

Improving Access to College and Employment



Helping Youth Investigate Innovative Careers

Some of your students have known what career they're interested in since they were in middle school. Some of your students may have a number of different interests, but no stand-out choice. And some of your students may have no clear direction at all. Students should look for careers that match their interests and skills. Working environment, required education, salary, and job availability are just a few of the things students should consider when identifying career choices. Students should learn as much as they possibly can about the careers they are interested in before committing to a college major. They should also keep in mind that many majors can be used outside their traditional scope to develop a truly specialized career. Students can use their traditional degree to develop a nontraditional career. Here are some interesting careers that your college-bound students may not think of when they're planning their future:

- **Flavorist** – blends chemicals to create tastes and smells for different foods
- **Sommelier** – expert in matching different wines to foods
- **Food Stylist** – makes food look appealing for photography and film
- **Yacht Captain** – millionaires need someone in charge to sail their yachts for them and the bigger the boat, the bigger the salary!
- **Greeting Card Writer** – targets their creative writing skills to specialized audiences; make it funny or from the heart
- **Makeup Artist** – can take their skills beyond the local salon and work on television or movie sets and commercial modeling shoots

These are just a few examples of the types of nontraditional careers that are out there. Students can explore careers in the Discovering module of www.educationplanner.org.

The Common Cents Tour

High school is the final transition from adolescence to adulthood for many students. It's a time of evaluation of individual strengths, interests and future goals. During their high school years, students begin to separate from their parents and explore independence for the first time. Exploring independence and taking on more responsibility, while exciting, can lead to frustration. For many students, issues like federal student aid, budgeting and planning for the future are complex and confusing. Students need guidance when addressing these issues. Parents and school counselors play a key role helping students plan for their future. In keeping with our commitment to work with parents and education professionals, American Educational Services/PHEAA has developed "The Common Cents Tour," an interactive program designed to educate high school seniors and first- year college students on a variety of smart money topics. The "Common Cents Tour" features:

- Advice and tips on effective budgeting, saving money, understanding credit and student loans, time management, and career planning.
- Interactive personal finance calculators and worksheets.

We encourage you to kick off "The Common Cents Tour" by visiting YouCanDealWithIt.com today. Your students and you can download "The Common Cents Tour" at no charge, as a public service of AES/PHEAA.

Help Your Students Become Better Learners

Students have different learning styles and preferences. Some students like to work in groups; some like to use pictures or graphs; while others prefer "hands on" learning. Learning style refers to the way people take in, process and organize information. There are three basic learning styles:

- Visual
- Auditory
- Tactile/Kinesthetic

Most people are visual learners; they learn best viewing pictures and slides, using graphs, and through reading. Auditory learners use the sense of hearing to process new information. Listening to a tape, reading out loud and singing songs about a subject are some of the ways they learn. Tactile/Kinesthetic learners rely on body movement and/or touch to help them learn. Clapping out rhythms, creating a model and touching objects are some of the methods they use to learn. Encourage your students to discover their personal learning style; we offer an online learning style quiz in the 'Preparing' module of EducationPlanner.org. Your students can find their learning style and get tips to help them become better learners. Your students can take the quiz at: <http://www.educationplanner.org>

Financial Aid and Scholarships Update



Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG)

Youth planning to enroll in college this fall should complete the Chafee ETG application in addition to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) worksheet. Chafee ETG applications for the 2008-2009 academic year are still available at www.pheaa.org. If your youth or you have questions about current Chafee applications or a youth's status, please contact **Tina Blair** at PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797. If you have Aftercare youth who plan to move to another state and enroll in a college or university there, they can find information on the ETG programs in other states at: www.statevoucher.org

Factsheet on College Aid for Foster Youth

Voice for Adoption (VFA) has developed a factsheet on the new college financial aid provisions for foster youth that will go into effect in 2009. Among other changes, the new provisions remove a financial disincentive to adopting teens from foster care by disregarding adoptive parents' income when calculating a youth's need for financial aid for youth adopted after their 13th birthday. The factsheet, which explains the details of the Fostering Adoption to Further Student Achievement Act (FAFSA) that was signed into law in September 2007 as part of Public Law 110-84, is available on the VFA website:

<http://voice-for-adoption.org/downloads/FAFSA%20factsheet.pdf>

Transitions to Permanency

Post-Permanency Services for Adopted Youth

The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) offers post-permanency services for youth who've been adopted. These services can be of benefit to the person adopted and their new family. More information about what post-permanency services are and how they can be accessed is available at www.diakon-swan.org.



If you'd like to learn about additional post-permanency or post-adoption services, you can also check out the following links on the Child Welfare Information Gateway:

www.childwelfare.gov/highlights/postadoption This section highlights post-adoption resources by target audience and includes information on types of post-adoption services and research on their effectiveness, program models for delivery, and where to find post-adoption services in your community. Also new to the website is a section on State and Local Examples of Post-adoption Service Delivery Models (www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/postadoption/service_delivery.cfm).

Reconnecting Youth

New Campaign to Prevent High School Dropouts

A new report from America's Promise Alliance has stunning data about the high school graduation rate in our nation's 50 largest cities: only about half (52 percent) of students in the main school systems actually finish high school with a diploma -- the number is as low as 35 percent in Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit and Indianapolis.



Some schools and areas, however, have made progress in raising graduation rates, proving that

it can be done. On April 1, America's Promise Alliance kicked off a campaign to turn these stark numbers around. www.connectforkids.org

ABA Policy and Report on Crossover and Dual Jurisdiction Youth

This document from the American Bar Association includes recommendations and a report on policies and practices related to "dual jurisdiction" youth, abused and neglected youth with juvenile dependency cases who are charged with acts of delinquency. <http://www.abanet.org/youthatrisk/crossoveryouthpolicy.html>

Improving Conditions for Learning for Youth Who are Neglected or Delinquent

This technical issue brief from the National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent or At Risk explores how each of the four conditions for learning applies to children and youth in or at risk of being placed in juvenile justice or neglected or delinquent (N or D) programs. It introduces practical approaches that may help teachers and staff increase the presence of these conditions and provides resources for further exploration of research or programs. <http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/resources/spotlight/cflbrief200803.asp>

Voices from the Street: A Survey of Homeless Youth by Their Peers In this survey from the California Research Bureau, homeless and formerly homeless youth completed interviews with their currently and formerly homeless peers across the state in order to find out about their experiences, the services they need, and the changes they would like to see happen in policy or law. From a section in the report on foster care: "Those young people in our study for whom foster care was a trajectory into homelessness often described an instability and 'emotional homelessness' that began long before they literally had no roof over their heads." <http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/08/08-004.pdf>

A Reason, a Season, or a Lifetime: Relational Permanence Among Young Adults with Foster Care Backgrounds, March 2008

This resource is from the Chapin Hall Center for Children and provides information on youth aging out of foster care. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with young adults that had transitioned from foster care into adulthood, and explored the social support networks of the respondents. It was found that "familial support" was an important support for young adults, which is defined as a support system that provides a sense of family connection. For more information, please see: http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1466

Mentoring Offers Benefits to Youth in Foster Care

Natural mentoring relationships may increase the likelihood that youth in foster care experience positive outcomes as they transition to adulthood. A recent study of youth in foster care compared young adult outcomes for youth with mentors versus youth without mentors. Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, the study analyzed 310 youth in foster care and found that mentored youth generally showed more positive outcomes. Mentored youth were defined as those benefiting from the presence of a non-parental adult over a period of at least 2 years between the ages of 14 and 18.

The study examined outcomes in four domains: education and employment, psychological well-being, physical health, and participation in unhealthy behaviors. In all four domains, mentored youth did significantly better than non-mentored youth. Participants who had a mentor performed better in school, led healthier lives, stayed away from unhealthy behaviors more often, and were significantly less likely to report psychological problems such as suicidal ideation. The full study, "Youth in Foster Care With Adult Mentors During Adolescence Have Improved Adult Outcomes," by Kym R. Ahrens, David Lane DuBois, Laura P. Richardson, Ming-Yu Fan, and Paula Lozano, was published in the online version of *Pediatrics* and can be accessed at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/121/2/e246>

Assessment and Intervention Strategies

Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: Identifying Strategies and Best Practices

This issue brief from the National Association of Counties outlines the current federal framework addressing youth aging out of foster care, identifies general outcomes for these young people, and highlights model county programs and best practices that are addressing the needs of this population in innovative ways. http://www.naco.org/Content/ContentGroups/Issue_Briefs/IB-YouthAgingoutofFoster-2008.pdf

Foster Care and School Mental Health

This brief from the Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland School of Medicine summarizes information about the mental health and special education needs of children in foster care, and discusses what schools can do to help.

<http://csmh.umaryland.edu/resources.html/FosterCareBrief.pdf>

Rensselaer County Foster Care Enrichment Team Report

This report describes a multi-system collaboration that achieved remarkable improvement in placement stability in a New York county. The project team, including the local public child welfare, mental health and health agencies, and private child placing agencies met regularly to address the needs of specific children as well as system-level issues. During the four-year period (1999-2002) covered by the report, the rate of unplanned placement changes in the county fell from 22.6% to 2.7%. The report provides extensive information regarding the background and operation of the program and detailed recommendations for replication

http://www.clmhd.org/UploadedFiles/Resources/MHI_0404_FCETreport.pdf

Foster Home Assessment Tool

A tool that assists agencies and caseworkers in assessing the ability of foster families to provide a safe and stable environment for children placed in care has been developed by ACTION for Child Protection. *Identifying and Verifying the Safe Foster Home: A Study and Assessment Method* presents 14 indicators that measure foster parent functioning in such areas as personal history, parenting practices and discipline, family functioning and support networks, the parent's viewpoints on the birth parents and child maltreatment, the level of preparation for foster parenting and motivation to support and meet the foster child's needs, and willingness to collaborate with the agency. The tool includes child indicators associated with the functioning of the foster parents' own children, the children in placement, and any other children present in the home. The tool also features a worksheet for formulating a support plan to address any specific concerns.

www.actionchildprotection.org/PDF/Identifying_and_Verifying_The_Safe_%20Foster_%20Home%20Method.pdf

Funding Opportunities and Sustainability

Online Sustainability Planning Resources

The Finance Project has launched the online Sustainability Planning Information Resource Center to provide information about financial sustainability for community programs. The website <http://www.financeproject.org/index.cfm?page=28> lists resources and information related to seven elements of sustainability:

- Vision-how to craft and share a vision statement
- Results orientation-improving effectiveness through ongoing evaluation
- Strategic financing-including diversifying funding, creating flexibility in funding, and generating new sources of funding
- Broad-based community support-how to effectively communicate and collaborate with stakeholders
- Key champions-engaging powerful advocates

- Adaptability to changing conditions-monitoring trends and knowing the community
- Strong internal systems-implementing effective management strategies

Grant: The Mazda Foundation – For education and literacy, cross-cultural understanding and other projects.

Funder: The Mazda Foundation.

Eligibility: Nonprofits.

Deadline: July 1.

Amount: About \$400,000 is distributed annually.

Contact: www.mazdafoundation.org/grantguidelines.html.

Grant: Community economic development – For job creation and business projects that stop financial dependency, chronic unemployment and community deterioration in both urban and rural areas. Beneficiaries include at-risk youth.

Funder: U.S. Administration for Children and Families.

Eligibility: Private, nonprofit community development corporations.

Deadline: June 25.

Amount: \$29 million for 41 to 45 grants.

Contact: www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2008-ACF-OCS-EE-0024.html

Grant: The LEGO Children’s Fund – For grants in early childhood education and development, technology and communication projects that advance learning opportunities, and sports or athletic programs that concentrate on underserved youth.

Funder: LEGO America.

Eligibility: Nonprofits.

Deadline: Quarterly.

Amount: \$500 to \$5,000.

Contact: www.legochildrensfund.org/Guidelines.html

Positive Youth Development

Achieve My Plan

This website from the Research & Treatment Center at Portland State University,

<http://www rtc pdx edu/AMP/pgVideo AMP ImportanceOfYPP.shtml>,

contains several useful youth engagement resources, including:

- Youth Participation in Planning: Why it Matters - In their own words and with stories from their own lives, youth describe what it feels like not to have any say in the plans that are made for their treatment, care, education and future.
- Involving Youth in Planning for Their Education, Treatment and Services: Research Tells Us We Should Be Doing Better - This document summarizes available research indicating that involving youth meaningfully and successfully in planning for their own future is possible and provides benefits for youth and their families.

Youth Self-Efficacy Scale/Mental Health and Youth Participation in Planning Scale

This packet contains two new measures developed by the Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health. The Youth Self-Efficacy Scale/Mental Health was designed to assess youth perceptions of self-efficacy with respect to managing their own mental health condition, managing their own services and supports, and using their experience and knowledge to help peers and improve service systems. The Youth Participation in Planning scale assesses youth perceptions of whether interdisciplinary teams that create service, care, or treatment plans support meaningful youth participation in the planning process.

[http://www.tapartnership.org/Regions/RegionI/docs/AMP_Particip_Empower_Measures\(Intro\).pdf](http://www.tapartnership.org/Regions/RegionI/docs/AMP_Particip_Empower_Measures(Intro).pdf)

Professional Development Opportunities

IL/SWAN Statewide Meeting, July 8-9, 2008, Lancaster Host Hotel.

Registration materials and more information soon at www.diakon-swan.org

16th Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference, "Embrace the Journey."

Lancaster Host Conference Center Hotel, July 9-11, 2008. Registration materials will be available soon at www.diakon-swan.org

Suicide Prevention Conference

The Department of Public Welfare, along with a number of other partners, is sponsoring the Second Annual Suicide Prevention Conference on September 9-10, 2008, at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey, Grantville, PA. The theme is "Outreach to Diverse Populations: Finding What Works." Program and registration information is now available online at www.parecovery.org/documents/Brochure_Suicide_Prevention_2008.doc

IL/SWAN Fall Quarterly Meetings:

Mark your calendars to reserve the following dates; more information soon!

- Thursday, October 2 – Best Western East Mountain Inn, Wilkes-Barre
- Wednesday, October 15 – Holiday Inn, Clarion
- Thursday, October 16 – Radisson Hotel, Monroeville
- Monday, October 20 – Harrisburg Holiday Inn, New Cumberland
- Tuesday, October 28 – The Desmond Great Valley, Malvern
- Wednesday, October 29, Embassy Suites Philadelphia Airport

People in Transition –

Ann Molsky, administrative assistant at the IL Project, is retiring on May 30th. We want to wish Ann well and thank her for her many contributions! We'll miss you!

Erica Morton is the IL coordinator for Cen-Clear Child Services in Clearfield County, the IL provider. Welcome!

Debbie Garrow has joined the IL staff at Indiana County CYS. Welcome!

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