possible. With this earlier preparation, agencies and programs are helping to increase the probabilities of a more successful youth transition to self-sufficiency.



Phase II Programming

Phase II programming, needs to provide additional instruction to augment the informal learning that is going on in the youth’s living situation or educational setting. Many states provide these opportunities in community life skills classes held in many ways and settings. Some classes meet weekly over an 8-12 week period, while others are continuous. Other programs use such classes and a variety of add-on features, ranging from career days to weeklong

retreats, summer camps, or conferences. Learning in such programs covers a broad range—money management, buying a used car, obtaining a birth certificate, health services, housing, and other practical topics.

Phase II formal learning experiences often are taught by individuals from outside the foster care system. Trained education specialists, business persons, health or community shelter workers, and community representatives often are asked to volunteer or are hired on a full- or part-time basis to “teach” life skills.

The best of these programs are those that incorporate strong experiential components. Skills training rely on minimal use of the traditional classroom and a heavy concentration of “field” activities. Youths learn living skills best by doing. Job skills are taught through visits to prospective employers – asking for an application, being interviewed, and actual work experiences. Housing skills are developed through newspaper and real estate searches and visits to prospective neighborhoods and housing units.

Phase III Programming

As independent living programs develop, Phase III components are becoming more important throughout the country. As youths become better prepared for transition to independence, they need more and better options for living situations. Originally, Phase III programs were dumping grounds for youths who had a history of failed placements. That is still the case in some areas. Prior to federal legislation (pre-1987), many states had undefined independent living placement options/regulations on the books. The common denominator was that state funds were used to support the program - and only when all else failed. The predictable consequence was an unending string of failures on the part of youths who lacked the prerequisite skills to successfully achieve self-sufficiency.

Phase III today is rapidly becoming better planned and systematic throughout the country. The emerging theme for Phase III programming is a multiplicity of housing options for the wide-range of youths who are moving to self-sufficiency. Ideally, and agency’s Phase III program will incorporate some of the

following living arrangement possibilities:

- **Cluster housing:** A range of apartments at one location.
- **Scattered site apartment(s):** Individual apartment(s) spread throughout a locale.
- **Boarding home:** Room rentals in a congregate living situation.
- **Host homes:** Situations where interested adults rent a room to a youth.
- **Short-term foster home:** Home is licensed as a foster care situation for a short period of time (*six months*) after which the youth becomes a renter and the short-term foster parent becomes a landlord. The home is closed as a foster home at the end of designated period of time.
- **Housing on a residential campus:** An apartment separate from the group-living situation but still on campus/grounds of the facility.
- **Transitional group homes:** Transforming the traditional group home into more transitional facilities.

Nationally, there are many other living arrangements being tested in independent living programs. All of these programs enable youths to start to move out on their own before discharge from out-of-home care, thus enabling them to practice their independent living skills. In addition, many states have established programs that provide a diminishing financial transitional subsidy for youths. These payments to youths are usually matched with a budgeting scheme that creates balance between earnings, savings, and subsidy.

The subsidy is usually set up over a three- to six-month period, diminishing to a zero point at the agreed upon termination date.

Phase IV Programming

Phase IV programs are being planned and refined in many locales. With federal legislation allowing for contact up to age 21, this Phase is fast becoming more of a reality. In some states such as Connecticut and North Carolina (through SAYSO) contact can continue beyond 21.

Phase IV allows youths who are no longer under the care and custody of the agency to receive additional instruction and support as needed. The follow-up after discharge component, mentioned in *Section 1*, becomes a reality at this point. Youths will have more time to further redefine the relationships from Phases I and II and to create a more extensive

personal support system or lifeline. Youths also will have developed a more extensive monitoring/support system as they “muddled” through their Phase III living arrangement.

In this phase, former program youths may be an untapped resource for those who will follow. Richard Barth, while at the University of California at Berkley, suggested creating a “national former foster youth reclamation project.” What better way for out-of-home care youths to learn than from peers who are already at some level of self-sufficiency?

The need for independent living services must be addressed at both the local and state agency level in all locations. There needs to be a full range of services available so that, regardless of where youths are living they will have access to resources to help make the transition to independence.



Section 3:



Planning a Project Approach

The planning process is an integral part of the development of independent living programs. Many programs have neither started nor completed an initial planning project and consequently find that service delivery has been haphazard, broken, and limited. In addition, due to a multiplicity of start-up problems and the initial flow of federal funds to states (*starting in 1987*) many breaks occurred in the planning process for the first few years of independent living programming in the United States. Thus, even for many of those states and agencies that have operational independent living programs, the planning process has never been fully developed and neither a solid base for operations nor a blueprint for future program development exists.

Benefits of a Plan

You may be wondering, “What does a program plan do for me?” This is a sensible and significant question. A plan offers some very significant benefits to the agency, staff, community, and inevitably youths.

Creating Support

First, a plan favorably impresses key people. Your staff, administrators, funding sources, and youths will say, “I like a program that has been thought out!” “I see that this is a ‘program’ and not just a whim or an idea gone astray!” Administrators and funding sources will be more willing to put in funds and other supportive services—internal or

external. Staff will be more willing to invest time, effort, and enthusiasm if there is a formal program. Programs should motivate, and a person with a careful plan often has a certain attraction and influence. Finally, a planned program increases the likelihood of success and continued funding, which can only help youths in out-of-home care.

Increasing Funding

Second, a plan can increase your funding. What is planned gets done—another way of saying “if you don’t know where you are going, you will end up somewhere else!” So if you build a good sensible program you have a much better chance of benefiting than without one. North Carolina, by using the “one-third” model discussed in *Section 1*, has increased the availability of state and local dollars to supplement its federal allotment. This increase has been steady, over each subsequent program year from the last. There have even been years when the additional dollars have added 40%-68% to the initial budget.

Saving Time and Resources

Third, a plan saves you time, work, and stress. You will avoid wasted action, mistakes, lost time, and funds. The plan effectively delegates the workload and anticipates problems. Stress is reduced and program operations become more fun for all those involved.

Using Available Talents

Fourth, a plan applies the strength, skills, abilities, and interests of those who will be involved. Everyone and every agency and community has talents. Yet these are sometimes unrecognized, unappreciated, and underemployed, even though these very things are the activities that people enjoy doing and often will generate the most results per day or week. A good plan helps find those valuable resources and applies them in constructive ways.

Providing a Roadmap

Fifth, a plan gives you a road to run on. A truck, car, runner, or bicyclist moves better, more efficiently, more effectively, when on a solid roadbed. All can see where they are, where they are going, and the directions they want to take. A road is usually smoother than going over rough, unprepared, or uncharted land. If your route is laid out, you can concentrate on your own progress and speed and on excelling, rather than trying to determine how to get past every aggravating unanticipated pitfall. It is much easier dealing with anticipated barriers by planning your attacks rather than having repeated unanticipated actions blocking and delaying each move. Planning uncovers many potential roadblocks and barriers beforehand, allowing time to plan remedies.

Setting Priorities

Finally, a plan sets priorities. This can be important and mighty handy in these days of limited resources and modest budgets. Programs simply can't afford to do everything today, much less yesterday—which is often what is asked. Independent living programming is important—in fact, essential—to the

well being of out-of-home care youths. Planning assists us in realizing that not everything can be done at once. With a plan, you know what to do first and what's coming next. It not only saves you from unpleasant surprises, but also lets you focus all your skill and resources on each step, so your program is more likely to succeed.

Overall, independent living programming takes an initial phase of approximately three years to develop a comprehensive approach. All too often, administrators, legislators, advocates, and staff want immediate wholesale results. This is unfortunate. If the planning process does not take place and appropriate time frames are not built in, there is much less likelihood of success.

The AILP

What does an AILP Development Plan mean?

Simply put, an adolescent independent living program plan is a way to manage resources to get positive results. A good plan even helps raise resources. After all, would you lend time and effort to a program with no plan for using it or no clear reasons for asking? Or would you rather buy into a well-thought-out program that projects a future commitment to staff and clients?

A plan is a look at where you are and where you hope to go. It also is a review of what steps you need to get there. Usually these steps are in rough chronological order. Some view a plan as the program blueprint. Others call it a projection, road map, game plan, or the direction to the future.

Who needs a plan?

All agencies and programs need plans. Some are short-term, while others are long-term or strategic plans. Some

are specifically focused on some type of agency action, such as capital development, future directions, specific 'new' programs, or fundraising. Others are more global. Plans are needed by all agencies in the face of diminishing resources and expanding client needs.

Why do you need these guidelines?

You need a plan simply because no one can remember hundreds of details while busy trying to get dozens of things done. You could waste motion or make major mistakes.

You need a plan because time is one of your most valuable resources and sometimes *the* most valuable one. Scheduling with a plan that considers time can boost staff response to the new program, favorably impress funding sources, and realistically increase the possibilities of achieving goals and objectives. The development of the components of a truly comprehensive approach to independent living takes time. Our advice is to use a three-year time frame for the planning process. The plan could be fully operational more quickly than that, but three years is a realistic point of reference.

Note: Having a three-year time frame does *not* mean that segments of the plan cannot be started today. Rather, it means that a program is built layer upon layer. With certain building blocks in place, the next segments of the structure will be added more easily and with more surety.

Preparing The Plan: Goals and Objectives

The first task is to set goals, emphasizing benefits to an agency and its youthful clients. Secondly, you must set very specific objectives that will assist you in achieving your goals. Goals

generally mean the place you want to get to or the overall thing you want to accomplish. Objectives are those specific things you want to do to achieve the overall goal. Objectives should be stated in behavioral (*measurable*) terms—what actions can be performed that can be observed and measured? For example:

- **Goal:** Establishment of an adolescent independent living program in Agency X.

A measurable objective for the above goal would be:

- **Objective 1:** Develop a specific written mission statement for the AILP by _____ (*a specific date*).

Some people confuse goals and objectives with tactics or strategies. The easy way to avoid that is to always remember that goals mean “where” you want to go. Objectives are measurements/milestones to assist in achieving goals. Tactics or strategies always mean “how” you plan to reach objectives that, in turn, will assist in achieving goals—in other words, your means, system, or methods.

Note: Sometimes objectives and goals are tiered. This allows for an objective to be transformed into a discrete goal with its own objectives. For instance, the objective stated above may become the goal of a AILP workgroup. New objectives might be to appoint four people to the committee by a certain date.

Tactics or strategies for the achievement of *Objective 1* might be to gather a certain number of mission statements as examples for review, revise a specific existing agency mission statement, etc. The worksheet in *Figure 3-1* can be useful in laying out goals, objectives, and tactics or strategies.

Figure 3-1 – Agency Work Plan

To more comprehensively approach the tasks involved in preparing youths for successful transition to adulthood, agencies need to develop an adolescent independent living program plan (AILP). This plan should encompass all aspects of an AILP. To start this process, an initial work plan for developing an AILP must be formulated. The following will outline the initial effort for agency X.

GOAL: To develop a mission statement that emphasizes enhancing the abilities of youths to live in a self-sufficient manner.

OBJECTIVE(S): (need to be behavioral/measurable)

- To form an initial AILP work group of four agency staff (with at least one youth and primary caregiver).
- To schedule three meetings for formulating and initial mission statement.
- To develop a specific written mission statement for the AILP.

TASKS/STEPS/ACTIVITIES:

- Create a memorandum to be distributed to all agency staff asking for four volunteers to meet on July 1, 14, 21, 2___ for three initial AILP planning meetings.
- Recruit at least one youth and primary caregiver currently involved with the agency to serve on the work group.
- Develop a packet of AILP materials (examples) to be distributed to the work group at the July 1, 2___ meeting.
- Gather examples of at least three program mission statements for work group to review at first meeting.
- Provide meeting space (schedule) and refreshments (purchase) for three meetings.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

Action Plan Steps and Time Frames

- Step 1. Develop memorandum and recruit work group. (Time frame: May 1-15)
- Step 2. Gather AILP materials. (Time frame: May 1- June 30)
- Step 3. Gather three examples of mission statements. (Time frame: May-June)
- Step 4. Schedule meeting space, order refreshments. (Time frame: May 15-31)

Planning Tactics

Your tactics or strategies for developing your program plan should include the following steps:

Generate Sense of Commitment

This step starts with your own personal point of view. If you are convinced that an adolescent independent living program can pay off for the agency and youths it serves, begin by telling others about the program, and showing them how this

will make the service delivery system more valuable:

- By helping get more done in less time;
- By reducing stress and making it more “fun” to deliver program services; and
- By leading to rewards such as a more successful youth discharge.

Convince one or two and others will follow. Hold informational meetings and discuss the idea (include handouts or informational packets). Encourage staff

of other programs to consider how they might affect the new AILP.

List Projects to Do, Then Set Priorities

The easiest approach is to create a list of program components you feel would be useful to your agency and youths it serves. (*Later sections of this book provide many program ideas from which a list can be developed.*)

Next, create a checklist in four “phases”—using Roman numerals to designate each phase. (*Section 2 detailed the “phases” for adolescent independent living programming.*)

To build the plan, after completing the list of components, attempt to place each in one of the four phases according to when you think it will be accomplished. After placing each in its appropriate time phase, go back and put a number in front of each item designating the order in which they need to be planned for development within the phase, using a simple, tiered numbering system—1a, 1b, 2a, b, etc. *Figure 3-2* shows an example of a simple plan.

Figure 3-2 – Program Plan

Phase I – 0-6 months

- I-1a Develop a planning committee
- I-1b Create memorandum
- I-1c Recruit youth and primary caregiver
- I-2a Schedule meetings
- I-2b Secure space

....

- I-10a Choose materials for teaching life skills

Phase II- 6-12 months

- II-1a Identify youths for skills training
- II-1b Send information and invitations to youths to attend sessions

...

- II-9a Identify key foster parents for training

...

- II-10a Develop incentives for youths and primary caregivers

- II-10b ...

Phase III

- III-1a Develop housing component
- III-1b Develop subsidy program
- III-2a ...

Phase IV

- IV-1a Create Post-Discharge Program
- IV-1b ...
- IV-2a Contact former substitute care youths

The moment you prioritize your planned tasks, your efficiency level goes up, because you will be planning on doing first things first, and putting time and value on activities early enough to come together at the right time in the project—the development of an adolescent independent living program.

Use Time to Focus on Your Goals

Priorities can be set for each of your goals. This tells you what’s important. Attention, time, and effort will be aimed at these top goals. They will be done first. You are managing your resources according to the goals of the project or proposed program.

Use Schedules to Motivate

Schedules have a motivating influence on most people. So, be sure that everyone on the “team” has a schedule once you have established priorities for your goals and objectives. People become a lot more enthusiastic when they see and understand the plan.

Information is Power

When others, both internally and externally, know what you want and need, they are less threatened and more responsive. *Do not* become the “new” program that no one knows anything about. Let others know whom you are and what you hope to accomplish. Part of the planning process might be “*dog-and-pony*” shows. These are opportunities to let people know what you think the program will do and what it will not do. Set up these informal—and, later, formal—informational meetings as soon as possible.

Starting at the Beginning

One of the first tasks involved in the planning process is to seek cooperation and assistance from personnel at all

levels of the agency. This will lend considerable strength to any planning effort. Without such an effort, the independent living program will continue to be viewed as “temporary,” thus limiting its overall effectiveness.

Our experiences over the last 20 years or so, in helping both public and private agencies develop independent living programs, has shown us some of the major pitfalls in independent living program planning. First, we firmly believe that when you do a little of this homework and do it seriously, you improve your position if and when you are tested with challenges. Suddenly, big problems become little ones and your cost is far lower than the price of failure or limited programming.

Everyone has seen program ideas that have failed. Some of the most common reasons for these failures are: no plan at all; halfway commitment; overly ambitiousness or overly complex and controlling plans; isolation; and failure to provide services the client can really use. Let’s look at each.

No Plan at All

This may mean either no awareness or consideration of the planning process (*or the advantages to it*). It also means a lack of facts, goals, and objectives. For state-level public agencies, the federal government has asked for an overall state plan for the expenditure of independent living initiative funds. In some cases, this “plan” takes the form of only one or two pages of nondescript information. States have, at times, asked their counties, purchase of services providers, and other providers for even less. We have had to request that many of our clients, both large and small, consider expanding those efforts to provide more guidelines for what they hope to accomplish through an AILP. “If

you don’t know where you are going you will end up somewhere else.”

A Halfway Commitment

A halfway commitment can be dangerous to your program’s health. Steps are taken, investing time, energy and funds. What follows? Poor communication with negative effects on delegation, team and agency acceptance, management support and budgets, or schedules. Often, a planner is assigned who has no credibility, stature, or clout. We often have found that the agency providing the AILP has had little contact with its internal sister divisions or departments or ancillary services providers. Many times, another agency or governmental department is serving the same client populations and little knowledge exists about each other’s programming. This is unfortunate and can lead to a terminal illness for the program-isolation.

Rule A

Make sure youth-serving programs in your own division are informed about AILP plans. Foster care, licensing and recruitment, residential treatment units, campus school, and other groups who serve your clients or others who support your youthful participants (e.g., foster parents) need to know what you are planning. With information they become supporters; without it they are detractors and withholders.

Rule B

Make sure you research other youth-serving groups within your structure and outside that can be part of the solution to the AILP programming needs. Corrections, Judiciary, Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Youth Bureau, campus school, other campus housing units and programs, and other child-caring agencies all need to

have information and, when possible, need to meet with you to develop a mutual understanding. Not only fiscal resources, but also days, weeks, and even months can be lost by not knowing, or not letting others know about the AILP plans. Duplication though necessary at times, can be wasteful and draining on available resources.

During a two-day seminar for administrators in North Carolina, two large child-caring facilities from another state sent seven staff members to the program (*four and three respectively*). These two facilities were within 30 miles of each other and neither knew the other was contemplating such an effort. One of the best things to come out of the seminar was the development of a plan for the two agencies to work together on the establishment of an AILP on each campus and to research the other state child-caring programs for further support.

Overly Ambitious, Complex, And Controlling Plans

Overly ambitious, overly complex, and controlling plans are almost as costly as all of the above. Remember that a written plan does not mean you are locked into one approach forever. Plans should be short, simple, understandable, practical, and workable. They should allow management to speed up or slow down, or change direction and make new plans quickly as new program situations or opportunities appear. *The plan is there to serve you; you are not there to serve the plan.* Use it as a tool. Change it when necessary.

Impractical Goals

Another frequent error, is expecting all parts of the program to work out exactly as anticipated. They seldom do. Few social programs, much less child-

caring programs, come out exactly as planned. One new youth, group, or staff person can force a program to change tactics. Accept this and work for the best plan possible. Sometimes youths don't reach goals. Other times they exceed them. And sometimes they simply get results that are different from expectations, opening new doors and vistas. Wise administrators and staff take advantage of these. But without a plan, nothing much would have happened.

By committing to the planning process and developing a plan for future action, programs assure themselves of some success. The more clearly programs define and develop the process the more success they will have. The development of a program plan does many things for an agency and its staff, youthful clients, and funding sources—all of which, if done thoroughly and correctly, can be good.

Defining Adolescent Independent Living

Many of the recommendations in this text will assist you in the planning process. We recommend that you read the balance of the text then come back and reread or finish this chapter. This approach will help you develop a sense of what constitutes a truly comprehensive AILP.

This method also will lead you to the next basic planning step—the development of a clear definition of adolescent independent living. Defining AILP is a must. This can be done through a clearly written statement, informational meetings, and gathering of other program examples. What is important is that everyone who will become associated with the program has a definition of what AILP is all about. Many people have misconceptions about independent living. We frequently tell

groups, “if the promoters of adolescent independent living could go back 20 plus years to the initial formulation of the concept, it would be much more appropriate to have called it “interdependent living,” rather than independent living.”

Interdependent living more accurately describes what youths should be doing. Programs do not want youths out there alone. Rather, they want youths to be interacting with the community in appropriate interdependent ways. Thus, a definition of this concept is extremely important for youthful participants and adult supporters. Again, reading the balance of this text should assist in development of a definition of AILP.

Needs Assessment

Finally, planning/project staffs need to consider developing a needs assessment instrument (survey type tool) for all counties or youth-caring facilities within a state, youths in out-of-home care, primary caregivers, facility staff, etc. The survey assists in ascertaining the need for adolescent independent living programming among agencies, staffs, and youths. (*See Appendices I and K for examples of a needs assessment instrument/survey and assessment forms.*)

The first stage of the assessment is to distribute the survey to individuals involved with projected participants throughout the service delivery area. Surveys may be sent to public child welfare staff, including supervisors and administrators, licensed foster parents, purchase of services providers, referral agencies, other interested adolescent-serving professionals, and youths. A second stage might include site visits to all sites where interviews are held with youths residing in out-of-home care, purchase of service providers, family court and health department staff, child

protection team members, advocacy and community-based foster care support groups, etc.

The project consists of three interactive efforts (*see Figure 3-3*):

- Compiling data from the needs assessment study.
- Developing a basic blueprint to encourage agency changes over time.
- Orienting and training on methods to improve present adolescent independent living service delivery.

Figure 3-3 Planning a Project or Program Approach

Improving Case Management

- Research existing practices
- Research alternatives
- Develop basic recommendations
- Finalize objectives and plans
- Provide orientation and training

Improving Service Delivery

- Identify key objectives
- Define standard elements
- Conduct needs assessment
- Identify community supports

Planning for the Future

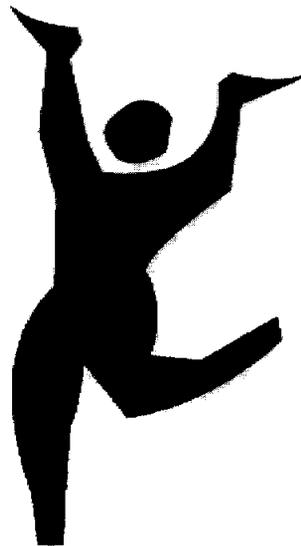
- Review other reports
- Review existing effort
- Conduct field visits
- Meet with agency staffs
- Meet with community, private agencies, youths
- Meet with field staffs
- Compile and analyze data
- Develop report
- Submit final report

Major Milestones of the Planning Process/Project

As the process unfolds, a series of major milestones (tasks) guides it to completion:

- Complete research of existing agency adolescent independent living programming practices.

- Identify and assess alternatives used elsewhere for comparisons to present agency practices.
- Identify budgetary, supervisory, primary caregivers, and worker objectives related to adolescent independent living service delivery standards. Define elements of those standards and determine alternative methods for their development.
 - Meet with agency administrators, supervisors, line-staff, purchase of service providers, primary caregivers, community advocacy and support groups, and youths.
 - Conduct orientation and training seminars for administrators, line-staff, and purchase of service providers, other agency personnel, primary caregivers, and interested community representatives to enhance their understanding of adolescent independent living service delivery.
- Disseminate independent living resource materials to orientation and training seminar participants.
 - Develop a needs assessment plan. Provide surveys and contact key staff and community representatives.
 - Compare existing adolescent independent living service delivery practices with standards, staff opinions and suggestions. Develop alternative approaches for both immediate and long-term implementation.
 - Compile needs assessment and site visit data.
- The remainder of this text presents detailed information on the elements of a comprehensive adolescent independent living program—all of which provide substantive material for developing a planned approach to delivering these services.



Section 4:



General Themes

There are some general themes, or issues, that are “true” for virtually all child-caring systems, whether private or public. These general themes are an important factor in the development of a planned approach to adolescent independent living programming. They cut across inter- and intra-agency lines and are common throughout most field settings, whether rural or urban. The themes relate to the:

- Definition and understanding of adolescent preparation for independence,
- Concerns raised by staffs, physical setting, and
- Funding of related independent living programming services.

At first glance, several of these issues appear to rest beyond variables that relate to adolescents’ independent living. Upon reflection, however, they are best understood as crucial concerns in the development of systemic support for independent living preparation. We have found that problems common to child-caring agency operations throughout the field fall into five basic categories:

1. Inconsistencies of state laws and agency/departmental regulations relating to youths in out-of-home care.
2. Lack of statewide coordination within and across agency/departmental lines.

3. Inadequately prepared staff (at all levels) to handle tasks related to adolescent independent living.
4. Limited community involvement in such programs.
5. Limited community-based resources for adolescents.

This section outlines a comprehensive approach to the delivery of adolescent independent living services, embracing all program components throughout an agency. It identifies key areas of concern, provides suggestions for effective approaches, and recommends alternatives for programming at the appropriate state/agency or local level.

Forming the context for this section are the plan criteria for developing a comprehensive program (discussed in *Section 1*), and the program planning continuum phases (discussed in *Section 2*). The remaining sections of this book will expand upon each of the general themes discussed in this section, offering the detailed explanation necessary for easier, comprehensive planning.

Overall Agency Policy

Statutory Requirements, Agency Policy and Regulations

Over the last 20-30 years throughout the nation, child welfare policies have concentrated on ensuring permanent placement planning for youths in out-of-home care (*reasonable efforts*). Major focuses of this process have been the reunification of children with their

biological parents or securing adoptive placements. Adoption and reunification are not always viable alternatives for older youths in foster care. Consequently, the permanent placement planning needs of older youths who have been in care for long periods of time or who have come into care as teenagers have not been always been adequately addressed.

Specific agency policy that expresses the philosophy, planning procedures, and service requirements for older youths facing discharge from out-of-home care to self-sufficiency has been limited in most cases. Agency administrators, supervisors, line staff, and purchase of service providers generally do not understand the programs that now exist for these youths. Confusion usually is apparent in the use of federal and state funds to support independent living initiatives and for setting future program directions. This lack of understanding often leads to under-utilization of the present independent living service programming and funding. Further, lack of coordination with other agencies providing foster care services, both public and private, creates misunderstandings about the eligibility of certain youths for existing services.

In our experience, we have found limited knowledge within agencies/departments and across divisional lines about national trends and progress in independent living programming. We know statistically that the yearly foster care population has consistently hovered between 500-600,000 and that 25-28,000 youths are discharged yearly to their own living situation. We also know that many states are not fully utilizing the Chafee federal funding, nor are they communicating the need for programming and the

availability of funding to others within their geographic area.

These conditions limit development and expansion of independent living programming both in the public and private sectors.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following actions be considered by agencies and planners to provide a strong policy framework for independent living services.

- Adolescent Independent Living Policy Statement

It is recommended that agencies consider developing an overall policy statement on independent living that incorporates the recommendations in *Section 1* and *2* on comprehensive programming and that reflects support for all branches in the provision of related services. Broadening the concept of permanency planning to incorporate independent living programming requires redefining certain service delivery components and expanding some resources, particularly to cover a whole agency. It does *not* require development of an entirely new delivery system. An effective statement will emphasize that *independent living programming can be incorporated into existing case management practices.*

(Activities available in the resource "Putting It Together" can assist staff with developing an effective AILP policy statement – See Appendix K-Resources.)

Consistent with the focus on safety, permanence, and well being in the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act (*ASFA*) (*P.L. 105-89*), the 1999 Chafee Independence Program reinforces the importance of adoption and other permanency options for teens in foster care by:

- Stating explicitly “*enrollment in Independent Living programs can occur concurrent with continued efforts to locate and achieve placement in adoptive families for older children in foster care,*” thereby clarifying that independent living services should not be seen as an alternative to adoption for teens.
- Requiring states to train both foster and adoptive parents (*as well as group care workers and case managers*) about the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living.
- Reinforcing the importance of providing personal and emotional support for youth aging out of foster care, through the promotion of interactions with mentors and other dedicated adults.
- Specifying that independent living services may be provided to young people at “various ages and various stages of achieving independence,” including those waiting for adoption or other permanent options (*NFCAP 2000*).

Legislative Changes

It is recommended that agencies consider further action to ascertain the changes needed in state statutes pertaining to youths that impact upon AILP service delivery. All of the changes sought must support a comprehensive approach to independent living preparation.

An example of this type of needed change is the youthful “rite of passage” in obtaining a driver’s license. The driver’s license issue is frequently mentioned as a barrier to effective programming in needs assessment surveys and staff interviews. It also is of particular importance to youths in care.

Any alteration of state policy and procedures that would allow for expansion of the number of youths who could potentially gain their driver’s licenses would be very productive. Such action would help youths’ self-esteem, social relationships, and ability to develop employment and housing opportunities. This is particularly true in rural areas and areas where there are limited jobs and affordable housing, forcing youths to seek both elsewhere.

Drivers’ licenses, the length of time agencies can stay involved with youths, and many other legal issues can be major program barriers. Whenever possible, and early on in the planning process, the legal issues that impede programming need to be addressed. Independent living programming for youths is relatively new and encourages “less control and restraints”—a much different approach than traditional child welfare services have allowed in the past. Consequently, a different set of legal requirements and agency regulations might be needed.

Agencies should consider using the voices of youths participating on advisory boards to provide personal testimony. The personal challenges youth face in an effort to achieve a “normal” life can be very influential. (*See Section 6 for more details on Youth Advisory Boards.*)

Independent Living Case Plans

It is recommended that agencies develop guidelines for youth focused AILP case plans. *Appendix F* contains an outline and an example case for an individual independent living plan.

Public and Private Agencies

Public Agencies: The outline in *Appendix F* adheres to federal guidelines for an acceptable plan and contains the guiding reference for each youth participating in his/her plan. Plans

should also reflect youth needs as they relate to measurable outcomes.

Under the Chafee Act states are given considerable leeway in working with youths, but there is a mandate to: "...ensure that adolescents participating in the program under this section participate directly in designing their own program activities that prepare them for independent living..." (PL 106-69, Foster Care Independence Act 1999, HR 3443, Title I, Sec 147, a (3)(H))

Private Agencies: A section of the youth's case/treatment plan needs to be devoted to independent living planning for the young person. *Section 10* provides an expansion of the public agency guidelines as explained above. This supplement can be used to develop a more expanded transitional plan for each youth. The expansion develops a comprehensive plan to include "after discharge" concerns for each transitioning youth.

Ideally, case plans would be a collaborative effort between public and private agencies, program participants (*youths*), and primary caregivers.

Foster Home Certification and Licensing

There are additional agency or departmental actions that would provide support for independent living preparation. It is recommended that consideration be given to expanding a number of these areas and solidifying certain program requirements through the foster home certification process (*where appropriate*). For instance, mentor homes could become certified to provide structured life skills experiences (*practice living*) under the supervision of an adult, who may not necessarily be a parent.

Increase Foster Parent Recruitment Activities

One of the greatest resources available to an agency can be the foster parent. Foster parents interact with youths on a daily basis and are in the best position to assess a youth's ability to live independently. With training and support, foster parents can use daily living experiences to teach basic skills and to help youths establish a support system that will help them make it when they are living on their own.

An increase in the number of available foster parent placements will increase the number of homes that are useful for adolescents and independent living preparation. In addition, recruitment activities need a component that promotes working with adolescents for independence, and possible alternative certification/licensing of living situations. For example, a category may be added that provides a limited certification/license to house a youth for six months. After that period, the caregiver ceases to be a licensed foster parent and becomes the landlord with the youth as a renter. (*This model approach has been formally utilized in Philadelphia's Independent Living Program and informally by agencies as warranted.*) Having the flexibility to recruit foster parents with AILP options can create more effective placements.

Improve Primary Caregivers' Training and Preparation

As part of recommended minimal pre- and in-service training requirements, certification/licensing needs to mandate primary caregiver participation. All foster parents or POS housing providers (*e.g., group homes, children's centers, etc.*) need to participate in agency independent living training as well as to provide those services to adolescents in their care (*see Section 9*).

The Chafee Act provided added emphasis to foster parent AILP training and support: “The Act added a new state plan requirement to the Title IV-E Foster Care Program that addresses the preparation of foster parents. A state’s Title IV-E plan must include a certification that before a child (*of any age*) under the responsibility of the state is placed with foster parents that the foster parents must be prepared adequately with the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide for the needs of the child. The preparation also must be continued if necessary after placement. This provision can be used to strengthen preparation of foster parents caring for adolescents.” (*NFCAP 2000*)

Revise Licensing Requirements

In addition, licensing for alternative or transitional housing arrangements deserves consideration. Examples are scattered site apartments, host homes, transitional group homes, etc. As programming develops, use of a variety of transitional housing situations can increase. Licensing criteria for these potential living situations needs to be considered (*see Section 15*).

Eligibility of Youths

Under the Chafee Act “*youth younger than 16 may receive age-appropriate independent living services.*” (*ACYF-CB-IM-00-03, March 16, 2000*)

Agencies need to develop programs that include younger youths in different aspects of an AILP. As mentioned earlier, the 12-, 13-, 14-, and 15-year-old today will be tomorrow’s 16- and 18 year-old. Time moves quickly (*just ask any parent*) and youths grow up in out-of-home care with little preparation before their eighteenth birthdays. Much can be done to prepare youths for independent living before they reach those “magical”

sixteenth or eighteenth years. Job training or how to obtain housing might not be taught earlier than 16, but personal hygiene, clothing and meal preparation, and consumer skills are all areas that can be explored at a earlier age.

In addition, including a wider range of ages will allow more skills training groupings to be made on developmental lines rather than the present trend of using predominantly chronological measures. A 16-year-old is not necessarily functioning on the same level as all other 16-year-old youths. Learning experiences will always be better when teaching is geared to the developmental level of the students rather than their chronological age. Thus, including younger persons can benefit older ones, and vice versa.

Including younger youths also allows less populated areas to draw from a wider pool of candidates to fill skills classes and groups. The reality is that agencies in many areas of the country, particularly those in the public sector cover large geographic areas with few youths in out-of-home care and grouping becomes extremely difficult. This is not that all training needs to take place in a group setting. But, when possible, group instruction is another teaching option that should be available.

Many private child-care and public agency programs funded with state dollars could include younger youths very easily. For those programs that are almost exclusively federally funded, however, planning to include the younger person will have more limits. An alternative is to include an examination of what might be done, which could encourage sources of referrals to supply younger youths with some skills training prior to entry into

the “formal” AILP. It is recognized that agencies often have contact with youths long before their sixteenth birthdays and valuable preparation time—time that can make the difference between success and failure, can be developed for younger teens.

Statewide Coordination

It is not unusual to encounter multiple divisions of state government or private child-caring agencies providing the same foster care services. The need for coordination among these divisions and agencies has been a recurring theme in response to many needs assessment surveys we have conducted nationally. During many on-site interviews with staff from both public and private child-caring agencies, family courts, and health departments, those questioned often-revealed limited knowledge of similar programs in other divisions of state government or in the private sector.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to improve coordination in the delivery of these important child-care services.

Policies to Coordinate Services

It is recommended that policies be developed to coordinate services within and among systems that provide foster care in an agency’s area of jurisdiction, including: the departments of health and mental health, judiciary, private child and family service agencies, etc. The common, overriding goal of each of these systems is to enable youths living in out-of-home care to mature with the appropriate social skills to be able to lead responsible, self-sufficient lives as adults. Thus, coordination is mutually beneficial for agencies and youths.

As a secondary action, it may be advantageous to use some type of interdepartmental or state child-caring association coordinating body to help link all departments/agencies that provide foster care services and, therefore, independent living services. Most states have existing child-care associations that could be one vehicle to greater information dissemination and coordination.

Coordinate Training

It is recommended that a coordinated training/professional development effort be launched under the guidance of the state/agency staff development or training office, with other systems providing foster care services. All staffs, including foster parents and other primary caregivers, would benefit from joint training and in-service efforts on the theory and practice of independent living.

Preparation Of Staff

Until the last several years, most staffs at all levels of agency operations have had limited information about independent living—something that is true of most social workers across the nation. This has left adolescent independent living programming as a limited entity in many child-care systems.

Independent living needs to become part of normal, everyday casework/child-care practice. Case Management needs to include mandatory discussions with youths about what they plan to do when they leave out-of-home care, where they plan to live, and other pertinent independent living questions. Staffs need to be able to perform basic independent living planning activities with youths and to assist primary caregivers, volunteers, mentors, and others to do the same. Ancillary units

throughout agencies need to have knowledge of independent living activities so they can support program efforts. Foster home certification and licensing units, homemakers, aides, and others must be able to work with their constituent groups to assure that all who come into contact with youthful clients practices independent living preparation.

One of the underpinnings of independent living preparation is the concept of teamwork. Teamwork involving youths, foster parents/primary caretakers, social workers, aides, and community representatives is at the very heart of successful independent living programs.

Independent living preparation cannot and should not be provided by one individual. All staff, biological family members, and community representatives can productively be involved with youths in their preparation for independent living. Sharing information and knowledge about programming and resource availability helps all those involved to be better prepared to assist youths moving toward self-sufficiency.

Clear, concise information about independent living preparation for youths needs to be disseminated on a regular basis. Properly presented, it is an issue that can claim ongoing attention both internally and externally. Features on adolescents and their needs, community support for youths, and public/private sector partnership efforts are examples of approaches that may yield good results. Interesting the local news media in AILP also can lead to a broader sharing of information. The task of finding “new” volunteers or mentors, primary caregivers, resources, and community support, can be made easier if the information about what agencies

are trying to do is more widely disseminated.

Recommendations

To further strengthen the preparation of staff to engage productively in independent living programs, the following are recommended:

Orientation Training Sessions

It is recommended that a series of two- to three-hour orientation/training sessions be developed for staff, primary caregivers, purchase of service providers, community representatives, staff from other departments, and youths who will potentially participate in the program. It is suggested that these sessions be offered at convenient times and locations throughout all of the agency’s branches/campuses. Initially, this can legitimately be considered a public relations campaign. Logically, it will evolve into part of an overall training plan for those involved with youths and the independent living initiative.

Reference Materials

It is recommended that packets of reference materials be developed for those key participants in the plan. General information about independent living as well as specifics about existing agency efforts (if any) and future program design will prove valuable to this group as they sharpen skills and gain experience. Youth packets should include a booklet (to be developed) that contains the rights and responsibilities for youths within the out-of-home care system.

(Many states such as Maine, New York, South Carolina, Vermont, Canada, and Kentucky presently either maintain websites with information or distribute these types of

packets and booklets – See Section 5 for additional information.)

Resource Library

It is recommended that a resource lending library be established. Hard-copy texts as well as audio-visual aids can be made available to those interested in learning more about independent living programming. (Section 5 presents detailed information on each of these recommendations.)

Community Involvement and Community-Based Resources

When developing independent living services it is important to first develop community support for these activities. ‘Community’ is broadly defined to include the state agency generally responsible for out-of-home care (*usually the Department of Social Services or equivalent*); other public agencies (*mental health, health, judiciary, employment services, etc.*); agencies providing supportive services; fraternal and civic groups; church and ethnic associations; employers and providers of housing; and private industry.

It is essential to develop a network of services that will support youths in their efforts to attain self-sufficiency. Using the one-third model has not only expands funding, but also provides an AILP-community relationship that transfers from program to youths as they exit care.

Many responses to needs assessment surveys have shown an overwhelming concern about the lack of supportive community resources for youths. This is usually particularly true in more rural areas.

The lack of resources coupled with poor transportation systems creates serious problems for staffs and youths. At the same time, survey responses, site

visits, and community meetings usually disclose that agencies have very limited community involvement activities.

Indeed, historically, community involvement in social services programs has been limited across the nation. Our experiences in agencies are not notably atypical of the national experience. Thus, we have found both public and private community resources for youths are usually largely underdeveloped throughout a particular state or geographic region.

On a more positive note, there have been changes in the support provided by the public/private sectors in this area during the last few years. Child Protection Teams, Friends of Foster Children, fraternal clubs, and child advocacy centers are recent examples of added community involvement in important child welfare service issues—including independent living—nationally. Continued growth in identifying these needs, particularly for adolescents and in more isolated areas, underscores the need for developing a comprehensive independent living program in all regions of the country.

Recommendations

To encourage added community involvement in independent living programs, the following are recommended:

Volunteer Service Coordinators

Agency volunteer services coordinators should be designated to develop an action plan to support the independent living effort. It is suggested further that, where it exists, the State Office of Volunteer Services be approached for assistance in developing a statewide plan for the development of volunteers and mentors for youth in out-of-home care (*see Section 11*).

Advisory Board

Organize a five- to ten-person advisory board for each agency and, where warranted, an overall state advisory group for the independent living program. These boards would provide information about and access to donations of goods and services for youths in the program. It is not recommended that these boards formulate policy but, rather, offer support to the program. Members of such boards may be drawn from prospective employers, housing providers, private industry, education, judicial, health services, and fraternal, ethnic, and philanthropic organizations, the media, and youths or former out-of-home-care residents (*see Section 6*).

Resource Directory

It is recommended that a resource directory of community youth services be developed and made available at all agency locations. This would be a state- or area-wide directory for distribution to

interested individuals, groups, organizations, and agencies throughout the agency service delivery area (*see Section 5*).

In Conclusion

As with all ideas presented in this text, some of these recommendations will need modification depending on the size and scope of the agency or program. Obviously, a small group home calls for a different response than a state department of social services or a child-caring agency with a large campus or one with multiple residential settings in one or many geographic areas. The utility of the concepts however, are appropriate for any child-caring agency large or small. An advisory board for the small group home can be as important as the development of a state panel for the mammoth state child-caring system.

The following sections expand on these ideas and concepts and offer more examples of direct actions to support the recommendations presented here.



Section 5:



Information and Public Relations Materials

There always is a need to promote programs within and outside of an agency. Promoting the adolescent independent living effort is equally important. The strategy can be simple: get the information out. Good information and the sharing of it build credibility with staff, community, and - most importantly - with youths. Developing a clear message of who you are and what you offer takes time, but the rewards are great. The planning should take place on two levels - with youths and with community. Within these levels, dissemination can be accomplished in a variety of ways.

Youth Handbook and Program Packet

Teens in many programs across the country consistently express a desire for more information on their rights and responsibilities while in out-of-home care. Some of the more articulate youths say they feel that a clearer understanding of the state system and their role while in care would contribute toward their success while in placement.

Kansas, Maine, and Kentucky are among states that have created handbooks for youths in out-of-home care that include information on independent living and its relationship to the youths, community resources, and other out-of-home care issues.

"This handbook was written for you if you are a teen who lives in an SRS 'placement' outside of your own home. The handbook covers many issues and questions

that may come up while you are in foster care. It also deals with subjects that will probably be of special interest to you, such as school, money, clothing, and preparing for your future- 'Independent Living!'" State of Kansas: A Handbook for Teens in Foster Care

Program Entrance Packet

Many independent living programs offer youths a packet of materials upon entering the program. The materials are all related to independent living topics.

The packets usually consist of a pocket folder or three-ring binder containing:

- A map of the state and county;
- A map of the public transportation system(s) and schedules;
- A listing of important agency addresses, telephone numbers, and contact person(s);
- Names and contact information for youths the local advisory board and or a brochure about the role of the board; and
- Other pertinent independent living program information (*e.g., a program mission statement, program application, criteria for completion of program, receipt of incentives, etc.*)

At times, the packet is "built" from a basic group of items into a more extensive resource. Materials are gathered from each session or module of the life skills curriculum. Youths then have a hand in its overall development and it becomes a part of the experiential

learning. A personal “Roots and Records” book is also an excellent tool for organizing information and documentation (See Appendix K-Resources).

*“As teenagers in Rhode Island, you are faced with various questions and decisions. The **Youth Yellow Pages** is a resource directory written especially for you. It was developed with the assistance of Youth Editors who provided insight into the variety of problems that teens face. The directory focuses on critical topics and offers accessible information and contact numbers to develop your awareness of services throughout the state. The **Youth Yellow Pages** will let you make choices and will give you the information and guidance you may need to reach intelligent, individual decisions.*

The directory is not just for emergencies. It also contains a lot of information which may be useful in everyday situations including where to go for help, what your rights are, and how to find support.” Greater Rhode Island Youth Yellow Pages: A Self-Referral Directory

Program Exit Packet

Upon completion of the independent living program and/or discharge to their own care and custody, youths would have completed organizing a packet or roots and records book of important personal documents such as school records, original social security card, certified copy of birth certificate, medical records, photographs, information about their biological family and foster parents, a history of their placements, immigration papers, and other documents that might be important for the transition to adult living.

Prior to discharge staff should review the materials with youths and “check-off” that youths understand how to best use the information and “add” new items as they progress through their transitions.

Again, the packet might be a product of the overall life skills curriculum or it might be new and separate. What is important is that it contains the most current information available and the items needed for transition from care to self-sufficiency.

Adult Community AILP Information Packet

Sharing information with the community is a way to enhance both the stature and effectiveness of your program and agency and can be crucial to the program’s success. For most people - citizens, voters, and officials alike - there is simply too much going on at too many levels of government to have a first-hand knowledge of what your agency does, or who your clients really are unless you inform them.

Furthermore, many people hold misconceptions about out-of-home care youths. The average citizen probably identifies these youths as “bad” or “in trouble.” They would typically have little understanding of why youths end up in the situations facing them and what it takes to assist in a healthy manner. Gaining the respect of key community people is the first priority, gaining the respect of as many citizens as possible is the second. An informational packet supporting and promoting the AILP can be an important ingredient.

This packet differs from the youth packet in that it provides descriptive material on independent living concepts to assist primary caregivers and community representatives (*and possibly other agency staffs*). It can also be developed for public relations use in the community at-large by providing information about adolescent independent living, specific events, and the agency as a whole.

Many agencies, private sector child-caring agencies in particular, have brochures describing themselves and their programs. A “new” brochure on the AILP or an insert with the additional information is one good option.

However, a caution is offered: try to provide a quality piece. Do *not* type a basic description and photocopy it for distribution. Choose a local or national printer, solicit their charitable support and guidance, and produce an item that lends credibility to your program.

Impress your audience! (*Kentucky was able to find a printer to produce approximately 70,000 copies of a high-quality youth handbook as a public service.*)

Remember to consider youth involvement in the development of the brochure. This is a perfect opportunity for youths to learn new skills and create a sense of ownership over the program. (For additional information on developing a packet and marketing your program to the community consult the *Putting It Together* in *Appendix K-Resources*.)

Resource Center/Library

Many agencies originally struggled with a lack of curricula, text, and audio-visuals to support their skills training efforts. In addition, because AILP is a relatively “new” phenomenon in child welfare services, there have been limited program examples to review. Happily, from that initial limited selection of goods and programs, time has produced an increasing number of suppliers of needed tools and case examples.

A wide range of materials has been developed and adapted to support the AILP concepts and individual program goals and objectives. This pool of materials and programs grows daily, making it a major challenge to stay on top of the growth and manage it in a manner useful to agencies and their AILP.

To address this issue, many agencies have now created repositories for

information on independent living, including texts, journal articles, curricula, and video and audiotapes. In some states it is the state independent living coordinator who houses and controls access to the materials, while in other states the materials are kept at a local community college or library or other locations where life skills classes are held. In Tennessee, the private child-caring agencies have assigned the responsibility for this resource collection to a specific individual at the state Child Care Association office.

A resource center or library can become a cornerstone for staff and youths in the development of an AILP. The utility of such an effort cannot be emphasized enough. Having the tools for staff to develop a range of topical life skills materials, the names and addresses of other similar programs and contact persons, and resource and funding sources, readily available in a central location can be a tremendous program booster.

Example: The South Bronx Development Organization (*SBDO*) created an Independent Living Skills Center to serve voluntary foster agencies throughout New York City. The Center provided access to state-of-the-art independent living skills program models, multi-media educational materials, training resources, and other youth-oriented materials. This model was then used to create a New York State Independent Living Resource Network. The Network was made up of four centers spread across New York State offering the same library and resource facilities as the original SBDO. (Special Note: SBDO later became known as the South Bronx Human Development Organization, Inc.)

Resource Directory

In the past, we found that numerous respondents to our needs assessment surveys requested a resource directory of youth services for their particular geographic area. The utility of a directory of youth services and youth-serving agencies for both youths and adults has been high in a number of existing programs. The development and regular updating of such information helps to sensitize the community to the need for youth services. In addition, the directory assists youth-serving professionals, agencies, and community groups to find and access resources that are otherwise unknown or receive limited use.

It is not unusual for our staff, after working in a specific locale for a period of time on a plan, to attend meetings with community representatives in which another “new” youth service is revealed. This new service is often unknown to many other attendees and may even have been operational for quite a while. This information is very important in the planning process alone, as well as for the utilization of the service and the availability of additional resources. The development of a directory of the available services helps circumvent the lack of communication, information sharing, and coordination that often exists in the community at-large.

A volunteer or student in placement might be assigned the task of compiling the various program descriptions, contact persons, and telephone numbers. This information can then be produced as a simple directory for general distribution. In some instances all that needs to be done is to update or expand an existing directory.

“This directory is primarily concerned with children’s programs . . . in the Southeastern United States. This has been developed to help those responsible for placing children to have a better idea of the types of services offered by a particular program.”

The Southeastern Directory-Duke Endowment

Information Meetings

Independent living programming for adolescents is a relatively new phenomenon and, as such, is often misunderstood. A public information campaign is needed nationally, to introduce, clarify, promote, and monitor perceptions and support for independent living programming.

Significant efforts need to be made to furnish the community at-large with information on independent living. This overall community subdivides into four groups:

- State and county departments of social services (*or their equivalents*) staffs at all levels, including administration, line levels, foster parents, and divisions other than child welfare who, in some capacity, also serve youths.
- The greater youth-serving community, including group home staffs, shelter personnel, judiciary, and health/mental health department staffs.
- The community, including civic associations, chamber of commerce, private industry officials, philanthropic and non-profit organizations, and church, fraternal, cultural, and ethnic groups.
- The executive and legislative branches of government, including the mayor, city council members, town and county boards, state

assembly and senate and U.S. Congressional delegations.

One of the best ways to achieve success in informing these special interest groups is to make presentations at their regular, staff, or special meetings. Most groups welcome outside participation by speakers on special topics. Groups ranging from fraternal organizations to homebuilders to local high school principals' associations meet regularly— as often as weekly or monthly. Getting a spot on the agenda is often quite easy. These meetings present many opportunities to get the agency message out and receive feedback and support from some very important active and potential constituency groups.

In addition, holding open forums and community meetings on AILP also can be productive. In Oklahoma, the State Department sponsored and promoted a series of “Adolescent Independent Living Community Forums” throughout the state before activating the AILP. These meetings brought judges, lawyers, businessmen, foster parents, agency staffs, concerned citizens, and others together to discuss the AILP movement and forthcoming state program.

In Wisconsin, a series of regional meetings was held for all county Department of Social Services staffs and other state officials, most notably representatives of the Department of Public Instruction, to provide information on AILP—including a definition of what it was and was not and what the state hoped to do in the future. Following this “paving of the way,” specific training was provided in the regions with nationally recognized experts on AILP. The recognition factor for AILP was considerably higher through this informational promotion

approach than for programs where no preliminary groundwork is undertaken.

Recommendations

To address these vital information needs, the following are recommended:

Youth Handbook and Packets

It is recommended that a youth handbook and entrance and exit program packets be developed for participants in the independent living program. The youth handbook may be designed for all youths in foster care—not just the AILP program participants. A section of the handbook might be directed specifically to those who are also participants in the independent living effort.

General AILP Packet

It is recommended that a general independent living program packet be developed explaining the overall objectives of the agency effort. It should include data and general information on independent living programs as well as the agency effort, and would be used for general distribution to interested adults in the community.

Resource Center/Library

It is recommended that a resource center/library or series of centers/libraries be established. If only one is established, it must have the capacity to loan items to anyone making a request from anywhere in the area it serves. If multiple centers are established, they could be located at each branch office or at local community colleges (as in California), schools, residential campuses, or libraries.

Resource Directory

It is recommended that a resource directory be compiled of all youth-serving agencies and resources within

the geographic area served. In multiple-agency program areas, each jurisdiction might have its own section of the directory. There are excellent examples of these types of directories from many areas of the country; replication would be relatively simple.

“Road Show”

It is recommended that staff develop a two- to three-hour informational “road show” that can be presented to certified and prospective foster parents, interested

civic groups, church organizations, other government departments, private industry groups, etc. This presentation provides staff an opportunity to explain the department or agency’s approach to independent living and disseminate the information packets (recommended above).

After a program has been established, panel and individual presentations by youths involved in the program are effective alternatives.

RESOURCES

Understanding Foster Care: A Handbook for Parents – North Carolina Division of Social Services, Children’s Services Section, Raleigh, North Carolina (DSS 5201 (4/98))

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) website contains an Overview of Foster Care Handbooks. This paper lists the components of effective handbooks and evaluates five publications on the basis of critical subject areas. CWLA has also published a template for the creation of foster care handbooks. “*Guidelines for the Development of Foster Care Handbooks*” CWLA, Phone: 1-800-407-6273 E-mail: cwla@pmds.com

The Maine Youth Advisory Team has completed “Answers: A handbook for youth by youth in foster care” and published it online. For additional information: Phone: 877-792-YLAT (Toll Free) Email: pburns@usm.maine.edu



Section 6:



Advisory Boards

Program advisory boards, or councils, have an interesting history. Many have excelled in promoting the scope and purpose of a program or agency, bringing in new resources, providing professional advice, and many other worthwhile efforts. They also have, in some instances, created more work, provided unwanted controversy, and bogged programs down with additional layers of bureaucracy. Boards are like all other components of a program effort; they take time and commitment. When this is accomplished, the results can be overwhelmingly positive.

If the use of an advisory board is to be effective for the overall program, the planning and development stage must be a systematic approach to involving community representatives and youths. Many manuals have been written on the subject of advisory boards of one sort or another, and some programs and agencies have developed well-functioning advisory arms. On the other hand, few AILPs have, to date, looked at and implemented this concept in the planning process or in ongoing program operations.

There are a few assumptions about people and communities that should be raised before such an effort can occur. These assumptions, if shared and acted upon by the process planners, will lead to a highly participatory approach to program betterment. They are as follows:

- People who live in the community have a significant amount of insight, often untapped, that can be shared and integrated into a practical and workable strategy for positive program growth.
- Most people are willing-when able-to build on the strength of the community and to change realities that are harmful to youths.
- When people work together in positive ways, the AILP can grow and become a strong community resource for all youths in need.
- People with diverse perspectives who view the community from different vantage points can become valuable allies and sources of information for one another if they share a common commitment, such as an AILP.

Overall, the use of an advisory board can elevate a program to new heights. Boards can bring in new or enlightening perspectives, additional and sometimes previously unknown resources can be added, and they can empower both youths and alumni adults, some of whom have experienced isolation and disenfranchisement prior to their board experiences.

This section describes several types of boards to consider in support of an AILP. All three can be useful to a program. The choice of any or all depends upon what the program hopes to accomplish. One type of board most

definitely empowers youths, a second develops community support, and a third, among other things, focuses on building a stronger monetary base by expanding present limitations. This permits youths to increase funds for items that presently fall outside existing guidelines or “between the cracks.”

Because different kinds of boards serve different purposes and have different impacts on independent living programs, it is important to seriously consider board development as an integral part of the AILP planning process.

Adolescent Advisory Board

Foster care youth advisory boards are being implemented in many locales nationally, with a wide range of duties and responsibilities. The boards range from being representative of a whole state (statewide) to a specific agency (agency-wide). Members are chosen based on interest and as representatives of specific areas, ages, or groups. A very effective approach is to select both youths who are presently residing in out-of-home care and those who have already exited to lives on their own.

To be effective, an advisory board needs to develop a mission or statement of purpose and to set goals for itself. This activity serves to identify needs, focus energy, and increase awareness about the board’s purpose among program members, the host organization, and the community (See “Youth Advocacy Start-Up Kit,” Appendix K for guidelines and activities).

A number of existing boards have adopted goals reflecting a wide range of important issues. These include youth rights, fund raising, recruitment, youth leadership, peer counseling, educating the community, mentoring youths, publishing a newsletter, speaking

engagements (e.g., at foster parent and staff training and conferences), providing ideas for programs, providing feedback on program and events, developing trust funds and scholarships, and planning monthly, quarterly, and/or yearly retreats.

Youth boards vary in size. They usually include from 8-20 youth members and one or two staff advisors. The Philadelphia youth board averages approximately nine members split fairly evenly between youths who are presently in foster care and those who have left care and are out on their own. The North Carolina board (*SAYSO – Strong Able Youth Speaking Out*) is 20 youth members and includes both residential and foster family youth as well as youth who have exited the foster care system.

In California, the youth board effort, California Youth Connections (*CYC*), was launched in 1988. Both SAYSO and CYC function on local and statewide levels. The groups are controlled by youths and supported by adult advisors. A recent article on CYC states:

“Social workers and other adult supporters have cited numerous instances of CYC youth going beyond all expectations: CYC groups holding fundraisers for local charitable organizations; CYC members holding regular peer support groups; CYC groups applying for and receiving private non-profit organization status; CYC members expressing the desire to help make the lives of their younger foster ‘brothers and sisters’ better, less difficult in the maze of public child welfare....” Daily Living, Vol. IV, No. 2

There are at least two public agency programs that created “quasi” boards. Oklahoma City had a Teen Association and Fresno, California, had the “I’m Somebody Special” Teen Club. The Fresno group had, among other things;

- Provided youths with funds from planning and carrying out car-washes, bake sales, and other fund raising events;
- Organized events or outings that often have been closed to foster youths; provided college financial assistance through scholarships; and
- Engaged in general socialization, citizenship, and cultural awareness activities.

The Oklahoma Association was the impetus for the development of a Teen Committee, which met regularly with adult facilitators to plan events. This committee developed the rules for Teen Association activities-banning drugs, sex, fighting, and cursing. It went on to plan attendance and activities at the Oklahoma statewide teen conference, dances, donations of community resources, careers nights at colleges, and speaking engagements.

Empowering Youths

If you help to form a youth committee you (the adult) must listen to its advice. Thus, mechanisms for listening and responding must be the order of the day when developing youth boards.

In a manual on developing better "Youth Participation in Adult Committees," Karen Thorp, State Coordinator for the Wisconsin Positive Youth Development Initiative, wrote:

"Hundreds of manuals have been written on the subject of youth participation. Agencies exist at local, state, and federal levels of government for the sole purpose of promoting the concepts and skills involved in youth participation. Thousands of people across the country are committed to youth participation both as a philosophy and as a reality. But the fact is that there are very few programs that actually provide

meaningful experiences for youth in the name of youth participation. Obviously, somewhere between the concept and the reality there are some problems. Obviously:

- *People don't really read the hundreds of manuals that discuss the details of successful youth participation programs.*
- *Youth participation does not just 'happen' when people recognize the need.*
- *Commitment and caring are not enough.*

Youth participation is too important to be intimidated by a little reality...youth participation on adult committees is not only an exciting opportunity for youth to learn skills and develop self-esteem, but is also the only way that adult committees can make sound and lasting decisions on youth programs and issues."

Maine's Youth Advisory Board developed a 28-page booklet, "Influencing Public Policy," North Carolina's SAYSO youth board developed the theme, "Don't let them (adults) develop policy about you without you."

Youths in out-of-home care have had decisions made for them over and over; starting the day they were removed from their biological families and placed in out-of-home care. Trudy Festinger's book on foster care and titled, *No One Ever Asked Us...* is a reality for out-of-home care youth. A reality, that usually lasts from the day of placement until the day of discharge. Somewhere in between, a change has to take place. By allowing youths to ask questions, and by seriously responding, new doors are opened for all concerned. A mutual sharing of information is started, and information is power. Thus, the process of empowering begins. Many staffs have watched youths take control of their lives in an AILP through this

empowering process. Youths need to be given opportunities to take positive control of their lives. When they take that opportunity, the probability for successful transition to adult living, will increase.

Recommendations

Form a Youth Advisory Board

It is recommended that agencies consider forming a state/agency-wide youth advisory board, with representatives from all locations and including youths presently in care as well as youths who are former residents of an out-of-home-care program.

Stipends for Youth Participation

Special funding should be allotted to provide a small stipend for each youth's participation on such an advisory board. If they are old enough to drive, reimbursing them for mileage, or if they are missing work, paying them for attending the meeting is important. It is recommended that meetings be held in a nice location, with food and beverages and one or two adult advisors. Quarterly meetings are important to provide continuity to board activity.

Newsletter

Support should be provided to allow the board to produce a brief newsletter for distribution to all out-of-home-care youths, foster parents, and agency staff. The newsletter will help provide exposure for the group and keep everyone aware of board activities.

- Regular Meetings

A top-level agency administrator should meet with the board on a once or twice a year to discuss concerns and suggestions generated by the group about the independent living program and out-of-

home-care system. Youths in out-of-home care often are left out of the planning and implementation stages of programming. Encouraging regular meetings, having an administrator meet once, twice, or more each year with the group, and accepting and using youths' contributions to the decision-making process - all empower youths.

Additional Advisory Boards

In addition to empowering youths participating in independent living programs, advisory boards can contribute in a number of ways to program strength. They can be of great value in generating interest in and support for the independent living program throughout the state, in both public and private sectors. Agencies often are left short of resources to complete their overall program goals and mission. In addition, the public sector, because of recent severe fiscal restraints, has had difficulty providing comprehensive support for all program efforts. Thus, "filling in the gaps" can become a vitally important task for a program advisory board.

Such fiscal constraints are particularly true for the out-of-home-care system, where a great many gaps exist. If not addressed effectively, these gaps can become barriers, sometimes-formidable ones, to program development and ongoing operations. It is therefore recommended that this issue of generating and sustaining support for the AILP be addressed with two not necessarily discrete approaches. The first is the formation of statewide and local advisory boards; the second is the development of a private foundation or non-profit support organization.

Statewide and Local Adult Community Advisory Boards

Positive linkage is an important role of these boards; linkages between the AILP and community programs, people, and resources. As an ongoing activity, members of these boards regularly survey their respective communities to determine more effective methods of promoting the concepts of independent living.

Underlying the development of this type of board is the belief that only a cooperative system of public and private services for adolescents can provide meaningful long-term assistance and support. The most effective intervention for these adolescents must include coordination with many appropriate resources in the community.

Local and statewide advisory boards have still another critical role: to assist the agency in identifying gaps in the program support system, to generate community awareness about these needs, and to generate added resources to meet them.

A typical board may have representatives from private businesses, chambers of commerce, public schools/vocational rehabilitation, fraternal organizations, community action groups, local and state work councils, and legislators or their representatives. Such a board is not a policy arm of the agency, but advises it on future program directions and assists in influencing certain sectors of the community to be responsive to program needs.

If more than one advisory board exists for a state or agency, a mechanism is needed to permit these separate entities to share information. One method is to make sure that minutes are taken at each group's meetings. These

minutes are then collated and shared agency- or statewide. Another option is to create a small advisory board newsletter. This formalizes the process somewhat, but the same communication and information sharing goals are achieved.

In addition, this level board may include some youth members as representatives of the client group. The ideal would be to have one or two Youth Board members as representatives to this body. These youth members would serve on a rotating basis so that, over time, all youths from the Youth Board would have an opportunity to participate in the adult committee work.

Recommendations

To marshal public and private resources, the following are recommended:

Form Statewide Advisory Board

Agencies should consider the formation of a statewide independent living advisory board, composed of representatives from the private sector, churches, community officials, and youths. To be most effective, the board needs to be limited in number to five to ten members.

Form Local Advisory Boards

Where appropriate, each branch office, unit, campus, or agency location should be encouraged to form an advisory board specific to its locale, with the same type of representation as the statewide board but focusing on the office's jurisdictional area. In rural areas, regional groupings might be more effective, coordinating their efforts with those of the statewide board. This can be easily accomplished by having a representative from each region serving as a member of the statewide body. In addition, minutes taken at each meeting

are shared with other boards. A newsletter can be developed to promote the sharing of information about board activities throughout the state or overall agency. *(Some private child-caring agencies operations cover multiple states.)*

Private Sector Boards, Foundations Or Non-Profit Organizations

There are many examples of highly effective work in independent living programs by private sector organizations. One of them is described in an excerpt from *Best of Daily Living*.

"The Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation was created in 1983 by a group of concerned Arizona citizens to pay for special items not covered by the state foster care program. These citizens had a special understanding of the needs of children in foster care. They were all members of the Foster Care Citizen Review Board and responsible for reviewing the case records of the 3,000 children in the Arizona Foster Care program. From their unique perspective, these review board members were able to see how many young people could benefit from seemingly small but important gifts like music lessons, bicycles, and athletic uniforms."

The mission of this Foundation is to:

"Offset some of (the) injustices (done to children) by doing what we can to give foster children as normal a lifestyle as possible during their time in foster care."

This statement is recognition that the state cannot-and perhaps should not-fund all of the special things children need as they grown up. The Foundation was formed to fill in the gaps.

A similar program operated as a public/private cooperation project in Oklahoma between the Department of Human Services and the Citizens Concerned for Children. It focused

exclusively on the independent living preparation of youth in out-of-home care.

"The roles of the primary participants involved in assisting foster children with their preparation for adult independence can be graphically illustrated as a triangle. The base, the most important segment of the triangle, is the team of the social worker and the foster parent or group home workers. These individuals have daily contact with the children and are responsible for the 'hands-on' preparation with each child. The overall success of an independent living program will, to a large degree, depend on their commitment to the program and the tools they are given to implement and maintain the program.

Outside professionals make up the second side of the triangle. These individuals represent the most highly trained and experienced part of the program. They provide the programs, materials and training for social workers and foster parents, as well as providing continued support in the overall development of the program.

The third side of the triangle is represented by non-profit organizations. These organizations complete the program by providing special resources to the social worker/foster parent team and by providing services directly to the child.

In the center of the triangle is the foster child who, through the efforts of the parties represented by each side of the triangle, is being guided with love and encouragement toward responsible, productive adulthood.

In most areas of the country, the base and the professional side of the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) triangle are in place. In order to make the program complete, the third side must be developed." Daily Living, Vol. V. No. 2

Both examples speak to the need for an external group to be developed and encouraged to provide youths, staff, and the program with assistance in areas where the agency has limitations.

In many areas, such groups already exist. Fraternal clubs, Friends of Foster Children organizations (*Hawaii and Wisconsin*), and child advocacy centers are actively pursuing goals similar to the Arizona and Oklahoma projects. During many of our meetings with staffs around the country, community representatives of all these groups, and other concerned community representatives, a strong showing of support was expressed for the idea of adolescent independent living program efforts. Verbal commitments are often expressed to support program activities with outside funding and many such expressions have become realities for agencies and programs.

Recommendations

To provide a strong, visible, effective mechanism to support the independent living program, the following are recommended:

Form a Non-Profit Organization

Agencies should consider asking for help from the community in forming a non-profit organization or foundation to provide support for adolescents who have a goal of independent living. It is believed that an entity separate from existing non-profit groups would be most beneficial, rather than attempting to expand the service mandate of those groups to include independent living. This approach allows the independent living movement to establish its own identity among child-serving organizations.

In addition, in choosing a name for this “new” organization, the AILP is more clearly profiled. Many programs have chosen names for their programs that do not include the term independent living—such as Choices, PAL, Pathways,

LINKS, and SaySo. Whatever name is chosen could also be used for the foundation or non-profit organization to promote the identity of the AILP and its goals and objectives.

Seek Endorsements

Agencies should also seek endorsement of this new organization from the aforementioned non-profit support groups so that an atmosphere of collaboration—rather than competition—exists among groups with such similar goals. The planning process should include an assessment of existing community organizations and the potential atmosphere for a “new” entity. Promotion of this new group should be done with as much sharing of information about its goals and objectives as possible.

Develop a Three-Year Action Plan

Agencies need to develop an initial three-year action plan for this new organization and seek assistance in formation of this resource as a state or agency-wide organization. Often programs have found a local or agency attorney who is willing to incorporate the group and provide support for the Internal Revenue Service Non-Profit Application for little or no fee. A three-year plan also parallels the AILP planning process.



Section 7:



Program Incentives

Motivation is an important key to program success for all participants. This section reviews a variety of incentives to encourage continued enthusiastic participation in independent living programs by youths, foster parents, staff, and other caregivers.

Incentives for Youth Participation

Under the best of circumstances, motivating teens to participate in a “program” is extremely difficult. Motivating youths in out-of-home care to participate in any departmental effort can be monumentally difficult at times. Consequently, considerable thought must be given to creating a program atmosphere that gets youths both involved and motivated to succeed. Programs across the country have tried a variety of approaches to deal with this issue. Many of them are listed below.

Youth Incentives: Monetary

There are many ways to motivate youths in independent living programs with monetary rewards. These include the following:

- Partial or delayed rewards: Payments are made for previous week(s) or a percentage of the due amount with the balance saved for an agreed-upon future date.
 - Payments toward rent and utilities: The program applies a subsidy for youths towards their living situation.
 - Bonus for employment: The program gives youth additional funds if they reach a certain level of employment (*either hours worked or amount earned*).
 - Savings plan: The program saves a percentage of income earned by youths and possibly matches a certain amount with program funds.
 - Allowance bonus: This can be tied to extra chores, points earned for tasks, or as an addition to earned income from employment.
 - Youth earns whatever is “left over” from a skills exercise: For example, youths shop for groceries with a specified budget for specific items. They may keep savings they realize (*through use of coupons, purchase of generic items, etc.*) from the agreed-upon budget.
 - Stipend to complete follow-up form (*evaluation*): A payment is made to youths who complete follow-up evaluations of program experiences.
- Payments for attending skills classes or discussion groups.
 - Payment for teaching life skills class
 - Immediate rewards: Payments are made at class sessions.

Youth Incentives: Non-Monetary

Equally important in motivating youths in independent living programs are the many non-monetary rewards available. The following are tested programs and incentives:

- Skills classes and discussion groups.
 - Food: Provide snacks, etc., at classes.
 - Films/videos: Provide latest video rentals as a reward for completing a class.
 - Sports activities: Provide recreational facilities, such as basketball and baseball.
 - Field trips: Provide youths with opportunities to attend shows, concerts, the circus, etc.; or to obtain needed information and documents, such as a birth certificate or working permit/papers; or provide the use of public transportation to interview for a job.
 - Banquets: Provide a “graduation” luncheon or dinner for youths for completing classes/programs or have a dinner at a teen conference. Ideally, these meetings are set up at pleasant facilities with flowers on the tables, tablecloths, catered meals, ceremonies, and awards for participation.
 - Retreats: Provide youths opportunities to get away to meetings and places otherwise unavailable to them before they leave out-of-home care. Examples include retreats, camps, conferences, and meetings at hotels/resorts.
 - Treasure Hunts: Make a game of accessing the community and its available services, such as acquiring a number of needed items from a list. The program provides bus/train fare or transportation to and from sites, but youths have to problem-solve and acquire as many items as possible on their list. They are rewarded with prizes (goods or cash) for their success.
- Wilderness/self-sufficiency/survival courses: Establish or purchase slots in a formal course where youths learn new skills or enhance already developed skills. Examples include: Ropes and Wilderness Schools, and Outward Bound.
 - Volunteers/Mentors: Develop support for youths by using volunteers. Volunteers can provide invaluable support, nurturing, and help with solving personal problems by serving as a “friend in times of need.” They also may fill an important mentor role for youths, working with staff to teach such specific skills as word processing, auto repair, and carpentry, as well as general academic tutoring (also, see Section 11).
 - Living Situation: Provide youths with real opportunities to learn in a living and teaching situation. These opportunities are different than the “usual” foster family or residential care living placements in that they allow youths to practice what they learn in skill classes or in the living situation in a more structured way. Incentives also can include allowing youths to live on their own on weekends or to move up through a level system. In the short-term, that may mean getting their own room in the group home or obtaining their own community-based apartment, which could turn into their permanent placement after the conclusion of the AILP (long-term). An example of a short-term program incentive is the Urban League of Essex County’s (NJ)

weekend apartment experiences. An example of a long-term incentive is the scattered site program of New Horizons of Cincinnati (OH). This incentive applies both during the program and after exit.

- Household furnishings: Provide furniture, dishes, linens, and other household supplies.
- Teen clubs: In some areas, youths form clubs to raise money for recreational trips to such events as a Shriner's football game, Sertoma Club Circus, and for visits to cities, national parks, concerts, etc. Examples include: Fresno's (CA) "*I'm Somebody Special Teen Club*" and Oklahoma City's (OK) Teen Association.
- Graduates' reunion weekend/dinner: This type of event brings together past program participants to share events in their lives. It has the effect of extending the program's impact beyond the youths' discharge date/completion of the AILP. The goal is to establish lifelines for youth that keep them connected with the positive influences in their past.
- Using graduates as peer counselors: Former AILP youths can be effective workers, usually on a part-time basis, when they enter into peer counseling relationships with currently enrolled youths.
- Youth Advisory Board Membership: Youths participate on a local or state/agency-wide program advisory board (see Section 6). Many youth become empowered by participation in the decision-making process. Having input into future program directions can be very rewarding to young people and be an incentive for further involvement.
- Academic credit: Some programs have established relationships with

educational institutions in their area that permit program youths to earn credit for different components of the AILP program. High school credit in some instances is extended for completion of skills classes or apprenticeships or for completing community or general college classes.

- Obtaining a driver's license: AILP participation can lead to obtaining a driver's permit, provide assistance in practice driving and driver's license test scheduling, and culminate in gaining a permanent driver's license.
- Jobs and work experience: Many programs have created employment opportunities for young people in the program and established services to place youths in jobs in the community.
- Level system: Some programs establish incentives linked to living space for the acquisition of different levels of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Attaining these levels can be determined through written testing and behavioral observation and assessment. Rewards may include physical movement within the home, on the residential campus, or within the community.
- T-Shirts, paraphernalia: Youths are given T-shirts, canvas bags, and folders embellished with logos, slogans, titles, and dates of the AILP, teen conferences, retreats, etc., as mementos of the times spent during independent skills development.
- Gift certificates: Provide opportunities for youths to practice purchasing foodstuffs, clothes, etc., by providing gift certificates at the conclusion of a particular skills class. As a bonus incentive, youths may be given a list of items they must purchase with the certificate, with the note that any savings

above the costs of the items will be theirs to keep for personal use. Thus, if they practice careful comparison-shopping, they will end up with goods and a cash bonus.

- **Bag of goodies:** Solicit community groups to provide packages of items representing community agencies and businesses, similar to the Welcome Wagon service. When youths participate in a conference or program-sponsored career day, they receive the bag of items. Typically it includes money-saving coupons, free passes, miniature replicas, writing pads, pens, pencils, etc.
- **Door prizes:** Some programs have gotten businesses to donate items for use as door prizes for youths when attending meetings, conferences, or job fairs. For example, Fieldcrest Cannon donated complete sets of bathroom towels to each youth attending the Annual "Youth Days" Conferences in North Carolina.
- **Success:** By providing the opportunity to succeed, AILPs create the environment for success. When youths see that they can have some success in a program, it breeds a desire to try again. With each small success comes the development of a truly independent/self-sufficient person.
- **Youth newsletter:** Some AILP's (*Miami, Florida*) produce an in-house newsletter for youths about the statewide effort, while others purchase a youth independent living newspaper, and have a state-specific page included. As youths learn more about the AILP and possible options they become more interested and motivated.
- **Bonuses from local businesses:** In Honolulu (*HI*), the Fun Factory, a video game haven, gives out free tokens for "good grades." This is an excellent

example of the constructive involvement of business in youth affairs. Other local amusement areas may give out free tokens or reduce admission costs to youths for completing certain tasks, skills classes, academic work, etc.

It takes time to motivate youths to participate in this type of program. Tangible gifts for youths are most useful in encouraging participation. As the program develops, more substantial gifts may become available, such as luggage, clothing, recreational trips, and life books (see "*Build Your Own Roots and Records Book*," in *Appendix K-Resources*).

Not all motivation comes in the form of material goods. Many youths, through the process of becoming more empowered by skill acquisition, will be rewarded with the invaluable gifts of higher self-esteem and a more positive self-image. Positive peer pressure and interaction, learning to deal with the past and present, and developing new hopes and aspirations are strong motivating factors. Each is achievable in an independent living program.

The motivators an agency chooses need to be dependent upon the agency's location and action on recommendations for change over time. Creation of advisory boards, added private sector support, and youth application and involvement in the case-planning process will all inevitably produce many different ways to motivate youths to become involved and remain involved.

Incentives for Foster Parent Participation

Many of the incentives mentioned for youths are also suitable for foster parents. Other incentives that address the state of the foster parent situation also offer possibilities for positive incentives. Increased per diem, special recognition,

professional training, participation in case planning and assessment with youths, respite care, support groups, and careful matching of children with families are a few of the critically important activities needed to motivate foster parents to remain with the system and to participate in improving it.

One of the greatest resources for an AILP can be foster parents or other types of caregivers who provide primary care in the living situation. Much of the teaching of skills and learning by youths occurs in what has been referred to in this text as Phase I-informal setting (*see Section 2*). The primary caregivers in Phase I are constantly faced with opportunities to transfer knowledge and skills to youths. These transfer opportunities are really times for teaching-through modeling behaviors (*youths observing adults*), actual demonstration (*showing youths how and including them in the process*), and in supporting and reinforcing the skills training youths receive away from home.

How are primary caregivers hooked into being a part of the overall AILP?

One basic way is through communication. Information is power. When it is shared with foster parents, programs empower them and urge them to become more creative and committed.

One of the most serious mistakes nationally is a failure to fully inform foster parents and other primary caregivers about the scope, purpose, and philosophy of the independent living program. What is the AILP trying to do, how does it intend to do it, and what support will be provided to everyone involved? Answers to these and other important questions are critical to ensure primary caregivers' commitment and involvement.

For the last five years in North Carolina, we have been training primary caregivers to become trainers in the area of adolescent independent living. These trainers facilitate sessions using the "*Foster Parent Training Collection*," (*see Appendix K-Resources*) to motivate other foster parents to become more actively involved in AILP through assessment, daily teaching, facilitating youth life skills classes, and recruiting families to foster and adopt teens.

The program has become highly successful and empowering to foster parents as they ultimately experience the difference their commitment to AILP makes in the behavior and skill development of their youths.

Whenever programs can provide extra funds, recognition, and professional development opportunities to primary caregivers, they help to ensure a higher level of success in programming.

Recommendations

To strengthen the foster parent and primary caregiver support network, the following are recommended:

Orientation Meetings

Orientation meetings should be held in all branches to familiarize foster parents with independent living concepts. Meetings should be scheduled to accommodate foster parents-that is, in the evening hours or on Saturdays. Other useful practices include using existing foster parent associations or newsletters, having key foster parents to host meetings in their homes, and providing babysitting services for younger children during meetings.

Cash Incentives

Offer cash incentives for program participation. Some states offer board

rates for independent living. Others provide an extra sum each month for each youth in the household who participates in the independent living program. It is our experience that the AILP can be strengthened if the agency develops a cash incentives plan for participating youths and foster parents. *(Many states have historically provided a differentiated board rate for those primary caregivers who are willing to accept adolescents.)*

Pre-service and In-service Training

Provide ongoing pre- and in-service training opportunities on independent living preparation. As suggested earlier, consideration should be given to making such training mandatory (See Section 9).

Foster Parents as Teachers

Use foster parents to teach groups. There is a great range of expertise among foster parents that can be used effectively to achieve common goals. Foster parents may, for example, be used to teach food preparation, mechanical repair, sewing, and other skill areas. The more foster parents are involved, the stronger their commitment to the program. Agencies also might consider choosing individuals from the foster parent pool to be trained as foster parent trainers. The “peer” trainers can be instrumental in creating a more professional cadre of foster parents focused on AILP issues.

Orientation Packet

Provide an informational newsletter and orientation packet. Whenever the AILP can create a program newsletter and or information packets these should be shared with primary caregivers (see Section 5). In North Carolina a foster parent newspaper, *Fostering Perspectives*, is produced to keep foster

parents informed. ILR utilizes this newspaper regularly to promote all aspects of AILP to foster parents and other caregivers and readers.

Incentives for Residential Staff

Much of what has been said in reference to incentives for foster parents and other primary caregivers applies to residential staff. Sharing information, inclusion in programming whenever possible, and cash or in-kind incentive payments, are all methods to assist staff to become more involved and invested in the AILP. *(Extra cash incentives for being the “lead” worker, or coordinating the AILP, or parts of the skills curriculum are additional ways to “identify and reward” through the use of incentives.)*

Moving residential staff from the often-primary role of “crowd control” to one of mutual involvement with youthful residents can make a world of difference in the AILP in the residential setting. Assigning youths household chores such as cleaning, shopping, and cooking, as well as other methods of involvement in their daily activities, can provide employment opportunities for youths and relieve staff of routine chores, freeing their time and energy for more serious facility needs. Staffs become more motivated to allow decision making to occur at the basic level-the resident.

Bringing all staff-child care, clerical, maintenance, grounds-into professional development training opportunities together; creating a yearly training calendar; and giving over segments of youths skills training responsibilities to staff-particularly within individual staff members areas of interest-are all incentives. Allowing staff to take youths and the classroom out into the community to the Laundromat, used car

lot, supermarket, or city hall “frees up” everyone’s energy and revitalizes.

ILR, in concert with the North Carolina Division of Social Services, has developed opportunities for group home staffs statewide to attend regularly scheduled AILP trainings with local county social workers and foster parents. This cross-pollination has encouraged group home programs to participate extensively in all aspects of the state AILP – LINKS.

Recommendations

Information Sharing

The recommendations presented here are basically the same as those described for foster parents. Orientations, information sharing and packets, cash and in-kind payments, change in roles or orientation to child care work, all will assist residential staff to become more involved advocates for independent living programming.

Community Involvement

Staff also should be allowed to work more in the community to develop resources and volunteer or mentor assistance. Be creative; encourage staff to recognize needs of the home and residents and to solicit community support for resources to meet those needs. Staff needs to become brokers and advocates for the agency and home. Assign staff responsibilities for some of these activities to further encourage outside or community connections.

Encourage Skill Development

Ask for staff input as to how skills can be developed in the program setting. For example:

- Could alarm clocks be used instead of staff waking youths up in the morning?
- Could youths share responsibility for keeping track of appointments, for menu development and shopping, or for budgeting for recreational spending?



Section 8:



Staff Specialization

Many public departments of social services and private child-caring agencies have been implementing specific adolescent units in their child welfare systems. Specialization usually occurs because a group of clients is significant enough in size to warrant assigning specific staff its case management functions.

Specialization is certainly not a new concept in the field of child welfare. Workers and units with specialized caseloads have been in existence in some counties, states, and private agencies for some time. Group homes, foster care, home finding and licensing, adoption, adult services, and child protection are just a few of the areas in which child welfare staffs have specialized.

Specialization in the area of adolescents, however, is a more recent phenomenon. This has occurred mainly because it is believed that adolescents in out-of-home care have unique needs best addressed by staffs that have expertise in working with this age group and, as mentioned earlier, because of the sheer number of out-of-home-care youths in the adolescent age range.

Shifting Demographics

The past decade in particular, has seen an important shift in the demographics of the out-of-home care population. Over that period, this population has become older. In 1980, according to some estimates, 31 percent of the out-of-home care population was age 13 to 21. By 1984, this had risen to

almost 46 percent of the estimated 275,000 youths residing in out-of-home care. Presently, the percentage in some locations is greater than 50 percent of today's estimated population of 550,000, and it is not unusual to encounter staffs that have upwards of 70-80 percent of their caseloads represented by adolescents.

As noted earlier, one consequence of this shift is a movement to develop staff that can be more focused and better trained to work with this number of adolescents. Arizona and Ohio are two of a number of states that have experimented with this specialization. Many private residential child-caring agencies, through their intake policies, cater exclusively to this adolescent age range.

Lead Worker or Facilitator

Creating a "lead worker" or paying a "community person" to function as the specialist is an alternative to developing specialized units or a number of specially trained social workers. The lead worker is responsible for coordinating and connecting youths to independent living services. The young person remains on another worker's caseload, but the coordinator ensures that the initial referral takes place and that follow-up and actual service delivery occur. Connecticut called these lead social workers "adolescent specialists" and the life skills instructors "*Community Life Skills Coordinators*,"

in Oregon they were designated “plan and community facilitators.”

It is our judgment that either of these models, in lieu of a specialized unit, can work successfully in most agencies. This would be particularly appropriate in locations that, because of limited staff, must incorporate independent living programming as part of the “normal” case management process. All other programs could have specialized units or “lead” workers as in the models described above. For an AILP in the residential setting, the lead worker concept adds specificity to an already specialized focus.

Using a lead worker to formulate and coordinate the AILP program gives the program additional special status. In support of this idea, the State of Oregon’s approach was quite functional in both public and private settings. The model employed two sets of specialists—Plan Facilitators and Community Facilitators—to connect youths to independent living services.

The *Plan Facilitator* focused exclusively on working with youths on the development, implementation, and follow-up on their independent living plans. The *Community Facilitator* focused on the development of a community-based independent living program. This person develops, promotes, connects, and supports community involvement and the provision of services and resources that support independent living programming (see *Appendix J*).

As a model for development in the group home or other residential facility, what occurs is that one child-care staff person coordinates or “leads” other staff to ensure that all aspects of the AILP are covered within the overall program. In this way, “non-lead” staff still work with all residents on day-to-day residential

living concerns but, in reference to the AILP, they focus on a specific aspect.

Our work with a variety of residential facilities has shown that, by using the lead worker to coordinate and the balance of staff to support, everyone is invested in the AILP without have to “own” the whole program. A good example of a way to accomplish this is to develop a youth skills training program that allows each staff person to take responsibility for one or two segments or modules.

This leaves the other segments or modules for other staff to focus on. The lead worker’s job is to ensure that all modules are covered, and to facilitate and coordinate the sharing of information, including scheduling and support for a particular staff person’s responsibilities.

Foster Parent Specialization and Partnering

Foster parents also have roles within the AILP that can expand the sharing and partnering of tasks needed to fully develop all aspects of programming. From assessing youths to connecting and working with local and statewide foster parent associations, foster parents are invaluable resources for life skills development in youths.

Levels of Foster Parent Partnerships

All Foster Parents (*contract on these issues before youth enters the home*)

- Assessments
- Teaching life skills in the home and community
- Providing opportunities for decision making and logical outcomes

Foster Parent Youth Coordinators

- Coordinates community wide youth programming.
- Organizes foster parents to participate in supporting youth programming via transportation/car pool, refreshments, making contacts in the community, sharing skills, etc.
- Facilitates independent living life skills groups: secures a speaker or group location, coordinates the details for the topic, and develops relationships between youths and community.
- Recruits foster parents to teach IL topics based on expertise and interest.
- Develops mentor relationships between foster parents and other foster youths not living in their home.
- Develops a system of follow-up for youths exiting care.

Foster Parent Support Coordinators

- Organize recruiting events for prospective foster and adoptive parents, especially for teens.
- Develop public relations announcements between the foster parent events and the media.
- Involves foster/adoptive teens in the coordination of foster/adoptive parent recruitment and training.
- Trains foster/adoptive parents in issues related especially to teens.
- Coordinates foster parent support system such as the “Buddy” system: new recruits are “teamed” with a seasoned foster parent already involved with teens.
- Liaison to the licensing agency to develop changes in foster parent policy and/or develop other ways to support foster parents such as increasing the range of living

arrangement options for youths to practice independent living skills.

- Liaison to the local foster parent association with the FP Youth Coordinator in terms of communicating independent living youth events to the association and outlining ways the association can support youth skill development.
(This also provides information to foster parents about younger youths and provides a level of “pre-IL” support.)

Recommendations

Staff Specialization

It is recommended that some type of specialization be incorporated into an agency’s approach to independent living programming—perhaps a blending of concepts, with differences depending upon field settings. It is suggested that pilot projects be established to determine the most effective approach. A state or agency administrator for the independent living program would be positioned to monitor the pilot projects and evaluate feasibility for state/agency wide implementation, and possibly, to be the “overall” specialist.

Specific Staff Responsibilities

In the residential setting, it is recommended that all staff including off-shift” and weekend staff—have responsibility for some aspect of the AILP. One worker should be designated the “lead” person for coordination and supportive services to the other staff as they prepare and train youths in the skills/module for which they are responsible.

Administrative Note: To ensure compliance among all staff, AILP activities also should be designated in job descriptions and evaluations of job performance.

Section 9:



Overall AILP Training

Training is an integral part of the development of an AILP. This includes not just the training of youths, but also the training of adults who interact with program participants. Social work and childcare staff, foster parents and other primary caregivers, evening and weekend shift persons, volunteers and mentors, and host-home adults are some of the individuals and groups who must be accounted for in planning the AILP training effort.

The planning approach to training can be broken into two basic groupings: staff and youths. In working with both groups, there are similarities and differences, yet as this section will detail, the differences are often minor, since the planning is for adults and soon-to-be adults.

Training is very important in the development of an AILP. The approach to adolescents in this type of program is often very different from that which agencies may have taken in the past. Less control, allowing more decisions to be made by staff and youths, creating more opportunities for ventures into the community for both social and vocational experiences—these are among the basic objectives of an AILP. And they could be at odds with past agency policies and approaches to adolescent programming.

Developing new staff and youth approaches, is best done through a planned orientation and training effort. Without such an effort, each person can easily make personal interpretations of

agency and program guidelines that are not necessarily correct. Nationally, there are widely differing definitions and interpretations of adolescent independent living. Some agencies still cling to the thought that an AILP is just placing an adolescent in his or her “own” apartment or living situation. This original approach has proven, in many instances, to be disastrous for all concerned—youth, staff, and agency (see *Sections 1 and 4*). Still other agencies fall somewhere between this “original” approach and what is presently accepted AILP practice.

Whether it is the youthful participant, newly hired staff, or “old-timer,” efforts need to be put forth that ensure consistency in program approaches. Programs must come closer to agreeing on the definition and baseline approaches to the delivery of AILP services. This can only occur by providing the appropriate information about AILP. One of the best methods of doing this is through planned youth training and staff development efforts. Developing these efforts can be enhanced by looking at some of the underlying theories of how youths and adults learn.

Experiential Learning or Adult Learning Theory (*Andragogy*)

As you probably know, teaching adults is different from teaching children. Many of the differences are directly related to the increased experience, maturity, and knowledge of

adulthood. These are distinct advantages for training.

Research in educational psychology, reveals that adults exhibit more individual differences than do children. This finding is consistent with common sense. After all, adults have had longer to be affected and changed by the variables that touch us all—genetic differences, social and interpersonal experiences, and cultural events. You may also infer from this, therefore, that a group of adult learners will come to sessions with wide variations of knowledge, experiences, biases, and attitudes.

Staff training deals with groups of social workers, childcare staffs, foster parents, and others who vary in age, academic preparation, and years of experiences. One staff person may be newly graduated from college with very limited experience. Another may have 25 years of experience in the field but is without a high school diploma.

Developmentally, these two people are focused on very different issues. Intellectually, they may function on very different levels. Emotionally, they will surely have different needs and exhibit different maturity levels.

Youth trainers often encounter a person who is literally between two worlds—childhood and adulthood. Chronological age, maturity, and developmental focus and needs clash. A youth may be chronologically 17 years old but, because of his or her history of trauma and placement, may be functioning on a developmental level more attuned to a 14-year-old.

As a guide for determining a foster youth's developmental stage it is helpful to keep in mind that these youths often fall behind their peers developmentally and academically for each move in

substitute care. We have used the basic concept that each move constitutes a one-year delay. With the average number of placements in the foster care system being three, a youth more than likely will be somewhat developmentally and academically delayed when the AILP encounters them.

How do you teach such a person? Are there any similarities in teaching the adult and the soon-to-be adult?

Maybe it is possible to teach the delayed person and maybe there are similarities between the soon-to-be adult and the adult that will make it easier. For instance, when looking at concepts in adult learning theories and techniques, there are some very effective approaches that also might be useful in preparing adolescents for independence.

Teaching Adults and Adolescents

Most adults maintain or enhance their level of intellectual functioning, as they grow older. The most critical variable that seems to determine whether intelligence continues to increase is whether people are intellectually challenged. Any training session offered should be presented in a way that challenges the learner.

A distinguishing feature of adult intelligence is its practical nature. Adults typically prefer to focus their intellectual energies on solving real problems. Further, adults tend to be good problem solvers, as they are generally very good at bringing together their knowledge and their experience. So the teacher will want the use of practical skills for problem solving to be the major focus of the educational experience offered to adult students.

In contrast, adolescents often lack the number and breadth of experiences

of adults. Yet, they often are developmentally ready and willing to try out adult-like activities. In addition, they also enjoy quick, practical, and “easy” ways to get what they want in a learning experience. Thus, the use in AILP skills training sessions of certain adult learning theory practices for both adults and adolescents can make for positive experiences for teachers and participants.

Modeling

There is one important way in which adult learners are very much like children in the learning situation. That is, they remember what you do much more than they remember what you say. Your most golden thoughts on how to enhance a person’s self esteem will be lost if you belittle even one person in the training session. Your behavior, as the teacher or trainer, must support participants as well as the learning goals of the session. Otherwise, you have diluted the content of the session, weakened your position, and diminished what you hoped the participants would take away with them.

Whether adults or adolescents are being taught, the teacher’s behavior must be congruent with what the program wants modeled for the individual or group. If the teacher’s behavior is inflammatory or derogatory, the message presented will be biased. Thus, the choice of who will provide orientation and training to staffs and youths is a critical factor.

Many programs have experienced situations where youths’ skills training opportunities are purchased from community groups external to the AILP agency-and there is little preparation for or monitoring of those groups. After problems arose, investigations revealed that the teachers were not aware of the

AILP program goals and objectives, nor did they have an understanding of the issues that out-of-home care youths had to deal with, such as separation and loss, abuse and neglect, and court involvement. Consequently, the messages presented and behaviors modeled were found to be detrimental to the programs and its participants.

Lectures

Lectures are presented as a concept within the context of participatory exercises. Lectures are designed to present information and to open the participants to new ideas. They serve as the bridge between printed information and the experiential learning in sessions.

The most important point to consider about lectures is length. Lectures, whether to adults or youths, should be brief-no more than a few minutes at a clip. Interspersed should be audio-visuals, use of newsprint (*flipcharts*), overhead transparencies, or chalkboard. Most people remember visual information better than what they hear.

Less experienced teachers of adults often make the mistake of following older models of teaching-which are based on teaching children-and of following didactic or lecture principles. Whenever possible, staff or contractors employed by the AILP agency should have some understanding of adult learning theory.

Experiential Exercises

Experiential exercises are structured experiences intended to provoke thinking or to provide an opportunity to practice skills. The learner is engaged in an activity that is followed by a group discussion or analysis of what happened during the activity. The person learns by doing...and reflecting.

Experiential exercises have the flexibility to be used in groups, with individuals, or both. In an experiential exercise, the teacher's role is to facilitate, not necessarily to give out information or do the activity. You may guide and influence the participants, but each individual or group should be given autonomy in completing exercises. Treasure hunts, rewards for completing tasks, and using the community for learning are all ways to motivate the learner. For example, you might teach money management to youths by assigning them to search for an affordable used car-using classroom time, the newspaper, a trip to a used car lot, etc. Adults can give the group or individual a practical, everyday problem and ask them to generate a solution.

One important element of experiential learning is that the teacher must have a good sense of what it feels like to do the exercise. Adults who teach individuals or groups should be prepared to undertake the exercises themselves prior to asking it of their students. In addition, the prior experience will help the teacher to have a better understanding of the preparation required, to anticipate barriers or roadblocks, and to have a clearer sense of timing for the activity.

Role Plays

Role-playing helps participants practice certain skills and create situations that they might encounter within a given context. Role-plays can be very effective teaching tools. However, many adult participants resist involvement in role-play situations. Thus, role-plays should be developed in two tracks: one for youths and one for adults.

Our experience is that adolescents are much easier to engage in role-plays, so this method can be used more readily with them. Developmentally, role-plays also fit better for youths. Role-plays for them can be done individually or in groups. For youths, role-plays should initially be humorous, progressing into more practical and realistic everyday areas. Youthful role-plays often work well when the youths can simulate adult roles, such as employer/employee, sales clerk/customer.

Adults, on the other hand, dictate somewhat different approaches. Role-plays with adults are usually more appropriate when they parallel "simulations" in which roles or problems are assigned. The group or individual comes up with a solution to the problem presented. Individual role-plays can be assigned with adults more reluctant to do those in front of a larger group, but willing to consent in smaller dyads, triads, or tetrads (2, 3, 4).

All of the above teaching techniques are practical and easy to employ. All respond to the need to maximize participants' involvement and minimize the "classroom" or didactic approach. Emphasis is on taking individuals, particularly youths, out of the classroom setting and into the community for learning purposes. With this in mind, let's look at the development of staff and youths AILP training programs.

Staff Training

Westat's (*a Washington, D.C. area consulting firm*) 1986 national study of independent living services found that "a lack of specialized training on the part of caseworkers, program administrators, foster parents and other care providers" was a major barrier to programming (Westat, pgs. 5-11). The Chafee

Independence Program (1999) required states to use some of the available training dollars under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to train foster and adoptive parents, group home workers, and case managers. Such training can enhance state efforts to meet both the independent living and permanency needs of young people in transition (NFCAP, *Frequently Asked Questions II*, pg.17).

The foundation of a strong training program and a key element in its success is preparation for future needs. With the recent national trends developing in public and private agencies for coordinated training among different departments serving the same youths and increased opportunities for foster parents to receive state-of-the-art information through training, the atmosphere now exists for incorporation of independent living preparation activities in training efforts.

Part of that response needs to be development of training modules that are specific to independent living and serve the needs of the different groups who will receive training in the future. Effective preparation of staff for work in the independent living program is critical to program success. This encourages a sharp focus on the development of an adolescent independent living knowledge base, skills, and attitudes.

During the past few years, Independent Living Resources has provided a core-training program, *"Putting It Together,"* (see Appendix K-Resources) to all public independent living staffs in North Carolina, a large number of other residential agencies' staffs, selected purchase of service representatives, and other "guests." The program is designed to help staff learn how to better prepare young people for

life on their own. The curriculum reflects a number of beliefs:

- Self-esteem and skill development are related and affect a young person's ability to successfully make the transition to adulthood.
- Every adult who works directly with a youth has a responsibility to help that young person prepare for independence.
- Staff professionals already possess skills that are essential for successful independent living. They need assistance in learning how to teach these skills to young people in their care.
- Intangible skills such as decision-making and problem solving need to be taught to all youths as well as the tangible skills, such as budgeting and cooking.

This professional development seminar has been well received because it presents practical information that is immediately useful. The participant's workbook provides specific activities and concrete tools that social work staff, foster parents, and child-care workers can use in their day-to-day work with young people.

It is recommended that adaptation of the *"Putting It Together"* materials or the introduction of another similar curriculum be undertaken to provide increased opportunities for all staff to receive information on preparing youths for their transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency (see Appendix K-Resources).

In establishing a staff-training program the following topics may prove useful for developing modules on each:

- Orientation to Adolescent Independent Living

- Human Development-Adolescent Development
- Nature of Separation and Loss
- Communication Skills
- Teamwork
- Training/Group Skills
- Counseling Skills
- Educational Planning
- Crisis Intervention
- Interagency Relations
- Transition Case Planning and Case Staffing (including Discharge Planning)
- Youth and Program Advocacy
- Development of Community Relations and Resources
- Technical Information on Job and Housing Programs
- Human Sexuality
- Ethnicity and Culture
- Independence and Teen Parents
- Assessment and Outcome Planning
- Developing Personal Support Systems
- Follow-up of After Discharge Services

Recommendations

Training in AILP Concepts

It is recommended that agencies provide training opportunities on the concepts of AILP. In addition, a refresher course needs to be developed to reinforce previous trainings and provide updates on new adolescent independent living ideas, concepts, and progressions nationally.

Training Series

It is recommended that agencies develop a training series geared to adolescent independent living, based on “Putting It Together” or an equivalent program, incorporating the series into the agency’s yearly staff development training calendar.

Training Modules

Agencies should create a series of training modules for foster parents, purchase of services providers, and other department staffs (*such as health, judiciary, education, campus school, etc.*). To be effective, the modules need to be short and designed specifically to meet the needs and roles of different groups. They can be offered at a central location or on-site (*such as the group home or center*); in a central geographic location; and at a time convenient for foster parents, off-shift staff, or others. The “*Foster Parent Training Collection*” provides 10 such modules and an outline for creating your own module(s) (see *Appendix K-Resources*).

Mandated POS Training

Participation in training should be mandated in the contract process with all POS staff including foster parents, so that, from the outset, independent living is a part of all purchase of service out-of-home experiences for youth. Without the mandating of training from the beginning, through the contract process, POS or child-caring agencies, foster parents, and other caregivers will not become involved in the independent living effort. All of these groups need orientation sessions and training to effectively provide AILP services.

Staff Orientation

In public systems, staffs of other state departments who provide foster

care services require orientation and training, as well. In many states, the departments of mental health, human services, health, corrections; the judiciary, family courts, and a series of private agencies licensed by the state all provide foster care services. The lead AILP agency should be the provider of training or of the information needed for each group to establish “in-house” independent living staff development capabilities.

AILP Orientation for Others

The lead AILP agency should schedule independent living orientation sessions and training modules for other individuals who encounter out-of-home-care youth. These “other” persons can be a critical element in the preparation of youth. Even such seemingly disparate groups as the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), or Guardians Ad Litem (GAL), and those who are involved in the foster care review process need a basic understanding of the independent living program to promote positive future case planning.

In Maine, the State Department of Human Services staffs assigned to do the foster care reviews were included in the initial AILP training sessions. The training provided these individuals with the opportunity to learn about the appropriate use of a program they could recommend for utilization as part of the foster care review process.

In Florida, Daniel Memorial Institute (a AILP provider) participated in sponsoring regular orientations and discussions of AILP at other youth serving agencies throughout the Jacksonville area.

Youth Skills Training

Many youths in out-of-home care have not had the opportunity to learn independent living skills either informally (*Phase I*) or formally (*Phase II*) (as described in Section 2). Public schools offer limited possibilities for youths to receive these learning experiences.

This is exacerbated by major disruptions (*removals from biological homes and all too common movements in placement*) resulting in delays in the educational experiences of a substantial proportion of young people in out-of-home care. Further, youths often come into care from situations that are abusive, neglectful, and generally chaotic, with accompanying developmental delays. These delays occur in three major growth areas: educational, social, and emotional.

Skills training must seek to address all three of these areas of concern for youths. Youths need adequate preparation in both the “hard” or concrete skills as well as the “soft” or intangible skills. This can only be accomplished through a planned approach.

It would be of great value for agencies to establish a life skills education model to assist youths to develop and enhance the skills necessary to become an *interdependent* part of the community. Essential elements in such a life skills education program include:

- Developing youths’ basic knowledge of how to care for themselves in their living situation.
- Greatly enhancing the participating youths’ knowledge of community systems and services, and how to access them.

- Coordinating with primary caregivers to extend the skills development process to the home environment.
- Increasing the community's awareness of these youths through active involvement in the skills education program.

A sequence of preparation might be:

- Informal training
- Formal training and practice
- Experiential practice and community living
- Support during the transition to self-sufficiency
- Follow-up after transition or discharge from out-of-home care.

All of this has to be accomplished in the face of sometimes overwhelming odds—continuing disruptions, delayed developmental and educational functioning, limited resources, and, at times, great geographic distances. Bringing youths together for life skills training can be difficult. Transportation problems, the number of youths available, time constraints, and more can be roadblocks to effectively developing and running the skills training aspects of an AILP.

How do programs deal with each of these roadblocks? Are you defeated before you have begun? Absolutely not! There are ways to overcome each of the roadblocks a program will encounter. Some methods are easier to develop and promote than others, some will take the maximum staff energy to create, and others will have obvious solutions from the beginning. Some will take short periods of time while others will take longer. What needs to be cautioned against is the failure to anticipate those

roadblocks to providing quality skills training for youths.

Initially, some aspects of the AILP and skills training program will be hard to “sell” to adolescents. It takes time to return some power and interest in what the agency or system can do for youths. That is why a well-crafted planning effort and a comprehensive program are so important. The key is credibility. The first few meetings with youths, the flyer or brochure promoting the program, inclusion of youths in the planning, commitment of staff, and development of community resources to support skills preparation efforts are all critical pieces.

For the first skills class to just occur, much less be a success might take Herculean efforts on the part of all involved. Convincing foster parents or other primary caregivers that their young persons should participate, getting youths to commit to attend, obtaining meeting space, food, and other incentives are all challenging.

In the initial stages of programming, staff might have to chase down and pick up youths and cajole primary caregivers and other staff and administration. But, as the programs progress, word-of-mouth and the initial small successes will help build support. Youths will become more willing to attend. If resistance continues, be self-reflective. Look at what you are doing and why it might not be working. ***Do not blame the youths!*** Remember that these young people have been neglected, abused, exploited, thrown away—and they are adolescents. It will take repeated efforts to earn youths trust and that the AILP is a sincere effort to encourage their involvement.

The Case of the Motown Skills Program

The Motown Children's Action (MCA) Group decided to hold a skills training for local out-of-home-care youths. They had never done anything like this before, but had read and heard that other cities and states were trying it, and it sounded like a good idea. They asked the local Department of Social Services and Maxim Group Home to choose a group of 10 out-of-home-care residents. The MCA Group then sent letters of congratulations signed by the Mayor to each youth for being selected.

However, only five youths showed up at the first skills class and they didn't seem very interested in the discussions. When the teacher finally asked specifically for an opinion from the youths, one responded weakly, "I don't know." Others giggled and made side remarks. Only one youth came to the next class, and the MCA Group decided that youth skills classes were not such a good idea after all.

This scenario could be rather typical of the experience many skills classes have had with initial youth participation. It is painful for both youths and adults and it leaves a lasting memory for both groups. The conclusion often is, "It doesn't work." *Wrong!*

The conclusion should be that the program staff hasn't really tried yet. What does the program need to do to get youths hooked on this idea? What did the program staff do wrong? Are there other programs that could be contacted to learn how to do a better job? While the initial intention was good, real youth involvement comes about, particularly in the beginning, by bending over backwards to get youths there. In addition, thoughtful planning, instructors who can connect with youths, subject

matter and activities that are practical, enjoyable, and rewarding are all necessary ingredients.

Success breeds success. If youths find the program useful and rewarding, the word will spread. Participation will increase and staff will want to do more.

The key is to find ways to hook youths through creative skills training. *For example:* teach money management by assigning the task of buying a used car; or explore the process of getting a birth certificate using the public transportation system to get to the Bureau of Vital Statistics; or teach problem-solving skills with a "treasure hunt" (*with awards for points or items gathered*).

Then, reward involvement with certificates for completing modules or programs, hold graduation ceremonies, banquets, retreats, and conferences. The message: provide training in a multiplicity of ways and locations; involve youth in the planning and have fun by making training and skills development fun!

Recommendations

Develop a Life Skills Curriculum

It is recommended that agencies develop a flexible life skills curriculum for youths in out-of-home care that can easily be adjusted to the varying developmental and skill needs of youths. The curriculum should:

- Have specific segments covering differing aspects of life skills education. The Life Skills Inventory (See Resources Appendix K) is one choice as a guideline for (14) topics for development. There also are many other example documents that list important life skills education areas.

- Be deliverable over a period of time. The program could parallel the school year or be offered for 6-8 weeks (*or longer*) in the fall and/or spring. There also could be a summer component.
- Be flexible. In actuality there should not be a set curriculum. There needs to be a series or pool of materials that allow different topics to be chosen as needed. There can be basic criteria and expectations, but the key is always flexibility. Allowing for the group, individuals within the group, timing of events, and discovery of “new” information in relation to both youths and program is the reason for flexibility in the delivery of skills training.

Gather Information on Life Skills Education

Employ a consultant, or assign a specific staff person to gather information on existing life skills education programs and development of the agencies’ effort. Award a mini- or seed grant for a local branch/group home to assist in development and field-testing of a life skills curriculum (*Section 16*).

Share Information with Other AILPs

Consult with other AILPs to see if aspects of their independent living program can be adapted to aid in fulfilling the recommendations. There presently are many AILPs operating in virtually every jurisdiction in the United States. Contacting these existing programs and ascertaining the contents of their curricula provides additional guidance. (*ILR has a toll-free number, 1-800-820-0001, to assist agencies and individuals in their search for appropriate materials.*)

Emphasize Experiential Teaching

Emphasize experiential teaching techniques in developing curricula. Adolescents need a “hands-on” approach to life skills education. To a large extent, classes need to incorporate community field experiences. Curricula that are chosen or developed also need to incorporate a wide-range of community representatives as teachers and community locations for learning.

As noted earlier, there are many different models that incorporate community representatives and locations. These models need to be researched and used as guides in developing an agency’s independent living skills education program. Examples include Connecticut’s Community Life Skills Projects And Oregon’s Plan and Community Facilitators (*see Appendix J-Oregon Example*).

Coordinate with Local Educational Institutions

Planning for life skills classes and program needs should involve working relationships with local educational institutions. Many programs have worked out agreements with local high schools for space or for youths to receive credit for taking the program’s skills classes—such as ½ or 1 elective credit for satisfactorily finishing the program.

A local college, in cooperation with the high school or independently, also may grant credit for completion of a skill class. In some instances, youths receive credit for completing a skill class from both the high school and college.

Another possibility is to have AILP events during the school year count as educational experiences, so that youths can attend without being counted “absent” from school on that day. In North Carolina, the Department Of

Public Instruction allows for such activities and ILR and AILP staffs provide letters for each youth attesting to their involvement in an excusable educational experience. In California, the local community colleges are heavily involved in delivery of life skills sessions.

Include Group and Individual Work

Both group and individual work need to be part of the life skills education program. Programs need to be accessible to adolescents from all out-of-home-care locations. Branches with more rural settings will have to plan more individualized opportunities for youth. Carpooling, reimbursement for mileage, and centralized locations will be critical to program success. Curricula chosen must have flexibility and adaptability to be useful with individuals or groups, both rural and urban settings, and the multiculturalism of out-of-home-care youths. North Carolina reimburses foster parents, community persons, and youths for providing transportation or transporting youths to ILR AILP and SaySo sponsored events.

Future Planning

Future planning for skills classes should include the capacity to work with teens in their living situation and special groups. In *Section 15*, there is a discussion of life skills work with youths

who are living on their own or teen parents who share living and learning space. In *Section 18*, there is a general discussion of *special groups* of youths.

Monetary Incentives

Develop a stipend or cash payment plan for incentives to be paid to youths for participating in life skills training. The cash plan should include a system where youths receive a percentage for regular daily use but also must save a set amount for the transition period. Some programs pay the total amount at the conclusion; others give partial payments as the youth completes “modules.” The recommendation here is for partial payments and mandated savings. Additional non-cash incentives can be provided in lieu of or as part of the cash payment aspect (see *Section 7*).

Non-Monetary Incentives

Provide food, videos, access to the gymnasium, field trips, and other goodies, for youths attending skills sessions. Call it “Pizza and Life Skills,” or “Videos and Life Skills.” Make the program interesting so both youths and staffs enjoy attending (see *Section 7*). Give independent living related gifts and prizes. Toasters, blenders, dishes, etc., are all items that will be needed when youth transition. Start providing those during life skills classes.



Section 10:



Independent Living Case Plan

The original Federal law on independent living set requirements under an amended *Section 475 (1) of the Social Security Act* that included the need for an independent living case plan. In order to continue to be eligible for federal financial participation under *Title IV-E and Title IV-B*, states had to comply with the following statutory requirements:

The title *IV-E State Plan Requirements in Section 471 (a)(16)* for the development of a case plan for each child receiving foster care maintenance payments under *Title IV-E* is affected by reference to *Section 475(a)*. *Section 475(1)* has been amended to require that states include, where appropriate, a *written description in the case plan of the programs and services that will help the child, age 16 or over, to prepare for the transition from foster care to independent living*. (Emphasis added, ACYF-PI-90-09, Program Instruction, 4-19-90)

The *Chafee Independence Program* reiterated the case planning process and required that states facilitate the development of personal responsibility by ensuring that *young people participate* in the planning and implementation of services at the individual level. Young people *must* be involved in the case planning process. They must also have some degree of choice, decision-making in identifying their own needs, and in what services they participate (*NFCAP, Questions II*, page 32).

In the early 1990's, to assist agency staff to meet federal requirements,

Independent Living Resources, Inc., of North Carolina, developed written guidelines for a youth case plan. (*Appendix F contains a copy of the guidelines and an illustrative example.*)

This guideline, which is used to illustrate the federal requirement, is a simple guide. In its development, Independent Living Resources, Inc., sought to provide agencies with practical and easy-to-use criteria. It therefore is recommended that agencies consider the possible expansion of the youth plan guideline and more extensive training in this area.

To assist with that effort, this section presents an outline of what could be considered a truly comprehensive approach to the development of a "transitional plan" for youths. The outline offers guidance for putting together a plan for each youth that addresses all aspects of transition to self-sufficiency. From the initial out-of-home-care living situation through independence and community living, the plan should ask questions of staff and youths, set budgets, identify educational and vocational needs, and build in life skills practice in the community, for each client. The "*Putting It Together*" curriculum offers a complete section on writing case plans (*see Appendix K-Resources*).

Transitional Plan Outline

The *Transitional Plan Outline* looks at areas of need and develops them into a plan that includes responses to each of those needs. How detailed the answers to

each question are can be determined later, it is the scope of the questions as a whole that is important at this point.

Overall Need

The basic need addressed here is to develop an individual transitional plan (*ITP*) for youths in out-of-home care. Included are specific needs of youths and additional services to support youths before, during transition, and after discharge from agency care and custody.

Goal

The goal is to develop an ITP with a specific timetable for offering life skills assessments and transitional services to youths. Strategies are undertaken to determine the following:

- The estimated date of discharge from out-of-home care. What is the estimated date of youth/client's discharge from state/agency care and custody? What is the length of time available for AILP service delivery to the youth (*in months*)?
- Youth's anticipated initial living arrangement option. What type of living arrangement option is anticipated for the youth/client upon discharge from state or agency care and custody?
- What is youth's estimated budget for the first 12 months after discharge (for rent, utilities, transportation, food, clothing, recreational expenses, and health care needs)?
- What are the sources and amounts of income, goods, services, or other resources both now and post discharge?
- What assistance is to be provided by the state or agency before, during, and after discharge?

- Does youth have a written financial plan?
- Has youth had educational and vocational evaluations and assessments?
- Does youth have an educational plan?
- Does youth have a vocational/occupational plan?
- Does youth have other sub-plans that need to be included in the ITP? (*Examples: medical, dental, sibling reunification plan, etc.*)
- Does youth have official documents necessary for work and adult life?

All of the above questions can be further detailed by developing specific outlines for the answers anticipated and expected. The plan will then include both what has occurred and what is expected to occur to elevate a youth's chances for a successful transition.

Youth Application

Additional efforts are recommended to formalize the process of establishing an independent living program and transitional case planning within an agency. As a first step, agencies should create a youth application for the adolescent independent living program.

The application should be succinct and direct, completed by youth and bearing his or her signature. The social work principle addressed in this process is "social contracting." This practice method works extremely well with adolescents and represents adult-like behavior, which youths are anxious to emulate, at least in part. (*Appendix E contains an example of a brief Youth Application for an Independent Living Program, used by hundreds of programs nationally. This model can be used as*

presented or modified to meet agency criteria.)

Youth Assessment

There is a growing national consensus that agencies employ one or more instruments to assist in determining the *strengths* and *needs* of youths in the adolescent independent living program. Therefore, they will need to develop their own method for assessing a youth's level of competence in independent living skills, acquire the rights to use a vendor's assessment package, or modify an existing public domain instrument. To be useful, the instrument must reflect:

- The youth's strengths, interests, and achieved skills to build upon,
- The service needs of each youth, and
- The youth's readiness (*periodically applied*).

Youth Assessment Instruments

Examples of such instruments are the "Life Skills Inventory" and "Strength/Needs Assessment" (see Appendix G and Appendix K—*Assessing and Contracting With Youth*). These instruments have been used in training sessions Independent Living Resources, Inc., and others have provided nationally for the last 20 years.

In North Carolina, these two instruments are written into child welfare policy as viable methods for obtaining information needed to complete youth assessments. *Assessing and Contracting With Youth* also includes other assessment instruments that can be incorporated into an independent living program, as well as a series of useful assessment tools for measuring a youth's level of competency in relation to life skills.

In addition, *Assessing and Contracting With Youth* can be purchased (see, Appendix K—*Resources*) with an accompanying computer diskette that contains the text in Microsoft Word. This diskette allows an agency to manipulate questions (*add, subtract, or rework*), add the agency's name (*titles, headers or footers*), or any other desired changes.

These instruments are used to record behavioral observations by staff, primary caregivers, mentors, volunteers, and youths themselves. Recording can be daily, weekly, monthly, or within other predetermined timeframes. The main thrust is to encourage programs to monitor and evaluate youth's skill development in the independent living program more closely than is possible in the normal case planning timeframe of six months.

As monitoring responsibilities extend to persons beyond the childcare worker or agency social worker, greater opportunities arise for examining the progress that occurs both with youth and with the program. Thus, a valuable objective is to get all members of the "independent living team" involved in assessment.

This "team" includes the agency social/casework or child-caring staff, primary caregiver(s), and youths. A community person such as a volunteer, advocate, or mentor also may be included in the process.

AILP Weekly Checklist 1

Assessing and Contracting With Youth includes two checklists (also, see Appendix G—*Behavioral and Narrative Assessments of Youth*). The *AILP Weekly Checklist 1* is used to determine weekly progress of youths in the program. It employs a point system to rate success of youths in keeping their living space clean, their

school and work attendance, keeping scheduled appointments, meeting with advocate/mentor, and so on. A point total is kept and weekly progress is compared with previous weeks and used as a milestone for future weeks. The uses for this tool are many; among them:

- To monitor weekly progress over a period of time.
- To set expectations of minimal positive or negative scores.
- To compare youths throughout the program.

Monitoring can occur at the direct-line level (primary caregivers or social worker) as well as at supervisory or administrative reviews.

AILP Weekly Checklist 2

AILP Weekly Checklist 2 (Appendix G and *Assessing and Contracting With Youth*) is a variation of *Checklist 1*, but there is no attempt to quantify the results. Instead this checklist is used on a weekly basis to rate success in accomplishing a specific task:

- Is the youth doing well with a task?
- Is a task being completed satisfactorily?
- Is there need for improvement?

Variations of this type of checklist exist. The main point is that this type of tool must be readily available for review. This can be accomplished by tacking it on the bedroom wall, putting it on the “family” bulletin board, taping it to the refrigerator for the week, etc. The checklist sends the message that skills development is taken seriously, monitored regularly, and viewed as part of the expected weekly household activities.

Assessment for Independent Living

The *Assessment for Independent Living* (Appendix G and *Assessing and Contracting With Youth*) is another example of a monitoring/checklist system. There are two specific areas within this assessment instrument:

- Level of Supervision
- Frequency of Performance

The instrument has a wide-ranging scale for determining what level of support is needed to assist youths in accomplishing certain tasks.

Adolescent’s Assessment of Progress on AILP Plan

Adolescent’s Assessment of Progress on AILP Plan (Appendix G and *Assessing and Contracting With Youth*) offers a format with which each youth can monitor his or her own independent living plan progress. Assessments are based on youth contract(s) with program staff, caregivers, mentors, and others. The key issue and paramount value comes from getting a youth’s own determination of how he or she is doing with respect to the established plan.

Strengths/Needs Assessment

The *Strengths/Needs Assessment* (Appendix G and *Assessing and Contracting With Youth*) is an instrument designed to examine the total person. Directions for its use are contained in *Appendix G*.

Included as well is the *Strengths Needs Worksheet*, with sample questions as a guide. This instrument has been used with considerable success in departments of social services, foster family care, child caring facilities, and correctional settings.

The interaction of youth and adult (*who is administering the assessment*) is key. This instrument applies a qualitative

approach to the assessment process and has the added benefit of increasing rapport between adults and youths.

Life Skills Inventory

The *Life Skills Inventory* (Appendix G and *Assessing and Contracting With Youth*) is a tool used to measure youths' independent living program progress and provide guidelines for skill instruction. Not only does it assist staff in recognizing the levels of difficulty within different skills areas; but also it demonstrates the instructional value of breaking required tasks into small, manageable steps.

The *Life Skills Inventory* can be administered by staff, primary caregivers, or others working on skills development with youths. Adolescents, after reviewing the scale, have made statements such as:

"I didn't realize I needed to know all of this to be independent"

"I am glad I know this now before I leave care"

"I am excited about learning some of these things"

"I know more than I realized."

The *Inventory* was developed for use with refugee families relocating to the United States. It has been adapted and revised many times for use with youths in out-of-home care. Its value is as a tool to monitor skills that a youth has learned and as a guide for staff.

Because there are so many skill areas to cover with youths on the transitional path to self-sufficiency, it is easy to overlook a skill area or miss a part of a skill area. Using the *Life Skills Inventory* as a guide helps ensure a greater degree of uniformity in what is being taught or talked about from one out-of-home care setting to another.

The *Life Skills Inventory* has considerable bulk, but it does not have to be used in its entirety nor in a single session. One topic may be selected at a time, working with youths to complete the tasks associated with that topic before moving on to another.

There are four skills levels in the *Inventory*: Basic, Intermediate, Adequate and Exceptional, each intended to show movement or progress. The level of greatest significance is "Adequate." Youths usually will need to demonstrate adequate competence in most skills areas to be comfortable in an independent living situation.

Scoring of the *Inventory* is based on giving youths credit in each skill area. To receive credit, they must demonstrate the skill. Thus, in fairness to youths, it is important to standardize what youths must do to demonstrate the acquisition of skills.

Program staff should agree on the specifics of what young people should know and how they demonstrate their ability. When a skill is mastered, the pertinent section of the *Inventory* should be initialed and dated by the monitor.

Programs throughout the United States use the *Inventory* with success. A number have formed youth advisory groups to assist in modifying or adding sections to the instrument, which heightens a sense of ownership of the process and leads to a better fit for their specific programs.

Additional Data and Elements

Also of value to the program are additional contextual data. Such information includes:

- Client identification and demographic data.

- Date of entering and exiting the program.
- Date of entering and exiting out-of-home care.
- Demographics of biological family.

Post-Program

Other assessment data can be gathered after a youth leaves the agency's care and custody. (Section 16 addresses the need for a follow-up or post-discharge component for the program.)

Post-program data can be gathered by several methods. A post-program evaluation can be given to the youth upon separation. The form is used to get feedback from youths on their program experiences. A second form is available for the agency/unit/worker who referred the youth to the program to evaluate the program from their perspective (see Appendix H).

At some point, agencies should consider increasing their ability to follow former out-of-home-care youths for longer periods of time. Some states/localities are attempting to contact/survey youths at 30, 60, 90, 180, and 360 days post-discharge.

Pennsylvania, Texas, California, New Jersey, and some contract agencies have begun using management information systems (MIS) to gather data. MIS items such as use of income maintenance programs and unemployment rolls, and state employment rosters are being used to track former program participants.

Additionally, monetary incentives can be tied to the evaluation to encourage youths to participate (for example, a stipend is paid for completing the form or contact).

The Chafee Independence Program requires states to collect data to track;

- The number and characteristics of young people receiving services
- The type and quantity of services provided
- State performance on outcomes measures developed by HHS (minimally):
 - ❖ Educational attainment (such as high school diploma)
 - ❖ Employment
 - ❖ Avoidance of dependency
 - ❖ Homelessness
 - ❖ Non-marital childbirth
 - ❖ Incarceration
 - ❖ High-risk behaviors

Overall Program Evaluation

"If the states seek the continuance of federal funding of independent living programs, they must be able to provide comprehensive program and evaluation data." (Tatara, et. Al., CWLA, 1988, pgs. 609-623)

"A system of fiscal penalties on states for noncompliance...for failing during the fiscal year to comply with HHS's information collection plan." (NFCAP, Questions II, 2000, pgs. 21-22)

Whether in a public agency or private institution, program evaluation is a necessary component. Funding sources, governing boards, administrators, and youth advocates all demand some type of evaluation of a program's success in providing independent living services. Questions about the benefits, milestones, and future needs and directions of the AILP are realistic and necessary. How these and other questions are answered should be clearly laid out.

The most common program assessment instruments are designed to evaluate fiscal responsibility and

program effectiveness. Federal legislation requires maintaining complete accounts of independent living program activities for each program year to demonstrate achievement. (*Section 477 SSA-PL 99-272, IV-E ILP-I, 1987, Chafee Independence Act, 1999*)

Gathering and maintaining relevant data in an effective way requires agencies to have or gain the capability for aggregate program and client outcome data analysis.

Aggregate program data analysis is defined as a set of technical activities (*e.g., data collection, analysis*) designed to assess the overall results of independent living program efforts using aggregate statistical data.

Client outcome data refers to a series of technical activities measuring the effect of program efforts on program youths, by using client outcome information. There are needs for these types of technical capabilities beyond the basic federal reporting requirements or reporting needs of the contracting agency.

“Have youth improved after receiving services?”

This is a vital question for all independent living program administrators. Client outcome monitoring offers a clear focus on youths served in the program.

“Are we doing enough?”

“Are we taking correct actions?”

“Do we need to alter present strategies?”

At present, most programs/agencies receive little or no information in response to these vital questions. It is important to consider seriously providing independent living program services and imperative that administrators be able to obtain information that helps to improve client outcomes and maximize the effectiveness of agency dollars.

The best evaluations are those where the program gathers information and an external source evaluates and adds to it. We have tried to encourage agencies to use a consultant who is well versed in AILP requirements and who is willing to provide on-site evaluation visits. A simple evaluation model can be drawn up and implemented over a reasonable period of time.



Section 11:

Volunteers/Mentors

As they head down the path to independence and self-sufficiency, youths need mature individuals to provide links to the community and to serve as responsible role models or mentors. These persons serve as confidants, teachers, friends, and much needed resources during a crucial period of time.

Many of the young people leaving foster care do not have family or friends to help them make the transition to independent living. These young people have to create their own support systems and, very quickly, learn to rely on themselves.

For some young people, moving out means returning to a community, neighborhood, or part of the state where they have not lived for a long time. Living away from home puts them out of touch with jobs, friends, and resources. Re-establishing themselves as adults in their home community takes time and patience.

For other young people who have been in foster care, independence means moving to communities where they have no family or friends to take a job or start a training program. Moves like this are always difficult, and even more so when there is no one from home who can help financially or emotionally. Volunteers can assist in filling this void.

Mentors and volunteers also can be used to assist youths in their goal planning. These "team planning" efforts can become important aspects of youths' transitional plan development. If these

adults are trusted and respected, their contributions can be invaluable to youths.

The volunteer/mentor has a complex role in helping an adolescent more toward independence. This adult is usually an older, more experienced, wiser person who is willing to advise and encourage a younger one.

Webster's dictionary defines a mentor as a "*trusted counselor or guide, tutor, or coach.*" Listening, coaching, educating, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, and being a role model, are all mentor functions. A volunteer is defined as "*a person who of his or her own free will offers him or herself for a service or duty.*" All of the mentor duties are as applicable to volunteers and you will often see the terms used interchangeably.

However, for the purposes of this text, we prefer to separate the volunteer role from that of the mentor for independent living programming. In this text, a mentor is a teacher, focusing primarily on assisting a youth to learn a skill or acquire specific information about a subject. A volunteer can also be a teacher, but is more likely to serve as social confidant and companion or community advisor.

One reason these two seemingly similar terms are used in this text in distinctly different ways is to encourage the development of an expanded volunteer program component. The more positive adult role models that youths interact with, the more opportunities they have to develop a broader *Personal*

Support System (PSS). This PSS is what helps youths survive the transition to adulthood. In fact, each person's PSS is often referred to as the "*natural mental health system*" that an individual depends on for assistance in handling life's transitions in a healthy manner.

By distinguishing between the two different roles of volunteers (community advisors) and mentors (teachers)-programs accomplish two important objectives:

- Youths are exposed to two different kinds of adult helpers; and
- Volunteers' long-term involvement is encouraged because their roles are specifically and clearly delineated.

Thus, the mentor is someone who "teaches" specific tasks and whose role is confined to just that task. Volunteer community advisors offer a broader range of support to youths. For example, Mrs. Prather, a mentor, teaches Armando word processing twice a week for an hour each time. While Anne Smith, a volunteer community advisor, is available to Susie, by phone or in person, to discuss personal issues, brainstorm solutions to problems, or have lunch or go to a movie.

Not only are clear roles useful for youths, but also for the adult volunteers, the careful delineation and limiting of volunteer roles minimizes the possibility of their being burned out by often very needy and demanding youths. Furthermore, exposing youths to more than one adult role model naturally increases their PSS and the possibility of a smoother transition towards independence. Finally, a component is added to the agency program that is relatively low-cost and abundantly available.

Recommendations

To use volunteers/mentors more effectively in an AILP, the following are recommended:

Use AILP Volunteers

It is recommended that agencies explore the possibility of expanding the role of existing volunteer coordinators to include activities supporting the AILP effort. Many agencies have existing volunteer offices or coordinators. These offices, particularly in public agencies, usually do not focus on child welfare programs.

Expanding them to include the AILP could provide the impetus for developing new and very useful resources. AILP alumni provide a vast network of volunteer power and a natural place to start expanding volunteer activities.

Work with State Volunteer Office

Efforts should be made to use and coordinate with existing state office(s) on volunteer services. States such as New York use their state office of volunteer services as a resource and promoter of adolescent independent living services.

"The New York State Department of Social Services, in cooperation with the Governor's Office for Voluntary Services and two local Volunteer Centers, is implementing a volunteer involvement project in a foster care agency and a local social services department. Over 50 volunteers have been involved in teaching 75 foster care youths independent living skills, and conducting career, education, and housing explorations." North, Mallabar, Desrochers, CWLA

Develop Volunteer Component

It is recommended that agencies undertake the development of a

volunteer component to assist the AILP in its delivery of services to youths. The Nebraska Department of Social Services created *The Volunteer Mentor Training Program* to:

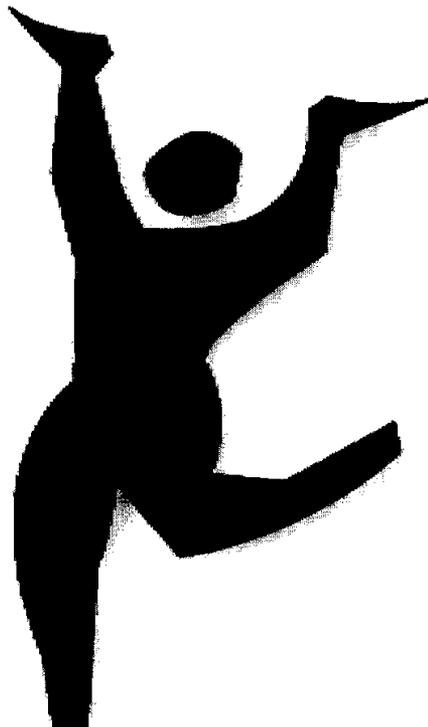
“...give young adults exiting foster care a link to the ‘real world’ they are preparing to enter. This fully tested, interdependence program matches each youth with a role model who is not ‘a part of the system.’ Through this training, a team of valuable and sustaining support is created for the emerging young adult. The volunteer mentor, case worker, foster care provider work together to make the transition to independence a positive and successful experience.”

This program and others like it are paving the way for youths to increase their personal support systems by

including positive adult role models and at the same time expand resources for the program and agency.

Two Types of Volunteers

Agencies should develop a two-pronged approach to the development or refinement of existing programming. Basically, this means distinguishing two types of volunteers: *community advisors and mentors*. As mentioned earlier, expanding the positive role model contacts youths have with adults from the community is critical. The most healthy, well-adjusted individual, when leaving home, needs a lifeline for survival. Development of these contacts can be the lifeline to which youths will cling for survival while on their own.



Section 12:

Teen Conferences

Living in an out-of-home-care situation can be very traumatic for a young person. Feelings of inadequacy, blame, frustration, and isolation are common. Youth often have difficulty talking about his or her feelings and situations, much less finding someone to trust with this information. In many instances, youths are physically as well as psychologically isolated. This isolation becomes a major barrier to their normal development. Many youths do not know who the other “foster or group home kids” are and, even when they do, rarely have opportunities to talk to each other about what it is like to be in these situations.

In the mid-1980s, the South Carolina Department of Social Services was having difficulty motivating teens to take an interest in planning their future. They decided to experiment with the idea of holding yearly teen conferences. Initially focused on bringing youths together to deal with independent living issues, the conferences were of considerable success.

Subsequently, many other states and programs adopted the idea of teen conferences. In 1990 alone, over 25 states offered teen conferences for out-of-home-care youth. With few exceptions, the conferences proved to be an excellent way to get teens (*and agency staff*) excited about preparing for independence. In North Carolina, four youth conferences are held around the state each summer at different community colleges.

The basic concept of teen conferences is to bring together youths from the out-of-home-care system to discuss their future plans. At the same time conference programs can provide youths with some very useful information, a place to discuss the central issues of what it is like to be a “foster care youth,” meet community representatives and others who can provide a community connection, give feedback to the agency, and have some much needed fun.

“When the concept of independent living preparation was first presented to staffs that I have worked with in the last six to seven years, it often met with a mixture of enthusiasm and skepticism. While most agreed that youth in out-of-home care needed help in preparing for emancipation, it often was felt that staff didn’t have enough time or resources to provide the needed services. Those agencies that had attempted to offer these services also reported that initially it was difficult to get teens and staffs interested and motivated to participate in independent living preparation activities.”
Best of Daily Living-Teens Conference’s on Independence

In this context, we have encouraged programs to accept the challenge of developing an independent living activity that would be interesting to teens and staffs and that required a modest expenditure of agency time and resources. The activity that evolved is similar to the South Carolina experience—it is a one-day, weekend, or weeklong retreat or conference for teens.

Instead of focusing solely on the foster care system, conference time is

used to teach living skills such as finding jobs, managing money, getting along with people, making decisions, and planning for the future. Youths are given ample time to discuss what it is like to plan for the future, what it will take to survive, and how the system and they can provide what is needed.

Programs have scheduled variations, ranging from one statewide conference to multiple gatherings regionally or countywide, meeting one to three times a year. There are “theme” conferences (*e.g., careers, college planning*), as well as just “fun” days or weekend retreats.

One group in California, for example, held a weekend simulation of the “real” world and in North Carolina they regularly hold one-day “Real World Youth Events.” Other agencies hold small repeated or regional conferences so that multiple offerings create the opportunity for more out-of-home-care youths to participate in the experience.

In North Carolina we have added numerous “other occasions” where youths are brought together for a day or weekend during the year to meet with other foster youths (*SAYSO Saturday, Link-Up Conference, Real World Youth Events, Youth Rally's, etc.*).

Although there is perhaps primary concern for youths who have been in the system for a long time, conference attendance should be an option for youths in out-of-home care who are able to care for themselves for the day or weekend, and who are not self-destructive or violent.

The following are some basic criteria for the development of a teen conference. **Special Note:** One agency does not have to develop a teen conference on its own. In fact, it is much better to “pull together” and pool talents to increase the number of potential attendees (both staff and youths); the

availability of resources; and the general diversity of youths. A program sponsored by the state social service department, group, or residential childcare association could be the better approach.

Conference Staffing

In developing a teen conference, staffing is a critical issue. Often, regular staffs are already overwhelmed by their present job related tasks. How do you free up additional time to allow for the planning and actual implementation of activities needed to do a conference? There are a few ways to overcome this very critical challenge.

If, as suggested earlier, you are pooling resources with other agencies, or even if you are going it alone, it is a good idea to try to draw at least a skeleton staff from among your co-employees or agency volunteer group.

The time they have available should be during regular working hours. Even though this is difficult, you do need someone from the regular staff to be the vanguard for planning this event.

Special Note: We have found that this assignment often becomes a very enjoyable one for staff. The activities of planning the meeting, site selection, soliciting community resources, and the like are rewarding and different then the normal routines most staff are engaged in on a daily basis. Our experiences have shown that many staff sign-on for the event and often offer additional time and energy voluntarily.

Building a Staff

Beyond regular staff, agencies should include a community person—possibly from the AILP advisory board (*see Section 6*) and youths to help coordinate the event. Youths might also come from

the youth advisory board, or they may simply be selected from the general out-of-home-care population. Another aspect is to find an adult who was a former out-of-home-care youth and who is willing to participate.

As the planning moves forward, consider expanding staff for the event so as to include a wide range of volunteers. Volunteers can be a vital part of the success of teen conferences functioning as small-group facilitators, activity coordinators, or for overnights, night supervisors.

Small-Group Facilitators or Workshop Leaders

The small-group facilitators or leaders play an important role since much of the planned discussion and instruction can occur within small-group sessions or workshops that are planned as part of the conference. (*Obviously, the longer the conference, the more small group sessions or workshops that can be scheduled.*)

Initially, it is best to try to find community or agency representatives who have some experience in working with teens and groups. Likely candidates can be found in a variety of places such as, high school teachers, public health counselors, community colleges, or adult educators who deal with real world issues; e.g., consumer studies, banking, home economics, job placement, etc. There are also agency staffs who have a "liking" for teens and are willing to take on a task or subject for a workshop; filling out job applications, doing mock interviews, changing a car tire, teaching CPR, etc.

Later as your volunteers gain experience (*or if you have someone with that level of group experience to begin with*) group sizes can increase. We have developed our conferences to the point

where repeat volunteer presenters can handle large groups, some as large as 20-25 youths and adults in a workshop session.

Activity Coordinator and Night Supervisors

The activity coordinator and night supervisors are responsible for all activities that occur outside of the small groups. Their jobs entail organizing the numerous recreational and social activities and for overnight conferences, making sure that young ladies and gentlemen retire to the appropriate sleeping quarters for the night and remain there. Needless to say, these volunteers will not get a lot of sleep during the conference. We have found that the ideal model for us has been the daylong conference and *NOT* the overnight type event. By utilizing the daylong model we have found that we have more control and it places less demand on conference staffs.

Recruiting

Volunteer recruitment is not difficult. About half the needed number often come from a variety of agency staffs. The balance of volunteers is usually made up of community representatives, college students, and present and former foster youths. Most volunteers leave the conference feeling really good about their contributions and about the young people they spent time with.

It is not unusual for several volunteers to sign up for future conferences, particularly if they become annual events. Usually by the end of the conference, one hears comments like, "I had no idea that being with 80-100 teenagers could be so much fun." "I learned a lot about working with groups," or "I'm ready to start groups or

events like this in my agency or with youth I work with.”

“In April, my wife and I volunteered to serve as facilitators for a independent living skills teen conference held near here. I say I ‘volunteered,’ with some hesitation. Though I should acknowledge up front that my wife was the real volunteer in this case; I sort of ‘accompanied’ her on this fabulous ‘get-away weekend...’ I can’t adequately recount all of the issues that we dealt with during the conference or what specific reactions and questions the group had about each. I can’t even share, as I’d like to, the great satisfaction I got from being able to help even one of these youths feel just a little more confident about his or her ability to ‘make it’ after being discharged from care. I can only encourage other ‘bystanders’ like myself-folks who don’t think they have much to offer as an AILP volunteer-to check it out. You might be surprised at how much you know and how much you have to share.”

Best of Daily Living-Volunteer-It’s Worth It!

Conference Design

In planning the conference, make every effort to present it as an attractive event to young people. A conference brochure is a must to describe the event and its special site. We use a brochure that also has a place for a youth’s signature agreeing to basic rules about their participation (*similar to a contract*).

Size and Location

Campus settings or a nice retreat area or hotel may prove to be a special enticement for attendees. (*Telephone and in-room movies can be controlled!*) We have found that community colleges are the best location for a number of reasons:

- Most foster youths and many staffs have not visited their local community college or any others in the state

- Participants often have little knowledge of the programs offered-particularly the non-traditional course offerings (*horticulture, nursing and hospital aides, truck driving and repair, culinary arts, hotel/motel management, all types of machine repair, etc.*), the use of non-traditional instructional methods (*hands-on versus didactic/lecture*), and the “open admissions” aspects of community colleges.
- Easy parking and large facilities including classrooms suitable for workshops and open sessions.
- Spring and summer college breaks-availability of campuses.

The ideal conference will bring together between 60-80 youths and 20-40 Adults at a maximum. If there is a need to have a larger group, staffing will have to increase accordingly. (*Connecticut has also held a large one-day conference for the last few years with much success.*)

Other options include holding a series of conferences-one in each region, combining a few regions (*this is the model for the North Carolina AILP*), or having two or three statewide meetings.

Sites for these gatherings should be places that youths would want to go to and will enjoy while attending. College campuses, campgrounds, 4-H retreat centers, wilderness areas, and resorts are just a few examples of sites that could be used. The site should be recreational and informative at the same time. Such locations, if chosen carefully and scheduled correctly, often can be reserved for little or no cost to the agency.

Our experience has been that college officials and owners of these facilities are often “philanthropic” and more than willing to assist in under-writing expenses or in waiving all space and use

fees. Our use of college campuses in North Carolina, Hawaii, and Connecticut, has all been cost free.

Conference Structure

There are two approaches to the conference structure. First, in relation to overnight or weekend events, there should be a good balance between small-group discussion and recreational activities. There is a tendency to pack as much instruction into the conference as possible, teens and adults can only tolerate so much time in formal sessions. Both teens and staffs need some less-structured time to relax and get to know each other. Teens often use this time to seek out a volunteer or guest speaker or to make friends with other conference participants. The friendships that are made during the time together are as important as the conference subject matter.

The second approach relates to the development of one-day programs. We structure youth meetings the same as adult conferences. There is an opening session, followed by two workshops sessions, lunch, an afternoon plenary session, followed by “hands-on” life skills rotations. Intermingled is morning ala Carte breakfast and refreshment breaks throughout the day. Pizza is usually the choice of food for lunch. Morning snacks are juices, coffee, donuts, and fruit. We serve cookies, chips, pretzels, and soda in the afternoon.

Adults and youths are asked to pre-register and then confirm that registration during check-in on the morning of the conference. Youths are then asked to sign up for workshops.

Usually two sessions are held in the morning with each offering between 3-5 different workshops. An opening session

is held before the workshops with a youth or adult speaker who is or was a foster youth.

The two workshop sessions take us up to lunch. After lunch an orientation to the college is held in an auditorium for the total group-adults and youths.

College admissions staff and student “ambassadors” are the presenters. Youths are then broken into three groups and given tours of the campus with emphasis on the non-traditional aspects of the community college.

After tours are completed and a refreshment break, youths are involved in a hands-on activity. The activity involves three-four stations that groups rotate through for instruction. Some examples of the activities at stations are:

- Meeting around a car with instructors from the automotive repair department to learn about what to look for when buying a used car and or changing a flat tire.
- Meeting with an emergency medical treatment team to learn about a certificate program, EMT work, and tour the EMS vehicle.
- To work with a culinary arts instructor learning how to cook a simple balanced meal.
- To work with representatives from the local fire station on using fire extinguishers and actually putting out small contained fires, or walking through a “smoke” house to understand safety and rescue methods.

These hands-on activities are followed by a refreshment break and then another workshop and or closing session. The closing session is motivational and inspiring. A former foster youth speaking positively, a youth expressing

his or her talent for song or poetry are great ending moments.

For over ten years now we have been giving each youth a “prize” during the day. These consist of a small kitchen appliance or some other independent living related product.

We have developed relationships with small appliance manufacturers and stores (*e.g., Proctor-Silex, Hamilton Beach, Walmart, Linens n’ Things, etc.*) to obtain items at a reduced or wholesale price.

At the end of each day we have “Grand Prizes” of laundry baskets filled with AILP related items that are usually reflective of a theme, such as, bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, auto and home, etc.

Youths must be present to get their prizes and stay to the end to be eligible for the grand prizes. Finally, we give every youth a special end of day gift. The youth has to fill out an evaluation, hand it in, and then is given the gift. Gifts range from toaster ovens, to ironing boards, irons, mixers, set of dishes, etc.

To say the least, these events have become quite popular and there have been many positive responses to the events, gifts, and prizes. Feedback from attendees has been extremely positive and everyone who attends (*both adults and youths*) feels the event just adds to the existing local program in a very positive way.

A Winning Idea

Teen conferences demonstrate to many individuals that helping teens prepare for life on their own can be a pleasant and rewarding experience. The conferences also show that people outside of the social service profession can contribute and should be involved in this helping experience. We have found that both youths and adults who

participate in such conferences leave feeling motivated to continue their preparations for the future.

In discussions with community representatives and agency staff during different projects nationally, we have found a high degree of interest in the teen conference concept. This could be an excellent way to “kick-off” an agency effort as well as to give ongoing impetus to program participants or to conclude a program year.

We solicit the help of local businesses and other community representatives. We set up a resource area where local businesses setup tables with examples of their products and services. These range from the local health department to an auto repair shop. Military recruiters and perspective employers are invited as well as everyone from insurance agents to the local cooperative extension agent. Youths are given sheets with each resource listed and are asked to visit each “booth” where the person manning the table “stamps” their sheet to show that they visited. When youths have visited all tables they then can place their sheets in a “Grand Prize” box. The grand prizes are only awarded to those who have completed the visits, had their sheets stamped, and are present at the end of the day.

Recommendations

To build a teen conference as a centerpiece in an agency’s independent living program, the following are recommended:

- Plan Teen Conference(s)

Agencies should plan and carry out teen conference(s) for youths in out-of-home care. Community support for food, lodging, transportation, and “goodies” (*i.e., tangible goods the young people can be*

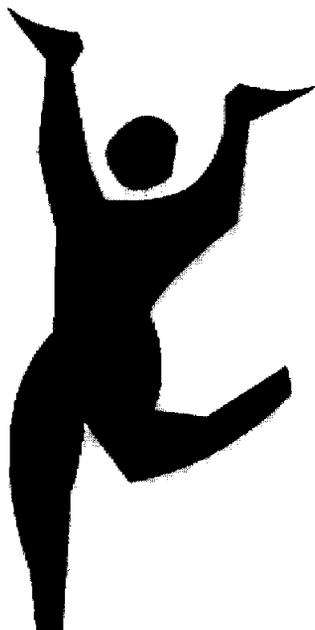
given to take home with them at the conclusion of the conference) can be solicited from public and private sources. To serve youths well, the conference needs a broad base of community interest and involvement to generate benefits that will carry well beyond the actual conference time together.

Each person attending is given a conference bag and there are many displays of community-generated promotional items such as key chains, pencils, pads, drink cups, etc., for the attendees to pick up throughout the day. These items come from the community college, local banks, the bar association,

motor vehicle department, and local businesses that use the items to promote their products or services.

Grant Funding

It is recommended that agencies award a mini- or seed grant (see *Section 17*) to a program or a few staff members to pilot the concept. (*Look for staffs that express interest in the teen conference idea.*) Particularly in large agencies or systems, piloting this concept on a smaller scale or region allows the “bugs” to be worked out and everyone to test the idea. Replication then becomes more manageable and measurable.



Section 13:



Education

A ILP planning and programming must also focus on the educational and vocational aspects of life skills development. Youths must be engaged and encouraged to pursue educational opportunities to enhance their ability to become an economic force within the community. The ability of adults to develop a livable income is critical to independence and a healthy lifestyle.

In the United States, graduation from high school and access to higher education is a goal most Americans share. Possession of a high school diploma in the general population (*84% over the age of 25*), and particularly among employed people (*90%*) is a major life achievement (Newburger and Curry, 2000).

“Further, a college degree is now the single greatest factor in determining access to better job opportunities and higher earnings” (Children’s Defense Fund, 2000; Child Welfare League of America, 2002).

For youths who reside in foster care a high school diploma, vocational certificate, or college degree is not easily obtainable. In relation to the general population foster youths lag considerably behind in obtaining a high school diploma and going on to vocational or college programs.

There are over 581,000 youths in foster care and over 274,000 (*47%*) are cared for in non-relative foster family homes, 151,864 (*26%*) in relative foster family homes, 57,590 (*10%*) in institutions, 46,279 (*8%*) in group homes,

and 51,167 (*9%*) in other types of facilities (Office of Inspector General (OIG), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS), May 2002).

Data are consistent in showing that youth in foster care share similar characteristics:

- Low-educational functioning
- A need for remedial services
- Limited post secondary experiences

Approximately 25,000 of these youths transition out of care to living on their own each year (OIG, U.S. DHHS, May, 2002). Of these only 13% will go on to college or vocational training (National Independent Living Association (NILA); Casey Family Programs, Orphan Foundation, 2002).

These data are in sharp contrast to 60-67% of the overall population of high school graduates who were enrolled in college the October after finishing high school over this last decade (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2001).

A review of the literature reveals that a lack of information and resources regarding an individual’s ability to attend college are cited as one of the main potential barriers to accessing post secondary education in the United States (Gilley, 1999).

“Caregivers, social workers and case managers need to begin individualized post-secondary planning with (foster) youth no later than 9th grade...”(Casey Family Programs, 2002).

The United States Department of Education recommended that information and resources be made available to students and their families as early as sixth grade (2002).

Expectations of foster youths and adults who house, advise, and mentor them need to be altered to include post-secondary educational opportunities as viable possibilities. Low educational achievement (*of foster youths*) has the most troubling consequences for the quality of foster youths' adult lives (Casey Family Programs).

Over the last fifteen years federal laws have provided funds that are central to transitioning youths from foster care and to ensure a higher quality of life, as they become valued members of their communities. Recently, research efforts under the Chafee Act have been focused on developing programs that would assist foster youth to have successful school experiences and educational outcomes that would further elevate their quality of life.

The initial focus has been on a broad range of initiatives related to early, middle, and high school years. First and foremost has been an emphasis on collaboration across systems (*social service, mental health, health, education, etc.*) and advocating for foster youths throughout all aspects of their educational experience.

AILP needs to be focused on foster youths in their middle and high school years (*7th-12th grades*) and providing those youths with information and resources that can enable them to make post secondary educational opportunities a reality. The approach used should develop and promote advocacy for post secondary educational support by youths themselves and the adults who shelter, advise, and mentor them.

In most instances foster care youth will need financial assistance from both public and private sources to complete post-secondary programs. The AILP program, caregivers, professionals, and youths need to be aware of and advocate

for all public and private scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study opportunities that are available (*Casey Family Programs*). Early access to information and resources will serve to raise expectations among foster youths and the adults surrounding them that some form of post secondary education is an achievable goal.

Significance

In a fourteen month project undertaken by the New Jersey Department of Family and Youth Services (*NJDYFS*) and supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Fund for New Jersey, and the US Department of Health and Human Services, it was found that 85% of service providers reported lack of finances as a significant barrier to foster youth enrolling in college and 72% reported lack of finances as a significant barrier to enrolling in post-secondary vocational training.

In addition, it has been shown that if left unattended, half of this population will become unemployed, and a quarter will be homeless for one or more nights (Casey Family Programs, Orphan Foundation, 2002).

Research indicates that one of the main reasons underprivileged students (*including most foster youths*) do not pursue a college education following high school graduation is that their families and adults caring for them (including many foster parents, group home parents and staffs) are often ill-equipped to provide advice on resources and information about post secondary opportunities (Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, CA: 2002).

In essence, they lack information and resources to assist youths in applying for vocational programs or college, as many have never attended post secondary programs or college themselves.

"In 1999, 82% of students whose parents held a bachelor's degree or higher enrolled in college immediately after finishing high school. The rates were much lower for those whose parents had completed high school but not college (54%) and even lower for those whose parents had less than a high school diploma (36%)." (NCES, 2001)

The ability of foster care youth to access higher education is further hampered by the fragmented system of natural and professional support. Agencies and programs that place and monitor foster youths have a history of limited collaboration. Social workers do not communicate with educators; group home staffs do not communicate with Department of Social Services staffs; foster parents have little connection with any of these groups; and most of the key players do not understand or connect with the college, community college, or vocational systems.

Foster parents and other direct caregivers, have little to no knowledge of scholarships and eligibility standards. Foster parents are usually not empowered to advocate for youths, youths are not empowered to advocate for themselves, social workers have limited information and time to advocate, and educators have little understanding of foster youth and first generation low-income candidates. This cycle continues to limit foster youths access to post secondary educational systems that would enhance their ability to survive after leaving care.

Research on academic success clearly documents the central role of parents in student achievement (Riley, 1994).

"Because of heightened risk factors for children in substitute care, there is an increased need for caregivers to be invested and involved in the education of these children. Many foster parents require

training and support programs in order to effectively fulfill their educational advocacy (mentor) roles" (Casey Family Programs, 2002).

When identifying major educational barriers for foster youths the lack of mentors-adults who can help youths find and sort through information needed to make an informed decision about post secondary education, has been identified.

"Thirty-five percent of providers indicated a lack of mentors as the most significant barrier to youths striving for their GED... and 85% indicated a lack of mentors as the most significant barrier to youths earning a high school diploma." (This study included 51 providers of services under contract with NJDFYS in 2000.) (NJDFYS, 2000)

Caregivers, whether they are foster family parents, group home staffs, house parents, etc., need support and information on what resources are available to aid them in assisting youths to develop and take advantage of post secondary opportunities. Youths lacking information and resources and the limited number and ability of caring adults to assist them in finding and realizing post secondary education milestones cannot be underestimated.

The overall educational situation is compounded for foster care youth when one considers the often-chaotic management of their lives. Studies report that the median number of placements for children in foster care is generally three to four placements, but it is not unusual to see children having upwards of twenty over their lifetime in care.

When looking specifically at older children and children who entered care at a later age it has been shown that they are more likely to experience a greater number of placements; ranging in number from three to forty-nine (CWLA, 2002). This movement creates an environment filled with inconsistencies.

Foster youth often experience many changes in homes, caregivers, schools, and neighborhoods right up to their transition from care. These changes coupled with a lack of information about educational opportunities create many problem areas for foster youths.

Studies have shown that after foster youths leave care they have higher rates of health and mental health problems than the general population. Recent data has been gathered showing that these rates have some correlation to low educational outcomes while in care. Youth transitioning from foster care:

- Have disproportionately high rates of physical, developmental, and mental health problems (AAP, 2000, Barth, 1990; Beech Acres, 2001; Rest and Watson, 1984)
- Have lower reading and math skills

and high school graduation rates (Barth, 1990; Cook, et al., 1991; Cook, 1994; Fanshel, Finch and Grundy, 1990; Fanshel and Shinn, 1978; Festinger, 1983)

- Have higher rates of unemployment and likelihood of dependence on public assistance (Cook, 1989; Cook, 1994; Triseliotis and Russell, 1984; Courtney et al., 1998)
- Are at higher risk of teen pregnancy and parenting (Stock, et al., 1997; Boyer and Fine, 1992)
- Have higher rates of alcohol and other drug abuse (Stock et al., 1997; Boyer and Fine, 1992)
- Are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system (Rogers and Leunes, 1979; Courtney, et. al., 1991)

Table below contains highlights of some of these studies. (Sources: US General Accounting Office, 1999 and Muskie School of Public Service, 1998.)

Study/Design	Outcomes
<p>Westat, Inc. (1991)</p> <p>Sample: study used a nationally representative sample. 810 former foster youth from eight states with youth out of care 2.5-4 years (n=810).</p> <p>Method: repeated interviews conducted 2.5 to 4 years after youth discharged from care. 69% conducted by phone, 31% in person.</p>	<p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 46% had not completed high school <p>Homelessness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 25% were homeless at least one night <p>Employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 51% were unemployed ▪ 62% had not maintained a job for at least a year <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 40% were a cost to the community ▪ 42% had birthed or fathered a child
<p>Barth (1990)</p> <p>Sample: 55 young adults from the San Francisco Bay Area; out of care at least one year, but no more than 10 years (n=55).</p> <p>Method: Interviews, 76% in person and 24% by phone.</p>	<p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 38% had not completed high school <p>Homelessness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 35% were homeless or moved frequently <p>Employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 25% were unemployed <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 47% received some type of public assistance or had problems paying for food or housing ▪ 38% had no health or medical coverage ▪ 40% of females reported a pregnancy ▪ 35% had been arrested or spent time in jail or prison
<p>Courtney, et al (1995) (1998), Beech Acres (2000)</p> <p>Sample: Wisconsin; cohort tracking 141 youth while in care and 113 youth (80% of first sample) 12 to 18 months after leaving care (n=113). Beech Acres: 280 foster families (543 foster youth) surveyed.</p>	<p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 37% had not completed high school <p>Homelessness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 12% were homeless at least one night ▪ 22% had lived in four or more places <p>Employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 39% were unemployed ▪ 19% had not had a job since leaving foster care <p>Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 63% receiving Mental Health services

Method: Surveys, Interviews (more than 80% in person).
Multivariate regression analysis.

Other:

- 27% of males and 10% of females were incarcerated at least once
- 44% reported problems obtaining health insurance
- 32% received some type of public assistance

Foster Youth Expectations and Improving Opportunities

Research findings indicate that foster care youth are vocal about their experiences. They emphasize that with the help of supportive adults, along with personal strengths, they feel that they can experience successful futures.

To improve their educational experiences youths recommend that they be provided with opportunities to participate in their own educational decisions and be given information about post secondary opportunities available to them (CWLA 2002; SAYSO, 2002).

A recent national study conducted by the CWLA and the Permanency Planning for Children Department of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, in consultation with Casey Family Programs (2002) outlines a number of “promising practices” to improve quality of life for foster care youth. These include:

- Asking foster caregivers/parents to examine their own biases regarding low educational expectations for youth in foster care,
- Training foster parents to be educational advocates,
- Educating schools about the needs of students in care, and
- Hiring educational liaisons to work with the educational system.

In sum, findings indicate that educational advocacy is needed that can ensure foster youths’ needs are met, that they have access to informational resources regarding educational opportunities, and that foster parents receive information and training so they

can become educational advocates for their foster children.

We have also found within our programming that there is a general misconception about who foster youth are and what they can accomplish. Many persons hold this misconception. School personnel, college admissions staffs, community based employment and vocational specialists, are just a few who have limited understanding of the foster care system and the youths who live in substitute care. Youths are blamed for their parent’s mistakes and unjustly labeled as lost causes that cannot move into the mainstream of society.

Yet, research also shows that this forgotten population is inspired and motivated to excel in school, college, and beyond. Our experience with SaySo (*North Carolina Youth Advocacy Board*) illustrates how empowering youths can change the profile of foster care. In 1998, when SaySo began, the initial youth board of directors consisted of three high school dropouts, two GED recipients, three high school students, and one college student. By the first meeting in 2003, 100% of the board was in school, 32% in high school and 68% attending college.

The link between placement in foster care and low educational outcomes apparently does not discourage youth from setting high educational goals.

McMillen, et. al. (2002), found that only five percent of youths they surveyed (including foster youths) planned to end their education at the high school level. Sixty-eight percent planned to attend college. With this need

identified, the question therefore arises regarding how to impart information in a strategic manner so that as many foster youths, parents, and other caregivers, as possible, can access it.

Educational Training Vouchers

ETV is a section of a federal program that offers up to \$5000 per year for college or vocational training for foster youths who are 18-20 years of age, aged out of foster care or were adopted from foster care after the age of 16, and are eligible for their state independent living program.

Youths must be accepted into or enrolled in an accredited college or post-secondary vocational/technical program. Eligibility is maintained by continued progress towards a degree or certificate. Participation is renewable until age 23.

A website that lists state eligibility requirements is operated under the guidance of the Orphan Foundation of America and can be reached on the Internet at: www.statevoucher.org -the site assists select states to administer the ETV program.

ETV Policy at a Glance

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendment of 2001 amended section 477 of the Social Security Act to add a new subsection to section 477. Subsection (i) states that:

“The following conditions shall apply to a State educational and training voucher program under this section:

1. Vouchers under the program shall be available to youth otherwise eligible for services under the State program under this section.
2. For purposes of the voucher program, youths adopted from foster care after attaining age 16 may be considered to be youth otherwise eligible for services under the State program under this section.
3. The State may allow youths participating in the voucher program on the date they attain 21 years of age to remain eligible until they attain 23 years of age, as long as they are enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.
4. The voucher or vouchers provided for an individual under this section –
 - a. Shall be available for the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965; and
 - b. Shall not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance, as defined in section 472 of that Act.
5. The amount of a voucher under this section shall be disregarded for the purposes of determining the recipient’s eligibility for, or the amount of, any other Federal or Federally supported assistance, except that the total amount of educational assistance to a youth under this section and under other Federal and Federally supported programs shall not exceed the total cost of attendance, as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and except that the State agency shall take appropriate steps to prevent duplication of benefits under this and other Federal and Federally supported programs.
6. The program is coordinated with other appropriate education and training programs.”

Section 14:



Jobs/Vocational Program

“Finding jobs is a major challenge that faces all young adults. For those about to leave foster care, sound preparation to make employment decisions is even more critical. Preparing youths to work, therefore, must be a primary treatment concern for foster care programs serving older adolescents.” North, Mallabar, and Desrochers, CWLA

For at-risk youths, gaining work experience while still involved with caring adults (*i.e., teachers, social workers, foster parents, residential counselors, etc.*) is a necessity, not a luxury. Youths need the opportunities to negotiate the world of work while being supported and assisted by adults who care. Without these opportunities, youths will face immense difficulties as they are emancipated. Youths also need adults to help them navigate through the maze of employment issues including co-worker conflict, negotiating work schedules, communication with employers, community relations, and basic tasks such as completing applications and interviews.

The world of work can be a principal source of independent living skills development, through interaction with other employees, maintaining relationships with employers, and managing finances. Many people believe the first step in preparing for a job search is to develop a resume and complete application forms. As a result, youths frequently secure jobs in areas providing minimal learning and satisfaction. Actually, the job search is the last step in a three-step approach towards preparing for work experiences and ultimately a career. These three-steps are as follows:

1. Exploring Interests: Activities includes career interest inventories,

exploring values, identifying personality types, and aptitude surveys. Basically a person should have some understanding of what they like to do. This understanding provides guidance for exploring work experiences and careers.

2. Exploring Careers: Careers are explored within a person’s area, sometimes called employment “cluster,” of interest. Exploration activities include job shadowing, volunteering, educational training, and researching outlook trends and the range of occupations in a particular cluster.

3. Job Search: Actual job search methods are put in place during this step. Methods such as making applications, developing job resumes, interviewing, networking, and writing letters to potential employers are all part of the job search step.

All youths in an AILP should be “employed” or gain “work experiences” at some level. This might take the form of paid employment, volunteer or community service, and/or continued school based “service learning” experiences. Work experiences may be defined as two hours, or as many as twenty, a week to start. The important aspect is to find work experiences at some level for all youths. Matching work experiences with the youths’ capabilities and interests can provide the

most optimal work and learning experience. That foundation provides inherent motivation and commitment. Without this foundation, youths customarily leave jobs prematurely and lack the opportunities to learn job maintenance skills before they leave care.

All too often youths in residential and foster care are unemployed or provided minimal follow-up assistance and support to maintain employment. Many agencies, particularly residential facilities complain about getting “bad” referrals - clients who cannot work. There are no “good” referrals in programs that work with youths, particularly those who have suffered some form of abuse or neglect. It is scary to most young people, even those within intact family units, to start acting responsibly, take “orders” from adults, handle their own lives, and become an “adult.”

Even, if youth serving program descriptions and basic referral criteria are clear, agencies will not necessarily receive youths who are appropriate for their services. Reality is that at some point even the inappropriate referral will leave the care and custody of the agency. It thus becomes the “job” of caring adults who work with at-risk youths to prepare even the worst referral for that reality. Aristotle said, “*What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing,*” and one of the best ways for youths to accomplish this is in the “real” world of work.

A formal effort to provide work experience for youths, beyond the basic skills class, is a vitally important part of an ALLP. Solid preparation will not only reward youths with jobs, but it will lead them to better jobs in shorter periods of time. They will also learn to handle one

of life’s major obstacles, getting and keeping a job!

It is recommend that agencies develop a method for identifying employment and training programs within their state/geographic area that can enhance the opportunities for youths to earn income. This, in turn, will facilitate a growth in opportunities for job related skills learning experiences.

An example is the Providence Center in Rhode Island, which developed a cost-sharing program to provide jobs for severely mentally handicapped youths. The Center found youths jobs by sharing the cost 50-50 with employers. That is, the employer (*restaurants, libraries, etc.*) paid the youths \$5 per hour and the Center reimbursed each job site \$2.50 per hour. Furthermore, the Center provided support through weekly contacts with the employer, and other efforts.

Youth serving agencies and their staffs need to stress the critical need for youths to gain work experiences prior to discharge. Youths must be able to practice employment responsibilities and ethics while they still have the safety net of caring adults in their lives. Work experiences also fit into adolescent developmental needs as they attempt to gain control over their lives. When adults understand this perspective, program services to support this need will follow.

It is also essential for adults to assist youths with making a conscious connection between educational choices and employment. Youths preparing for their transition to self-sufficiency must begin to connect their future plans with current programming. This places youths in a better position of job preparedness and security.

Developing a Comprehensive Community Based Employment Program

Planning is the key to developing any AILP component. Instituting a community based employment component is achieved by following a simple three-step formula:

- Explore existing programs. Re-inventing the wheel is laborious and unnecessary. Employment programs exist in every community. Locate and develop an understanding of these programs so youths can be connected to the most appropriate resource.
- Develop partnerships with existing programs. Meet with program coordinators for employment services in your area. Develop mutually agreeable terms to serve youths and break down historical agency boundaries.
- Many of these services are success-oriented, meaning their programs continue only if they are able to serve a significant number of youths with positive results. Coordinators of these programs frequently prefer working with AILP youths because they have an existing support system (*i.e., foster parents, group home staff, teachers, social workers, mentors, etc.*). The extra supports help promote successful results which make their programs look good. The bottom line is that these programs need youths!
- Create GAP programming. GAP programming is created when services needed within the AILP do not exist in the community. For instance, job-shadowing programs may not be available or are sporadic and do not meet the consistent needs

of youths. Team members, including youths, then create this component.

Although simple in nature, many programs avoid developing community-based programs and resort to developing agency based programs. Agency based programming is referred to as “gap programming” and should be developed only when needed services do not exist. Since youths will live interdependently in the community at some point, it is advantageous to provide youths with community-based experiences prior to emancipation. It is also helpful for the AILP to “plug into” previously existing services to build a solid foundation and “free up” staff time for supportive services and coordination.

Existing Programs

A brief review of some of the existing national programs functioning in virtually all states may assist in this program development area. These programs, for whatever reason, are frequently overlooked by an AILP. Most often it is because little research has been undertaken by the agency to determine the availability of such services. Second, at times, little pre-planning takes place for inclusion of agency youths in these programs and application deadlines are often missed.

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

In 1982, *JTPA* replaced the Comprehensive *Employment and Training Act (CETA)* as the government’s program to train youths, unskilled, and dislocated workers for entry or reentry into the work force, and to provide job training to economically disadvantaged individuals and others facing serious barriers to employment.

Most agencies and their staffs haven't realized that JTPA was the replacement for CETA. This program is still under publicized within child welfare, and the result is underutilization of the program by those certifiable for service.

In addition, many agencies have backed away from the JTPA program because of some of the politics involved. Currently, JTPA is governed by the *Workforce Investment Act (WIA)*. The Act provides momentum for states and local communities to centralize their employment placement and training programs. Political "waves" tend to dictate the priorities of JTPA. For instance, the JTPA Summer Youth program was expecting to be eliminated in 1999 when in fact, the funding was increased. Even though the program has become highly politicized in some areas of the country, agencies should consider (or reconsider) participation in this program because benefits to youths can be great.

Locating the JTPA program (and concurrent *WIA Youth Programs*) is gained through contacting the local Joblink Office or other centralized job service agency (such as an Employment Security Commission Office).

The local *Workforce Development Board (WDB)* or *Workforce Investment Board (WIB)* previously known as *Private Industry Council (PIC)* governs these programs. The WDB/WIB is usually listed in the local telephone book and the members of the council are often local individuals (the community/private sector must be represented by at least 51% of the members), some of whom are already known to your agency. The WDB/WIA may still be listed as PIC in some local telephone books.

It should be noted with the *Summer Youth Employment Program*, application

deadlines are extremely important. Program staff and youths have to make contact early (*as early as mid-January in some areas*) to receive "interest surveys" (*formal applications*) to ensure consideration for the program. Each WDB operates the program based on area needs, so be sure to make contact with the agency contracted to operate the program.

In some areas, JTPA and WIA have special provisions allowing services to individuals ages 14-15. These programs focus on job readiness and in some cases operate in local schools and are taught by Joblink and WIA representatives. WIA targets available funds to serve the economically (*including the underemployed as well as the unemployed*) and the academically disadvantaged which includes substitute care youths.

The primary services available for 14-15 year olds include job readiness, work ethics, and vocational assessments. When an appropriate match can be made with an employer, 14-15 year olds can secure summer employment, however employment priority is given to the older adolescent.

A 16-year-old or older youth who has dropped out of school can receive services, however they may be required to simultaneously participate in a GED or high school diploma program.

Developing a Partnership with JTPA and WIA

Performance standards built into the Workforce Investment Act often result in minimal outreach for difficult populations, such as at-risk youths. Youth serving agencies, therefore, should be prepared to advocate for youths as "high priority" for these programs, especially since youth workers can provide tangible support. It

should be noted that recent requirements of the Welfare to Work (*WTW*) program also governed by the Workforce Investment Act, mandate services to foster youths, current and aged out, who are age 18 and over. Nationally, *WTW* staffs have sought out the foster youth population to meet quotas.

The act provides for communities to address their local employment needs through the collaboration of professionals at the local level. Youth service agencies should join in collaborative efforts to insure that youths with special needs receive appropriate services.

Workforce Development Board's will contract with community-based organizations to operate youth employment programs at the local level. These organizations can be required, as part of a contract, to accept referrals from agencies serving transitional youth.

"This is the primary method of entry into the JTPA system for foster care youths" (North, Mallabar, and Desrochers, CWLA).

Contact must be made with the local WDB and, where appropriate, sponsoring school districts or other agencies offering JTPA programs to raise their awareness of the special needs of substitute care youths. Agency staffs should make contact with WDB to make arrangements to present their program to the WDB staff. The presentations must stress the need for community programs to coordinate their efforts to serve at-risk youths.

Call the Chamber of Commerce if you have trouble locating the WDB (*remember it may still be referred to as PIC or as WIB*). It would also be very beneficial to ask a WDB member, and/or a local school/sponsoring agency staff person to be involved on the AILP advisory board in your area.

JTPA and WIA programs are offering job-readiness courses at some local high schools during the academic year as a precursor to the summer employment program. Connect with the vocational education coordinators at local schools to determine if this service is available.

Program changes over the years have forced JTPA to limit and in some cases, eliminate supportive services such as transportation, child care, meals, health care, and temporary shelter. Services for the handicapped are provided and coordinated with other agencies already in place, such as vocational rehabilitation. By providing supportive services, AILP youths become reliable candidates for the JTPA and WIA youth programs.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (*WOTC*)

Besides the WIA youth program, investigate the *Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)* program, as an additional resource for preparing and placing youths in employment situations. *WOTC* is the revised *TJTC (Targeted Jobs Tax Credit)* program. It has become widely used as a recruiting tool for companies participating in the *WTW* program because it provides a direct tax credit to companies hiring employees among eight categories of targeted groups identified in the legislation. For this reason, you may hear it called the *Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit Program*.

The *WOTC* tax credit is substantial - 40 percent of \$6,000 in qualified wages paid during the first year to each new employee working 400 hours or 35% of the first \$10,000 during the first year for *WTW* participants. Participants must fall into one of eight target groups, including:

- Qualified IV-A recipients (*TANF*) having received those benefits for at least 9 months within the last 18 months,
- High risk youth, 18-24 years old, residing within an Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community (*your local WDB has a state listing of these zones*),
- 16-17 year olds who perform service for an employer between May 1 and September 15 and residing within an Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community,
- Vocational rehabilitation referrals, and qualified food stamp recipients, 18-24 years old.

The WOTC employee must work a minimum of 400 hours or 180 days (120 hours for Summer Youth) to be eligible for the tax credit. The employer must make application for the tax credit before the employee's first day of work. Approach small businesses with this program as an incentive to employ eligible youth and receive a direct tax credit of up to \$2,400 per employee. The credit comes right off the top of the employer's tax bill. WOTC information and application forms may be obtained from the IRS or state job service.

Other Employment Programs

- Job Corps, Conservation Corps, and other job programs nationally, statewide, and locally sponsored can add to jobs training and employment options an agency can have available for an AILP. Job Corps provides residential services as well as job training. Become informed about the regional Job Corps as each location has its own operations and standards for behavior. Be sure to inquire about job placement, follow-up, and discharge policies. Job Corps has an 800-telephone number for each state.

- Challenge is a program run by the National Guard. It is currently not available in every state but is gaining popularity. It is a military style job training and educational program that offers approximately five months of residential placement and training for youths at-risk for high school dropout. Graduates of the program have praised the degree of staff commitment to help youths reach a respectable level of responsibility. Contact the National Guard to inquire about the availability in a particular area.

- Americorps is a 10-12 month commitment serving individual states. Grants are issued to various areas of the state based on need. The programs selected to receive the grants change annually. Call Americorps to receive current information and to get on their mailing list. Applications will be sent out the first week in June for the commitment period of September to August. Each program varies in job training and expected number of hours. Youths are paid, full or part-time, depending on their level of commitment. Expectations include: age 17 or older, show up and serve, work towards your goals. This is a skill building experience, however, some programs require previously acquired skills. Some programs also accept special needs, learning disabilities, and others require frequent movement - from site to site. The program is operated at the state level. Contact with the state employment service or a governor's "Committee of Volunteer Services" may be the best way to explore available options for a particular state.

- Employment services such as Joblink and Centers for Employment and Training (*CET*) are increasing their

focus. Coordinated by the Workforce Investment Act, services include assessment and career exploration as well as job training and location services. It is anticipated that programs such as JTPA may be administered locally through block grants and/or vouchers through such Joblink Centers. Eventually, all job training and employment services will be streamlined to Joblink Centers around the country. Explore these employment services locally by researching the area via the local telephone book.

- Military options can provide youths will resources and services they need. Services include housing, employment, education, and training as well as an income, meals, uniforms, etc. Each branch has particular educational requirements so maintaining brochures on all the branches is necessary to distinguish between them. Again, this option may not meet the needs of all youths in the program, but it may provide the services for some. Having options for youths will help them make better decisions.

Job Related Skills Training

Due to community wide efforts under WIA to improve job training and placement for all citizens, coalitions have been formed in each state to coordinate these efforts. The *State Occupational Information Coordinating Council (SOICC)* operates in each state. Its purpose is to collect data from state institutions such as the Department of Labor, Department of Commerce, Employment Security Commissions, Department of Public Instruction and Secondary Education, the military, and so forth, to determine the state labor needs and develop training to produce a corresponding, skilled work force.

SOICC follows the three-step career planning approach introduced at the beginning of this section. SOICC differs in its scope from state to state and as a result provides information to schools and businesses in a variety of ways.

Typically, SOICC will publish annual newspaper type tabloids available to students as early as junior high outlining careers, possible salaries, educational needs for identified careers, and the state's future outlook for such careers. SOICC identifies and coordinates job training specific to careers through the following institutions:

- **Community Colleges** – Each Community College is established to meet the labor demands of the community; resulting in a curriculum designed specifically by local businesses and industry. Human Resource Development (*HRD*) departments exist in the community colleges to prepare students for the job market. Classes are offered for educational attainment such as General Education Diploma (*GED*), Adult Diploma, and English as a Second Language (*ESL*) as a precursor for securing employment. Employment skills classes include developing a resume, interviewing, applications, and maintaining employment as well as job placement, are also offered through HRD.

- **Vocational Education** – Vocational education courses become available in junior high school when educators begin the career assessment process with youths. Due to “educational gaps” foster youths frequently experience, they may miss the assessments and thus a huge piece of career self-exploration. Current vocational education programs are extensive and are typically designed to

meet community needs. For instance, rural areas will have more agricultural courses available in the junior high and high school level than commercial, urban areas. School-to-Work programs are operated in partnership with vocational education programs, community colleges, and local businesses to ease the transition for young people as they incorporate their learning into the world of work. School-to-Work programs can include apprenticeships and internships, as well as formal classroom and lab instruction.

Developing Partnerships with Community Programs

It may be helpful to view community programs as businesses. They need customers to survive. A number of community programs have been discontinued because they could not document serving a significant number of clients. Youth serving programs have customers as well as adults who support the youth "customer." This understanding can assist in developing partnerships with current programs.

The following approach may be helpful in accessing services for youths in care,

"The youths I work with are better customers for your services. They have me and other caring adults helping to provide other needs such as follow-up services, transportation, problem-solving, and time management that are necessary to maintain employment."

A partnership can develop when both programs (*AILP and employment program*) have their needs met through a mutual agreed upon connection.

The essential element to developing partnerships is to communicate the goals and mission of each program in question. Partnerships are created

through mutual goals. It is helpful to develop a brochure, pamphlet, flyer, or program guide to help community programs understand the AILP focus.

A formalized information packet also sends the message that the AILP is established, well thought out, and organized. From a business point of view, partnerships with other well organized programs benefits everyone. For more information on developing a packet and marketing an AILP to the community see *Sections 4 and 5*.

Creating GAP Programming

Only after all known community resources have been exhausted should an agency resort to creating programming necessary to prepare youths for work experience. Not all of the following recommendations may be applicable for all programs. The recommendations are intended to provide a variety of options so an AILP can choose those that best meet the variety of youth needs. Gap programming also involves enhancements to current employment activities, such as ensuring someone:

- Is connected to the local HRD or Job Link,
- Is on the AILP advisory board,
- Is providing job shadowing to all youths,
- Is instituting a Real World Youth Event (*simulation of real world fiscal decisions*), and
- Is expanding use of community resources.

Recommendations

Use Community Resources

Agencies should develop a plan for utilizing community job-related resources. With the Program Advisory Board (*see Section 6*), volunteers, mentors, and skills-classes, youths can receive

eligibility information, vocational and occupational guidance, and possibly even priority for certain employment opportunities. This job opportunity action plan should project the methods for developing actual job positions for all youths in the program over a year's period of time. Many job opportunities—such as the WIA Youth and JTPA Summer Jobs Program—must be anticipated months in advance to obtain slots.

Establish Incentive Programs

A job-related incentive program should be established to assist in overcoming all possible barriers to employment, maximize potential savings, and create incentives for youths' employment. Methods might include matching youths' earnings or establishing a trust fund so that youths are not penalized for income earned. In Charlotte, North Carolina, a youth on the local youth advisory board discussed the benefits of such a matching program to the director of his agency. Together they established a "dollar for dollar" matching program. The agency currently matches the amount a youth saves over a six-month period of time and deposits that into a trust fund, available to the youth upon discharge. Other such incentive ideas, both monetary and non-monetary, can be found in *Section 7*.

Develop a Comprehensive Tiered Employment or "In-House" Program

Youth serving agencies should consider development of a tiered or in-house employment program. A tiered-employment program, or some other method of providing a consistent jobs readiness preparatory program, is beneficial in developing overall acceptance among youths and staffs that

all AILP participants should be employed.

The basic premise of a tiered, comprehensive employment program is that one step builds upon the next. It is a teamwork approach that builds on developmental and skill levels. Agencies serving larger populations can provide in-house "entry" level work experiences in preparation for youths' community based experiences.

Tiered employment programs include components that provide a work experience youths can use to progress to the next level. Such programs can begin at the pre-adolescent stage. AILP staff working cooperatively to prepare youths before they reach an employable age should include the following basic components:

- Assessment and interest inventories – connecting interests to career opportunities
- Shadowing and volunteer opportunities – concrete exposure to available employment and career options
- Time-limited paid job experience – has a beginning and an end; optimal chance of success
- Extended job experience – balancing employment- with education
- Job experience based on career choice
- Recognition (*youth and employers*) and evaluation at each stage of programming

Policy Promoting Full AILP Employment

Agencies need to consider development of a policy that promotes 100 percent employment among AILP participants. Actual work experiences and related activities can become the cornerstone of an AILP. Through

employment, youths and staff will see an incentive for participation and gain involvement in hands-on (*experiential*) learning. An example is DIAL-SELF, in Greenfield, Massachusetts, which developed an employment-vocational mentor-volunteer program to provide one-on-one training for youths.

Establish a Job Shadowing Program

Job shadowing refers to spending some time (*a day, part of a day, or longer*) accompanying someone in the work place, to observe and learn about a particular job or occupation. A job-shadowing experience usually expects that,

- The youth shadowing does not interfere with the person being observed, and
- The youth must conduct his/herself in a manner appropriate for the work place.

This type of job training provides a concrete experience for youths as they explore careers and link their educational goals to career and lifestyle choices. Consider contacting the local Chamber of Commerce for job shadowing events, such as the National Job Shadowing Day (*February -in conjunction with Groundhog's Day*). If events are not coordinated locally, enlist the support of foster parents, mentors, youths, and other community resources to coordinate a day for all agency youths to experience job shadowing. For more information on *Job Shadowing*, consult ***Putting It Together*** in *Appendix K – Resources*.

Career Assessments

For a variety of reasons, AILP youths may have never fully explored potential careers. The *Career Exploration Inventory (CEI)* (See *Appendix K-Resources*) can help a young person consider career, education, and leisure choices based on their interests.

The assessment is developmentally appropriate since it is self-scored and provides optimal control by youth. Youths receive immediate information and when completed have an instrument that is available to them for future reference.

The CEI provides youths with career options in their interest areas and it continues to be a resource for additional career, training, and recreational ideas.

Coordinate a Community Based Real World Youth Event

Concrete experiences such as a Real World Event provides youths with powerful opportunities to determine whether planned career and educational choices match their lifestyle preferences.

Coordinating a one-day simulated “*Real World*” assists youths in learning about personal fiscal decisions. Participating youths frequently learn that their lifestyle choices exceed the financial return of their chosen career.

Youths become ready (*and motivated*) as a result for continued career, educational, and job training to maximize their financial gain. For more information on how to coordinate a similar event, contact Independent Living Resources, Inc., 1-800-820-0001.

Job Resource Materials

Many employment services provide materials free of charge, or at a nominal cost. However, those materials may not always be appropriate for the population you serve. For suggestions on materials meeting the developmental and interest levels of AILP participants, consult “*Employment Resources*” at www.ilrinc.com or *Appendix K – Resources*, and activities available in the *Putting It Together* curriculum.

Section 15:



Housing

As discussed in *Section 2*, many programs in the United States have developed Phase I (*informal learning*) and Phase II (*formal learning*) programs for youths in out-of-home care. These approaches vary from basic skill offerings to detailed programming for youths and the adults involved with them. As adolescent independent living programming progresses nationally, the next area of development should be alternative or supervised living arrangement options, which have been described in Phase III activities.

Phase III programming is characterized by the creation of a “*safety net*” that helps support youths as they try out “*living on their own.*” Cluster apartments and scattered-site apartment living are two of the most common models. As the AILP develops in an agency, plans need to be made for establishing a multiplicity of “*safety net*” housing alternatives for youths who complete the program.

Housing availability and affordability are critical issues in most locations. Our work in most states reveals that the “*jobs*” (see *Section 14*) component of the program will be much less difficult to develop than will housing. It is therefore especially important that this aspect of programming be part of the blueprint for present and future actions.

Living Arrangement Options

“*A Continuum of Living Arrangement Options,*” presented earlier in this text,

needs to be considered for every AILP. The objective is to create a pool of available options for youths who are ready to adopt an independent living lifestyle. By looking at this array of options, rather than a single choice, the program will create more opportunities for youths and staffs to consider. Some examples of existing options that might be considered for replication are:

- **Cluster apartments:** An apartment building usually owned or rented by an agency that houses youths in separate apartments, sometimes on the same floor, and is supervised by live-in or over-night staff.
- **Live-in roommates:** A youth shares an apartment with an adult or college student who serves as a mentor or role model. Typically, the apartment is rented or owned by either the adult or agency.
- **Host homes:** A youth rents a room in a family or single adult’s home. The youth shares basic facilities and agrees to basic rules while being largely responsible for his or her life. (*The youth is a renter and the adult a landlord.*)
- **Boarding homes:** A facility that provides individual rooms for youths or young adults, often with shared facilities and minimal supervisory expectations. (*YMCAs and YWCAs are examples.*)
- **Shared houses:** This is a minimally supervised house shared by several young adults who take full

responsibility for the house and their personal affairs.

- **Semi-supervised apartments** (scattered-site): An agency or youth rents a privately owned apartment. The young person functions independently with financial support, training, or some monitoring by the agency. Apartments are usually not concentrated but are spread throughout a geographic area.
- **Subsidy programs:** The youth receives a monthly stipend that is used towards a self-chosen living arrangements, food, and personal supplies, while following certain agency guidelines. The subsidy usually diminishes over time, to a point where the youth becomes fully responsible for the financial aspects of maintaining the apartment.

A Continuum of Options

The ideal situation is for youths to be able to move up and down the housing continuum (see Section 2, Figure 2-4). An example of this movement is when a youth is placed in an apartment alone and has difficulty adjusting. Rather than terminate him or her from the program, the youth is moved back on the continuum. That does not necessarily mean a move back to foster family care or to the group home. It simply means back to a somewhat more structured situation, such as a boarding home.

The youth lives in the more structured environment for a period of time, gains additional confidence and training, and then progresses along the continuum to one of the more independent alternatives. This progression might be another try at solo apartment living, sharing an apartment

with a roommate, or sharing an apartment with an adult.

The development of housing options for an AILP needs to include as many alternatives as possible. New Horizons in Cincinnati (*OH*) employs housing options as part of the AILP program. Youths can come from foster family care, group settings, or some other residential situation, encounter enough difficulties in a scattered site apartment that they cannot stay there and yet still remain in the program.

New Horizons looks first to moving youths back to more shared options and then assists them in developing the necessary skills and confidence to try independence again. One way that New Horizons helped to ensure that options were available was to rent two rooms in a local boarding situation year-round. The rooms are not always used, but the landlord is assured of having both rooms rented and even agreed to make a third room available for free as part of the agreement.

As the field of adolescent independent living learns more about the development of housing options there will be more opportunities to create a true continuum of situations within Phase III (*Supervised Living Arrangements*). This will help an AILP to have many different situations available with safety nets attached. Youths should not be terminated from the program solely because they can't make it in the one type of living situation the AILP has available.

Subsidy Programs

Subsidy programs might be the most advantageous option for many agencies. With the present housing conditions nationally, providing youths with some type of financial subsidy might be the

only realistic approach for most youths who are moving to independence—even those who are employed. A variety of alternatives are still needed, however, but the subsidy is useful in “buying” time while alternatives are considered. This plan offers a bridge until youths or other state programs are able to develop alternatives for dealing with the serious shortage of affordable housing.

Subsidy policies allow direct cash payments to youths to maintain their own residences while still in the care and custody of the department/agency. Policy guidelines—covering eligibility criteria, subsidy amount, and agency and youth roles—range from very specific to very liberal. Changes in state laws and licensing procedures often are needed to accommodate a subsidy program.

Nationally, subsidy programs differ in the number of youths receiving payments and the reasons for providing payments. Most states have had some type of subsidy policy on their books for many years. This policy has been used most often for those youths who had “failed” all other placements and thus were relegated to their “own” apartments or living situation. Most of these efforts failed, primarily because the youths did not receive the Phase I and Phase II learning experiences of the model described in *Section 2*. Without the preparation and training required to develop self-sufficiency skills, transitioning youths often became a part of other systems—such as the adult corrections system or the homeless population.

Federal initiatives, begun as early as 1984 in Arizona, illustrate that subsidies can be a truly helpful method for assisting youths (*to make the transition from out-of-home care to the community*). Typically, payments diminish over time, and correlated to youths’ earnings, or are

used creatively as “add-ons” for food, clothing, furnishings, and utilities. All are intended to buy additional time and supervision for youths before they truly are in Phase IV (*self-sufficiency*).

Housing and the Chafee Program

The Act makes it clear that a state may choose to use up to 30 percent of its Chafee Independence Program funds for room and board for young people ages 18 to 21 who were in foster care on their 18th birthday.

Sec. 477. John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

(a) Purpose. –

(5) To provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participant’s recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

(b) Applications

(3) Certifications. –

(B) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that not more than 30 percent of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment under subsection (c) for a fiscal year will be expended for room and board for children who have left foster care because they had attained 18 years of age and who have not attained 21 years of age. (Underlining added for emphasis)

(C) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that none of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment under subsection (c) will be expended for room or board for any child who has not attained 18 years of age.

Under the Chafee Act for the first time, states could use up to 30 percent of their federal independent living dollars to provide room or board services to young people over the age of 18. Room

or board service may be provided, and were (at that time) being provided by many states, to young people older than age 18 through state funded programs. Chafee Independence Program funds must be used to supplement, not to supplant programs that existed at that time.

Who Is Eligible?

Eligible youth are those “who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age and who have not attained 21 years of age.” This includes young people who have aged out at age 18 or older, up to age 21, who move directly from foster care into independent living programs, as well as those who age out, lose touch with the agency, and then return for assistance before reaching the age of 21. Further, this includes young people who leave care voluntarily at age 18, but find themselves in need of supportive services after leaving, but prior to turning age 21. The law was very clear that none of the funds states receive under the Chafee Act might be used for room or board services for young people under the age of 18. (NFCAP, 2000)

The National Foster Care Awareness Project (NFCAP) – 2000

As states have begun to plan for and implement their newly designed independent living programs under the Chafee Independence Program, providing housing to these young people is, in many cases, least developed and most challenging. While many states are pleased that the new law allows them to spend some of these funds on room or board services for young people over the age of 18, they clearly recognize that 30% of an already limited amount of money will not go very far towards

providing a comprehensive package of housing services.

States are grappling with the question of whether to provide some very limited housing assistance to a larger number of young people (i.e., money for security deposits on apartments), or a more complete package of room and board services to a much smaller number of youth. Many states are just starting to create priorities and criteria for use of these dollars.

A second challenge some states have noted is how to maintain open cases on young people over the age of 18 for the purpose of providing housing and other assistance. For states which closed foster care cases on the young person’s 18th birthday, holding these cases open longer appears to create administrative and caseload burdens in a system that is already weighted down to begin with. Other states have raised questions about whether or not they can (or need to) require young people to remain in foster care, under supervision, in order to access the housing dollars and supports that the Chafee Independence Program offers.

Several states, including North Carolina, Arizona, Louisiana and New Mexico, have responded to this second challenge by maintaining voluntary open cases for young people over the age of 18. Other states, such as Maryland and Connecticut, provided housing and other supportive services to young adults through voluntary agreements prior to the passage of the Act. Louisiana’s program, known as the “Young Adult Program,” allows youth between the ages of 18 and 21 to receive a variety of services, including housing supports, which will enable them to complete high school, go to college or enter vocational training. The housing provided to youth in this program can be located in a foster home, a college dorm or an apartment (both supervised and non-supervised).

Arizona’s Voluntary Foster Care Agreement for Young Adults allows

young people to continue to receive all traditional foster care and case management services, including room or board, until age 21. Housing and other assistance are also available through the Transitional Independent Living Program to youth who do not wish to remain in care. This program is a limited service with approximately \$1,800 available per young person, and is often used to meet the initial costs of securing housing.

Other states are considering contracting out case management services that will be provided to former foster youth over the age of 18. Missouri, for instance, is creating contracts with other agencies to serve as fiscal agents to administer funds related to services for youth who left foster care at age 18. Missouri is clear that these services are intended to be short term and flexible, with a goal of helping young people stabilize themselves and move towards self-sufficiency. Thus, the funds may be used for housing 'start-up costs,' but not long-term housing assistance."

A number of states have recently enacted tuition waivers or other post-secondary support programs for young people leaving foster care in order to obtain college educations. Kansas and Arkansas are two of the states that will use some of the Chafee Independence Program housing dollars to provide the room or board a young person needs while furthering their education at the college level. Kansas is currently developing plans to expand housing support to include non-college-bound youth.

How can states maximize the housing dollars allowable under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program?

While many states are exploring whether to provide limited housing assistance to many youth or more intensive housing assistance to a fewer number of youth, many other states have recognized that the most effective strategy to maximize the housing options for young people is to use both existing dollars and the new focus on housing promoted by the

Chafee Independence Program to leverage other sources of funding for housing, including state dollars.

As has been noted, some states are using Chafee Independence Program dollars to serve college-bound young people. Youth with special educational needs should have a transition IEP (Individual Education Plan) developed through the school. Living independently, including the ability to locate, obtain and maintain appropriate housing, is one of the transition services listed in IDEA for inclusion in IEP planning and implementation. Education staffs in some communities have developed strategies to assist young people in exploring their housing options, and teachers have even accompanied youth as they investigate these options in their community.

Independent living program providers can coordinate efforts with schools to assist these young people in obtaining appropriate housing. The school can provide many of the case management and support services, freeing Chafee dollars to go directly toward actual housing costs.

There are a number of programs available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that can include young people leaving foster care. Again, the Chafee Independence Program dollars can be supplemented by funds and services from other programs to extend their reach.

Three examples are:

- The Supportive Housing Program (SHP), one of the Stewart B. McKinney Act programs, is designed to move homeless persons from streets and shelters to permanent housing and maximum self-sufficiency. A person must be homeless in order to receive assistance under SHP. While young people in foster care are not typically eligible for SHP dollars, youth in foster care may receive needed supportive services which supplement, but do not substitute for, the state's assistance, and youth who have left foster care are more likely to be eligible.

- The Family Unification Program (FUP) is a collaborative program between local housing authorities and child welfare agencies that links vulnerable families with HUD-funded Section 8 housing subsidies and supportive services so that they can stay together and become self-sufficient families. Recently enacted legislation enable youth aging out of foster care to receive time-limited Section 8 vouchers (up to 18 months) under FUP. With the FUP vouchers for young people, child welfare and housing agencies in local communities will need to collaborate to design programs and services for former foster youth.

- Special housing grants funded under Section 202 are targeted to provide housing for persons with disabilities-which includes many young people leaving foster care, and special programs for supported housing for the elderly. In Los Angeles, an innovative program has utilized Section 202 dollars, in combination with other funding, to provide intergenerational housing for elderly and youth together.

By including local, county and state housing and homeless experts in planning and implementation of the Chafee Independence Program, a state can identify other ways to combine these funds with other funds or programs to maximize housing options for youth. For example, in New York City, when housing and youth workers recognized that a large number of studio and efficiency rental units were remaining vacant (unable to meet the needs of homeless or low-income families), they created a program allowing youth leaving foster care to achieve a priority status for these particular apartments.

Who are other potential housing partners at the state and community levels?

Community development organizations are important partners, as are local initiatives that combine public and private, and often faith-based, efforts to combat homelessness. In addition, some communities have voluntary programs such as Home Share or Home

Companions, which match homeowners or renters who want to share their living space. Some communities have cooperative living associations, where members each have their own private space but share common spaces for dining, laundry and recreational facilities. There may be opportunities for young people leaving foster care to participate in these programs. NFCAP, Frequently Asked Questions, 2000

Special Note

One of the basic tenets of a housing program is, whenever possible, to establish youths in settings that provide them with the option of remaining in the unit after transition from the care and custody of the agency. Whatever the method of housing chosen, youths need to have the option of “staying” at that site when finally on their own.

For example, if a youth has been placed by him or herself in a scattered-site apartment (*an apartment with no live-in supervision*), the agency should be willing to “give up” that unit to the youth, even though it might have performed the search for and signed the initial apartment lease. The youth should not have to search for another apartment if he or she does not want to.

New Horizons places youths in scattered-site apartments throughout the greater Cincinnati area. The agency finds the apartment, initially signs the lease, and assists youths in furnishing, stocking of foodstuffs, and acquiring the needed utilities. As youths complete the life skills training component of the program, the apartment leases and utilities are transferred to them. In other words, upon completion of the program youths have the option of “staying” in the completely stocked and furnished apartment, taking ownership of all the items inside, or moving to wherever they choose. Youths are not forced to move elsewhere.

No matter what methods of providing housing are chosen, agencies should strive to create units where youths, at their choosing, can stay post-program. Clearly, some of the methods for providing housing are limited in this respect by their basic nature. For example, cluster-housing situations, where live-in supervision is provided, limits the possibility of youths staying in their units post-program.

This is extremely important to the planning process. If your housing choice limits the ability of the youths to stay in one place post-program, alternatives must be considered. This does not mean that you cannot provide cluster housing or an apartment on campus. What it does mean is that the planning process is not complete. Agencies must plan, at some level, for youths after they leave the program's choice of housing, particularly if they cannot stay in the unit or situation they have become accustomed to living within.

Looking at the housing issue from a planning perspective it is recommended that a program try to provide for different options along this "new" continuum of care. For instance, if you are using a cluster apartment model, plans need to be made to assist youths in obtaining their own apartments and providing after-discharge services. Youths can then move from the program housing to their own place with some early supportive planning and follow-up from staff after transition.

Acquiring Housing For a Program

One question not covered yet in the realm of options is how agencies should go about acquiring housing for their programs. Should an agency buy, build, or rent? Many agencies struggle with these questions as they develop their

basic program. Whether your program is trying to develop a Phase III housing component or you are the agency's housing provider, how units are obtained is a very serious question. Some agencies have built new buildings, refurbished older units, guaranteed landlords that a specific number of units will be rented, or have used the rental market at-large in their own geographic area.

Each agency has to look at its resources, community support, and projected longevity before such decisions could be made. We presently hold a bias towards the use of scattered-site apartment units. These are usually apartments that are rented in a general area as they are needed and become available, and which stay in the "affordability" range of the agency and its clients. Scattered-site programs can also have a more liquid budget. If the program needs more apartments it seeks them. If the program census drops they seek fewer units or drop existing apartments. If the program is set up correctly, the elasticity of a scattered-site model provides considerable budget flexibility.

The program's responsibility to assist clients in getting their "own" housing has a significant impact on decisions about how to start the Phase III component. Obviously, if the route chosen is to help a young adult stay in his or her own apartment both during and after a program, the need for scattered sites is more apparent.

Nonetheless, the agency may decide that it is in its best interests to own a building, and this raises important issues for program planners. How might this be done? Among the possibilities: a capital fund drive might be undertaken; a foundation might be approached for the

needed funds; or a low-cost housing unit might be acquired through a governmental office to be rehabilitated.

There are examples of AILPs that have taken each of the above routes to developing housing options, and it is good to remember that what works for one program may not work for another.

The field of AILP is not only starting to emerge on its own but also is becoming known to other agencies that can work cooperatively to the advantage of young adults. Whatever the housing route chosen by an agency, ears should always remain open to the latest possibilities for expanding those efforts. These openings might occur in both the private and public sectors.

Supervision

An often-observed mistake made in AILP Phase III concerns the supervision of youths in their living units. If a housing situation is set up where a young person is “on his own” in a unit, the agency responsibility for supervision has not been relieved, particularly in the beginning. In fact, the opposite should occur. Supervision should be high in the initial placement period, which could be a few weeks to a month or longer.

As the young person adjusts, supervision can diminish. All too often, staff remove themselves completely from daily contact—early on—and the youth flounders. Supervision should be reduced over a more judicious period of time. Contacts can diminish from physical to verbal (*via telephone*), or to agency office visits. The young person will give clear messages about level of need by their actions and in the beginning, staff must “see” to understand the need.

Transitional Group Homes

One of the main residential child-caring structures is the group home. These homes usually house between 5 and 15 youths, with an average setting accommodating about 8. Traditionally, the group home has been community based. Youths live in the community, attend local schools, and are a part of a neighborhood. The Transitional Home is quite similar to the traditional group home. The differences lie in the expectations and control of youths and staffs, and the extent of the program’s involvement with youths on their discharge planning.

A transitional group home focuses on providing life skills training and youth management of the daily household functions, including cooking, shopping, and maintenance. The expectation is that all youths are employed part-time and attend school. The program does extensive preparation and planning for the youths’ transition to a living arrangement away from the group home. The program assists in the acquisition and furnishing of housing and initial supervision as the youth transitions. Preparation before discharge, management of the transition, and follow-up after discharge occurs are program services. The extent of each of these services is up to individual programs, but the ideal is for a transitional group home to be as comprehensive an AILP as possible.

Transitional group homes that work are usually facilities that have experience and a good understanding of the basics of group home operations. They then move towards turning more responsibility over to youths in the program. With the cooperation of the referring agencies and the agency with primary care and custody (*legally*), the

preparation, management, and follow-up of youths in this setting provides a distinct advantage over traditional group homes.

Staffs in transitional group homes do little cooking, shopping, or cleaning. They supervise and teach skills. They provide planning services, advocate for employment opportunities and vocational training, develop housing options and community resources, manage youths' transitions, and provide follow-up services, all of which are done while trying to minimize the need for "crowd control."

Recommendations

To plan a comprehensive housing component the following are recommended.

Include Housing Component in AILP

Agencies should include development of a housing component in the three-year planning process for adolescent independent living programming. This would be planning for Phases III and IV.

Many Housing Options

Agencies should develop as many different types of living situations as possible for youths to transition to in

Phase III. This creates a larger pool of housing choices for program participants. In addition, some of these options can be available for youths to move into upon discharge (*Phase IV*).

Develop Subsidy Policy

Serious consideration should be given to the development of a subsidy policy tied to the independent living program and Phase III. The subsidy would have two purposes: to assist youths in setting up a living situation, and to create a more solid base for transition into Phase IV.

Encourage Transitional Homes

Group home providers need to be encouraged to move their programs more into being "transitional" living situations. Transitional programs are group facilities whose independent living program includes moving youths out into their own living situations and providing support or follow-up services. The program has a strong employment component and assigns household responsibilities to youths, as well as providing standard skills training.



Section 16:

Follow-up After Transition Post-Discharge Services

Trudy Festinger, in her book *No One Ever Asked Us...A Postscript to Foster Care*, found in over 250 interviews with young men and women who were discharged from out-of-home care to their own responsibility that they rarely were asked about how they fared as adults and how they viewed their experiences in foster care. She recommended that agencies establish information centers, similar to alumni offices, to gather this information.

"These [centers] could provide foster care graduates with a place to turn for information and referral during the first several years following final discharge. Such offices could even provide graduates with brochures containing information on community facilities that address various needs. The nature of requests flowing into such offices could, in turn, be used as a source for ideas about how better to prepare youths for independent living."

A major goal of an independent living preparation program is to assist youths in exiting out-of-home care with a well-developed, predominantly community-based support system. Ideally, this community-based or personal support system (*PSS*), takes over when agency support ends and youths enter adult living (*Phase IV*).

Accomplishing this goal is not enough. We have, throughout this text, recommended numerous other actions that need to be undertaken to support successful transitions. One final area requires attention. The *post-discharge* aspects of an independent living

program are of substantial importance. What happens to youths after they leave care? To whom do youths turn when the going gets rough or they encounter crises that tax their limits financially, socially, and emotionally? Can youths who have left the system give something back to the agency and their peers? Can programs expend funds post-discharge to assist youths?

All the above and many more questions need to be considered when completing the "comprehensive" planning we have addressed from the beginning of this text. When a solid program is developed, much of what is needed by youths to be self-sufficient will fall into place. This includes the possibility of some agency connection post-discharge.

What forms can this aspect of a program take? One group home we have worked with has developed an agreement with the State Department of Children's Services whereby the Department pays the group home two months of per diem when youths are discharged to their own care. This payment is used to insure 12 months of follow-up services for each youth by group home staff.

Another facility has a staff person assigned to go and see youths each month post-discharge, for up to 12 months. This staff person's role is to check in with each youth, offer advice, brainstorm solutions to problems, and generally to be a supportive adult for the young person. They also gather

information about the facility and its programs-post-discharge.

In an attempt to look at outcomes of youths who were served by the foster care system, Richard Barth, DSW, then at the University of California at Berkeley, examined the experiences of 55 youths. All 55 had left foster care during the permanency planning era-post-1980. Barth found:

“In sum, this sample of former foster youths is often struggling with ill health, poor educations, severe housing problems, substance abuse, and criminal behavior. On the average, youths are leaving foster care while still 17 years old, even before their eligibility ends, and they must leave care. This suggests the need to begin independent living preparation early and to identify ways to better provide adolescents with services that encourage them to remain in care longer and to their greater benefit. Respondents often complained that they were allowed to just drift out of foster care without any services, guidance, pep talks, or goodbyes” (On Their Own: The Experiences of Youth After Foster Care).

All of these attempts to follow-up with youths are important. Part of the planning process for each AILP needs to address the post-discharge aspects. How can programs continue to assist youths? What have youths got to say about the AILP and the out-of-home-care system, and can planners learn anything from that contact that will allow them to create better support programs.

Chafee Independence Program Accountability and Reporting

There are provisions in the Act that hold states accountable for the services they provide under the program. The Act requires states to collect data and track:

- The number and characteristics of young people receiving services under the Chafee Program
- The type and quantity of services
- State performance on outcome measures developed by HHS minimally in the areas:
 - Educational attainment
 - Employment
 - Avoidance of dependency
 - Homelessness
 - Non-marital childbirth
 - Incarceration
 - High-risk behaviors

In considering follow-up and post-discharge services agencies should seriously consider the areas mentioned in the Act. The information gathered, even at the local level, can be very beneficial in evaluating an agency's AILP efforts.

Finally, the program should ask referring agencies and social workers their opinions about the AILP.

- Did the program serve youths in a manner that was expected?
- What would the referring agency or workers like to have done differently?
- Would the referring agency or workers like to do more to prepare referrals for the AILP?

Appendix H contains examples of follow-up evaluations/surveys for both youths and referring agency social workers. These are just some of the questions that youths and referral sources can be asked post-discharge:

- How well do you feel the AILP helped to prepare you for living on your own?

- What did you learn while in the program?
- What do you feel you did not learn while in the program?
- Do you feel that the staff gave you enough supervision and support?
- What changes would you make in the program?
- Where did you go when you left the program?
- Is there anything that the AILP staff could have done differently that might have increased the progress of this youth?
- Was the AILP staff timely in making referrals for youth, did they assist youth in getting housing, employment, etc.?

All of the above can be invaluable in assessing program results and the need for possible changes. In addition, they keep the program connected with youths and referral sources, all of which could become stronger program advocates and resources in the future.

If planned for, follow-up after discharge will allow an agency to:

- Find out if youths received needed services, during the AILP, that support them as they live independently.
- Gather information from participants on the utility of existing programming and resources, and any expansion of programming they now perceive as necessary.
- Provide a “lifeline” to youths consisting of emergency services, resources, or contacts.
- Use former participants as resources for their peers and the independent living program.

Recommendations

Follow-up Survey

It is recommended that agencies develop a follow-up survey for youths who have exited out-of-home care. The survey should inquire about the utility of services they received during the AILP, what services they presently need, and other pertinent follow-up questions.

The survey needs to be sent to youths at three, six, and nine-month intervals post-discharge. To ensure a greater degree of response than generally is seen in this type of effort, a \$15-\$25 stipend might need to be paid to youths to complete the survey(s).

Involve Former Out-of-Home-Care Youths

It is recommended that the agency seek former out-of-home-care youths for membership on the youth advisory board as recommended in *Section 6*. Many programs have looked to young adults who were former out-of-home-care residents to assist them in providing leadership and guidance to younger youths and the overall AILP. One such area is the formation and ongoing membership on program and youth advisory boards. The city of Philadelphia’s independent living program, for example, has had a youth advisory board almost from the outset. The program consistently attempted to keep approximately half of the board open to former out-of-home care residents who were out on their own.

Identify Out-of-Home-Care Alumni

It is recommended that the agency identify former out-of-home-care youths as “alumni.” An alumni brochure should be developed requesting former program youths’ continued contact and involvement in present programming.

These individuals may be able to serve as teachers, mentors or volunteers, group facilitators, and in other resource roles. There is a **National Association of Former Foster Children** that might assist in development of a local Chapter or in locating their members who reside in an agency's geographic area.

Casey Foundation has developed a Website section for former foster youth that could be useful in providing ideas on involving former foster youths in AILP work.

Identify Other Community Resource Persons

The agency should employ outreach methods to enlist the assistance of other community persons who spent time in out-of-home care, not necessarily in the agency's care and custody, who might want to become program resources. Local news media and other public service outlets are avenues to explore to get the information out to the community at-large. Where military installations

exist, Family Resource Centers can be useful in identifying prospects in the different service branches.

Special Note

These recommendations require a strong screening component so that persons chosen would be both appropriate and positive role models for youth in an AILP.

For public agencies, the post-discharge program component has become more feasible with the extensions of time that agencies are permitted to stay involved with youths and to expend federal funds (presently up to age 21). For private agencies, many of which have been following their graduates for years, this may need only some extra planning or refinement. However, how the post-discharge services and contacts are accomplished is almost irrelevant. The main concern is that post-discharge follow-up be undertaken in a planned manner and be considered a part of the comprehensive approach to delivery of AILP services.



Section 17:



Mini- or Seed Grants

In many systems, the possibility exists for allowing individual programs or divisions to “try out” AILP concepts through the use of mini- or “seed” grants. These efforts can produce significant interest and enthusiasm for AILP.

There are many ways to approach the development of mini- or seed grants. It is appropriate to do so after some awareness and interest have been generated in the organization for independent living programming. Distribution would be based upon submission of proposals in response to a simple *Request For Proposal (RFP)* from a program development office (*or similar administrative structure*).

The Application Phase

In developing the RFP, the objective is to stimulate individuals’ good ideas. The basic criteria are:

- That the proposed activity is within the scope of the established objectives of the program (*agency overall, child welfare, or AILP*) or stated purposes.
- That the action to be taken is valuable because it will solve an immediate problem or elicit fundamental information, or because it will extend existing knowledge and assist in the eventual solution of a problem concerning adolescents.

The length of the proposal can be as little as two or three paragraphs or as long as a few pages. Most government agencies have standard forms and private agencies can come up with a basic form. You do *not* want to

overwhelm staff with the application process.

Try to minimize the requirements. Make the grants “small” seed grants that will give staff opportunities to try out new ideas with youths, engaging young people in AILP type activities, and giving both groups time to have some fun. Grants could be as little as \$100, or as much as \$1,000-\$2,000. All grants will motivate and give staff a chance to become involved with the AILP.

Recommendation

Solicit Mini- or Seed Grants With RFPs

Agencies should develop mini or seed-grants by sending out an RFP with suggestions. For example:

- Establishing a foster teen club.
- Plan a teen conference to bring youths together for a day to discuss independent living, jobs, housing, etc.
- Developing a basic core curriculum for a skills class, or offering several skills sessions for youths.

Materials and Cash Grants

Programs should consider RFPs for materials when cash grants are not feasible. Mini-grants could be given to staffs, branches, a group home, etc., to purchase independent living materials or create a resource library for staff. Examples include the purchase of an array of life skills resources to meet the varying degrees of development and skill attainment levels of AILP participants.

Section 18:



Special Groups

Within all child-serving agencies there are special groups of youths who often are overlooked or underserved because of their particular needs. Teen parents (*both fathers and mothers*), the physically and emotionally handicapped, and corrections and treatment center youths often are not served by initial independent living programming efforts.

These groups need to be studied by agencies to determine the number that exist in their out-of-home-care systems. As an example, in 1991, ILR requested that such a survey be conducted to determine the number of teen parents in one small, sparsely populated western state's foster care system. (*These data had not previously been gathered.*)

Preliminary findings, of this very basic canvass, showed that there were approximately 23 teen mothers and 12 pregnant teens in the foster care system. In one county alone, there were 19 mothers and 9 pregnant teens. In all probability, if a "true" study of the population had been undertaken, it is likely that the total number of pregnant teens and teen parents would actually have been much higher. Even these preliminary figures lent substance to the need for considering specific independent living programming for teen mothers—at the very least in one county.

In Oregon, in the early nineties, a pilot project was developed between the State of Oregon's Children's Services Division (CSD) and the Vocational Rehabilitation Division (VRD) to help

older foster children with disabilities achieve greater self-support and independence.

"A cooperative interagency agreement was established to determine if VRD services could benefit those older handicapped youths (i.e., ages 16 through 21) who were living in CSD foster homes. The idea was to help create a successful bridge from foster care dependency to adult living for these handicapped teenagers.

These youths were severely disabled, by single or multiple handicaps such as mental retardation, hearing and visual impairments, serious emotional disturbances, severe physical disabilities, substance abuse, cerebral palsy, seizure disorders, and other varied handicaps.

As a result of the project's success, VRD now has funding in its base budget to service 50 CSD handicapped youths per year. The project also encouraged close linkage between VRD and CSD professional staff while jointly providing comprehensive services to mutual clients.

By expanding the capacity of VRD to serve handicapped CSD clients on a statewide basis and utilizing the resources and expertise of both agencies simultaneously, older handicapped teenagers in foster care can be better prepared to make their eventual transition to more independent adult living and employment." Daily Living, Vol. IV No. 4

As demonstrated in these two examples, there are special interest groups of adolescents in sufficient numbers to warrant consideration for programming. Agencies need to assess the number of youths who fall into "special group" categories and then determine if an AILP component for

these individuals is necessary. If it is necessary, then a part of the planning process needs to be devoted to independent living preparation for these special groups.

Chafee Independent Living Program: *Young People With Special Needs*

All provisions of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 are equally applicable to young people with disabilities. States are specifically required in their state plans to address the inclusion of youth with special needs.

Sec. 477. John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

- (b) Applications. –
- (2) State Plan. –
- (C) Ensure that programs serve children of various ages and at various stages of achieving independence.
- (3) Certifications. –
- (F) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that the state will make every effort to coordinate the State programs receiving funds from an allotment made to the State under subsection (c) with other State and Federal programs for youth (especially transitional living youth projects funded under Part B of Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974), abstinence education programs, local housing programs, programs for disabled youth (especially sheltered workshops), and school-to-work programs offered by high schools or local workforce agencies.

The following is drawn from the:

National Foster Care Awareness Project's Frequently Asked Questions and Questions II

Who are young people with special needs?

The Maternal and Child Health Bureau's Division of Services for Children with

Special Health Needs, defines children with special needs as follows:

Children with special health care needs include all children who have, or are at an increased risk for chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required generally.

Why is it important to pay special attention to foster youth with special needs?

While transitioning youth with special needs face the same challenges as their non-special-needs peers, they are at a higher-risk for several of the least desirable outcomes such as poverty, early or unintended pregnancy and becoming a victim of sexual assaults. Many of the young people with special needs in foster care may have "invisible special needs" such as learning disabilities or emotional and behavioral challenges. These many have gone undiagnosed and/or untreated and therefore further increase the risk these particular teens have for problematic outcomes.

The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLT), a 1987 and 1990 survey of 8000 youth with disabilities in 300 school districts found, for example, that 50% of young women with learning disabilities became pregnant within five years of leaving high school – and many of these young women had dropped out of school.

Teenagers with special needs were found, in the same study, to be 68% more likely to live in poverty than their non-disabled peers, and experience a greater degree of social isolation. They often are unable to pick up on the often-subtle cues needed to learn social and independent living skills. Many young people leaving foster care read at below grade level, and may also have auditory processing problems, as well as difficulty attending to information. This makes it more challenging for them to benefit from materials and instructional programs designed for typically developing adolescents or young adults.

A startling finding from the NLT reveals that young people with disabilities are four times more likely to be sexually abused than their non-disabled peers. Sexual education and pregnancy prevention strategies that are designed to meet needs of young people with special needs are nearly non-existent.

Schools and service providers are not well equipped to help young people with special needs.

Lack of training, knowledge and sensitivity to transition issues of youth with special needs on the part of service providers across the spectrum were cited as the most significant barriers to successful transition of youth with special needs in a Spring 2000 survey of providers, parents and youth in 44 states conducted by the Institute for Child Health Policy. California's School-To-Work Interagency Transition Partnership finds that very few school-to-work programs nationwide understand or focus on the unique issues faced by young people with special needs, and some school-to-work programs are not even offered to youth in special education programs. Service providers are often unable to translate factual information about a young person's disability into terms that will assist with other planning efforts.

There is a failure to focus on youths overall needs.

Young people with special needs often report that they are not treated in a holistic manner. They only receive treatment and follow-up care based on their diagnosed condition. Concerns they have about continuing education, employment, housing or recreation are typically overlooked. Young people with special health care needs often find that their mental health needs are not addressed; yet these youth are at higher-than-average risk of depression and other mental health challenges.

There is a lack of family networks and service coordination.

The Center from Promoting Employment in Boston has identified the importance of a family network in the creation and maintenance of job opportunities for youth with disabilities. Yet, young people leaving the foster care system are less likely to have such a network available to them. Additional challenges faced by young people with special needs during the transition process include lack of coordination among multiple agencies that serve them. A young person in Maine's Adolescent Transition Partnership described it well, "Sometimes it seems like people from the different agencies do not know what each other does very well – I think that makes it hard for them to help me get what I need." Expectations for these youths are often lowered, and challenges faced by all young people, such as transportation, are even more complex when

special needs are involved.

How can independent living programs ensure inclusion of and appropriate services to young people with special needs?

Services must be developed and provided in ways that address the multiple needs and learning styles of participants. Suggestions include:

- Information and materials should be tailored to needs of the audience. Young people with cognitive disabilities, for example, will need materials that are very concrete. Further, many young people have college potential and neither expectations nor materials should be too low to meet their needs.
- Repeated opportunities to practice new skills should be available. Young people with learning disabilities or attention deficits may need information in a multi-modal format. They may be challenged by impulsivity and poor organizational skills, making it difficult for them to process and utilize information presented in traditional ways.
- Use a holistic approach to assess and meet all of the needs of young people. Do not focus solely on a disability or assume that a person with a disability cannot benefit from independent living services.
- Do not neglect the mental health needs of youth in transition. Independent living services should include strategies to assist youth in obtaining therapy and other mental health services as needed.

The Chafee Independence Program provides an important vehicle for child welfare agencies serving youth in transition to reach out to and coordinate efforts with other agencies and organizations that serve young people with disabilities. These can include special educators, health and mental health care providers, substance abuse treatment facilities, children's hospitals and vocational rehabilitation services.

For some young people with special needs, the challenge is to provide ongoing support related to their disabilities as well as continued assistance towards achieving self-sufficiency. It may mean making sure they receive SSI or other benefits for which they may be entitled. It may mean connecting them to services through the adult Mental Retardation or Developmental Disabilities agencies. The most effective support will be individualized for each young person.

Who are potential partners in the community and what resources exist?

As states plan for the transition issues of young people with special needs leaving foster care, consider national, state and community level partners for information and resources.

On October 25, 2000, President Clinton signed an Executive Order amending the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities to include a focus on youth. Among the goals are to “improve employment outcomes by addressing, among other things...transition...and independent living issues affecting young people with disabilities.” The Executive Order created a nationally representative Youth Advisory Council to the Presidential Task Force.

▪ The Healthy and Ready to Work (HRTW) initiative funded by the Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) provides a wealth of resources to assist communities in meeting the challenges of transition for young people with special needs. In addition to the MCHB website at <http://www.mchbhrtw.org>, most of the nine model sites, located in California, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ohio and Oregon, also have their own websites. Some particularly useful resources include the needs assessment tools and community collaboration best practice models in California and the “Youthspeak” training materials in Maine. “Youthspeak”

provides five youth-written training presentations for employers, teachers, parents, health care providers and policy makers. Oregon’s HRTW project includes special resources on providing services to minority youth with special needs, as well as assistance in starting youth organizations.

- The Pacer Program in Minnesota at <http://www.pacer.org>, through the Technical Assistance and Training on the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA) project, has extensive materials and examples of programs throughout the country. Another resource is the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials in Stillwater, Oklahoma. There are also resource centers specifically focused on providing services to Native American, Hispanic and African American persons with disabilities.

At the state and community level, organizations such as the Parent Training Institutes (PTIs) can be valuable partners. , Special education teachers, school-to-work programs, disability advocates and local divisions of federal agencies such as the Maternal and Child Health Bureau’s Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs, Departments of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation should also be included in planning and implementation efforts.



“If you don’t know where you are going you will end up somewhere else.” Dr. David Campbell

Section 19:

Overall Recommendations Implementation Strategies

It is recommended that agencies develop their adolescent independent living programs in progressive phases, with each phase linked to every other. As this phasing-in of the program takes place, there will be recognition that some needs are still unmet. Other gaps in the service delivery system will emerge as well, creating an ongoing need to modify the program. The development of a “new” program takes time and planning. The recommendations of this text will require coordination.

The objective of this section is to offer guidance in establishing priorities and a reasonable sequence for planning and implementing the program. Recommendations are grouped in three phases, paralleling the phases noted in *Section 2*. Within these phases, this section establishes priorities for consideration. Note, however, that clear distinctions between recommendations are, at times, difficult to make and many of the tasks are presented for simultaneous planning, development, and implementation.

Furthermore, recommendations, at times, will not be clearly connected to a particular Phase. For example, a Phase III recommendation on the one hand clearly needs consideration after design of Phases I and II. At the same time, its existence in Phase III needs to influence planning in Phases I and II. Further, as planning and implementation of Phase I

and Phase II programming alters the need for the Phase III activity, those early adjustments will need to be made. Clearly, then, *flexibility* needs to be the hallmark of the planning activity.

Overall, we believe the planning/implementation process will require upwards of three years, considering such critical factors as the need for policy and staff changes, securing funding, and changes in legislation. Certainly this timeframe is not unusual in the best of circumstances.

A principal purpose of this text is to provide guidance for the short-term actions as well as to offer a blueprint for the longer term.

This text makes a distinct effort to recognize differences that exist between urban and rural areas. These differences need not, we believe, diminish the practicality of instituting independent living preparation in all branches of an agency.

Certainly alterations in methods and the overall level of programming will be necessary to adjust to the environmental differences. As the recommended state or agency wide networking is developed, rural areas will benefit significantly.

If each site, branch, or office will take the initiative to assess and develop its own community resources, it will have significant support even without strong statewide or agency wide efforts. A creative staff can do a great deal to assist young people in out-of-home care

as they move through the critical developmental years toward self-sufficiency.

The following is a projection for overall implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. This model projection can be laid out or supplemented by other planning methods, such as a Gantt Chart or Management-by-Objectives format.

Phase I Implementation - (Year 1)

1. Develop overall policy statement. *(Sec. 4)*
2. Research and develop recommendations for changes to statutes. *(Section 4)*
3. Develop guidelines for independent living case plans. *(Sections 2 and 10)*
4. Develop policy for coordinating with other systems that provide foster care services in the state or geographic area. *(Section 2)*
5. Under the guidance of the training unit or staff development office, develop a coordinated training and professional development effort with other systems providing foster care. *(Section 9)*
6. Develop series of orientation and training sessions for staff, primary caregivers, purchase of service providers, community representatives, staff from other departments, and youths. *(Section 4)*
7. Develop informational packets on independent living. *(Sections 2 & 5)*
8. Develop a resource lending library. *(Sec. 5)*
9. Develop youth skills training opportunities. *(Section 9)*
10. Develop an action plan for mentor/volunteer services to support independent living efforts. *(Sections 2 & 11)*

11. Develop statewide, branch, youth advisory boards. *(Sections 2 & 6)*
12. Develop a resource directory of community youth services available within all locations. *(Section 5)*
13. Increased foster home recruitment and licensing activities. *(Section 4)*
14. Improve foster parent or primary caregivers training and preparation. *(Sections 4 and 8)*
15. Mandate participation in adolescent independent living training for all primary caregivers and AILP staffs. *(Section 9)*
16. Develop RFP for awarding of mini-grants. *(Section 17)*

Phase II Implementation (Year 2)

1. Institute staff specialization pilot with caseloads specifically for adolescents. *(Section 8)*
2. Develop incentives for youths' program participation. *(Section 7)*
3. Develop incentives for foster parent/residential staff program participation. *(Section 7)*
4. Undertake a survey to determine what special interest youth groups exist and the need for programming for each. *(Section 18)*
5. Develop teen conference concept. *(Sec. 12)*
6. Develop staff training for all in-house staffs and purchase of service providers. *(Sec. 9)*
7. Develop a jobs/vocational program component. *(Section 14)*

Phase III Implementation (Year 3)

1. Revise licensing requirements to include alternative and transitional living situations. *(Sections 4 and 15)*
2. Develop a housing program component. *(Section 15)*
3. Develop an after-transition/post-discharge service component. *(Section 16)*





APPENDICES

Appendix A Chafee Act – Page 127

Appendix B States Five-Year Plans – Page 134

Appendix C Medicaid – Page 135

Appendix D References and Literature Cited – Page 140

Appendix E Youth Application – Short Form – Page 142

Appendix F Example of a Youth IL Plan – Page 143

Appendix G Behavioral/Narrative Assessment – Page 146

Appendix H Referring Agency Evaluations – Page 176

Appendix I Needs Assessment Survey – Page 178

Appendix J Oregon Example – Page 184

Appendix K Resources – Page 188

Appendix A - FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999 – PL 106-169 SEC. 477. JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

The Foster Care Independence Act Legislation

Title 1: Improved Independent Living Program (P.L. 106-169)

FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999 - Public Law 106-169

An Act To amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to provide States with more funding and greater flexibility in carrying out programs designed to help children make the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. NOTE: Foster Care Independence Act of 1999

TITLE I – IMPROVED INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

Subtitle A – Improved Independent Living Program

SEC. 101. IMPROVED INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

(a) Findings. – The Congress finds the following:

- (1) States are required to make reasonable efforts to find adoptive families for all children, including older children, for whom reunification with their biological family is not in the best interests of the child. However, some older children will continue to live in foster care. These children should be enrolled in an Independent Living program designed and conducted by State and local government to help prepare them for employment, postsecondary education, and successful management of adult responsibilities.
 - (2) Older children who continue to be in foster care as adolescents may become eligible for Independent Living programs. These Independent Living programs are not an alternative to adoption for these children. Enrollments in Independent Living programs are not an alternative to adoption for these children. Enrollment in Independent Living programs can occur concurrent with continued efforts to locate and achieve placement in adoptive families for older children in foster care.
 - (3) About 20,000 adolescents leave the Nation's foster care system each year because they have reached 18 years of age and are expected to support themselves.
 - (4) Congress has received extensive information that adolescents leaving foster care have significant difficulty making a successful transition to adulthood; this information shows that children aging out of foster care show high rates of homelessness, non-marital childbearing, poverty, and delinquent or criminal behavior; they are also frequently the target of crime and physical assaults.
 - (5) The Nation's State and local governments, with financial support from the Federal Government, should offer an extensive program of education, training, employment, and financial support for young adults leaving foster care, with participation in such program beginning several years before high school graduation and continuing, as needed, until the young adults emancipated from foster care establish independence or reach 21 years of age.
- (b) Improved Independent Living Program. – Section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677) is amended to read as follows:

SEC. 477. JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

(a) Purpose. – The purpose of this section is to provide States with flexible funding that will enable programs to be designed and conducted-

- (1) to identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and to help these children make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services such as assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management skills, substance abuse prevention, and

preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention);

- (2) to help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment;
- (3) to help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions;
- (4) to provide personal and emotional support to children aging out of foster care, through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults; and
- (5) to provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

(b) Applications. –

- (1) In general. – A State may apply for funds from its allotment under subsection © for a period of five consecutive fiscal years by submitting to the Secretary, in writing, a plan that meets the requirements of paragraph (2) and the certifications required by paragraph (3) with respect to the plan.
- (2) State plan. – A plan meets the requirements of this paragraph if the plan specifies which State agency or agencies will administer, supervise, or oversee the programs carried out under the plan, and describes how the State intends to do the following:
 - (A) Design and deliver programs to achieve the purposes of this section.
 - (B) Ensure that all political subdivisions in the State are served by the program, though not necessarily in a uniform manner.
 - (C) Ensure that the programs serve children of various ages and at various stages of achieving independence.
 - (D) Involve the public and private sectors in helping adolescents in foster care achieve independence.
 - (E) Use objective criteria for determining eligibility for benefits and services under the programs, and for ensuring fair and equitable treatment of benefit recipients.
 - (F) Cooperate in national evaluations of the effects of the programs in achieving the purposes of this section.
- (3) Certifications. – The certifications required by this paragraph with respect to a plan are the following:
 - (A) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that the State will provide assistance and services to children who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and who have not attained 21 years of age.
 - (B) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that not more than 30 percent of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment under subsection (c) for a fiscal year will be expended for room or board for children who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and who have not attained 21 years of age.
 - (C) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that none of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment under subsection (c) will be expended for room or board for any child who has not attained 18 years of age.
 - (D) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that the State will use training funds provided under the program of Federal payments for foster care and adoption assistance to provide training to help foster parents, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living, and will, to the

- extent possible, coordinate such training with the independent living program conducted for adolescents.
- (E) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that the State has consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing the plan and that the State has given all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments on the plan.
 - (F) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that the State will make every effort to coordinate the State programs receiving funds provided from an allotment made to the State under subsection (c) with other Federal and State programs for youth (especially transitional living youth projects funded under part B of title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974), abstinence education programs, local housing programs, programs for disabled youth (especially sheltered workshops), and school-to-work programs offered by high schools or local workforce agencies.
 - (G) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that each Indian tribe in the State has been consulted about the programs to be carried out under the plan; that there have been efforts to coordinate the programs with such tribes; and that benefits and services under the programs will be made available to Indian children in the State on the same basis as to other children in the State.
 - (H) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that the State will ensure that adolescents participating in the program under this section participate directly in designing their own program activities that prepare them for independent living and that the adolescents accept personal responsibility for living up to their part of the program.
 - (I) A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that the State has established and will enforce standards and procedures to prevent fraud and abuse in the programs carried out under the plan.
- (4) Approval.—The Secretary shall approve an application submitted by a State pursuant to paragraph (1) for a period if—
- (A) the application is submitted on or before June 30 of the calendar year in which such period begins; and
 - (B) the Secretary finds that the application contains the material required by paragraph (1).
- (5) Authority to implement certain amendments; notification.—A State with an application approved under paragraph (4) may implement any amendment to the plan contained in the application if the application, incorporating the amendment, would be approvable under paragraph (4). Within 30 days after a State implements any such amendment, the State shall notify the Secretary of the amendment.
- (6) Availability.—The State shall make available to the public any application submitted by the State pursuant to paragraph (1), and a brief summary of the plan contained in the application.
- (c) Allotments to States.—
- (1) In general.—From the amount specified in subsection (h) that remains after applying subsection (g)(2) for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall allot to each State with an application approved under subsection (b) for the fiscal year the amount which bears the same ratio to such remaining amount as the number of children in foster care under a program of the State in the most recent fiscal year for which such information is available bears to the total number of children in foster care in all States for such most recent fiscal year, as adjusted in accordance with paragraph (2).
- (2) Hold harmless provision.—

- (A) In general.—The Secretary shall allot to each State whose allotment for a fiscal year under paragraph (1) is less than the greater of 500,000 or the amount payable to the State under this section for fiscal year 1998, an additional amount equal to the difference between such allotment and such greater amount.
- (B) Ratable reduction of certain allotments.—In the case of a State not described in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall reduce the amount allotted to the State for the page 40 fiscal year under paragraph (1) by the amount that bears the same ratio to the sum of the differences determined under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph for the fiscal year as the excess of the amount so allotted over the greater of \$500,000 or the amount payable to the State under this section for fiscal year 1998 bears to the sum of such excess amounts determined for all such States.
- (d) Use of Funds.—
- (1) In general.—A State to which an amount is paid from its allotment under subsection (c) may use the amount in any manner that is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of this section.
- (2) No supplantation of other funds available for same general purposes.—The amounts paid to a State from its allotment under subsection (c) shall be used to supplement and not supplant any other funds which are available for the same general purposes in the State.
- (3) Two-year availability of funds.—Payments made to a State under this section for a fiscal year shall be expended by the State in the fiscal year or in the succeeding fiscal year.
- (e) Penalties.—
- (1) Use of grant in violation of this part.—If the Secretary is made aware, by an audit conducted under chapter 75 of title 31, United States Code, or by any other means, that a program receiving funds from an allotment made to a State under subsection (c) has been operated in a manner that is inconsistent with, or not disclosed in the State application approved under subsection (b), the Secretary shall assess a penalty against the State in an amount equal to not less than 1 percent and not more than 5 percent of the amount of the allotment.
- (2) Failure to comply with data reporting requirement.—The Secretary shall assess a penalty against a State that fails during a fiscal year to comply with an information collection plan implemented under subsection (f) in an amount equal to not less than 1 percent and not more than 5 percent of the amount allotted to the State for the fiscal year.
- (3) Penalties based on degree of noncompliance.—The Secretary shall assess penalties under this subsection based on the degree of noncompliance.
- (f) Data Collection and Performance Measurement.—
- (1) In general.—The Secretary, in consultation with State and local public officials responsible for administering independent living and other child welfare programs, child welfare advocates, Members of Congress, youth service providers, and researchers, shall—
- (A) develop outcome measures (including measures of educational attainment, high school diploma, employment, avoidance of dependency, homelessness, nonmarital childbirth, incarceration, and high-risk behaviors) that can be used to assess the performance of States in operating independent living programs;
- (B) identify data elements needed to track—
- (i) the number and characteristics of children receiving services under this section;
- (ii) the type and quantity of services being provided; and
- (iii) State performance on the outcome measures; and
- (C) develop and implement a plan to collect the needed information beginning with the second fiscal year beginning after the date of the enactment of this section.
- (2) Report to the Congress.—Within 12 months after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report detailing the plans and timetable for collecting

from the States the information described in paragraph (1) and a proposal to impose penalties consistent with paragraph (e)(2) on States that do not report data.

(g) Evaluations.—

(1) In general.—The Secretary shall conduct evaluations of such State programs funded under this section as the Secretary deems to be innovative or of potential national significance. The evaluation of any such program shall include information on the effects of the program on education, employment, and personal development. To the maximum extent practicable, the evaluations shall be based on rigorous scientific standards including random assignment to treatment and control groups. The Secretary is encouraged to work directly with State and local governments to design methods for conducting the evaluations, directly or by grant, contract, or cooperative agreement.

(2) Funding of evaluations.—The Secretary shall reserve 1.5 percent of the amount specified in subsection (h) for a fiscal year to carry out, during the fiscal year, evaluation, technical assistance, performance measurement, and data collection activities related to this section, directly or through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements with appropriate entities.

(h) Limitations on Authorization of Appropriations.—To carry out this section and for payments to States under section 474(a)(4), there are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary \$140,000,000 for each fiscal year.’’. (c) Payments to States.—Section 474(a)(4) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 674(a)(4)) is amended to read as follows:

4) the lesser of—

(A) 80 percent of the amount (if any) by which—

(i) the total amount expended by the State during the fiscal year in which the quarter occurs to carry out programs in accordance with the State application approved under section 477(b) for the period in which the quarter occurs (including any amendment that meets the requirements of section 477(b)(5)); exceeds

(ii) the total amount of any penalties assessed against the State under section 477(e) during the fiscal year in which the quarter occurs; or

(B) the amount allotted to the State under section 477 for the fiscal year in which the quarter occurs, reduced by the total of the amounts payable to the State under this paragraph for all prior quarters in the fiscal year.’’.

(d) Regulations.—Not later than 12 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall issue such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the amendments made by this section.

42 USC 677 note.

(e) Sense of the Congress.—It is the sense of the Congress that States should provide medical assistance under the State plan approved under title XIX of the Social Security Act to 18-, 19-, and 20-year-olds who have been emancipated from foster care.

Subtitle B—Related Foster Care Provision

SEC. 111. INCREASE IN AMOUNT OF ASSETS ALLOWABLE FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Section 472(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 672(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “In determining whether a child would have received aid under a State plan approved under section 402 (as in effect on July 16, 1996), a child whose resources (determined pursuant to section 402(a)(7)(B), as so in effect) have a combined value of not more than \$10,000 shall be considered to be a child whose resources have a combined value of not more than \$1,000 (or such lower amount as the State may determine for purposes of such section 402(a)(7)(B)).’’.

SEC. 112. PREPARATION OF FOSTER PARENTS TO PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN STATE CARE

- (a) State Plan Requirement.—Section 471(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)) is amended—
- (1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (22);
 - (2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (23) and inserting “; and”; and
 - (3) by adding at the end the following:
 - (24) include a certification that, before a child in foster care under the responsibility of the State is placed with prospective foster parents, the prospective foster parents will be prepared adequately with the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide for the needs of the child, and that such preparation will be continued, as necessary, after the placement of the child.’’.
- (b) Effective Date.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on October 1, 1999.

Subtitle C—Medicaid Amendments

SEC. 121. STATE OPTION OF MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR ADOLESCENTS LEAVING FOSTER CARE

- (a) In General.—Subject to subsection (c), title XIX of the Social Security Act, is amended—
- (1) in section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii) (42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(10)(A)(ii))—
 - (A) by striking “or” at the end of subclause (XIII);
 - (B) by adding “or” at the end of subclause (XIV); and
 - (C) by adding at the end the following new subclause:
 - (XV) who are independent foster care adolescents (as defined in section 1905 (v)(1)), or who are within any reasonable categories of such adolescents specified by the State;’’; and (2) by adding at the end of section 1905 (42 U.S.C. 1396d) the following new subsection:
 - (v)(1) For purposes of this title, the term ‘independent foster care adolescent’ means an individual—
 - (A) who is under 21 years of age;
 - (B) who, on the individual’s 18th birthday, was in foster care under the responsibility of a State; and
 - (C) whose assets, resources, and income do not exceed such levels (if any) as the State may establish consistent with paragraph (2).
 - (2) The levels established by a State under paragraph (1)(C) may not be less than the corresponding levels applied by the State under section 1931(b).
 - (3) A State may limit the eligibility of independent foster care adolescents under section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XV) to those individuals with respect to whom foster care maintenance payments or independent living services were furnished under a program funded under part E of title IV before the date the individuals attained 18 years of age.’’.
- (b) Effective Date.—The amendments made by subsection (a) apply to medical assistance for items and services furnished on or after October 1, 1999.
- 42 USC 1396a note.
- (c) Contingency in Enactment.—If the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 is enacted (whether before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act)—
- (1) the amendments made by that Act shall be executed as if this Act had been enacted after the enactment of such other Act;
 - (2) with respect to subsection (a)(1)(A) of this section, any reference to subclause (XIII) is deemed a reference to subclause (XV);
 - (3) with respect to subsection (a)(1)(B) of this section, any reference to subclause (XIV) is deemed a reference to subclause (XVI);
 - (4) the subclause (XV) added by subsection (a)(1)(C) of this section—

- (A) is redesignated as subclause (XVII); and
 - (B) is amended by striking "section 1905(v)(1)" and inserting "section 1905(w)(1)";
- and
- (5) the subsection (v) added by subsection (a)(2) of this section—
 - (A) is redesignated as subsection (w); and
 - (B) is amended by striking "1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XV)" and inserting "1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XVII)".

Subtitle D—Adoption Incentive Payments

SEC. 131. INCREASED FUNDING FOR ADOPTION INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

- (a) Supplemental Grants.—Section 473A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673b) is amended by adding at the end the following:
 - (j) Supplemental Grants.—
 - (1) In general.—Subject to the availability of such amounts as may be provided in advance in appropriations Acts, in addition to any amount otherwise payable under this section to any State that is an incentive eligible State for fiscal year 1998, the Secretary shall make a grant to the State in an amount equal to lesser of
 - (A) the amount by which—
 - (i) the amount that would have been payable to the State under this section during fiscal year 1999 (on the basis of adoptions in fiscal year 1998) in the absence of subsection (d)(2) if sufficient funds had been available for the payment; exceeds
 - (ii) the amount that, before the enactment of this subsection, was payable to the State under this section during fiscal year 1999 (on such basis); or
 - (B) the amount that bears the same ratio to the dollar amount specified in paragraph (2) as the amount described by subparagraph (A) for the State bears to the aggregate of the amounts described by subparagraph (A) for all States that are incentive-eligible States for fiscal year 1998.
 - (2) Funding.—"\$23,000,000 of the amounts appropriated under subsection (h)(1) for fiscal year 2000 may be used for grants under paragraph (1) of this subsection."
- (b) Limitation on Authorization of Appropriations.—Section 473A(h)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673b(h)(1)) is amended to read as follows:
 - (1) In general.—For grants under subsection (a), there are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary—
 - (A) \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 1999;
 - (B) \$43,000,000 for fiscal year 2000; and
 - (C) \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2001 through 2003."



APPENDIX B



Five-Year State Plans

Minimum components of the five-year state plan for the John H. Chafee Foster

Minimum components of the five-year state plan for the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program*

DESCRIPTIONS OF HOW A STATE WILL:

- Administer, supervise or oversee the programs carried out under the plan
- Design and deliver independent living services consistent with the purposes of the Chafee Independence Program
- Ensure statewide, although not necessarily uniform, coverage by the program
- Serve children at various ages and stages of development
- Involve both the public and private sectors in service delivery
- Use objective criteria for determining eligibility for and ensuring fair and equitable treatment under the program
- Cooperate in national evaluations of the effectiveness of the services in achieving the purposes of the Chafee Independence Program

CERTIFICATIONS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF A STATE THAT THE STATE WILL:

- Provide assistance and services to children who have left foster care because they have attained age 18, but not age 21
- Spend no more than 30 percent of its annual allotment for room or board for children who have left foster care because they have attained age 18, but not 21, and none of it for room or board for children under age 18
- Use its training funds authorized under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to help foster and adoptive parents, workers in group homes and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living and, where possible, coordinate such training with independent living programs
- Have consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing the plan and given all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments
- Make every effort to coordinate Chafee Independence Program-funded activities with other federal and state programs for youth (especially programs funded under the federal Transitional Living Grant Program), abstinence education programs, local housing programs, programs for young people with disabilities (especially sheltered workshops), and school-to-work programs offered by high schools or local workforce agencies
- Consult with each Indian tribe in the state about the activities to be carried out under the plan; coordinate the programs with such tribes; and make the programs' benefits and services available to Indian children in the state on the same basis as other children
- Ensure that adolescents participate directly in designing their own independent living activities and accept responsibility for living up to their part of the program
- Have established and will enforce standards and procedures to prevent fraud and abuse in the programs carried out under the plan

* See Section 477(b) of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program



APPENDIX C – MEDICAID

The following information is drawn from: Frequently Asked Questions: About The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program – National Foster Care Awareness Project (2000)

1. How does the Foster Care Independence Act expand Medicaid eligibility for young people transitioning from foster care?

The Foster Care Independence Act gives states new flexibility to provide Medicaid for young people ages 18 to 21 who are transitioning from foster care. The Act creates a new optional Medicaid eligibility group for “independent foster care adolescents” who are young people under the age of 21 who were in foster care under the responsibility of the state on their 18th birthday. A state may provide Medicaid to all young people under the age of 21 who were in foster care on their 18th birthday or to “reasonable categories” of this group of young people.

The Act gives states discretion to define “reasonable categories” of this group of young people, but includes two examples of ways states may limit who they choose to make eligible for Medicaid:

- Only otherwise eligible young people who were receiving federal foster care payments or independent living services under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act while in foster care, and/or
- Only eligible young people with assets, resources, and income below certain levels (which may not be more restrictive than the levels currently imposed under Medicaid). In identifying additional reasonable categories of young people, states may also choose to extend

Medicaid young people of certain ages (18, 19, or 20) rather than to all eligible young people ages 18 to 21.

2. Which young people 18 years of age and older in foster care, or transitioning from foster care, were eligible for Medicaid prior to enactment of the foster care independence act?

Most young people have had health insurance coverage through the Medicaid program while in foster care. Young people eligible for the federal foster care program under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act are automatically eligible for Medicaid. In addition, most young people in state supported foster care who are not eligible for federal foster care assistance also receive Medicaid. They may be eligible because they are eligible for SSI (the federal Supplemental Security Income Program for children with severe disabilities) or because they qualify through one of the other optional coverage categories under Medicaid. Some states also provide health coverage through Medicaid or totally state-funded assistance for young people who remain in foster care beyond age 18.

The biggest problems in obtaining health care and Medicaid occur for young people when they leave foster care, often at age 18 or in some cases 19 (if they are still in school and expected to graduate by age 19). Their health insurance coverage through Medicaid

or other means often does not continue unless the state had made special accommodations for them. Even then it is up to individual workers to ensure that the young people in their caseloads are advised of these options.

It is useful to know which young people a state currently covers under Medicaid and how. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that at least 24,000 additional young people will qualify for Medicaid and that number could increase if all states take the full Medicaid option.

There are several groups of young people transitioning from foster care who already may be eligible for continuing Medicaid. If a state is currently covering one or more of these groups, determine to what age the young people are covered. Examples of groups of young people who may already be eligible for Medicaid include:

- Eighteen-year-olds who may be covered for one year if they meet the state's age and income guidelines
- Young people with serious disabilities who can qualify for SSI, and then Medicaid by virtue of their SSI eligibility
- Pregnant or parenting teens that meet the state's income eligibility guidelines
- Young people ages 18, 19, or 20 who the state has chosen to cover under the "Ribicoff" option in federal law (Generally these have to be young people who *would qualify for TANF if they were "dependent children".)

Some states also choose to continue to provide health coverage to young people transitioning from foster care with funds under the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) (to age 19), or with exclusively state funds.

If there are some young people in a state who retain health insurance coverage after they leave care, it is important to understand who specifically is eligible, at what ages, how the health insurance is funded, and whether the young person would have to incur any costs to obtain the insurance. It is also important to learn more about the precise help the public agency provides to ensure that the young people take advantage of the assistance that is available. Just being eligible is not sufficient—the young people must also be enrolled in the insurance program.

3. If a state takes the full option, who will be eligible for Medicaid?

All young people who were in foster care under the responsibility of the state on their 18th birthday and who are not yet 21 will be automatically eligible for Medicaid if states take full advantage of the Medicaid option in the Foster Care Independence Act.

4. What discretion does a state have to pick and choose among eligible young people?

As mentioned above, states have a lot of discretion to decide which young people should be eligible for Medicaid as they are transitioning from care. The largest number of young people will benefit when a state decides to make all young people who were in foster care on their 18th birthday, and who are not yet age 21, eligible without regard to their income. However, the law also allows states to make only subsets of this group of young people eligible. They may restrict the group by income. If a state applies an income or resource test, then the levels and methods used cannot be more restrictive than those used for families eligible under specific Medicaid requirements in Section 1931(b) of the

Social Security Act. A state also may restrict eligibility by age (e.g., providing assistance only to a portion of the 18, 19, or 20 year olds), by foster care status (e.g., only those who were eligible for the Title IV-E foster care program), or by other reasonable categories defined by the state.

5. Does a state have to impose either an income test or a resource test on the young people applying for Medicaid under this new option?

No. A state does not have to impose either an income test or a resource test on young people eligible for the new Medicaid option.

6. How can state Medicaid agencies take advantage of the new option?

The Director of the Health Care Financing Administration in HHS, in a December 14, 1999 letter to State Medicaid Directors, strongly encouraged them to take advantage of this new opportunity to provide health coverage to young people who have been in foster care (see BELOW). To amend its Medicaid program, a state Medicaid agency must prepare an amendment to its state Medicaid plan adding this eligible group of young people and submit it to its Regional HHS Medicaid office for approval.

7. Can a state Medicaid plan amendment be submitted at any time?

Yes. A state may submit a Medicaid plan amendment at any time. A state will be able to provide Medicaid funds to these young people beginning at the start of the federal fiscal quarter in which HHS approves the plan.

8. How will the new Medicaid coverage for these young people be funded?

Federal funding is guaranteed for the provision of Medicaid for this group of young people. However, states must provide a state match that is the same as for other parts of Medicaid program. State matches range from 50 percent in most states to as high as 76.8 percent in the lowest income states. The match may be provided by either the state Medicaid agency, the child welfare agency, or the two in combination.

9. How important is it that the Medicaid and child welfare agencies work together to assist these young people transitioning from foster care?

If they do not already, it is essential that state child welfare and Medicaid agencies work together to ensure that eligible young people benefit from this new option. The child welfare agency can familiarize the Medicaid agency about the unmet health care needs of young people transitioning from foster care and the benefits of providing health care coverage for them.

10. What services will young people be eligible for under Medicaid?

The young people will be eligible for the full Medicaid benefits package. All services, including Early, Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) Services, must be available to all young people who are eligible for Medicaid. Under EPSDT, these young people will be eligible to receive any medically necessary health, mental health, or substance abuse treatment services allowable under Medicaid that were identified when the young person's health needs were assessed under EPSDT.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201

December 1, 2000

Dear State Child Welfare and State Medicaid Director:

Each year more than 20,000 youth across this country are discharged from the child welfare foster care system. The majority of these youth have no health care coverage or families to help them should they become sick, have an accident or become the victims of violence. Accordingly, we encourage your agencies to work together to extend a new Medicaid health benefit to eligible young people as they make the transition from foster care to adulthood.

The bipartisan Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, P.L. No. 106-169 signed December 14, 1999, provides important new help to young people who are making the transition from foster care. Title I of the Act establishes the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, which increases funding for independent living activities and expands services and supports to help older youths who are leaving foster care prepare for adulthood. Subtitle C of Title I of the Act also offers States an important opportunity to provide Medicaid to the young people, ages 18-21.

This new Medicaid option builds on President Clinton's continuing efforts to provide health care coverage to more children, adolescents, and working families.

Health Status of Young People Transitioning from Foster Care

Typically, these young people have significant health concerns but no insurance and limited access to health and mental health services. Studies have shown that children in foster care suffer more frequent and more serious medical, developmental, and psychological problems than nearly any other group of children. A 1995 General Accounting Office report found "...as a group, they are sicker than homeless children and children living in the poorest sections of inner cities." Young people who have been in foster care may be at high risk for continuing health problems because of the circumstances that brought them into foster care, as well as the ongoing instability of their lives.

While in foster care, most of these young people were eligible for Medicaid, either categorically if they received support under the Federal Adoption Assistance or Foster Care Programs (authorized under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act), or through State-elected eligibility categories. Some States also provide health coverage through Medicaid or totally State-funded assistance for young people who remain in foster care beyond age 18. Unfortunately, many children who leave foster care at age 18 or 19 lose the Medicaid coverage they had in foster care.

Expanded Medicaid Eligibility

The Foster Care Independence Act establishes a new optional Medicaid eligibility group for "independent foster care adolescents," i.e., young people who are in foster care under the responsibility of the State on their 18th birthday." If a State takes full advantage of this Medicaid option, all young people in foster care under the responsibility of the State on their 18th birthday who are not yet 21 could be automatically eligible for Medicaid, without regard to their income status. No income or resource test would be required for these children.

States, however, also have the flexibility under the Act to provide Medicaid to only a "reasonable category" of this broad group of eligible young people. For example, a State may decide to determine eligibility in one or more of the following ways:

- Apply an income or resource test in determining eligibility. In this case, the standards and methodologies used cannot be more restrictive than those used for the State's low-income families with children eligible under the Medicaid requirements in Section 1931(b) of the Social Security Act.
- Limit eligibility by age. Provide Medicaid eligibility only to youths through age 18 or through age 19, rather than to all eligible 18-21 year olds.
- Limit eligibility by foster care status. Provide Medicaid eligibility only to those children who were eligible for foster care maintenance payments or independent living services under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

The Importance of Medicaid Eligibility

Medicaid eligibility entitles young people to the full Medicaid benefits package. This includes the broad array of health care screening, diagnosis and treatment services included in the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Program (EPSDT). When an EPSDT screen identifies a physical or mental disability, illness, or condition, the young person is then eligible to receive all the additional diagnostic, treatment, and follow-up services allowed under the Medicaid Program that are medically necessary to remedy the condition. The young person would be eligible for these services and treatment, even if they are not specified in the State's Medicaid plan.

The Medicaid State Match

States are responsible for the non-Federal share of Medicaid payments. The Federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) ranges from 50 percent to 76.8 percent depending on the State's per capita income. The FMAP is the same percentage that is applied to Federal funding under the Federal Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Programs.

States generally rely on State general funds for Medicaid spending; however, some allow other public entities to share in Medicaid financing. Other public agencies, such as child welfare agencies, may provide or contribute to the State's share of Medicaid match through an intergovernmental transfer to the State, or local Medicaid agency, under its administrative control. State funds appropriated to child welfare may be transferred or reprogrammed to pay all or a portion of the State share of Medicaid expenditures for this group. In general, Federal funds may not be used for the match unless they are Federal funds specifically authorized by Federal law to be used to match other Federal funds.

Medicaid Plan Amendment Approval Process

To take advantage of the new option, a State Medicaid agency must prepare an amendment to its State Medicaid Plan, adding the eligible group of young people to whom coverage will be provided. At any time, the State may submit the plan amendment to its Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) Regional Office for approval. The plan amendment may be made effective the first day of the quarter in which it is submitted to HCFA in approvable form. HCFA Regional Office staffs are available to provide technical assistance to States in developing such amendments.

We are excited about the opportunities that the new John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Living Program provides this most vulnerable population. We urge your State to elect this new Medicaid option to ensure that children transitioning from foster care get the physical and mental health care they need.

Sincerely,

Patricia Montoya
Commissioner
Director, Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Timothy M. Westmoreland
Director
Center for Medicaid and State Operations
Health Care Financing Administration



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APPENDIX E – Youth Application: Short Form

Our basic belief is that there needs to be a contract between the agency AILP and youths who will be served. This contracting can take on many forms. One such effort is to have youths formally apply to the program. The following is an example of a short version of a Youth Application. A more elaborate application can be found in ILR's *Assessing and Contracting With Youth* (see *Appendix K - Resources Section*).

Youth Application: Adolescent Independent Living Program – Short Form

Name _____

Age _____ Grade _____ Employed: Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please list where, your position, and hours per week.

1. Please briefly state why you would like to be in the independent living program.
2. Please state briefly what you hope to gain from the independent living program.
3. Please list three or more things you like about yourself.
4. Please list three or more things about yourself that you feel need improvement and tell why.
5. What do you think you will do when you leave the program?

Youth Candidate _____ Date _____



APPENDIX F Examples of Youth AIL Plan

Independent Living Plan Criteria

Federal guidelines ask for “A written description of programs and services to help youth prepare for the transition from foster care to independent living.” To meet the guidelines, staff can be given the following criteria for development of an independent living case plan for each youth:

1. Anticipated age at discharge.
2. Amount of time available to transition youth.
3. Anticipate location or situation youth will transition to after discharge.
4. Description of assessment, process, tools, and methods used to determine services.
5. Listing of services:
 - Rationale for offering
 - Description of service
 - Time frames
 - Expected outcomes

Examples of services that could be offered to youth are:

- Life skills assessment
- Life skills instruction
- Vocational/educational assessment
- Tutoring
- Vocational training
- Job training and placement
- Counseling focused on independent living

Example:

The following is an example of how the guidelines would look as a “*Transition to Independent Living Section*” of a child welfare youth case plan:

Tommie, Age 16

1. Anticipated age of transition: 18
2. Amount of time available to transition: 2 years
3. Location/situation upon transition: Remain in New Town
4. Description of assessment process and tools: *Life Skills Inventory (LSI)* and *Strength/Needs Assessment*, completed at age 16 and at follow-up intervals

5. Services:
 - A. Participation in Garrett Road Group Home skills training for:
 - Daily living skills
 - Money management
 - Legal rights and responsibilities
 - Housing
 - Program began: 8/03
 - Program ending: 6/05
 - Outcomes: Intermediate level of functioning in eight (8) areas of *LSI*
 - B. Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation Services for vocational assessment
 - Referral: 8/03
 - Outcomes: Appropriate vocational referral
 - C. Training in house maintenance and cooking by group home staff.
 - Program beginning: 8/03
 - Program ending: 1/04 (utilizing *LSI*)
 - Outcomes: Intermediate level of functioning in two (2) *LSI* areas
 - D. Counseling by Social Worker Nancy A. Carter on working towards transition (utilizing the *Strength/Needs Assessment*)
 - Referral/start: 8/03
 - Ending at 18 years of age (6/05)
 - Outcomes: Development of personal support network of at least 10 connections for before and after transition

Emphasis should be put on the Idea that federal requirements are that each youth have a copy of his or her IL plan

Individual Transition Plan Outline

Youth Name: _____ Date of birth: _____

Date of plan: _____ Anticipated date of discharge: _____

Anticipated age at discharge: _____

Length of available time to provide transitional services: _____

Anticipated location or situation youth will transition to: _____

Team Members participating in the transitional plan and signatures:
(Suggested team members should include the following people)

Youth: _____ Caregiver: _____

Guardian: _____ Social Worker: _____

Teacher: _____ Other: _____

Assessment Tools and dates used for this plan include: _____

Assessed Area (to be completed for each area): _____

Identify one need for this area: _____

List the objectives, activities, target dates, and person(s) responsible for addressing the need:

Objective	Activities	Target Date	Person/Agency Responsible
Projected completion date: _____			

Results of the assessed area:

Was the need resolved? ___ Yes ___ No. If no, describe why: _____

Was the objective met? Yes ___ No ___ If no, describe:	Were the activities met? Yes ___ No ___ If no, describe:	Actual completion date:

Suggestions for Completing the Transitional Plan Outline

1. Remember this is the **Youth's Plan**, not the adult's. If goals are developed based on adult wants then the youth will not **OWN** it. Goals are based on youths' needs.
2. List basic information at the top of the page.
3. Involve team members from the beginning. Schedule a meeting to include youths!. Do not write the plan and then ask for signatures.
4. Listing the assessment tools and dates are necessary. Indicate that a copy of the assessment results is in the youth's file. Some assessments like the Strength/Needs may only need the one sheet (Strengths on left, Needs on right).
5. Recommended areas of assessed need include:
 - Educational,
 - Vocational/Job Preparation,
 - Basic Living Skills (such as housekeeping, shopping, etc.),
 - Social and Interpersonal, and
 - Post-Discharge (follow-up).

Some programs may choose to use each category of the Life Skills Inventory or combine "Housing Issues." Consult the team members for what approach best meets the need of youths involved. Be sure however, to include follow-up services.

6. By identifying one need, youth and team members are challenged to prioritize the most critical needs for a specific area and not try to meet all needs. This also simplifies the plan and makes it more manageable for youth and other team members. If a plan is too involved it may seem unachievable, resulting in lost motivation and interest of all parties.
7. Listing objectives and activities to meet the need is much like creating "steps." If necessary, draw the steps on a board to help youth and team members identify the appropriate measures to meet the need. One objective and a few activities may be all that is needed. Remember to identify simple and measurable activities.
8. Listing target dates and persons responsible is essential to instill accountability and levels of responsibility to all team members. Be realistic about time frames especially when needing to connect with other members of the community. To maintain a youth focused plan, youths need to assume a larger level of responsibility for the activities than other team members. This may be difficult at first (given that most youths are not experienced with controlling their destiny), so start simply with assessing one or two areas chosen by the youth. As comfort with the process develops, youths will accept more complex responsibilities. Consider the youth's capabilities while assigning activities and support staff to assist youth.
9. Anticipate the projected date of completion to create time lines and evaluations. It is also helpful to maintain a conscious connection between the time available until discharge and the activities planned to appropriately transition the youth.
10. Listing results of interventions as activities are completed is important for evaluation, anticipating follow-up needs, and helping youths achieve increased self-competence.
11. By using an outline form, youth and team members can find information easily.

From: Putting It Together, Independent Living Resources, Inc., 1999

APPENDIX G



Behavioral & Narrative Assessment of Youth After Entrance Into the AILP

Appendix G includes a sampling of assessments found in the *Assessing and Contracting With Youth*, developed and published by *Independent Living Resources, Inc.* More detailed information about this resource can be found in *Appendix K*. The assessments included in this appendix are:

- *Weekly Checklist #1*
- *Weekly Checklist #2*
- *Assessment for Independent Living*
- *Adolescent's Assessment of Progress*
- *Strengths/Needs Assessment*
- *Life Skills Inventory*

Behavioral and Narrative Assessment Of Youth After Entrance Into the AILP (Ongoing)

Appendix G includes instruments to record behavioral observations by line staffs, primary caregivers, mentors and volunteers, and the youths themselves. The recording can be maintained daily, weekly, monthly or at other predetermined time frames. The main thrust of this section is to encourage programs to monitor and evaluate youth skills development in an independent living program, much more closely than the normal case planning process of every six months.

If the monitoring can be spread throughout members of the team so that it is not just the childcare worker or agency caseworker doing the assessments, there will be:

- ◆ Greater opportunities to examine the progress which occurs in a program, and
- ◆ A sharing of the responsibilities of timely monitoring.

Thus, the focus is to get all members of the “team” involved in assessment. This “team” is basically composed of the agency social/case work or child caring staff, the primary caregiver(s), and the youth. A community person such as a volunteer, advocate, or mentor could also be included.

The first two samples of AILP forms are checklists. First, *ILP Weekly Check List 1* is used for determining weekly progress of youths in the program. This check list uses a point system on whether or not youths have kept their apartment/room clean, attended school and work, kept scheduled appointments, met with their advocate/mentor, etc. A point total is kept and weekly progress is compared with previous weeks and used as a milestone for future weeks. The uses for this tool are many:

- ◆ To monitor weekly progress over a period of time,
- ◆ To set expectations of minimal positive or negative scores,
- ◆ To compare youths throughout the program, etc.

The monitoring can occur at the direct line level as well as at supervisory or administrative reviews.

ILP Weekly Check List 2 is a variation of checklist 1, but there is no attempt to quantify the results. Instead this checklist is used on a weekly basis to look at three aspects:

- Is the youth doing well with a task (excellent),
- Is a task being completed satisfactorily, or
- Is there a need for improvement?

Variations of this type of checklist exist, but the main point is this type of tool must be readily available for review. This can be accomplished by tacking it on the bedroom wall, putting it on the “family” bulletin board, taping it to the refrigerator for the week, etc. The checklist sets a tone that skills development will be taken seriously, monitored regularly, and viewed as part of the expected weekly household activities.

The *Assessment for Independent Living* is another example of a type of monitoring/check list type system. There are two specific areas within this assessment instrument; Level of supervision and Frequency of Performance. The instrument has a wide-ranging scale for determining what level of supports is needed to assist youths in accomplishing certain tasks.

The *Adolescent's Assessment of Progress on ILP Plan* develops a format for youths to monitor their independent living plan progress. The tasks monitored will be based upon their contract(s) with the program staff, caregiver(s), mentors, etc. The key is to get the youths determination of how they are doing in respect to the established plan.

The Strengths/Needs Assessment is an assessment instrument that is designed to look at the total person. Included in the Strengths/Needs are: Directions, the Strengths/Needs Worksheet, and lists sample guideline questions. This particular instrument has been used with much success in settings ranging from departments of social services, to foster family care, to child caring facilities, and correctional settings.

Life Skills Inventory is a tool used to measure youths' independent living program progress and to provide guidelines for skill instruction. It will also assist staff in recognizing the levels of difficulty within the different skills areas and developing an understanding that teaching requires tasks be broken down into small manageable steps.]

The *Life Skills Inventory* (LSI) is to be administered by staff, primary caregivers, or anyone who is working on skills development with youths. Youths, after reviewing the scale have made statements such as: "I didn't realize I needed to know all of this to be independent," "I am glad I know this now before I leave care," "I am excited about learning some of these things."

The LSI was originally developed for use with refugee families relocating to the United States. It has been adapted and revised many times for use with youths in out-of-home care. Its value not only lies in serving as a tool to keep track of the skills that a youth has learned but also as a guide for the life skills team.

Because there are so many skill areas to cover with youths as they plan to move into the community, it is easy to overlook a skill area or miss a part of a skill area. By using the LSI as a guide it will help to ensure a greater degree of uniformity in what is being taught or talked about from one out-of-home care setting to another.

The Life Skills Inventory appears to be a large cumbersome document, but it does not have to be used in its entirety; nor in one sitting. One topic may be selected at a time. The focus would then be on completing the tasks on that topic before moving on to another.

There are four skills levels within the LSI: Basic, Intermediate, Adequate and Exceptional. The levels are intended to show movement or progress. The level of greatest significance is *Adequate*. Youths usually will need to show competence in most skills up to and including the *adequate* skill level to be comfortable in an independent living situation.

The scoring of the LSI is based on giving youths credit for being able to perform a skill in a certain area. Before youths are given credit for skills within an area, they should be able to demonstrate the skill. Therefore, the question becomes what must they do in order to prove to you that they have obtained the skill: e.g., knows the value of currency - the youth can make change, correctly name the coins and paper money, produce the correct change for a purchase at the store, etc.

What the youths do to demonstrate the skill must be standardized within the program. There should be agreement among the life skills team on this point; otherwise there will be differing requirements from one youth to another in the process of completing the LSI areas. A second aspect is that when the skill is mastered the relative section of the LSI should be initialed and dated by the monitoring person(s).

Many programs throughout the United States are utilizing the LSI. Some programs have formed youth advisory groups to assist in modifying or adding sections. This allows for youth input in creating a complete and overall enhancement of the tool and a better fit for their programs.

The concept of getting everyone involved and committed to assessing and teaching youths life skills is a theme of the entire **Assessing and Contracting With Youth** book. The team concept involves, the youth, caseworker, primary caregiver(s), biological parent (where appropriate), and others youths view as important members of the team. Assessment and monitoring progress is another example of where formalization of that process can occur.

Independent Living Program Weekly Check List #1

Name _____ Week Ending _____

Weekly Total: _____

Previous Week Total: _____

Weekly Progress (One point for each item)

Positive Progress (Plus 1 point)

Negative Progress (Minus 1 point)

___ Apartment/Room Clean

___ Apartment/Room Not Clean

___ No school absences

___ 1 or more absences

___ No tardiness

___ Tardy 1 or more times

___ Good work attendance

___ Poor work attendance

___ Good group participation

___ Poor group participation

___ Worked on workbook

___ No workbook progress

___ Looked for a job

___ Did not look for a job

___ No complaints from landlord

___ Complaint from landlord

___ Good peer relations

___ Poor peer relations

___ Volunteer work

___ No constructive activities

___ Kept appointments

___ Missed an appointment

___ Cleaned up after group

___ Lied to staff

___ Met with advocate

___ Missed meeting with advocate

___ Good report from teacher

___ Poor report from teacher

___ _____

___ _____

___ _____

___ _____

___ **Total**

___ **Total**

This checklist was adapted from New Life Youth Services, ILP, Cincinnati, Ohio

Independent Living Program Weekly Check List #2

Name _____ Date _____

Vocational

Working _____	Looking for work _____
Job Schedule _____	(if unemployed) _____
	Satisfactory job report _____

Financial

Savings _____	Payment of bills _____
---------------	------------------------

Educational

Tardiness _____	Progress report _____
School Work _____	Passing grades _____
Suspended _____	Study time _____

House-Management

Food preparation _____	Church _____
Food and drink _____	Daily chores _____
Food cleanup _____	Room time _____
Dating rules _____	Curfew _____
Laundry _____	Phone _____
Trips _____	Whereabouts _____
Room chores _____	Quiet time _____

Personal & Social

Hygiene _____	
Group meeting _____	
Individual meetings _____	
Cooperation _____	
Attitude _____	

Code

1 = Needs Improvement

2 = Satisfactory

3 = Excellent

NA = Not Applicable

Comments:

This material is adapted from the Crossnore School Independent Living Program, Crossnore, NC

Assessment for Independent Living

PART I: Level of Supervision

This instrument is intended as a tool for assessment of a teenager's progress toward, or readiness for, independent living. This section deals with level of supervision, and should be used with life skills A-F, which appear on the following page.

Key Definition

- A Assistance:** Needs concrete aid in performing task.
- 1-1 One-to-One:** Needs for emotional support and/or verbal guidance to complete task.
- P Periodic Help:** Needs encouragement and verbal guidance part of the time while attempting to perform task.
- R Reminder:** Needs periodic reminder that task needs to be done before it is performed.
- I Improvement:** Can handle task only with difficulty and needs to improve.
- C Clarification:** Understands partially and needs clarification.
- U Understands Fully.**
- T Teaching** of task needed.
- CM Complete Mastery** of skill has been attained.
- NR No Reminder** is necessary, performs tasks as needed.
- NA Not Applicable.**

**This material was adapted from the School of Social Welfare, State University of New York, Center at Stony Brook, 1982*

Assessment for Independent Living: Level of Supervision

Life Skills Areas A Through F: Part II: Frequency Of Performance*

A. Personal Care

- _____ Bathing, mouth care
- _____ Use of deodorant
- _____ Grooming
- _____ Change/choose clothing
- _____ Care of clothing (washing, pressing, mending, etc.)

B. Care of the Home

- _____ Sweeping/vacuuming/scrubbing floors
- _____ Washing windows
- _____ Cleaning walls, appliances, counters
- _____ Cleaning out/defrosting refrigerator
- _____ Cleaning bathtub/shower
- _____ Emptying garbage
- _____ Tidying the home
- _____ Use of basic maintenance tools

C. Food Preparation

- _____ Planning varied & balanced meals
- _____ Shopping
- _____ Reading directions/instructions
- _____ Preparing meals
- _____ Setting/clearing dishes

D. Handling Finances

- _____ Budgeting
- _____ Managing bank account
- _____ Keeping records
- _____ Spending money sensibly
- _____ Understands & uses credit responsibly
- _____ Understands insurance system

E. Utilization of Community

Systems & Services

- _____ Understands transportation systems
- _____ Participates in recreational activities
- _____ Understands use of health services
- _____ Has knowledge of helping agencies and services
- _____ Knowledgeable about housing: locating, negotiating leases, etc.

F. Training & Employment

- _____ Recognizes own job aptitude & interest
- _____ Demonstrates realistic work attitudes
- _____ Shows realistic perception of training needs
- _____ Understands functions of career/trade
- _____ Can locate & use training facilities
- _____ Locating employment
- _____ Resume writing
- _____ Completing job applications
- _____ Prepared for job interviews

Comments:

**Adapted from the School of Social Welfare, SUNY at Stony Brook, 1984*

PART II: FREQUENCY OF PERFORMANCE

*This section deals with frequency of performance and should be used with
Life Area Skills G, below.*

Key Definition

S	Sometimes:	The action is taken periodically but not predominantly
O	Often:	A dominant action but not constant
A	Always:	A constant action
P	Never:	A void of action at all times

LIFE SKILLS AREA “G”: Social & Interpersonal Skills

- ___ Initiates contact with others
- ___ Responds to being sought out
- ___ Does not mislead others
- ___ Is not misled by others
- ___ Regulates impulses
- ___ Demonstrates manners
- ___ Recognizes and responds appropriately to authority figures
- ___ Respects rights of others
- ___ Helpful to others
- ___ Uses appropriate language
- ___ Participates comfortably in group activities

Comments:

**Adapted from School of Social Welfare, SUNY at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, New York, 1984*

Adolescent's Assessment of Progress On Independent Living Case Plan

Report For _____, 20__

Name: _____

Residence/Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

Brief Summary of Activities & Progress on Contract:

Education & Training _____

Medical Appointments _____

Job Progress _____

Roots & Records (Lifebook) Progress

1. Family Materials _____

2. Records _____

Money Management _____

Social Relationships and Activities _____

Other Tasks _____

Other Comments _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Strengths/Needs Assessment - Directions

Whenever possible a good assessment (instrument) should do the following:

1. Be completed with the youth present
2. Help the youth gain an understanding of his/her strengths/needs.
3. Help increase the youth's self-esteem.
4. Guide the youth in determining personal goals.
5. Provide a foundation for developing a personal plan.
6. Help youth with problem solving.

The place to begin is with a tool like the *Strengths/Needs Assessment* that engages the youth in the assessment process. The best way to motivate youths to participate in learning skills is to start with a skill that each youth is most interested in learning. The way to find out which skills youths already have and the one(s) that they are interested in learning is to involve them directly in the assessment process.

The *Strengths/Needs Assessment* is different from many assessment instruments in that it looks at the total person, and it refers to "needs" instead of "problems." Both points are significant. In order to help young people begin to prepare for AILP, they must have a good grasp of their capabilities in all aspects of their lives, including special interests. A solid place to start with youths is in helping them meet a need identified as a special interest.

The difference between the terms "needs" and "problems" may seem minor. Yet, everyone has needs and, for that reason, it is easier and more positive to talk about needs. On the other hand, the term "problems" has a negative connotation and implies that something is wrong. It is harder to talk about the things that both others and we perceive as wrong.

Guideline Categories

Most people find that they have to tailor the *Strength/Needs Guideline Questions* to fit different agency settings and the interviewer's personal style of communication. The guideline questions are intended to serve as an outline for what to ask in interviews with youths. The questions can be modified with little difficulty and most interviewers and youths find that completing a *S/N Assessment* is a positive experience.

The *S/N Assessment* has been used extensively in the field of human services. The instrument is just one part of a goal-planning process outlined by Drs. Peter Houts and Robert Scott of Pennsylvania State University. It has been used effectively with adults and youth who are clients of social services and mental health agencies, correctional facilities, rehabilitation agencies, veteran's and community hospitals. The *S/N Assessment* is a good way to actively involve a client from the beginning and develop a greater degree of client involvement and commitment.

Interviewing

When completing a *S/N Assessment*, always start with the *Special Interests* category. The questions in that section are less threatening and set the tone for the rest of the interview.

Use short one word recordings on the *S/N Form* whenever possible. As long as the notations are understandable to you and your young person, that's all that counts.

If the young person has difficulty identifying *strengths or needs* in a particular area, give feedback. Point out those *strengths and needs* that you have observed (at least to this point in time). Ask if the young person would agree with your observations. It is important that the information recorded on the form accurately describe how youths' see themselves and not how the interviewer sees them.

When the interview is finished, review the completed *S/N Form* with youths to make sure the information is correct. Be sure to give youths a copy of the completed form to take with them. Start case planning and possible skills development by asking youths to identify the two most important "Need" areas that they would be most interested in working on in the near future.

When using the following pages to develop your interviews, remember, all that is needed is a blank sheet of paper. By drawing a line down the center of the sheet of paper a *S/N Assessment* form is created.

Strengths/Needs Assessment Form

Youth's Name _____ Date _____

Strengths

Needs

Special Interest

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

Social/Personal

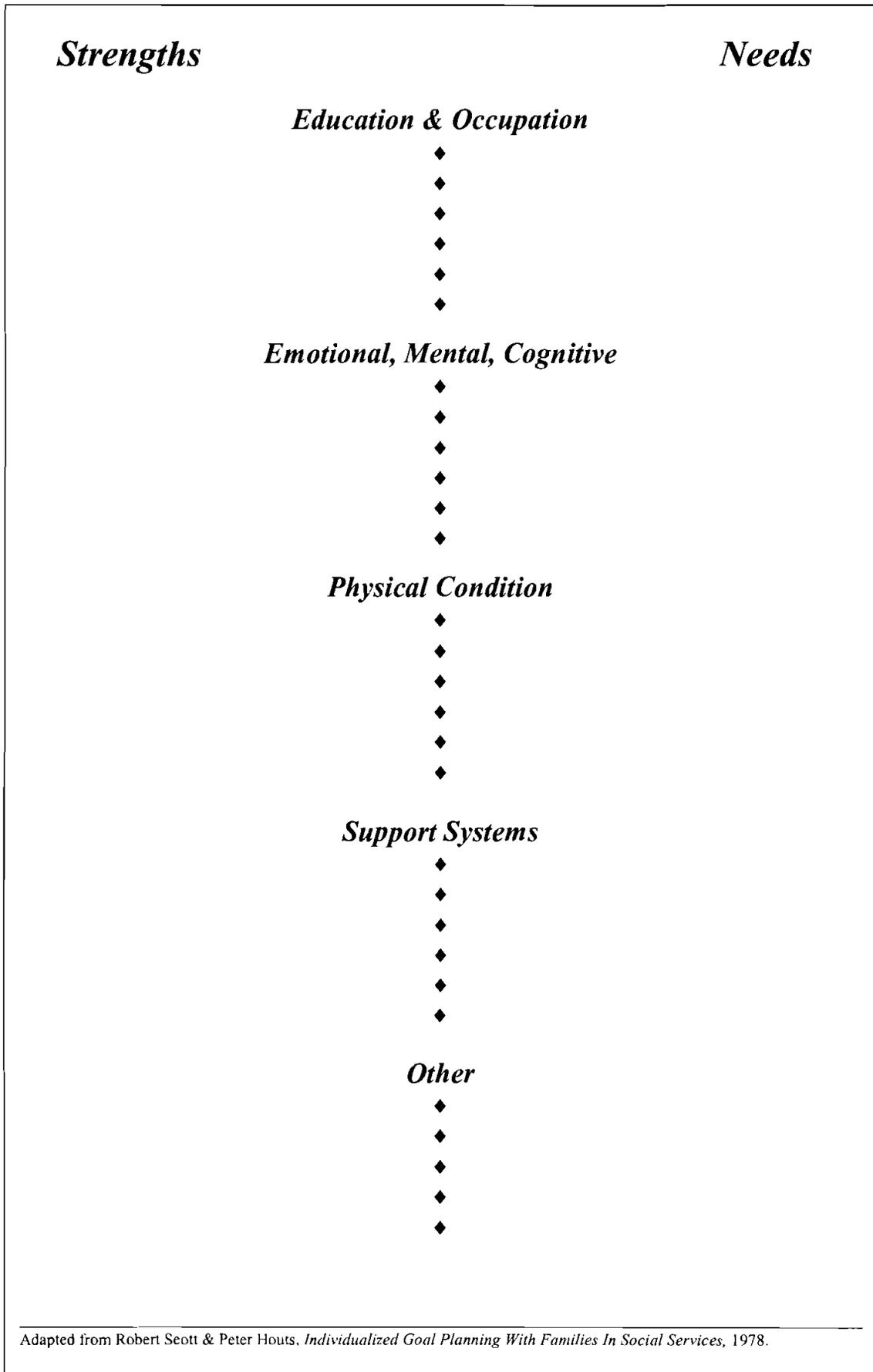
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

Family/Friends

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

Religion & Values

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆



Adapted from Robert Seott & Peter Houts, *Individualized Goal Planning With Families In Social Services*, 1978.

Sample Guideline Questions

Strengths

What participant can do, what he or she likes to do, and people who are willing to help participant attain goals.

Needs

State these positively--what participant wants to be doing.

1. Special Interests & Activities

How do you spend your free time?	What would you like to do in your free time?
Do (did) you have any hobbies?	Are there any hobbies or crafts you would like to learn or do more?
What clubs or organizations do you belong?	Are there any clubs or activities you would like to join or become more involved?
What do you like to do on your vacations?	Is there something else you would like to learn or go for fun?
Do you play any sports?	Are there any sports you would like to play?
Do you play a musical instrument?	Is there an instrument you would like to play?
Does anyone tell you that you have other strengths?	What are others encouraging you to do?

2. Social/Personal

How would you describe yourself to others?	Is there anything you would like to change about your personality?
What one thing do you like best about yourself?	Is there anything you would like to change about the way you present yourself to others?

3. Family and Friends

Whom do you call family?	What changes would you like to make with your family?
Are you currently living with a family?	What needs to be improved?
Who are your friends?	Would you like different kinds of friends?
In what ways are you a good friend to others?	Is there anything that your family or friends could do for you now?
What friends would you call for help?	What does your family and friends want to see you change?

4. Religion, Values, Beliefs

How does religion play a part in your life?

Would you like to go to religious activities more or talk with a priest, minister, or rabbi?

What do you do that helps others?

Are there additional things you would like to do for others?

What do you believe in?

What would help you practice those things you believe?

Who is your ideal person?

What would you have to change in order to be more like your ideal person?

Do you have a personal philosophy or motto?

What would you like to add to this philosophy?

5. Education and Occupation

What do you like most about school?

Is there more training or schooling that you would like?

What schooling do you have?

What work would you like to do?

What are your best subjects?

Is there something connected with your work that you would like to do more?

What jobs have you held?

Is there anything your employer or co-workers think you need to do to improve?

What part of your job do/did you like best?

6. Emotional, Mental, Cognitive

When are you in the best mood?

What do you need to get you in these moods?

What makes you feel happy?

What kinds of things could be done to make you feel happier?

How would you describe your attitude in general?

What could improve your attitude?

How do you work your problems out?

What would help you deal with problems?

How can you change your own mood or attitude when you are feeling down?

What would help to keep you from feeling down?

What is your best time of day?

7. Physical Condition

What is your best physical activity?	Are there physical activities you'd like to do better or try for the first time?
How would you rate your physical health?	Are you receiving any regular treatment?
When do you feel physically best?	Do you have any nutritional needs?
When was your last physical exam?	What would help you to be stronger and healthier?
When was your last dental check-up?	Do you need to see a doctor for any reason?

8. Support Systems/Reaction to Professional Services

What is your source of income?	What could you do if you wanted to generate more income?
What persons or agencies do you and rely on for support?	Could people where you live be more helpful and supportive?
What do you like about the way you are treated by the agency?	What do you think is your primary reason for being here now?
What agency staffs have helped you most?	Are there other staff you need at this time?

9. Other

(This category is for observations and questions that do not fit into other categories).

What are you most proud of having accomplished?	In five years, what would you like to say you have accomplished?
What skills do you have that will help you live on your own?	What do you need to do to prepare for independence?

Adapted from Robert Seott and Peter Houts, *Individualized Goal Planning with Families In Social Services*, 1978.

Life Skills Inventory Cover Sheet

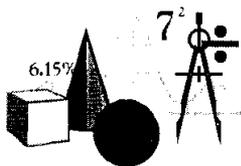
Name Of Youth: _____

Date Of Birth: _____

Person(s) involved in life skills assessment and dates of assessment

Category	Date Skill Level Attained			
	Basic	Intermediate	Adequate	Exceptional
A. Money Management & Consumer Awareness				
B. Food Management				
C. Personal Appearance & Hygiene				
D. Health				
E. Housekeeping				
F. Housing				
G. Transportation				
H. Educational Planning				
I. Job Seeking Skills				
J. Job Maintenance Skills				
K. Emergency & Safety Skills				
L. Knowledge of Community Resources				
M. Interpersonal Skills				
N. Legal Issues				





Category A: Money Management And Consumer Awareness

Basic

- _____ Knows value of coins and currency
- _____ Can make a transaction at a local store and count change
- _____ Has an understanding of the difference between “luxuries” and “necessities” in food, transportation, clothing, housing, etc.
- _____ Understands the difference between “sale price” and “regular price”
- _____ Knows how to clip and use coupons

Intermediate

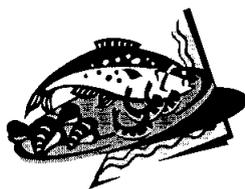
- _____ Can open a checking or saving account
- _____ Can write checks/ make withdrawals and make deposits
- _____ Can record banking transactions (either checking or savings)
- _____ Can budget allowance to last for a week
- _____ Shows understanding of concept of saving
- _____ Understands the difference between gross wage and take home pay
- _____ Can use a calculator to add, subtract, divide and multiple

Adequate

- _____ With assistance can make out monthly budget covering regular expenses for independent living
- _____ Shows some “sales resistance” to “something for nothing” advertising and “low weekly payment” credit plans
- _____ Can read monthly bank statements, compare balances, make adjustments as necessary (deduct service charges, check fees, adjust for differences in the balance)
- _____ Can comparison shop using unit pricing information
- _____ Understands the responsibility of filing a federal and state tax form
- _____ Knows the information that is required for filing taxes and knows where to go to get assistance in filing taxes

Exceptional

- _____ Budgets for unanticipated emergencies, seasonal bills, etc.
- _____ Understands buying on credit, loans, interest and late payment penalties
- _____ Understands payroll deductions, taxes, FICA, insurance
- _____ Understands what a good credit rating is, how it can be obtained and maintained
- _____ Can complete a short tax form
- _____ Can balance a checkbook
- _____ Has regular savings program



Category B: Food Management

Basic

- _____ Can order in a cafeteria or fast food restaurant
- _____ Can set the table properly
- _____ Knows name and use of cooking utensils

Intermediate

- _____ Can order a meal from the menu in a family-style restaurant
- _____ Can fix a breakfast for one
- _____ Can fix a lunch for one
- _____ Can fix a dinner for one
- _____ Can make out a grocery shopping list
- _____ Can carry out a grocery shopping trip (Selecting items on shopping list and paying cashier)
- _____ Can use cooking utensils effectively (knives, grater, can opener, peeler, egg beater, etc.)
- _____ Can use kitchen appliances effectively and safely

Adequate

- _____ Stores perishable items under refrigeration
- _____ Recognizes signs of spoilage in food
- _____ Can follow instructions for preparing canned or frozen foods
- _____ Can use acceptable table manners
- _____ Can plan weekly menu of nutritious meals
- _____ Can shop for a week's menu and stay within a food budget
- _____ Can prepare all meals on a week's menu

Exceptional

- _____ Can follow recipes from a cookbook
- _____ Can adjust recipes to feed more or less people than called for in recipes
- _____ Understands how to use dates on food packages to prevent spoilage
- _____ Takes advantage of specials on seasonal produce, uses coupons, farmers markets, etc.
- _____ Understands and can use unit pricing to comparison shop



Category C: Personal Appearance And Hygiene

Basic

- _____ Can dress self in an acceptable fashion (including underwear, socks, and shoes)
- _____ Can bathe self
- _____ Knows how to use soap, shampoo, deodorant, and other common personal products

Intermediate

- _____ Showers or bathes regularly
- _____ Brushes teeth regularly
- _____ Keeps hair clean and neat
- _____ Dresses in reasonably clean clothing

Adequate

- _____ Can read clothing labels and determine which clothes are to be dry cleaned, or hand, or machine washed
- _____ Can sort and machine wash clothes at a Laundromat using appropriate temperatures, amounts of soap, bleach, etc.
- _____ Can dry clothes in a dryer using appropriate settings
- _____ Knows approximate cost of dry cleaning and can arrange for dry cleaning
- _____ Can hand wash items following the instructions on the label
- _____ Can iron clothes
- _____ Can sew on button and make minor clothing repairs

Exceptional

- _____ Knows cost of and can budget money for special hair and nail care (permanents, braiding, manicures, etc.)
- _____ Knows appropriate clothing to wear for almost all occasions



Category D: Health

Basic

- _____ Can open child proof container
- _____ Knows not to take someone else's medication
- _____ Knows that drugs, alcohol, and tobacco may be harmful to a person's health.
- _____ Knows parts of the body and sexual functioning
- _____ Knows how pregnancy occurs

Intermediate

- _____ Can recognize and describe symptoms of colds, flu, and other common health problems
- _____ Knows how to get emergency health care
- _____ Knows what to do for a minor cut, a minor burn, a splinter
- _____ Understands the risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases
- _____ Understands the risks of drug and alcohol abuse

Adequate

- _____ Can take own temperature using an oral thermometer
- _____ Can nurse self through cold or flu
- _____ Recognizes and makes correct use of "over the counter" drugs for pain, stomach upset, diarrhea, fever, cold/allergy symptoms
- _____ Can call a doctor or dentist and schedule an appointment
- _____ Can read a prescription label correctly and follow the instructions
- _____ Can take medication without supervision
- _____ Knows how to dispose of drugs in a safe manner
- _____ Knows how to use what is included in a First Aid Kit
- _____ Has a copy of personal immunization records and medical history
- _____ Knows methods of birth control and how to obtain birth control devices
- _____ Knows how to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases
- _____ Has selected a doctor, dentist or clinic for regular health care

Exceptional

- _____ Is conscious of diet, exercise, good eating habits and preventative health measures
- _____ Can determine when to go to an emergency room and when to make an appointment with family doctor or clinic.
- _____ Understands importance of medical insurance and how to obtain it



Category E: Housekeeping

Basic

- _____ Can wash dishes adequately using soap and hot water
- _____ Can change a light bulb
- _____ Can make bed
- _____ Knows how to sweep floor and stairs, wash wood and linoleum floors, wash windows, dust, polish furniture, clean toilet, clean bath tub and sink
- _____ Knows appropriate cleaning products to use for different jobs
- _____ Knows how to dispose of garbage

Intermediate

- _____ Can use vacuum cleaner properly and change bags
- _____ Can change bed linen
- _____ Knows how to prevent sinks and toilets from clogging

Adequate

- _____ Knows how to stop a toilet from running
- _____ Knows how to use a plunger to unstop a toilet or sink
- _____ Can defrost the refrigerator
- _____ Can clean a stove
- _____ Knows what repairs a landlord should perform
- _____ Knows how to conserve energy and water

Exceptional

- _____ Can perform routine house-cleaning to maintain the home in a reasonably clean condition
- _____ Uses drawers and closets appropriately for storage
- _____ Can do minor household repairs
- _____ Is able to contact the landlord and request repairs
- _____ Can change a fuse or reset a circuit breaker
- _____ Can measure a window for shades or curtains
- _____ Knows how to get rid of and avoid roaches, ants, mice, etc.



Category F: Housing

Basic

_____ Understands the concept of renting and knows the role of a landlord

Intermediate

_____ Can read want ads for vacancies

_____ Understands basic terms (lease, sub-let, utilities, studio, efficiency, security deposit, references)

_____ Can calculate the costs associated with different types of housing

Adequate

_____ Can identify type of housing that is within budget and meets current housing needs

_____ Can calculate "start up" costs (utility deposits, connection fees, security deposit, first month's rent, purchase of furniture and all other household items)

_____ Can complete a rental application

_____ Can ask the landlord about apartment to determine if the space meets needs

_____ Knows to inspect an apartment to make sure appliances work and that the landlord has supplied accurate information about the apartment and the neighborhood

_____ Shows some concerns for rights of other residents with regard to property and noise

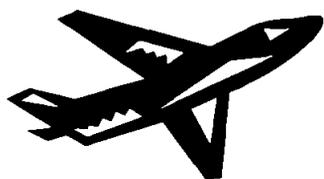
_____ Understands what could happen if the rights of other residents are not respected

_____ Understands all aspects of a security deposit (escrow account, return upon moving, etc.)

Exceptional

_____ Demonstrates the ability to get along with other residents and the landlord

_____ Knows how to get help if there is a conflict with the landlord



Category G: Transportation

Basic

- _____ Knows amount of money required for bus fare
- _____ Can make solitary trip on public transportation between two designated points
- _____ Can ride bicycle safely
- _____ Knows what is required to get a driver's license

Intermediate

- _____ Knows how to call a taxi and provide information needed
- _____ Knows the approximate cost of taking a taxi
- _____ If given instructions, can make public transportation journey involving several transfers
- _____ Can obtain monthly or student bus pass

Adequate

- _____ Can use information on public transportation routes to get to any location within the system
- _____ Knows how to travel between cities by bus or train (knows how to obtain travel information, make reservations, purchase tickets, get to station, find train, bus, etc.)
- _____ Can arrange routine transportation to work or school

Exceptional

- _____ Can read a map
- _____ Has a driver's license
- _____ Can give directions
- _____ Can fix bicycle
- _____ Knows how to do basic car maintenance
- _____ Can estimate cost of owning and operating a car for a month/ year



Category H: Educational Planning

Basic

_____ Has a realistic view of chances for completing high school and/or seeking higher education

Intermediate

_____ If high school graduation is not realistic, understands how to obtain a GED

_____ Understands future prospects and probable living standards relative to specific levels of education and/or specialized skills.

Adequate

_____ Can fill out forms to enroll in an educational program

_____ Has a general idea of what job he/she wants

_____ Has an appropriate educational plan for the job selected

_____ Understands educational/skill requirements for job selected

_____ Can discuss educational/vocational plans with teachers/counselor

_____ Is aware of the cost of higher education or vocational training

_____ Knows the difference between a loan and a grant

_____ Is aware of educational resources available in the community

Exceptional

_____ “Shops around” to find the best educational resources

_____ Knows where and how to access adult education or vocational training in the community

_____ Knows how to obtain financial aid/scholarships for additional education



Category I: Job Seeking Skills

Basic

- _____ Has reasonable idea of the types of jobs that will be available to him/her
- _____ Knows what the minimum wage is

Intermediate

- _____ Can fill out a standard job application form
- _____ Can read want ads and find appropriate leads
- _____ Can complete a mock interview giving appropriate answers to potential questions

Adequate

- _____ Has a completed job application/fact sheet to take on a job interview
- _____ Can make appointment for a job interview
- _____ Knows how to prepare for a job interview
- _____ Knows appropriate clothing to wear for an interview
- _____ Can complete a job interview
- _____ Knows the function of and can contact the public employment agency
- _____ Knows the function of and can contact private employment agencies
- _____ Understands that private employment agencies charge fees
- _____ Can identify ads placed by private employment agencies

Exceptional

- _____ Can write a resume
- _____ Can follow up an interview with a letter
- _____ Is able to maturely weigh the advantages of one job over another
- _____ Understands legal discrimination and where to seek help if discriminated against



Category J: Job Maintenance Skills

Basic

- _____ Dresses for work appropriately
- _____ Reports to work on time
- _____ Knows job responsibilities and how to complete job tasks

Intermediate

- _____ Knows how to read a pay stub
- _____ Knows to contact employer when not able to go to work
- _____ Knows what behaviors will get a person fired immediately
- _____ Knows how to ask for help with a problem on the job

Adequate

- _____ Knows if eligible for sick time, vacation time, or personal time
- _____ Knows what is a grievance procedure
- _____ Knows what to do to get a raise
- _____ Knows when and when not to talk with co-workers
- _____ Knows appropriate ways to talk to supervisor
- _____ Has a plan for handling anger with a supervisor, co-workers, or customers

Exceptional

- _____ Can implement anger management plan in majority of cases
- _____ Knows how to use company grievance procedure to resolve disagreements
- _____ Knows companies "unwritten polices" and can function within them
- _____ Knows how to ask for a raise
- _____ Knows what to do to be eligible for promotion
- _____ Knows legal rights as an employee



Category K: Emergency And Safety Skills

Basic

- _____ Knows functions of police, ambulance, and fire department and can reach each by calling the appropriate number
- _____ Is trained to evacuate a residence in case of fire
- _____ Knows proper way of exposing of smoking and other combustible materials
- _____ Knows how to lock and unlock door and windows

Intermediate

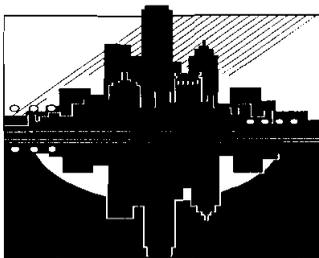
- _____ Understands basic fire prevention (no smoking in bed, using gas stove to heat, excessive use of extension cords, frayed electrical cords, etc.)
- _____ Knows how to check smoke alarm and how to replace battery
- _____ Knows that improperly used appliances can cause fires
- _____ Can recognize the smell of a gas leak
- _____ Knows what to do, who to call if she/he smells a gas leak

Adequate

- _____ Knows how to use a fire extinguisher
- _____ Knows the different methods for putting out different kinds of fires
- _____ Knows how to properly store cleaning materials
- _____ Can usually determine when professional medical help is needed

Exceptional

- _____ Has completed First Aid training
- _____ Has completed CPR training



Category L: Knowledge Of Community Resources

Basic

- _____ Knows location of nearest post office and how to use it
- _____ Knows how to get information by telephone
- _____ Knows where nearest park is located
- _____ Knows where nearest supermarket or shopping district is located

Intermediate

- _____ Knows where nearest Laundromat is located
- _____ Knows where personal bank is located
- _____ Can use the yellow pages to obtain information

Adequate

- _____ Knows who to contact if lost, frightened, depressed, anxious, sick, injured, out of food and money, utilities disconnected, or heat goes out
- _____ Knows where and how to register for selective service
- _____ Knows where the nearest state employment office is located
- _____ Can obtain a copy of birth certificate and a duplicate social security card

Exceptional

- _____ Has awareness of “specialized” resources: mental health counseling, consumer counseling, VD clinics, student aid offices, tenant groups, animal control, public recreation, etc.
- _____ Knows who elected representatives are and how to contact them
- _____ Has obtained a library card
- _____ Knows what the Better Business Bureau does and how to contact it



Category M: Interpersonal Skills

Basic

- _____ Can respond to introductions and answer simple questions
- _____ Can identify personal strengths and needs (with assistance if necessary)
- _____ Has "good" table manners: can use a knife, fork, spoons, and napkin appropriately

Intermediate

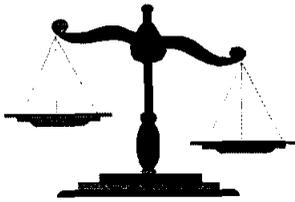
- _____ Looks others in the eye and shakes hands if other person offers
- _____ Can make "small talk" (face to face)
- _____ Can make introductions, including approaching others to introduce self
- _____ Can establish a realistic goal to meet an identified personal need (with assistance if necessary)

Adequate

- _____ Accepts invitations from others to be involved in social activities
- _____ Can make arrangements with peers for social activities
- _____ Knows where to get help if unable to resolve interpersonal conflicts alone
- _____ Has some ability to resolve conflicts with others
- _____ Refrains from physical violence as a means of solving interpersonal conflict
- _____ Has practiced (in role play or mock situation) how to say "no" to a peer who is trying to persuade him/her to do something wrong
- _____ Can develop a realistic plan with appropriate steps identified to achieve goal
- _____ Can carry out plan with some assistance provided
- _____ Can describe "best possible" outcome if a goal is achieved and "worst" outcome if it is not achieved
- _____ Can describe relationship between actions and consequences

Exceptional

- _____ Labels and expresses anger or other strong feelings appropriately, "talks out" problems rather than "acting them out"
- _____ Has demonstrated the ability to say "no" to peers
- _____ Can develop and carry out a personal plan for goal achievement without constant supervision
- _____ Can anticipate, with limited input from others, what consequences might be associated with different choices
- _____ Knows when and how to send a written thank you note



Category N: Legal Issues

Basic

- _____ Would have the phone number of someone to call if arrested or victimized
- _____ Understands generally what actions are against the law and what the consequences are for violations.

Intermediate

- _____ Knows rights of arrest
- _____ Knows what the functions of a lawyer
- _____ Knows legal age for buying alcohol and tobacco products
- _____ Understands the meaning of “legal age” (what you can do and what you cannot do)
- _____ Knows the legal requirements for marriage

Adequate

- _____ If male, knows responsibility for registering for selective service
- _____ Is aware of availability of free legal services
- _____ Understands consequences of signing a contract or a lease
- _____ Knows legal penalty for:
 - ___ Buying, possessing, selling and smoking marijuana and other drugs,
 - ___ Buying and drinking beer and alcohol underage,
 - ___ Trespassing,
 - ___ Shoplifting,
 - ___ Burglary,
 - ___ Possession of stolen property,
 - ___ Traffic violations.

Exceptional

- _____ Shows good citizenship and an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of a citizen
- _____ Knows how and where to register to vote
- _____ Knows where to go to vote
- _____ Knows the difference between “felony,” “misdemeanor,” and “violation”



APPENDIX H – Youth’s Post-Program Satisfaction & Referring Agency Evaluation

Our belief is that evaluation is multi-faceted. This means that evaluations need to be developed for both internal and external use, by program participants and observers, by staffs and referring sources, by funding sources and contributors. The following are examples of two types of evaluations, youths who have participated in an AILP, and staffs from agencies that have referred youths for services. Others that might be considered are AILP program staff, community supporters and funding sources.

Youth Evaluation – After Participating in the AILP

1. How do you feel the AILP helped you to prepare for living on your own?
2. What did you learn while participating in the AILP?
3. What would you like to have learned while in the AILP?
4. Do you feel that you cooperated with the AILP staff?
5. Do you feel that the AILP staff gave you enough supervision and support?
6. What changes would you make in the program? (Please list)
7. Where did you go when you left the program?
8. What problems did you encounter when you left the program?
9. What specific things did you learn while in the AILP that helped you after leaving?
10. What helped you most while in the program?
11. Are there any comments, ideas, suggestions or criticisms you would like to make?
(Use the reverse if needed.)

Post-Program Evaluation of AILP - Discharge Evaluation*

To be completed by referring agency social worker or case manager. (Use reverse side for explanation)

Program Participant _____ Social Worker or Case Manager _____

Date of Discharge _____ Date of Evaluation _____

1. Services Rendered

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth was assisted in finding decent, affordable, safe housing.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth was assisted in finding adequate furnishings for housing.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth was assisted in enrolling in educational/vocational program.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	AILP staff monitored youth's educational/vocational progress.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	AILP staff assisted youth in completing life skills training program.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	AILP staff met with youth weekly and documented progress/problems.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	AILP staff assisted youth to find employment or monitored existing work situation.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth has a certified copy of birth certificate.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth has copy of Social Security card.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth has a savings and or checking account (circle one or both).
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth received counseling or on-call services as needed.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth was allowed to live on own while still under AILP supervision.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	AILP had youth involved with community resources.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	AILP sent regular reports on youth progress.

2. Client Growth

Please use the following scale to score the items below with:

0= No Improvement 1= a little improvement 2= moderate improvement

Score	
	Ability to meet basic survival skills with minimal support.
	Ability to take initiative in meeting own needs.
	Ability to support self financially.
	Ability to ask for help.
	Ability to manage time.
	Ability to set up and keep appointments.
	Ability to find a job.
	Ability to hold a job.
	Ability to function in an educational/vocational program.
	Ability to develop a support network.
	Ability to manage money.
	Ability to manage apartment upkeep and general housekeeping.
	Ability to utilize community services.
	Ability to use public transportation.
	Ability to take responsibility for own actions.
	Overall self-awareness.
	Overall to express self verbally.
	Overall to personal hygiene.
	Overall judgment concerning choice of friends.
	Overall confidence to function independently.
	Overall ability to communicate during stressful situations.
	Total

3. General Issues

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoided legal problems while in the AILP.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was discharged according to agreed upon timeframe-not terminated.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Has stable living situation.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed life skills training program.
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed or in appropriate educational/vocational program.

Any additional comments on this youth's progress while in this program or post-discharge.

*Adapted from New Life Youth Services, Cincinnati, Ohio.



APPENDIX I – Needs Assessment Survey

The purpose of this survey is to gather information on perceptions of services available to youths in a particular service delivery area. In addition, the document asks for suggestions and comments that respondents have about the delivery of services to youths in out-of-home care. The questionnaires would be mailed to all agency staffs; Department of Social Services and private agency child welfare and residential child care staffs, foster parents, purchase of service providers, community representatives, and other interested parties.

In developing a report on the data gathered by using this instrument we try to detail the responses for each question and grouping of respondents. The example below is an outline of just such an effort:

Summary of Adolescent Independent Living Survey

During (month or dates), 612 questionnaires were mailed to all Department of Social Services Child Welfare staff, foster parents, purchase of service providers, community representatives, and other interested parties. The survey's purpose was to gather information on perceptions of services available to youths in the state. In addition, the document asked for suggestions and comments about the delivery of services to youths in out-of-home care.

The Survey

The survey was in question-and-answer format. The first section requested demographic data for respondents: name, agency, address, position title, and telephone number. Of 226 respondents, all but 10 completed this section. The second section asked 11 questions about respondents' present and anticipated contacts with DSS and other youths in out-of-home care, community resources, and mentors or volunteers. It also solicited perceptions of the most pressing difficulties facing youths exiting care and moving into their communities. A final question (#12) asked respondents to check any of four choices indicating their willingness to participate in independent living programming or follow-ups by our staff. The following summarizes responses to this final question.

- 78 (33%) **Adolescent mentor program**
- 79 (33%) **Community independent living advisory board**
- 86 (36%) **Teaching of skills to adolescents**
- 90 (38%) **Follow-up contacts by Independent Living Resources, Inc., staff**
- 26 (11%) **Respondents checked all four items** (These also are counted in the individual items above.)

As of (date), ILR, Inc. received 226 responses to the survey, or a 37 percent rate of return-an excellent level of response for a general survey mailiipe. The following provides a further breakdown of survey respondents by locale:

County Office Staff	No. Sent	Returned (%)
County A	200	91 (45%)
County B	33	25 (76%)
County C	50	24 (48%)
County D	70	33 (47%)
Foster Parents (all counties)	232	26 (11%)
Community Groups & POS Providers*	27	27 (100%)
Totals	612 (100%)	226 (37%)

(*Small numbers of additional surveys were distributed in this category; the exact number is unknown. Therefore, figures in this category are an approximation.)

Due to the limited time span of the project, we could not follow-up on non-returned surveys. A follow-up mailing would have increased the overall return rate.

The following summarizes and highlights respondents' reactions to each of the survey questions. We repeat that 60 percent of those surveyed did not respond. We believe the significance of this on our overall effort was minimal. The information contained in the surveys returned was similar in content to other data-gathering efforts. The balance of the report details initiatives beyond the surveys. Overall, we believe summarizing results of the 226 surveys is a reasonably accurate portrayal of out-of-home care activities in the State.

To be most useful, we have when possible grouped responses by county office or interest group, in three principal categories: community groups and purchase of service providers, DSS foster parents, and DSS staff.

Summary of Responses: POS Providers & Community Representatives (N=27)

The respondents in this group represented all counties. Most were from residential child-caring agencies, predominantly staff of group homes and shelters. This group was fairly knowledgeable about community resources that have the potential to provide support for expansion of programming. Still, a substantial number replied they were "unsure" about who could "assist" in the delivery of adolescent independent living services (see Question #5). Approximately 60 percent of these respondents checked (Question #12) one or more areas, indicating their willingness to participate in differing aspects of independent living programming in the future. Six respondents (22%) checked all four areas for future involvement.

1. Do you presently work with adolescents?
 - Yes (22) No (0)
2. Do you foresee working with adolescents in custody of DHS?
 - Yes (19) No (3)
3. Do you consider present services for adolescents in the care and custody of the Department of Social Services (DSS) to be adequate?
 - DSS programs are not adequate because the needs of these youths are changing
 - Too dependent on individual social workers and caseloads
 - DSS needs additional alternative living arrangements for youth
 - There are too many limitations to foster family care
 - Certain geographic locations are more limited than others, e.g., County X
 - Poor overall planning for youths
 - Few programs designed to meet the needs of adolescents
 - Limited shelter or foster care space available
 - Lack of formal counseling programs
 - Need more group homes-short-term (1-3 mos.) and long-term (1 year)
 - We need more counselors, people to drive them to NA/AA, independent living centers, places where they can hang out that are fun
 - There has not been adequate preparation and/or planning for the child for independent living and adult responsibilities.
 - Youth "under-referred" to community programs
4. What "new" or additional adolescent services would you like to see offered?
 - Life skills education/pre-independent living skill building
 - Independent living programs
 - Adolescent groups to deal with building self-esteem and confidence. Also, motivation groups and related activities
 - Transition programs/apartment programs (supervised and unstaffed)
 - Follow-up services after discharge
 - Peer-counseling
 - In-patient adolescent substance abuse, psychiatric facilities
 - Local business work programs
 - Respite care for primary caregivers
 - Services to youths ages 18-22

- Outreach services by private, non-profit organizations
 - Parenting services/teen mother programs
 - Remedial education programs for drop-out youths
 - Big Brother/Sisters programs
 - Comprehensive, intensive, culturally sensitive services
5. Are there community organizations or agencies in your area that could assist in the delivery of adolescent independent living services?
- Many replied “unsure,” or left this question blank
 - University of XX
 - County Economic Opportunity
 - Community College
 - State Employment Office and Job Corps
 - Family and Youth Services
 - Volunteers
 - Child and Family Services
 - University of XX Extension
 - Alternatives to Violence
 - Civic Organizations-Masons, Elks, American Legion, hotel associations, etc.
 - Teen Network
 - Central Youth Services
 - Storefront School-academic needs
 - Center for Independent Living (handicapped program)
 - Churches
6. Are there local businesses or private sector organizations in your area that are presently providing adolescent services, school incentives, etc., for youth?
- After-school services for youths
 - Summer youth employment programs
 - Boys and Girl Clubs
 - State Employment Office
 - Teen Network
 - Medical Group
 - Parents Anonymous
 - Beach Hotel
 - Churches
 - Community Foundation
7. Are there community organizations or agencies that could be utilized to develop adolescent services in your geographic area?
- These ideas are best served in a consortium between public and private
 - Parks and Recreation departments
 - Community Centers
 - Boys and Girls Clubs
 - Rotary, Lions, Elks, Kiwanis
 - Hotel Associations
 - Community Associations (e.g., Sunrise Community Association)
 - Churches
 - University of XX
 - Salvation Army
 - Jaycees
 - Coast Community Mental & Comprehensive Health & Adolescent Health Network
 - Parents & Children Together
8. Are there businesses or private interests in your geographic area that might be receptive to helping to develop adolescent services in the community?

- If businesses can gain some exposure or benefits, there is a chance they'll support some programs for youths
 - Hotel Industry
 - Local businesses (health clubs, etc.)
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Hotel and Tourism Industries
 - Catholic Charities
 - 700 Club
 - Junior League
9. Are there mentor programs for adolescents in your area?
- Yes (6) No (14)
 - Big Brothers, Big Sisters
 - Family Support
 - YWCA
 - Child and Family Services
 - Alateen
 - Youth At Risk
 - Adult Friends for Youth
10. What are the biggest problems facing youth who are presently in the care and custody of the Department of Human Services?
- Not enough adequate placements
 - Meeting youths' needs within
 - Youth turning 18 and not knowing how to live without assistance
 - Separation issues, lack of social and independent living skills, chemical abuse, depression, poor education
 - Untrained caretakers
 - Providing culturally sensitive programming, including staff who are appropriately bilingual, culturally, and ethnically representative of the youths served
 - Accessibility of services-geographically inaccessible
 - Lack of a subsidy to use during youth's transition from care
 - Lack of driver's license
11. What are the greatest problems facing youths (18-22) who are "on their own" in your geographic area?
- Job security
 - Lack of higher education and training opportunities
 - Not enough good-paying jobs
 - Not being trained for work, finding a place to live, and everyday living skills
 - Housing options
 - High costs of living
 - Becoming homeless
 - Lack of public transportation
 - Parenting services
12. Would you be willing to participate in any of the following?
- | | |
|----------|---|
| 17 (63%) | Adolescent mentor program |
| 15 (56%) | Community independent living advisory board |
| 17 (63%) | Teaching of skills to adolescents |
| 17 (63%) | Follow-up contacts by Brendan Assoc. staff |
| 6 (22%) | Respondents checked all four boxes |
- (These are also counted in the individual areas above.)

Summaries of responses by purchase of service providers, DSS foster parents, and staff would follow in a fashion similar to that of the example above.

Independent Living Resources, Inc., Human Services Consultation
411 Andrews Road, Suite 230, Durham, NC 27705 (919) 384-1457 – www.ilrinc@ilrinc.com



411 Andrews Road, Suite 230
Durham North Carolina 27705-2993
E-mail ilrinc@ilrinc.com Website: www.ilrinc.com
919-384-1457 Fax 919-384-0338

Dear Colleague:

Independent Living Resources, Inc., in concert with the Department of Human Services, is undertaking a survey of individuals involved with youth. These persons are those who, in some manner, support the delivery of adolescent services to children and families within the state. The information will assist in the development of a state plan for adolescent independent living.

“Independent living,” in this case, is the reference to services that will assist youth to make the transition from the child welfare system to early adulthood self-sufficiency. Independent living is also referred to as “interdependent” living. Independent and interdependent living programs are relatively “new” service offerings for child welfare. Previously, preparation of adolescents for their transition from foster or residential care had seen little effort nationally. Helping adolescents develop skills-such as getting and keeping a job, cooking, cleaning, personal hygiene, time management, problem solving, decision making, and personal communications-are some of the “new” service offerings. We are requesting your assistance in taking a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey form. The survey questions are open-ended. Our desire is to gather the opinions of state agency staff, foster parents, service providers, community youth workers, and other youth-serving folks throughout the state.

Please return this survey as soon as possible. If you have any questions about this survey, please feel free to contact me at (919) 384-1457.

Sincerely,

Project Director

Adolescent Independent Living Survey

Name: _____
Title: _____
Agency: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____
Telephone: () _____ - _____

If the space available below is not adequate, please answer on additional sheets.

1. Do you presently work with adolescents? Yes No
2. Do you foresee working with adolescents in the custody of Department of Human Services? Yes No
3. Do you consider present services for adolescents in the care and custody of the Department of Human Services (DHS) to be adequate? Yes No Please explain.
4. What "new or additional adolescent services would you like to see offered?"
5. Are there community organizations or agencies in your area that could assist in the delivery of adolescent independent living services? Yes No If yes, please describe those organizations and how they could be of assistance.
6. Are local businesses or private sector organizations in your area presently providing adolescent services, school incentives, etc., for youth? Yes No If yes, please describe those efforts.
7. Are there community organizations or agencies that could be utilized to develop adolescent services in your geographic area? Yes No If yes, please describe.
8. Are there businesses or other private interests in your geographic area that might be receptive to helping to develop adolescent services in the community? Yes No If yes, please describe.
9. Are there mentor programs for adolescents in your area? Yes No If yes, please describe.
10. What are the biggest problems facing youth who are presently in the care and custody of the Department of Human Services?
11. What are the greatest problems facing youths (18-22) who are "on their own" in your geographic area?
12. Would you be willing to participate in any of the following? Please check:
 - Adolescent mentor program
 - Community independent living advisory board
 - Teaching of skills to adolescents
 - Follow-up contacts by Independent Living Resources, Inc., project staff.

Please complete and return this survey as soon as possible to:

William V. Griffin, Project Director
Independent Living Resources, Inc.
411 Andrews Road, Suite 230
Durham, NC 27705

Thank you.



APPENDIX J – Oregon Example

In the late 1980's Oregon developed an AILP with state monies and later adapted that program to the 1987 IL legislation. Elements of those efforts have been replicated in many programs around the country. The following is an article by Lee Cornforth the Oregon Independent Living Coordinator at that time. (Salem, Oregon, 1987)

Federal enactment of the Independent Living Initiatives has been one of the most beneficial programs ever available to older teenagers in foster care. Oregon, for some time, has funded an Independent Living subsidy program for teenagers with state general funds. There wasn't money, however, to prepare youths before they went into apartment living. The Social Security Act IV-E Independent Living Grant was exactly what Oregon's Community Services Division (CSD) needed to really make sure teenagers were ready to take their next big step into adulthood. The development of the Oregon Independent Living program was based on emphasizing six basic principles:

1. Independent living readiness services should be individualized and available to every eligible teenager in the state.
2. There should be maximum use of existing local private, community, and governmental agency services that can help prepare youths for independent living. Networking services within local communities and creating local ownership of this new service will be a key objective to gaining a permanent place for independent living readiness training in the existing delivery system.
3. The new program should be incorporated into the agency (CSD) service delivery system in ways that minimize disruption or cause new procedural requirements.
4. There should be local service authorization of grant expenditures for allowable services based on standard program guidelines. The focus should be on preserving fiscal stewardship while minimizing processing roadblocks that could delay giving needed services.
5. There should be training opportunities, in relation to preparing teenagers for independent living, available to out-of-home care providers and agency staff.
6. Local CSD staff should be encouraged to be creative, within the bounds of procedural and program requirements, in finding ways to prepare teenagers and to leverage existing IV-E funds to serve more teenagers.

With these six principles in mind, Oregon established an overall state policy to guide local spending and service requirements.

Maximum program and expenditure control were placed with local branch managers so services could be developed and tailored to unique local needs. Local assumption of IV-E Independent Living program management has been a gradual process, away from centralized control. Case record keeping was set up to be maintained in each local office and to use existing payment procedures. This approach reduced complications of local staff needing to learn additional procedural and payment systems. A Central Grant Budget is maintained and expenditures are monitored statewide, but a spending cap for each region of the state was established based on the number of eligible youths in each area. Branch managers have direct authority to spend grant funds so long as the expenditure meets policy requirements and is within their regional cap.

Overall grant management and coordination are a centralized function, but CSD continues to move more control to the local level each year. An example is that this fiscal year, training for foster parents and staff working with teenagers is being moved to regional control and folded in with other professional training. Also this year, purchase of training materials used to benefit foster teenagers can be authorized at the regional/branch level.

Computer data reports have been developed which are sent to local branch offices each month to aid in local program management.

- One report gives detailed information about each eligible youth, such as whether services are being given and how long they are eligible, etc.
- Another data report gives details about local spending.
- A third report gives an analysis of use compared to spending. This report shows: clients eligible, enrolled, served-to-date, rate of spending needed to balance the year, etc.

Plan and Community Facilitators

The CSD independent living program emphasizes the need for close local community development, and the intensive work associated with getting a youth's transition plan actualized. Thus, it makes it possible for branch managers to contract with private citizens to do much of the local and individual case plan development. These private citizens are known as "Plan Facilitators" and "Community Facilitators," depending on the type of contract developed. The following are excerpts from Client Services Manual detailing the development of facilitators:

Private Citizen Participation

Oregon's IV-E Independent Living program encourages local citizen participation and community networking of services that benefit older teenagers' transitions to adulthood. Branch managers may contract directly with a private citizen to help promote this program, using either of two specially designed contracts, depending upon local need.

A. Plan Facilitator

A private citizen may be offered a contract to provide six to ten hours per month of day-to-day assistance, monitoring, and guidance to youths as they move toward completion of their independent living plan. The plan facilitator works closely with CSD professional staff and others in the community who provide direction, training, and educational opportunities. A plan facilitator may provide services at any time after a youth has qualified for the program from an early assessment phase to the final completion of a service plan. Plan facilitator services are individual client centered and are paid at a standard hourly rate. Facilitator selection is from citizens in the local community who have been approved by the branch manager. The facilitator does not have casework responsibility or authority.

B. Community Facilitator

A private citizen under contract as a "Community Facilitator" is paid monthly, based upon a fixed hourly rate of \$8 or \$10 (depending upon work to be performed), for a negotiated number of hours of service. Community facilitator services are not individual client-centered. Work to be performed emphasizes assisting CSD branch staff in the promotion, development, and maintenance of dynamic independent living readiness programs with the branch area.

The facilitator acts on behalf of the branch to promote community participation in the development of a comprehensive range of services in accordance with the contract. The facilitator does not have casework responsibility or authority. As Plan Facilitator, the private citizen works with specified youths (like a "Big Brother" or "Big Sister" to help them achieve their independent living transition plans. As Community Facilitator, the private citizen acts on behalf of the branch to link up and plan with other community agencies in development of major independent living readiness services that will benefit all youths making the transition.

The contracts are standardized throughout the state and applicants must be screened and meet eligibility requirements. Contracting for a facilitator is strictly optional at the local level, depending on need. Usually, only one Community Facilitator per branch is allowed and Plan Facilitators can only be contracted with to help youths with exceptional needs.

A Comprehensive Program

The Oregon plan emphasizes development of a comprehensive Independent Living Program within the state's foster care system. The Independent Living grant, therefore, supplements state efforts to comply with federal law requiring independent living readiness services for youths over 16 years of age and who reside in foster care. The Oregon basic plan is to provide individual readiness services to each youth based upon a written assessment of needs. Handicapping conditions do not pose a barrier to eligibility for this service.

In concert with local communities, local private agencies, educational, or governmental vendors either through contract or direct purchase provide services. These services include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Individual and group counseling,
- Development of daily living skills (full range) as needed,
- Educational and vocational development, and
- Work and career planning.

Community Networking of Services

Private citizens are encouraged to participate with state staff in developing community program support as well as the establishment of new services where necessary. There should be linkages at the community level of all essential services.

Outreach and Community Participation is Promoted Statewide

- Local promotional activities include youths, local agencies, and private citizens.
- Teenage newsletters are sent to all eligible youths each month.
- Promotional posters and brochures are used statewide.
- Local teen conferences, group workshops, and youth enrichment activities are being conducted within local communities that help prepare participating youths for independence and attract other eligible youths.

Professional Training and Training Materials

Grand funds supplement state general funds to allow training and resource materials to be available for foster care providers and CSD staff that help youths prepare for independent living.

The program is now in place throughout the state of Oregon and continues to grow and develop. With emphasis on local control and local creativity throughout the state, CSD is tapping into enthusiasm and good ideas that have just been waiting to be discovered. Oregon served over 1,200 teenagers last year with a wide array of unique experiences and services within their local communities.

Statewide Themes

Teen camps and conferences were conducted in several places in the state. One teen camp was reported on as follows:

Racing down the wild rapids of the McKenzie, or guiding yourself over a rope bridge, were just a few of the activities teenagers participated in at the statewide camp. The camp, held in August 1990 at Lost Valley Center, just east of Eugene, was designed for teenagers 16-19 who resided in foster care. IV-E Independent Living Facilitators from several parts of the state organized the camp. This was the first time a group of private citizens assumed full responsibility to develop and organize an outing of this size for teenagers in state care. The objective of the camp was to help prepare teenagers for adulthood. In addition to physical activities, the 67 teenagers attending formed small groups and concentrated on self-esteem, self-awareness, learning to set personal goals, developing skills for daily living, and many other contemporary issues.

State/Community Partnerships

During 1990 while using IV-E Independent Living Grant funds, CSD made possible the placement of foster teens from throughout Oregon in Portland's YWCA Emancipation Program.

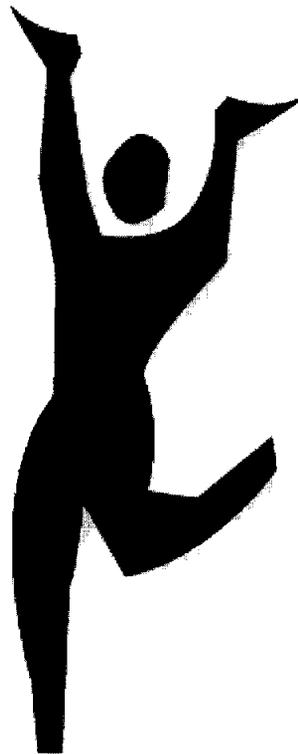
The “Y” has an innovative and successful program that is nationally recognized. An initial contract to serve five young women through the IV-E grant has grown so that it now provides 13 teens from all over Oregon with a place to live and the help they need to transition to self-sufficiency.

One Last Word About Facilitators

These private citizens are unique in the way they participate with local CSD offices around the state to promote needed independent living readiness services. The facilitator sometimes fills the role of big brother or big sister to a youth who is getting ready for independence. Most often, the facilitator acts on behalf of the Branch office to network with other community organizations and to help in the development of independent living readiness services for youths. These facilitators are proving to be of great value around the state of Oregon. They are a positive link between state and local services that benefit Oregon youths.

In Conclusion

To the end that this program becomes a regular, normalized, and required service for every Oregon teenager who must be placed in state foster care, it is hoped that local communities will assume program ownership and control and that the State Program Coordinator will be minimally needed. The Coordinator at this time exists to promote maximum benefits to the largest number of eligible youths and to encourage statewide development of a strong independent living component within the Oregon sub-care system.



Appendix K - Resources

Independent Living Program Strategies for the 21st Century

#024 - Program Strategies - \$29.95 - to order additional copies of this text and all the other resources listed use the order form on page 226.

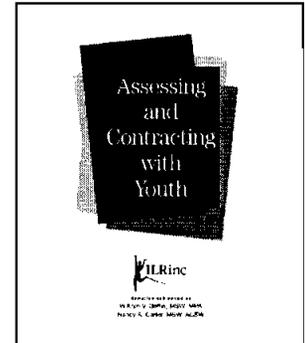
Assessing and Contracting With Youth with CD-ROM #043 - \$37.95

This text provides professionals with a collection of assessment, contracting, and outcome forms that when used with youth, provide reliable information for;

- goal plans,
- case-management,
- and post-discharge services.

Forms include those useful to residential programs, foster homes, pregnancy and parenting programs, as well as follow up services.

This resource also includes a CD-ROM that allows downloading of the forms for reformatting to meet individual or agency needs.

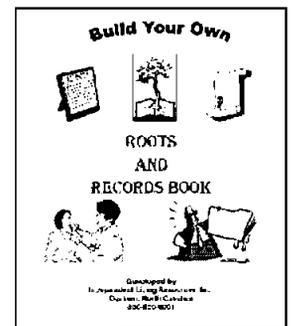


Build Your Own Roots and Records - #226 \$24.95

Nothing helps a young person more with putting together their identity than a life book. Each young person will enjoy having a book, which not only looks unique but also, is unique!

This "roots and records" book is intended to help a young person organize documents and life events that are unique and important to them. Each section offers suggestions on what information, documentation, and pictures to include.

Best Use: Youths, foster and adoptive parents, social workers, youth workers, adoption and foster care workers, foster parent and foster youth associations.

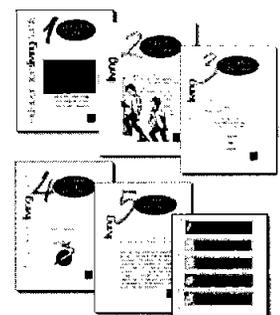


Independent Living Cards - Set of 5 Decks of Cards

#031 - \$34.95

Shuffle and deal them, or just pass the cards around. These versatile and fun-to-use Decks of Cards are a great way to engage young people in discussions about life skills. Each card presents a situation that allows young people a chance to practice how to handle life's tough problems and decisions. Use them with groups or one-on-one. Get to know your teen and yourself better.

Best Use: With groups, as a "no-planning required" activity, to simulate real-life situations, classroom, retreats, conferences, teen discussions.



Youth Advocacy Start-Up Kit - #042 - \$34.95

This resource includes information and reproducible documents to assist anyone in helping to create a youth advisory board or committee.

This three-ring binder provides step-by-step guidance to establish youth boards and suggestions for youth and adult members. A computer diskette of all documents is also included to adjust with your own program information.

Audience: Youth program coordinators, mentors, volunteers, group organizers, etc.



Best Use: Developing youth focused programs

Putting It Together: A Program Guide for Helping Youth Transition into the Community - #038 \$54.95

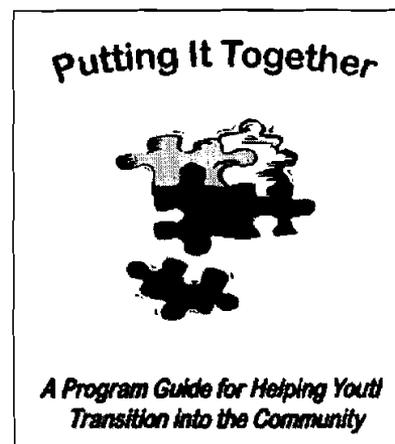
186-page (plus handouts) 3-ring binder - Resource

Establishing a program to help youth reach self-sufficiency requires hard work, patience, and a comprehensive transitional plan. **Putting It Together** offers program coordinators and other youth workers tools to develop and implement each piece of the plan.

This resource can also assist in the development of new program components or to evaluate existing programs. Each of the twelve sections offers information and suggestions too help incorporate the transitional plan into a community-based program. Many sections also contain exercises for training youth workers, parents, mentors, volunteers, and foster parents. Topics include:

- What is a Transitional Program? • The Foundation of Independent Living
- Coordinating the Transitional Team • Community Involvement
- How to Teach Life Skills • Youth Assessment
- How to Write an Individual Transition Plan • Helping Youths Make Decisions
- Developing an Employment Component • Focus on Education
- Living Arrangements • On a Shoestring Budget!

Best Use: administrators, supervisors, independent living coordinators, teachers, youth group leaders, and other youth serving professionals interested in developing transitional programs, training youth workers, mentors, and other adults who help youths reach self sufficiency.



Independent Living Group Activities Books

Set of Four or Individually

SPECIAL - Volumes I, II, III, IV - #033 \$49.95

Individual Books:

Volume I - Ten Activities -#033A \$20.95

Volume II - Seven Activities -#033B \$14.95

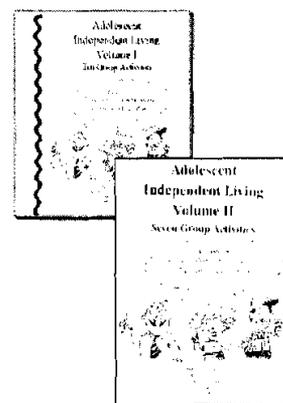
Volume III - Seven Activities -#033C \$14.95

Volume IV - Seven Activities -#033D \$14.95

The text(s) contains independent living group activities created by teams of North Carolina social workers specializing in teaching life skills to adolescents in substitute care. They were edited and compiled by ILR, Inc., to benefit other social workers conducting groups with adolescents.

- To identify community resources that matches the "need" of the activity.
- To keep the activity to 1 to 2 hours.
- To include all stages of activity development, including publicity and resource development.
- To consider the best time of the year to run the activity.
- To establish all facets of setup; such as location, refreshments, time of day, and room arrangements.
- To describe in detail each segment of the activity; participant gathering, topic development, & closing.
- To include some form of evaluation: written, verbal, or group response (for each activity offered there are questions to be answered either verbally or in writing).
- To develop a "backup" plan and adjustments to the activity should unexpected changes occur in location, number of planned participants, speaker, etc.
- To plan how to show appreciation for involvement of community resources.
- To include youth in all aspects of the group activity.

Each of the activities follows these guidelines and should be helpful as you plan the activity for your group. It is important to note that some activities utilize materials from published works. In such cases, the resource is cited with the information on how to obtain the material.



A Pocket Guide to Independent Living

1-100 copies \$6.95 each 101-500 copies \$6.00 each 501 or more copies \$5.00 each

This comprehensive, easy to carry spiral bound reference guide to independent living puts essential information at the fingertips of adolescents!

A Personal Reference Guide for Students

Only 4"x6" it fits comfortably in pocket, purse, or backpack for easy, inconspicuous access when needed to complete an application, looking for the right house or apartment, etc.

Covers Vital Aspects of Transitioning to Independence

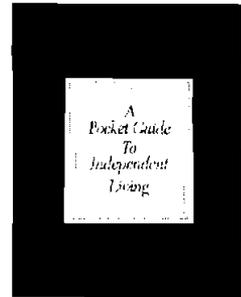
- Personal Information
- Budgeting
- Community Help
- Finding Housing
- Employment Tips
- Cleaning/Laundry Guide
- Responsible Shopping
- Household Needs
- Abbreviations & Symbols

A Teaching Tool for Groups or Classrooms

The Pocket Guide provides a format for helping students organize, plan, and prepare to live responsibly on their own. All nine chapters are presented in easy to understand language with attractive graphics and space for additional notes.

A Perfect Aid for Meeting Individual Transition Plan Goals

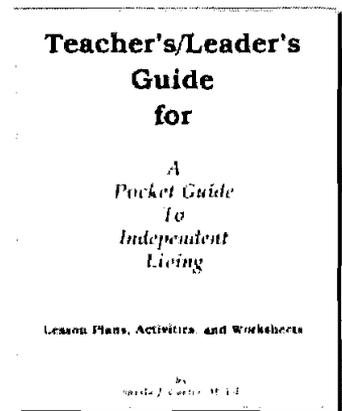
For educator's the Pocket Guide covers all four domains that must be addressed in Individual Transition Plans (ITPs) as required under the Department of Education. For independent living coordinators, the Pocket Guide is another excellent resource for youths to use in developing good transitional skills.



Pocket Guide to Independent Living Leader's Manuals \$84.95

This highly effective tool will make teaching chapters in the Pocket Guide to Independent Living easy and meaningful to young people. This curriculum manual combines interesting thought-provoking lessons and community experiences in an easy to follow format that will reinforce information contained in the Pocket Guide. Packaged in an easy to use loose-leaf binder, the manual contains over 200 pages of lessons and reproducible activities, worksheets, and assignment sheets to monitor and ensure understanding and mastery.

Also included, are transparencies to aid in class or group presentations and enlargements of all of the Personal Information pages that will afford students or clients opportunities to practice spelling, writing, and editing skills before actually putting any information in their books. Lists of Suggested Responses are provided for all lessons as well as Answer Keys for all activity and assignment sheets. An appendix contains additional activities for students who learn at a slower pace or who might require additional drill or practice.



SPECIAL- 5 Pocket Guides and 1 Leader's Manual - \$99.95 - a savings of \$19.95

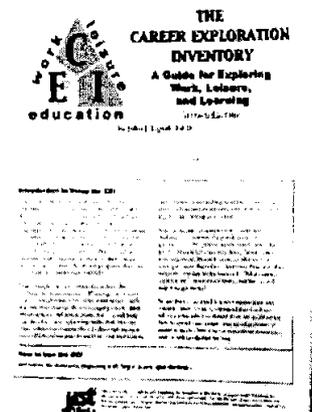
The Career Exploration Inventory (CEI)

Package of 25 Inventories - #037 - \$35.95 (Spanish Version \$37.95)

How the CEI works - A simple self-scoring grid totals the responses, and the CEI interest profile provides an immediate graphic picture of interest levels in 15 different categories. Inventory takers then open the device to a clever four-panel *Work, Learning, & Leisure Activities Guide*; find the areas of strongest interest; and get information on hundreds of related occupations, typical leisure activities, and related educational and training programs. **Scoring and interpretation are all in one piece!**

Self-scoring--another way to promote self-direction. CEI users get immediate feedback from their efforts. No waiting for batch or off-site computer scoring.

Best Use: Group and individual work with teens preparing for jobs and careers.



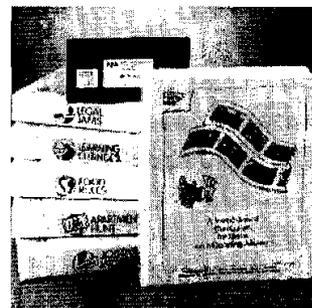
Independent Living Skills Library #115 - \$1,150

SAVE!!! SAVE!!! SAVE \$253.00 over individual video prices!

Library Includes:

- Apartment Hunt • Food Rules
- Health Matters • Money Talks
- Legal Jams • Learning Change
- Getting Ready For The Job World

- 7 - 30 minute Videos
- 7 Leader's Guides
- 3 sets of Student Workbooks
- 10 - 1-year subscriptions to Getting Ready newspaper



How Foster Parents Can Teach Independent Living Skills To Teens

16-minute - Teaching Moments Video - #090A - \$99.95

Special!! Bonus 12-minute Video –

Teach Teens Cooking included with purchase!!

The quality of life foster teens face is shaped by what they learn in the foster home. In this upbeat, easy-to-implement program, foster parents learn how to encourage self-reliance in teenagers. Everyday activities are turned into springboards for teaching independent living skills, so that teens can face their future with less confusion, a lot more certainty.



Here is a natural showcase for putting a teaching moment to work in real life. This video shows parents how to include kids in the world of cooking, such as suggesting ideas for meals, following recipes, making a shopping list and going to the grocery store. A fun way to engage the whole family in the heart of the home - the kitchen.

Audience: Foster and Adoptive Parents, Parents

The Foster Parent Collection - #222 - \$119.95

Experience the fun and enthusiasm of foster parent sessions with this collection of some of our best "tried and true" training curricula. Each of the ten curriculum topics is geared towards helping foster parents develop the skills and knowledge necessary to help youths live more self-sufficiently. Foster parents will appreciate the insight! You will appreciate a ready-made curriculum.

Each session is broken into a 2-2 1/2 hour interactive training to help foster parents, volunteers, and mentors learn how to assist youths transitioning towards self-sufficiency.



The ILR Foster Parent Training Collection provides step-by-step trainer instructions along with reproducible participant handouts. The first section offers instructions/ideas for using the curriculum and how to involve foster parents as trainers. The last section outlines how trainers can develop their own individualized foster parent session given specific group needs. Other sections include ten curricula on various topics.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- What is Independent Living • Teamwork for Youthwork • Finding Teaching Moments
- Adolescent Development: Stages not Ages • Helping Youths Make Decisions
- Living Arrangement Options • Assessing Young People and Liking It!
- Say What? How to Communicate with Youths • Work Experiences for Every Youth
- Locating Youth Education and Training

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practical legal information*

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**Independent Living Program Strategies
for the 21st Century: Developing a
Comprehensive Adolescent Independent
Living Program Plan**

William V. Griffin, MSW, MPA

Nancy A. Carter, MSW, ACSW

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