

Improving Access to College and Employment

Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG)

Youth planning to enroll in college this summer or next 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 2009-2010 academic year are expected to be available on the www.pheaa.org website as of April 1. (Chafee ETG applications for the 2008-2009 academic year are still available at www.pheaa.org.)

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.

SAT Fee Waivers are available from the IL Project

You can obtain SAT fee waivers for juniors and SAT fee waivers/college application fee waivers for seniors entered into PILOTS from Janice Coplin at jtc30@pitt.edu or 717.795.9048, ext. 231.

Encourage Students to Complete Financial Aid Applications

Now is the time for youth to complete financial aid and scholarship applications if they are considering college or other post-secondary options for next fall. Your students already in college must renew their college financial aid applications each year, too. The deadline for students to complete their state grant applications is May 1st if they are considering four-year academic majors (August 1st is the deadline for first time applicants for two-year programs.) Youth need not be accepted at colleges to begin the financial aid and scholarship process. Local and community application may have early deadlines; check with your high school guidance offices. Don't let your youth miss important deadlines and possible funding.



Foster and Homeless Children – Education Policy:

Good news! The PA Department of Education issued a BEC (Basic Education Circular) on 1/22/09 that directs schools to begin new enrollment and transfer policies with the 09/10 school year that are more friendly to children in foster care and children who are homeless. The BEC can be read at the Dept. of Education website at http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12/cwp/view.asp?A=11&QUESTION_ID=84241

Transitions to Permanency

Identity Theft – Perform Credit Checks for Youth Before They Leave Care

Identity theft among youth in foster is common, and for good reason: they're easy targets. They move often among various homes and schools, so their personal data pass through dozens of hands. According to the Identity Theft Resource Center in San Diego, half of the 84,000 youth in California's system may have been victimized. The problem got so bad that in 2006, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a law requiring credit checks for youth in state care when they turn 16. But it had no enforcement mechanism, and overburdened case workers had more urgent concerns than credit. An October 2008 study from Javelin Strategy and Research found that one in 20 children overall have been the victims of identity theft, averaging \$12,000 in wrongly assigned debt. "We were stunned by the results," says Bo Holland, CEO of Debix Credit Protection, which commissioned the study. Most youth in foster discover the fraud only after they "age out" of the system. By then, according to another Javelin study, it typically costs more than \$1,000 and 150 hours to clear up the problem. And that's if you know what you're doing. These youth don't. "The onus is on the victim to clear their name," says Tiffany Johnson, associate director of the California Youth Connection, but "when you emancipate from foster care, you have no legal representation. These people don't have the resources to fight. They're basically screwed."

Not every case of juvenile ID theft is intentionally illicit. In low-income families, a parent with bad credit might put a heating bill in a child's name, not anticipating the snowballing debt that could accumulate. With the economy in free fall, the problem is sure to get worse. For more information on this problem, visit: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/183711>

Guide to Partnering With Resource Families

This guide, produced by the North Carolina Division of Social Services with support from Jordan Institute for Families, seeks to provide tools and strategies you and your agency can use to build, refine, and sustain partnerships with resource families.

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/publications/>

http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/publications/docs/Partnering_with_Resource_Families.pdf

San Francisco Model Toolkit to Serve Homeless Youth

In less than three years, more than 170 communities had adopted the San Francisco model that moves people more quickly toward stable housing by connecting the homeless with "under one roof" services and mobile hospitality volunteers. YEF recommends this online toolkit for cities launching their own Project Homeless Connect Initiative. www.yep.org



Youth in Transition Resource

If you are looking for ideas and materials to supplement your current Independent Living or transition curriculum, you should check out this website. It contains a number of suggestions and tools that you can use in your program.

<http://www.fostercarealumni.org/userfiles/file/Strategic%20Sharing%20Booklet.pdf>

A Troubling Statistic: Increase in Teen Births

The National Center for Health Statistics just released new data showing that the teen birth rate increased again in 2007. This is the second increase in a row after a 14-year decline. A Child Trends research brief, Teen Births: Examining the Recent Increase, explores whether the data reflect a short-term blip or a true reversal in the decline of the U.S. teen birth rate. It also considers potential explanations for the uptick in teen births, and raises data and research gaps that must be filled to inform public and private prevention efforts. Among the findings:

- Declines in teen contraceptive use may have played some role in the teen birth rate increase.
 - Between 2003 and 2005, a slightly greater percentage of high school girls reported using no method of birth control the last time they had sex.
- Recent declines in teen sexual activity have stalled.
- Economic hardship and the rising cost of certain birth control methods may also have made contraception less affordable for some teens.
- National data indicate a significant decline between 1995 and 2002 in the percentage of students who report having received formal contraceptive education.

This brief is based on a paper by Kristin Anderson Moore, Ph.D. that resulted from a meeting of experts and researchers convened by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. Moore commented, "These young parents are now caring for toddlers in an economic environment that is challenging even for adult parents." Jennifer Manlove, Ph.D., Senior Research Scientist at Child Trends, noted, "Two years of increases in the teen birth rate are a wake-up call showing the need to target efforts to help teens delay sexual activity, improve contraceptive use, and delay early and generally unplanned childbearing." www.childtrends.org

Creating Inclusive Services for LGBT Youth in Out of Home Care: Training Resources

The Out of Home Youth Advocacy Council (a project administered jointly by Family Builders by Adoption, Legal Services for Children and the National Center for Lesbian Rights) has developed training resources to support the creation of inclusive services for LGBT Youth in Out of Home Care. These resources include: a Know Your Rights Guide, a "Hate Free Zone" poster, CWLA Best Practice Guidelines, Breaking the Silence: LGBTQ Foster Youth Tell their Stories (a DVD containing short digital stories by former foster youth who identify as LGBT), a PowerPoint presentation about creating inclusive systems of care for LGBT youth, and others. Training tips and key messages are outlined in order to support the effective use of these resources.

http://www.nclrights.org/site/DocServer/Preface_OHYAC_training_FINAL.pdf?docID=2921

Stronger Effort Needed to Prevent Mental, Emotional, Behavioral Problems

The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine reports that young people experience mental, emotional and behavioral disorders as commonly as they experience fractured limbs, costing the U.S. an estimated \$247 billion annually. The report highlights classroom and other interventions that work. <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/nrc/index.htm>

Foster Youth Transitioning to Independence Need Stronger Supports

The Society for Research in Child Development identifies specific measures to support youth in foster care as they move to adulthood: revise eligibility requirements to include high-risk populations, develop adequate transition services and supports, involve young people in the process and allow states to extend financial assistance through age 21. www.srccd.org

Profiles from the Youth Transition Demonstration Projects

A report on the Social Security Administration's Youth Transition Demonstration Projects describes six promising strategies for helping youth with disabilities become financially self-sufficient. www.socialsecurity.gov/us

Aging Out of Foster Care: Towards a Universal Safety Net for Former Foster Youth

This article by Melinda Atkinson identifies the specific needs and outcomes of youths who age out under current foster care policies. The article also provides an extensive review of research and legal findings and precedents, as well as policy analysis, and an overview of state programs which continue support for foster youth to age 21. The article argues for adoption of legislation and policy changes to better support transition-age foster youth.

<http://cafosteringconnections.org/research.html>

Helping Former Foster Youth Graduate from College: Campus Support Programs in California and Washington State

Campus support programs provide financial, academic, and other types of supports to help former foster youth succeed in college. However, relatively little is known about the impact of these programs on college retention or graduation rates. This Chapin Hall study by Amy Dworsky and Alfred Perez lays the groundwork for an impact evaluation by examining program implementation from two different perspectives. Researchers conducted telephone interviews with the directors of 10 campus support programs in California and Washington State. The interviews covered a variety of domains, including the population served, referral sources and recruitment, the application process, the provision of services and supports, program staff, relationships with stakeholders, and data collection. In addition, participants from 8 of the 10 programs completed a web-based survey that asked about their perceptions of and experiences with the program. The survey included questions about students' demographic characteristics, referral and recruitment, the application process, reasons for participating in the program, services and supports received, unmet needs, contact with staff, and recommendations for improvement. The report concludes with several recommendations for moving forward with a methodologically sound impact evaluation of campus support programs for former foster youth.

http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1483&L2=60&L3=125

Web-based Presentation of MEPA/IEP: Compliance with the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994, as Amended, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

This video presentation is sponsored by the Policy Division of the Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, in coordination with the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption, a service of the Children's Bureau. This presentation will focus on: Federal laws that apply to the consideration of race, color, and national origin (RCNO) and how they interrelate; Practical guidance on how child welfare agencies and social workers can comply with MEPA in their programs and daily practice; Respective roles of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the Department of Health and Human Services; Enforcement of Title VI and MEPA; Compliance Tips; Resources; Legal, Regulatory, and Policy Authority. This is a two part video presentation, accessible online. The video player allows for playback of audio and video files, along with pause, stop, fast forward, and reverse features for navigation. Due to the large file sizes, you may need to wait until download is complete before navigating within the video. For questions or more information, please contact Ingrid Parks at (248) 443-0306, or iparks@nrcadoption.org or <http://www.nrcadoption.org/mepa/>

Reconnecting Youth

The Human Context for Teaching Writing

Writing sharpens and clarifies thinking. Yet, in too many schools, especially those overwhelmed by poverty, writing is not about thinking or persuading but about completing fill-in-the-blank activities. The National Council of Teachers of English hopes to change this with an eye to the National Day on Writing (coming in October 20, 2009). www.ncte.org

After-School, Summer Learning, and Family Involvement as Critical Learning Supports

What, in conjunction with good schools, is necessary to increase the chances that all children, especially disadvantaged ones, will enter and leave school with the skills they need for 21st-century success? This report from Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) makes a research-based case for federal provision of out-of-school complementary learning supports from birth through high school, particularly for poor children, so that all students gain the skills that economists, educators, and employers agree are necessary for success in the 21st century. Four decades of consistent research evidence demonstrate it is necessary to redefine learning—both where and when it takes place—and to follow up with innovations that enable communities to move to a complementary learning approach, if the country is to achieve its national goal of educating all children. Commissioned by the Center for Education Policy (CEP) as part of a series of 11 papers on “Rethinking the Federal Role in Elementary and Secondary Education,” the report was presented at a hearing on Capitol Hill in November 2008. For a full copy of this and other papers in that series, visit the CEP web site at www.cep-dc.org.

Keeping Kids in School

The America's Promise Alliance has released its updated edition of *Grad Nation*, a comprehensive guidebook with supporting tools on the best evidence-based practices on keeping students in school, graduating and prepared for college. www.americiaspromise.org

Strengthening Families and Communities, Preventing Abuse

Free copies of the Strengthening Families and Communities: 2009 Resource Guide are now available. Developed for service providers, the guide highlights strategies to strengthen families by promoting key protective factors that prevent child abuse and neglect. It also includes tip sheets in both English and Spanish to share with parents. The Resource Guide is produced annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention. The 2009 guide was developed with input from numerous national organizations, Federal partners, and parents committed to strengthening families and communities. The guide can be downloaded or ordered at: http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/res_guide_2009

Or contact Child Welfare Information Gateway at 1.800.394.3366 or info@childwelfare.gov

Service providers can find additional materials in the Preventing Child Abuse & Neglect section of the Information Gateway website. This web section includes resources for National Child Abuse Prevention Month, as well as information on evaluating and funding prevention programs, enhancing protective factors, and effective parenting. <http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing>

Program Resources

Selecting, Training, and Coaching Out-of-School Time Staff

Research on successful out-of-school time programs repeatedly has found that the caliber of a program's staff is a critical feature of high-quality programs that achieve positive outcomes. Three new Child Trends briefs present findings and effective strategies for selecting, training, and coaching frontline staff in the effective implementation of out-of-school time programs.

Staff Selection: What's Important for Out-Of-School Time Programs?

Staff selection involves recruiting, interviewing, and hiring new staff or redeploying existing staff within the program. This brief offers the following action steps:

- Recruitment practices should focus on multiple factors, such as education, interpersonal skills, and abilities.
- Staff should be culturally competent.
- Out-of-school time programs should apply consistent standards to evaluate applicants.
- Programs should assess staff readiness, motivation, and commitment to the organization's mission.
- www.childtrends.org

Training Out-Of-School Time Staff

Staff training includes providing specialized information, instruction, or skill development in an organized way to practitioners and other key staff members within the program. This brief offers the following recommendations:

- Present background information, theory, philosophy, and values of the new program or practice to staff.
- Introduce and then demonstrate important aspects of the new practice or program.
- Provide staff with opportunities to practice new skills and receive feedback in a safe training environment.
- Provide staff with ongoing support and follow-up training.
- Allow sufficient time for training.
- www.childtrends.org

Using Coaching to Provide Ongoing Support and Supervision to Out-Of-School Time Staff

Staff coaching involves ongoing teaching, reinforcement of newly learned skills, and adaptations of skills and knowledge to practitioners' personal styles. This brief offers the following recommendations:

- Coaches should have knowledge of coaching theory, as well as content area knowledge.
- Coaching relationships should be built on respect, trust, and collegiality.
- Coaches and program staff or peer coaching teams should meet frequently, both formally and informally, and should engage in a wide variety of activities.
- Program staff members should have time to experiment, practice, and make mistakes.
- The program administration should support and promote any and all coaching initiatives fully, including making sure that appropriate time and resources are devoted to the coaching experience.
- Coaching should be considered a long-term professional development strategy.
- www.childtrends.org

Enhancing School Reform Through Expanded Learning

Released by Learning Point Associates and CBASS, *Enhancing School Reform Through Expanded Learning* looks at the benefits of integrating expanded learning opportunities into overall school reform. Comprised of three papers and four case studies about different aspects of expanded learning, the report finds that well-designed expanded learning programs can improve school performance, increasing positive academic, developmental, and health outcomes. The report is a call to action for education and after school leaders to work together in new ways to foster enhanced school reform through better integration with expanded learning opportunities. Free. Available online only at www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time

Funding Opportunities and Sustainability

Summer Program Opportunities

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) has fundraising tips for summer programs. Also, get information on summer learning funding opportunities in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. www.frac.org

Professional Development Opportunities

IL/SWAN Spring Quarterly Meetings:

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 – Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, Scranton

Monday, April 6, 2009 – Holiday Inn, Clarion

Tuesday, April 7, 2009 – Four Points Sheraton, Greensburg

Tuesday, April 21, 2009 – The Conference Center, Central Pennsylvania College, Summerdale

Monday, April 27, 2009 – Embassy Suite Hotel, Philadelphia Airport

Tuesday, April 28, 2009 – Holiday Inn, Fort Washington

Register for the Quarterly meetings at: www.diakon-swan.org

Leading Change Through Innovation – PA Partners 25th Employment, Training and Education Conference, May 6th – 8th, Hershey Lodge, Hershey. For information and registration materials, go to: register@papartners.org

National Pathways to Adulthood 2009 Independent Living/Transitional Living Conference June 3-5, 2009 in San Diego, CA This Conference will provide important opportunities to hear about promising practices from across the country and for participants to work together to explore effective transition solutions for young people. Connect with your colleagues and take advantage of networking and collaboration opportunities. <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/conferences/np09>

IL/SWAN Summer Statewide Meeting

Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center, Lancaster, June 23-24, 2009

17th Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference

Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center, Lancaster, June 24-26, 2009

Growing Pains - National Independent Living Conference

September 1-4, 2009 in Nashville, Tennessee. To submit a workshop proposal for the 22nd annual conference, go to www.danielkids.org

Independent Living Project Updates:

Pennsylvania Independent Living Statewide Youth Retreat

This summer's statewide IL Youth Retreat is July 13-17, 2009 at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. The theme, "DREAM -- (Determine, Realize, Educate, Achieve, and Motivate) was suggested by Ivory Bennett, a high school senior from Allegheny County. The banquet speaker on July 16th is going to be Jaiya Johns. More information will be sent to IL programs in the April.

Know Your Rights Manual Trainings

The Know Your Rights manual, which was developed by the Juvenile Law Center, Kids Voice and the Youth Advisory Board, has been recently updated. Training is available in your area from the Juvenile Law Center, Kids Voice or the IL Project staff at the University of Pittsburgh. If you have not already submitted a request for training, please contact your IL specialist at Pitt and we'll arrange for one of the groups to provide training for your youth, staff and/or partners.

Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) training

Justin Lee and Steve Eidson recently completed a three-day training from Casey Family Programs are certified to train programs about the ACLSA and its many advantages and resources for youth and programs. If you'd like to learn more about the ACLSA and how it could be used (or better utilized) by your program, please let either Justin or Steve know.

Independent Living Curricula: Coming Soon Throughout the State

Two new Independent Living curricula will soon be offered by the IL Project; as they have been approved by the University. The first curriculum, The Foundations of Independent Living: An Overview, is a one-day introduction to IL programs. This training would be excellent for anyone who wants to have some knowledge of IL services and the transition philosophy. The second curriculum, The Independent Living Services Continuum: Engaging Youth in Their Transition Process is a two-day workshop for Independent Living professionals. Look for more information about workshops which will be offered in your area this spring and summer.

CWTP Training Calendar:

If you'd like to know what courses are offered to counties and providers, the Encompass database has been updated so that you can view all of the training opportunities at the CWTP. The following website will provide access to trainings at: <http://www.encompass.pitt.edu/>

People in Transition – Congratulations to:

Steve Socci, who is the new IL program supervisor in Beaver County. Welcome.

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