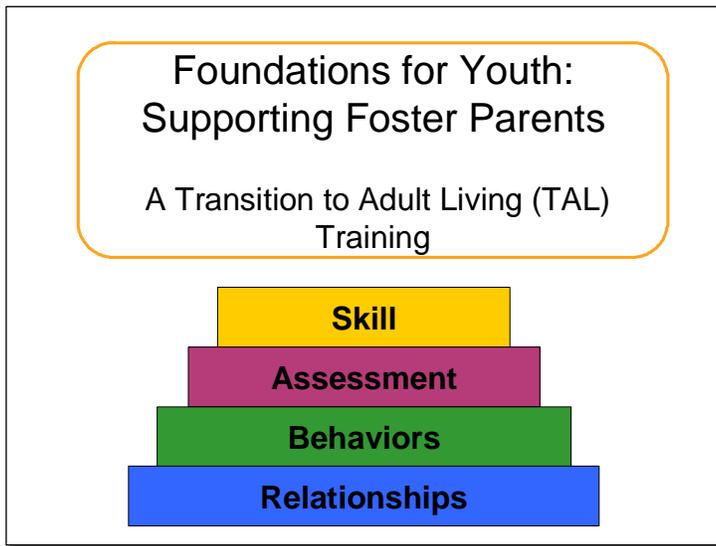


# Foundations for Youth: Supporting Foster Parents

## Part 1



Foster parents with the Utah Foster Care Foundation have been receiving training on working with adolescents and the issues surrounding Transition to Adult Living or (TAL) work. This web training is a companion training for caseworkers. It reviews the materials that the foster parents are receiving and provides information on how caseworkers can support foster

parents. This support improves services to adolescents in care and increases partnershiping between caseworkers and caregivers. When you have completed this training you will have some additional ideas and skills for supporting foster parents in providing daily care and guidance to the youth in their homes.

This training will emphasize the significance of establishing and maintaining a supportive, nurturing relationship with youth in care. This relationship is the cornerstone for teaching youth the skills necessary to transition into adulthood. It is important to assess the youth's needs with the youth and foster parent to understand how to engage in effective planning to help the youth achieve

### Training Outcomes

- Purpose of Transition to Adult Living
- Building and maintaining relationships with youth
- Solution-focused/strengths based work with adolescents
- Involving youth in planning
- Adolescent development
- development
- Impact of abuse, neglect and trauma
- Behaviors of adolescents in care
- Adolescent identity Development
- Assessing with youth in care
- Intervening with adolescents in care
- Teaming to support the youth's transition to adulthood

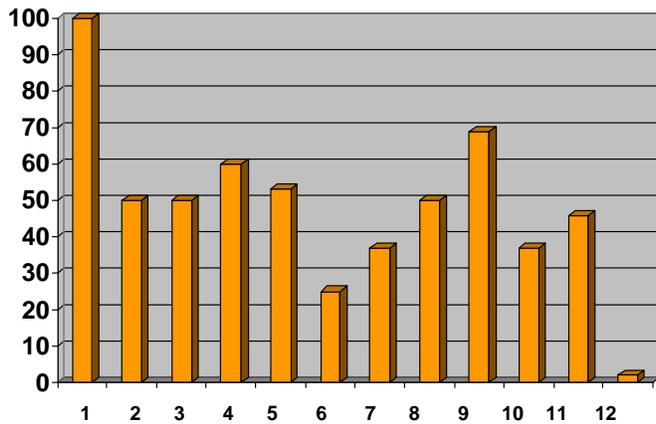
their goals, and how to involve the youth and foster parents in the planning process in a significant way.

It is also important to understand adolescent development, and the impact of trauma on this development, as caseworker and foster parents address the youth's behaviors. This understanding will help caregivers and caseworkers to have realistic expectations of a youth's behavior while enabling them to provide structure, boundaries, and guidance. These behaviors must also be understood within the context of varying mental health issues youth develop. Often, youth engage in substance abuse, sexual promiscuity and criminal behaviors. We must have the knowledge to recognize these conditions and the skills to address them. Youth who have been abused, neglected, or maltreated may exhibit the effects of trauma in a variety of ways; so we must be skilled in helping youth feel supported through their grief and loss and in helping caregivers effectively deal with issues and challenges that arise.

Youth who enter foster care come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, bringing a myriad of differing values, beliefs, and practices into a foster care setting. We must understand that youth need to maintain their cultural identities while learning the values and practices found in their foster homes and in society. We must understand the importance of cultural identity and demonstrate the ability to support a youth's differing values and practices. We can actively work with caregivers to integrate the youth's values and culture into the youth's daily living in a positive and safe way.

In order for youth to be prepared for adult living it is essential they have the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed without being in an adult structured home environment and be able to maintain their own home and all the responsibilities that go along with that. The first step in building a foundation for success is assessing. Foster parents learned about the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment tool that identifies the skill a youth needs. Interventions to help them achieve goals are important and we can help caregivers and team members understand, teach and mentor youth to obtain the understanding needed and to develop the necessary skills for ongoing success.

## Why the Emphasis on TAL



There is an increased focus on the care and services provided to youth ages 14 years of age and up. This focus is a result of the national data that tells us that the youth leaving care are not experiencing success when they leave care. Data specific to Utah is unavailable because youth are difficult to track after they leave care.

- The first bar in the graph represents the youth who have left foster care.
- The second bar represents the 50% of youth who are experiencing developmental delays due to trauma or life challenges caused by the abuse and neglect they suffered.
- The third bar, the 50% of youth who have chronic health conditions.
- The fourth, the 60% of youth who have a serious mental health diagnoses.
- Fifth, the 53% of youth who have not accessed help for their mental and physical health problems after leaving care.
- The sixth represents the 25% of youth who will be homeless within one year of leaving care.
- The seventh represents the 37% of youth who will be incarcerated within one year of leaving care.
- The eighth, the 50% of youth who will be unemployed.
- And the ninth, the 69% of youth who will be living in poverty.
- The tenth bar represents the 37% who will not have finished high school.
- And the eleventh, the 46% who will not have a diploma or a GED.
- And the twelfth, the 2% who will have graduated from college with at least a bachelor's degree.

These statistics make it clear why a focus on Transition to Adult Living services and an active partnership with caregivers is so important.

When we talk about the realistic capabilities and expectations for adolescents it is important to talk about their physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. We often see adolescents in their nearly adult bodies, doing nearly adult things and we forget they are still in a rapid period of development. Often we have expectations that are not based on their actual capabilities.



One of the rewards of working with youth is to watch them grow and make progress toward positive change.

Of course, adolescent behavior, even under healthy conditions, is sometimes difficult to manage. That's why it is so important to understand adolescent development and the impact of abuse and neglect on that development. This knowledge better equips you to mentor and support foster parents in working with youth.

### Physical Development

- Major physical changes
  - Growth
  - Hormonal
- Gender Issues
- Depression
- Aggression



According to the National Child Trauma Stress Network adolescents, in particular, are more vulnerable to the impacts of trauma than adults. In fact, physiologically, adolescents have increased response to stressors and we see an increase in the blood pressure and blood flow when they experience stress. In addition, adolescents often respond to stress and trauma with more negative affect. The

outcome for adolescents can significantly complicate their normal development patterns.

Here is what foster parents learned about physical development:

With the exception of infancy, the human body makes the most physical changes during adolescence than at any other time of life. Growth is accelerated and hormone production increases as the body prepares to become fertile. Stress in a youth's life can result in an earlier and more rapid maturation. There are a number of issues in addition to the regular tasks of adolescents that we need to be aware of when considering the capacity of youth.

As hormonal changes occur youth may struggle with gender related issues. These issues may include the usual dating and relationships issues, feelings of comfort or discomfort with the physical changes that have taken place and they may also involve issues of same sex attraction.

The hormonal changes that adolescents go through during puberty can result in increased depression, especially for girls and an increase in aggressive and delinquent behaviors, especially for boys. It is important for us to be aware however, that family conflict increases the production of hormones that contribute to aggressive behavior. In addition, as adolescents become larger in size they may use their size to intimidate others or they may aggressively impose their will on others; especially if this is what has been modeled for them or if they have not had a model for appropriate problem solving or for interacting with others.

Here is what foster parents are learning about emotional development:

Adolescence is an emotional rollercoaster. When you add abuse and neglect it is important to understand that hostile parenting tactics, especially physical abuse, contribute to aggressive behavior. Add that to the hormones produced when they witness violence and it becomes clear why the adolescents in care struggle with aggression.

### Emotional Development

- Aggressiveness
- Self Concept
- Depression
- Development of values and moral standards
- Major life transitions



Part of the emotional struggle of adolescence is their development of their self concept. Youth feel that their self-concept is stronger and more positive among people who listen to them, value what they say and if they feel supported. Caseworkers can team with foster parents and members of the Child and Family Team to make this happen for youth in care.

Another emotional issue for adolescents in care is depression. This is based on hormones, concerns about their body image, emerging sex drive and relationships, both peer and familial. Youth are also struggling with the development of their own set of values and moral standards. In addition they are facing one of the biggest transitions of their lives; in school, in level of responsibility and in ownership for who they are and what they do. These are huge issues that they are dealing with and we have a responsibility to work with their foster parents and the Child and Family Team to help them plan for and be successful in these learning experiences and transitions.

During adolescents youth are becoming more autonomous and increasing their independence from their family. To reach this level of independence, most youth use the adult in their lives as models for appropriate adult behavior. Many youth in care experience struggles with appropriate independent behaviors as their parents, and other adults in their lives, have demonstrated difficulties managing their own anger and regulating their own behaviors.

## Social Development



- Developing understanding of social rules
- Moral reasoning development
- Peers relationships

Here is what foster parents learned about social development: Early adolescence is when youth develop their understanding of rules and when and how they can be changed. It is normal for adolescents to resist rules made by authority figures as they explore their own beliefs and the legitimacy of authority.

Duty, sympathy, empathy and the need to act on these feelings when seeing a need are becoming part of the adolescent's moral

reasoning process. Remember it is not yet part of who they are. This capacity for seeing through the eyes of others develops during adolescents along with the youth's sense of self.

During adolescence youth begin preferring the company of the opposite sex rather than spending time with peers of the same sex. They begin dating, developing relationships and exploring their sexuality. It is our responsibility, as the adults, to help them develop and maintain safe and appropriate boundaries. Adolescents go through a normal period of adjustment to issues related to romantic attraction and involvement. Trauma and stress can interfere with the establishment of healthy relationships and increases the vulnerability to a youth being in a violent relationship; with boys more likely to become the abusers, while girls are often more likely to tolerant being abused.

Peer support is so important to youth that they may do anything to fit in. Adolescent's academic progress and behavior can be affected by their peer group. Peers usually encourage youth's academic performance, or discourage it, even to the point of making fun of them if they want to do well in school. Peer support, and lack of support, can affect many areas of a youth's life.

It would be nice if social skills classes would remedy this situation, but it is a bigger problem, a problem of social regulation which includes:

- Processing social information
- Emotional regulation
- Developing a perspective of empathy
- Self-control
- Communication skills
- Problem solving skills

It is well accepted that adolescents have increased peer involvement in their lives during this stage of development. Maltreatment, chaotic environments, or unhealthy family dynamics

### Social Development and Social Regulation

- Processing social information
- Emotional regulation
- Empathy
- Self-control
- Communication
- Problem solving



can interfere with a youth's perception of peers and their importance. Some may turn to substance abuse to avoid dealing with family issues, or perhaps they may engage in other anti-social behavior to escape violence at home. They can also isolate themselves from peers to avoid the embarrassment of talking about their abusive or neglectful environments. Or perhaps, there is a perception that peers may know their family's "secret" and so they avoid interactions with them. In any case, if their behaviors are perceived by the larger peer group as "problematic" there is a greater risk of rejection, thereby increasing the likelihood that the youth will seek out peers with similar, unhealthy characteristics.

These are issues that you, the foster parent and the therapist need to be aware of. Caseworkers and foster parents can work together to create a holistic intervention that helps the youth develop the appropriate social skills and emotional stability to overcome rejection by their peers.

### Cognitive Development

- Brain growth
- Critical thinking and problem solving skills developing
- Learning to learn
- Brain development vulnerable
- Future planning



Understanding of adolescent cognitive development has changed over the past few years. Caseworkers can help remind foster parents to apply these principles with youth.

The thought processes of adolescents begin to change dramatically during adolescence to include what is described as formal operations, which is very abstract, hypothetical, and future

oriented thinking. Youth who have been traumatized have often missed opportunities to marshal these thoughts in productive ways. In many ways, brain chemistry has also prohibited the development of these processes. Youth may become more argumentative, combative, and critical of others as they attempt to use these new abilities to resolve emotional distress or resolve problems.

The brain is making significant changes during adolescence. The areas of the brain that are changing involve organization, planning, self-control, judgment, emotional regulation,

information integration, language, logical thinking and consciousness centers. In addition to the actual physical process of neuron development of the brain, hormones are also impacting how well the brain functions. The highest regions of the brain are developing during this time, which means that youth are still developing critical thinking skills and problem solving skills. They are constructing their own identity by exploring and forming their own beliefs, values, and determining where they fit in the world. They are exploring ideal possibilities to plan their own future. They are becoming better and better learners.

Abuse and neglect can impact brain development during adolescence by releasing hormones which increase a youth's vulnerability for psychiatric disorders, interfere with the organization of the developing brain, increasing stress sensitivity and activating genes that contribute to abnormal development. Becoming a better learner is dependent on not having to split their focus between survival, abuse and neglect issues, and worries about family members and safety.

Another issue for adolescence is that of planning for the future. You have just heard that youth's brains are still developing; in fact they will not reach their full development until about the age of 21. Researchers tell us that because of this it is too early for an adolescent to commit to a career. Some kids know what they want, but most are still exploring. We can help youth by supporting them in making a commitment to further education in areas of interest to them, narrowing their areas of interest to a smaller number of possible career choices; after all, many college students change their major 4-5 times before they find their life long career.

Jen is fifteen years old and has been in Foster Care for two years.

Jen has struggled with depression off and on since she came into care. Jen struggles with feelings of guilt, sometimes thinking that it is her fault her family was 'torn apart.' She has no extended family except

### Jen's Case

- 15 years old
- 2 years in care
- Recurrent depression
- No reunification with parents
- Sister adopted – living in another community
- Recent move to new foster placement



just her parent's and one younger sister. Her parent's no longer have reunification services and her sister has been adopted by a family who lives in an other community.

She was recently moved from one foster home to another. It was a good move for Jen, one that she wanted, but a transition nonetheless. The foster family would like to adopt Jen later, if she chooses to be adopted.

Jen is 15 and is struggling with depression. What developmental factors may be contributing to her depression? (*choose all that apply*)

- a) Physical development and hormones
- a) Emotional Development which include sense of self and life transitions
- a) Social Development and the struggle to self-regulate
- a) Cognitive Development and transitioning to adulthood

Foster parents sometimes care for youth in their home who are suffering from various degrees of depression. We can help them understand that this is not only a normal adolescent situation, but it is severely aggravated by issues of abuse and neglect. Depression is impacted by all four of the developmental areas of adolescents.

In Jen's case, physical development may be a contributing factor. Hormones and discomfort with physical changes can result in depression. This is aggravated if youth come from homes where they were made to feel less attractive or desirable than their peers.

The emotional development of an adolescent is filled with issues that can contribute to depression. These can include their changing self esteem and how that process is impacted by the abuse and neglect they suffered. It can be influenced the emotional rollercoaster of adolescent peer relationships and their increasing sex drive, moral development and their desire to be loved by someone special.

Social development is tied closely to emotional development for adolescents. For adolescents who have been raised in environments where abuse and neglect is the rule, the natural process of social development is even more difficult as they struggle to self-regulate, communicate, problem solve and mature. Without ongoing examples of how to effectively use these skills and mature in a healthy way, youth in care can struggle in these areas.

Caseworkers can help foster parents understand this and meet these challenges with the youth in a strength based and empathetic way. It is also important for caseworkers and foster parents

to be examples of how to self-regulate, effectively solve problems, communicate and act as a mature adult.

Most adolescents know that they have family to fall back on if they struggle in the first few years after high school in determining what they want to do in school and in their careers. This is not always the case for the youth in care. Depression can be an issue for youth as they think about their future without support. When we think about an adolescents cognitive abilities it is important to remember and talk with foster parents about the stress youth may feel as their brain makes changes, is confused by abuse and neglect issues, and as they struggle to feel ready to make decisions that will affect the rest of their life around education and career. Caseworkers can work with foster parents and the team to create a network of lifelong, enduring supportive relationships for youth, help them explore careers and education, and take care of survival issues with them so they can more fully focus on the approach of adulthood.

What can a caseworker do to support the foster parents in helping Jen? (**choose all that apply**)

- a) Talk with Jen and the foster parents about how Jen's symptoms and depression are influenced by her developmental process so they can normalize the depression for themselves and Jen taking into account Jen's history
- b) They can handle it, don't intervene unless they ask
- c) Discuss Jen's symptoms to decide if a therapeutic or medical intervention is needed
- d) Ask Jen how she is doing and what is going on with her so she can see how her past is effecting her present and talk about strategies for helping her improve her sense of self, cope with upcoming transitions and develop self-regulation strategies

Ask Jen how she is feeling so you can assess her symptoms. If Jen's symptoms are interfering with her ability to function then c is the best answer.

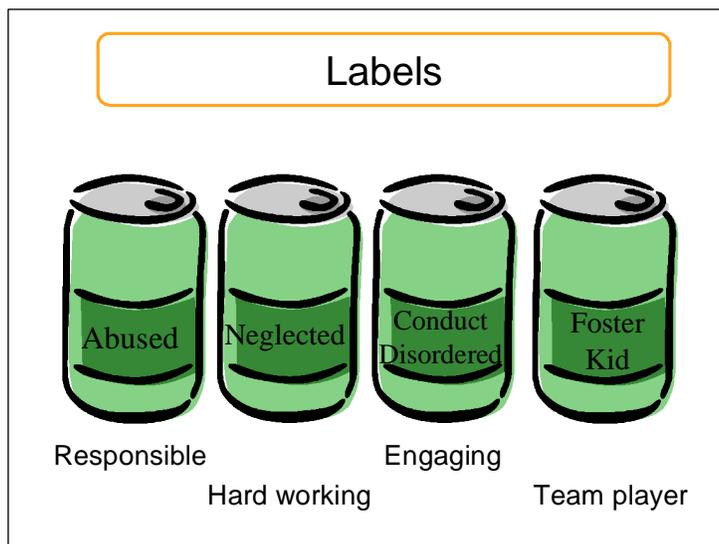
b) is not a good answer. During your monthly visit with the foster parents you should discuss the issues the youth is dealing with, strategies to meet those needs, and how you can support the foster parent.

a) and d) are both answers that are good if the youth's ability to function is not compromised. For the caregiver and youth to know that a history of abuse and neglect can lead to depression, that it is not abnormal, and that it can be dealt with can be helpful to both the youth and the caregiver. Helping Jen tell her story can help her understand how her history is impacting her emotionally.

When the response is c) or d), work closely with the youth's therapist.

## Foundations for Youth: Supporting Foster Parents

### Part 2



Youth come to us with many different labels. They also acquire labels while they are in our care. Some of these labels are helpful, some are not. One of the challenges that we are faced with is seeing past the labels and focusing on the individual youth. It is also important that we help the youth recognize labels they have received that are not helping them. We want to help

them move past the labels of abused, neglected, conduct disordered, foster kid and other negative labels to identities that help them, such as responsible, hard working, engaging and team player. This is a challenge for the caregivers and the Child and Family Team.

How can you work with a youth, caregiver and team to help a youth lose these labels?

In the Foster Parent's training they discussed this analogy of the labels youth have. A youth's self-perception is often out of sync with our expectations. It is our responsibility to support the youth in slowly rebuilding their picture of themselves and help them become the person they are, rather than the one that the labels have led them to believe.



We can help youth through many of the difficulties they face by supporting caregivers in providing rules and boundaries, building trust, modeling appropriate behavior, managing our expectations, good communication and listening. We can also help youth and caregivers by valuing a youth's cultural experiences and

helping them find ways to integrate them into their experience in foster care. This helps the youth to feel not only valued, but trusted, secure and to realize they have a place of importance in the relationships in which they engage.

When AI comes into care he has a number of labels including delinquent and disruptive. You work to change these labels by . . . ?  
*(choose all that apply)*

- a) Discussing AI's strengths each time you meet with AI, the caregivers and the Child and Family Team
- b) Ignoring the labels
- c) Supporting AI and the caregivers in helping AI develop skills that create positive labels for AI
- d) Reminding AI and the caregivers about the labels so they can focus on them in an attempt to eradicate the labels.

Often the labels that youth have are part of their survival skills. One way to help youth develop better coping skills is to focus on their strengths and talk with them about how these strengths can be used to cope more effectively. This concept makes a) a good answer.

b) is a good answer on occasion, because the things that are the focus are the things that are strengthened. However,

ignoring them is not enough. Labels and skills that are positive and healthy need to replace the old labels. This makes c) a good response as well. Because things which are focused on are strengthened, d) is not a good answer.

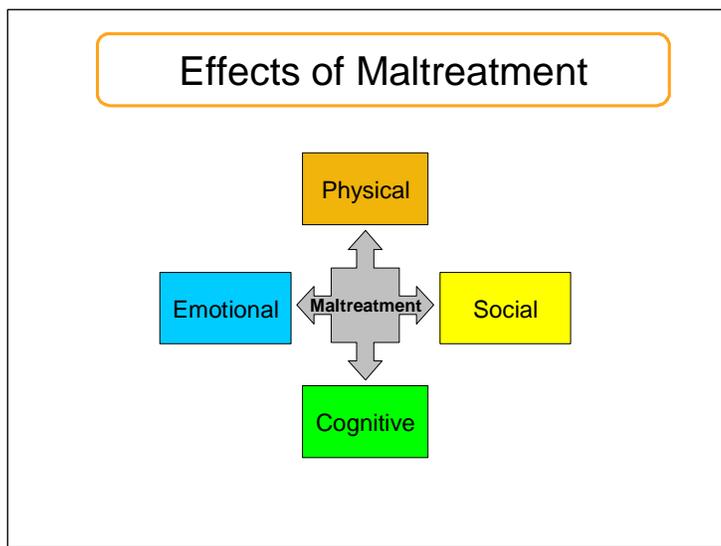
Because of the trauma of abuse and neglect, youth often turn to drugs, alcohol, sexual promiscuity, delinquency, or self-destructive behaviors to help them cope. In addition, many may develop mild to serious mental health disorders, such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, Conduct Disorder, or Substance Dependency. Others often have developmental delays. It is sometimes

difficult to help youth cope with these conditions while attempting to help them succeed in school, improve their social relations, or seek employment. It is important to consider our

### Effects of Abuse and Neglect

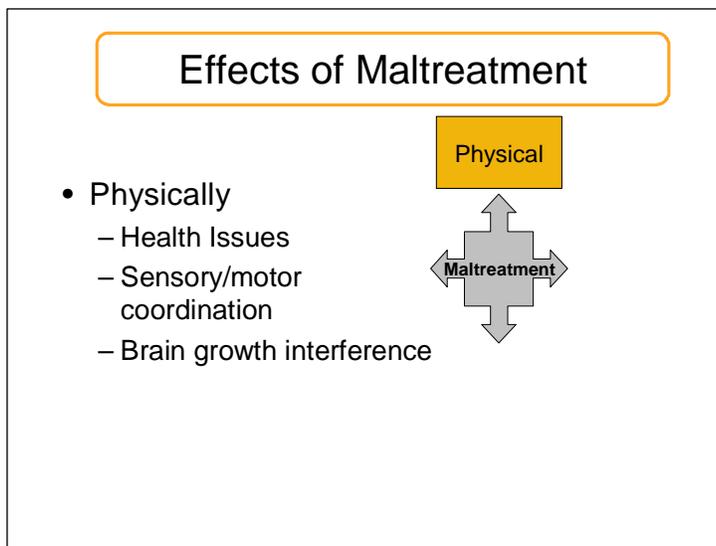
- Drugs and alcohol
- Sexual promiscuity
- Delinquency
- Self-destructive behaviors
- Mental disorders
- Developmental Delays

response and the response of the caregivers as we work with the youth to support them in succeeding, even if we may be disappointed when they do not meet our expectations. It becomes extremely important to understand the importance of balancing the youth's capabilities with our expectations.



For us to provide quality services to adolescents it is important to understand adolescent development in the context of maltreatment and the potential outcomes so we can distinguish between normal behaviors, delayed development and abuse and trauma related behaviors.

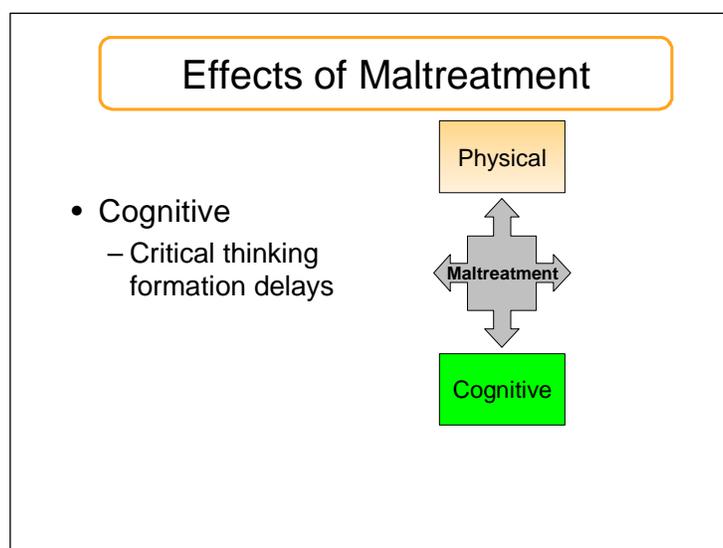
Trauma can be defined “as any stressful event which is prolonged, overwhelming, and unpredictable.” By the time a youth reaches adolescence they may have endured years of abuse, neglect and trauma. The impact on their development can result in decreased physical health and of more frequent illness. Abuse and neglect may also lead to mild to serious delays in coordination,



balance, and other fine and gross motor skills. Malnutrition in a youth's background may delay the onset of puberty and impair some internal organ functions such as the operation of the immune system. Trauma and stress can interfere with brain growth and development. A youth can become a “hostage to a brain state over which they have little to no control.” It is important to understand how the brain's function can be altered by traumatic experiences.

When faced with any stressful event, including incidents of abuse and neglect, the brain produces stress hormones such as cortisol and norepinephrine that are intended for short-term use during emergency situations. When they are consistently activated by abuse, neglect or trauma they can damage and even kill brain cells. Repeated traumatic experiences reinforce this process, over time, so that it requires less and less serious situations to activate the same response. A caregiver's movements, facial expressions, body language, and even the mere presence of an adult, can activate a threat response. This response can interfere with the brain's ability to regulate stress. Trauma impairs the ability to think clearly during stressful events. Stress produces a fear response in the youth that is often displayed using anger,

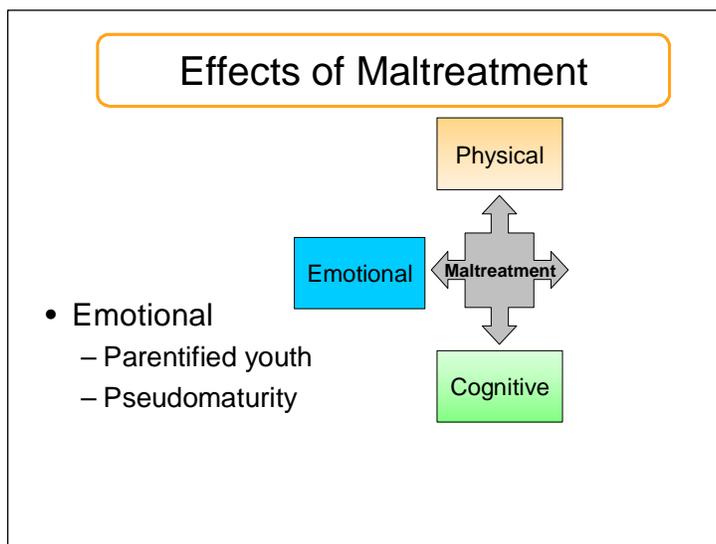
frustration, opposition, and aggression.



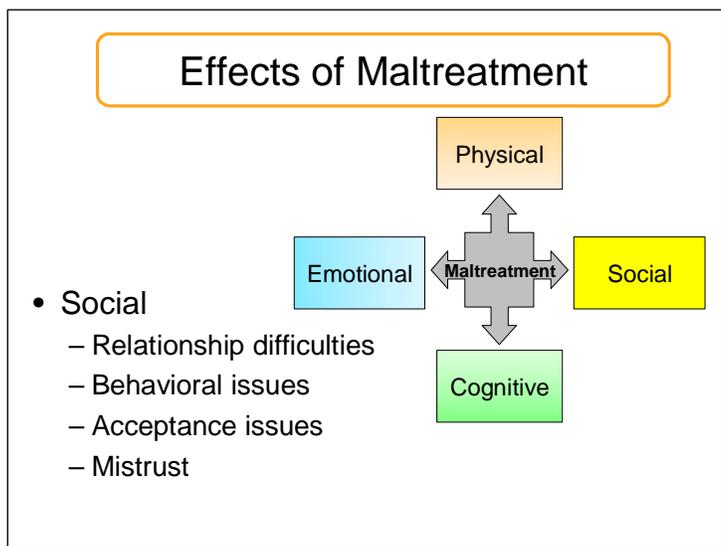
As youth enter adolescence some formal operational thinking should emerge. However, abuse and neglect often cause delays in such functions. Youth may remain concrete thinkers which relates to “here and now” thinking and immediate gratification. It can also delay the ability to engage in cause and

effect relationships. Thought content and processes can appear like that of a much younger child. As a result, some youth have learning difficulties.

Some youth who grow up in maladaptive environments may be filling the role of parent and caring for younger siblings or children in the home. Some of the developmental skills they should have learned may have been missed. This



pseudo-maturity can prevent youth from engaging in the developmental tasks critical to their social and emotional development. It also fools the adults around them into thinking that the youth has greater capacity than is really available to the youth on an ongoing basis.



Youth who have been abused and neglected sometimes have difficulties forming and maintaining relationships; the very relationships that enhance their ability to adapt to changing environments and social norms. As a result, youth sometimes engage in a variety of behaviors that gain them acceptance but that can be self-destructive, antisocial, or risky. For example: when a youth has

been sexually abused, acceptance may mean engaging in sexual activity that not only may be dangerous; but lead to shame, guilt, and poor self-image. These behaviors can be compounded by the youth's general mistrust of adults so that they see interventions as attempts to control, monitor, or restrain them.

## Foundations for Youth: Supporting Foster Parents

### Part 3

Children who have experienced trauma may be living in a state of fear. Fear, which may look like anger, is at the core of an abused and neglected child, and may be what is driving their responses and behaviors. In addition to fear, traumatized youth may also experience increased worry, frustration, jealousy, envy, shame, anxiety, blame and depression. Interestingly enough, these are all fear based emotions.

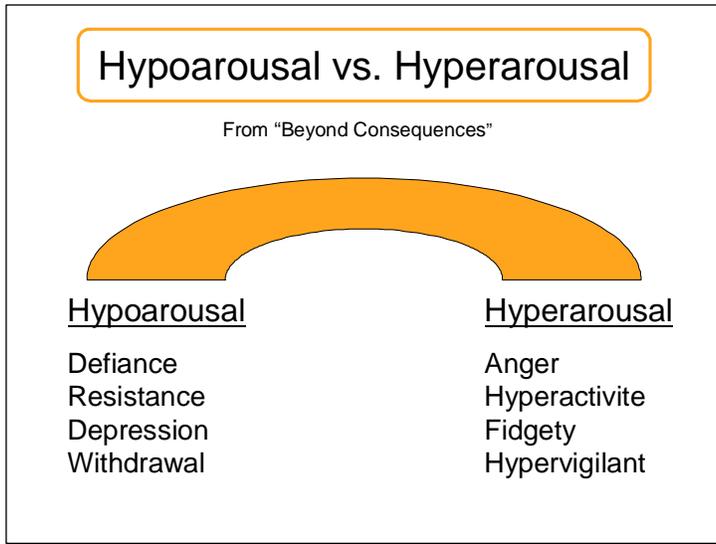
**Trauma = Fear = Behavior**

As caseworkers we can help youth, caregivers and team members by reminding them that abused and neglected youth often act out of fear, not the logical part of their brain that most adults use when responding to situations and feelings. We must look at the youth's underlying needs, what lies beyond the behavior or response when considering our response to a youth and in determining and enforcing consequences. This allows the adult response to create a learning opportunity for the youth. Our responses must come from a place of self-regulation. Caseworkers can support caregivers in learning more about self-regulation and in practicing self-regulated responses to the fear based responses of youth.

You may hear the term self-regulation often. It is a term that refers to remaining calm and maintaining self-control when a situation is stressful or difficult.

Our brains respond to trauma in one of two ways, hypo or hyper arousal. Hypoarousal is associated with the freeze in the “fight, flight or freeze” model of trauma response. Hyperarousal is more closely related to the flight part of the trauma response.

Boys are more likely to be hyperaroused and girls are more likely to be hypoaroused, but this is not a firm and fast rule. In addition to defiance, resistance, depression and withdrawal, a hypoaroused youth may under or overeat or engage in self abuse and mutilation.



Hyperaroused youth are often angry, hyperactive, fidgety, and hyper-vigilant as well as aggressive and volatile.

Youth can go back and forth between hypo and hyper arousal.

Youth who have experienced prolonged stress and trauma can actually suffer damage to the regulatory portions

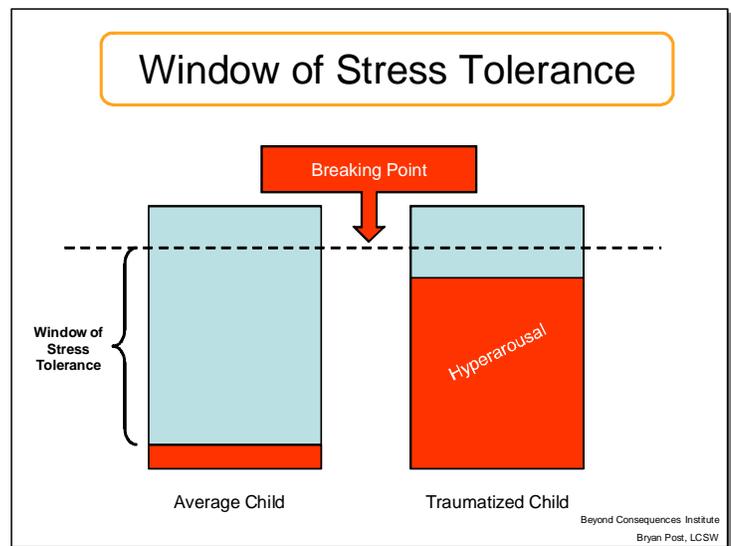
of the brain that help regulate their responses. Because of this youth can become unable to “think clearly and learn effectively.”

Caseworkers can help team members remember that there are two important factors to the healthy development of the brain, and the repair of the traumatized brain: a positive environment and positive relationships.

Traumatized youth have an extremely limited stress tolerance.

Most youth may be able to endure

more prolonged periods of stress before reaching a breaking point. The traumatized youth can only endure limited stress before reaching the breaking point. For example, an average youth may come home from school to find that someone has eaten the rest of the ice cream. Her response may be one of complaining or whining, but usually it will quickly subside and does not cause her to remain in a stress state. A traumatized youth who comes home to discover the



ice cream has been eaten can quickly reach the breaking point and engage in acts of rage, aggression, or anger.

### Prolonged Stress

- High sensitivity to perceived threats
- Threats = stress producing dysregulation
- Prolonged dysregulation = oversensitivity to stress
- Change in youth's environment = stress

Here are some important things to remember about traumatized youth.

They have a high sensitivity to perceived threats. Perceived threats become stress-producing events which lead to a state of dysregulation.

Prolonged dysregulation, such as living in an abusive or neglectful environment, can produce an oversensitivity to stress.

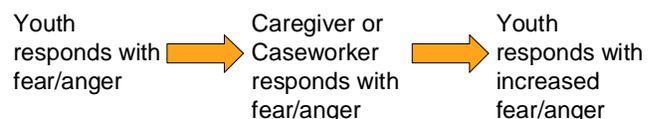
Youth can often sense stress before caregivers speak. Change, such as a caregiver, birth parent, caseworker or friend's entrance into the youth's environment can cause a stress reaction.

Emotions that are connected with painful events often trigger fear which can be seen as anger, anxiety, worry, and sadness.

It is important for caregivers and caseworkers to recognize the roots of behavior as opposed to the behavior itself. It can be a vicious circle: a youth's anger increases their fear/anger, which increases our fear/anger, which increases fear/anger in the youth.

### Prolonged Stress

- Emotions connected to painful events trigger fear
- Fear = anger, anxiety, worry and sadness
- Fear and anger build on each other



Behaviors and symptoms displayed by youth who have had traumatic experiences include lying, stealing, hyper-vigilance, self-harm, aggression toward others, poor peer

relations, lack of conscience, and learning difficulties. Caregivers and caseworkers can see

these behaviors as dysfunctional or abnormal. However, caseworkers and caregivers can look at behaviors through a different lens. This lens reminds us that a youth's behaviors may be a result of their fear and anger, which is a result of the abuse and neglect they may have suffered.

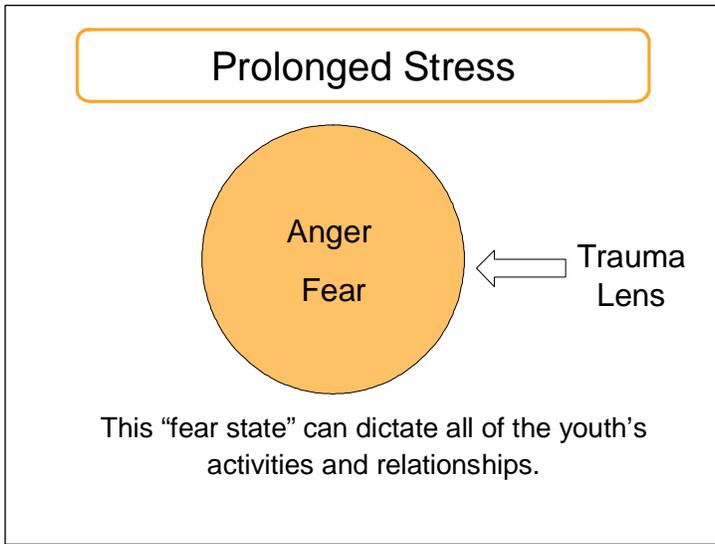
A youth's "fear state" can dictate their activities and relationships. It is

important for caseworkers to understand this so they and the foster parents can help youth deal with their altered stress states.

Take a minute to consider the outcomes on this slide.

These outcomes are not uncommon for adolescents who have experienced trauma. Remember at the beginning of the training, when we talked about 60% of the youth having a serious mental health diagnosis within one year of leaving care? Helping foster parents understand that these potential outcomes do not indicate a bad kid, they indicate that a youth has experienced trauma.

Knowing these potential outcomes can help caseworkers and caregivers see issues that may require an intervention, and to see these issues as needing to be addressed, rather than abnormalities that create fear or barriers. Sometimes, caregivers and caseworkers only see the behaviors without recognizing what is below the surface. If we continue to "chip away" at the behaviors, without recognizing the underlying stress response, the behaviors usually persist, or



**Outcomes for abused and neglected adolescents**

- Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Attachment Disorders
- Major Depression
- Substance Abuse
- Suicide
- Conduct Disorder
- Learning Difficulties

change to something else equally as inappropriate, often causing stress for caregivers that is similar to that being experienced by the youth.

Caseworkers can be a sounding board for foster parents, to help them process the stress they are feeling, how they are reacting, and how they want to change their reactions.

Caseworkers can practice desired changes with foster parents.

Brenda has been sluffing school fairly frequently. When the school calls the foster parents, their first reaction is to be very angry with Brenda. They talk about grounding her,

### Example: A regulated response



- Talk about Brenda's concerns
- Arrange to alleviate or address Brenda's concerns
- Talk about how the adults are responsible for the situation
- Offer support and concrete help

taking away her privileges, sending her to detention and even having her removed from their home for her bad behavior. Fortunately, they call her caseworker.

The caseworker reminds them that Brenda is still very overwhelmed by the abuse she suffered. Brenda blames herself for talking about the abuse and causing such chaos in her birth family.

Brenda is frightened for her younger siblings for whom she has been the primary caretaker for many years. The caseworker and the foster parents talk about how Brenda is probably having a hard time concentrating in class with all these worries on her mind. She is probably not doing well in school either, if she cannot concentrate on the teacher and the work.

Together they decide that the best approach would be to talk with Brenda. They can talk about how she is feeling about being in foster care. They could also offer to help her with the school work. If she is not able to concentrate in school, extra help to successfully complete the homework may help Brenda. There are many effective ways to approach this situation without approaching Brenda in a punitive, problem focused manner.

Talk with your coworkers about this scenario and the ideas they have for talking with the foster parents.

As caseworkers, we can often support foster parents in a concrete manner by offer connections to services such as tutoring; which could be provided by the school, a volunteer, or paid for with TAL funds.

## Foundations for Youth: Supporting Foster Parents

### Part 4

#### Possible Implications of Trauma, Child Abuse, and Neglect

- Guilt – my behavior resulted in placement, not parent's
- Inconsistency in feelings
- Help youth resolve conflicts in feelings
- Support youth in addressing grief and loss issues

Unfortunately, youth are not only dealing with issues of abuse, neglect and development. They are mourning their family situation, and often experiencing stress over the part they played in entering care.

Feelings of guilt can also emerge when youth are faced with the realization that their families have been torn apart.

Youth can develop the belief that their

behavior, not the parent's, are the reason for the placement. In those cases, where their behavior has resulted in placement in a foster home, it is not uncommon for them to feel guilty for causing chaos in their families. In either case, youth must reconcile these feelings with their parents' actions, often experiencing inconsistencies between their feelings or desires and the reality of their situation.

The outcomes of trauma, separation, and loss are important behavioral indicators that all the adults in a foster youth's life must recognize in order to assist the youth with their resolution. The development of a nurturing, trusting relationship will be the foundation upon which effective intervention will take place.

Caseworkers can talk with foster parents about how the youth's reactions are normal reactions for the youth, considering what they are going through. They can offer sympathy, lend a listening ear, validate the caregiver's good work and frustrations and refer them to services, as appropriate.

Caseworkers can have discussions with foster parents that normalize a youth's behaviors, offer what the caseworker has learned about behaviors, trauma, grief and loss and these issues relationship to underlying needs and that the youth are not bad, they have just been through a lot.

## Grief and Loss: Shock and Denial

- Flat affect
- Appears to make a good adjustment to the home
- Initial compliance
- Denial the separation will continue

Caseworkers may support youth by referring them to appropriate services

We can share with caregivers, that during the Shock/Denial phase of grief and loss, youth may behave compliantly, but are often “disconnected” from events or surroundings. They may also deny the loss and say it is of little, if any, consequence. Their overall affect or demeanor may be flat and there may be an absence of a broad range of emotional responses. For example, events that

would normally evoke a pleasurable emotional response do not; or painful events do not evoke troubling emotional responses.

We can talk with caregivers about how the Anger/Protest stage may begin when the reality of the youth’s placement can no longer be denied. At this point youth often begin to display anger. Anger may become random, or directed toward a number of sources, including caregivers, birth parents, caseworkers, people in positions of authority, and others. Behaviorally, youth may begin to act out more aggressively, become non-compliant and oppositional, and may engage in anti-social behaviors such as shoplifting, smoking, drug and alcohol use, or other criminal acts.

## Grief and Loss: Anger and Protest

- Aggression
- Destructive behaviors
- Defiance with authority figures
- Lying, stealing
- Easily frustrated
- Hypersensitive
- Promiscuity

## Grief and Loss: Bargaining

- Youth becomes eager to please
- Compulsively “good” behaviors occur
- Attempts to negotiate agreements with caregivers
- Blame themselves for separation and believe they can reverse it by behaving differently

We can help foster parents understand that when youth are in the bargaining stage they may recognize that their attempts to gain control of their lives is not working. They may attempt to resolve it by engaging in bargaining behaviors. Many youth feel responsible for their placements and believe that if they change something about themselves it will help determine the outcome of

their situation. Caregivers may notice behavioral changes in youth that include ritualized attempts to engage in “good” behavior. This can be a youth’s attempt to alter their reality and change the outcome of their placement. They may believe that their good behavior will fix the situation and they can then go home. In addition, youth may engage in attempts to verbally negotiate agreements that may influence placement decisions. For example, a youth may say, “If I get better grades this term, then can I go home,” or, “If I agree to go to counseling will I be able to live with my mom again?”

Caseworkers can help foster parents identify depression as one of the stages of grief. The symptoms of depression are generally well known to most people. As youth seemingly believe they have little control over the outcome of their placement they may begin to have feelings of hopelessness, futility, and despair. Youth saying things like, “It doesn’t matter what I do, I’m not going home

anyway,” or, “Why even try, it won’t make any difference.” Caregivers may notice youth starting to isolate themselves and lose interest in daily activities. They may become less

## Grief and Loss: Depression

- Overwhelming sadness
- Lack of focus or motivation
- Changes in sleeping and eating patterns
- Withdrawal
- Lack of energy
- Feelings of helplessness and despair
- Regressive behaviors
- Easily distracted
- Poor academic performance

Depression is a normal part of the grieving process as long as it does not persist.

motivated and show little initiative or follow-through. In addition, youth may begin to think about death, suicide, or other ways to cope with their despair. Youth may also turn to drugs and alcohol as coping mechanisms, especially if they have lived in environments where they have seen their parents engage in these behaviors.

### Grief and Loss: Reconstruction

- Identification with family
- Strengthening of emotional attachments
- Increase in goal-directed activity

We can help foster parents have hope in regards to the youth in their home by talking about the reconstruction phase of grief and loss. Because the pain of loss can become intense, most people begin to restructure their lives to remove it in some way. Youth may begin to strengthen their relationships, especially if they have begun to recognize the significance of the relationships with

foster parents and others. They may also begin to become less overwhelmed by tasks or responsibilities and dwell less on past problems and become more future oriented.

We can encourage foster parents to work through the stages of grief and loss to help youth get to the reconstruction phase. We can also remind them that grief and loss is not a linear process. Youth may jump from one phase to another, go through phases in a circular manner or skip some steps all together.

## Foundations for Youth: Supporting Foster Parents

### Part 5

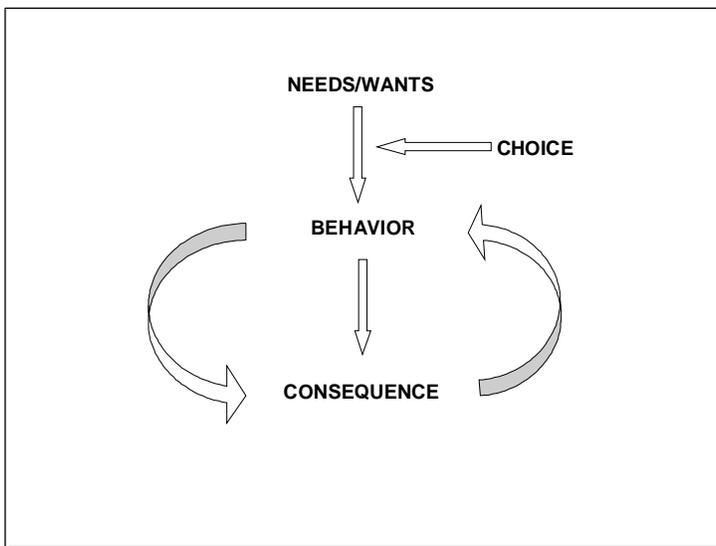
Look closely at the FedEx logo. Can you see the arrow? We have seen this logo thousands of times, but may never have noticed that it contains an arrow. The arrow has been there all along.



When youth misbehave or act out, caregivers and caseworkers tend to only see the stress. Caregivers and caseworkers must change their perceptions of the behaviors to more effectively help youth

manage their stressors. They must see the positives that have been there all along.

Just as with the logo, we need to move beyond the obvious and see the youth in terms of their capacity. We must look for the positive intentions behind their behaviors. We must ask ourselves what need a youth is trying to meet with a particular behavior.



Foster parents were taught about the child parent attachment cycle.

Caseworkers can talk with foster parents about how youth are used to being rewarded and given attention for bad behavior. Caseworkers and caregivers can talk with youth about this cycle, and help them see the value of good behavior to get what they want, and then, most importantly, to follow that up

with rewarding good behavior and ignoring bad behavior that is not risky.

We can support foster parents and youth in care to consider consequences by encouraging foster parents to talk with youth about the connection between their behaviors and the consequences. This is best done later, when the situation is over, when things are calm, and a youth can look at the situation in a less passionate way.

The dynamic of chronic dysregulation often leads to poor social skills, lack of conscience, and learning difficulties. As long as a youth is in a state of stress he cannot relate well to peers or form and maintain more positive social relationships. However, this does not change the youth's need for relationships.

This state of stress also interferes with a youth's ability to learn effectively due to their being in a constant state of survival. This also applies to their ability to demonstrate conscience. When you are thinking about survival, how can you concentrate on learning, appropriate behavior, right and wrong or other people's expectations.

Improvements in all three of these areas require prolonged states of regulation. Therefore, when youth escalate their behaviors it becomes extremely important for caregivers and caseworkers to regulate their responses to avoid activating the youth's stress response. Caseworkers can remind caregivers that sometimes this means ignoring the behavior while attending to the youth. Rather than applying the consequence, attempt to soothe the youth with assurances that they can feel safe. When both the caregiver and youth are regulated it is appropriate to revisit the behavior and explain why it is important that the youth feel safe enough to no longer display those behaviors.

### Remember

- Chronic dysregulation often leads to poor social skills, lack of conscience, and learning difficulties
- State of stress may lead to youth who do not learn effectively
- Improvement in these areas requires prolonged states of regulation

## Core Conditions

Respect

Genuineness

Empathy

You will recognize these words as the Core Conditions from Practice Model. These concepts have been taught to foster parents. You can be a resource to them in helping them see that these core conditions are essential in building relationships with youth.

We can model for and help foster parents understand that to build a relationship with a youth, the youth needs to see us

adults being congruent in what we say and do, being non-defensive and spontaneous. We can be aware of our feelings and respond to youth in a respectful manner that opens up, rather than closing, communication.

To learn more about what foster parents learned about the core conditions:

Youth need to believe that there is value in each human being, especially themselves. We can do this by respecting and valuing the youth as a person; separate from any evaluation of the youth's behavior. We can communicate to youth that we accept them, like them, care about them, and have concern for them. Respecting a person does not mean sanctioning or approving their unhealthy or inappropriate thoughts or behaviors. Values and beliefs that convey respect include belief in the following:

- all human beings have worth;
- each person is a unique individual;
- people have the right to self-determination and to make their own choices;
- and people can change.

Respect can be communicated and demonstrated by:

- Communicating warmth.
- Showing commitment.
- Recognizing and using the youth's strengths.

- Being open-minded.

Genuineness can be demonstrated by:

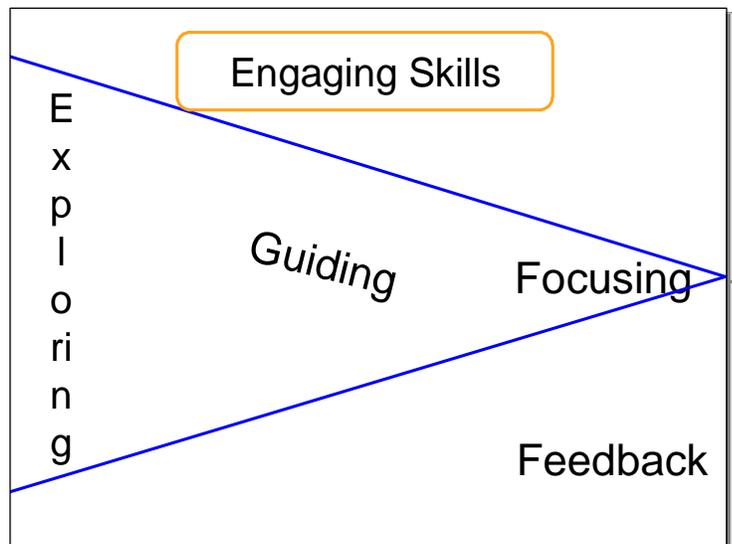
- Being ourselves and not taking on a role or acting contrary to how we feel or believe.
- Making sure that our nonverbal behavior, voice tone and verbal responses match or are congruent.
- Communicating trustworthiness and acceptance.
- Being able to express ourselves naturally, without artificial behaviors.
- Being non-defensive.
- Self-disclosing in a purposeful and brief manner.

It is important to be empathetic with youth and attempt to experience their world and develop a sense of what a situation means to them. so that we can communicate an understanding of and compassion for the person’s experience. It is important to recognizing their experiences, feelings, and nonverbal communication.

We need to communicate our understanding of the person’s experience with words (our communication will reflect our understanding of their ideas and feelings). Having empathy helps create a climate where the youth is willing and able to explore their issues and problems. Communicating with empathy creates more openness in people.

Exploring is useful in helping youth tell their story. Exploring skills help you engage with a youth and include active listening, mirroring, and use of reflection. Encourage caregivers to listen to and respect a youth’s story, as well as exploring with the youth the impact their story has on the youth’s life.

Guiding allows caseworkers and foster parents to guide a discussion with a



youth to help them both understand what the youth has been through and the strengths and needs the youth may have. Caregivers can ask strategic questions and encourage responses.

Focusing helps a foster parent use a conversation with a youth to develop understanding, plan, and better understand what motivates and moves a youth.

Feedback to a youth reinforces and maintains desired behavior. It motivates and empowers youth to action and helps them see what is working for them and what is not. Foster parents are in a unique position to provide youth with ongoing feedback.

Think about the core conditions that you learned in practice model and how you can reinforce what foster parents have learned to be a support to them?

### Solution-Focused Skills

- Solution Defining
- Past Successes
- Exception Finding Questions
- Miracle Question
- Scaling Questions

Foster Parents are trained to use solution-focused questions with youth. With caseworkers and foster parents working together, using solution-focused questions, and supporting each other in improving this skill, we can provide better services to our youth. Some of the advantages to using solution focused questions with adolescents that we can talk about with foster parents include:

- Supporting youth in identifying their own solutions
- Helping youth identify past successes
- Helping youth look at how problems occur, what led up to the problem
- Providing youth with hope that things can be different
- Helping youth develop a vision of how things might be different than they are right now
- Helping adults engage with youth and youth engage with adults

The foster parents working with youth on your caseload have received training to use the solution-focused skills that you use. You can talk to foster parents about how they use solution-focused work and if they would like to practice it with you.

According to Dr. Bruce Perry, “We are neurologically hard wired to be in relationships.” The absence of relationships has far reaching psychological, physiological, and emotional consequences. When we develop relationships with youth they can manage behaviors much more effectively. A child’s blueprint of relationships is generally much different than our own. A youth’s behavior can

challenge our attachment system and cause our blueprint to match theirs if we focus on control, rather than relationships building. When youth have been traumatized the effects on brain function can seriously impair their ability to respond to relationships in anticipated ways. Neural pathways, which are necessary to help regulate various emotional responses, including those that help a person feel safe and secure, have been overwritten by neural responses to trauma. When the brain is activated to respond to threat, a person may lose the ability to access those portions of the brain that help a youth regulate their responses. Behaviors associated with a threat response are aggression, opposition, withdrawal, defiance, and anger. In order to help youth develop a different blueprint for relationships, caseworkers and caregivers must

Youth need relationships



We all need relationships

“What helps people get better is the availability of the relationship”

Dr. Bruce Perry

understand the components of a strong relationship and how to implement them in effective ways.

Through positive repetition, caseworkers and caregivers can build the trusting relationships that will lead to behavioral changes.

In fact, according to Dr. Bruce Perry,

he can provide many marvelous interventions, but if the youth is missing relationships in their life, the interventions do not create change. On the other hand, no matter how inadequate the interventions, if the youth has relationships, the change occurs. Relationships are the key to healthy development and change for the youth in care.

Supporting youth in building a network of supports, relationships with professionals, family members, community members, and other healthy relationships is the most important thing that we can help them do to set them up for success. This is the reason that practice guidelines require us to identify at least five caring individuals for each youth.

### Working with Adolescents

- ★ Build Team
- ★ Communicate
- ★ Engage
- ★ Be understanding
- ★ Be consistent
- ★ Respect culture and values
- ★ Build familial relationships

Relationships, Relationships, Relationships

Engage with the youth; make visits that are about them. Consider their wants and needs, rather than always taking care of business. Be spontaneous and fun. There is a time and a place for business, but most visits with youth should be about building relationships, valuing the youth, and putting them at the center of the time we spent with them.

Often youth in care have not learned to communicate. Think of fun ways to communicate with the youth and teach them this valuable skill. It is good to be able to communicate in many different ways; verbally, in writing, over the phone, via text or email message, and in other ways. Make it fun. It is also important that communication be honest, it is their lives, tell them everything that you can so they know what is coming and help them prepare.

Understand the basis of their behaviors, the positive intent behind what youth do. Communicate acceptance to them. Many youth in care of been rejected due to their behaviors, experiences and choices. Caseworkers and caregivers can understand that these behaviors, experiences and choices are a part of the fear the youth are experiencing.

Be consistent in what you say and do, do not get defensive, an adolescent's behaviors are not about you, they are about their fears, their needs, and their past. Part of communicating honestly with a youth is keeping your word. If you say you will do something, do it. Make your actions and your communications match in deed and in attitude.

Youth who enter foster care come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, bringing a myriad of differing values, beliefs, and practices into a foster care setting. We must understand that youth need to maintain their cultural identities while learning the values and practices found in their foster homes and within Child and Family Services. We must understand the importance of cultural identity and demonstrate the ability to support a youth's differing values and practices.

Youth who have a relationship with a family member; even if it is only about birthdays, holidays, phone calls, and letters do better than youth who have no relationship with their family members. Our job is to work with youth and caregivers to develop relationships, especially relationships with family, in a way that is safe and helps the youth develop a plan for having a safe relationship with these family members after they leave care.

### Creating a positive atmosphere that supports change

1. Recognize positive behavior
2. Recognize positive characteristics
3. Positive statements
4. Individual notes
5. Spend time with youth

Foster parents were taught in their training that rewards are the most powerful method for change. It is not uncommon to struggle with recognizing the positives of youth when they are acting out. To create positive change with youth we must first reward the things that are going well first. If youth discover that only the negative behavior gets attention, then they will have more

negative behaviors. To change this it is important to create a positive relationship with the youth that is based on recognizing the youth's strengths. A youth is more likely to engage in positive behaviors when the positive behaviors are getting attention. Some ideas for helping

create a more positive environment for a youth are listed here. To read more about these topics:

Describe the positive things you notice a youth doing. For example, if a youth has done a great job on a task, point it out by saying something like, “Johnny, great job helping with the dishes. That was great,” or, “Thank you for mowing the lawn” or, “Your room looks great, thanks for picking it up.”

You can also identify positive characteristics of the child by saying things like, “I’m sure glad you are a part of our family,” or, “You’re so fun be around,” or, “I sure like the way you did your hair.”

Create a box for the family where individual family members can contribute positive statements of their own. Have pieces of scratch paper near the box so any time a person notices a family member doing something positive for another it can be written on a piece of paper and placed in the box. Read them together as a family once a week at the dinner table. Caseworkers can contribute to this as well, letting family members know about great things the youth has done that the family may not be aware of.

Parents can also write individual notes to youth that express praise and encouragement. For example, a note that says, “Great job at your piano recital,” that is placed on the youth’s pillow before she goes to bed is a good way to recognize positive behaviors. Notes can be used in a variety of ways to encourage youth. Sometimes adolescents find it easier to communicate if it is not face to face. Having a journal that adults write in and place on the youth’s pillow, the youth can reply and leave the journal on the parent’s pillow, desk or other designated place. This can make positive communication easier for a youth who is not used to positive communication.

Spend time with the child when they are behaving in positive ways. We rarely, if ever, ignore negative behavior, but tend to constantly overlook positive behaviors. Help youth understand that the positive behaviors are those that get attention. Give the positive behaviors attention, - go together to get an ice cream, read, play a game, show the adolescent that positive behavior is important enough for you to take time from your schedule, exclusively for them. It is especially valuable if it is spontaneous – immediately following behavior – or if needed a coupon that they can trade in when the youth wants to.

Foster parents learned in their training that they can take an active role in helping establish some important principles of behavior management in order to help youth develop the skills necessary for self-governance. Ways that caregivers can use their relationship building skills to engage in more effective behavioral interventions are listed above. Select each of the bulleted points to read what caregivers heard about each factor in their training.

## Principles of Discipline

- Clear expectation in advance
- No adult tantrums
- Immediate connection between behavior and consequences
- Avoid grounding

Caregivers can define expectations before behaviors become an issues. This can be done in several different ways. First, hold regular family meetings where the youth and the foster parents come together to discuss important issues. These help caregivers and youth to review, clarify, and revise expectations based on input from the youth, family members and caseworkers. Second, take time to discuss expectations prior to the behavior occurring. For example, if a youth has a specific curfew, the caregiver can discuss when the youth should be home, what needs to happen if the youth knows they will be late, or the consequences if the youth fails to arrive on time. Caregivers can use these opportunities to constantly communicate with youth—part of building a relationship with them—and help ensure that they understand the expectations in advance of outcomes or consequences. In addition the caseworker can use Child and Family Team Meetings to support the caregivers in this area and so that the youth has an opportunity to provide input into rules and consequences. They can also check that the caregiver is developing realistic expectations with the youth. Caseworkers can encourage caregivers to have individual specific rules. It is best if 10-year-old and a 17-year-old do not have the same rules, since their needs and development are not the same.

It is important for adults to stay in control of their behavior in order to more effectively manage the behavior of youth. Engaging in argumentative behavior with the youth gives their behavior power. Once a youth sees they have the power to control the behavior of an adult, the

youth will continue to engage in the very behaviors that caregivers would like to eliminate. Caregivers and caseworkers need to remain in a state of “regulation” in order to manage their emotional responses to various behaviors. In the absence of regulation an adult is in a state of “dysregulation” where stress, in the form of a youth’s oppositional, aggressive, or angry behaviors cause a caregiver to reach a state of intolerance. Caseworkers can help foster parents practice this skill. It is easier said than done when one is in the middle of an emotional charged situation with a youth and it helps to have practiced the skill before it is needed.

Consequences, for both positive and negative behavior, should be immediate. In order to understand the link between their behaviors and the outcomes the consequence should be linked immediately to the behavior. Caseworkers can help foster parents understand how important it is not to prolong consequences. Small, brief, and easy to manage consequences generally work better than lengthy consequences, which tend to build resentment and are counterproductive to a trusting relationship. Withdrawing a specific privilege, rather than all privileges, related to the youth’s behavior may, over time, produce the desired result. For example, if a youth violates their curfew, the youth may lose the privilege of going out the next night. Caseworkers can help foster parents see the effectiveness of a immediate but short consequence.

Avoid grounding, it should only be used when it is a natural consequence for a behavior and should be associated with a short, specific period of time or single event. Grounding is not only more punishment for the adult than it is for the youth, but it is counterproductive in

building a relationship and in curbing undesirable behaviors.

As caseworkers we need to remember and remind foster parents and the Child and Family team members that adolescents need enough freedom to complete the tasks of adolescent development. It is important for

### Understanding Interventions

- Limits vs. freedom
- Protected risk taking
- Brain developing until early 20s
- Developing critical thinking

caseworkers to work with the foster family and the Child and Family Team to set appropriate limits, but that still allow the youth enough space to complete the tasks of developing their own values and beliefs, learning to make decisions, and exploring their limitations.

The caseworker, foster family, and Child and Family Team need to work with the youth to create situations where the youth can take safe, controlled risks; it is an important part of their developmental process. Overprotecting the youth increases the risk taking and increases the danger related to the risks.

The adolescent brain does not complete its developmental process until somewhere in the early 20s. This is important to remember as we consider the youth's development. It is important to know each individual youth and provide the protection, supervision, nurturing, independence, and freedom appropriate for the individual youth to support them in reaching their greatest potential.

We often see procrastination in youth; it may be a symptom of their development, taking extended periods of time to think critically through a decision. It might be indecision because of lack of understanding of all the elements combined with their need for adult guidance but counteracted by their desire to make an independent decision. This offers a learning opportunity for a caseworker or foster parent. For example, the adult could say, "this would be a hard decision for me to make, here are some things you might want to think about, here are some possible choices, and these are the potential outcomes, think about it. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask." They could ask solution focused questions like:

"What has helped you to make decisions in the past? How have you seen this work for others? How do you see this working best for you?"

How do you work with youth who has been smoking, again?

In this scenario, selecting d) would be the best response. Since this is not the

John was caught smoking a cigarette in the back yard. He has done this in the past and been told his behavior is not acceptable.  
**(choose all that apply)**

- a) A Child and Family Team meeting will be held to discuss his inappropriate behavior and determine the consequences
- b) A referral will be made to the juvenile court
- c) John will lose his privileges and not be allowed to spend anytime with friends or family in fun activities
- d) John will remind the foster parents and caseworker about the consequences that were agreed upon following the previous smoking incident

first time that John has been smoking, the foster parent, caseworker and youth have agreed upon a consequence. The actual consequence is not as important as the fact that it was pre-determined by the foster parents, caseworker and youth together and that the youth knows exactly what to expect if he is caught smoking. Consequences may include a court intervention if the youth was arrested for the previous smoking incident, so b is a possible correct answer because smoking is a status offense. Having the youth be the one to remind everyone else of the consequences reminds the youth that they have responsibility for their own behavior.

a) and c) are not responses that are sensitive to the needs and development of the youth in our care.

Samantha is exhibiting a number of irritating behaviors that concern you and her caregivers. However, none of these behaviors are not creating a threat of harm, nor breaking major rules. **(choose all that apply)**

- a) A Child and Family Team meeting will be held where her irritating behavior will be discussed to determine the consequences.
- b) Since her behaviors are not creating risk and are not infractions of major rules, the behaviors will be ignored and at another, appropriate time, the strain the behaviors put on relationships will be discussed.
- c) Since her behaviors are not creating risk and are not infractions of major rules, the behaviors will be ignored and immediate rewards will be given for positive behaviors.
- d) Samantha's privileges will be restricted until she stops the irritating behaviors.

**What would you do?**

How do you work with youth who engage in behavior you have difficulty tolerating?

Sometimes we want to set firm boundaries and exert control. Other times we are able to see the behaviors as a message or a negative coping skill a youth has developed. Understanding the underlying messages helps us more effectively work with the youth.

In this scenario, selecting c) would be the best response. Moving the focus to her positive behaviors and ignoring the negative behaviors, because they are not creating a threat of harm, will gradually increase the positive and decrease the negative behaviors.

b) is not a bad answer, but the discussion would be beneficial only if a strong relationship has been established and the discussion with the caregiver has meaning to the adolescent.

a) and d) are not responses that are sensitive to the needs and development of the youth in our care.

## Foundations for Youth: Supporting Foster Parents

### Part 6

One young lady who grew up in foster care described leaving foster care like this: “We youth do not have the luxury of putting life on ‘pause,’ like on a DVD player, and crashing on our parent's couch until we're ready to push ‘play’ again! We are on ‘fast forward’ and must acclimate to this reality!”

If my son is ‘crashing’ he can put his problems on pause, and let someone else either solve them or at least support him. Once the youth in care leave care, they must sink or swim all on their own, and do it immediately.

We can prepare them in two ways. We have talked about helping them make connections that will last past their leaving care. We can also help them learn the skills they will need. Foster parents, caseworkers, and Child and Family Team Members can work together to support the youth in being prepared to live on their own.

### Example: The need to help youth prepare

- Skills
- Relationships



### Supporting youth to prepare to live on their own

- Transition to Adult Living (TAL) focus areas
- Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment
- Skill development
- Planning with youth for transitions

Foster Parents have been trained in the 5 focus areas. In their training they saw demonstrations on teaching skills and engaged in practice around teaching youth the skills they will need. How can you support foster parents in heading youth in the right direction?

There are a number of things that caseworkers can do, skills that have been

covered in training. A few of these things are completing, discussing and planning with the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment with the youth and foster parents. This identifies areas where the youth needs support. In addition, the resources available through the Casey Foundation give foster parents activities to do to help youth learn skills they will need as they transition to adulthood.

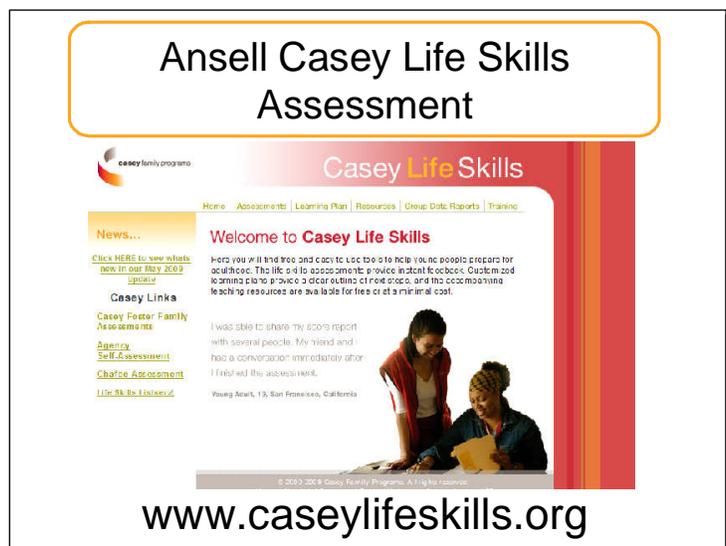
Caseworkers and foster parents can coordinate efforts to teach youth through purposeful visits, Transition to Adult Living classes, community activities, school opportunities, and other resources. In addition, they can solicit the participation and expertise of Child and Family Team members.

Caseworkers and foster parents can talk with youth about what the youth, and what the adults, see as necessary to the youth's success in transitioning to adulthood, about the youth's concerns for their future, and about how to set the youth up for success in their transition.

Take time to talk with your coworkers about their successes and ideas about helping foster parents and youth around the transition to adulthood.

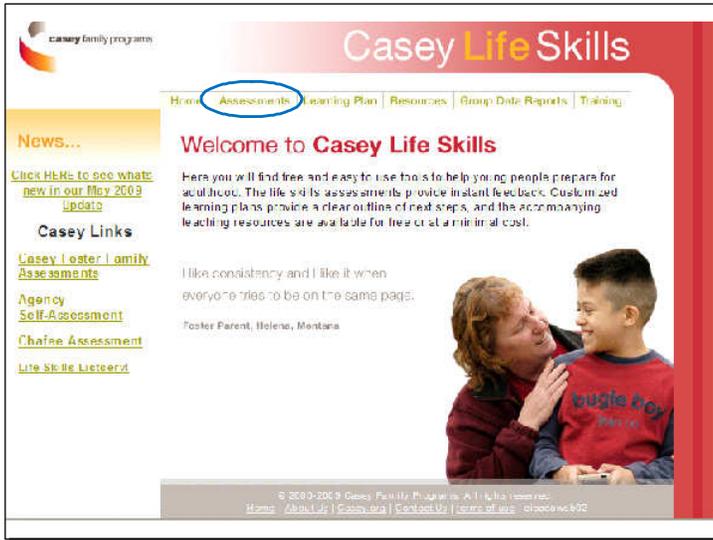
Foster parents learned about the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment, and their shared responsibility in taking and supporting the youth in taking the assessment. This is a valuable tool that is used to assess youth's daily living skills and help the Child and Family Team plan to support the youth in meeting these needs. The Practice Guidelines, Section 303.15 stipulates that all youth in care will complete the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment within 30 days of their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Section 303.72 explains that each youth will complete the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment each year from 14 years of age until they leave care. This section of the Practice



Guidelines also stipulates that the assessment results will be the foundation for the youth's Transition to Adult Living Plan.

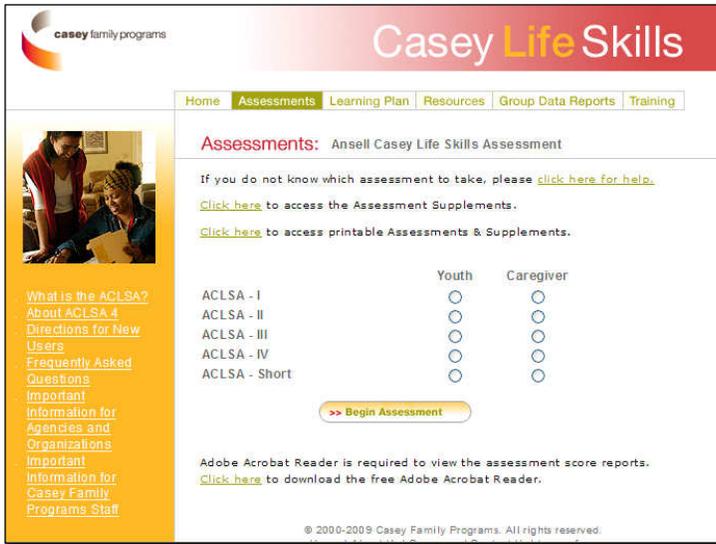
The Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment can be found at [www.caseylifeskills.org](http://www.caseylifeskills.org).



To begin the Assessment, select “Assessments” from the tool bar.

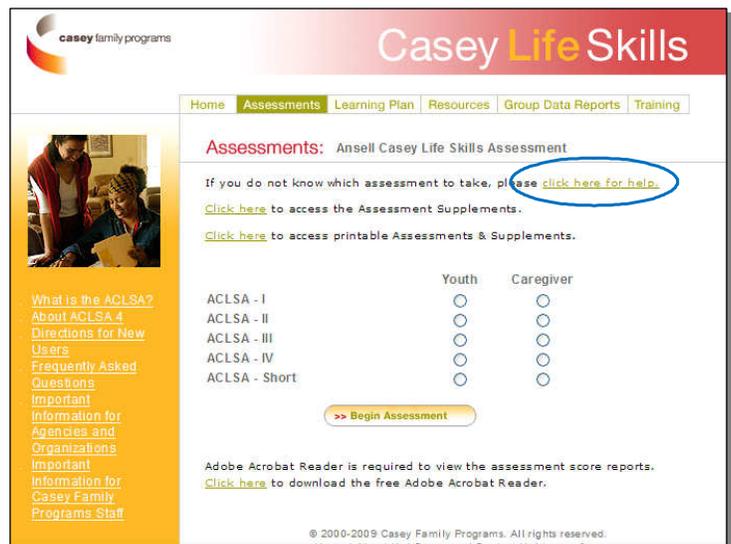
From the drop down screen you can select the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment in either English, Spanish, or French.





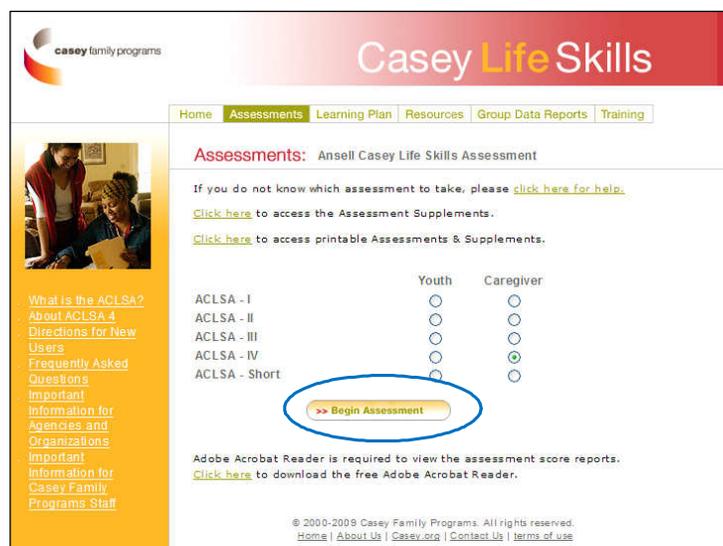
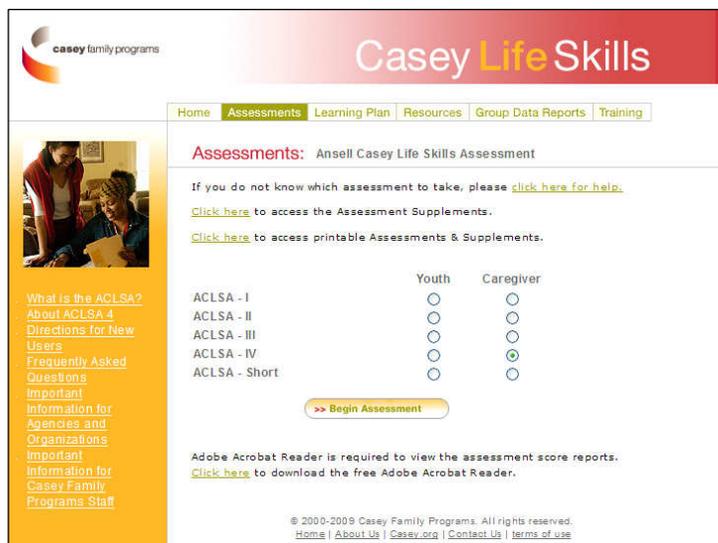
The Casey Life Skills page appears and you can then select the appropriate assessment for the individual youth.

If you want a reminder about which assessment to use for which ages groups, select “click here for help” and the page with the age groupings will be displayed.



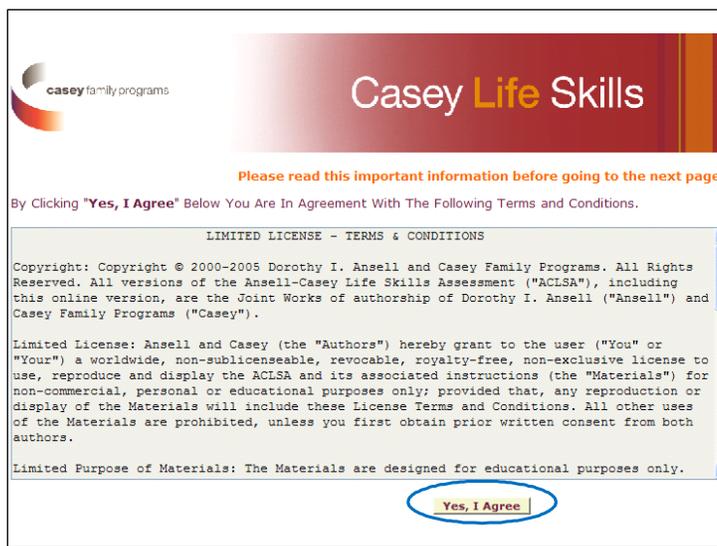
Remember that the assessments are taken based less on the youth’s chronological age and more on their developmental ability.

So back on the Assessments page, where you can select the assessment appropriate for the youth



Click on the “Begin Assessment” button to start the assessment.

You are then taken to the Terms and Conditions of Licensure. Click on the “Yes, I agree” button which will allow you to proceed.



The next screen is where you enter the youth ID number and the organization ID number.

This ID# is the youths seven digit SAFE person ID number, their personal identification number or PIN.

The organization ID number is different for each region. If you need a reminder of these regional ID numbers, they can be found in Practice Guidelines section 303.15, numbers 3 and 4.

The next step is to enter the Matching email address.

This is always the caseworkers email address. Every adult, as well as the youth, who takes the assessment must enter the caseworkers email address in this field. As a caseworker, be sure you give your email address to caregivers, the youth, and other adults taking the assessment with a youth. This allows all of the assessments taken for a youth to be combined into a Matched Scored report.

If you want the Youth and Caregiver(s) scores to be on the same report, click the box below.

**3. Matching E-mail Address:**

**4. Verify Matching E-mail Address:**

To have your Score Report sent to as many as three people, enter the e-mail address(es) in the box(es) below. The Score Report for the current assessment. It will not include Youth and Caregiver scores.

**5. E-mail Address:**

**6. Verify E-mail Address:**

**7. E-mail Address:**

**8. Verify E-mail Address:**

**9. E-mail Address:**

**10. Verify E-mail Address:**

Click on the "NEXT" button to proceed with the assessment.

[Save and Finish Later](#)

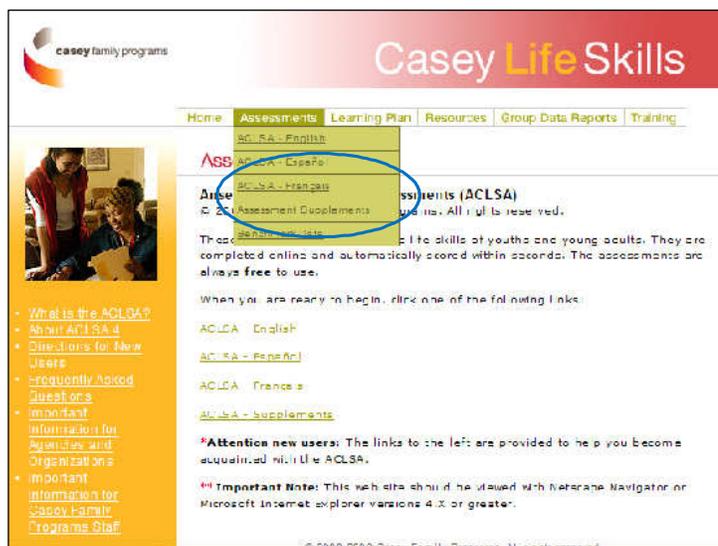
The next screen is where you can enter the email addresses of the individuals who will receive a copy of the assessment results. For example; enter the email address of the foster parent, and then verify that email address by entering it a second time. Be sure and enter your own email address so you receive a copy of the report. You can only enter three email addresses. If you

have more individuals to send the assessment to, just forward the email you receive to them.

Sending the youth the assessment results is not recommended. It is better if they see it when you can discuss the results with them.

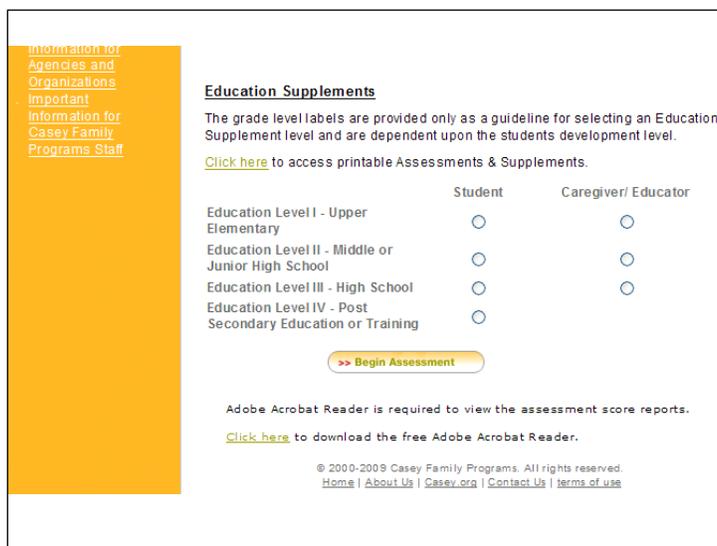
If you do not understand how to interpret the results of an Ansell Casey Life Skills Report, contact your region Transition to Adult Living Coordinator or your region trainers to access the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment training.

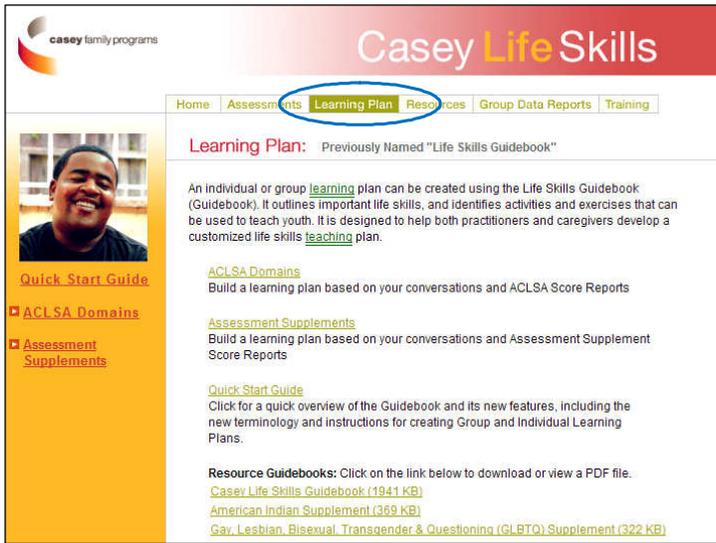
In addition to the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment, there are supplemental assessments. These can be accessed by selecting the assessment tab from the tool bar.



There are seven supplemental assessments, to identify the needs of youth who are Native American, parents – or soon to be parents, homeless, and Gay, Lesbian Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning youth.

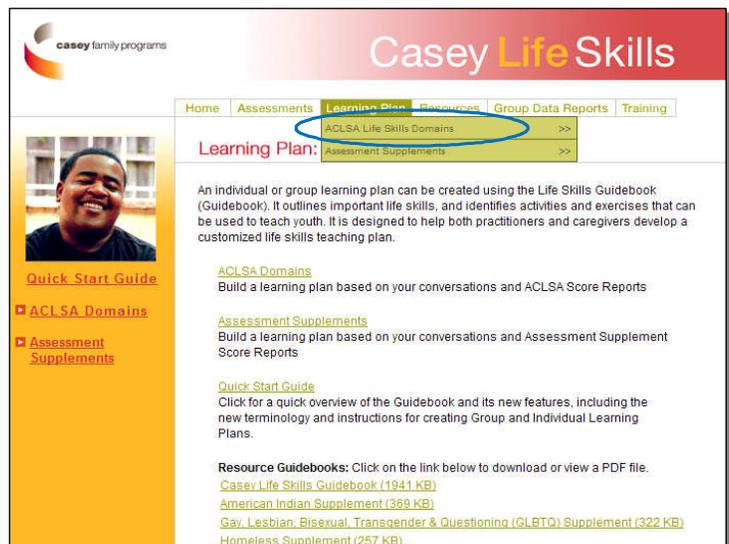
The education supplements cover youth from elementary school to post-secondary school or training. These supplements identify skills and information a youth needs to be successful academically at each of these levels and the particular needs of an individual youth.



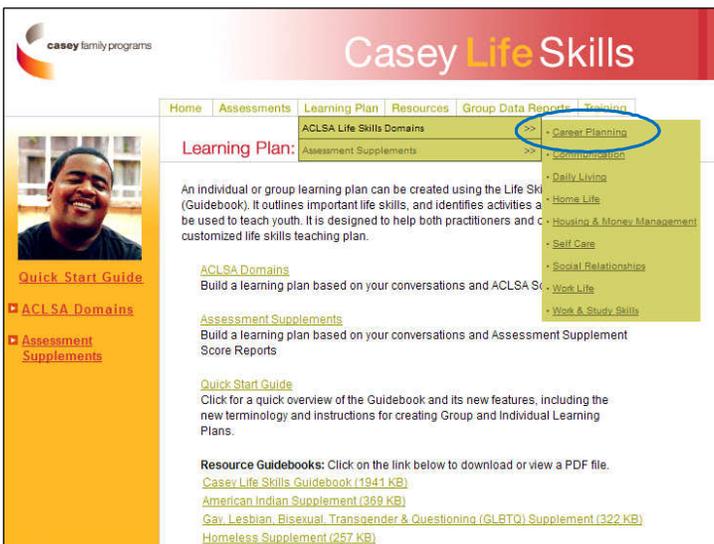


To identify planning needs and steps begin by selecting the Learning Plan tab from the tool bar.

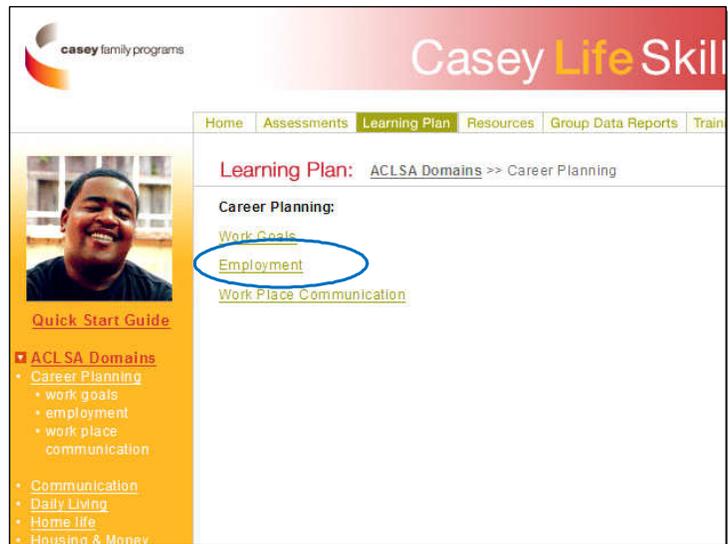
Then select the Ansell Casey Life Skills domain.



You then select the domain the youth has chosen to work on; for example, career planning.



Then select a specific area of the domain, for example, employment.

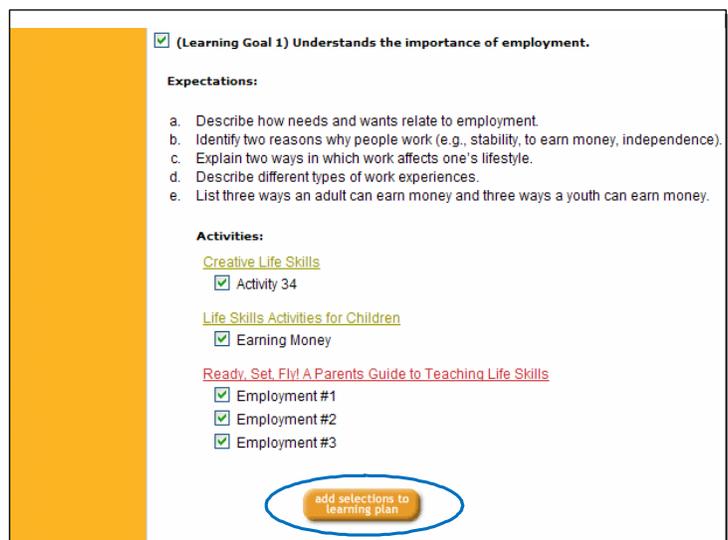


Selecting the domain area will display learning goals which can be needs, or steps to meet needs, in the Transition to Adult Living portion of your Child and Family Plan.

For example; if you select Learning Goal number 1 under employment, you have “Understands the importance of employment”. When this goal is selected it takes you to a list of steps.



Selecting the learning goal and the activities allows you to begin using the Casey Website to build your Transition to Adult Living Plan. You then select the “add selection to learning plan” button.



(Learning Goal 6) Knows how to access resources to improve educational outcomes.

**Expectations:**

- Name at least two resources in the community that provide tutoring, after school programs and test preparation courses, as well as the costs associated with them.
- Name at least three resources in educational settings (e.g., guidance counselors, advisors, student assistance, mentors, tutors).
- Explain how to access these community resources.

**Activities:**

[Creative Life Skills Activities](#)

Activity 30

[Ready, Set, Fly! A Parents Guide to Teaching Life Skills](#)

Study Skills #8

[add selections to learning plan](#)

Adding multiple learning goals and activities allows you to approach a need in a more holistic way. We will now add goal number 6 under employment, “Knows how to access educational resources to improve educational outcomes” which will help you build the steps needed to build the plan.

Then again select the “add selection to learning plan” button.

Finally, let’s select learning goal number 7 under employment, “Understands the importance of education and its relationship to employment.” These three goals and the accompanying activities will be sufficient for this demonstration. As before, select the “add selection to learning plan” button.

(Learning Goal 7) Understands the importance of education and its relationship to employment.

**Expectations:**

- Identify personal values related to education.
- Compare how individual needs and wants relate to education.
- Explain the level of education/vocational training needed to achieve your employment goals.

**Activities:**

[Developing Your Vision](#)

Book 1

**PAYA**

Module 3, Education, Staying in School

Module 5, Education and Career Planning

**Web Resources**

Minnesota Careers

[add selections to learning plan](#)

casey family programs

# Casey Life Skills

Home | Assessments | **Learning Plan** | Resources | Group Data Reports | Training

Learning Plan: [ACLSA Domains](#) >> [Career Planning](#) >> [Employment](#)

**Employment**

There are 8 [learning goals](#) in this area. Click on which learning goals the youth wants to work on below.

[>> Preview or Print Learning Plan](#)

[\(Learning Goal 1\) Understands the importance of employment.](#)

[\(Learning Goal 2\) Knows how to find part-time temporary jobs in the community.](#)

[\(Learning Goal 3\) Knows how to search for employment.](#)

[\(Learning Goal 4\) Knows how to maintain employment.](#)

[\(Learning Goal 5\) Knows how to change jobs.](#)

[\(Learning Goal 6\) Knows how to access resources to improve educational outcomes.](#)

[\(Learning Goal 7\) Understands the importance of education and its relationship to employment.](#)

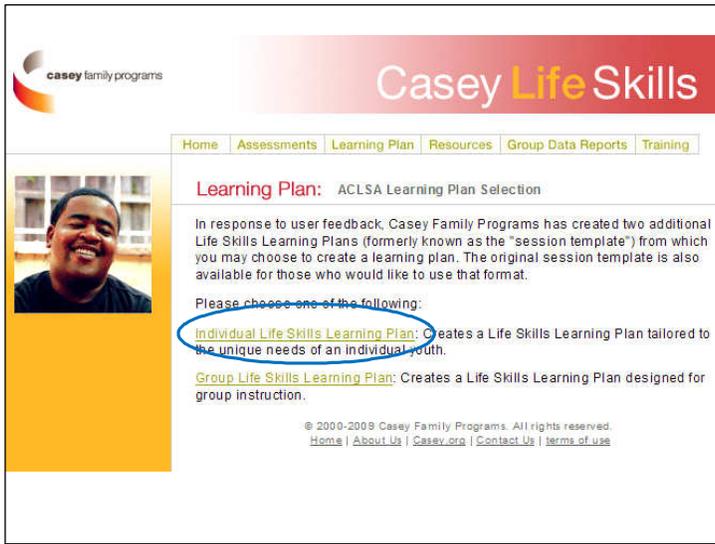
[\(Learning Goal 8\) Is able to develop an educational plan.](#)

**Quick Start Guide**

**ACLSA Domains**

- Career Planning
  - work goals
  - employment
  - work place communication
- Communication
- Daily Living
- Home life
- Housing & Money Management
- Self Care
- Social Relationships

The next step is to return to the top of the page and select the “Preview or Print Plan” button.



In the learning plan screen, select the link for “Individual Life Skills Learning Plan.”

This will combine all of your selected goals and activities into one document that you can copy and paste into a Microsoft Word document.

**Career Planning**

**Skill Area:** Employment

**Learning Goal 1:** Understands the importance of employment.

**Expectations (Objectives):**  
At the end of the session, the youth will be able to:

- Describe how needs and wants relate to employment.
- Identify two reasons why people work (e.g., stability, to earn money, independence).
- Explain two ways in which work affects one's lifestyle.
- Describe different types of work experiences.
- List three ways an adult can earn money and three ways a youth can earn money.

**Action Plan**

The actions you take to reach your goals should be clear so you know exactly what to do. Identify who will do what help reach the goals - yourself, staff, and others.

What activities or services will be done?	Who is responsible for doing it?	When will it be acc
Activity 34 Creative Life Skills It's in the Bag		
Earning Money Life Skills Activities for Children p. 60-61>		
Employment #1 Ready, Set, Fly! A Parents		

**Career Planning**

**Skill Area:** Employment

**Learning Goal 1:** Understands the importance of employment.

**Expectations (Objectives):**  
At the end of the session, the youth will be able to:

- Describe how needs and wants relate to employment.
- Identify two reasons why people work (e.g., stability, to earn money, independence).
- Explain two ways in which work affects one's lifestyle.
- Describe different types of work experiences.
- List three ways an adult can earn money and three ways a youth can earn money.

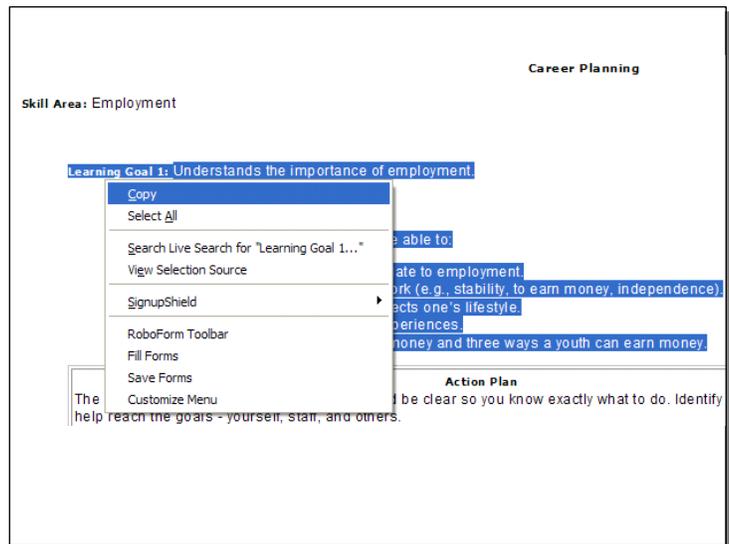
**Action Plan**

The actions you take to reach your goals should be clear so you know exactly what to do. Identify who help reach the goals - yourself, staff, and others.

What activities or services will be done?	Who is responsible for doing it?	When

Select Learning Goal #1 and the Expectations.

Right click with your mouse and select copy.



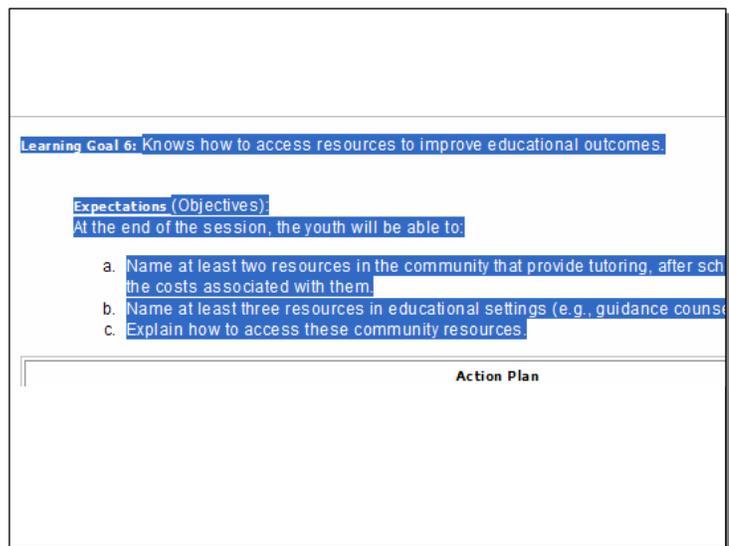
Learning Goal 1: Understands the importance of employment.

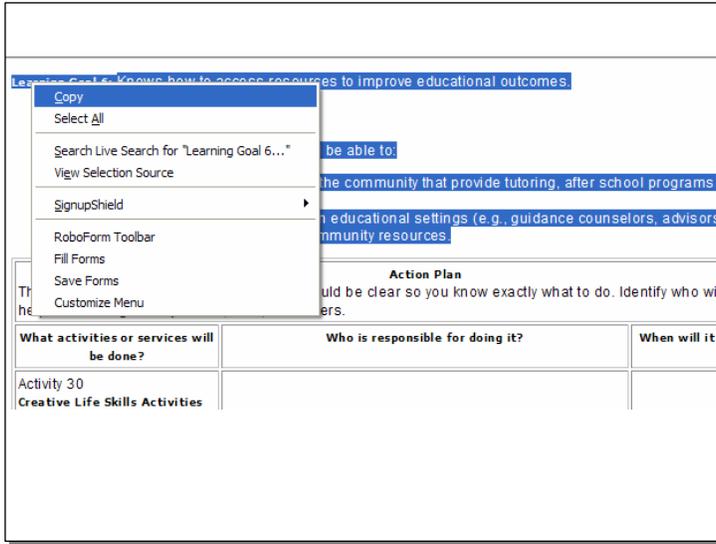
Expectations (Objectives):  
At the end of the session, the youth will be able to:

- Describe how needs and wants relate to employment.
- Identify two reasons why people work (e.g., stability, to earn money, independence).
- Explain two ways in which work affects one's lifestyle.
- Describe different types of work experiences
- List three ways an adult can earn money and three ways a youth can earn money.

Then paste the goals and explanations into a Word document.

Select Learning Goal #6 and the Expectations.





Right click with you mouse and select copy.

Then paste the goals and explanations into a Word document.

Learning Goal 1: Understands the importance of employment.

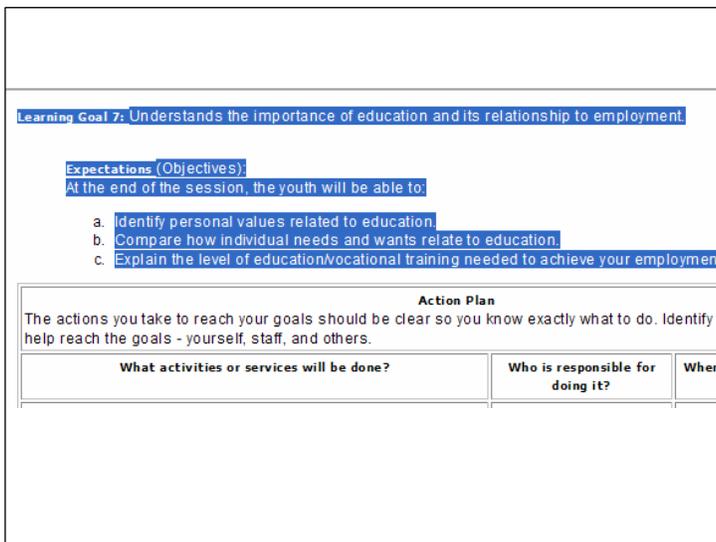
Expectations (Objectives):  
At the end of the session, the youth will be able to:

- Describe how needs and wants relate to employment.
- Identify two reasons why people work (e.g., stability, to earn money, independence).
- Explain two ways in which work affects one's lifestyle.
- Describe different types of work experiences.
- List three ways an adult can earn money and three ways a youth can earn money.

Learning Goal 6: Knows how to access resources to improve educational outcomes.

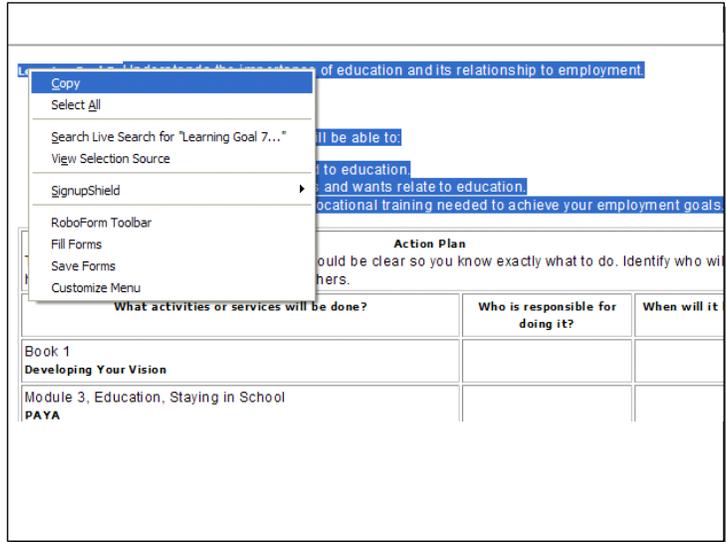
Expectations (Objectives):

- Name at least two resources in the community that provide tutoring, after school programs and test preparation courses, as well as the costs associated with them.
- Name at least three resources in educational settings (e.g., guidance counselors, advisors, student assistance, mentors, tutors).
- Explain how to access these community resources.



As before, select Learning Goal #7 and the Expectations.

Again, right click with your mouse and select copy.



Learning Goal 6: Knows how to access resources to improve educational outcomes.

Expectations (Objectives):

- Name at least two resources in the community that provide tutoring, after school programs and test preparation courses, as well as the costs associated with them.
- Name at least three resources in educational settings (e.g., guidance counselors, advisors, student assistance, mentors, tutors).
- Explain how to access these community resources.

Learning Goal 7: Understands the importance of education and its relationship to employment.

Expectations (Objectives):

- Identify personal values related to education.
- Compare how individual needs and wants relate to education.
- Explain the level of education/vocational training needed to achieve your employment goals.

Then finally, paste the goals and expectations for learning goal number 7 into the Word document.

You can then manipulate the word document to get needs and steps that you want.

Learning Goal 1: Understands the importance of employment.

Expectations (Objectives):

At the end of the session, the youth will be able to:

- Describe how needs and wants relate to employment.
- Identify two reasons why people work (e.g., stability, to earn money, independence).
- Explain two ways in which work affects one's lifestyle.
- Describe different types of work experiences.
- List three ways an adult can earn money and three ways a youth can earn money.

Learning Goal 6: Knows how to access resources to improve educational outcomes.

Expectations (Objectives):

- Name at least two resources in the community that provide tutoring, after school programs and test preparation courses, as well as the costs associated with them.
- Name at least three resources in educational settings (e.g., guidance counselors, advisors, student assistance, mentors, tutors).
- Explain how to access these community resources.

**Educational and Stable Employment Need:**

John will know the importance of employment and the education he will need to achieve his goals.

**Steps:**

Expectations (Objectives):

At the end of the session, the youth will be able to:

- a. Describe how needs and wants relate to employment.
- b. Identify two reasons why people work (e.g., stability, to earn money, independence).
- c. Explain two ways in which work affects one's lifestyle.
- d. Describe different types of work experiences
- e. List three ways an adult can earn money and three ways a youth can earn money.

Expectations (Objectives):

- a. Name at least two resources in the community that provide tutoring, after school programs and test preparation courses, as well as the costs associated with them.
- b. Name at least three resources in educational settings (e.g., guidance counselors, advisors, student assistance, mentors, tutors).
- c. Explain how to access these community resources.

Expectations (Objectives):

You can combine, add, and delete information to create your needs and steps.

The Casey Website generated plan also includes activities with each goal. These activities provide resources for the foster parents, caseworkers, youth, or other team members to teach life skills or provide information the youth needs.

- b. Identify two reasons why people work (e.g., stability, to earn money, independence).
- c. Explain two ways in which work affects one's lifestyle.
- d. Describe different types of work experiences.
- e. List three ways an adult can earn money and three ways a youth can earn money.

**Action Plan**

The actions you take to reach your goals should be clear so you know exactly what to do. Identify who will do what help reach the goals - yourself, staff, and others.

What activities or services will be done?	Who is responsible for doing it?	When will it be acc
Activity 34 Creative Life Skills It's in the Bag		
Earning Money Life Skills Activities for Children p. 60-61>		
Employment #1 Ready, Set, Fly! A Parents Guide to Teaching Life Skills		
Employment #2 Ready, Set, Fly! A Parents Guide to Teaching Life Skills		
Employment #3 Ready, Set, Fly! A Parents Guide to Teaching Life Skills		

Casey family programs

Casey Life Skills

Home | Assessments | Learning Plan | Resources | Group Data Reports | Training

Learning Plan: ACLSA Domains >> Career Planning >> Employment

**Employment**

There are 8 learning goals in this area. Click on which learning goals the youth wants to work on below. [Preview or Print Learning Plan](#)

Quick Start Guide

- (Learning Goal 1) Understands the importance of employment.
- (Learning Goal 2) Knows how to find and find time to complete jobs in the community.
- (Learning Goal 3) Knows how to search for employment.
- (Learning Goal 4) Knows how to maintain employment.
- (Learning Goal 5) Knows how to change jobs.
- (Learning Goal 6) Knows how to access resources to improve educational outcomes.
- (Learning Goal 7) Understands the importance of education and its relationship to employment.
- (Learning Goal 8) Is able to develop an educational plan.

To access these resources, you go to the Learning Plan. Then for example, select Learning goal #1.

Under the learning goals are the activities – these activities are the resources. One popular resource for foster parents was developed by foster parents, for other foster parents. Selecting Ready, Set, Fly from this screen will take you to the Ready, Set, Fly on the resource page.

(Learning Goal 1) Understands the importance of employment.

**Expectations:**

- Describe how needs and wants relate to employment.
- Identify two reasons why people work (e.g., stability, to earn money, independence).
- Explain two ways in which work affects one's lifestyle.
- Describe different types of work experiences.
- List three ways an adult can earn money and three ways a youth can earn money.

**Activities:**

[Creative Life Skills](#)

Activity 34

[Life Skills Activities for Children](#)

Earning Money

[Ready, Set, Fly! A Parents Guide to Teaching Life Skills](#)

Employment #1

Employment #2

Employment #3

[add selections to learning plan](#)

**Ready, Set, Fly! A Parent's Guide to Teaching Life Skills**

This resource was developed by foster parents for other parents to use when teaching life skills to be used in conjunction with the Life Skills Guidebook. It contains a series of activities and one-to-one instruction. For parents use with youth ages 8 and older.

Available as free pdf.

- [Ready, Set, Fly! \(English\)](#)
- [Ready, Set, Fly! \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Quick Start Guide to Ready, Set, Fly! \(English\)](#)
- [Instructions for using Ready, Set, Fly! with ACLSA & the Life Skills Guidebook](#)

To purchase hard copies of Ready, Set, Fly! call:  
The National Resource Center at (918) 660-3700.

For orders of 500 or more contact:  
G.A. Design Inc. at: <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/catalog/shop.html>

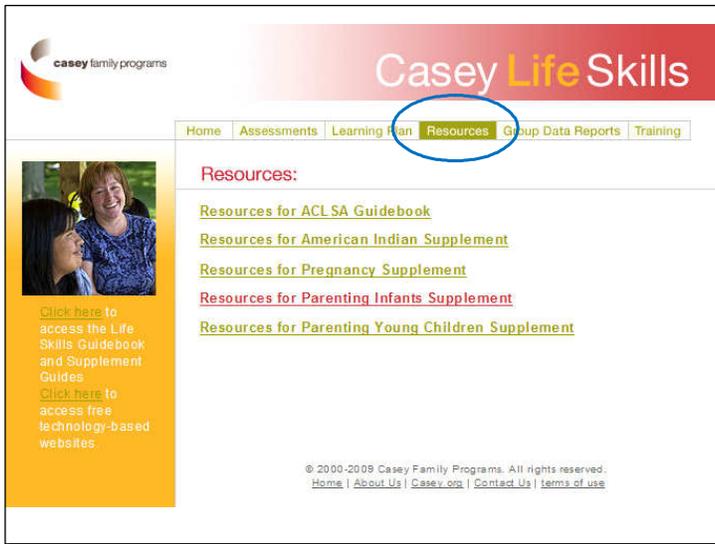
At the Resource page you have the option to access Ready, Set, Fly in English or Spanish. When you select the English link, it takes you to the English version.

The manual has activities for each of the steps in the Ansell Casey Plan that foster parents, caseworkers, or team members can use.

**Ready, Set, Fly!**

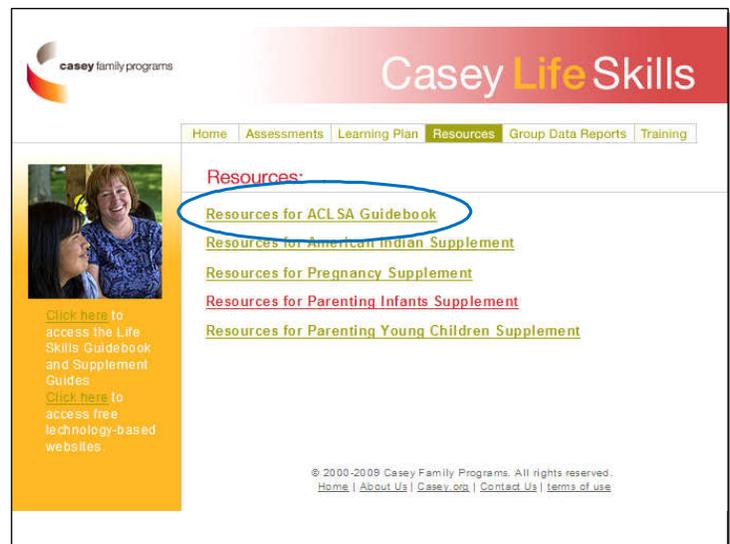
**A Parent's Guide To Teaching Life Skills**

 CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS  
FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

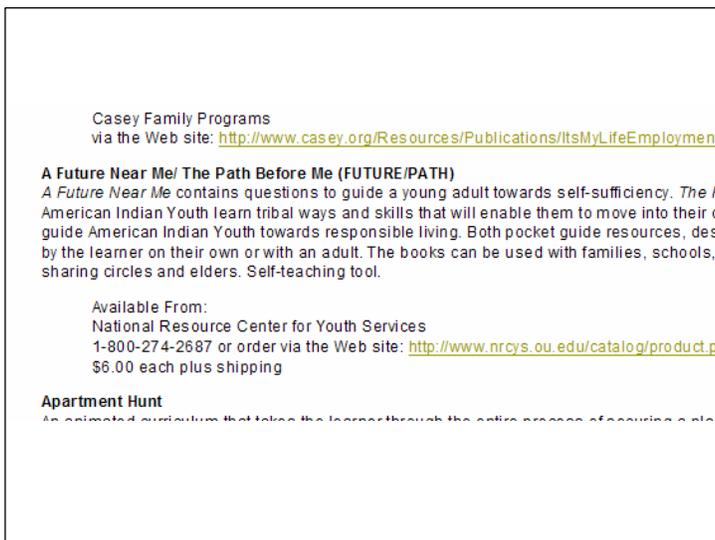


Another way to get to the resources is to select resources from the tool bar. This will display resources for the Ansell Case Life Skills Assessment and for four of the supplemental assessments.

Selecting “Resources for the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment Guidebook” will take you to the list of resources for the Casey Plan goals, expectations and activities.



There are several types of resources, some are free, some are online, and some must be purchased. A Future Near Me is a resource that has to be purchased.



Ready, Set, Fly is a free resource that can be accessed on line. You can however, order hard copies for a fee.

**Ready, Set, Fly! A Parent's Guide to Teaching Life Skills**  
 This resource was developed by foster parents for other parents to use when teaching life skills. It is to be used in conjunction with the Life Skills Guidebook. It contains a series of activities and one-to-one instruction. For parents use with youth ages 8 and older.

Available as free pdf:

- [Ready, Set, Fly! \(English\)](#)
- [Ready, Set, Fly! \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Quick Start Guide to Ready, Set, Fly! \(English\)](#)
- [Instructions for using Ready, Set, Fly! with ACLSA & the Life Skills Guidebook](#)

To purchase hard copies of Ready, Set, Fly! call:  
 The National Resource Center at (918) 660-3700.

For orders of 500 or more contact:  
 G.A. Design Inc. at: <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/catalog/shop.html>

Casey Life Skills			
<b>Matching Score Report - ACLSA 4</b>			
Organization ID:	testing	Youth ID:	Aliciaaclstest
Grade In School:	10th grade	Youth Gender:	Female
Primary Ethnicity:	American Indian or Alaskan Native	I have a Social Security number:	Yes
Living Situation:	With Relatives (not in foster care)	I have a copy of my birth certificate:	Yes
Youth Age:	18	I have a photo ID:	Yes
Youth	1/6/2005		
Licensed foster parent, including kin	1/6/2005		
Other caregiver or guardian	1/6/2005		
Service provider (e.g., caseworker, therapist, child care worker)	1/6/2005		
<b>Knowledge &amp; Behavior Items</b>			
<small>Mastery Score: The percentage of items answered very much like me (youth) or very much like the youth (caregiver).            Raw Score: The sum of the responses expressed in percentage of the maximum points possible. Not Like Me = 1 point   Somewhat Like Me</small>			

The Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment, and the resulting report, are a resources that can help caseworkers, foster parents and youth, as youth prepare to be successful living on their own.

If you were unable to see the arrow earlier in the training, here is its location.



## Resources

*Beyond Consequences Live*, Denver Co., August, 25, 2007.

Forbes, Heather T. & B. Bryan Post. *Beyond Consequences, Logic, and Control: A Loved Based Approach to Helping Attachment-Challenged Children With Severe Behaviors*. Volume I. Beyond Consequences Institute, LLC: Orlando, Florida, 2006.

*Foster Care by the Numbers* by the Casey Family Foundation

Harris, L. (2008). *Foundations for Youth*. Utah Foster Care Foundation.

Perry, Bruce. (2009) Utah Child Welfare Institute.

Post, Bryan B. "How to Help the Angry and Defiant Child Educational Guide: When Behavior Modification & Consequences Don't Work" [www.postfamilysystem.com](http://www.postfamilysystem.com): 2003.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

We have included a list of the resources used for this training.

If you have questions  
feel free to contact:

The Transition to Adult  
Living (TAL) Program  
Administrator or TAL  
training team member  
by calling 801-538-4100  
for current names and  
phone numbers.



**Child and Family  
Services**

March 2009