

**CWS3000.1W Foster Care
New Worker Guidance**

**LEARNER HANDOUTS
Day 3**



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



Revised 01/14/26

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
STATE OFFICE

FOSTER CARE SERVICE PLAN: PART A

COURT FILE NO:

CASE NAME: BRADY

Local Number:

DATE PREPARED: 8/7/20xx

OASIS CASE NO: 20047366

DATE FILED: 8/8/20xx

The Code of Virginia requires the involvement of birth parents/prior custodians, foster parents, and the child (where applicable) in the mutual development of the Service Plan. Part A should reflect the involvement and responsibility of the parties mentioned above. Part A is to be distributed to all involved.

Child: Cindy Brady **Date of Birth:** 4/22/20xx

Reason for New Service Plan: Dispositional Hearing

Date of Most Recent removal from Home: 7/12/20xx

Date of Custody: 7/12/20xx

Official Custody: Court Ordered

Custody Disposition: DSS Custody

Legal Basis for Custody: Abuse/Neglect

Program Goal : Return to Own Home

Target Date for Achievement: 7/12/20xy

Concurrent Goal: Relative Placement

1. Discuss why and How Child Came into Care.

Richmond DSS Child Protective Services responded to an afterhours call concerning the welfare of Cindy Brady, aged 9, and her brother, Peter, aged 17, on July 12, 20xx. After conferring with Officers Smith and Wesson of the Richmond Police Department, it was learned that they had arrived at the Brady home due to a report of a domestic altercation in progress. Upon arrival, officers learned that Michael Brady and Carol Brady had been involved in a physical argument in the presence of their children, Cindy and Peter. In addition to Mrs. Brady having visible facial bruising, officers noted the presence of drugs and drug paraphernalia in open view in the living room. At that time, both parents were arrested for possession of marijuana. Both parents subsequently tested positive for multiple substances. Neither parent was able to make bail on that date. Because neither the parents nor the children could identify relatives/alternative caregivers in Virginia for consideration as a placement resource, RDSS assumed emergency custody and both children were placed in foster care.

Upon their arraignment on July 20, 20xx, Mr. Brady remained incarcerated. Mrs. Brady was allowed to enter a drug rehabilitation program pending sentencing. The treatment program does not allow the children to live with their parent.

2. Describe DSS and other agency services to prevent removal. If not services given, explain why.

The emergency nature of the children's removal precluded the provision of preventive services. In subsequent interviews, Mrs. Brady stated that she had been in two prior drug rehabilitation programs, but has not successfully completed either program. She had spoken with the Virginia Domestic Violence Hotline, but had not followed through with their advice.

3. Describe child's situation at the time placement occurred or custody transferred. Information relative to family, health and education must be addressed.

At the time of removal, the family had been receiving Section 8 Housing assistance and participated in the SNAP program. Both children appeared healthy and the Health Department verified that they had all of their immunizations. Upon acquiring past medical records, there appeared to be no history of significant prior medical problems.

Preliminary assessment interviews and criminal history checks established that Mr. and Mrs. Brady have a prior history of multiple moves, having lived at four different addresses in the past year. Before coming to Richmond four months ago, they had lived in Monroe County and two locations in upstate New York. Mr. Brady stated that the moves were related to his desire to find employment. However, while he continues to be unemployed; he has had two convictions for drug possession during this time. Mrs. Brady is also unemployed. She had participated in drug rehabilitation programs in New York and Virginia but did not successfully complete either program.

Cindy and Peter Brady reported that they have often been left to care for themselves. Their parents have been physically unavailable to provide for them, either because of not being at home for several days at a time or due to lengthy periods of sleep. Record requests show that both children had sporadic school attendance in all locations. At the time of removal, Cindy Brady attended Apple Tree Elementary School. She was receiving Special Education services to include one hour of speech therapy each week, per her IEP. She enjoyed school and was on the B honor role. When he entered foster care, Peter Brady attended the 12th grade at Bon Air High School. He was receiving Special Education services and had an IEP on the basis of Emotional Disorders. Peter reported being responsible for getting his sister to school. Both reported safety concerns related to domestic violence.

4. Describe placement:

a. Type of Placement

Foster Home, Non-Relative

b.1 Describe efforts made to locate and place the child with absent father, maternal relatives and paternal relatives (throughout the life of the case as appropriate).

b.2. Describe efforts which have been made to place the child in the least restrictive (most family-like) setting available, consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child.

Through interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Brady, relative search forms and genograms were completed. A CLEAR Search was also completed by Foster Care staff. Relative notification letters were sent to maternal and paternal grandparents on July 20, 20xx. Mrs. Brady's parents, Sam and Alice Nelson, live in San Bernardino, California; they responded to agency contact and stated that they had made prior attempts to gain custody of both children. An Intestate Compact on the Placement of Children Request was forwarded to the Virginia Department of Social Services on July 28, 20xx, requesting a study of the Nelsons' home after a court order was obtained with the assistance of the City Attorney's Office. As the receiving state has not received the request as of this date and the viability of placement with grandparents is not assured, relative search efforts continue for placement and planning purposes.

Cindy continues to be placed in an approved Richmond City resource home, the most family-like, least restrictive setting consistent with her needs. The foster family provides for Cindy's daily needs, assists with additional school support, and provides transportation to appointments.

c. Describe the efforts to place the child in closest proximity to parent's home.

Cindy resides in a Richmond City resource home. Her brother, Peter, is placed in a Richmond City therapeutic resource family home. Both children were able to remain stable in their school placement. Due to their legal/rehabilitation statuses, neither of Cindy's birth parents is currently in a location near their original residence.

5. Describe how any court orders made in respect to this child are being addressed.

To the Department's knowledge, Mr. Brady is complying with the Protective Order issued regarding his need to receive prior evaluation before contacting Cindy, Peter or Carol Brady outside of agency supervision.

6. Mechanisms for ensuring the proper care of the child:

a. Identify the needs which must be met to achieve the goal for the child. (Include discussion of parent(s)/prior custodian(s) visitation.)

In addition to acquiring assessment information from school, interviews and record reviews, a Family Partnership Meeting (FPM) was held on July 31, 20xx. The following assessment and plan reflect the meeting's discussion of the goals for this case and service plan requirements. Present at the FPM were Carol Brady, Peter Brady, Cindy Brady, Carol Trent, Cindy's therapist, and Cindy's foster mother. Mike Brady, Cindy's father, was included by conference call from the Richmond City Jail. In addition to agency staff, Brenda Jackson, Rehabilitation Counselor, provided information with consent from Mrs. Brady, in compliance with HIPPA regulations.

Cindy Brady is a child with significant vulnerabilities due to the trauma of being exposed to domestic violence, physical and emotional abuse by both parents, and multiple losses from a series of moves to include her recent placement in foster care. Trauma behaviors needing further evaluation include excessive clinginess, fear of being alone, startle reflex, and poor hygiene. She has been assessed with mild educational delays and speech difficulties. A follow-up psychological evaluation is scheduled to better assess and understand recently exhibited attachment concerns.

In order to provide her with a sense of safety and predictability which is essential to meeting her basic developmental needs, Cindy will need to live in a stable and supportive environment. Cindy will need to continue to receive age appropriate supports, such as the services listed in her IEP to maintain/improve her academic progress. To build a sense of trust and attachment, her caregivers will need to know and practice positive parenting techniques that include understanding the impact of abuse on children. Her caregivers will need to assure their consistent attention and availability by abstaining from illegal and abusive substance use. To repair the past impact of trauma, Cindy and her family will need to engage in relationship building interventions such as individual and family counseling.

Throughout her placement in care, Cindy needs to be kept informed of the planning process, and progress of all parties, regarding her future. Regular visitation with her mother and brother will provide Cindy this opportunity, as well as provide opportunities to build on positive parent-child interactions and play. Visitation with her father will be considered based on the recommendation of her therapist. To address the alternative plan of Placement with Relative, both Cindy and the

identified relatives will need to have increased contact and inclusion in her mental health treatment, prior to placement, to understand her current developmental needs and treatment plan.

b. List the services which will be provided which will address the needs identified above, improve conditions of the parents' home and facilitate return of the child home, movement into other permanent placement, or transition to independence. Give target dates for completion.

1. Parent(s)/Prior Custodian(s) –

GOAL: RETURN HOME: CAROL BRADY

To assist Mrs. Brady in providing a safe and stable living environment, DSS will:

- Refer her to the Housing Unit and assist her in completing an application for assistance (two months prior to completion of her current inpatient substance abuse treatment program and in consultation with her rehabilitation counselor).
- Refer Mrs. Brady to the Work Force Center for training and counseling in securing employment (upon release from her program or as recommended by her counselor).
- Connect Mrs. Brady with community resources to assure the availability of basic furniture, clothing and food supplies (upon her securing a residence).

To strengthen and support the parent/child relationship, DSS will:

- Connect and monitor compliance of Mrs. Brady with mental health services at the Richmond City CSB or other Medicaid/sliding scale treatment provider, targeting both individual counseling and issues of domestic violence. (Referral was completed 7/18/20xx. Services to begin post-detox and will be ongoing, as recommended by treatment provider).
- Refer and monitor compliance with parenting education program that includes topics related to meeting Cindy's basic developmental needs and the delays resulting from prior abuse and neglect. Program should include the use of positive parenting techniques (within two months and until completion of program).
- Arrange weekly visitation consistent with policy at the rehab center. Should it be needed, DSS will provide Mrs. Brady with transportation services. Upon her release from substance abuse treatment, the visitation schedule will be reviewed for increased contact (ongoing).

To enhance and support Mrs. Brady's parental capacity to attend to Cindy's developmental delays and ongoing needs for safety and well-being, DSS will:

- Arrange for a parental capacity evaluation to be completed by Richmond CSB (within 3 months).

- Monitor compliance with any current safety plan regarding the presence of Mr. Brady in the home or near the children (ongoing and to be reviewed as his status may change).
- Monitor Mrs. Brady's interactions during visitation/contacts with Cindy to support and provide feedback on implementation of parenting techniques.(ongoing)
- Ensure Mrs. Brady's inclusion in all IEP and other school meetings (ongoing).
- Assist with Mrs. Brady's knowledge of, and attendance at, any medical or dental appointments, as well as obtaining any consents for more extensive medical treatment (ongoing).
- Inform and include Mrs. Brady in periodic Family Partnership Meetings and monthly progress reviews to discuss and assess service needs and accomplishments (ongoing).
- To assist Mrs. Brady in meeting Cindy's need for lifelong connections and permanency, DSS will:
- Discuss with her all paternal and maternal relative support and placement resources (ongoing).
- Provide full disclosure of issues, concerns and progress that affect meeting the concurrent goals of this plan (ongoing/monthly).

GOAL: RETURN HOME: MICHAEL BRADY

Upon sentencing and disposition of the criminal charges for which Mr. Brady is currently incarcerated, an amended service plan will be submitted regarding the support and assistance that will/can be given, based on his residence/sentence.

GOAL: PLACEMENT WITH RELATIVES

Alternative placement with relative options will be pursued and supported as:

- DSS will request relatives' names and contact information from both parents and children, using interview, genogram and/or other assessment tools, such as Accurint (ongoing)
- DSS will send letters to identified relatives encouraging participation in case planning, attendance at Family Partnership meetings and placement (within the first 30 days, and ongoing, for the time Cindy remains in custody).

To assure a viable relative placement meets physical safety standards, DSS will:

- Conduct a home study consistent with Virginia State standards for approved providers (as soon as application is received).
- Should the relative reside out of state, a request for an ICPC home study from the legal jurisdiction in which the relative resides will be initiated. The request will include criminal and reference checks, as well as an assessment that the relative meets the standards of that jurisdiction's approved providers. (Request to be completed within two weeks of identification).
- Supervision of the placement on a monthly basis will be provided/requested (ongoing until custody is transferred)
-

To ensure the caregiver's capacity to meet Cindy's developmental needs and delays, DSS will:

- Provide/request supervising agency provide full disclosure of all medical, educational and psychological information available. (Prior to and ongoing, as available).
- Include relative in therapy sessions with Cindy, as recommended and in collaboration with her therapist.(TBD)

- Include relative caregivers in agency provided pre-service training for resource or kinship care providers, to include issues related to the developmental needs of abused/neglected children.(prior to or within 60 days of placement)

To address permanency and well-being needs, DSS will:

- Include relatives in FPM and planning meetings, as well as provide full disclosure on the progress of meeting the concurrent goals.(ongoing)
- Assist and encourage face-to-face and other forms of contact with Cindy to build a stronger connection.(ongoing)
- Assist relative and birth parents in defining role responsibilities, as well as visitation/communication schedules (ongoing).
- Provide counseling to Mrs. Brady to assist in Cindy's transition relative custody (as needed).

2. Child/Youth

To address Cindy's past trauma, repair her sense of well-being and vulnerabilities, DSS will:

- Continue to ensure attendance at individual counseling, currently provided by Richmond CSB and monitor its progress (ongoing).
- Refer her for psychological testing with recommendations for focus of treatment and suggestions for any additional interventions (within 30 days).
- Consult with her current school regarding further need for academic support or speech therapy (ongoing)
- Provide extracurricular activities that promote the development of her talents, skills and self-esteem. (ongoing)

To encourage the development of a more positive relationship with her birth parent and maintain her relationship with her sibling, DSS will:

- Ensure regular contact with Mrs. Brady consistent with current rehab program restrictions. This schedule will be reviewed upon her discharge from the program (ongoing).
- Arrange for family therapy, in consultation and consensus with both Mrs. Brady's and Cindy's therapists' recommendations (TBD)
- Schedule regular visitation/contact between Cindy and Peter at a minimum of twice a month.

To support Cindy's growth in her ability to be self-protective and encourage her ability to make good judgments, DSS will:

- Include Cindy in Family Partnership meetings and case planning, by attendance or inclusion of her written concerns and desires (ongoing).
- Provide full disclosure to Cindy of participants' progress in completing service plan responsibilities and the status of alternative goals.
- Provide opportunities for Cindy to visit, contact and have input regarding any proposed relative placements (ongoing).

3. Foster Parent(s)/Adoptive Parent(s)/Residential Facility -

To provide support services and guidance in meeting Cindy's physical and developmental needs, as well as to assure her safety while in care, DSS will:

- Share pertinent information regarding the child's past history, medical, psychological and academic needs.
- Provide a copy of and monitor compliance with the service plan and the standards for approval of resource families.
- Conduct, at a minimum, monthly contact with the resource home (ongoing).
- Include the resource parent in FPMs and provide full disclosure on progress towards goal achievement (ongoing).
- Assist and support resource and birth parent communication (ongoing).
- Manage funding for basic shelter, clothing, medical and service needs (ongoing).
- Provide 24 hour on-call availability by phone.

7. List responsibilities, including conduct and financial support, with target dates for completion for:

a. Parent(s)/Prior Custodian(s) –

GOAL: RETURN HOME: CAROL BRADY

Mrs. Brady will meet Cindy's developmental need for a safe and stable living environment by:

- Completing an application for housing assistance prior to her completion of her inpatient drug treatment program, or independently securing housing upon her successful of treatment.
- Acquired housing should be free of safety hazards and provide accommodations for at least two bedrooms.
 - Prior to Cindy participating in in-home/overnight visitation, this residence is to be maintained without financial concern for three months.
- Mrs. Brady will be able to provide for her own financial needs, independent of irregular community donation, on an ongoing basis (within two months of discharge from rehab).
 - Mrs. Brady will participate in the Work Force Center training and counseling program (upon release from her program or as recommended by her counselor).
 - Until she has secured employment, she will provide verification to DSS of at least two job applications each week.
 - Mrs. Brady will apply for SSI benefits, should she meet criteria for disability benefits.

Mrs. Brady will address issues of her parental capacity to attend to Cindy's developmental delays, needs and well-being by:

- Completing the parental capacity evaluation at the agreed upon appointment time. Should she not be able to make the appointment, she must call within 48 hours of the scheduled appointment and provide verification of the reason for missing the appointment.
- Follow all recommendations of the parental capacity evaluation (TBD)
- Abide by any current safety plan regarding the presence of Mr. Brady in her home or near the children (ongoing).
- Complete a parenting education program approved by DSS that includes topics related to meeting Cindy's basic developmental needs and the delays resulting from prior abuse and neglect. Program should include the use of positive parenting techniques (within two months of release from treatment and until completion of program).

- Attend/complete all arranged visitation/contacts with Cindy, or provide 24 hour notice and verification of reason for cancelling.
 - Mrs. Brady must be free of all substance use at the time of visitation. Random screens may be requested and visitation may be cancelled if substance use is suspected (ongoing).
 - Practice/implement positive parenting in interactions with Cindy – e.g. participating in play activities and discussion regarding school and routine life activities, using patience and redirection with guidance, while abstaining from abusive verbal comments or physical consequences, withholding of affection or suggesting child's guilt in the family's current status.
- Attend and actively participate in school meetings, any medical or dental appointments, as well as being available to provide any consents for more extensive medical treatment (ongoing).
- Attend and actively participate in Family Partnership meetings and monthly progress reviews to discuss and assess service needs and accomplishments (ongoing).

To address her current mental health and substance abuse issues that have impaired her ability to protect and attend to Cindy's needs, Mrs. Brady will:

- Complete current drug treatment program and meet the program's definition of "actively and successfully participating". Participate in follow-up drug programs and supports as recommended by the treatment program.
- Actively and consistently participate in individual therapy at Richmond City CSB or other Medicaid/sliding scale treatment provider, targeting both individual mental health issues and issues of domestic violence. (Services to begin post-detox and will be ongoing, as recommended by treatment provider)

To assist Cindy's need for lifelong connections and permanency, Mrs. Brady will:

- Provide paternal and maternal relative names and information regarding their ability to be placement resources (ongoing).
- Should the goal of relative placement be primary, assist Cindy in transitioning to the relative placement and cooperate with the redefined role responsibilities (ongoing).

CONCURRENT GOAL: Placement with Relative

To assure that the identified caregiver has the capacity to meet the safety and developmental needs of Cindy, they will:

- Participate in and comply with all requirements of the home study process, consistent with the standards set by the jurisdiction in which they live (within 90 days of initiation).
- Complete pre-service training for resource or kinship care providers, to include issues related to the developmental needs of abused/neglected children (prior to or within 60 days of placement).
- Comply with agency supervision of the placement on a monthly basis (ongoing until custody is transferred).
- Comply with and participate in any and all agency recommendations for continued mental health, medical, educational or special service needs identified in Cindy's treatment plan. (ongoing).
- Identified relatives will participate in any school, provider, FPM and planning meetings (until custody is transferred)

To address safety and permanency needs, for Cindy:

- Cooperate in arranging and participating in face-to-face and other forms of contact with Cindy to build a stronger connection.(ongoing)
- Assist relative and birth parents in defining role responsibilities, as well as visitation/communication schedules (ongoing).

b. Child/Youth -

In order to address her past trauma, develop more secure attachment to caregivers and learn coping skills that will increase her personal safety skills, Cindy will:

- Participate in a psychological evaluation at Richmond CSB and follow treatment recommendations (within two months).
- Continue to participate in weekly therapy sessions at Richmond City Community Services Board, or a similar service provider, should her place of residence change (as recommended by the treatment team).
- Participate in family therapy work, when agreed upon by her and Mrs. Brady's therapists. Should she be placed with a relative, family work will be arranged with that caregiver (TBD).
- Participate in scheduled visitation/contact with Mrs. Brady as well as with her brother, Peter (ongoing).
- Upon identification of the potential relative placement, participate in contact and visitation with said relative (ongoing).

To address her developmental delays and academic needs, Cindy will:

- Attend school and speech therapy, as scheduled.

c. Foster Parent(s)/Adoptive Parent(s)/Residential Facility -

To remedy Cindy's need for a safe, stable and supportive environment, Resource parents will:

- Assist in meeting Cindy's physical and mental health needs by providing current information to service providers, as well as transportation to necessary appointments (ongoing).
- Cooperate with and encourage scheduled visitation between Cindy and her family members (ongoing).
- Assist her with educational and speech delays by attending school conferences, assisting with homework and practicing speech exercises (ongoing).
- Participate in FPM and provider meetings, apprising agency, providers and family of Cindy's adjustments and progress (as requested).
- Maintain documentation of medical, dental and/or special service reports and treatment.
- Maintain and provide Cindy with pictures, mementos or recordings of events and activities to provide continuity in her life experience (ongoing).

8. The following persons were involved in planning:

- ☒ **Child**
- ☒ **Parent(s)/Prior Custodian(s)**
- ☒ **Foster Parent(s) or Care Providers**
- ☐ **Adoptive Parent(s)**
- ☐ **Other**

If parent(s) not involved, explain why.

WORKER

DATE

SUPERVISOR

DATE

OTHER SIGNATURE

DATE

New Foster Care Plan Part B Requirements Cheat Sheet

A separate section of the foster care plan shall be completed when the child cannot be returned to the parents or prior custodians within a practicable time (§ 16.1-281). The foster care plan Part B should describe fully:

- The reasons the child cannot return home within a practicable time, consistent with the child's best interests;
- The opportunities and plans for achieving the following goals and the reasons these goals are or are not feasible:
 - Achieving Adoption within the shortest practicable time.
 - Achieving Placement with Relatives if a subsequent transfer of custody is planned.

This cheat sheet identifies the requirements (in red, additional clarification in blue) which are not specifically addressed in the Part B template. What has been added does not replace the existing items. Please be sure to address the template items as well as the new items.

What is the permanent plan for the child?

You will need to select the permanency option for the child and explain why other permanency options were not selected.

Return Home to parents within ____ months

Explain why/why not selected:

If selected:

- Document what services the parents must still complete and the timeframe for completion. Provide specific reasons as to why the services have not been completed prior to the permanency planning hearing. Document a specific plan to initiate a trial home placement prior to the next court hearing.

Placement with Relatives

- ☐ Transfer custody to relative
Name:
Relationship:
- ☐ It is premature
- ☐ Custody to relative within ____ months

Explain why/why not selected:

If selected:

- If placed with a relative: Document where the child is placed, length of time in the home, adjustment of the child to the placement, stability of the placement, fitness and capability of the relative, safety and quality of care the child receives, and commitment of the relative to the child.
- If not placed with a relative: Document the steps the agency has taken to identify relatives, what is preventing a relative placement, and the plans to place the child in a relative's home within the next 6 months.

Adoption

- ☐ TPR Petition filed/to be filed
- ☐ Adoption is in the best interest

Explain why/why not selected:

- Document why adoption is in the best interest of the child. Identify when the TPR petitions was filed. If the petition has not been filed, document when it will be filed.

Describe any efforts to explore voluntary termination of parental rights with the child's parents.

Permanent Foster Care

Name:

Explain why/why not selected:

If selected:

- Explain why Permanent Foster Care is the plan for the child (16 years or older), describing the significant relationship with the foster parent(s) and how the child's needs will be met on a long-term basis. Permanent foster care does not achieve permanency for the youth. Explain what efforts have been made to explore the permanency goals of reunification, adoption, and relative custody and what barriers there are to permanency that resulted in the selection of permanent foster care.

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Explain why/why not selected

If selected:

- Explain why Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement is the plan for the child (16 years or older), describing the child's severe, chronic, and disabling condition that is emotional, physical, or neurological in nature and that requires long-term residential treatment of six (6) months or longer. Explain why all other goals have been ruled out and what efforts are being made to achieve permanency for the youth, including discharge plans.

☐ Yes ☐ No Child has been in care for at least any 15 of the past 22 months

☐ Yes ☐ No Petition for TPR (If no is chosen check all that apply)

☐ TPR is not in the child's best interest

- If selected, a compelling reason for not petitioning for TPR must be documented in the explanation box below. The agency must include the specific reason and an explanation of how the case will move to permanency. Examples of compelling reasons are outlined in guidance and are included on page 3 of this job aid for easy reference.

☐ The child is residing with a relative

- If selected, ensure that all the criteria have been completed under the Placement with Relative box above. Document all efforts to achieve permanency with the relative and what steps the agency has taken to explore all permanency options with the relative either in the placement with relative box above or in the TPR explanation box below.

☐ Services not provided to parents to return the child safely home

- If selected, describe the specific reunification services that have not been provided but are considered necessary for the child's safe return. Describe why such services have been delayed or have not been provided within the time frame outlined in the plan. Describe the steps the agency has taken to remedy the failure to provide services. Describe the likelihood that the safe reunification within a specified time will occur if services are provided.

Explain why TPR is not being pursued:

Additional Comments:

Compelling Reasons for not Petitioning for Termination of Parental Rights

Determinations regarding compelling reasons must be made on a case-by-case basis.

Examples of compelling reasons for not petitioning for TPR include (but are not limited to):

- A parent has made substantial progress toward eliminating the problem that caused the child's placement in foster care; it is possible for the child to safely return home within six months, and the child's return home will be in the child's best interest;
 - If this is selected as a compelling reason, the LDSS shall document in the service plan what services the parents must still complete and the timeframe for completion. The LDSS must provide specific reasons as to why the services have not been completed in 15 months. The LDSS must also document a specific plan to initiate a trial home visit prior to the next court hearing.
- Another permanency plan is better suited to meet the health and safety needs of the child. The following situations are examples of when an alternative permanency plan may be in the child's best interest:
 - The child is 14 years of age or older and objects to the TPR (13.1-283 G) who does not wish to be adopted after documented efforts, including therapeutic interventions. (*See Section 9.5 and 9.5 of Foster Care Guidance*) regarding preparing and involving youth regarding adoption)
 - The parent and child have a significant bond, but the parent is unable to care for the child because of an emotional or physical disability and the child's relative caregiver or permanent foster parent has committed to raising the child to adulthood and facilitating visits with the parent;
 - The child is 16 years old, has a severe and chronic emotional, physical or neurological disabling condition for which the child requires long-term residential treatment, and meets the criteria for a goal of another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA).
 - The child entered foster care due to reasons other than abuse and neglect; their parent, guardian or legal custodian has cooperated with referrals, visitation, family conferences and therapy; the child is uncooperative or inconsistent with services or referrals; and the child continues to require placement to address reason for entry.
- If the LDSS has questions regarding appropriate use of a compelling reason not to file for termination of parental rights, they may reach out to their regional practice consultant to discuss the specific, unique circumstances that exist in their case.

Supporting Your Child's Path to Permanency



As part of permanency planning, VDSS (Virginia Department of Social Services) is required by the Code of Virginia to provide you information about your option to voluntarily relinquish your parental rights. Your caseworker may share this information with you at any time during the case to help you plan for your child's future. Voluntary relinquishment has multiple benefits:

- It can serve to preserve a parent's dignity, while preventing a lengthy, contested court hearing.
- Parents are able to play a key role in supporting their child's exit out of foster care to permanency more quickly.
- Parents can enter into a Post-Adoption Communication Contact Agreement, if the adoptive parents are in agreement, to maintain contact with their child after they have been adopted (this may be an option regardless of whether the TPR was voluntary or involuntary).

This informational guide is designed to inform you of your option to voluntarily terminate your parental rights. Termination of parental rights is a serious, life-altering decision and should not be made without careful consideration. This guide does not provide legal advice and you are encouraged to consult with an attorney prior to making a decision regarding your parental rights

Termination of Parental (TPR) severs all legal rights between a child and their parent, freeing the child for adoption. TPR removes the responsibility of the parent to continue providing financial support for the child, and removes the legal rights to visit with or have contact with the child, determine religious affiliation, and consent to adoption. After TPR, parents are no longer provided notification of court proceedings.

What are the two types of TPR?

Voluntary

This is when a parent chooses voluntarily to relinquish their parental rights.

This can be done two different ways:

1. *Through a permanent entrustment agreement.* The opportunity for counseling services (regarding the adoption process/other alternatives) prior to entering into the agreement must be provided to the parents. Once approved by the court and the order terminating rights has been issued, the parents cannot revoke the agreement but can appeal the order.
2. *Through a petition for permanent relief of care and custody.* The parents file a joint petition with the court for termination of parental rights and the LDSS may join in the petition.

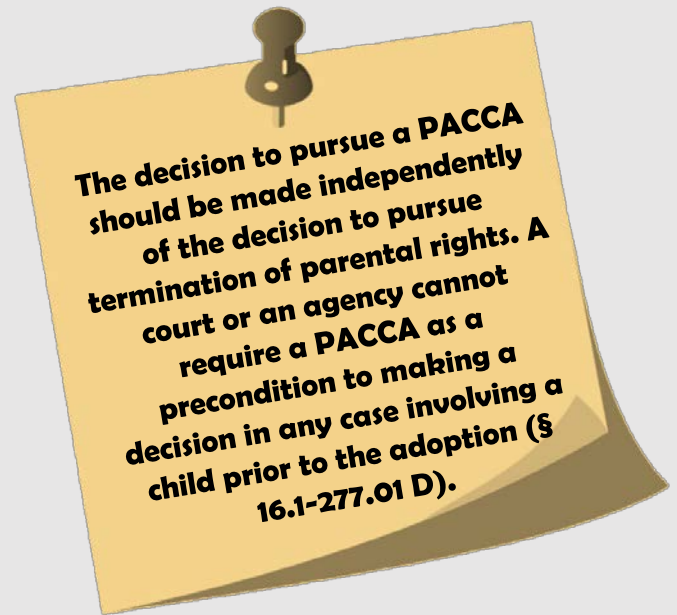
Involuntary

If voluntary TPR is not possible, then DSS may consider filing for involuntary TPR. The court would have to decide if there are grounds for the TPR, if it's in the best interest of the child, and if the child (when they are ages 14+) consents to the TPR. There is an appeal process with this type of TPR as well. Involuntary TPR involves a court hearing where evidence and/or testimony is presented to establish grounds for involuntary TPR.

If a parent's rights have been involuntarily terminated on one of their children, this can be used to establish grounds for involuntarily terminating parental rights on another of their children.

Will I be able to continue to visit with my child once my rights have been terminated?

Once your rights have been terminated, you no longer have a “right to visitation.” Continued contact is a decision that is made amongst the adoptive parents, the agency, and the birth parents, taking into consideration the child’s wishes. The parties can develop and enter into a Post Adoption Contact and Communication Agreement (PACCA). If all parties, including the child’s Guardian ad Litem (GAL), agree that entering into the agreement is in the child’s best interest, the PACCA is filed in court with the petition to adopt creating a legally binding document.



Resources

- Legal Help (American Bar Association)
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_services/flh-home/
- Dial 2-1-1 or <http://211.org/>
(Community Resources)
- Mental health services (Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services)
<http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/behavioral-health/mental-health-services>
- Other Community Resources:

What are my next steps?

- ❖ If you wish to explore voluntary termination of parental rights, discuss with your attorney and/or caseworker what process would be best in your local court system.
- ❖ Ensure that you have support during this process and that you fully understand what your decision to voluntarily terminate or not to terminate your parental rights means for your family. If you have a counselor, make sure they are aware of what you are considering and can help you consider the emotional impact of your decision. If you do not have counseling services, let your caseworker know so that they can help connect you to services.
- ❖ Legal aid and mental health resources have been provided under *Resources*.

INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS CHECKLIST

1. Petition

- _____ a. Specifically requests termination of residual parental rights.
- _____ b. May accompany permanency planning petition.
- _____ c. Proceeded by filing of a foster care plan documenting that TPR is in the best interest of the child.

2. Notice

- _____ a. Summons and copy of the petition is served upon:
 - _____ i Child, if 12 years of age or older;
 - _____ ii Parents, guardian, legal custodian or other persons standing in loco parentis. If parent is not the custodian, the parent must also be summoned.
 - _____ iii Other persons the court deems proper and necessary.
- _____ b. Written notice to foster parents, a relative predicting care for the child and pre-adoptive parents.
- _____ c. Summons or notice clearly states the consequence of TPR.
- _____ d. If party within VA, summons served in person or substituted services.
- _____ e. If party without VA, but party can be found or address is known or with reasonable diligence can be ascertained, summons served in person or certified mail with return receipt.
- _____ f. If after reasonable effort, party cannot be found or post-office address cannot be ascertained, within or without VA, summons and notice of consequences served by publication.

3. Appointment of Counsel

- _____ a. Same GAL represents child.
- _____ b. Parents informed of right to counsel or same counsel is present.
- _____ c. GAL appointed to represent incarcerated/incapacitated parents.
- _____ d. Court may appoint CASA volunteer, if not previously appointed.

4. Hearing

- _____ a. Same Judge at earlier hearings conduct TPR hearing.
- _____ b. Parental rights terminated when child found to be neglected or abused and placed in foster care due to (Section 16.1-283B):
 - _____ i Court commitment
 - _____ ii Entrustment agreement entered into by parent(s)
 - _____ iii Voluntary relinquishment by parent(s) AND IF
- _____ b.1 Court finds clear and convincing evidence that TPR is in best interest of child and that:
 - _____ i Neglect/abuse was a serious and substantial threat to life, health or development of child (Section 16.1-283B.1) and
 - _____ ii Not reasonably likely conditions can be substantially correct to allow child's safe return home within reasonable time (Section 16.1-283B.2).
- _____ b.2 Proof of any of the following is prima facie evidence of above:
 - _____ i Parents have severe mental/emotional illness/deficiency with no reasonable expectation parents can take responsibility for child.
 - _____ ii Parents have habitually abused/are addicted to drugs to extent parental ability is seriously impaired and parent has not responded to treatment.
 - _____ iii Parents without good cause have not participated in appropriate rehabilitative efforts and cooperated with rehabilitative agencies.
- _____ c. Parental rights terminated when child placed in foster care due to court commitment, entrustment, or voluntary relinquishment and court finds by clear and convincing evidence it is in child's best interest and that (Section 16.1-283C):
 - _____ i Parents without good cause failed to maintain continuing contact, provide, or substantially plan for child within 6 months after placement. Proof that parents have failed without good cause to communicate with child for 6 months constitutes prima facie evidence of this condition (Section 16.1-283C.1); or

- _____ ii Parents have failed without good cause to remedy the conditions which led to the child's foster care placement within time limits set in foster care plan filed in court within a period of time not to exceed 12 months from the child's placement (Section 16.1-283C.2).
- _____ d. Parental rights terminated when child found to be abandoned and court finds clear and convincing evidence it is in child's best interest and that (Section 16.1-283D):

 - _____ i Child was abandoned and parents identity or whereabouts cannot be determined AND
 - _____ ii Parents, guardian, or relatives have not come forward within 3 months following issuance of order placing child in foster care; AND
 - _____ iii Diligent efforts have been made to locate child's parents.
- _____ e. Parental rights terminated when Court finds clear and convincing evidence and best interest of the child and (Section 16.1-283E):

 - _____ i Residual parental right of the parent regarding a sibling of the child have previously been involuntarily terminated; or
 - _____ ii Parents have been convicted of murder, voluntary manslaughter, or felony attempt to commit such offense, if victim was the child of the parents, a child with whom the parent resided or the other parent of the child; or
 - _____ iii Parents have been convicted of felony assault or felony sexual assault, if victim of the offense was the child of the parent or a child with whom the parent resided.
- _____ f. Court terminates parental rights of one parent without affecting rights of other.

5. Court Order

- _____ a. Order terminating parental rights is accompanied by order granting custody to:
 - _____ i local board of public welfare or social services;
 - _____ ii licensed child-placing agency; or
 - _____ iii a relative or other interested individual.
 - _____ iv if (i) or (ii), order indicates whether agency has the authority to place child for adoption and consent thereto.
- _____ b. Court considers granting custody to relative, including grandparent, after appropriate investigation.
- _____ c. Parties present receive a copy of TPR order.
- _____ d. Absent parties receive copy of TPR order. Court order not entered, if child is 14 years or older or otherwise of the age of discretion and objects, unless child age 14 or older has a disability that reduces developmental age.
- _____ e. Court sets date for agency submission to the court of the Adoption Progress Report within 6 months of final TPR order.

SUMMARY OF DECISION TO NOT FILE FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS (TPR)

Instructions for Completing the Summary of Decision Not to File for TPR

When a child has been in foster care for 15 out of the last 22 months, the agency must file for termination of parental rights, unless an exception exists. Per the 2020 Acts of Assembly Chapter 934, agencies are required to provide to their Regional Permanency Practice Consultant a clear description of the reasons why they have not filed for TPR and the reasonable efforts made regarding reunification or placement of the child with a relative. *This is a notification of the decision to not file for TPR and is not an approval process.* The Permanency Practice Consultant will review the information provided by the agency and, if applicable, provide the agency with any comments or concerns.

For further information on the allowable exceptions to filing for TPR, please refer to [Foster Care Guidance 16.2.6.5](#).

Within **5 business days of the agency's decision not to file for TPR**, the agency must submit the Summary of Decision Not to File for TPR to the [Regional Permanency Practice Consultant](#) assigned to your agency via an encrypted email. Both the worker and supervisor must sign this form (physically or electronically). If you are having difficulty sending your form, please contact your Permanency Practice Consultant

SUMMARY OF DECISION TO NOT FILE FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS (TPR)

Child's Name

OASIS Client ID

OASIS Case Number

Custody Date

Child's Age

Permanency Goal

What exception to the requirement to file for termination of parental rights exists? Include documentation. (See Service Plan Part B Cheat Sheet and/or Foster Care Guidance 16.2.6.5)

- ☐ The child is being cared for by a relative and the relative is pursuing custody of the child and does not want to adopt (LDSS will assess for KinGAP or State Funded Kinship Subsidy)
- ☐ The LDSS has not provided services to the parents deemed necessary for the safe return of the child
- ☐ TPR is not in the best interests of the child and a compelling reason exists why TPR is not in the child's best interest

Explain:

Efforts to achieve permanency goal (include efforts to achieve reunification and relative placement, barriers, engagement of services, FPMs held, etc.):

Summary of Decision to Not File for TPR (include how the agency came to the decision, family involvement in the decision, and what the agency's next steps are):

**SUMMARY OF DECISION TO NOT FILE FOR
TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS (TPR)**

FSS Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date

State Use: Permanency Practice Consultant's Comments:

Click or tap here to enter text.

A Relative's Guide to Services Post-Custody Transfer

This guide is designed for relatives who are pursuing custody transfer without kinship guardianship assistance. For services and support available through kinship guardianship assistance, please see the Assistance Information Sheet.

All resources are provided electronically, including brochures. If you need a physical copy of the brochure mentioned, please let your caseworker know to provide a hard copy.

Private health insurance coverage

- Relatives caregivers should contact their private health insurance provider to see what options there may be to have the child or youth be added to their existing policy. For example, health insurance coverage may include:
 - Employer-based health plan.
 - Self-employed health plan.
 - TRICARE (<http://www.tricare.mil/> 1-800-444-5445) for families of Uniformed Service members and retirees.
 - Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) (http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/benefits_chap11.asp or 1-800-733-8387) for certain dependents and survivors of Veterans and eligible Reservists and National Guard members.

Child support

(<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/dcse/index.cgi> or 1-800-468-8894)

- Unless the court terminates parental rights, the child's birth parents remain financially responsible for their child or youth. The contact information for your local child support enforcement office (<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/dcseoffices.cgi>) is _____ and _____.

You may pursue obtaining child support for the child or youth in the home after custody has been transferred. The amount of support is based on the needs of the child or youth and on the resources and the abilities of the birth parents to pay. When you are receiving TANF, Medicaid, or kinship guardianship assistance, the child support enforcement office will pursue child support on both birth parents to recoup the state's cost of providing services and child support payments would go to the local department of social services.

Social Security benefits

(<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/> or 1 (800) 772-1213)

- The child may be eligible for benefits due to the retirement, death, or disability of a birth parent through the Social Security Administration (SSA). Relative caregivers may apply for benefits on behalf of the child or youth based on the work record of the child's or youth's parents. If the child or youth is not receiving benefits from the parent record and is being raised by a grandparent, the child or youth may qualify for

benefits from the grandparent's record. There are eligibility requirements that must be met and the grandparent will need to contact the SSA for additional information. The child or youth raised by relatives other than a grandparent may qualify for dependent benefits, but only if the child is legally adopted by the relative.

- The [Supplemental Security Income](#) (SSI) program administered by the SSA. SSI provides cash benefits for individuals who are blind or have certain disabilities. To qualify for benefits the child or youth must be under 18 years old and meet the SSI disability, income, and resources criteria.
- Other retirement or disability benefits (e.g. *Veterans benefits* - <https://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/virginia-state-veterans-benefits.html>, *Railroad Retirement benefits* <https://rrb.gov/Benefits> or 1 877 772-5772), life insurance benefits, and/or trust fund payments related to a birth parent.

Tax Credits

- If you are working, then you may qualify for several tax credits through the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (<http://www.irs.gov/> or 800-829-1040). These include the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, and the Child and Dependent Tax Credit. You may contact the IRS or their tax preparer for more information.

Women, Infant and Children Program (WIC).

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/wic/> or 877-835-5942

- WIC provides supplemental food and nutrition education. WIC accepts children who are under the age of five (5) years, income eligible, and have a nutritional risk.

School nutrition programs

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/programs/index.shtml> or contact your local school

- There are school nutrition programs available for eligible children (e.g., Free and Reduced Price Lunches through the National School Lunch Program; School Breakfast Program). Application information may be obtained at the local school where the child or youth attends.

VDSS Benefit programs

- A copy of the Benefits Program Brochure is available electronically (https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/bp/fs/intro_page/forms/b032-01-0002-21-eng.pdf). to inform the relatives of eligibility and the application process for TANF, Medicaid, and SNAP in Virginia.
- To apply for assistance, access the CommonHelp portal: https://commonhelp.virginia.gov/access/media/en/VA_CommonHelp_QuickReferenceGuide.pdf or call 1-855-635-4370.
- Types of assistance:
 - *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program* (<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/tanf/index.cgi>). It is possible for the relative to apply for a Child Only TANF payment where only the child's or youth's income and

resources are considered for eligibility. These benefits may be available until the child's or youth's 18th birthday. In addition, relatives who prevent foster care placements may be eligible for increased TANF assistance.

- Medical assistance through the Medicaid (http://dmasva.dmas.virginia.gov/Content_pgs/rcp-home.aspx) or FAMIS program for the eligible child or youth to receive support for medical, dental, and behavioral health expenses.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
<https://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/snap.cgi> This program provides benefits to purchase food.

Early Intervention Services.

<http://www.infantva.org/documents/pr-ReferralGuide.pdf> or (800) 234-1448

- The Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia (<http://www.infantva.org/fam-SupportServices.htm>) provides early intervention supports and services to infants and toddlers from birth through age two who are not developing as expected or who have a medical condition that can delay normal development. Early intervention supports and services focus on increasing the child's or youth's participation in family and community activities that are important to the family. In addition, supports and services focus on helping you find ways to help the child or youth learn during everyday activities. These supports and services are available for all eligible children or youth and their families regardless of the family's ability to pay. To determine eligibility, the child's or youth's development is evaluated by at least two professionals from different professions or areas of development. When eligible, the family and professionals develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

Community Services Boards (CSBs)

<https://vacsb.org/> or call 2-1-1 to locate your local CSB

- CSBs provide the point of entry for the publicly-funded mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse services for the state. The CSB in your locality provides 24 hour screening and emergency services and referrals for follow-up care.

Children's Services Act (CSA)

<http://www.csa.virginia.gov/> or ask your service worker for your local CSA contact.

- This is a system of services and funding that is community based and family focused to assist in providing services to at risk children, youth, and their families. The FAPT is the local team established through the CSA that identifies the complement of services to meet the needs of the child or youth in their local community. If you have a need for additional services, let your LDSS service worker know. They can refer the child or youth to the FAPT.

Virginia Department of Rehabilitation Services.

(<https://www.vadars.org/>) or 800-552-5019

- This agency provides services for children and youth with significant disabilities to maximize their independence and inclusion in society. Services include vocational

rehabilitation, brain injury service coordination, community rehabilitation, case management services, independent living services, personal assistance services and procurement of assistive technology services, devices and equipment.

PRIOR TO KINGAP FINALIZATION

- ☐ Child is under 18 and has been in kinship resource home for at least six consecutive months (10.11.2.1)
- ☐ Permanency options of Return Home and Adoption are not appropriate AND thoroughly documented in the child's foster care plan and case contact narrative (10.11.3 and 10.11.4)
- ☐ Kinship resource parent is aware of the services available through KinGAP
- ☐ Kinship resource parent is aware the kinship subsidy is counted as income for the child when applying or any public assistance (such as childcare) and that child support may be pursued on the biological parent
- ☐ Complete the [Kinship Guardianship Assistance Screening Tool](#) to ensure that the child meets all criteria for eligibility (10.11.2.5)
- ☐ Hold a Family Partnership Meeting

KINGAP APPLICATION & NEGOTIATION PROCESS

- ☐ Assist the kinship resource parent with completing the [Application for Assistance](#)
- ☐ Within 14 days of receiving the application:
 - ☐ Determine that the application is complete and gather the appropriate supporting documentation (10.14)
 - If additional information is needed, send written notification regarding the specific information needed to complete the application. The kinship resource parent must submit the information within 30 days from the notice date.
 - If the application is denied, send the [Family Services Notice of Action and Right to Appeal](#) that clearly states the reason for denial and provides information on their right to appeal within 30 days of receiving notice of the denial
 - ☐ Administer the VEMAT if a VEMAT is required:
 - When the current VEMAT will be six months old by the time the KinGAP Agreement will be signed
 - When the VEMAT will become due during the negotiation timeframe
 - When there is no VEMAT and there is reason to believe the child requires additional supervision and support
- ☐ Submit the Referral for KinGAP Negotiation Packet to the Adoption Assistance Consultant (10.15)
 - The packet includes
 - ☐ [Referral for KinGAP Negotiation](#)
 - ☐ [Application for Assistance](#)
 - ☐ VEMAT, if applicable, with supporting documentation
 - Submit the application for assistance to the Adoption Assistance Consultant **at least 30 days prior to the court hearing**. This will ensure the Adoption Assistance Consultant has adequate time to review and process the application*
- ☐ The Adoption Assistance Consultant will submit the [Negotiation Report](#) to the LDSS no later than 30 days after receiving the referral packet
- ☐ Provide a copy of the Negotiation Report to the family

EXECUTING KINSHIP GUARDIANSHIP AGREEMENT

The agreement must be signed within 90 days of the LDSS receiving the completed application. The agreement must be signed by all required parties and fully executed prior to the legal transfer of custody

- ☐ Draft and execute the [Kinship Guardianship \(KINGAP\) Assistance Agreement](#) within 15 days from the date of the Negotiation Report
 - ☐ If the child was title IV-E eligible in foster care, the youth is automatically title IV-E eligible for KinGAP
 - ☐ For non-title IV-E youth, comply with your local department's policy and procedure to obtain CSA approval for negotiated payments prior to executing the agreement
- ☐ Submit a copy of the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Agreement to the Adoption Assistance Consultant no later than 10 days following the last signature on the agreement
- ☐ The Kinship Guardianship Assistance Agreement is effective on the date the court order is signed by the judge transferring legal custody to the relative custodian

POST CUSTODY TRANSFER

- ☐ Close the Foster Care OASIS case and paper case record within 30 days after legal custody is transferred (10.24)
- ☐ Establish the kinship guardianship assistance paper case record
- ☐ Open the kinship guardianship assistance case in OASIS under the relative custodian's name (10.25)
- ☐ Notify DCSE that the case has transitioned to KinGAP and that the child support case needs to remain open, using the [Notification to DCSE of Foster Care Case Change to KinGAP Form](#) (10.12)
- ☐ Send written notification to the relative custodian at least 60 days prior to the annual affidavit due date
- ☐ Obtain the [Annual KinGAP Affidavit](#) no later than the anniversary date that custody was legally transferred (10.20)
- ☐ Document in the OASIS case contacts when the signed affidavit was returned
- ☐ Follow guidelines in *Foster Care Guidance Section 10.21* for procedures for handling Addendum requests
- ☐ Increase basic maintenance payments when the child reaches a higher age grouping or when statewide increases are approved; no addendum is required.
 - ☐ Update the KinGAP payment screen in OASIS with the new maintenance amount
- ☐ If the child is in need of services after KinGAP finalization, assist the relative custodian with making a referral to the FAPT where the relative custodian resides. For further information, refer to *Foster Care Guidance Section 10.19*
 - ☐ The LDSS responsible for the KinGAP assistance and the LDSS where the relative custodian resides should establish a process for working collaboratively, in conjunction with the family, to meet the needs of the family.
- ☐ Send the [Family Services Notice of Action and Right to Appeal](#) to the relative custodian six months prior to the youth turning age 18, to advise the relative custodian(s) that the agreement will terminate on the youth's 18th birthday unless they submit, prior to the youth attaining age 18, documentation demonstrating that the youth has a condition that warrants continuation of the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Agreement, or is eligible for Fostering Futures.
 - ☐ Refer to *Foster Care Guidance 10.21.7* for steps to assess conditions that warrant continuation of KinGAP assistance beyond the youth's 18th birthday

PRIOR TO STATE FUNDED KINSHIP SUBSIDY FINALIZATION

- ☐ Child is under 18 and has been in foster care for at least 90 days (10.27.1)
- ☐ The child is not eligible for KinGAP, as outlined in [§63.2-1305](#) of the Code of Virginia
- ☐ Complete a home study on the prospective relative custodian
 - ☐ Utilize the [Kinship Mutual Family Assessment template](#) for this home study
- ☐ Prospective relative custodian is aware that State Funded Kinship Subsidy only includes the basic maintenance and does not include enhanced maintenance, non-recurring expenses, Medicaid, childcare, or special services
- ☐ Prospective relative custodian is aware the State Funded Kinship Subsidy is counted as income for the child when applying for any public assistance (such as childcare)
- ☐ Complete the [State Funded Kinship Subsidy Screen Tool](#) to ensure that the child and relative meet all criteria for eligibility
- ☐ Hold a Family Partnership Meeting

STATE FUNDED KINSHIP SUBSIDY APPLICATION & NEGOTIATION PROCESS

- ☐ Assist the prospective relative custodian with completing the [Application for State Funded Kinship Subsidy](#)
- ☐ Within 14 days of receiving the application, submit the following to the Adoption Assistance Consultant (10.27.3):
 - ☐ Application
 - ☐ [State Funded Kinship Subsidy Background Status Form](#) (if applicable)
 - ☐ Home Study of prospective relative custodian
 - ☐ Draft of the [Virginia State Funded Kinship Subsidy Agreement](#)

*Submit the application for assistance to the Adoption Assistance Consultant **at least 30 days prior to the court hearing.** This will ensure the Adoption Assistance Consultant has adequate time to review and process the application*
- ☐ The Adoption Assistance Consultant will submit the [Negotiation Report](#) to the LDSS within 14 days of receipt of the application
- ☐ Provide a copy of the Negotiation Report to the family

EXECUTING STATE FUNDED KINSHIP SUBSIDY AGREEMENT

The agreement must be signed by all required parties and fully executed prior to the legal transfer of custody (10.27.4)

- ☐ Within 30 days of receipt of the approval, comply with your local department's policy and procedure to obtain CSA approval for the State Funded Kinship Subsidy agreement
 - ☐ FAPT must approve all State Funded Kinship Subsidy agreements, regardless of the child's funding source while in foster care
- ☐ Obtain FAPT approval and all the required signatures on the State Funded Kinship Subsidy agreement prior to custody transfer
- ☐ The State Funded Kinship Subsidy Agreement is effective on the date the court order is signed by the judge transferring legal custody to the relative custodian

POST CUSTODY TRANSFER

- ☐ Close the Foster Care OASIS case and paper case record within 30 days after legal custody is transferred (10.27.10)
- ☐ Open the kinship guardianship assistance case in OASIS under the relative custodian's name
- ☐ Establish the kinship guardianship assistance paper case record (10.27.11)
- ☐ Notify DCSE that the child has left foster care
 - ☐ Ensure that the relative is informed how to apply for child support (if needed)
- ☐ Send written notification to the relative custodian at least 60 days prior to the annual affidavit due date
- ☐ Obtain the [State Funded Kinship Subsidy Annual Affidavit](#) no later than the anniversary date that custody was legally transferred (10.27.6)
- ☐ Document in the OASIS case contacts when the signed affidavit was returned
- ☐ Increase basic maintenance payments when the child reaches a higher age grouping or when statewide increases are approved; no additional paperwork is required.
 - ☐ Update the payment screen in OASIS with the new maintenance amount
- ☐ If the child is in need of services after State Funded Kinship Subsidy finalization, assist the relative custodian with making a referral to the FAPT where the relative custodian resides. For further information, refer to *Foster Care Guidance Section 10.27.7*
 - ☐ The LDSS responsible for the State Funded Kinship Subsidy assistance and the LDSS where the relative custodian resides should establish a process for working collaboratively, in conjunction with the family, to meet the needs of the family.
- ☐ Send the [Family Services Notice of Action and Right to Appeal](#) to the relative custodian 60 days prior to the youth turning age 18, to advise the relative custodian(s) that the agreement will terminate on the youth's 18th birthday. There is no provision for State Funded Kinship Subsidy to continue after age 18 and the youth is not eligible for Fostering Futures (10.27.8.2)

KINGAP VS. STATE FUNDED KINSHIP SUBSIDY

	KinGAP	SFKS
Assistance Provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Maintenance • Enhanced Maintenance (VEMAT) • Non-recurring Costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Maintenance Only
Funding Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV-E or CSA • Funding dependent on youth's eligibility in foster care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSA - no federal funds • Youth who were eligible for IV-E or CSA in FC would receive CSA funding
Foster Home Approval Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinship Provider must be approved as a Kinship Foster Home <u>AND</u> • The child must have been placed in the home for at least 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinship provider can qualify for exception from foster home approval • Youth must have been in foster care for 90+ days • Youth is not required to have lived in the home while in foster care
Service Plan Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return Home & Adoption goals determined to be not appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement for Return Home & Adoption goals to be determined not appropriate
Extension past 18 yrs old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to continue after 18 to age 21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ends at 18
Successor Guardian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance agreement can identify a successor guardian (refer to 10.16.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not available for State Funded Kinship Subsidy
<p style="text-align: center;">REMINDERS!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BOTH programs require that the agreement is signed PRIOR to the transfer of custody</p> <p>When applying for any public assistance (such as childcare), the kinship subsidy is considered as income for the child and can affect eligibility. It is very important to thoroughly assess the relative's need and consult with your Benefits Program prior to executing any kinship assistance agreement</p>		

Shifting Our Lens from Child Welfare to Youth Welfare

Being Reactive

- Decisions are made with minimal youth consultation.
- Protection safety concerns don't change as a young person grows.
- Assessments are based on predetermined parameters.
- Well-being is focused on physical and mental health.
- There is minimal community and partner involvement.

Being Proactive

- Youth participate in dialogue and share decision-making power.
- Self-sufficiency is encouraged.
- Assessments are based on relationships and trust between young people and caseworkers.
- Well-being is focused on normalcy as well as physical and mental health
- Collaborative practice is the norm.

Being Case-Driven

- Connections with biological family are driven by the caseworker.
- Youth voice is secondary in decision-making and case-planning.
- Youth have few choices in most areas of their lives.

Being Youth-Driven

- Connections with biological family are driven by the youth.
- Youth voice is primary in decision-making and case-planning.
- Youth have choices in most areas of their lives.

Being Protection-Focused

- Protection and safety of youth are the only concerns.
- Organizations focus only on protocols to keep children safe.
- Care is not individualized and not driven by youth desires and capacities.

Being Normalcy-Focused

- Emphasis on protection is relaxed, to focus on normalcy.
- In addition to safety, organizations encourage youth to take on developmentally appropriate challenges.
- All care is individualized and services are aligned with needs.

Being Focused on the Past or Present

- A child's past or present situation informs service delivery.
- Organizations do not provide many services to help young people prepare for the future.

Being Focused on the Future

- Youth have access to services and case planning that will benefit them in the future.
- Organizations work with youth to prepare them for adulthood.

Permanency Pact

*Life-long, kin-like
connections between
a youth and
a supportive adult*

A free tool to support permanency for youth in foster care



The national network for young people in foster care

www.fosterclub.org

What's a Permanency Pact? A pledge by a supportive adult to provide specific supports to a young person in foster care with a goal of establishing a lifelong, kin-like relationship.

Permanency Pact

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.

A Permanency Pact provides:

- structure and a safety net for the youth
- a defined and verbalized commitment by both parties to a long term supportive relationship
- clarity regarding the expectations of the relationship

A Permanency Pact creates a formalized, facilitated process to connect youth in foster care with a supportive adult. The process of bringing the supportive adult together with youth and developing a pledge or "Permanency Pact" has proven successful in clarifying the relationship and identifying mutual expectations. A committed, caring adult may provide a lifeline for a youth, particularly those who are preparing to transition out of foster care to life on their own.

Participants in a Permanency Pact

In addition to the two primary parties in a Permanency Pact (the youth and the supportive adult), it is recommended that a Facilitator assist in developing the Pact.

The *Facilitator* may be a Case Worker, Independent Living Provider or other adult who:

- is knowledgeable in facilitating Permanency Pacts*
- is familiar with the youth, and
- can provide insight into the general needs of the youth transitioning from care

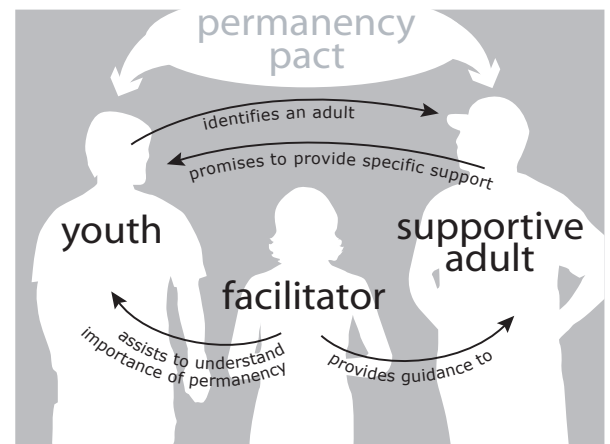
The *Supportive Adult* is an adult who:

- has been identified by the youth
- has a relationship with the youth
- is willing to commit to a life-long relationship with the youth
- is a positive role-model and
- is able to provide the youth with specific support on an on-going basis



Shawn from Michigan,
FosterClub All-Star

"As I get older I am seeing the importance of family, community and peer support. Ever since I became engaged and active in my community my circle of support has expanded. My life has become so much more enriched now that I have accepted that I have a lot of people that care about me, I genuinely believe that family: peers, bio, foster, adoptive, in-laws are the most valuable thing a person can have in their life."



*A Permanency Pact Toolkit will be available
Summer, 2007 at www.fosterclub.org



Developing a Permanency Pact

The first step is to engage the youth to identify the supports they want or need as they prepare for the transition out of foster care, and beyond to adulthood. The following list of 45 Suggested Supports can help with this process. Together with the youth, the Facilitator can then begin to develop a list of adults who may be able to provide some of those supports. This list may include current relationships or adults with whom the youth has had a previous connection to which they wish to reestablish.

The Facilitator then:

- obtains necessary releases of information
- makes initial contact with the indentified adult(s)
- updates them regarding the youth's current situation
- gauges their level of interest
- assists the adult in identifying possible supports they will provide, and
- schedules and facilitates the Permanency Pact meeting

Working with the Supportive Adult, the Facilitator can use the following list of 45 Suggested Supports to draft a list of supports that the adult wishes to offer the youth. The list is then presented to the youth who will acknowledge the offer and accept those supports that they feel would be most beneficial. Additional supports may be suggested by either the youth or the supportive adult.

The final list may then be hand written using the attached list or entered into the Pact template, available in Microsoft Word, Wordperfect, and PDF formats (available in the Permanency Pact toolkit, order through www.fosterclub.org starting Summer 2007). The youth and Supportive Adult sign the Pact and the Facilitator provides a witness signature. Copies of the Permanency Pact are provided to the youth, the Supportive Adult and maintained in the case record as part of the youth's Transition Plan. It is recommended that a certificate be prepared which documents the Pact between the adult and youth (certificate templates available in the Permanency Pact toolkit). All other members of the youth's Transition Team, including foster parents, CASA, judge, etc. should also receive copies of the Permanency Pact.

Taking a step toward trusting a relationship is often a very great accomplishment for a youth with a background where relationships are broken, promises are often not kept, and disappointment in caretakers prevails. The gift that a Supportive Adult contributes by way of a life-long commitment to the relationship is heroic. The impact of the forged relationship may be profound to all parties. To symbolize the importance of the commitment, it is recommended that a Permanency Pact be held in conjunction with some sort of ceremony or celebration. The Supportive Adult may want to give the youth a token keepsake gift (a piece of jewelry, photo frame, watch, engraved item, a special note, photo album, etc.), a celebration meal can be enjoyed.

A Certificate has been provided in this packet which may be used to affirm the Permanency Pact made between a youth and supportive adult.

*FosterClub member Caliguy94037,
age 18, from California*

"I consider permanency to be a life long connection with an adult and consider it very important. In my experiences, I have just met adults that seem to stay in my life and that connection with them helps me to succeed in life."



*Schylar From Montana,
Fosterclub All-Star*

"I have been through a lot in my life, and sometimes felt as if I were the only one alive in the world even when I was surrounded by lots of people. I am not always sure why I felt this way, maybe because I was a foster kid or maybe because I had always been told I was meant for nothing. But after a life of trials, I found someone that can almost make me forget a lot of the hurt and bad relationships. He is my 6th grade music teacher, my mentor, my savior through 11 placements, and now... my dad. I am 23, and am soon to be adopted your never too old to be adopted."



45

45 Suggested Supports...

*...that a Supportive Adult might offer
to a youth transitioning from care*

☐ **A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

Spending the holidays without a family and with nowhere to go is a significant issue cited by young people who have transitioned out of foster care. Extending an invitation to holiday celebrations, or birthdays can help a youth fend off the depression that usually sets in around these important times of year.

☐ **A PLACE TO DO LAUNDRY**

Many adults can look back at the times they returned home as a youth with bags loaded with dirty clothes to wash. The offer to use laundry facilities can be a great way to keep a regular connection with a youth and provide them with a way to maintain pride in their appearance, regardless of an unstable housing situation.

☐ **EMERGENCY PLACE TO STAY**

Statistics show 25% of young persons will spend at least one night homeless within the first 2-4 years of leaving foster care. The offer of an emergency couch to sleep on or a guest bedroom to stay in can reduce anxiety and keep young people safe during hardships. Supportive adults may want to specify limits in time or expectations (help with housework, etc.) as a condition of this offer.

☐ **FOOD/OCCASIONAL MEALS**

A friendly, family-style meal every thursday evening or an invitation to Sunday brunch or a monthly lunch can provide a youth with a healthy alternative to the fast-food that often composes a youth's diet. It also provides a chance to connect and to role-model family life. An open invite to "raid the pantry" can be very comforting to young students or those on a limited budget and will help to ensure that the youth's health isn't jeopardized when funds are low.

☐ **CARE PACKAGES AT COLLEGE**

Students regularly receive boxes of homemade cookies, a phone card or photos from their parents when away at college. A regular package to a foster youth who has transitioned from care reminds them of connections "back home", and allows them to fit in with their peers.

☐ **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

An employer or person in a position to hire, can help by providing special consideration when hiring for a new position. A phone call to the youth inviting them to apply, help with a written application, coaching for a job interview are all ways to help. Supportive adults can offer a youth the chance to help with yard work, housecleaning, babysitting, etc. in order to earn extra money and to establish a work reference.

☐ **JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE**

Finding a job can be a daunting task for anyone. Advice, help filling out applications or creating a resumé, rehearsal of interview questions, transportation to interviews, preparation of appropriate clothing, discussion of workplace behavior, and just plain cheering on can help a youth successfully land a job.

☐ **CAREER COUNSELING**

An adult working in the youth's field of interest can offer advice which could launch a youth's career. Youth particularly benefit from connections and introductions which lead to apprenticeships, job shadows, or other real-world experience. Supportive adults can help the transitioning youth make these contacts.

☐ **HOUSING HUNT**

Securing a first apartment is a rite of passage to adulthood. But without guidance, finding housing can turn into an overwhelming experience. Youth leaving care often lack references or a co-signer which a supportive adult may be able to offer. Former foster youth may have opportunities for financial assistance, but may need help locating it or applying for it. Also, supportive adults can utilize apartment hunting as an opportunity to discuss other daily living challenges, like roommates, utilities, selecting a neighborhood, transportation to job and needed services, etc.

☐ **RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Extending an invitation to a youth to go bike riding, go bowling, shoot some hoops or to simply take a walk can promote health, relieve anxiety, and provide a comfortable way to connect. Recreational activities like cooking, woodworking, painting or playing guitar can provide an outlet for youth and help to develop skills. Other activities include going to a movie, playing cards or chess or Monopoly, taking photographs, going shopping or taking a short trip.

☐ **MENTOR**

Mentors have proven to be an effective influence on youth. Whether a formal or informal mentor to a youth in care, the supportive adult can be a role-model, coach and a friend.

☐ **TRANSPORTATION**

Youth often need help with transportation and may have no one to turn to. A supportive adult can be a transportation resource, specifying the limits of the offer, i.e. for school, to find employment, for medical appointments, to visit relatives, etc. Youth can often use help to figure out how to use public transportation.



☐ **EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

According to statistics, only 50% of foster youth will graduate from high school. These shocking statistics show that many youth in care struggle through school against terrible odds including multiple moves, learning disabilities, lack of parental support and missed time in class. A supportive adult can help by becoming a tutor, an educational advocate, or by simply providing advice when needed. Youth planning to attend college can use help with college applications, finding financial aid, and visits to perspective college campuses.

☐ **RELATIONSHIP/MARRIAGE/PARENTING COUNSELING**

Youth coming out of foster care often lack the skill to cultivate and maintain lasting personal relationships. In many cases, role-modeled relationships for the youth have included biological parents with dysfunctional relationships and paid caretakers from group homes or facilities. Supportive adults can provide frank discussions about relationships, marriage, the role of a spouse and how to be a good parent when the time comes.

☐ **ASSISTANCE WITH MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS/ CHAPERONE**

It can be scary attending a medical appointment all alone. A supportive adult can accompany a youth to a medical appointment or rehearse what questions to ask, interpret a doctor's instructions, or provide advice about obtaining a second opinion.

☐ **STORAGE**

Sometimes the life of a youth can be transient, moving from location to location before getting settled. The supportive adult can provide a safe place to store valuables and help ensure that the youth doesn't lose track of valuables, including photo albums, family keepsakes, and records.

☐ **MOTIVATION**

Everyone does better with a personal cheering section. The supportive adult may be the only one to offer encouraging words to a youth.

☐ **SOMEONE TO TALK TO/DISCUSS PROBLEMS**

When a youth transitions out of care, there are often moments of insecurity, loneliness and anxiety. The supportive adult can provide a listening ear for a youth to vent, offer advice and wisdom, or be a sounding board for ideas. It may be wise to establish "calling hours" to avoid late night or early morning calls, if that is a concern.

☐ **A PHONE TO USE**

Sometimes a phone is simply not an affordable luxury for a youth starting out on their own. A supportive adult could provide use of their phone as a message phone for the youth's prospective employers or landlords. Use of the phone can be helpful to keep in touch with caseworkers, siblings, parents, former foster parents, or to access resources in the community.

☐ **A COMPUTER TO USE**

Access to a computer is a valuable tool for a youth for school work, employment or housing search, or contact with siblings or other relatives. A supportive adult can provide this access from a computer at work or at home, and may want to establish limits in time, websites visited, or downloads that are acceptable.

☐ **CLOTHING**

A youth may need assistance and/or advise in purchasing or preparing clothing for events like a job interview, weddings or special occasions, or graduation. Sometimes special opportunities need special gear, like a school ski trip, a costume party, etc. A supportive adult can assist with laundry, ironing, mending, shopping for new clothes, or occasionally purchasing a new item. Improving a youth's personal appearance can boost self confidence.

☐ **SPIRITUAL SUPPORT**

Youth often develop the same spiritual beliefs as their parents. Youth coming from care may have lacked this spiritual guidance. A supportive adult can invite a youth to join them as they search for their own spiritual path. The adult can offer to explore religion with the youth and invite them to participate in church or other spiritual activities.

☐ **LEGAL TROUBLES**

A youth emerging from care who gets into legal trouble usually cannot afford legal advice. When youth have a tangle with the law, they often land in deeper trouble because of their lack of experience and resources in navigating the legal system. A supportive adult can assist by connecting youth to needed legal services. The supporter may also wish to provide preventative advice to the youth who may be headed for legal entanglement.



JJ from Michigan,
FosterClub All-Star

"Permanency is a feeling that is different for everyone, it is not bound by time nor can it be measured. It has to be discovered and often times it has to be tested, and rejected more than once before permanency can be established. Permanency is so hard to understand because it is a conceptual idea of an emotion and is received on both ends very differently for every person. There is no straight "by the book" definition of permanency because the emotions I feel cannot be felt by anyone else, and that's the great thing about it."

☐ **CULTURAL EXPERIENCE**

Supportive adults who share a cultural background with a youth may wish to engage them in cultural activities. Even if the cultural backgrounds are different, the youth can be motivated to participate in cultural events. Support can be given to examine cultural traditions and beliefs and encouragement given to take pride in their cultural identity.

☐ **APARTMENT MOVE-IN**

Moving is so much easier with the support of friends, from packing, to manpower, a truck to move, to help setting up the new apartment. The supportive adult can also invite the youth to scout through their garage or storage area for extra furniture or household items that might be useful.



☐ **COOKING LESSONS/ASSISTANCE**

Many times youth coming out of care have not had the opportunity to practice cooking on their own. Meal preparation is often a natural way to engage in meaningful conversation and build a relationship. The supportive adult may decide to take a youth grocery shopping, or help stock the youth's first kitchen with a starter supply of utensils, spices, cleaning supplies and food.

☐ **REGULAR CHECK-IN (DAILY, WEEKLY OR MONTHLY)**

Simply knowing that someone will be aware that you are missing, hurt or in trouble is important. A supportive adult can instigate regular check-in's with a youth transitioning out of care, easing feelings of anxiety and building confidence that someone is concerned about their safety.

☐ **BILLS AND MONEY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE**

Sorting through bills and balancing a checkbook can be a particularly daunting task for a youth with a learning disability, deficient math skills or experience. Understanding how to maintain and obtain credit, deciphering loan applications, and budgeting are some of the items where a supportive adult can lend help.

☐ **DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION HELP**

A high percentage of youth in care have parents who had drug or alcohol dependency problems. Working with young people transitioning out of care to avoid these dangerous pitfalls and offering support if a problem should develop could help break a familial cycle of addiction.

☐ **HELP WITH READING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, AND COMPLEX MAIL**

Many youth in care have learning disabilities which may make complicated reading assignments all the more difficult. The supportive adult can make arrangements for a youth to collect materials for review on a weekly basis or to give a call on an as-needed basis.

☐ **MECHANICAL AND/OR BUILDING PROJECTS**

Youth may need help keeping an automobile in good repair. Teaching a youth about the care of their car can help them build self-confidence and skills that can last a lifetime. Helping a youth fix up their apartment or a rented home, or asking for their assistance in projects around your home, can teach new skills which may be put to use throughout life.

☐ **HOUSEKEEPING**

Some youth, particularly those who have lived in a residential facility or restrictive environment, may not have had real-life experience in keeping a home clean. The supportive adult can discuss cleaning supplies to use for particular household chores, how to avoid disease, and organization of clutter once a youth has transitioned to their own home.

☐ **HOME DECORATING**

Helping a youth decorate their home can be a fun and rewarding way to contribute to the youth's sense of pride and self esteem.

☐ **VOTING**

Youth in our society often form their first political impressions based on their parents' political beliefs. Youth in care often do not receive this role modeling. A supportive adult may wish to discuss current local, state and national issues, help a youth register to vote or take a youth to the polling location to vote.

☐ **VOLUNTEERISM**

Volunteering to help others or for a worthy cause is an excellent way to build self-esteem. Supporters can offer to engage a youth in their own good work or embark on a new volunteer effort together.

☐ **FINDING COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

Navigating through the maze of government agencies and myriad of social service programs is difficult at best even for a resourceful adult. The supportive adult can help the youth make a list of useful resources in the community and offer to visit them together.

☐ **SAFETY AND PERSONAL SECURITY**

The youth transitioning from care needs to take charge of their own personal safety. The supportive adult can encourage them to take a self-defense class, get CPR certified, get current on health and safety issues. The adult can take a tour of the youth's apartment and make suggestions regarding home safety, can help develop an evacuation plan, and make plans with the youth on what to do in an emergency situation. The supportive adult can offer to be called when something goes wrong, and offer to be listed as "person to contact in an emergency" on business forms.

☐ **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

Some youth in care suffer from mental health challenges. Depression, attention-deficit disorder, eating disorders, and other illness may afflict the youth. It is suggested that the supportive adult educate themselves about any mental health disorders that are at issue.

☐ **CO-SIGNER**

Many times youth need co-signers to acquire housing, car loans, or bank accounts (particularly when the youth is under 18 years old). Consider the financial liability if the youth were to miss payments or not fulfill the financial agreement. It is suggested that an adult who acts as a co-signer closely supervise the arrangement until the youth has established a consistent pattern of responsibility.



Sharde from Indiana, FosterClub All-Star

"Permanency is important because if you spend your entire life moving around it doesn't give you a chance to get close to anyone, and you don't learn how to build those essential relationships you will need later in life. Moving around also influences you to run away from your problems."



❑ **BABYSITTING**

If the youth is a parent, babysitting services can be the relief that is needed to keep a young family intact. In addition to providing a time-out, the offer to watch a child while the young parent gets other chores around the house accomplished (laundry, cleaning, etc.), provides an excellent opportunity to role-model good parenting skills.

❑ **EMERGENCY CASH**

Most of us have experienced a cash shortage at one time or another as a youth. Youth coming from care usually lack this important “safety net”. The supportive adult may wish to discuss up front their comfort level in supplying financial assistance. They would discuss what constitutes an emergency (not enough to cover rent? a medical emergency? cash for a date? gas money?).

❑ **REFERENCE**

Many applications, including those for college, housing and jobs, require a list of references be provided by the applicant. If the supportive adult is able to give a positive reference for a youth, they should make sure a youth has their current contact information so that the supporter can be included on their list of references.

❑ **ADVOCACY**

Sometimes youth have a difficult time speaking up for themselves in court, at school, with government systems, etc. Supportive adults can help a youth organize their thoughts, speak on their behalf, or assist in writing letters.

❑ **INCLUSION IN SOCIAL CIRCLE/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

Often youth in care have difficulty forming new friendships and relationships when they leave care. A supportive adult can extend regular invitations to the youth to attend social and community gatherings as an opportunity to form new friendships and make connections with people. Good opportunities to make new friends include family weddings, hiking trips, garden clubs, community service projects and volunteer opportunities, dances, sporting events, debate groups, community college classes, etc.

❑ **ADOPTION**

Even for many older youth, including those over the age of 18, adoption remains a dream. An adult who is able to offer this ultimate permanent connection for a youth may make an initial offer to adopt through a Permanency Pact. Often youth may have fears about adoption, interpreting adoption to mean loss of contact with bio parents or siblings (this should be taken into consideration when discussing this option). Youth who once declined to be adopted often change their minds, so an adult may want to renew the offer from time to time.

About FosterClub



*FosterClub is the national network
for young people in foster care.*

Every 2 minutes, a child's life changes as they enter the foster care system. There are more than 513,000 young people living in foster care across the country, and FosterClub *is their club* — a place to turn for advice, information, and hope. Our peer support network gives kids in foster care **a new spin on life**.

At FosterClub's **web sites**, kids are asking questions and getting answers: www.fosterclub.com is for young people and www.fyi3.com is designed for youth transitioning from care. FosterClub's gateway for adults who support young people in foster care is www.fosterclub.org. Our **publications** supply youth with tools for success and also provide inspiration and perspective from their peers who have successfully emerged from foster care. FosterClub's **training and events** are held across the country and feature a dynamic group of young foster care alumni called the FosterClub All-Stars. **Outreach tools** designed to improve communication with young people in care and engage them in achieving their own personal success.

The members of FosterClub are resilient young people determined to build a better future for themselves and for other kids coming up through the system behind them. Their success depends on the generosity of concerned individuals and collaborations with partner organizations. If you would like to learn more about FosterClub or how you can support young people in foster care, visit www.fosterclub.org or call 503-717-1552. FosterClub is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. EIN 93-1287234.



The pinwheel is an enduring symbol of the happy, carefree childhood all kids deserve. For more than 513,000 youth living in the U.S. foster care system, childhood has been interrupted by abuse, neglect or abandonment. FosterClub's peer support network gives kids in foster care a new spin on life by providing information, resources, encouragement and hope.

the national network for young people in foster care

FOSTERCLUB



PERMANENCY PACT

In an effort to substantiate and sustain
an on-going connection between a youth and a supportive adult,

S U P P O R T I V E A D U L T

pledges to provide specific support to, and has been accepted as a
provider of such support by,

Y O U T H

confirmed this _____ day of _____, _____
DAY MONTH YEAR

as witnessed by _____
FACILITATOR



*FosterClub's Permanency Pact documents a
life-long, kin-like commitment to a relationship
between a youth and a supportive adult.*

the national network for young people in foster care | www.fosterclub.org

- ☐ A Home For The Holidays
- ☐ A Place To Do Laundry
- ☐ Emergency Place To Stay
- ☐ Food/Occasional Meals
- ☐ Care Packages At College
- ☐ Employment Opportunity
- ☐ Job Search Assistance
- ☐ Career Counseling
- ☐ Housing Hunt
- ☐ Recreational Activities
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Educational Assistance
- ☐ Relationship/Marriage/Parenting
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Assistance With Medical Appts
- ☐ Storage
- ☐ Motivation
- ☐ Someone To Talk To/Discuss Problems
- ☐ A Phone To Use
- ☐ A Computer To Use
- ☐ Clothing
- ☐ Spiritual Support
- ☐ Legal Troubles
- ☐ Cultural Experience
- ☐ Apartment Move-in
- ☐ Cooking Lessons/Assistance
- ☐ Regular Check-in
- ☐ Bills & Money Management Assistance
- ☐ Drug And Alcohol Addiction Help
- ☐ Mental Health Support
- ☐ Co-Signer
- ☐ Help Reading Forms, Complex Docs
- ☐ Mechanical/Building Projects
- ☐ Housekeeping
- ☐ Home Decorating
- ☐ Voting
- ☐ Volunteerism
- ☐ Finding Community Resources
- ☐ Safety And Personal Security
- ☐ Babysitting
- ☐ Emergency Cash
- ☐ Social Circle/Community Activities
- ☐ Advocacy
- ☐ Reference
- ☐ Adoption
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____



National Resource Center for
Permanency and Family
Connections



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

Ten Things that Youth Want Child Welfare Professionals to Know: Talking to Youth in Foster Care about Permanency

Project LIFE, a partnership of United Methodist Family Services with and funded by Virginia Department of Social Services, held a state-wide conference on permanency in October 2013. During the conference, adopted youth and youth in foster care shared their experiences and developed their ideas into tips for child welfare workers. This NRCPPFC resource highlights their recommendations for workers when engaging youth in foster care.

1. Permanency is a new concept for me.

I need you to explain to me in detail what you mean when you use the word permanency, what the different possible routes to permanency are, and what is involved in each of these possibilities. I may have never even used the term permanency before.

2. Communication about permanency is so important!

Talk with me about permanency often and arrange frequent visits that allow us to engage in meaningful and ongoing conversations. This will help with my process of achieving permanency.

3. Remember that young people process and share information in different ways.

Consider resources and interactive activities that you can use to help me think about my relationships. If we do an activity, use the information as a tool in our planning so that I know my participation in these activities is purposeful.

4. Your support, constructive criticism, exploration, and feedback are essential for me to make good, informed choices.

5. Stay open minded and understanding regarding my ideas and suggestions about permanency options that you may not have considered.

6. Consider my foster parents as an option for permanency when we have a positive relationship and work with everyone involved to explore that possibility and provide support.

Try to recruit more foster parents that may be willing to adopt and create additional foster-to-adopt homes.

7. Stay proactive when addressing concerns that I bring up.

Address them in a timely manner and follow up on things you say you will do.

8. Be patient with me! I may need time to make up mind about permanency – don't expect me to make an immediate decision.

Allow me to change my mind if I don't initially think permanency is for me.

9. Adoption is a great choice for a lot of youth, but I may not think at first it is the right fit for me.

Help me understand more about the reality of adoption. Help me to understand and explore the pros and cons of all permanency options.

10. Identifying and choosing a lifelong connection may be scary for me!

There are so many factors that are unknown and variables that are out of my control. Help me to put my fears into perspective and comprehend what will happen once I find permanency.



ADVANCE YOUR FUTURE

with support from the
Education and Training Voucher Program

Do you need help paying for college or vocational training? Were you in foster care?

The federal Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program provides up to \$5,000 per year in grant funds to assist with education and training expenses associated with colleges, universities and post-secondary vocational training programs for individuals who were in foster care as teenagers. Contact your local department of social services for more information.

WHAT IT COVERS

ETV funds can help pay costs associated with college education or post-secondary vocational training, including:

- » Tuition and fees
- » Room and board
- » Educational materials including laptop, printer and software
- » Books and supplies
- » Transportation
- » Child care

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

If the following applies to you:

- ☐ Currently in foster care or Fostering Futures; left foster care after turning 18; or left foster care through adoption or the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) after turning 16.
- and
- Hold a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) Certificate
- Enrolled in or planning to enroll in a post-secondary education or vocational training program
- Between 14-25 years of age

For more information about the
ETV Program and the student application:



(804) 726-7905



FosterMyFuture.com



va.ilp@dss.virginia.gov

Applications can be submitted through your local department of social services.



EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program provides up to \$5,000 per year in financial assistance to eligible students for education and training expenses associated with college, universities, and post-secondary vocational training programs, such as:

- ▶ Personal computer, calculator, and software
- ▶ Books, school supplies, and transportation
- ▶ Room and board
- ▶ Tuition and fees
- ▶ Child care

Handout I-10



WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Students must be between 14 – 25 years of age, planning to enroll or enrolled in a post-secondary education or vocational training program, and meet one of the following eligibility requirements:

- ▶ Currently in foster care or *Fostering Futures*
- ▶ Have aged out of foster care or left *Fostering Futures* after turning 18
- ▶ Have left foster care through adoption or the *Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program* (KinGAP) after turning 16

Applicants must also hold a high school diploma, General Education Development (GED) certificate or equivalent, and have an approved ETV Student Application on file where the student is or was in care. Students must also complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), where applicable.

HOW CAN I ASSIST ELIGIBLE STUDENTS?

Local departments of social services (LDSS) caseworkers can assist current and eligible students by:

- ▶ Sharing ETV program and application information with eligible students
- ▶ Providing assistance with the ETV Student Application, if needed
- ▶ Coordinating with students to ensure continued ETV eligibility throughout the school year
- ▶ Directing students to the Virginia Department of Social Services foster care portal for youth, FosterMyFuture.com

LDSS should also process ETV applications within two weeks of receipt and notify students of funding.

HOW DO STUDENTS APPLY?

The ETV Student Application is available for download at www.FosterMyFuture.com. Completed applications should be submitted to the LDSS where the student is, or most recently was, in foster care or *Fostering Futures*. Students must reapply annually for a maximum of five years total.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:



(804) 726-7905



FosterMyFuture.com



va.ilp@dss.virginia.gov

