Youth Permanency

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A Family for Every Child: Strategies to Achieve Permanence for Older Foster Children and Youth
Family to family : tools for rebuilding foster care.
Ford, Mary. Boo, Mary. Kroll, Joe.
2005
Available from: Annie E. Casey Foundation
701 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
Tel: 410-547-6600
info@casey.org
Available from: http://www.aecf.org

In our research for this publication, we identified successful programs, policies, and strategies that have been helping older children find permanent families. We then examined how lessons learned from each effective program or policy change could be distilled into a number of action steps that others might follow. Finally, we created a series of overall recommendations and spelled out how advocates can learn from others to create an integrated system of programs and policies that will help older children and youth find permanent families. This tool is organized into four major sections: Section I presents the characteristics of older children and youth in care for two years or more. Section II details the problems that keep older foster children and youth from living permanently with families. Section III describes an emerging youth permanency philosophy. Section IV makes recommendations, describes action steps for change, and suggests concrete ways to achieve permanence for youth in the following areas: Help lawmakers and policymakers understand the importance of permanence for older foster children and youth; Establish agency guidelines to help staff carry out permanency policy for youth, and train staff in the new policy; Help older children and youth consider permanence and adoption; Eliminate reliance on long-term foster care as a case plan; Let youth assume a major role in forming their permanency plan; Use performance-based contracting to achieve timely permanence for youth; Build partnerships between public and private agency adoption workers; Develop accountable youth-centered permanency planning practices and support families and youth after placement; Advocate for federal policy changes to allow for uniform subsidized guardianship policy and funding, and implement state or local subsidized guardianship programs; Use group care less and family-based care more for older children and youth; Recruit permanent families from the child's life and support the new families; Teach families that
unconditional commitment is a prerequisite, and teach them to transition gradually to adoption; and
Provide ongoing support to the permanent families. (Author abstract)
http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/tools/family_every_child.pdf

Toolbox No. 3: Facilitating Permanency for Youth

_Toolboxes for permanency_
Mallon, Gerald P.
Hunter College of Social Work, New York, NY. National Resource Center for Foster Care and
Permanency Planning.
2005
Available from: Child Welfare League of America
440 First St., NW Third Floor
Washington, DC 20001-2085
books@cwla.org
Available from: http://www.cwla.org/pubs

Permanency planning for adolescents has become a low priority for agencies because of the focus on the
needs of young children, separate funding streams for independent living services, and perceptions about
the adoptability of older youth. These factors have created a system that routinely relies on "another
planned living arrangement" when required to plan for the long-term care of teens. However, teens do
need permanent relationships with supportive persons as they make the transition out of foster care.
Stability and a sense of interdependence improve the likelihood that youth will succeed as adults. This
toolkit describes the barriers to permanency for youth and outlines a framework for practice that includes
a wide variety of alternatives, from family preservation to adoption and legal guardianship. The discussion
recommends engaging youth in permanency planning, expanding resources, adapting financial
requirements, and providing more support services. Innovative strategies for achieving permanency for
youth are described, such as mentoring programs, lifebooks, foster clubs, video portraits, family group
conferencing, and interagency collaboration. The appendix contains descriptions of programs designed to
expedite youth permanency. 62 references.

_A Call to Action: An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood_
Frey, Lauren L. Greenblatt, Sarah B. Brown, Jim.
Casey Family Services.
2005
Available from: Casey Family Services
127 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510
Tel: 203-401-6900
info@caseyfamilyservices.org
Available from: http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org

This report discusses the problems youth face when aging out of foster care without a permanent family,
and calls for an integrated approach to youth permanency and preparation for adulthood. It provides a
rationale for changing the foster care system, and explores the context and language for change.
Considerations concerning permanency options for youth are listed, and promising practices are
reviewed. Guiding principles for change are provided, along with the following practice recommendations:
(1) partner with youth as the central player in their own integrated planning process, engaging them in
identifying essential team members that include: parent and significant adults in their life, adults in the
process of being recruited and prepared as potential permanent parents, child welfare staff, and
professionals or individuals from the local community; (2) include parents, family members, caregivers,
significant adults, professionals, and community members in the team process for what they can
contribute, rather than excluding them for what they can not contribute; (3) explore each adult's level of
commitment to a youth over time; (4) engage youth in a collaborative casework process that prepares
them to actively and meaningfully participate in team planning; (5) develop a youth-centered, family-
focused integrated plan that addresses the critical dimensions of safety, permanence, and well-being;
and (6) facilitate an ongoing collaborative team planning process to: insure a safe and secure family
permanency outcome and monitor progress toward comprehensive preparation for adulthood, enhance
the network of formal and informal post-permanency supports and services necessary beyond exit from
the system, and strengthen relationships among team members functioning as the safety net. The report closes by identifying indicators of a child welfare system that prioritizes an integrated approach to achieving family permanency and comprehensive preparation for adulthood for all youth in care. 19 references.

http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org/pdfs/casey_permanency_0505.pdf

**Model Programs for Youth Permanency**

Louiseill, Mardith J.

California Permanency for Youth Project.

2004

Available from: California Permanency for Youth Project

4200 Park Blvd., PMB 273

Oakland, CA 94602

Tel: 510-268-0038


This report profiles nine model programs of youth permanence for children and adolescents in foster care. The programs include: (1) Adolescent Connections Pilot, Project Uplift, Colorado; (2) Connected and Cared For, Northwest Institute for Children and Families, Washington State; (3) Empowered Transitions, Family Focus Adoption Services, New York; (4) EMQ Children and Family Services Wrap Around, Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services, California; (5) Families for Teens, New York City; (6) FAST (Family Assessment and Stabilization Team), Catholic Community Services of Western Washington, Washington State; (7) Intensive Family Reunification (IFR), Child and Adolescent Placement Project, Indianapolis; (8) Life Long Family Connections, Massachusetts Families for Kids, Massachusetts; and (9) You Gotta Believe, New York. All the programs except three concentrate on youth over the age of eleven. IFR in Indianapolis, and Catholic Community Services of Western Washington, work primarily with teenagers. The third, Family Focus Adoption Services, Little Neck, New York, involves teenagers in the process of their own permanence. Each profile includes a description of the program and information on: program successes and outcomes, duration, genesis, program structure, focus on youth permanence, youth involvement in finding permanency, partnerships, problems and solutions, system barriers, reasons for success, sustainability, program recommendations, and funding. Across the programs the following strategies were believed to have contributed to success: involve youth and former foster youth, hire great staff, hire staff who understand the target system, spend time on accountability, use your resources well, keep track of data, start small, build connections, do public relations all the time, and implement the program system-wide.

http://www.cpyp.org/Files/ModelPrograms.pdf

**Permanency for Adolescents**

University of Oklahoma. National Resource Center for Youth Development.

2004

**NRCYD update.**

Publication Information: Tulsa, OK : University of Oklahoma, National Resource Center for Youth Development.

Distributed by: University of Oklahoma

National Resource Center for Youth Services Schusterman Center 4502 E. 41st Street Bldg. 4W

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Available from: [http://www.nrcys.ou.edu](http://www.nrcys.ou.edu)

This special issue focuses on attaining placement permanency for adolescents in the foster care system. In the first article, "Successful Adolescent Adoptions," 48 families who adopted youth between the ages of 12-19 discuss their definitions of permanency success, the factors that made their adoptions successful, and the process they went through in deciding to adopt. In addition, 37 of the adolescents from 30 of the families provide their insight about the adoption process and how they came to accept the decision to be adopted. The second article, "CSR/Massachusetts Families for Kids-Lifelong Family Connections: An Adolescent Permanency Model," describes the seven key components of a project that focuses on establishing lifelong family connections for adolescents in foster/residential care in Massachusetts. The following article, "Merging Permanency and Independent Living: Lifelong/Family
Relationships and Life Skills for Older Youth," identifies and explains child welfare principles when working with older youth. The final article, "The Path to Permanence: Innovative Strategies for Life Long Connections," provides examples of innovative and creative ways youth have brainstormed to achieve meaningful connections with adults.

http://www.nrncys.ou.edu/PDFs/YD%20UPdate/ydusum04.pdf

**Youth Perspectives on Permanency**
Sanchez, Reina M.
California Permanency for Youth Project.
California Youth Connection.
2004
Distributed by: California Permanency for Youth Project
4200 Park Blvd., PMB 273
Oakland, CA 94602
Tel: 510-268-0038
Available from: http://www.cpyp.org
A study explored permanency perspectives of young people who had extensive personal experience with the child welfare system in California. Data emerged from a series of phone interviews with 25 young people (ages 16-24) conducted during October and November 2003 and a focus group held in December 2003 that included nine of the young people who had been interviewed. The study included emancipated youth and youth still in the child welfare system that had experienced various kinds of placements, including group homes, foster homes, relative care, legal guardianship, permanent adoption, transitional housing, as well as other settings. Findings from the study indicate youth in foster care experience feelings of displacement, loneliness and stigmatization, loyalty to their biological family, a lack of social capital, and a reliance on social workers. Foster youth expressed a desire for permanency, and believed relational permanency was more important than legal permanency or physical permanency. The majority of the youth interviewed found at least one permanent connection with a responsible adult. Foster youth identified three major barriers to permanency: inappropriate placements, poorly selected and trained foster parents, and social workers’ push toward adoption for foster children. Strategies for empowering foster youth to achieve permanency are discussed and include providing access to information about different permanency options early on and listening to the desires of youth in foster care.

http://www.cpyp.org/Files/YouthPerspectives.pdf

**Best Practices on Permanency for Older Youth: Workgroup Report from 2003 National Youth Permanence Convening**
California Permanency for Youth Project.
2003
Available from: California Permanency for Youth Project
4200 Park Blvd., PMB 273
Oakland, CA 94602
Tel: 510-268-0038
Available from: http://www.cpyp.org/
Moving adolescents to permanence is often overlooked or avoided by agencies and workers because of the perceived difficulty of finding families for these youth. This workgroup defined best practice for moving adolescents to permanence, focusing on preparing the agency, worker, youth and prospective families for achieving successful, permanent placements for adolescents. Their 13 recommendations are provided in this document. (Author abstract modified)

http://www.cpyp.org/Files/Best%20Practices%20on%20Permanency%20for%20Older%20Youth.doc

**Permanency Planning: Creating Life Long Connections. What Does It Mean for Adolescents?**
Charles, K. Nelson, J.
University of Oklahoma, Tulsa. National Resource Center for Youth Development.
2000
Available from: University of Oklahoma
College of Continuing Education National Resource Center for Youth Development 202 W. Eighth St.
As a result of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the University of Oklahoma National Resource Center for Youth Development has been able to focus increased efforts on the issue of adolescents and permanency. Recognizing the need within the child welfare system to develop integrated strategies, approaches, and policies that assist agencies as they recruit and prepare foster families and adoptive families, as well as staff, the Center acted to provide agencies with information on adolescents' needs and desires for permanency, and practices that meet those needs. The Center's permanency initiatives include: collection and review of adolescent adoption demonstration projects funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; development and dissemination of an annotated bibliography on issues related to adolescents and permanency; provision of training and technical assistance to state public child welfare agencies regarding adoption opportunities and permanency for adolescents; and convening of a "think tank" to address the issues associated with ASFA in relationship to adolescents. Findings substantiated the Center's assumptions regarding adolescents' need and skills acquisition. Recommendations focus on five areas: relationships with caring peers and adults; youth-driven change; youth-defined family connections; organization and workforce enhancement; and adoption. Six figures; 22 references; four appendixes.


TRAINING CURRICULA

Concurrent Planning Curriculum: Concurrent Planning for Timely Permanency
National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning.
2003
Distributed by: National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning
Hunter College School of Social Work 129 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10021
Tel: 212/452-7053
gmallon@hunter.cuny.edu

This curriculum explains the foundations of concurrent planning for professional child welfare workers. The training program is designed to equip professionals to assess families and engage parents in decisions about child safety and permanency. Five modules address the basics of concurrent planning, differential assessment, the change process, full disclosure as a motivational device, and the role of family meetings in expediting permanency for children. Core components of concurrent planning are reviewed, including the consideration of crises as opportunities, frequent family visitation, permanency planning resource families, written documentation, and collaboration with the legal system. The curriculum guide includes session outlines, handouts, and instructions for individual and group exercises.

http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/concurrent-permanency-planning.html

TheToolkit.org
http://www.thetoolkit.org/
Lewis, R.G. & Heffeman, M.

Toolkit 1: Adolescents and Families for Life: A Toolkit for Supervisors. This guide for child welfare supervisors presents an array of mini-workshops that can be conducted with child welfare workers to improve permanency for adolescents under agency care. The sessions address the importance of permanency for adolescents, adolescent development, helping teens accept permanent family relationships, system barriers, identifying established connections, supporting the permanent placement, and introductory information about adoption and kinships.

This curriculum is designed to prepare adolescents for transition into an adoptive family. The Family Bound curriculum includes nine sessions that address the five major areas that a young person needs to address to move successfully into a family: loyalty, loss, self-esteem, self-determination, and behavior management. A participant manual, a family manual, and a guide for Family Bound families are included in the materials.

**Toolkit 3: Families for Teens: A Toolkit for Focusing, Educating and Motivating Staff.** A workbook for managers, supervisors and workers to support and train or retrain staff in adolescent permanency.

### ADOPTING OLDER CHILDREN

**Field-initiated Research on Successful Adolescent Adoptions**
The Center for Child and Family Studies, College of Social Work, University of South Carolina. 2004
Available from: The Center for Child & Family Studies
College of Social Work University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC  29208
Tel: 803-777-9408
centerinformation@gwm.sc.edu
Available from: [http://www.sc.edu/ccfs/](http://www.sc.edu/ccfs/)
Sponsoring Organization: Children's Bureau
This final report discusses the activities and outcomes of a study that investigated factors for successful adolescent adoptions. The study included 58 adoptive parents and 37 adoptees from 30 of the 49 participating families. Results are shared on the perspectives before the adoption, making the decision to adopt, adolescent involvement in the adoption process, pre-adoption support services, post-adoption support services, adoption preparation classes, birth family involvement, racial and cultural issues, and educational issues. Parents and teens in this study identified four major keys to success: commitment, realistic expectations, personality, and support. Advice for adoptive parents is provided and recommendations for child welfare agencies are made throughout the report. Recommendations include: include recruitment strategies that offer opportunities for adults in the community to get to know teens in foster care; recognize that parents will proceed at varying speeds through the adoption process; develop a coordinated orientation program for parents considering adoption; support prospective adoptive parents and provide information to them as they work through the stretching process; allow parents and adolescents to have an adequate visitation schedule prior to moving adolescents into the home; employ caseworkers who specialize in adolescent adoptions; individually prepare adolescents for the adoption process by doing six key steps; design and implement an adoption training program that focuses on various age ranges of children to be adopted and that includes information on resources available to families both before and after the adoption; provide formal and informal support groups to families throughout the adoption process and into the adoption; provide monetary and other supports throughout the adoption; initiate or continue contact with birth families when it is safe to do so and when the adolescents desire it; and provide ongoing support for parents and teens and to make sure that families are aware of these services and how to access them. 4 figures and 33 references.

Related information: Find insights from adolescents who have been adopted and their adoptive parents at [http://www.sc.edu/ccfs/research/adoladoptions.html](http://www.sc.edu/ccfs/research/adoladoptions.html)

**Older Child Adoption**
National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption 2004
This fact sheet discusses several issues child welfare professionals should address in order to help more of these youth achieve permanency. Issues include worker attitudes and values; youth opposed to adoption; foster parent and kin adoptions; recruitment of adoptive families, and adoption preparation.

[http://www.nracadoption.org/resources/prac/OlderChildAdoption.pdf](http://www.nracadoption.org/resources/prac/OlderChildAdoption.pdf)
Individualized and Targeted Recruitment for Adoption

Resources on
Casey Family Programs
2003
Available from: Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support
1808 Eye Street NW 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: 202-728-2003
info@casey.org
Available from: http://www.casey.org
This paper reviews the challenges of recruiting adoptive families and highlights child-specific and targeted recruitment efforts that have achieved results. Recommendations for child-specific recruitment efforts include: clearly describing characteristics of the child, maintaining a photolisting book, using Internet listings, developing print campaigns, and using televised appeals. The success of a televised profiling program, Wednesday's Child, in four different cities is recounted, along with the success of the Heart Gallery that places pictures of children in art galleries in New Mexico, and the success of Video Conference Matching Meetings in Georgia. The following section discusses individualized preparation of adolescents for adoption, and strategies for increasing the adoption of teens. Strategies of successful programs in Virginia and North Carolina are described, and Iowa's Permanency for Teens Project is profiled along the lessons learned during the project. The paper then considers targeted recruitment efforts that seek families for categories of young people who are highly represented in the population of those who are free for adoption. Strategies for targeted campaigns are shared and include: identify children and youth awaiting permanency, identify families likely to adopt, and craft and deliver messages to families likely to adopt. Programs that have used strategic recruitment approaches and regional targeted recruitment plans are profiled. 26 references.

REUNIFICATION FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Lighting the Fire of Urgency: Families Lost and Found in America's Child Welfare System
2005
Available from: California Permanency for Youth Project
Program Office 4200 Park Blvd. PMB 273
Oakland, CA 94602
Tel: 510-562-8472
patrh@sbcglobal.net
Available from: http://www.cpyp.org
What sort of framework and technologies would be necessary to overcome the systemic barriers that block the ability for children and adolescents living in out-of-home care to maintain or re-establish contact and relationships with those that love them or could love them? This article considers frameworks both outside and inside child welfare traditions, calling for a "determined sense of urgency and purpose" in engaging family of foster care youth. (Author abstract)
http://www.cpyp.org/Files/Lighting%20the%20Fire%20of%20Urgency.doc
Webcast, June 14, 2005: http://event.netbriefings.com/event/nrcfcpp/Archives/huntemrcfcpp7/

Parental Visiting and Family Reunification: Could Inclusive Practice Make a Difference?
Leathers, S. J.
This study examined whether parental involvement in foster children's lives while in placement is correlated with more frequent visiting and a greater likelihood of reunification. Parental involvement through inclusive practice is believed to help parents overcome common barriers to visitation, such as time requirements, agency policy, transportation, foster parents, and psychological issues about shame and inadequacy. The hypothesis was tested among a random sample of 230 twelve- and thirteen-year olds placed in traditional family foster care. Information about visitation patterns and parental involvement was collected from interviews with caseworkers and foster mothers. Caseworkers also were asked to rate the likelihood that the children would be reunified with their family. Adaptation to foster care and emotional and behavior disturbance specifically were measured. The results suggest that mothers who visit their child and are involved in case reviews and child care activities visit more frequently than mothers who visit in settings such as agency offices and have no other types of involvement. In addition, visiting frequency is highly predictive of reunification. These associations were not explained by maternal substance abuse, mental illness, or the child's placement history. Future research should determine the impact of inclusive practice on visitation and reunification rates. If inclusive practice is effective, the approach will help families and agencies comply with the timeframes mandated in the Adoption and Safe Families Act. (Author abstract modified) 21 references, 4 tables.

**Who Am I?: Why Family Really Matters**  
2001  
*Focal point*  
15 (2) Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children  
P.O. Box 2008  
Saratoga, CA  95070  
Tel: (408) 866-6303  
secretaria_crs@gva.es  
This article describes the positive results of efforts to reunite children in foster care with their families. It includes a case study, reunification and support strategies, and outcome information. Includes a family story about a 12-year old African-American boy.  
[http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/FPInHTML/FocalPointFA01/pgFPfa01Tacoma.shtml](http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/FPInHTML/FocalPointFA01/pgFPfa01Tacoma.shtml)