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Improving Readiness for College and Work

Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG)

Youth planning to enroll in college this summer should complete the Chafee ETG application in addition to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) worksheet. Chafee ETG applications for the 2009-2010 academic year are on the www.pheaa.org website; the ETG application for 2010-11 will be on the PHEAA website in early April. (Note: there are no deadlines for the federal Pell Grant or Chafee ETG; it’s not too late to submit a FAFSA application for summer classes.)

New for the ETG program is an automatic renewal process. All current ETG award recipients will be automatically enrolled for the next academic year and do not need to complete the ETG application. This will relieve youth of the necessity of completing the ETG application annually. Students who have not completed an application or received an ETG award must complete and submit an initial application. Students must still complete a FAFSA each year.

For questions about current Chafee applications or a youth’s status, please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797. If you have Aftercare youth who plan to move to another state and establish residency there, they can find state information on the ETG programs at: www.statevoucher.org Each state has individual application processes.

Hopes for Higher Education Scholarship Application

The Hopes for Higher Education Scholarship is awarded to youth in foster care for the purposes of obtaining professional certification or to attend a post secondary institution (undergraduate only). Scholarships range in amount from $500 to $1,000, and the number awarded each year varies depending on funding. Scholarship funds may be used for tuition, fees, and school room and board. All materials must be submitted by email and received on or before the May 15th deadline date. scholarship@hopesforhighereducation.com

Keeping it Real - Teen Finances

PathWays PA announces the completion of a new helpful handbook for managing money written specifically for teens, Keeping it Real: Teen Finances. This guide not only discusses what teens should understand about their finances, it also assists them in planning for their future. The guide focuses on such areas as understanding your paycheck, budgeting, banking, financial contracts, credit, and insurance. It also includes goal setting, finding a job, education, child care, and housing. If you would like to have a copy or learn more about this handbook please email policy@pathwayspa.org. It will also be soon available on the Pathways PA website at www.pathwayspa.org/publications.html

Students with special needs are improving literacy skills in new program

A program developed by professors from the University of Northern Iowa is aimed at improving literacy and communication skills in students with special needs. Iowa students taking part in the pilot program are surrounded by literacy in the classroom, with educators listing vocabulary on a word wall and engaging students in world-building games and other activities. "One of our goals is that every child be recognized as a literate individual who has the capacity to grow," one UNI special-education professor said. www.smartbrief.com

College Mental Health: A Different Diagnosis

Student struggles with college mental health services are leading to some important changes across the country. Here's a fresh perspective from young people themselves. www.connectforkids.org
**Community Colleges - Pathways Out of Poverty**

Only a minority of students who start a community college earn a certificate or degree within 6 years. In this commentary, David Jason Fischer says that a New York City program that offers tuition waivers for financial aid-eligible students, free transportation and textbooks, a consolidated schedule of classes, cohort grouping by student majors, small class sizes and comprehensive academic and career guidance services is significantly boosting graduation rates for low-income students. [www.connectforkids.org](http://www.connectforkids.org)

**Transitions to Permanency**

**Supporting Parents of Young Children in the Child Welfare System**

This report from the National Center for Children in Poverty explores the challenges and opportunities of improving mandated parent training. Drawing on lessons from research and practice, it calls on states, courts and communities to use a more intentional, cost effective, and strategic approach to required parent training. [http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_920.html?utm_source](http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_920.html?utm_source)

**Teen Space: A Room of Our Own**

In this article, featured on the YouthSuccessNYC website, Taquan Pugh, Teen Space Peer Advocate, discusses the opening of Teen Space in the Queens County Family Court in New York City. Teen Space is a welcoming space reserved especially for teens in care, where youth (ages 13-21) can get information and relax while they’re waiting for their case to be heard. [http://www.youthsuccessnyc.org/legal/stories/TeenSpace-Pugh.html](http://www.youthsuccessnyc.org/legal/stories/TeenSpace-Pugh.html)

**New Resources to Help Youth Build Relationships with Parents and Foster Parents**

Below are some new resources from Youth Communication to help youth build good relationships with parents and foster parents. Each of these web pages includes the following sections: Stories by Teens, Resources for Teens and Staff, Tips for Staff, and Helpful Links.

- Foster Parents: [http://www.youthsuccessnyc.org/foster_parents/index.html](http://www.youthsuccessnyc.org/foster_parents/index.html)

**Foster Care Alumni Resources**

Foster Care Alumni of America offers a variety of resources to support youth in foster care or those formerly in care. Two new resources were recently announced:

- **FLUX: Life After Foster Care** is a new book that includes contributions from more than 100 alumni of foster care. *FLUX* looks at the emotional transition from foster care to adulthood and serves as a resource for both foster care alumni and social workers. To order a copy, visit: [www.fostercarealumni.org/FLUX](http://www.fostercarealumni.org/FLUX)
- The Foster Care Alumni website now offers a variety of information on housing rentals, mortgage assistance, and other housing issues: [www.fostercarealumni.org/resources/Housing.htm](http://www.fostercarealumni.org/resources/Housing.htm)

The Foster Care Alumni Association just celebrated its fifth anniversary. To learn more about this organization, visit the website: [www.fostercarealumni.org](http://www.fostercarealumni.org)

**Improving Outcomes for Youth Exiting Foster Care**

The California Social Work Education Center at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Social Welfare, provides a number of child welfare-related training resources on its website, including a training designed to disseminate information about improving outcomes for youth exiting the foster care system and transitioning to adulthood. This web-based training is divided...
into two sections: one for child welfare supervisors and managers and the other for caseworkers and families. Each section has the following components:

- Learning Objectives
- Title IV-E Competencies
- Lesson Plan
- Training Activities
- Handouts

The training activities were designed to last approximately 1.5 hours, and the handouts may be viewed online or printed. For more information: [http://calswec.berkeley.edu/CalSWEC/OtherTraining.ExitFoster.html](http://calswec.berkeley.edu/CalSWEC/OtherTraining.ExitFoster.html)

**Positive Youth Development**

**Targeting Hard-to-Reach Youth through New Technologies**

Connect for Kids provides techniques shared at a recent Society for International Development workshop on high-tech ways to engage hard-to-reach teens. [www.connectforkids.org](http://www.connectforkids.org)

**Incorporating Technology Into Out-Of-School Time Programs**

Technology and technologically-based learning environments are extending student learning beyond the conventional classroom. A new Child Trends brief, *Incorporating Technology Into Out-Of-School Time Programs*, draws on results from research and from practitioners' insights to outline the benefits, challenges, and strategies associated with using technology in out-of-school time programs. Among the uses of technology found to be especially beneficial in out-of-school programs:

- Computer-based reading intervention programs have been used to successfully supplement children's in-class reading and build comprehension.
- Program participants can use computer-based programs to follow developments over time, whether it is how plants are growing or how a community service project is progressing.
- Video technology can involve program participants in the exploration of their world through filmmaking, digital artwork, and online instruction.

The brief also provides additional resources for programs interested in incorporating technology into their activities and profiles a technology-based out-of-school time program. [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org)

**OJJDP Fact Sheet Addresses Girls' Delinquency**


Print copies may be ordered online at [www.ncjrs.gov/App/ShoppingCart/ShopCart.aspx?item=NCJ+228414&repro=0](http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/ShoppingCart/ShopCart.aspx?item=NCJ+228414&repro=0).

"Diplomas Now" Offers Potential Drop-Outs Lots of Help

*EdWeek* reports on this program that links teams of adults with struggling students as early as middle school. From morning greetings to late afternoons and homework help to community-service projects, adults serve as mentors, monitors, teachers, naggers and nurturers for students

IL Resources – March 2010
What Works for Programs for Older Youth

A new Child Trends fact sheet, What Works for Older Youth During the Transition to Adulthood, examines the role that programs for older youth can play in promoting positive development and subsequent self-sufficiency in adulthood. It synthesizes the findings from 31 rigorous evaluations of programs; all of the programs evaluated youth outcomes during the transition to adulthood (ages 18 to 25), but programs varied in the ages of targeted youth. Among the findings:

- Education and career programs can be effective, especially for low-income youth and for youth targeted from younger ages.
- Specific intervention strategies, such as mentoring, case management, and providing child care for young parents, are associated with program success across youth outcomes.
- Substance use and reproductive health programs have not consistently been found to be effective for this age group.

Related Research from Child Trends

Summaries of over 420 evaluations of programs that work (or don't) to enhance children's development and additional fact sheets that synthesize "what works" are available at www.childtrends.org/WhatWorks

Courtroom Education Advocacy – New Factsheet from the ABA

Please see the newly updated and revised factsheet developed by the Legal Center for Foster Care and Education, Courtroom Education Advocacy for Children in Out-of-Home Care. This factsheet discusses the important need for education advocacy in the courtroom, includes tips for practitioners, and provides additional resources for more information. www.abanet.org/child/education/publications/

Raising the Bar: Quality Improvement Systems for Youth Programs

Out-of-school programs can help children improve their academic and social skills, but only if managers improve staff "point of service" interactions with children and youth. This Forum for Youth Investment commentary draws lessons from successful programs in Michigan and Chicago. www.connectforkids.org

Think Long-Term Commitment in Mentoring Programs

Mentoring works to improve kids' outcomes, but good outcomes depend on sustaining good relationships and programs that screen, train and support long-term mentor commitments. www.connectforkids.org

Improving Youth Engagement in High Schools

How can high schools be more effective in engaging their students? Why not ask the students? Researchers who have conducted multiple inquiry groups with students conclude that students are an excellent source of information about what's working and what's not in their school. www.connectforkids.org

Youth Mentoring Grant Opportunity

The Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention invites applications for a new mentoring initiative addressing high-risk populations that are underserved due to location, shortage of mentors, special physical or mental challenges of the targeted population, or other situations identified by the community in need of mentoring services. http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?mode=VIEW&oppId=52595
Professional Development

Spring IL/SWAN Quarterly Meetings: Register now at [www.diakon-swan.org](http://www.diakon-swan.org)

Thursday, April 8, Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, Scranton, PA

Wednesday, April 14, Holiday Inn, Clarion, PA

Thursday, April 15, Comfort Inn, Monroeville, PA

Wednesday, April 21, Central Penn Conference Center, Enola, PA

Wednesday, April 28, Embassy Suites Airport, Philadelphia, PA

Thursday, April 29, Holiday Inn, Ft. Washington, PA

UPMC Offers Workshop for Child Welfare Professionals

"Mental Health 101: Working with Adolescents and Young Adults with Mental Illness (MC25)" will take place on April 29, 2010 at UPMC Mercy from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This workshop will provide a context for professionals who are new to the mental health system to gain a basic understanding of the assessment techniques and therapeutic interventions used in the treatment of adolescents whose primary Axis I diagnosis is mood or anxiety disorder. Details can be found on the website, [http://www.wpic.pitt.edu/oerp/Regional/MC25FlierWeb.htm](http://www.wpic.pitt.edu/oerp/Regional/MC25FlierWeb.htm).


Save the Date: 2010 Pennsylvania Permanency Conference, Fostering Connections, Lancaster Host Hotel and Conference Center, June 24-26

New Online Clearinghouse for State Child Welfare Policies

Child Trends, with support from Casey Family Programs, launches the State Child Welfare Policy Database to provide information on child welfare laws, procedures, and agency guidance for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Database can help elected officials, administrators, advocates, practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders keep up to date with the policies that protect our nation's most vulnerable children.

The site can be navigated by state or by topic. You can learn about your state's expenditures on child welfare services, policies for relatives and "kin" caring for children involved in the child welfare system, benefits and services provided to foster youth after age 18, and much more. In addition to the traditional web version, the site is designed to be compatible with your mobile device, allowing for easily accessible information on the go. For more information about child welfare resources available at Child Trends, please visit: [www.childtrends.org/childwelfare](http://www.childtrends.org/childwelfare).

Independent Living Transitions

Traci Decker is the new IL worker for Trehab in Susquehanna County.

Jen Gesing and Emma Walton are coordinating the Independent Living program in Warren County for Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems.

Independent Living Project Updates:

Increasing Your Knowledge of Independent Living and Transition Services

The Independent Living Project offers The Foundations of Independent Living: An Overview Curriculum at various sites around the state; this is a one-day overview to help those entering IL Resources – March 2010
the field or those who want to learn more valuable information about Independent Living and transition programs. A two-day intensive curriculum for IL and transition professionals, The Independent Living Services Continuum: Engaging Youth in Their Transition Process is also offered to those who have completed the Overview. Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) training explores the many advantages and resources for youth and programs. To learn more about these specialized curricula, please contact your county’s IL specialist.

Know Your Rights Training

The Juvenile Law Center, Kids Voice and the IL Project offer Know Your Rights training for youth, foster parents, casework staff and partner/community agencies in addition to our new partner, students at the Dickinson School of Law. Know Your Rights Part 2: How to Conduct Yourself in Court is an addition to the original training which provides scenarios, role play and practical advice for youth as they prepare for hearings/reviews and advocate for themselves in court. If you have not had the original training and/or you are interested in a session with Part 2, please contact the IL Project specialist for your county or Neha Desai at the Juvenile Law Center: ndesai@jlc.org

2010 Youth Retreat

The 2010 IL Youth Retreat Steering committee comprised of IL youth and IL coordinators from across the state had its first meeting to begin planning the 2010 IL Youth Retreat being held on August 9th – 13th at University of Pittsburgh Johnstown. The IL youth on the Steering Committee chose the Retreat Theme for 2010: C.H.A.N.G.E.: Confidence, Hope, Achieve, Navigate, Goals, and Endurance. The C.H.A.N.G.E. theme will guide activities, classroom sessions, and guest speakers throughout the week. To find out about previous IL Youth Retreats and for additional information about the 2010 IL Youth Retreat, visit the Youth Advisory Board website at www.independentlivingpa.org. If you have any questions, contact Justin Lee at jml75@pitt.edu.

The Blast Seeks Youth Information

The Blast is an e-publication of the statewide Youth Advisory Board. If your youth are engaged in projects, writing stories, poems or developing other media, please contact Ivory Bennett, Youth Ambassador and coordinator of The Blast. She’d like to include articles and other information from counties and programs around the state. Contact Ivory at: ivory.bennett@yahoo.com