



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of CHILD SAFETY

December 14, 2023

Note: The focus of a transition plan for young people is to outline their goals and the steps involved in achieving these goals. Use the following areas to develop appropriate goals for young people, as you prepare for and facilitate their transition to adulthood.

Note: This can include "unsafe" people in their lives. Safety planning around contact and that specific unsafe person's involvement may be necessary. If that person plays a large role in the young person's life, it is worth exploring and maintaining the relationship, rather than cutting them off all together. This is also an opportunity for young people to learn how to navigate different types of relationships and how they fit into their life plan.

Guide to Transitioning Planning for Young People (ages 14-21)

Transition planning is important for young people to have a clear outline of what to expect when making big changes in their lives. Transition planning should be an extension of regular case planning, as our young people experience many transitions as they grow up, particularly during their teen and early adult years. Some of the many transitions young people can experience while in foster care include:

- Transitioning to a case plan of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA).
- Moving to a new living arrangement.
- Turning 18 years old and becoming a legal adult.
- Turning 21 and preparing to exit the extended foster care system.
- Exiting the foster care system at any age (including reunification, guardianship, adoption, etc).

Within transition planning, it is important to keep in mind many aspects of a young person's life, such as social connections, housing, education, employment, family planning, parenting skills (if applicable), transportation, finances, and personal health. This guide will outline how to plan for each of these goal areas while developing a transition plan for a young person. Each young person is going to have different areas of focus for their transition plan.

Social Connections:

Young people are best supported by those who understand that attachments, connections, and relationships are a primary source of growth, learning, and stability.

- Document who the young person's primary supports are and how those supports are included in the transition. This includes friends, family members, teachers, coaches, mentors, fictive kin, or anyone else the youth may view as an important relationship in their life. What will that person be completing or doing to support the transition?
- Create objectives if there is an interest or need in developing connections and relationships
 - Examples: Visit siblings more often, talk to mom once a week, Meet with mentor consistently, etc.
- Creating objectives for social connections helps young people realize the amount of support they already have. Objectives also set young people up for success in the future by strengthening and building their support network that can follow them into adulthood.

Transition Plans are located in the Guardian case record under the Plans tab.

Permanency Pact:

https://www.fosterclub.com/sites/default/files/Permanency%20Pact_0.pdf

“Youth transitioning from foster care are often unsure about who they can count on for ongoing support. Many of their significant relationships with adults have been based on professional connections, which will terminate once the transition from care is completed. It is critical to the youth’s success to identify those adults who will continue to provide various supports through and beyond the transition from care. Clarifying exactly what the various supports will include can help to avoid gaps in the youth’s safety net and misunderstandings between the youth and the supportive adult.”

Housing

Create anywhere from a 6 month to multiyear plan with young people to determine their goals for their living arrangements for the future. Think about where they want to live, how their living arrangement may dictate other parts of their life (ex: proximity to school, work, family, etc).

This part of the plan should include goals such as:

- Talking with family members about what kinship housing opportunities exist for the young people
- Creating financial plans on how to obtain/maintain their housing into the future – how they will save to get their first apartment or budget to rent a space from their friend or family member
- Explore housing opportunities with the young person and create small, obtainable goals to get there (ex. Research apartments by this date, save \$20/pay check towards a deposit on an apartment, commit to paying one utility to family members they live with to help with bills, etc).

Education

These goals can range anywhere from completing high school, obtaining a GED, attending vocational/trade school, or attending a 4 year university. Young people often do not know the full extent of educational opportunities out there for them so they rely on their team to help inform them.

- Determine what the young person’s long term and short term goals are for their education
- Break that goal down into smaller steps (Objectives) to work towards their ultimate goals
 - Examples: Completing high school, Finish a GED program, Get a tutor or mentor, contact a student advisor, apply for colleges or programs, apply for FAFSA/financial aid, etc.
- Document who will be responsible for each objective – young person, DCS, advisor, educational specialist, etc.
- Provide a target date to achieve each objective by, to ensure continued progress towards the ultimate goal.
- *Make sure to research ETV and current or new educational opportunities for grants and scholarships that are available.

Employment Services and Workforce Support

Entering the workforce is an important part of most young people’s lives. Our foster youth are able to obtain jobs like other young people their age. This helps provide them a sense of normalcy in their lives, even though they are experiencing foster care. Getting a job can develop independence and responsibility in our young people.

- First, identify what goals the young person has for their employment
 - These could include get a part time job, gain experience in a particular field of interest (art, food service, music, construction, babysitting, etc.) volunteer to build a gain experience and explore different jobs, among many others.

Employment Services and Workforce Support - *continued*

- Create objectives as smaller steps to achieve the employment goals
 - Examples: Building a resume, researching available jobs in young person's area, referring to a job assistance program, buying clothes for a new job, etc.
- Include how the young person will get to and from their job and outline who will be responsible for what objectives (DCS, young person, Caregiver, Support worker, etc).

Family Planning

As our young people prepare to transition to adulthood, family planning is an important part of the transition. Many of them are seeking out relationships and connections where they can find them. Some of them are already parents or soon will be. This adds an additional responsibility and factor into transition planning, as you are planning for not only the life of the youth, but also their children as well. This section should be discussed closely with social/familial connections, as the family planning can rely heavily on the social connections and supports a youth has.

- When writing objectives, make sure to include the young person's perspective and plan for their own future, not only what their team "thinks is best". The objectives should include both the roles and responsibilities of the young person, as well as their supports.
 - Examples: Medical needs of the young person and family, long term and short term plans for childcare, major supports (The Permanency pact is good to refer to here!), financial specifics around family planning- Who will pay for what?, etc.
- Also include objectives around safe sex and future planning including insurance coverage of family planning (birth control, women's health, etc).

Parenting Skills

For young people who are also parents or soon will be, Parenting Skills are often something that our youth are not taught while in the foster care system the same way they would be by their parents or family while growing up.

- These objectives need to be clear and focus on the youth's strengths and independence
 - Examples: Referrals to parenting classes, parenting milestones the youth will reach, build on supports and who the young people can lean on for help in particular situations, child support, childcare needs, how to break the cycle of trauma for our young people's own children

Transportation

When planning for a successful transition to adulthood, step-by-step instructions are helpful to ensure every potential is planned for as best as possible. Some of our young people go from their caregiver with consistent transportation to needing to learn to utilize public transportation.

- Examples of objectives: Young person will map out bus routes between work and home; young person will learn how to take the bus on their own, caregivers providing transportation to school or events.
- This can include goals to get a drivers license and a car. Include objectives around taking the driver's license test, saving money towards a car, a plan for maintaining car insurance, etc.
- Include a discussion of the opportunity to register to vote when getting a driver's license. This is their opportunity to impact themselves and their community.

Financial literacy

Transitioning to adulthood includes learning how to manage your own finances and learning how to be financially independent. Think of the individual youth and their ability to be responsible with their finances. Is the youth ready to have a bank account? Do they need additional supports in that area such as an ILS worker or mentor?

- Goals can be things such as opening a bank account, saving a particular amount of money, learning about deposits, down payments, and other finance related needs the youth may experience in their transition to independence.
- Referrals to ILS services or mentor programs can be helpful here. If available, lean on available natural supports the young people has in family, friends, or caregivers! Young people may be more receptive to information from someone whom they already have a relationship.

Other Areas of Focus

This area can include any other specific goals the young person wants to work on that may not fit into the pre-determined categories. These objectives can include hobbies, personal goal, spiritual or religious goals and how to support those needs.

Personal Health

Personal health can include hygiene, physical, and mental health. Focus this on any illnesses or health concerns the young person has. This should include mental health needs and a plan for ensuring they understand how and when to reach out for help if they need it.

- Objectives can include finding a new health care provider, goals for working with a therapist or doctor, personal health goals for improvement such as working out, eating better, etc.

Healthcare planning and Medical Coverage

- Include the transition to YATI, specifically, when applications will be sent in, how to access insurance websites, and who to turn to for help with health coverage.
- This is a good time to discuss setting up a HealthEArizonaplus.org account for easy access to medical information.
- Include goals on choosing providers, and how to navigate the health insurance system.
- This is a good area to include Youth Support Specialists (Independent Living Skills) programs and goals for supporting the transition to managing their own insurance.