Barriers and Opportunities for Foster Youth

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Barriers to Education for foster youth

- Placement stability
- Lack of traditional family support
- Inadequate level of education
- Emotional Factors
Placement Stability

• Foster youth move an average of 3 times per year. The federal recommendation is no more than one time per year.

• When students change schools, they lose an average of 4-6 months of educational progress.

• The uncertainty of home and family situations can profoundly affect student’s ability to focus in school.
Lack of Traditional Family support

• Children in out of home care do not have the daily support of their biological parents and many times may be separated from siblings and extended family.

• Due to frequent moves it is difficult for children to develop stable relationships in any area of their life.

• Uncertainty about where they will live on a permanent basis makes it difficult to assimilate into a new family.

• Loyalty to parents interferes with the bonding process.
Foster youth traditional family

- Biological Family
- Child Welfare
- Foster Parent
- Education
- Youth
- Court
- Service Provider
Inadequate level of Education

• Due to multiple moves School officials often fail to identify the special needs of students.

• Youth with special needs are unable to complete assessments that would provide them with the services they require

• Children and youth in out-of-home care are 2-3 times more likely than are other students to have disabilities that affect their ability to learn

• More than 60% of children in foster care drop out of school before graduation which is more than twice the dropout rate for all students
Emotional Factors

• Many children and youth who are in out-of-home care have been victims of abuse and neglect that affect their ability to do well in school.

• Youth’s behaviors are labeled and not explored by adults.

• Many youth are in survival mode and cannot see the importance of an education in their lives.
Opportunities
Independent Living

• The Independent Living (IL) Program seeks to serve youth:
  (1) ages 16 and 17 who are in the legal custody of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services or a federally recognized Tribe and in out of home placement;
  (2) ages 18, 19, and 20 who were in OKDHS or tribal custody:
    (A) in out-of-home placement a cumulative total of nine months or more during the time the youth was 16 or 17 years of age;
    (B) in out-of-home placement on their 18th birthday, and
    (C) who have not reached their 21st birthday:
  (3) who entered a kinship guardianship or adoption after the age of 16 to achieve permanence and who have not yet reached their 21st birthday; and
  (4) ages 21 and 22 who on their 21st birthday were participating in the Education and Training Voucher Program.
Case Assessment

• “IL Case Assessment. A comprehensive evaluation of the youth’s readiness for IL and identification of the services and supports required for the youth to achieve a maximum level of self sufficiency
7 Key Elements

- Health
- Housing
- Employment Education
- Essential Documents
- Life Skills
- Permanent Connections
Supporting

- Youth Development Funds
- Youth Opportunities
- Educational Opportunities
- Community Resources
Youth Development Funds

All requests support the youth’s plans

• 16-18
  • Education related
  • Miscellaneous
  • Work related
  • Permanent connections related
  • One time only funds
Youth who were in OKDHS or tribal custody on 18\textsuperscript{th} birthday

- 18-21
  - Housing
  - Utilities deposits and payments
  - Food
  - Car expenses
  - Furniture
  - Counseling and mentoring
  - Medical expenses
  - Work related
Youth Opportunities

- Seminars, Teen Conference, Area Events, Life Skills Groups
- Teen Panels
- Legislative Page
- Youth Service Boards
- Oklahoma Youth Adult Partnerships (O-YAP)
- SWAG Speaking with a Goal
Educational Opportunities

- Tutoring
- OHLAP
- Tuition Waiver
  - This requires reporting youth’s graduation from high school or GED attainment!
- Education Training Voucher (ETV)
  - This requires a completed application and deadlines apply.
Community Resources

- NRYCS Technical Assistance
  - County TA
  - Individual TA
  - H²E³L¹P¹ Clinics
- Can assist with:
  - Exit Interviews/Sooner Care Process
  - Event Planning
  - Plans
  - Youth Development Funds
  - Plans
  - IL Case Assessments
  - Assessments
  - ISPS
  - Yes I Can Information
  - 90 Day Transition
  - Youth Focused Case
  - Casey Type
  - And much more!
What Can You Do?

• Meet the youth where they are at

• Ask the next question

• Guide students in appropriate social and interpersonal skills to improve teacher and peer relationships

*Nine Tenths of Education is Encouragement.*

Anatole France
INTERACTION MODEL

THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

MESSAGES
- I win, you win
- You're worth my time and energy
- You're important
- You can... You're competent

STYLES
- Assertive
- Influencing
- Nurturing

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
- Regarded Self
  - Someone cares about me
  - Wanted, appreciated, loved

EXPERIENCE OF SELF
- Connected and safe
- Secure, competent

EXPRESSION OF SELF
- Caring, invested
- Open, self-confident
- Cooperative, assertive

EVERY INTERACTION

STYLE

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
- Disregarded Self
  - No one cares about me
  - Unwanted, unappreciated, unloved

EXPERIENCE OF SELF
- Alone and threatened
- Fear, hurt, anger

EXPRESSIVE APPROACH

MESSAGES
- I win, you lose
- You're worth nothing
- You can't do anything right
- You can't... You're incompetent

STYLES
- Aggressive/Passive Aggressive
- Demanding
- Abusive

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
- Disregarded Self
  - No one cares about me
  - Unwanted, unappreciated, unloved

EXPERIENCE OF SELF
- Alone and threatened
- Fear, hurt, anger

EXPRESSION OF SELF
- Nonchalant, uncaring tough guy
- Watchful, hypersensitive to rejection
- Aggressive, verbally and/or physically
Standing up for another who maybe can’t do it alone

Utilization and

Advocacy

An Ally

communicator

resource

volunteer
You can make an Impact

Being active in a child’s education can be one of the longest-lasting gifts you can give to him or her. You are building connections among the healthy adults in this child's life.