

# INDEPENDENT LIVING STRATEGIES

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A Program to Prepare Adolescents  
for Their Exit From  
Foster or Group Care

WILLIAM V. GRIFFIN, M.S.W., M.P.A.



Developed by  
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The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
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Distributed by  
National Resource Center for Youth Services  
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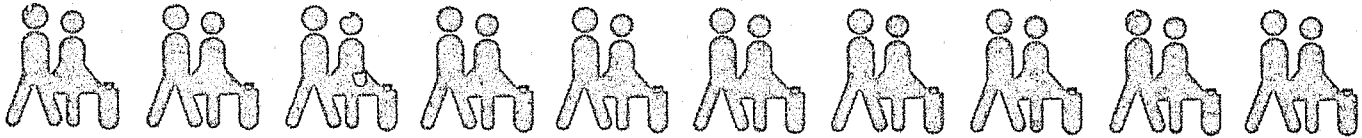


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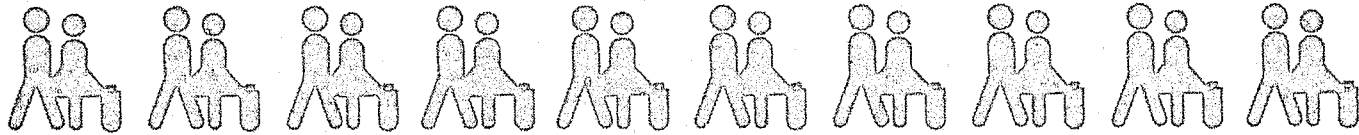
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# Preface



The purpose of this text is to provide a practical model for an adolescent independent living program. In this model, the concept of independent living becomes much more than the movement of an adolescent out of foster care; it becomes the preparation for the transition out of care, the management of the transition itself, and the follow-up after transition is accomplished.

Inherent in the model is the flexibility for the adolescent and the agency to plan a multi-level program that will allow the adolescent to become partially or fully financially independent as early as 17 years of age. The outcome could be substantive in that caseworkers would work in a number of ways towards the adolescent becoming self-sufficient in the community rather than remaining dependent on the agency.

Outlined below are the benefits that could be expected for the adolescents and for the human service agencies which undertake an independent living program. In addition, the contributions to child welfare policy, practice, and theory are also outlined.

## Benefits for Adolescents

- The development of a healthy sense of adolescents' own identities, their needs, wants, values, strengths, abilities, and interests;
- Basic knowledge of available options in the workplace, and the information and skills needed to begin making educational/vocational and job/career choices;
- The knowledge and skills which will enable adolescents to successfully find a job opening, get hired, and maintain successful employment;
- The development of necessary documentation the adolescent will need to make a successful transition from foster care to independent living (e.g., birth certificate, social security card, school records);
- Experience with a problem-solving model designed to increase personal decision making/communication skills which will allow adolescents to become more independent;



- An educational screening/evaluation that will help to pinpoint inadequate academic skills and the remediation needed;
- Knowledge of and experience with the actual requirements of daily living, such as:
  - home management (food preparation, cooking, cleaning, and laundry),
  - shopping (buying clothes, food, household supplies),
  - utilization of community systems and services (transportation, applying for food stamps, etc.),
  - health (personal care, family planning, medical assistance),
  - money management (handling of finances, budgeting, savings), and
  - leisure time (recreational/avocational activities);
- The experience of living alone while still being a part of the social services system through use of subsidized apartments or semi-independent living arrangements such as group homes, caretaker apartments, etc.;
- A developed support system that is predominately community-based which then allows the agency to become the back-up for support rather than the mainstay.

## **Benefits For The Public Agency**

- The development of an independent living program without the allocation of significant additional resources or financial expenditures;
- The adaptation of an array of training materials and guidelines to meet training needs of staff, adolescents and foster parents;
- The development of a public-private partnership with community-based groups that will support adolescent clients both during and after their exit from foster care (e.g., chambers of commerce, building trade councils, local businesses, etc.);
- The maximization of existing programs and resources to more effectively serve adolescents in foster care.



## **Benefits For Allied Social Service Agencies**

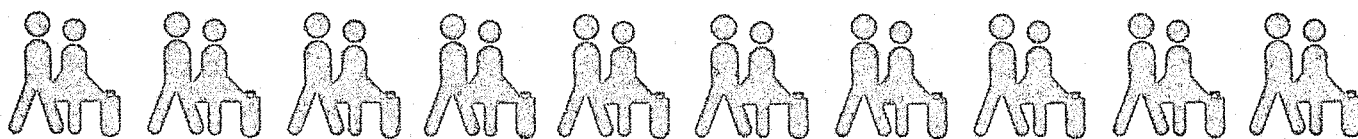
- Involvement with the planning and implementation of an independent living program in the public social service agency through membership on an advisory board;
- A decrease in the number of adolescents who have exited foster care unprepared for independence and self-sufficient living who then drain resources from the allied agencies.

## **Contributions to Policy, Practice, and Theory**

- The development of tested guidelines and policies in the area of public agency independent living;
- The testing of the theories that (a) local communities have the capacity to develop a coordinated response to the needs of adolescents who do not have permanent homes, and that (b) the adolescent can live in a self-sufficient and independent manner if given proper preparation for integration into the community;
- The demonstration that public casework practice can be enhanced in the delivery of independent living skills to adolescents in foster care.

The model provides a fresh approach for agencies in developing services for adolescents approaching emancipation. This theme is developed by providing the public child welfare agency with a model program which will guide the development and implementation of an independent living program within its present foster care system.

# Acknowledgments



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Special appreciation is extended to a very talented group of individuals who served as the Advisory Committee that guided the development of the model. Members of the Committee included:

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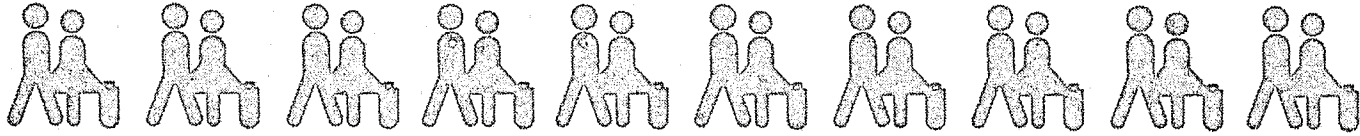
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# Introduction



*Learning to live independently is a lifelong process.* For a number of reasons, however, the child welfare system has not focused on the development of the skills which promote self-sufficiency in those children who are exiting the foster care system.

Public agencies need to make fundamental changes in their program emphasis for these children. Clarification is necessary on many issues surrounding the development, operation, and follow-up of an independent living program. Examples include:

- What are the basic requirements for a good independent living program?
- When should the agency take more responsibility for the in-house delivery of services for this population of adolescents?
- When a child is discharged to an independent living situation, can he/she remain eligible for services?

The Independent Living Model developed by The National Child Welfare Leadership Center (NCWLC) addresses this need in a straightforward manner and can be implemented within the staffing patterns now existing in most public agencies. The model incorporates the following:

- Criteria for selection of adolescents to be assigned a goal of independent living.
- Agency support systems for an adolescent entering and leaving such a program.
- Development of a team approach to working with adolescents.
- Development of community support networks for each adolescent.
- Development of policy/regulation changes to support an independent living program.
- Training in the skills and tasks associated with independent living.
- A plan for services to the adolescent after exit from foster care. The model provides a fresh approach for agencies in developing services for adolescents approaching emancipation. The model:
  - allows greater input by the adolescent into the choice of his/her living situation,
  - provides support without 24-hour supervision,
  - implements a new case management approach, and
  - broadens the community context in which the services are delivered.



The model provides the public child welfare agency with a program that serves to guide the development and implementation of an independent living program within its present foster care system. The changes required in the present foster care system assume that *the adolescent can and will participate in the community*. If appropriate plans and services for foster children are to be made available, independent living programs will need to include expanded efforts towards improving the receptiveness and support of the community and creatively utilizing its available resources.

The success of these efforts will ultimately rest on the ability of adolescents to develop skills that allow them to function as providers of their own needs, as advocates for their right to do so, and perhaps even as policymakers for themselves and their peers who have similar needs.

If relatively unskilled foster children are to assume these unaccustomed roles, they will require training and assistance in competencies that are quite different from those addressed in traditional social services. Consequently, the role of the caseworker will need to be shifted from that of a clinician to that of a technical consultant (teacher) who develops or adapts the resources necessary for independent living, and who provides training and assistance to the adolescent foster child.

An important step in the process of community and agency change is identifying the concerns of children exiting foster care by listening to their ideas and suggestions for improvement. Information from potential and actual program participants about those aspects of the community that facilitate or impede self-sufficiency should be used to guide program development efforts. Such information should also be gathered about the services of allied public service agencies and private agencies.

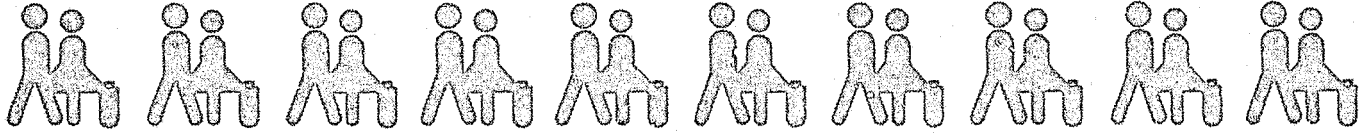
Another significant step in the process of agency and program change involves: (a) specifying the personnel, finances, and other resources required to take action, and (b) identifying those resources that are available in the agency and community. Resources that are unavailable could then be targeted for possible development.

By enlisting the aid of the voluntary/community sector, publicizing the purpose and need of the program, and increasing agency visibility, some of the concerns may be identified that are likely to be of importance to potential support groups. Additionally, actions should be carefully chosen to maximize the likelihood of immediate, visible, and permanent efforts. For example, a Chamber of Commerce might provide teenagers with after-school work. The Independent Living Program could help to maximize these efforts by publicizing the collaborative action of getting jobs for adolescents who will exit foster care in the near future.

The critical step in program development is that the agency take the initiative to work in a broader community context, establish new public policies, and create alternative resources for the foster care population.

## CHAPTER 1

# Adolescent Population and Range of Services for an Independent Living Program



## Adolescent Population

Many children in public agency foster or group care are now determined to be candidates for an independent living goal or program. Yet, what usually happens is that agencies end up choosing only those youths who have a high probability of (a) completing the program, or (b) living independently with little or no need for services. The majority of youths residing in foster care are overlooked and end up exiting care as part of an agency requirement, rather than being formally prepared for living independently. They are literally children one day and adults the next.

For the purposes of an independent living program, adolescents can be categorized in three ways:

**Mature Youth** ▪ This category consists of youths who are able to build and maintain relationships, exhibit appropriate behavior under most circumstances, are usually fairly sure they want to and can leave agency care, and have or are willing to seek employment in the community. This group will usually:

- develop their own pace for learning and self-sufficiency,
- finish high school or vocational training, and possibly
- attend college,
- find and maintain employment, and
- remain in contact with individuals who will provide a good personal support system after they exit care.

**Immature Youth** ▪ These adolescents comprise the primary target group for an independent living program. They tend to be dependent upon others to meet their needs, have difficulty maintaining relationships, frequently use inappropriate behavior, and often have unrealistic expectations of the agency. This group has to some degree become "institutionalized" and agency-dependent. The structure and content of the life skills training, the use of a team approach, volunteers, community supports, and independent living situations will positively influence the maturational process for these adolescents. The conscious effort of teaching specific skills while allowing the adolescents to learn at their own pace, is a key factor for this group.



**Youths with Handicaps** - This group, because of its handicaps, is largely "dependent" upon the agency and the community. The individuals have a wide range of handicapping conditions, ranging from severe physical and emotional scarring to the mildly or profoundly retarded individual. The adolescents' handicapping condition usually inhibits progress towards emancipation outside of a residential placement or foster home. Thus, services are directed towards maintaining the placement and preparing the child for eventual discharge from foster care to another appropriate program. Especially for this group, allied public agencies should be worked with closely as possible resources for these youths.

Long-term and continuous supportive services are a strong possibility for this group of adolescents.

All of these groups would gain from inclusion in an independent living program, but the follow-up support system utilized will vary depending on the youth's capabilities and community/agency resources available.

## Range of Services

Preparation for self-sufficiency is more than acquiring skills. Within a developmental framework, the adolescent's training should fit his/her level of maturation.

Thus, a continuum of services should be available to children in care. The continuum should be specific to the individual child's maturity and the available training environments. Adolescents should not be assigned to overly structured training sessions, but rather should be taught on the basis of functional levels and age. For example, caseworkers have to discern appropriate individual and group training based upon information from previous placements and extensive behavioral observations during the periods of time the child(ren) have been in care.

Just as skills are arranged in a hierarchy from the simple to the complex, training should be designed to facilitate learning for adolescents. To accomplish this the agency must provide a variety of settings designed to accommodate individual as well as group needs.

It is also important to emphasize that adolescents may be involved in several different training settings depending on their needs. The casework staff should have the primary responsibility of connecting each adolescent with the training needed. The agency's responsibility to youths in its care is reflected in the diagram below.



## RANGE OF SERVICES FOR YOUTHS APPROACHING EMANCIPATION

### **Mature Youths**

- Skills training
- Independent placement prior to emancipation
- Support network
- Still under agency custody until 18/21 years of age

### **Immature Youths**

- Skills training
- Stay in foster care
- Begin to plan support network to prepare for emancipation
- After discharge services
- Still under agency custody until 18-21 years of age

### **Youths with Handicaps**

- Skills training
- Stay in foster care
- Begin to plan support network to prepare for discharge
- Formal network with other agencies

The skills needed by each group all involve self-sufficiency and the networking and support systems developed are all predominately community-based. The programs differ in the timing and degree of emancipation/separation from agency care and supervision.

An agency's willingness to adapt the independent living program to its foster care population and service delivery system will help to meet the responsibility for adolescents residing in foster care.

## CHAPTER 2

# A Model Program Design



With the lack of public program experience that exists, some creative thinking is needed to develop an effective life skills training program. For example, Trudy Festinger, in *No One Ever Asked Us . . . . A Postscript to Foster Care*, asked former foster children what things could have helped them to deal better with their preparation for discharge from foster care.

"A recurrent theme touched on the role that could be played by foster care graduates and youths in placement. Former foster people should be asked to go back and talk with current foster care kids . . . to present a positive image . . . that they too can make a success of their lives. They suggested discussion groups between foster care graduates and children in placement. They thought older children could be given more responsibility for developing peer groups and for serving as 'activity guides' for others." (p. 283).

The following sections delineate a range of tasks and activities which an agency's life skills training might include for adolescents. The target population for the life skills training is the youth who reside in public agency foster care programs. However, all of these tasks and activities are suitable for any adolescent or young adult making preparations for independent living. The order for delivery of the training is flexible. For example, the segments on Job Training, etc., might be more useful to begin with than the section on Self-Esteem. Agencies should determine the order based upon their adolescent population needs.

Additionally, the reader is referred to Appendix A for a listing of resources that will supplement each of the following sections.

### **Counseling for Self-Esteem and Self-Image**

As part of an independent living program, adolescents should be involved in individual and group counseling to deal with their feelings and apprehensions and to help prepare them for living in a self-sufficient manner.

"Self-image may negatively or positively affect a teen's attempt at independence. As teens become more aware of their feelings about



themselves they can begin to work on projecting a favorable image to others.

Self-esteem is important because self-concept affects how we relate to others and vice-versa. Teens who are working toward a life on their own will be aided or hurt by their self-images. The messages about their worth that they receive from others are central to the process of maturing. If as they mature they are repeatedly assured that they are good and of benefit, then they begin to believe it and incorporate this evaluation into their views of themselves. Conversely, the messages that they are bad, worthless, or unlovable convince them that they really do not have much to offer. This conviction can lead to a life of anger, self-doubt, and rejection.

Children who are unable to build a healthy sense of their own identities and worth typically use one or more of three ways of coping with the world: (1) by erecting defenses which allow the individual to cover-up for feelings of inadequacy, (2) by submitting and accepting the feelings of inadequacy as real, (3) by withdrawing and retreating into fantasies which will block out rejection.

The normal, although traumatic, changes which accompany an adolescent's growth into adulthood can complicate the development of self-esteem and identity. These changes occur in three principal areas: intrapsychic, interpersonal, and characterological. If these normal changes are misdirected by the uncertainties and traumas of foster care, there can be severe damage to the young person's development."<sup>1</sup>

Ideally, this aspect of a program should be started early, at the time a goal of independent living is assigned, and should continue through completion of transition from foster care. Whenever possible, young adults in the community who have formerly exited foster care should be utilized as a resource for first-hand information about their experience and to provide peer support. Knowledge that there is a "life after foster care" can be extremely important in developing the concept of "self" for an adolescent who is preparing to make the transition to independence.

Different groups around the country have recognized this need and followed up with innovative foster children groups. For example:

"Caseworkers from Montgomery County Department of Social Services and Pulaski Department of Social Services (Virginia) gathered together approximately 15 older foster children and took them to a local college for a two-day conference. The children spent time in group discussion — often led by volunteers so that they could speak more



candidly — and spent time in recreation with their caseworkers and each other . . . . They complained about their treatment at home, in foster homes, and by agencies. They also gave excellent suggestions. They played and swam and had a great time. Most importantly, however, they realized they weren't alone. Meeting other foster children and getting support had a really positive impact."<sup>2</sup>

South Carolina was the first state to have a yearly foster children's conference, as have Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. In such conferences children are brought together to develop a sense of community, advocacy, interpersonal contact with peers, and support for each other.

Whatever method is chosen to develop self-image and esteem, its importance cannot be stressed enough. The adolescent must feel competent and confident in his/her ability to develop into an independent adult. These "personal resources" will allow the adolescent to connect with others like themselves who will become part of the "social resources" each person requires to develop self-sufficiency and independence.

## Daily Living Skills

The demands of the adult world are such that if an adolescent is to survive he/she must meet the requirements of day-to-day living, in such critical areas as:

- locating and maintaining housing,
- home management (food preparation, cooking, cleaning, and laundry),
- shopping (buying clothes, food, household supplies),
- utilization of community systems and services (transportation, applying for food stamps, etc.),
- health (personal care, family planning, medical assistance),
- money management (handling of finances, budgeting, savings), and
- leisure time (recreational/vocational activities).

All daily activities of adolescents in foster care, for example, trips on public transportation, doctors' visits, or the basics of preparing meals, personal hygiene, etc., are opportunities to learn. Whether conducted with a group or with individuals, teaching these skills within the context of normal daily activities transforms these routine events into active training for the development of functional skills.

This is where the specialized selection and training of casework staff, foster





parents, and the concept of a team casework approach become so vital. What the caseworker and foster parent used to do in isolation from each other and with little formalized thought should now become a conscious, well-developed effort. This will elevate the activities and tasks involved to the point that each person will be conscious of the purpose for instruction in washing, cooking, sewing, buying clothes, etc.

Not only must the adolescent realize there is a "life after foster care," but so too must the agency staff and foster parents. When training is designed for and actually conducted in the normal environment, staff will more easily grasp an understanding of the probable effectiveness of their efforts.

This particular aspect of an independent living program, more so than all the other areas, has a wealth of program experience, developed curriculum, and trained practitioners available for reference or duplication purposes. Mental health, programs for physically handicapped children and adults, and residential care facilities have all focused on this aspect of independent living for many years.

### **Roots and Records/Picture Book or Scrapbook**

Similar to the adoptive process, preparation for independence should focus on two initial tasks, the adolescent's biological beginnings and foster care history. The first section of this chapter sought to encourage adolescents to develop self-image and esteem by looking at their past, and then to project their future strengths. This segment should encourage the adolescent to develop concrete evidence of past experiences and to begin building a foundation for the future. Through this process adolescents can start to feel they have some control over their life, and they will then be more prepared for independence and self-sufficiency.

The seemingly inconsequential tasks of visiting former foster homes, looking at a birth certificate or old report cards, putting pictures in a scrapbook, etc., could be the beginning of adolescents' taking control of their lives. A picture book, records book, or scrapbook are all aids to helping children understand themselves and their histories.

Ideally, this type of book should be developed for every child in out-of-home care. The easiest time to begin this process would be as a child enters the foster care system. Unfortunately, when the adolescent comes to the Independent Living Program, he/she most likely will not have a comprehensive record, much less a book of his/her own. It thus becomes the caseworker's job to go back and help locate the information.



"There is no 'right way' to help an adolescent begin to piece together the information into a personal life record. The worker must be sensitive to the areas that are of most interest to the child and proceed from there."<sup>3</sup>

Through this activity the adolescents will also learn about what documents and records are needed to support their actions as a self-sufficient adult. A Social Security card; driver's license; birth certificate; working papers; high school diploma or equivalency certificate; medical records, including a history; and other vital documents that ease the transition to becoming independent.

The individual or group can be led through the process of determining where they would get such information or records (e.g., caseworker, current doctor, hospitals, health agencies, present and former foster parents, relatives, etc.). This serves the purpose of stimulating thinking about the importance of record keeping, what they will need for future endeavors, and recreating their "roots" or family history.

## **Personal Decision Making and Communication Skills**

Adolescents who are involved in the foster care system are often ill-equipped to make decisions or to communicate effectively. Their level of trust in adults, fear of the external environment, poor interaction with their peers, and lack of social skills make them highly susceptible to failures.

Adolescents need to be able to:

- exercise judgment on crucial problems and issues,
- assume responsibility for their actions,
- have a range of social contacts,
- display independence in judgment and actions,
- take an objective attitude toward themselves,
- adjust to different situations,
- think and plan in terms of short and long-range goals, and
- evaluate issues and problems in terms of the welfare of themselves and others.

Developing these abilities will enable an adolescent to successfully make decisions which enhance his/her independent living status. To facilitate acquiring



these abilities adolescents should be trained in a problem-solving model. That is, they need to be taught how to:

- define the problem,
- determine possible alternative solutions,
- decide on a solution,
- communicate that decision to others,
- act on the solution, and
- evaluate the solution.

The caseworker's role is to model the use of these positive decision making skills. There will be times in the Independent Living Program when differences of opinion may arise between caseworkers and adolescents. Program staff must be able to utilize the model for problem solving that the adolescents are being taught. This modeling of behavior will provide invaluable experience for the youth in developing the problem-solving skills which are taught.

Additionally, the framework for decision making should include instruction in the use of verbal communication skills:

Teens need to understand some basics about communication. Put simply, communication occurs when a message is transmitted between the sender and receiver. Communication always includes who, what, when, where, how, and why.<sup>4</sup>

Equally important are the non-verbal communication skills that accompany each message — position, posture/mannerisms, eye contact, and listening. How adolescents present themselves non-verbally is an important part of communication and should be a vital part of any independent living training program.

## **Educational Screening and Evaluation**

A 1984 study by the Citizen's Committee for Children of New York, Inc., revealed:

“The social workers and others interviewed said that by-and-large the youngsters in their care had serious academic deficits. They wondered how many would be able to catch up. It seems that agencies recognize the educational problems, but they have not responded to the problem. We learned that only about half of the youngsters in our subsample were



receiving remedial help, tutoring, or a combination of those services. We were told, however, that almost all the youngsters need these services."<sup>5</sup>

Inadequate academic skills, and poor educational screening and evaluations can be a primary cause of unemployment among youths. Agencies responsible for the care of adolescents should monitor the progress of the schools and the child in these areas. Most school districts have legal provisions for providing screening and remedial programs to all students. However, experience indicates that many students continue to leave school without developing even minimum skills. Thus, it is critical to secure testing and programs for students who are not progressing academically. Based on comprehensive individual educational assessments, educative efforts might include tutoring, work-study, special education, alternative education or vocational education programs. Without an effort to assess educational needs, the possibility of an adolescent achieving independent living are greatly reduced.

A vital factor for ensuring successful educational screening and evaluation is proper preparation of the schools. Too often, plans for the transition of adolescents to independent living are either never raised with schools or are left until the last few weeks before transition, if discussed at all. Expectations of the agency caseworker and adolescent should be made explicit to schools as early as possible to avoid problems and disappointments that could result in the school's resistance to all plans.

A mechanism for formalizing initial transitional plans is the use of a procedural agreement. The procedural agreement is drafted and signed between the agency and the individual school or district. It lists in general terms the duties and responsibilities of each party including:

- for the agency, the time frame for notification of the school that an adolescent is a candidate for assignment of an independent living goal, and the projected date for transition;
- for the schools, the major types of educational screening/evaluation services to be provided; and,
- for the adolescent, the amount of time they will need to devote to the process.

Most importantly, the agreement specifies a date to review the performance of each of the parties. The procedural document is essentially a letter of agreement rather than a binding legal document, yet it usually serves its purpose of making expectations explicit and generating control over the actions of the parties involved.



Upon completion of the screening and evaluation, an outline or simple checklist of the problem areas or deficits an adolescent is experiencing should be developed. This will help focus the need for remediation on specific behaviors or tasks. Depending on the level of cooperation achieved between the agency and the schools, the adolescent can be helped to develop career and educational goals helpful in their successful transition to independent living.

## **Jobs and Career Planning**

An area frequently noted and inextricably linked with the many other problems encountered by adolescents is that of securing and maintaining employment. Adolescents should be thoroughly schooled in the techniques needed to enter the work force. This should be accomplished through a combination of counseling for career selection, vocational and educational guidance, training, and actual work experience.

These concepts should be presented in a manner that makes adolescents aware that career choices exist and are very important. Additionally, this aspect must be introduced early in the Independent Living Program so that participants will have a knowledge base from which to grow as they develop work and social experiences. Adolescents must be given help in understanding the type and forms of career information available and how to use this information to identify a job or career area. Use of such information will lead the adolescent to ask:

- What strengths, abilities, interests, wants, needs, and values do I have?
- What personal traits can I market?
- How do I match myself with a job?

Assistance should be provided to adolescents to help them develop an understanding of what personal traits they should consider and market in seeking a job that will maximize their satisfaction and success in the work world.

Career awareness is the first step in the process of helping an adolescent select jobs or careers in which they are interested and best able to perform. The most likely resource and potential ally for this aspect of a program are the schools. The availability of materials that schools acquire on career planning and job selection are plentiful, and the costs to the agency would be nominal. Other groups, such as local chambers of commerce, building trade councils, manufacturing associations and local community colleges, are also potentially productive resources:



"One of the easiest and useful first steps in undertaking a coordinated effort with another agency is exchanging information that already exists. This costs each agency almost nothing; it simply extends the usefulness of work already done."<sup>6</sup>

Finally, a direct connection must be drawn between the need for planning a career or job choice and the financial realities of living independently:

"Early emphasis on vocational and career preparation is essential . . . . These children (adolescents) cannot become self-sufficient financially without some type of marketable vocational skills in today's competitive job market."<sup>7</sup>

Jobs and career planning will help adolescents to understand the rules, customs, and basic facts of the work world, and the relationship of those elements to development of their independence both personally and financially.

## **Securing and Maintaining Employment**

"In order to be on your own you will need some source of income. The job you get now may not be what you want to do the rest of your life, but it can provide you with a source of income while you are finishing your education or deciding on a career."<sup>8</sup>

The employment component of an independent living program should be divided into as many individual steps as needed by the program participant. Even if the agency is able to set up a job program through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), Targeted Jobs Tax Credit Program (TJTC), or some other formal procedure, the adolescent needs to develop a sense of the process of obtaining employment.

The curriculum developed should focus primarily on the needs of low-income youth who frequently have had little or no experience with the work world, and who usually have no significant role models who are successfully employed. Therefore the material needs to focus on the basics. For example, content would likely include discussion of:



- I. What is a job search?
- II. What kind of work can I do?
- III. How do I find a job?
  - A. How to read the want ads.
  - B. Job Service office
  - C. Friends and relatives
  - D. Work/study program
  - E. Help wanted signs
  - F. Flyer/posters — self-employment
- IV. Techniques for contacting prospects
  - A. Telephone techniques
  - B. Walk-in approach
- V. How do I apply for a job?
  - A. Completing a job application form
  - B. Developing a resume
  - C. Obtaining personal references
- VI. Job Interviewing
  - A. Preparation
  - B. Personal appearance
  - C. Dos and don'ts
- VII. Employee Benefits
- VIII. Forms to be completed
  - A. Social security
  - B. Withholding
  - C. Insurance
- IX. Fair Labor Standards Act and Minimum Wages
- X. Job Maintenance and adjusting to the work environment



This aspect of an independent living program is crucial because it focuses on the adolescent's present and future actions in seeking employment. Casework staff should be prepared to provide very detailed information and experiences to help adolescents overcome their anxieties related to seeking and securing employment. The material should be versatile, including field trips, outside speakers, and related experiences. The application for a social security card, or researching how to obtain or replace a birth certificate is as valuable as any lecture or classroom training. This segment should also include staff support for the adolescent in a job search. The reality of the frustrations and successes of seeking employment are apparent only when an individual experiences the search for work.

### **Services After Exit/Discharge**

"Communities are composed of networks, and networks are composed of people helping each other. When these natural helping networks are linked together, or at least when the potential exists within a community to link them up in order to help people, the social fabric of a community is strengthened and the quality of life in that community enhanced."<sup>9</sup>

The ideal is for the adolescent to exit care with a well-developed, predominately community-based support system. However, most adolescents leave foster care without such a support structure. To remedy this they may need the experience of living alone while still being a part of the social services system. For these adolescents, and agencies developing this program, subsidized apartments or semi-independent living arrangements (e.g., group living, a caretaker apartment, supervised apartment, etc.) are an added benefit.

An agency's foster care program can better keep pace with the need to support the adolescent following discharge by increasing local community knowledge of and capacity to provide specific community-based services. The development of a coordinated transition from the foster care system to the community service delivery system requires a comprehensive plan that:

- establishes the goals of the system,
- anticipates the effects of external variables (funding cutbacks, statutory disincentives),
- provides for the range of services needed by adolescents and young adults (vocational to recreational),
- details the resources available and resources needed to establish the system (needs assessment),





- specifies the criteria for goal achievement (numbers and quality of volunteers, youth workers, etc.), and
- assigns specific responsibilities for program development.

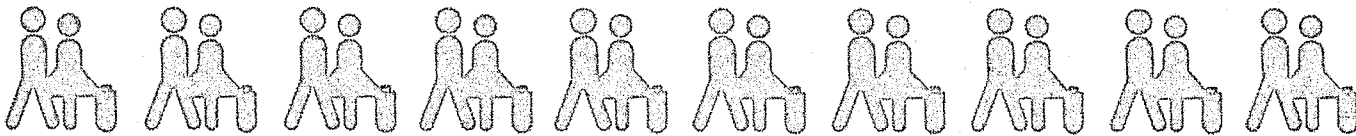
Adolescent independence will be more successful if community supports are available, appropriate, and adequate. A brief look at a program proposed by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) reveals just such an effort to develop community supports for adolescents:

"It is the intent of DES (ACYF) to implement a program which will utilize volunteer sponsor families and create partnerships with training programs, community resources, and employers in the community to assist children in the foster care system to be self-sufficient."<sup>10</sup>

With a thorough agency planning effort, the involvement of community groups which can support the independent adolescent, and creative use and adaptation of these two groups' expertise, a successful "after exit services" segment and overall independent living program can be implemented.

## CHAPTER 3

# Program Implementation



### The Agency

Agency personnel should review their role in developing the adolescent's ability to manage his or her living environment outside the confines of foster care. This is extremely important because there must be a realization that foster care is temporary and that every moment is important in the development of the adolescent's sense of independence.

All too often the behaviors identified for change are relevant only to the foster care setting, and behaviors needed to function in the community are not clearly addressed. Most youths need to experience through actual use and interaction those skills which will eventually carry them through life.

Agencies should develop and monitor programs for independent living which focus on the adolescents under its jurisdiction. These programs should include, but not be limited to, the following concepts:

- Casework staff need to assume more of a role of technical consultants (teachers) rather than clinical specialists.
- Caseworkers need to transfer necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to adolescents moving into self-sufficiency.

The challenge of improving casework services to this population is substantial and complex. However, a remedy lies in the redesign of individual elements in the philosophy and practice of adolescent casework services. The following areas may be targets for change:

1. Weigh each decision and action taken versus its direct benefit to the adolescent.
2. Reorganize supervisory and casework staff so that there is specialized supervision of the targeted adolescent population.
3. Limit and set priorities for individual and agency goals to ensure that adolescents have access to supportive services prior to and after exiting foster care.
4. Reorient services towards a true goal of independent living that triggers a specialized case plan and specific services to meet established priorities.



5. Set priorities for staff training on the basis of immediate relevance to adolescent care, and alter the method of this training towards mastery of functional skills through active practice in realistic situations.
6. Institute a functional evaluation including a system that checks for utilization of services, regularly monitors the adequacy of service delivery, and routinely makes use of adolescent feedback.

Agencies must be very innovative in this respect by developing their own guidelines and training materials when necessary, and adapting materials from states and agencies experienced with components of independent living programs (e.g., Tennessee, Arizona, New York, etc.).

### **Development of a Team Concept**

The development of a team concept is another strength of the Independent Living Model, and it is a two-fold process:

- the creation of a community advisory board composed of other public agency staff, members of the private sector, and voluntary organizations; and,
- the creation of an agency team composed of the caseworker, adolescent, foster parents, and community representatives.

### **Establishment of a Community Advisory Board**

The philosophy underlying the development of the Board is the belief that only a cooperative system of public and private services to adolescents can provide meaningful long-term assistance and support. The most effective intervention for these adolescents will include the coordination of as many appropriate resources in the community and adequate work with the adolescents to enable them to benefit from the available array of services. In addition, the board should assist the agency in identifying gaps in resources and in seeking community support to meet them. A typical board will have representatives from private businesses, chambers of commerce, mental health, public schools, juvenile justice, health clinics, fraternal organizations, etc.



## **Development of an Agency Team**

This team is generally under the leadership of the agency caseworker, but the exertion of authority must be very judicious. The adolescent's role in this process must be significant, and the possibility to add a community contact person always available. Ideally the team covers all phases of transition including the "after exit" time period.

The team should develop a transition plan that takes into consideration the availability of services in the community and represents a unified view of the individuals involved with the adolescent. It is equally essential that the same team originally involved in the formulation of a transition plan be brought together with the adolescent when changes are considered. Optimally, the team would be composed of a limited number of key individuals, including the adolescent, foster parents, caseworker, and a community representative.

The individuals involved with the adolescent will be a diverse group and the sharing of responsibilities for diagnosis, prognosis, and development of a transition plan is a key element. Both professional satisfaction and the quality of care are improved when a team:

- Has an adequate data base for adolescent assessment;
- Can formulate a reasonable transition plan which makes sense within a community context; and,
- Has drawn up guidelines for following the adolescent to ensure his/her safety and to assess progress at each stage of transition.

It is, therefore, essential that the public agency include the team concept in its professional network of diagnosis to avoid fragmentation of decision making and to insure better care for the adolescent.

## **Orientation and Training of Casework Staff**

A handbook of program policies and procedures should be developed so all caseworkers understand the goals of the agency's independent living program. Such a handbook should include the agency's organizational structure, personnel practices, and codes of conduct. It should also contain the rights, responsibilities, and protections afforded the young by law. Such orientation should be provided all



employees as a part of ongoing in-service training.

In addition to such policy orientation there should be special training of the caseworker to the independent living work he/she has been assigned. This is particularly significant because of the need for the caseworker to be proactive with external groups in helping the adolescent foster child become integrated in the community. The caseworker should be active in:

1. Assessing the individual adolescent's needs;
2. Working with the adolescent in setting attainable short-term and long-term goals and objectives;
3. Planning, conducting, and evaluating the behavior changes that an adolescent can gain through interactive experiences;
4. Documenting change in an adolescent's case record;
5. Assisting in transitional planning with the adolescent (e.g., preparation, exit from foster care, and follow-up); and,
6. Generally monitoring an adolescent's program and services to ensure that his/her needs are being met.

Caseworkers must focus on stimulating adolescents to develop self-sufficiency through such specific outcomes as obtaining apartments, jobs, education or vocational training, etc.

## **Selection and Training of Foster Parents\***

In any foster care placement, there should be careful selection of a foster home for the individual child, encompassing his/her special needs, problems, strengths, family situation, and outlook for the length of placement. These factors should be matched with the foster family's situation and needs. This is particularly so when trying to match an adolescent who has a goal of independent living with a foster family. The willingness to work with an adolescent, to allow his level of maturity and desire for independence to develop at his/her pace, and to maintain a relationship after exit from care are high ideals and expectations of the agency for

*\*The focus of this section is the foster home placement. If an agency has a group home under its auspices, then an additional option for placement would be available. Thoughtful matching of the group home and adolescent would parallel the aforementioned foster parent criteria.*



foster parents. Yet, with a clear selection process, good training, and a team approach to the case management, the possibilities of a positive adolescent placement can be significantly increased.

To borrow from the mental health field, the development of foster parents as resources for adolescents should be along the lines of the "teaching-family model" developed in 1967 as an alternative to group homes. This model provides intensive care and treatment to youths by trained care providers within a home-like environment. The model has the ability to develop appropriate social, self-care, and academic skills in adolescents. The title "teaching parents" distinguishes these individuals from more traditional foster parents who for the most part are not specifically trained to provide independent living skills. The foster parents should be encouraged to participate in training and feedback sessions with the caseworker and the adolescent.

The primary goals of the preparation and training of foster parents are to reduce burnout, placement failure, and to increase the teamwork and skilled foster home resources available to help adolescent foster children. The training content would cover a wide range of subjects including: job seeking, apartment living, home management, shopping, transportation, health, leisure activities, money management, etc. (See Appendix A for additional resources)

The basic concepts of independent living are made available to the teaching parents through training, interaction with the caseworker, and open communications with the agency. Ideally, the training will enable the foster parents to:

- teach and model needed skills to the adolescent,
- communicate the adolescent's developing maturity and emotional stability to the caseworker, and
- to interpret the reaction of the community to that particular adolescent as transition approaches.

Prior to training, agencies should determine how much flexibility they are comfortable in giving foster parents to allow adolescents to make their own decisions and to experience the consequences of these decisions. The agency should emphasize a movement away from foster parents controlling a youth's behavior to serving as a mentor to the adolescent as he/she explores independent living for him/herself.



## **Development of Community Resources**

Providing information about community resources and service organizations is often the most basic service offered by social service agencies. Because the needs of adolescents rarely match the offerings of a single agency or individual support person, caseworkers and agencies need to develop information about what services and service gaps exist.

With the assumption that shared responsibility for client care is possible, agency staff can explore the impact of what that can mean to an independent living program for adolescents. The caseworkers should explore mutually beneficial ways to combine their skills with the strengths of informal and formal helpers to provide a system of community care for adolescents in transition from foster care to self-sufficiency.

The child care agency may be the sole resource for adolescents prior to their exiting foster care. At the point of transition community resources should become more of a focus for the adolescent. An active teen who seeks out medical care, family planning services, food stamp assistance, child care, etc., should be learning that contacting various agencies does not diminish control over his/her own destiny, but in fact shows a positive use of the community.

## **Development of Program Resources**

An important step in program development is to identify existing resources utilized by the adolescent consumer and to identify those resources needed but not yet available. Additional information should be gathered from the adolescents about other aspects of the community which may facilitate or impede independent living. This information might be used to guide agency program development activities.

Agencies should be extremely creative in these times of shrinking resources. The use of the private sector and the concept of a public/private cooperative venture is very appropriate in this area of public agency social work. The Washington, D.C. based Cities in Schools, Inc. program and the New York City One Company-One Kid Project are excellent examples of such cooperation. Jobs, housing, independence, self-sufficiency, are all aspects for agencies to promote in



the private sector in the interests of adolescents. Alternative agencies might develop to supplement an independent living program are volunteerism, the Job Training Partnership Act, and private sector initiatives, each of which is discussed below:

### **VOLUNTEERISM**

Agencies can develop voluntary aspects for their independent living programs that supplement, in a positive way, the factors influencing an adolescent to become self-sufficient. An example is the Big Brother/Big Sister Program.

While volunteer programs effectively stretch an organization's limited funds, they also educate a community to accept the responsibility for managing its own social ills. Thus, the adolescent and his problems of jobs, housing, independence, etc., are shared between the agency and the community.

Within the context of an independent living program volunteers would be appropriate at any stage of the work with an adolescent; though the best results most probably would be at the point of transition and during the post-exit period. It is at these stages that the public agency usually feels the greatest restrictions on its resources, either because of manpower allocation issues or statutory limitations.

Incorporation of a volunteer aspect for the independent living program could help alleviate these significant restrictions. Examples of how volunteers can be used to develop an adolescent's self-sufficiency are:

- teaching a craft or trade,
- involving program participants in recreational and social activities,
- individual and group counseling,
- peer relations, and
- parenting training.

(See Appendix A for additional resources.)





## THE JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT (JTPA)

JTPA has replaced the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) as the government's program to train the unemployed. Most agencies and their staffs haven't realized that JTPA was the replacement for CETA. This program is very underpublicized, and the result is underutilization of the program by those certifiable for service under the Act.

Agencies might investigate this program and its counterpart, Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC), as additional resources for preparing and placing youths in employment situations. TJTC provides a direct tax credit to companies for hiring employees from among nine categories of targeted groups identified in the legislation. TJTC is not exactly new. It has existed in some form since 1978. What is new, however, is that when Congress recently extended the enabling legislation through 1985, it made TJTC easier to use and added a new category of eligible workers — summer youth. Examples from the nine target groups that might be useful for an independent living program are:

- economically disadvantaged youth, ages 18-24;
- economically disadvantaged cooperative education students, ages 16-19;
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients;
- general assistance (welfare) recipients;
- economically disadvantaged ex-offenders; and,
- economically disadvantaged summer youth employees, ages 16-17.

The Job Training Partnership Act was signed into law in October 1982. The Act calls for the establishment of local partnerships between the public and private sectors for the purposes of planning and delivering employment and training services to the economically disadvantaged and long-term unemployed. Some of the activities and benefits allowed under the Act include:

- on-the-job training or OJT (with reimbursement to the employer of training costs up to 50 percent of wages);
- programs which improve work habits and better prepare persons to obtain and retain employment; and
- remedial education and basic skills training.

(See Appendix A for additional resources.)



## **PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES**

Adolescents are among those groups that are of special concern to all agencies. The private sector at times has sought to help these youths and other similar groups. Agencies should be creative and active in seeking help via public/private partnerships, involvement with non-profit organizations, and encouragement of the corporate/business community to realize that adolescents are integral to "the bottom line" in maintaining viable and stable economic and social conditions within individual communities. This form of cooperation could be for employment, space for meetings and training, scholarships for school, apartment subsidies, etc.

New, diverse coalitions between the public and private sectors can help achieve real strides in working with adolescents with the result that the social costs of allowing an unprepared, ill-equipped youth to exit foster care can be reduced now — and a decade from now.

## **Establishment of Inter- and Intra-Agency Agreements**

A cornerstone of the development and success of an independent living program is the level of cooperation existing within, as well as among, agencies involved with adolescents. What is intra-agency cooperation? It can be a written agreement between the income maintenance unit and the services division about what furniture and supplies can be purchased for an adolescent exiting foster care (to set up an apartment). It can be the independent living program worker sending a youth to participate in a job training program housed in another unit of the same public social service agency. It can be a food stamp eligibility examiner giving a class for the independent living program participants about the advantages of using food stamps.

What is inter-agency cooperation? It can be a probation officer or youth worker meeting with independent living program staff and the adolescent participant to work out an alternative for a probation or court-ordered plan. It can be a Chamber of Commerce representative notifying the child care agency that there are part-time or full-time jobs available. There can be as many examples of coordinated efforts as there are combinations of agencies and workers. What is important is that there are professionals and para-professionals who are working towards the



same goal and not in opposition to each other.

While there are definite reasons for agencies and staffs to work together, this does not happen often enough. In most instances the lack of a formalization of the process impedes the longevity of any agreement. If a worker who is adept at obtaining the necessary resources for a youth never formalizes the process, then subsequent workers may not be able to continue that positive practice, or may end up having to completely renegotiate the agreement. Formalized agreements can give the program visibility, generate interest, and have long-lasting effects beyond the limits of the program itself.

Formalized written referral arrangements between or among agencies can ensure cooperation and can save frustrating moments for both the caseworker and the adolescent. The particular situation and adolescent will dictate the level of formalization. Some of the arrangements will be elevated to the level of a formal contract for providing services, while others will provide no more than an oral commitment by an agency to help out. Close working relationships and fair understandings of what an agency can and cannot do will help decrease the likelihood that adolescents will fall between the cracks during or after independent living training.

In summary, the use of inter and intra-agency agreements reduces fragmentation of adolescent services, encourages the sharing of information and planning of program-related activities, makes services more available, and reduces frustration of both the caseworkers and adolescents.

## **Development of Agency Policies/Regulations**

It is not surprising that the single most pressing problem for agencies and adolescents upon the youths' exiting from foster care is lack of financial resources. Although the financing of human services programs is usually problematic, the independent living program suffers from something additional. The policy and regulations of the agency and state at times are formulated so that disincentives exist which undermine certain aspects of the program. At other times the maze of apparently conflicting policies and regulations prevents program staff from dealing effectively with the most pressing problems.

An illustration is in the area of youth and employment. Employment is a primary mechanism of support for adolescents exiting foster care. This primary resource must be initiated early in an independent living program to help the youth develop

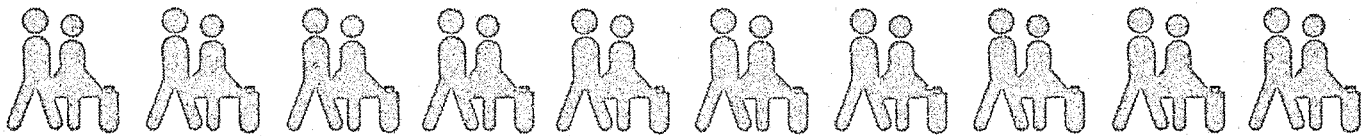


it as a way to become genuinely integrated into the community. Disincentives and conflicts often arise when limits or ceilings are placed on the adolescent's earned income, savings accounts, or eligibility for other categorical programs (e.g., Medicaid). Such limits exist in many localities and are counterproductive to creation of the financial support needed by the youth to successfully make the transition to independent living.

In addition, special efforts should be put forth to clarify the rights of youths concerning eligibility for income related services. This clarification of eligibility will help strengthen the development of guidelines and consequently provide additional program direction.

Appendix B provides two examples of efforts to incorporate the concepts of an independent living program into state social service policy/regulations (Arizona and West Virginia). Both of the programs deal with the issues of disincentives, categorical eligibility, and aftercare.

# Conclusion

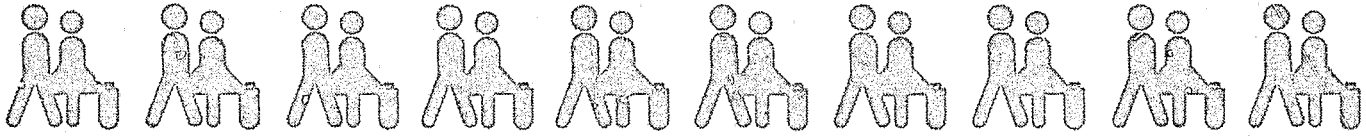


This text has presented a practical model for an independent living program for adolescents. The hope is that the concepts and ideas presented would be developed to match a specific agency need — the adolescent foster care population. The adaptability of each section should allow an agency to address both the immediate concerns for this population as well as the long-term programmatic needs of the foster care system.

The resources, bibliography, and examples of state level independent living policy/regulations should help an agency start the development of a program within its own system. During the next few years, the field of child welfare will be developing more information in this area, and the resulting dissemination will further extend the concepts presented in this model.

The population of adolescents who will exit foster care in the near future is substantial enough to warrant such planning and development, and the time to do so is now.

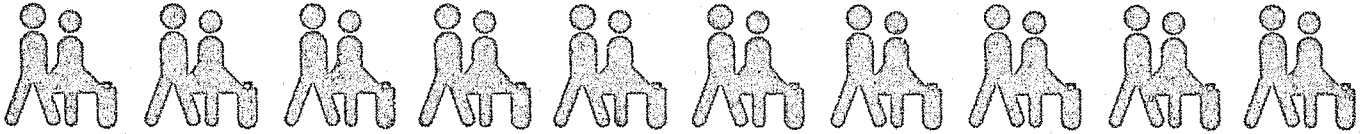
# Notes



- <sup>1</sup> Nancy Chandler and Jo Wintker. *Supplement to Making It On Your Own* (Knoxville, Tennessee, 1984), p. 1.
- <sup>2</sup> *Foster Care — Is It Better?*, The Virginia Child Protection Newsletter, Vol II (Spring 1984), p. 7.
- <sup>3</sup> State of Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, Children, Youth and Families. *Preparation of Children* (Tallahassee, Florida, 1983), p. 69.
- <sup>4</sup> Chandler and Wintker, p. 9.
- <sup>5</sup> Citizens' Committee for Children of New York Inc., *The Foster Care Exit - Ready Or Not*, A Report on Foster Care (New York, September 1984), p. 48.
- <sup>6</sup> Robert J. Rossi, Kevin J. Gilmartin, and Charles W. Dayton. *Agencies Working Together* (Beverly Hills, California, 1982), p. 36.
- <sup>7</sup> Arizona Administration for Children, Youth & Families. *Arizona Young Adult Program: Preparation of Youth in Foster Care for Successful Independent Living*, A federal proposal by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (Phoenix, Arizona, 1983), p. 9.
- <sup>8</sup> Dorothy I. Ansell, M.S.W., *Making It On Your Own* (Richmond, Virginia, August, 1983), Unit 1, p. 1.
- <sup>9</sup> Lambert McGuire, *Understanding Social Networks* (Beverly Hills, California, 1983), p. 111.
- <sup>10</sup> Arizona, P. 10.

## APPENDIX A

# Resources and Bibliography



## RESOURCES

### Counseling for Self-Esteem and Self-Image

#### **Supplement to Making It On Your Own**

Nancy Chandler and Jo Wintker  
Office of Continuing Social Work Education  
School of Social Work  
P.O. Box 90810  
University of Tennessee  
Nashville, TN 37209

Note: The text of this material contains a unit on self-esteem and self-image, as well as a Trainer's Manual and Adolescent's Workbook.

#### **Foster Childrens' Conferences**

The following states have held foster childrens' conferences and the person listed is a contact for that program.

Tennessee Department of Human Resources  
111 — 7th Avenue N.  
Nashville, TN 37203

Contact Person: Gloria Manhiem 615-741-3443

South Carolina Department of Social Services  
Protective and Placement Services  
P.O. Box 1520  
Columbia, SC 29202

Contact Person: Ramona Foley 803-758-8593

Kentucky Department for Social Services  
275 E. Main Street  
Frankfort, KY 40621

Contact Person: Sharon Surbeck 502-564-2136



## Daily Living Skills

Larry Weese  
National Foundation for Services to Children, Inc.  
2412 Umstead Rd.  
Durham, NC 27712 919-383-0201

Note: Mr. Weese is a consultant and trainer who specializes in the area of adolescent independent living.

Oasis House Independent Living Manual  
Oasis House Outreach Program  
Jerome J. Johnson, Associate Director  
Family and Children's Services of Richmond  
1518 Willow Lawn Drive  
Richmond, VA 23230 804-282-4255

Note: Oasis House has developed a training program and manual that encompasses daily living skills within its overall independent living program. Topic areas included are:

- Consumer awareness/shopping,
- Housing search and maintenance,
- Health and safety, and
- Community resources.

### **Making It On Your Own**

Dorothy Ansell  
Region III Resource Center for Children, Youth, and Families  
School of Social Work  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
1001 N. Franklin Street  
Richmond, VA 23230 804-257-6628

Note: This excellent text and an accompanying guidebook covers the following independent living areas:

- Job Hunting
- Transportation
- Apartment Living
- Your Health





- Home Management
- Leisure Time
- Shopping Smart
- Money Management

### **Book Catalog on Educational Materials**

Janus Book Publishers  
2501 Industrial Parkway, West  
Department H  
Hayward, CA 94545  
800-227-2395  
415-887-7070 Collect (from CA, AK, HI)

Note: The Janus Book Company has developed a series of books that are presented at modest reading levels and cover such topics as career awareness, career education, independent living skills, consumer economics, practical living skills, reading and language arts, health, science, and government. The topical areas in most instances represent a series of books/pamphlets that will enhance an adolescent's ability to develop an understanding of the world around them. The catalog can be ordered free of charge.

## **Roots and Records/Picture or Scrapbook**

### **The Supplement to Making It On Your Own**

University of Tennessee

Note: The text contains a section on adolescents' collecting and developing records they will need to make the transition to independence.

### **Preparation of Children**

State of Florida  
Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services  
Children, Youth, and Families  
Tallahassee, FL (1983)

Note: Section IX of this text develops the concept of "Helping Children Understand Themselves and Their Histories," through the use of a Life Book. (Also, see Fahlberg, V., and Jewett, C., "Preparing Children for Adoption," in



Morton, Thomas, Ed., *Adoption of Children with Special Needs*. Office of Continuing Social Work Education, the University of Georgia, Athens, GA, 1982.

## **Personal Decision Making and Communication Skills**

### **Communication Skills: The Client Interview**

School of Social Work

University of Washington

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, and The Northwest Federation of Human Services Incorporated, 1979

Seattle, WA

Note: The text, though oriented to the client interview, has excellent training sessions on verbal and non-verbal communications.

### **The Supplement to Making It On Your Own**

University of Tennessee

Note: The text contains a complete section on decision making and communication skills training for adolescents.

## **Educational Screening and Evaluation**

### **Agencies Working Together**

Robert J. Rossi, Kevin J. Gilmartin, and Charles W. Dayton

Sage Human Services Guide #28 (1982)

275 South Beverly Drive

Beverly Hills, CA 90212

Note: This is an excellent text for developing interagency coordination, resources, and a common purpose for community action.



### **The Parents Handbook On School Testing**

Ann E. Boehm and Mary Alice White  
Teachers College Press  
1234 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, NY 10027

Note: The text explores what questions should be asked of educational institutions when seeking evaluative information about a child/adolescent.

## **Job and Career Planning**

### **Janus Book Publishers**

Hayward, CA

Note: See Daily Living Skills section for a description of the Janus publications.

### **Understanding Social Networks**

Lambert Maguire  
Sage Human Services Guide #32 (1983)  
275 South Beverly Drive  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

Note: The text addresses new and innovative approaches to maximizing the use of "networks" in developing resources, including jobs, training, self-help groups, and the community.

### **Preparation for Employment Curriculum**

New York State Division for Youth  
84 Holland Avenue  
Albany, NY 12208  
Contact Person: Tana Feleccia-Flagg 518-473-8445

Note: This curriculum includes extensive training materials for adolescents so they can look at their personal traits and abilities, and then match those to a job choice.



## **Securing and Maintaining Employment**

The following list of previously mentioned texts and resources have detailed descriptions and training materials for how an adolescent can secure and maintain employment.

1. Making It On Your Own
2. Oasis House Independent Living Manual
3. The Preparation for Employment Curriculum
4. Janus Books

Note: The New York State Division for Youth Curriculum (#3 above) is a detailed training program which is very adaptable to both individual and group settings.

## **Services After Exit/Discharge**

Furrh, Paul E., Jr. "Emancipation: The Supervised Apartment Living Approach," Child Welfare League of America, Vol. LXII, No. 1 (January-February 1983), p. 54-61.

## **Foster Parents**

### **Foster Parent Training Program**

University of Tennessee  
Office of Continuing Social Work Education  
P.O. Box 90810  
Nashville, TN 37209  
Contact Person: Jo Wintker 615-327-0822

Note: This program has been involved with foster parent training since 1977. Presently, there are twenty courses offered. Plans for the future include developing and piloting training in "Independent Living Skills for Older Adolescents" both in urban and rural settings.



### **Adolescent in Need of Special Services**

P.D. Press  
A Division of Creative Associates, Inc.  
3201 New Mexico Avenue  
Suite 270  
Washington, DC 20016

Note: This text is primarily intended for child welfare in-service training. Segments of the material are adaptable to the training of foster parents in the special needs of adolescents.

### **Foster Parenting An Adolescent**

Child Welfare League of America, 1977  
67 Irving Place  
New York, NY 10003

Note: This publication is a series of three texts:

- Added to Adolescence — Foster Parenting an Adolescent,
- With A Little Help From Our Friends, and
- Leader's Guide.

## **Volunteerism**

### **Managing Volunteer Services — Resource Kit**

National Clearinghouse for Improving the Management of Human Services  
Project SHARE  
P.O. Box 2309  
Rockville, MD 20852  
301-231-9539

Note: This project resource kit on managing volunteer services is designed to help explore the many elements necessary to make a volunteer program work. It provides guidelines, suggested resources, and an extensive bibliography.



## Job Training Partnerships Act (JTPA) and The Targeted Job Tax Credit Program (TJTC)

National Alliance of Business (NAB)  
1015 15th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005

Note: NAB has developed handbooks and brochures to explain what the JTPA and TJTC are and how business can take advantage of them. In addition, these publications indicate how a business can collaborate with other businesses and government in the community to develop employment.

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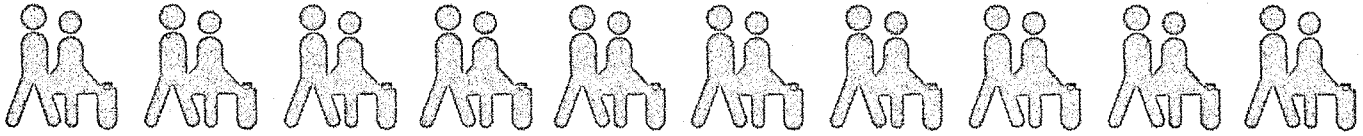
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## APPENDIX B

# State Policies/Regulations



### States with Published Regulations

**Arizona Department of Economic Security**  
**Chapter 5 Social Services**  
**Articles 57 — Foster Care: Placement and Supervision**  
**Pages: DES 5-57-30 H — 5-57-30 G**

#### **INDEPENDENT LIVING PLACEMENT**

##### **A. DEFINITION:**

Independent Living under ARS 8-241 is appropriate for young people 17 years of age and older who are dependent, in DES custody and who are working toward social and financial adult roles.

##### **B. AUTHORITY:**

ARS 8-241 and 8-521 authorizes ACYF, under certain conditions, to approve and subsidize independent living for dependent minors. This program is designed for those young persons who cannot or should not be expected to adjust to a family. The goal of this program is to provide an avenue whereby the older youth can work toward total emancipation: from a dependent living situation to a position of self-sufficiency through increasing responsibility through carefully-planned graduated steps.

##### **C. POLICY:**

1. The youth for whom a plan of independent living is approved will be helped by their social worker to learn to live independently and responsibly. The DES social worker will be working closely with the participant, meeting at least twice a month to provide counseling and support. These youth will be engaged in academic/vocational training and/or employment geared to self-sufficiency which is intended to be reached within one year wherever possible.





2. As required by ARS 8-521A the youth shall also receive additional supervision from a licensed child welfare agency or provider under contract. Recognizing the unique needs of each youth, a contract with a provider for supervision should specify the amount and frequency of supervision to occur during a monthly period. This requirement may also be fulfilled by a volunteer.
3. Cases of youth placed in an independent living situation shall meet the following requirements:
  - a. The youth is adjudicated dependent, is at least 17 years of age, is currently in DES custody, and employed or a full-time student, and
  - b. The plan has been approved by the DES Director or designee, and
  - c. A court order for independent living has been received from the appropriate juvenile court.
  - d. The youth's case record must contain documentation that the foregoing criteria are met.

#### D. PROCESS FOR CASE APPROVAL:

1. Each youth referred for the DES Director or designee's approval to be placed in an independent living situation will be evaluated by the social worker in relation to ability to assume responsibility to work toward self-sufficiency over a reasonable period of time.
2. The Director or designee will approve, disapprove, or establish conditions for approval of youth's request for an independent living placement criteria as outlined in this policy.

A request for Department approval shall be initiated by the youth's social worker, approved at the District Program Manager level and forwarded to the ACYF Program Administrator — 940A. Information which gives a summary of the plan for the child should be included containing specific information about:

- a. Where the child will live.
- b. Where the child is working or attending school. (Mandatory)
- c. A monthly budget for the child.
- d. A plan for extra supervision to be provided.
- e. The child's age.
- f. A copy of the most recent court report.



3. The Program Administrator will forward to the District Program Manager and the social worker the results of the request to the Director for independent living.
4. If approved, the social worker will request the appropriate juvenile court for approval of the independent living placement.

#### E. COORDINATION OF CASE PLAN AND PROGRESS:

1. The social worker shall arrange for the youth to be supervised by a licensed child welfare agency or provider under contract.
  - a. A provider for this service shall be determined by the worker to be a responsible adult who is at least 21 years of age, willing and capable of providing supervision to the youth. Social worker should seek out a provider whom the child already knows to provide supervision.
  - b. Supervision by the provider shall occur at least three (3) times per week for the first four weeks and at least once a week thereafter.
  - c. The provider may receive \$5.00 per hour for supervision service to be billed against contracts monthly; or the provider may be a volunteer and in turn donate their services in accordance with the contract specifications.
2. A written agreement or contract shall be developed with each youth and signed by both the social worker, youth and contract provider. The contract should be reviewed at least quarterly and modified as needed. This agreement shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:
  - a. The agreed upon place of residence.
  - b. Clearly stated responsibilities of the youth and of the social worker and contract provider for supervision.
  - c. Identification of potential problems/barriers and solutions that the youth and social worker perceive in working toward self-sufficiency.
  - d. A plan for full-time activity (education and/or employment) for the youth.
  - e. A statement of financial arrangements agreed to by the social worker and the youth.
  - f. A statement of proposed time span needed to attain the goal of self-sufficiency and review dates to determine progress.
  - g. A statement outlining action that will be taken if the youth does not meet the terms of the contract or program requirements.



3. The social worker shall submit a case progress report to the court and the Foster Care Review Board on a quarterly basis.
4. Independent living residences shall include, but are not limited to, YMCA, YWCA, boarding house or apartment. They shall meet the following minimum standards:
  - a. Be located so as to provide reasonably convenient access to schools, places of employment or services, as required by the youth.
  - b. Comply with applicable state and local zoning, fire, sanitary and safety regulations insofar as can be determined by ACYF.
  - c. Provide a setting which is conducive to good mental health and progress toward independence for the youth, as determined by ACYF.

ACYF staff are expected to ascertain that the above minimum requirements, as well as any other requirements that the local office establishes, are met. Documentation shall be contained in the case record.

5. Monthly Budget:
  - a. An initial monthly budget will be developed with the youth, reviewed and revised monthly as needed. This budget will reflect current needs and will be used by the youth in money management to further self-sufficiency capabilities.
  - b. The following items should be considered in establishing a monthly budget for ILP youths: rent, food, utilities (including telephone if needed and advisable), electricity and/or gas, laundry, dry cleaning, transportation, tuition and recreation costs.
6. Payment to youth in an independent living placement is to be made based on the following:
  - a. A total monthly subsidy of up to \$495.00 (based on the youth's budget) shall be paid directly to the youth. Subsidy payments will be made in two installments per month.
  - b. In addition to a monthly subsidy of up to \$495.00, start-up costs (not to exceed the maximum monthly rate) may be authorized for youth entering an independent living placement. Start-up costs are for such items as rent deposits, utility deposits and household goods (e.g., sheets, towels, blankets, dishes, glasses, tableware, cutlery, pots and pans, pillows, radios). Start-up costs may be paid only for specified items for a documented need that cannot be met from any other resource. Such payments must be approved by the Program Manager or designee.



Funds are limited for this program and whenever possible, parent(s), community resources and low cost resources (e.g., garage sales, thrift shops, etc.) are to be used.

#### F. METHOD OF PAYMENT TO THE YOUTH:

The following procedures shall be followed for Independent Living grants to youth:

1. *Start Up Costs, Initial or Special Payments*
  - a. Send a memo identifying child's eligibility date and the date for which payment is submitted. (Note: Allow 10 work days to process necessary paperwork.) Payment periods are for the first fifteen days of the month and the last 15 days of the month.
  - b. Attach a memo with the completed information for an Independent Living Grant (see F.4 & F.5) or completed TC-50 for each child.
  - c. Attach the following completed forms:
    - i. FW-067 — leave child address section blank if the permanent address is not available. The address will be added by Central Office when it becomes available.
    - ii. FW-022 — Submit memo with initial claim giving child's name as family name, etc. (Note: For initial claims, attach a copy of the court order to the claims.)
2. *District Prepared Claims* — Submit a claim (TC-50) for each child. (An example is provided as a guide for completion.) The period covered by the payment must be identified in the block titled "Invoice Description." (Note: If the claim is prepared by the District, submittal of the Independent Living Grant form is not necessary.) All claims for Independent Living Grant must be sent to Budget and Planning Unit, site code 940A.
3. *Budget and Planning Prepared Claims* — Submit the completed Independent Living Grant memo (Exhibit 1) to Budget and Planning Unit (940A) and one claim for all children will be submitted to Human Services Accounting. (Note: If a memo is submitted for each child, the districts will not submit a claim (TC-50) for the child.)

G. A youth in an independent living placement is entitled to CMDP. ACYF will not pay for any medical insurance. (It will be necessary to notify CMDP of the youth's whereabouts on the FW-025.)



H. Resources to which a youth is entitled (e.g., parental support, Old Age Survivors and Disability Insurance benefits, Veteran's benefits) are to be utilized for the youth's support whenever possible using a trust account. (See Trust Policy ACYF.)

I. CONCLUSION OF PARTICIPATION:

1. Participation in this program shall be concluded when the youth has either:
  - a. Achieved self-sufficiency to the extent that there is no longer a need for financial support and social services from ACYF and custody has been terminated by the juvenile court, or;
  - b. Made a voluntary decision to no longer participate in the program, and went back into foster care or returned home, or;
  - c. Generally demonstrated inability to meet the requirements of the program or the terms of the contract, and went back into foster care or returned home, or;
  - d. Had custody terminated by the juvenile court at the time of their 18th birthday.
2. If it is ACYF's decision to remove a youth from participation in this program for reasons stated in (c) above the following applies:

There must be formal administrative approval. The supervisor of the social worker must approve the removal in writing and a court hearing shall be requested as soon as possible. The social worker shall notify in writing the Program Manager and the Program Administrator, if a youth is removed from the Independent Living Program.

**State of West Virginia Department of Human Services**  
**Social Services Manual**  
**Foster Care**  
**October 1983**  
**Sections 13900-13920**  
**Pages 127-134**

13900 Independent Living Subsidy Program

13910 Definition and Purpose

The Independent Living Subsidy Program permits a young person 17 years of age and older who is in the custody of the Department of Human Services to live without daily substitute parental supervision. The purpose of the program



is to provide an avenue through which the youth can learn to live independently and responsibly. By the end of the program, the youth should be self-sufficient.

### 13920 Eligibility Requirements

A young person eligible to participate in the program:

1. Is at least 17 years of age but not yet 21 years of age, and
2. Has been in the custody of the Department or other state agency for at least six months prior, and
3. Has written approval from parent or legal custodian, if under the age of 18, and
4. Has a plan for self-sufficiency that is achievable within 18 months, and
5. Has demonstrated an ability to handle independence as evidenced by responsible behavior during his placement, such as maintained part-time employment, established a savings program, maintained regular attendance at school or training program, etc., and
6. Is capable of contributing a minimum of \$75 per month to his/her financial support through a combination of earned and unearned income (see Section 13920 for definitions), and
7. Has obtained the basic life skills necessary for beginning independent living as is evidenced either by satisfactory completion of independent living training provided by the foster parents, provider, worker, school or community volunteer, or by demonstration through the practical application of these skills.

The minimum basic living skills include:

- use of available public transportation
- nutrition and menu planning
- economical grocery shopping
- cooking
- use of laundry equipment
- financial management — maintaining a checking account or other money management system
- shopping for necessary goods and services
- job hunting
- apartment hunting



- knowledge of birth control
- ability to manage health needs
- use of leisure time

8. Is willing to work with responsible adult (other than the social worker) who will be the youth's volunteer independent living advisor until the goal of independence is achieved. (see Section 13980)

#### 13930 Independent Living Residence Minimum Standards

Independent living residences shall meet the following minimum standards:

1. Be located so as to provide reasonably convenient access to schools, places of employment or services as required by the individual.
2. Comply with applicable state and local zoning; fire, sanitary and safety regulations.
3. Provide a setting which is conducive to good mental health and progress towards independence for the young adults, as determined by the Department.

The worker must determine that the residence meets these minimum standards before a lease is signed or a commitment is made to use the residence.

#### 13940 Approval Process

Once the social worker has identified a youth for whom independent living may be appropriate or a youth requests an independent living arrangement, a plan must be developed and submitted to the area administrator and the Administrative Review Committee for approval along with the documentation that all other eligibility requirements have been met. The plan is a written agreement developed and signed by both the worker, the youth, and the volunteer independent living advisor.

The written agreement shall include, but is not limited to the following:

1. Clearly stated responsibilities of the youth, the worker, and the advisor.
2. The anticipated length of time independent living support will be needed until the youth is fully independent (not to exceed 18 months) and the review dates to determine progress.
3. The education/training and work plan that will provide full-time activity for the youth.
4. The plan for assisting youth in increasing his knowledge and skills in such areas as budgeting, household management, etc.



5. The plan for supervision of the youth including worker contacts, other agencies to be included if any, and contacts with the advisor.
6. The plan for financing independent living specifying the amount the youth will contribute and the amount to be provided by the Department (see Section 13950 for guidelines).
7. A statement explaining how the Department's portion will decrease as the youth's income increases.
8. Target dates for when the youth's income will increase and when he will become financially self-sufficient.
9. A budget outlining the youth's proposed monthly expenditures.
10. A statement outlining action that will be taken if the youth fails to use total funds for necessities of life and other agreed-to-expenditures or fails to adhere to other parts of the agreement.
11. A statement explaining the youth's responsibility to inform the agency within 72 hours of any major changes in his/her situation (loses job, leaves educational/training program, moves, is arrested, etc.).

## 13950 Financing Independent Living

### **Start Up Costs**

Initial expenses related to setting up a household may be partially subsidized by the department. Initial expenses may include such things as rent deposits, utility deposits, bedding and kitchen equipment. Requests for assistance with start-up costs should list specifically what is needed and be submitted to the coordinating social services supervisor for approval. The coordinating social services supervisor can authorize payment up to \$250. The youth may also use the excess of Social Security or other benefits to cover the start-up costs.

### **Monthly Payments**

Financial assistance to the youth in independent living is provided as a supplement to the youth's earned and/or unearned income.

*Earned income* is the net money received in the form of wages, salary, or profits from self employment activities.

*Unearned income* is money provided through scholarships or stipends to cover the costs of room and board payments. Tuition waivers or scholarships that cover tuition and fees is not considered income. *Unearned income* also





includes the past and present excess of benefits (i.e., Social Security, Veterans, Railroad Retirement, etc.) that have not been used to cover the boarding care rate.

The youth may elect to save 25% of his earned income without affecting his independent living subsidy.

The maximum combined income a youth in the Independent Living Subsidy Program is allowed is \$450. The \$450 includes the youth's earned income, minus the savings, any unearned income and the department's subsidy payment. Example:

A youth earns \$120 per month as a part-time worker at a fast food chain. He elects to save 25% or \$30. His total contribution is \$90. The \$90 is subtracted from the maximum allowable income of \$450, leaving \$360 which is the amount of the subsidy.

#### **Medical Coverage**

The youth in independent living will continue to receive his medical card. The youth will be given a provider number (F). The youth will receive a one dollar payment and a medical card monthly. The same provider number is to be used in making the monthly demand payments as outlined in Section 13960 below. The total amount of the monthly demand is reduced by one dollar.

#### **Savings**

Those youths electing to save 25% of their earned income must establish a savings account. This account will be jointly held with the area administrator or coordinating social services supervisor and will require both signatures for withdrawal of funds. Money accrued in the savings account can be spent only if the worker and youth have established a plan for such expenditures.

Expenditures might include the purchase of special work equipment, household equipment, additional furnishings, etc.

#### **Gradual Reduction of Subsidy Payments**

The written agreement prepared by the worker, youth, and advisor will address the time period in which the youth will require the subsidy payment and the target dates at which his income will increase. It is expected that the youth's income will gradually increase and that the subsidy payments will gradually decrease during the time allotted in the written agreement.



#### 13960 Payments for Independent Living

Payments are made directly to the youth via a monthly demand payment initiated each month by the worker and approved by the supervisor. If the youth's resources change, the amount of the payment must be adjusted on a month by month basis. In the event that a major change occurs such as a youth drops out of a training program or loses his job, continuation of the independent living plan must be approved by the coordinating social services supervisor.

#### 13970 Responsibilities of the Worker

The workers assigned to the youth participating in this program have the following responsibilities:

1. Evaluate each youth's ability to assume responsibility and work towards the goal of independence within the 18 month time frame.
2. Document that the youth meets the eligibility requirements in Section 13920. The documentation is to be included in the youth's case record.
3. Determine and document that the independent living residence selected meets the minimum standards identified in Section 13930. The documentation becomes part of the case record.
4. Obtain written approval of the parent or legal custodian regarding the youth's participation in the program. The written approval may be omitted if it has previously been documented in the case record that the parents/legal custodians whereabouts are unknown.
5. Find a compatible advisor for the youth.
6. Establish a written agreement with the youth and advisor following the guidelines in Section 13940.
7. Call a meeting of the Administrative Review Committee to approve the agreement.
8. Review the agreement every three months. Revise and update necessary parts of the agreement. An extension in the time frame for goal achievement requires the approval of the coordinating social services supervisor.
9. Develop a monthly budget with the youth. Meet with the youth each month to review the budget. (Budget reviews may occur less frequently after the first six months if the youth demonstrates ability to maintain the budget). Approve any expenditures from the savings account.



10. Provide counseling services to the youth twice a month. Counseling is provided through face to face contact. At least one meeting per month should be at the youth's residence.
11. Provide an orientation of the Independent Living Subsidy Program to the advisor and maintain weekly contacts with the advisor during the first three months.
12. Initiate the subsidy payment each month.
13. Explore all possible financial resources to the youth (e.g., Social Security, VA benefits, etc.). Where such resources exist, they shall be applied to cover the cost of the subsidy payment.

#### 13980 Qualifications and Responsibility of the Volunteer Independent Living Advisor

Advisors should be at least 25 years of age and living successfully on their own for the previous two years. Advisors must be accessible to the youth either by phone or proximity. The advisor has the following responsibilities:

1. Complete an orientation of the Independent Living Subsidy Program.
2. Participate in the development of the written agreement prepared by the worker and the youth.
3. Meet with the youth on a weekly basis for the first three months and more often if necessary to discuss progress towards the goal of independence.
4. Be available to the youth if he/she initiates contacts beyond the required weekly meeting.
5. Maintain weekly contacts with the worker and provide written reports regarding the youth's progress.
6. Participate as a member of the Administrative Review Committee as long as the youth is in independent living.

#### 13990 Conclusion on Participation

Participation in this program shall be concluded when the youth has:

1. Achieved independence to the extent that financial support and social services are no longer needed.
2. Made a voluntary decision to no longer participate in the program.
3. Had custody terminated by the Juvenile Court.



4. Generally demonstrated unwillingness or inability to meet the requirements of the program and the terms of the agreement.
5. In no case may Independent Living continue beyond 21. Should a youth not complete the program by his 21st birthday, the case must be closed at that point.

If it is decided to discharge a youth from this program as a result of "4" above, the worker and supervisor shall determine what further resources are to be considered for the youth. The coordinating social services supervisor must approve the termination.

The worker shall notify the youth in writing 15 days in advance of the termination of subsidy. The notification shall include the date the subsidy will terminate and the right of the youth to appeal the decision. Refer to Chapter 16000 of the Social Service Manual for the grievance process.

**West Virginia  
Department of Human Services**

*Independent Living Subsidy Program Contract*

This is an agreement between \_\_\_\_\_, hereafter called participant, and \_\_\_\_\_, hereafter called advisor, and \_\_\_\_\_, representing the West Virginia Department of Human Services, hereafter called social worker.

This agreement is binding during the participant's stay in the Independent Living Subsidy Program (ILSP) commencing on \_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_ at which time the participant will be financially self-sufficient.

This agreement is subject to change only if:

- (a) any part of it is contradictory to future policies or procedures adopted by West Virginia Department of Human Services,
- (b) any part of it is contradictory to future rules, policies, or procedures enacted by governing bodies,
- (c) negotiated and signed by participant, advisor, and social worker.

**Section A — Participant's Responsibilities**

1. The participant will attend \_\_\_\_\_ School/Training Program until \_\_\_\_\_ with the following schedule:
- DATE

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2. The participant will continue to work at \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week. Change in employment will occur under the supervision of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The participant will contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month to his support for the first \_\_\_\_\_ months.
4. The participant's contribution to his own support will increase over the next \_\_\_\_\_ months in the following manner:

Date of Increase	Amount of Contribution
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. The participant will live by the following budget during the first month and review the budget each month thereafter with the social worker. All subsequent budgets will be considered a part of this agreement.

Savings	_____
Rent	_____
Utilities	_____
Food	_____
Home Maintenance	_____
Clothing/Personal Care	_____
Transportation	_____
Recreation	_____
Other (gifts, donations, etc.)	_____
<b>Total</b>	_____

6. The participant will meet with the advisor weekly for the first three months to cover the following topics:

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7. The participant will meet with the social worker twice a month. At least one of these meetings will take place in the participant's residence.

8. The participant will participate in the following additional activities:

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9. The participant will inform the social worker within 72 hours of any major changes in his/her situation, such as quits or loses job, leaves education/training program, moves, etc.

Failure to follow the terms set forth in this agreement may result in termination from the ILSP.

## Section B — Advisor's Responsibilities

1. The advisor will meet with the participant at least once a week for the first three months to cover the topics listed in Section A-6.
2. The advisor will submit the Advisor's Progress Report Form on a weekly basis to the social worker regarding the participant's progress.

## Section C — Social Worker's Responsibilities

1. The social worker will initiate a one-time only payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to partially cover the participant's start-up costs.
2. The social worker will initiate the subsidy payment each month. The subsidy amount is \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month for the first \_\_\_\_\_ months.
3. The amount of the subsidy will decrease in the following manner:

Date of Decrease

Amount of Subsidy

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4. The social worker will provide a medical card for the participant for the duration of his participation in ILSP.
5. The social worker will meet with the participant twice a month. One meeting will take place in the participant's residence.
6. The social worker will review the participant's budget monthly.
7. The social worker will monitor the participant's school attendance and work attendance.



This agreement will be reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_ with the participant, advisor, and social worker present.

_____ Participant	_____ Date
_____ Advisor	_____ Date
_____ Social Worker	_____ Date