

Youth Engagement and Assessment

A transfer conference will be held for every youth who is 14 years and older and who is in out of home placement or committed to DCF as an abused, neglected, or uncared for child.

Caseload carrying staff who primarily work with adolescents are referred to as Transitional Support Specialists.

In the transfer process, the Program Supervisor will work within the office structure to provide a forum for these conferences. Participants will include the youth, current ongoing social worker, the current ongoing supervisor, the RRG staff (when indicated) and the educational consultant. Youth can also bring additional participants for support and guidance on a case by case basis. Topics that will be discussed shall include but are not limited to: permanency goals, youth strengths, important relationships, current living arrangement, trauma history, comprehensive needs in the context of race, ethnicity, language, culture and the relationship to current case goals, objectives, identified services, and progress towards those; a comprehensive analysis of youth educational status; the youth's aspirations for the future, youth interests/hobbies/activities. The team will also discuss special considerations that need to be addressed prior to the transfer, the time frame for transfer, and compelling reasons that the case should remain with the current social worker. **It would be helpful for the young adult to co-lead the conversation, and to have a say about a possible change in team members. If a youth objects to a team change, the option of staying with the current team members can be explored and individualized workforce development training in serving TAY can be arranged.** The tools to strengthen the skill set needed to work with adolescents will be offered through the Academy of Workforce Development.

Team members will outline the expectations that the youth complete life skills, a health and wellness curriculum, and financial literacy training prior to launching from the Department. Financial literacy is part of the L.I.S.T. and can also be obtained through banks and schools (For information on specific sites, please see the V.I.T.A.L Resources website or contact the Transitional Supports and Success Division for guidance). Young adults will also be encouraged to participate in local youth advisory boards to learn advocacy skills. **At age 18, a youth written "Passport" will replace the case plan.**

The U.S Department of Health and Human Services outlines Five Essentials for Healthy Adolescents that can help guide team areas for assessment and planning (Retrieved at <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/TAG/about-TAG/five-essentials>):

Adolescents should have 1) Positive connections with supportive people; 2) Safe and secure places to live, learn, and play (communities, schools, neighborhoods, places to socialize); 3) access to high quality health care (mental, dental, medical care); 4) Opportunities to engage as learners, leaders, team members, and workers; and, 5) Coordinated adolescent-centered and family centered supports.

The ACR team also co-leads "**Omega Assessments**" of youth age 16 and up. The information in those assessments are in-depth and collected in partnership with regional staff. They should help support planning.

The team may consider adding suggestions from the Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures (retrieved from <https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu>) when initially engaging with a young adult:

- 1) Ask one open ended question, avoid stacking multiple questions, and avoid asking an open ended question followed by a lengthy explanation.
- 2) Ask a question before offering a suggestion. If the young person needs more information, guide them to it instead of telling them what to consider.
- 3) Follow up with a question or reflection any time the youth says something meaningful, mentions something more than once, shares something personal, or takes a risk.
- 4) When going through a checklist or a worksheet, make the interaction conversational.
- 5) Make sure praise is detailed and highlights a specific strength.
- 6) Congratulate the young person at every step.
- 7) Highlight all the goals, ideas, strengths, and activities the young person comes up with.
- 8) Prompt the youth to think of the support they might want. Who would they want to support them? And how would that person support them?
- 9) Consider sharing any note taking with young adults. That way the risk of losing information by paraphrasing is reduced and youth has a say in what's recorded.
- 10) Makes sure to check if the youth has additional ideas to share before moving on to a different topic.