

Transition Planning for Youth in Foster Care

1. Prioritize Stability and Consistency

- **Educational Stability:**
 - Ensure the student remains in their school of origin when possible to maintain educational continuity, as mandated by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Frequent school changes can disrupt learning and transition planning.
- **Collaborate with Caseworkers:**
 - Engage with the student's caseworkers, foster care agency staff, and child advocates during IEP and transition planning meetings. They can provide critical information about the student's placement and services.
- **Foster Stability in Living Arrangements:**
 - Address potential disruptions in housing, and plan for transitions from foster care to independent living. Ensure that the student has access to transitional housing programs if necessary.

2. Foster Life Skills Development

- **Independent Living Skills Training:**
 - Focus on life skills such as managing finances, cooking, personal care, and time management, especially if the student will "age out" of foster care at 18. Include training in job readiness, vocational skills, and self-advocacy.
- **Prepare for Aging Out of Foster Care:**
 - Ensure the student is enrolled in programs like the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood, which offers education and financial support as youth transition out of the foster care system.
- **Connect to Transitional Services:**
 - Provide information about community resources for foster youth transitioning to adulthood, including housing assistance, healthcare, and educational supports. Programs like Independent Living (IL) services offer critical support for youth aging out of care.

3. Coordinate with Foster Care and Education Liaisons

- **Foster Care Education Liaisons:**
 - Schools should work closely with foster care liaisons, who are required by ESSA, to ensure the student's educational needs are met, including transportation to school and access to individualized support.
- **Postsecondary Planning:**
 - Include caseworkers and foster care liaisons in discussions about postsecondary education or employment plans. Explore special programs like tuition waivers, scholarships, and grants for foster youth in higher education or training programs.

4. Legal Considerations and Guardianship

- **Legal Rights and Emancipation:**
 - Ensure that youth are informed of their legal rights as they approach adulthood, including their right to make decisions about their education and healthcare once they reach the age of majority (usually 18).
- **Power of Attorney or Guardianship:**
 - For students with disabilities, it may be necessary to establish guardianship or other legal arrangements if they need continued support after they turn 18.