

Other Permanent Plan Living Arrangement

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Office of Child Representative
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Why am I wearing what I am wearing?

- A. To make OCR question my presentation abilities
- B. Young people need to feel comfortable in talking to the person they are supposed to trust.
- C. I bought way too many clothes, and I cannot let my husband know
- D. Most professionals working with young people assert power through attire
- E. All of the Above

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Quick Thoughts

- How many of you currently work with young people 16 or older?
- Realistically, looking back to when you were 16 or even 21, how many of you felt ready to be on your own with little to no support?

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Law

- The department must document “intensive, ongoing, and, as of the date of the hearing, unsuccessful efforts” made to return the child home or secure a placement for the child with a relative, legal guardian, or adoptive parent. See 42 U.S.C. § 675a(a)(1); see also 12 CCR 2509-4: 7.301.24(R); § 19-3-702(4)(c).
- The ACA 2010, effective Jan. 1, 2014 REQUIRED foster youth who had Medicaid while in foster care and attained age 18 or emancipated from care to have Medicaid coverage through age 26. (42 U.S.C. § 1396(a)(10)(IX))
- Education Vouchers under 42 U.S.C. § 677 (i)
- The College Cost Reduction Act stated an “independent student” as any youth “an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older.” 20 U.S.C. 1087vv(B) (2015).

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Services for OPPLA

- Eligible for Medicaid until 26 years of age
- Education Training Vouchers – Eligible young people can qualify for up to \$5,000 a year for school related expenses to be covered by the state.
 - Requirements:
 - Currently in foster care, Adopted from foster care after turning 16 or emancipated from care at 18;
 - Citizen or qualified noncitizen
 - Age 17-21; AND
 - Has GED or HS diploma and entering or enrolled in vocational or college-level training

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Services Continued

- Chafee Services
 - Work with young people up to 21 years old
 - Help with:
 - Housing
 - Education
 - Financial
 - Employment
 - Counseling
 - General Barriers identified by Youth

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Services Available to all Young People

- Foster Care Youth and FAFSA “Independent Student” Status:
 - The College Cost Reduction Act stated an “independent student” as any youth “an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older.” 20 U.S.C. 1087vv(B) (2015).
 - Allows youth to apply for FAFSA without having guardians or parents’ financial status to be taken into account when calculating financial aid
- Independent Living Arrangement:
 - It is a stipend under § 19-1-103(65)
 - Eligibility Requirements:
 - Ages 16 – 21, AND
 - Child was previously in out-of-home placement or in CORE services programs
 - Stipend is determined by the goals of the case plan and contract between youth and DHS
 - Independent Living Grants are available under Chafee as well

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Services Available to all Young People

- Family Unification Program (FUP) Housing Voucher
 - Voucher allows individual to rent from any landlord
 - Youth must pay 30% -40% of their adjusted monthly income to rent
 - Balance is paid by the FUP voucher
 - Eligibility Requirements:
 - Ages 18-21
 - Was in foster care on or after 16th birthday
 - Currently lack adequate housing

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Services Available to all Young People

- Chafee Foster Care Independence Act
 - Eligibility Categories:
 - Available to youth 14-18 who have been in out-of-home care for minimum of 6 months (note: does not have to be consecutive months)
 - Young Person turning 18 while in out-of-home placement
 - Young Person 16-21 who meet the requirements of Relative Guardianship (RGAP)
 - Young Person meeting requirements of adoption assistance age 16-21, and entered into adoption after 16 years old; OR
 - Young Person 18-21, who were in out-of-home care on their 18th birthday
 - Services Available:
 - Help with obtaining a HS Diploma
 - Vocational Training
 - Employment preparation (resumes, mock interviews, job hunt)
 - Substance abuse prevention
 - Preventative health
 - Mentoring
 - Extended Medicaid
 - Authorization for financial, housing, counseling, employment, educational, and other services 18-21
 - Community resources

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Other Considerations for OPPLA

- Adult Services
 - Long Term Foster Care
 - Eligible to Transition to Adult Services

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Questions

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Topics To Discuss With Youth

- School Plan
- Vital Documents
- Support system
- Job Application/Resume
- Basic Life Skills
- Housing

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Working with OPPLA Young People

- Everything will be a crisis/last minute
- Generally, the Younger person has so much anxiety , that the team is not helpfully
- Fear of being alone, but tired of the system
- View that adult hood is easy
- I can do it myself

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DHS Responsibilities

- Does your caseworker understand services available for OPPLA youth?
- Has DHS exhausted family finding?
- Has DHS made referrals to services and followed up on those referrals?
 - If not, do you consider motion of services/reasonable efforts?

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Questions????

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Youth in Transition

- Who is Eligible:
 - At least 18 years old; but not yet 21 years old;
 - Case or Care
 - Has a current Dependency and Neglect case;
 - Was in foster care on or after 16th birthday,
 - Was in non certified kinship care on or after 16th birthday and adjudicated dependent and neglected, or
 - Turned 18 when named as a child/youth in an open Dependency and Neglect case.
 - Would like to enter into a voluntary services agreement (VSA) with the DHS or is substantially complying with a VSA

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Youth in Transition

- Who is Eligible
 - Employment or Education - engaged or INTENDS TO engage in one of the following
 - Completing high school diploma or equivalent, attending college, university or educational programing relating to employment.
 - Working part-time or full-time at least 80 hours a month, or
 - participating in a program or activity that helps retain employment.
 - Exception: If you young person is unable to participate in above requirements because of medical condition, supported by regularly updated documentation in youth's case plan.
 - Tip: DHS maintaining Custody in a Dependency & Neglect, or a Juvenile Delinquency is extremely important for eligibility. Creative arguments can be made for eligibility purposes and C.R.S. § 19-1-103(66).

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Benefits of Youth in Transition Program

- Young person decides whether to participate, stop participating or rejoin the program.
- Young person has adult rights and responsibilities; example; medical care, sign contracts (lease), bank accounts.
- An attorney – choice to keep previous GAL or have a new Attorney assigned.

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Services and Supports of YIT

- Based on what youth needs and developmental level/current situation:
 - Enroll in Medicaid or other benefits
 - Safe, affordable, stable housing;
 - Information about relatives and siblings
 - Getting documents and records
 - Getting driver's license or state ID.
 - Reaching educational goals
 - Getting criminal records expunged.

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Practice Tips for YIT

- Advise young person continuously about program when turning 16
- Explore multiple options with young person.
- Realistic goal setting/expectations
- Continue to counsel young person not to wait until last minute; (planning ahead)
- Review road map to success with young person, continue to update road map to success as goals are reached.

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Resources

- Jeff Cuneo - coloradolegalproject@gmail.com
- RMIAN - <https://www.rmian.org/> - Ashely Harrington
- Bridging the Gap thru Mile high United way
- Aurora Housing
- Denver Housing
- SB 222-08- Higher Educaiton Support for Foster Youth
- Public Assistance
 - Food Stamps
 - TANF (remmber only eligible for 60 months for Persons entire life)
 - Snap
- Foster Youth in Transition Check List
 - **Foster Youth in Transition Program: what you can expect from your CFY**

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Questions????

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