



Transition Planning for California's Youth in Foster Care

Frequently Asked Questions

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Background

“**Transition planning**” refers to the process of ensuring that youth in foster care are prepared for the transition from foster care to a successful adulthood. Federal law requires transition planning to begin no later than age 14. There are several procedures outlined in state law to ensure that transition planning is taking place, including transitional independent living plans (TILPs), 90-day transition plans prior to a youth’s exit from foster care, and court review of transition planning activities.

The following are common questions raised by youth, dependency court attorneys, and juvenile court partners in their work to ensure that all young people in California’s foster care system have access to robust supports during the transition to adulthood. For additional questions, contact the Alliance for Children’s Rights at policy@alliancecpr.org and Youth Law Center at info@ylc.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

Transitional Independent Living Plans (TILPs)

Q: What is the difference between a transitional independent living case plan and a 90-day transition plan?

A: The case plan is a core component of any foster care case. The transitional independent living case plan (TILCP) recognizes the need for case plan goals, which may have previously focused on reunification or legal permanency, to include activities to assist older youth in the transition to adulthood. The county child welfare or probation agency is required to submit a TILCP to the juvenile court at the last review hearing before the youth turns 18 years old and (if the youth stays in foster care past age 18) every six months thereafter. The TILCP must include:

- The goals and objectives of how the youth will make progress in the transition to living independently and assume incremental responsibility for adult decision-making.
- The collaborative efforts between the youth and the social worker (or probation officer or Indian tribal placing entity) and the supportive services provided to ensure active and meaningful participation in the Extended Foster Care eligibility criteria;
- The youth’s placement setting; and
- The youth’s permanent plan for transition to living independently, including maintaining or obtaining permanent connections to caring and committed adult.

The TILCP should also incorporate the youth’s existing transitional independent living plan (TILP), which case workers must submit to the court beginning when the youth is 16 years old.

Additionally, 90 days prior to the youth exiting foster care due to age, the youth’s case worker shall assist and support the youth in developing a written 90-day transition plan

that must include (but is not limited to) options regarding housing, health insurance including enrollment in Former Foster Youth Medi-Cal, education, mentorship and continuing support services, workforce supports and employment services, information about healthcare power of attorney and advance healthcare directives. The 90-day transition plan should be personalized to the youth and as detailed as the youth wants.

Practice Tip

All transition documents should be developed in close collaboration with the youth, and youth should be encouraged to identify supportive individuals to participate in the development and revision of all transition plans.

Welf. & Inst. Code 11400(y), 16501.1(g)(16)

Q: How frequently should the county update a youth’s TILP? How can youth request to make changes to their TILPs?

A: Beginning at age 14, the case plan should include a written description of the programs and services that will help the young person make a successful transition to adulthood. This description should be the foundation for the **transitional independent living plan (TILP)**, which must be developed and be included in the case plan beginning at age 16. The TILP is an important document that should list the specific goals that a young person has related to developing skills that will help them thrive in adulthood and the services, supports, and experiences they need to achieve those goals. For non-minor dependents (NMDs) in extended foster care, the TILP should also include action steps to help ensure continued eligibility for extended foster care. As mentioned above, there are additional obligations related to the final TILP that is developed before a young person leaves foster care or extended foster care at age 18 or older to ensure that young people leave care with a good transition plan that provides stability and a foundation for their adult life.

The TILP must be updated at least two times a year along with the case plan, but should be revised when there are changes in circumstances, such as placement moves, the achievement of goals, or when specific challenges arise. The TILP should also be revised any time that the young person makes a request. The young person can make the request to their case worker and can also ask their attorney to make a request.

Practice Tip

Here is a link to [a template letter](#) that a young person can use to request a Child and Family Team Meeting to revise the TILP. The most effective TILPs are the ones that young people are centrally involved in developing and revising! We encourage young people and their supporters to participate in CFT meetings to ensure the TILP responds to the needs of the youth and that requests to revise the TILP are made as often as needed.

Welf. & Inst. Code 11400(y), 16501.1(g)(16)(A)(i) & (ii), (B)

Vital Documents and Court Procedures

Q: I am working with a 17-year-old in foster care who needs his social security card to apply for postsecondary financial aid. Can he ask his social worker for assistance in accessing the social security card?

A: Yes. The county child welfare agency (or juvenile probation department, if responsible for the youth's care and supervision) is required to provide foster youth with several vital documents, including Social Security cards, by the last regularly scheduled hearing before the youth turns 18 years old. California law also specifies circumstances where youth under the age of 18 may access their social security card from the county on a temporary basis. These circumstances include:

- To enable the child to obtain employment.
- To apply for admission to an institution of postsecondary education or a vocational training program.
- To apply for financial aid.
- To apply for or access public benefits.
- As otherwise determined by the child's caseworker, including, but not limited to, in response to a request from the child.

Welf. & Inst. Code 391(a)-(b)

Q: What happens at the last court hearing before a young adult exits foster care? Does the youth have to attend the hearing?

A: The last hearing before a young adult exits foster care is important because it is the final opportunity to make sure a transition plan is in place that provides security, stability and puts the young person in a position to thrive as they enter adulthood. It is the last chance to have the benefit of court oversight and legal representation that can ask for court orders if an acceptable plan is not in place and actions must occur to complete the plan. Because of the importance of this hearing, it is critical that the young person attend to

make sure they understand the transition plan, that extended foster care services, court oversight, and legal representation will end as well as what benefits are available to them upon discharge. Ideally, at this last hearing a youth-centered, specific, and comprehensive transition plan is presented and approved by the court that sets the young person up for success as they leave foster care.

As noted throughout this document, planning for the transition to adulthood should begin at least at age 14 and a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) should be developed beginning at age 16. An excellent TILP that is driven by the young person and their support network is key to creating the transition plan that is prepared before a young person exits foster care when they are age 18 or older.

Under state and federal law, the court cannot terminate jurisdiction of a case unless a hearing is held where the young adult is present and the court determines that the required elements of the transition plan have been presented and that discharge documents described below have been provided to the young person. While the young adult may participate in the hearing telephonically if they would like to, it is strongly encouraged that they attend because of the importance of the hearing and because this is an opportunity to raise any questions or concerns before the case is closed. The young person is in the best position to know if the transition plan is not adequate—for example, if there is no housing plan in place, their presence in court helps ensure that the judge is aware of whether the law has been followed or whether more work needs to be done before the case can be closed.

At the last hearing before the court terminates jurisdiction of the case, the court must ensure that the department has submitted a report verifying that the following information, documents, and services have been provided to the young adult:

Documents and Records

- Social security card.
- Certified copy of the birth certificate.
- Driver's license or identification card.
- Medi-Cal Benefits Identification Card.
- A letter prepared by the county welfare department or probation department that includes the following information: (1) The minor's or nonminor's name and date of birth; (2) The dates during which the minor or nonminor was within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court; (3) A statement that the minor or nonminor was a foster youth in compliance with state and federal financial aid documentation requirements.
- If applicable, the death certificate of the parent or parents.
- If applicable, proof of the minor's or nonminor's citizenship or legal residence.
- An advance health care directive form.
- The Judicial Council form that the minor or nonminor would use to file a petition pursuant to subdivision (e) of WIC 388 to resume dependency jurisdiction.
- Written information notifying the minor or nonminor that they may be eligible to receive CalFresh benefits, and where the minor or nonminor can apply for CalFresh benefits.
- Written information notifying the young adult that youth who are or have been in foster care are granted a preference for student assistant or internship positions

with state agencies pursuant to Section 18220 of the Government Code, or with participating county agencies pursuant to Section 31000.11 of the Government Code, until the child attains 26 years of age.

- Written information notifying the young adult of any financial literacy programs or other available resources provided through the county or other community organizations to help the youth obtain financial literacy skills, including, but not limited to, banking, credit card debt, student loan debt, credit scores, credit history, and personal savings.
- Written information concerning the young adult's dependency case, including, but not limited to: (1) Any known information regarding the nonminor's Indian heritage or tribal connections; (2) The nonminor's family history and placement history; (3) Any photographs of the nonminor or the family of the nonminor in the possession of the county welfare department, other than forensic photographs; (4) Directions on how to access the documents the nonminor is entitled to inspect under WIC 827 related to the case file; (5) The written 90-day transition plan prepared pursuant to WIC 16501.1; (6) The date on which the jurisdiction of the juvenile court would be terminated.
- The health and education summary described in WIC 16010.
- Written verification that the eligible young adult is enrolled in Medi-Cal and the nonminor's Medi-Cal Benefits Identification Card and that continued and uninterrupted enrollment in Medi-Cal for eligible nonminors pursuant to WIC 14005.28 or 14005.285.

Assistance

- Assistance in obtaining employment.
- Assistance in applying for, or preparing to apply for, admission to college or to a vocational training program or other educational institution and in obtaining financial aid, where applicable.
- Assistance in accessing Independent Living Aftercare services, which are services, caseworker support and potential financial assistance that a young adult can receive until age 21.
- Assistance with referrals to transitional housing, if available, or assistance in securing other housing, including whether the referral or assistance has resulted in housing being secured, and, if not, what, if any, different or additional assistance the department has provided that is intended to secure housing.
- Assistance with referrals for obtaining employment or other financial support.
- Any other referrals, assistance, or services provided by county departments or agencies other than the county welfare department that are intended to prevent the minor or nonminor from becoming homeless if jurisdiction is terminated pursuant to this section.

In most cases, this final hearing should be held around the young person's 21st birthday because a young person may stay in extended foster care until age 21. The child welfare and probation department should inform the young person of their right to stay in care, the benefits of remaining in care and help them establish eligibility. If they decide they do not want to remain in foster care, they can always re-enter foster care at any time before turning age 21.

Transition planning advocacy should occur as soon as the youth turns age 14 to make sure there is enough time to do the hard work of planning for the transition to adulthood.

Practice Tip

In cases where a youth is discharged without an adequate transition plan, the child's dependency court attorney should request reconsideration or take an appeal of the court's decision. Reach out to ACR and YLC if you would like technical assistance to appeal.

Welf. & Inst. Code 391,16501.1(g)(16)(B).

Employment and Economic Stability

Q: What transition planning is needed for a 17-year-old who just got approved for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and wants to continue receiving SSI as an adult?

A: The youth's case worker should indicate in the youth's case plan that the youth has been approved for SSI and identify as a transition goal that the youth would like to continue receiving SSI as an adult. The youth and their caseworker should revisit this goal regularly for the rest of the youth's time in care.

California law states that when a foster youth who is receiving SSI payments is approaching their 18th birthday, the county shall: (1) provide information to the youth regarding the federal requirement that the youth establish continuing disability as an adult; (2) provide information to the youth regarding the process for becoming their own payee or designating an appropriate representative payee, and regarding any SSI benefits that have accumulated on the youth's behalf; and (3) assist the youth in fulfilling these requirements. This requirement applies whether or not the youth decides to remain in foster care past age 18.

If the youth is simultaneously eligible for federal foster care benefits and federal SSI payments, then the Social Security Administration may suspend the SSI payments if the youth's other federal income exceeds the SSI payment. It is critical that the county ensure that the youth's SSI benefits are not kept in suspense for 12 consecutive months. SSA terminates benefits that are kept in suspense for 12 consecutive months, meaning that the youth would have to apply for SSI anew and potentially exit care without benefits in place because SSI applications can take months or years to process. To prevent any inadvertent termination of benefits, California law requires counties to, during at least one month out of every 12-month period (beginning with the date that the SSI benefit is placed in suspense), forego the federally funded AFDC-FC benefit and instead use nonfederal AFDC-FC resources to supplement the SSI benefit that the youth receives during that month. The county shall inform the Social Security Administration that the youth is not receiving any federal financial participation during that month in order to permit the nonminor dependent to receive an SSI benefit during a single month of every 12-month period. The county must then reclaim the federally funded AFDC-FC benefit in the following month.

SB 187 (Chapter 50, Statutes of 2022) created additional transition planning responsibilities for transition age youth who receive, or may be eligible to receive, SSI benefits. These new responsibilities will be described in a future fact sheet once the statute goes into effect in 2023.

Welf. & Inst. Code 13753, 13757(c), 16501.1(g)(16)(A)(ii)

Q: What resources are available to help youth develop and meet the employment goals in their transition plans?

A: There are several resources to help youth develop and meet the employment goals in their TILPs.

First, youth should work with their caregivers as early as possible to try to get informal and formal work experience. This can include chores in the home, babysitting, and experiences that help youth learn skills to earn and manage money.

Practice Tip

Caregivers, mentors, and teachers can also play a critical role in helping youth explore careers and fields of interest.

Second, as a young person gets older, they should be working with their Independent Living Program (ILP) coordinator about opportunities for employment and training. The ILP coordinator may be able to provide employment experience directly or refer the youth to a local program that can provide job placement, job training or an internship. The youth should work with their child and family team (CFT) to ensure that the youth's employment goals are supported in the case plan and TILP. For example, if the youth needs a referral for an internship program and also needs transportation to attend the program, these items should be included in the case plan.

Third, youth should be supported in getting services from organizations and agencies that have expertise in employment readiness, training, and job placement. Here are a few to consider:

- Almost all counties have youth employment programs for which youth in foster care are eligible. These programs are great resources to gain work experience and access to career counseling. One program that is available in many counties is the Youth Employment Opportunity Program (YEOP). Youth who are between the ages of 15 and 25 and are in foster care or the juvenile justice system are eligible for YEOP services. YEOP programs can provide referrals to supportive services, career coaching, employment preparation, and training. You can find your local YEOP contact here: https://edd.ca.gov/en/jobs_and_training/YEOP_Contact_Information/
- Youth who have a disability or special need should access the support of the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) to get help in establishing and meeting employment goals. DOR can help youth develop employment skills, explore

careers, get training and with work placement. Youth can request these services from DOR beginning at age 16. Find out more here:

<https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/StudentsandYouth>

- iFoster is another great resource for youth to help develop and meet employment goals. iFoster provides a jobs program that gives youth work experience as well as an array of other support services related to developing financial skills and furthering education or training. You can find more about the iFoster jobs program here: <https://portal.ifoster.org/iFosterJobs.aspx>.

In Los Angeles County, foster youth can be referred to career advancement and employment options via the [Universal Referral Form](#), through which youth can access LA County's [Youth@Work Program](#) and Youth@Work's Elevate Program.

Practice Tip

The [LA County Opportunity Youth Collaborative](#) has published several [career guides](#) that are helpful in providing supportive conversations around career exploration and ideas to plan out action steps. These guides are available in both English and Spanish for youth and their caregivers.

Q: I am a nonminor dependent and my [TILP form](#) includes certain limitations on my income and savings. My goal is to save as much as possible to prepare for my transition out of foster care at age 21. Do I need to keep my savings below a certain amount in order to remain in extended foster care?

A: No. State law allows youth over the age of 16 to retain cash savings up to \$10,000 and requires withdrawals from that savings account to be used for purposes directly related to their transitional goals. But, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) recently clarified that counties only need to assess a youth's savings and resources when the youth first enters foster care—and that assessment is only for purposes of determining whether the youth's foster care funding comes from federal or state dollars. In practice, this means two important things:

- A young person who enters care as a child and remains in foster care continuously, and accumulates cash savings during that time, is not subject to any limit on the amount of cash savings they can accumulate, and
- A child who enters foster care with more than \$10,000 in savings, or a nonminor dependent who re-enters foster care with more than \$10,000 in savings, may be ineligible for federal foster care benefits, but **they are still eligible for state foster care benefits as long as they meet all other criteria**. Under no circumstances should a youth's extended foster care participation or funding eligibility be jeopardized based on the amount of cash savings they have.

Under CDSS’s policy guidance, a nonminor dependent can remain in extended foster care while saving as much as possible to ensure a smooth transition from foster care.

[All-County Letter 22-16](#)

Q: What resources are available to assist youth in transitioning to adulthood with healthy credit?

A: Among the key skills that youth must develop as they enter adulthood are how to manage and save money so they can be on a path to building financial security. **Protecting, understanding and building credit** are an important part of this development. Healthy credit is critical to most of the activities that young people must engage in as they enter adulthood: securing an apartment and employment, for example. As young people get older and have opportunities to purchase a home or start a business, good credit is also key. Unfortunately, young people in foster care are at high risk for identity theft given how often their information is shared and other factors. They may not find out that their identity has been used to open accounts or that debt has been incurred in their name until they leave care and are trying to rent an apartment or take out a loan. Many young people are also not given the opportunity to learn about credit and develop financial management skills. Below are tips to help youth protect, understand and build credit.

Reviewing credit reports and resolving problems on the credit report

Federal and state law requires that beginning at age 14, every youth in foster care is provided a copy of their credit report from each of the three credit reporting agencies at least once annually and that they are provided assistance to resolve any problems—like accounts opened in their names—that appear on the reports. The child welfare agency and probation department must provide the report to young people who are under age 18 and must assist youth between ages 18 and 21 who are in extended foster care request the report. These rights are embedded in the case planning requirements and the foster youth bill of rights.

Those working with young people should help ensure that this process has occurred and work with the youth’s team to make sure the case plan documents the process and any needed action steps to resolve problems discovered on the credit report.

Practice Tip

It is important to make the court aware if the credit report has not been provided to the youth or the problems revealed in the report have not been resolved so that any remedial orders can be made.

If the case worker or attorney for the youth is not able to resolve the issue, a referral to the local civil legal aid agency should be made. The case plan should also include steps to ensure that the young person understands the process. In some cases, the young person knows and cares about the person who has used their identity to secure credit

and may need support to understand the options available to them to resolve the issues.

Freezing credit records or blocking elements of a credit report

If there are concerns about a youth's credit being damaged or being vulnerable to further identity theft, state and federal law has put in place tools to provide protection in the form of freezing a credit record or blocking elements on a credit report. Freezing a credit record means that credit, loans and services cannot be opened in the young person's name without their permission during the time the account is frozen. Blocking an element on a report means no one can view that element on the credit report. Under California law, a request can be made to put a security freeze on a youth's account when requested for a youth who is under the jurisdiction of a county welfare department or county probation department and has been placed in a foster care setting and is under 16 years of age at the time a request for a security freeze is made. A request must be made for this to occur; it will not happen automatically. Advocates can ask that the agency make a request for a security freeze or for the court to order the agency to do so. A request to remove the security freeze should be made as part of the transition planning process. (If the freeze is not lifted, the young adult will not be able to successfully apply for credit.)

There are two recent laws, one federal and one state, that may help protect the credit of young people in foster care who have incurred debts as a result of specific difficult or abusive circumstances. First, [SB 975 of 2022](#) creates a process for stopping the collection of debts that an individual incurred through coercion. This includes the coercion of a young person who is or was in foster care. This new law applies to debts incurred after July 1, 2023. Please look out for implementation guidance later this year. Second, the federal Debt Bondage Repair Act created a process for survivors of trafficking to block certain damaging things—like debts— from their credit reports that were a result of their being victimized. To find out more about the process for blocking elements on a credit report for a trafficking victim see the guidance [here](#) and consult with your local civil legal aid agency.

Building credit and developing financial literacy and capability skills

In addition to the case plan including any steps that must be taken to resolve credit issues, it should also include steps and activities to help the youth build their financial literacy and capability skills related to credit and financial literacy generally. This should begin in the case plan at age 14 and then be included in the TILP beginning at age 16. Activities related directly to understanding credit through scheduled discussions or enrollment in courses could be included. The county Independent Living Program may offer classes or instruction and many community-based organizations may offer options as well. You can also ask the child welfare agency to identify youth friendly online learning experiences related to credit and include that step in the case plan. It is also important to include instruction on how to protect one's identity, especially online.

Using the case plan to identify real life experiences for young people to understand credit, managing money, and savings is suggested because young people learn best through practice. Simulating experiences is an option when a real-world experience is not possible. Examples include: simulating the use of a credit card and payment of bills, reviewing a mock credit report and explaining its impact on things that relate to the

young person’s plans for the future (buying a car, renting their own apartment). Activities and goals should also be included in the TILP like opening up a bank account and building a savings plan. When possible, provide incentives that encourage skill development like matching savings or rewarding and celebrating meeting certain benchmarks.

42 U.S.C.A. 675 (5)(l)(federal requirements for requesting credit reports and resolving credit issues); Welf. & Inst. Code 16501.1(g)(16)(C)(state requirements for requesting credit reports and resolving credit issues); Welf. & Inst. Code 16001.9 (a)(32)(similar requirements in the foster youth bill of rights); Cal. Civ. Code 1785.11.9-.11 (process for freezing a credit record of a youth in foster care); Cal. Civ. Code 1798.97.1-.5 (coercive debts); 12 CFR 1022.142 (regulations for the Debt Bondage Repair Act as it related to trafficking victims); Welf. & Inst. Code 16501.1(g)(16)(A) (development of the case plan and TILP)

Housing

Q: What are examples of transition planning goals, activities, and resources to help youth maximize available and appropriate housing options?

A: Given the high cost of housing and lack of affordable housing in most counties in California, paying special attention to planning for housing in the TILP is critical. Here are a few recommended activities and goals to include in the TILP to increase the odds of developing a good housing plan.

Permanency Impacts Housing Options and Housing Stability

One of the best ways to address the housing needs of a young person is to maintain a rigorous focus on permanency and family connections. Most young adults live with family or rely heavily on family to make their housing arrangements work as they attend post-secondary programs, enter the workforce or try out different paths. Your permanency advocacy is critical to many of the youth’s TILP goals, including housing. Family support can provide housing permanently, temporarily (between semesters, holidays, etc.) and can provide financial and other support as youth identify other housing options and work to maintain housing.

Practice Tip

Include permanency goals and services in the TILP and consider them as you develop housing plans.

It is also recommended that you include family and kin in the TILP planning process and seek their input, along with the young person, on developing a housing plan. They may have ideas as well as resources to contribute to the plan.

Include in the TILP Specific Goals and Activities Such as Completing and Tracking Applications for Specific Housing Programs

For young adults with experience in foster care, such programs include, but are not limited to: THP-Plus, Family Unification Program and Fostering Youth to Independence Vouchers, and Chafee Room and Board funds for youth ages 18-21. **THP-Plus** is a state funded transitional housing program designed to provide housing and supportive transitional services to former foster youth who are 18 to 25 years of age, including youth who were placed in foster care by juvenile probation. You can find out more about THP-Plus [here](#). **Family Unification Program (FUP) and Fostering Youth to Independence (FYI) Vouchers** are a type of Housing Choice Voucher (formerly known as Section 8) targeted at young people who are leaving foster care or were in foster care. Vouchers cover a portion of the rent and FYI and FUP vouchers last for three years, with an option to extend for two more years. County child welfare agencies can make referrals to local housing authorities to access these vouchers. You can find out more about FYI and FUP [here](#). Counties can use a portion of their **Chafee funds** to pay for **room and board**, which can include rent and other housing costs for youth who have left foster care and are between ages 18 and 21. Ask the county Independent Living Coordinator about Chafee room and board funds. Use this roster to identify a point-of-contact for IL Coordinator in each county: <https://jbay.org/resources/ilp-roster/> Because all of these programs and funds are in high demand and do not meet the need, early planning and keeping track of application submissions and checking the status is critical.

Identify Staff or Programs funded with Housing Navigation and Maintenance Funds to Assist with Housing Planning and Developing Action Steps to Include in the TILP

As of July of 2022, counties were offered increased funds to provide housing navigation and maintenance services to young people ages 18 through 24, including young people who are still in foster care. While counties have flexibility in how they will use these funds, housing navigation and maintenance activities can include: 1) assistance in securing and maintaining housing; 2) housing case management; 3) homeless prevention activities; and 4) coordination of services and linkages to key resources across the community including those from within the child welfare system and the local Continuum of Care.

Practice Tip

Reach out to your county IL program to identify staff or programs that are funded with housing navigation and maintenance funds and ask for their assistance in developing the action steps in the TILP related to housing.

Alert the Court to Concerns About the Housing Plan at Permanency and Status Review Hearings and Ask for Remedial Orders to Get the Plan on Track

You should use the Child and Family Team meeting to develop the housing goals and activities that are included in the TILP. It is an excellent time to brainstorm, troubleshoot and come up with creative solutions. If there are barriers to movement on the housing elements of the TILP—referrals that have not occurred, interagency collaboration that is needed—it is important to raise these issues in court as soon as possible to have sufficient time to remedy any problems that have been identified before a young person leaves care. As noted throughout this FAQ, the court must make findings about the needed transition to adulthood services and must approve the transition plan prior to discharging the case. This includes goals and activities related to housing. The law prohibits the court from terminating jurisdiction of the young person’s case until a hearing is conducted and the child welfare agency or probation department has submitted a report verifying that referrals to transitional housing, if available, or assistance in securing other housing have been provided to the young person. Advocates should use this provision to make sure a good housing plan is developed as the youth gets older and that the court does not discharge the case if a housing plan is not in place.

Welf. & Inst. Code 391(e)(4).

Immigration

Q: What transition planning is needed for a youth who is exiting foster care with a pending application for special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS)?

A: The youth’s case worker should indicate in the youth’s case plan that the youth has a pending application for SIJS or other application for immigration relief, including whether an active dependency case is required for that application. The youth and their caseworker should revisit the status of the application regularly for the rest of the youth’s time in care and avoid closing the youth’s case if an active dependency case is required to meet the youth’s legal residency goals.

Immigration law changes frequently. Youth should be assisted in seeking legal counsel about any immigration relief for which they may be eligible. For any child or youth in foster care who does not have documented legal status in the United States, a county shall make its best efforts to provide access to immigration legal services, including through outside legal service providers.

Practice Tip

Given the impact that not having status can have on a young person’s future, attorneys should raise in court the issue of access to immigration counsel and any specific actions that need to be taken by the child welfare agency to ensure adjustment of status.

For more information about SIJS and other forms of immigration relief, Legal Services for Children's: <https://www.lsc-sf.org/resource/immigration-services-resources/>.

Welf. & Inst. Code 13310, 16501.1(g)(16)(A); Cal. Rules of Court, rule 5.555(d)(1)(F)

Expectant and Parenting Youth

Q: What are some transition planning goals, activities, and resources to consider for youth who are expecting or parenting?

A: Expectant and parenting young people should have many of the same TILP goals and activities as non-parenting young people in the areas of connecting with caring adults, employment, education, housing, and life skills, for example. Their supporters should help make sure that they have the opportunity to grow and have the experiences that all teens and young adults do. In addition, parenting young people—both mothers and fathers—should consider the following areas for planning to help ensure that they are supported in their parenting and address any barriers to success they may face because of the additional obligations of parenting.

Education and Support of Legal Rights

Practice Tip

Parenting youth in foster care have the same legal rights to their children as their peers out of care. They should be supported in understanding their rights and ensuring that those rights are protected.

- This should include their rights with respect to the child welfare agency, the other parent, and any benefits.
- Young parents should be supported in their parenting and the fact that they are in foster care should have no bearing on their capacity to parent. Like any parent, if the child welfare agency does take action to interfere with a parent's rights, they must follow the law and the parent would have a right to an attorney to represent them as a parent (distinct from their representation as a dependent young person in foster care).

Accessing Financial Supports

- Expectant parenting payment of \$2700 for youth 3 months prior to their expected due date.
- Infant Supplement of \$900 per month for the custodial parent once the child is born.
- \$200 per month if the young person enters into a Parenting Support Plan and they are in a SILP placement.
- Public Benefits, which may include depending on their income and circumstances:

- CalFresh (food stamps)
- WIC: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children provides food, health care referrals, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support for pregnant women and children up to age 5.
- CalWORKs: Parents in foster care may not receive CalWORKs while also receiving an infant supplement, but they may apply for CalWORKs prior to their exit from foster care to ensure that CalWORKs payments begin before foster care funding stops.
- Filing for any tax credits they may be due as a parent.

Accessing Child Care

- The Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Youth provides a childcare voucher or payment and assistance with finding a subsidized childcare placement. This funding is provided for a limited time while a permanent source of funding is identified.
- You can find out about funds to pay for child care here: <https://www.childcarelaw.org/content/quick-guide-to-affordable-child-care-programs-in-california/>

Parenting Support

- **Home visiting programs** provide in-home support to expectant and parenting young people. These are voluntary programs that are community based. They offer ongoing, individualized support to families during pregnancy and through a child's first years of life. Examples include Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start Home Visiting Option, and Healthy Families America. Find your local First 5 program and ask for a list of local home visiting programs here: <https://www.cafc.ca.gov/family/family.html#find>
You can find a list of home visiting programs here: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/CHVP/Pages/Sites.aspx#site_map. For young parents in Los Angeles, the LA County Perinatal and Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium (LACPECHVC) is an eDirectory of all of the county's home visitation programs and eligibility requirements: www.homevisitingla.org
- **Adolescent Family Life Program** provides expectant and parenting youth with one-on-one support and case management. The program helps young people access services, set goals and plan for the future. A list of counties with the Adolescent Family Life Program can be found here: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/afip/Pages/Sites.aspx#Local_Directory

Health and Reproductive Care

- **Public Health Nurses** are available to every youth and non-minor dependent in foster care as part of the Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care. They can provide educational information, assist with planning appointments, share and health records, refer to services, and support the youth with all health planning. This includes referrals for prenatal care, postnatal care, home visiting, and parenting classes. You can find a list of public health nurses here: <https://ibay.org/resources/phn-roster/>

- **Prenatal and postpartum care** should be provided as part of the young person’s Medi-Cal coverage. As of January 1, 2023, [doula services](#) are available and include personal support to women and families throughout a woman’s pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum experience. This includes emotional and physical support, provided during pregnancy, labor, birth, and the postpartum period.
- **Comprehensive sex education and reproductive health care.** All young people in foster care who are age 10 and older must be provided comprehensive sex education and must be informed that they may access age-appropriate, medically accurate information about reproductive and sexual health care, of their right to consent to that care, and confidentiality rights regarding those services.

Practice Tip

Youth should also be informed of how to access reproductive and sexual health care services and be supported in accessing care, including addressing any identified barriers to care.

Welf. & Inst. Code 11465 (e) & (d)(expectant parent payment, infant supplement, parenting support plan); Welf. & Inst. Code 16501.1(g)(20) (sexual health education and access to reproductive care)