

Preparing Older Youth for Independent Living

[E-Track Learning Numbers will vary according to workshop, as listed below]

Caseworkers and Caregivers: Do you worry that your older youth in out-of-home care may not be fully prepared to transition to successful independent living? How actively do you involve them in developing their own plans for independent living? Are you looking for enhanced knowledge, tools, and strategies to help them increase their odds for a favorable outcome? Then register now for the *Preparing Older Youth for Independent Living* training series.

What is Preparing Older Youth for Independent Living?

Preparing Older Youth for Independent Living is a series of three workshops developed by the National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD), and is designed to address challenges that interfere with an older youth's ability to make a successful transition from foster care to independent living. Each session confronts the critical issues and needs of Ohio's youth as they transition out of care.

The workshops, co-trained by a foster care alumnus and a child welfare trainer, include:

- *Youth Development: The Vital Link* [E-Track No. 202-35-NOS],
- *Life Long Connections: Permanency for Older Youth* [E-Track No. 210-26-NOS], and
- *Engaging Youth in Transition Planning* [E-Track No. 202-36-NOS].

They are designed for joint participation by caseworkers and caregivers. The series also offers the following online resources:

- [*The Positive Youth Development Toolkit*](#),
- [*The Permanency Pact*](#),
- [*The Transition Toolkit*](#), and
- [*Transition Planning with Adolescents: A Review of Principles and Practices Across Systems*](#).

Who is the intended audience?

The series is intended for caseworkers who engage older adolescents in developing their independent living plans, and for foster caregivers who provide older adolescents day-to-day nurturing, guidance, and support.

Is credit offered for the series?

Youth Development: The Vital Link is a two-day workshop offering 12 hours of training credit toward ODJFS requirements for ongoing training for staff and caregivers, and 11 hours of continuing education credits that can be applied toward either social work or counseling licensure. The other two workshops in the series each offers six hours of training credit and 5.5 continuing education credits.

How the series is structured:

There are three workshops that make up the series. As an added bonus, each workshop offering relevant follow-up online resources:

- *Youth Development: The Vital Link* is a foundational course upon which the other two workshops are built. It is the only two-day, 12-hour session, and is recommended as the first course to take in the series (although this is not mandatory).
--Its follow-up online resource is called [*The Positive Youth Development Toolkit*](#).
- *Life Long Connections: Permanency for Older Youth* is a one-day, 6-hour course.
--Its follow-up online resource is called [*The Permanency Pact*](#).
- *Youth in Transition Planning* is also a one-day, 6-hour course and can logically be taken before or after the *Life Long Connections* course.

This course offers *two* separate follow-up online resources:

- [*The Transition Toolkit*](#), and
- [*Transition Planning with Adolescents: A Review of Principles and Practices Across Systems*](#).

How this series can help caseworkers and foster caregivers:

Casework staff and foster caregivers have a unique opportunity to learn from child welfare and alumni experts and one another while gaining new insights and effective strategies.

- The *Youth Development* workshop helps participants learn creative ways of empowering youth by allowing them to take on leadership roles and become active participants in their own transition planning.
- *Life Long Connections* allows participants to hear, see and experience the concepts of “permanent connections,” and why they are so vital to youth.
- The *Youth in Transition Planning* course will define transition planning, examine the importance of youth engagement in transition planning, and provide an overview of the transition planning process.

Caseworkers and caregivers will find [The Transition Toolkit](#) and [The Permanency Pact](#) (from FosterClub) especially useful tools in helping older youth develop nurturing lifelong connections and navigate their journeys toward independent living.

How this series can help youth and families:

The principles outlined in this three-workshop series increase the odds of preparing older youth for successful independent living, permanent life-long connections with caring adults and positive, progressive development. Families involved with older youth can be encouraged to apply these principles in order to promote the youths’ future success.

How this series can be used in your agency:

Agencies may choose to:

- Send all staff and caregivers to the first workshop in the series so that all workers have foundational knowledge about youth development.
- Review handouts at staff meetings and during caregiver home visits.
- Review the Foster Club’s preparatory resources with youth and use them as resource guides to assist with independent living planning.
- Share this information with members of OHIO YAB (Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio-- Youth Advisory Board) and invite them to share ideas about how the agency can support youth development.
- Ensure that foster caregivers who care for older youth, caseworkers with older youth on their caseloads, and staff attend the entire series.
- Actively involve older youth as decision-makers in developing their own plans for independent living.

Tips for success:

- Supervisors should make sure that their staff has coverage so as not to be interrupted during class.
- Participants should dress comfortably and be ready to participate in the many activities of each workshop.
- Participants should use the training as an opportunity to consult foster care alumni trainers for their insights, experiences and recommendations about preparing for independent living.

How to access:

Refer to E-Track for course offerings and registration.

For questions, contact your [RTC](#).