

## Mentoring Resources

### Mentoring Program Development

If you are interested in beginning or improving a mentoring program for youth, this is a really comprehensive site. The link provides on-line resources as well as downloadable pdf versions of document and options. [www.mentoring.org/program\\_staff/design/elements\\_of\\_effective\\_practice](http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/design/elements_of_effective_practice)

### Effective After-School Programs for Older Youth: Making the Difference

After-school programs can make a big difference for older students, yet reaching these teens is a major challenge for the field. This evaluation from The After-School Corporation looked at a New York City program -- one of the nation's largest, longest-running efforts, which has connected 40,000 teens to high quality, structured after-school programs over the past nine years. The paper describes promising programmatic models, examines the situations in which they work best and warns of possible pitfalls. [www.tascorp.org](http://www.tascorp.org)

## Preparing Youth for Education and/or Employment

### SAT Fee Waivers

The SAT Fee Waivers for 2007-2008 as well as the College Fee Waivers are available at the IL Project. If you need application forms for your youth, please contact Ann Molsky at [akm9@pitt.edu](mailto:akm9@pitt.edu) or 717.795.9048. You can duplicate the application form as often as needed. Youth can register for fall SAT dates now. Keep in mind that SAT and College Fee Waivers are specific to each youth, therefore a separate application for each youth must be completed.

### Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG)

Youth planning to enroll in college this spring 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 are available at [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org). If your youth or you have questions about Chafee applications or a youth's status, please contact **Tina Blair** at PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797.

### Admissions Essay 101

Many students dread the thought of writing the essay for their college applications. . .and often they don't know where to start. If your college-bound students need help with their essay, steer them to the free essay writing course on EducationPlanner.org. This comprehensive course gives students direction for creating an original and effective essay. It teaches students how to choose appropriate topics and themes, how to structure their essay as a coherent and flowing piece and how to convey their ideas through engaging and active language.

Encourage your college-bound students to check out the essay writing course in the 'Applying' section of [www.EducationPlanner.org](http://www.EducationPlanner.org).

### The Qualities Colleges Look For In Students

Many college-bound students want to know what college admissions counselors are looking for when they evaluate college applications. The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) compiled a list of the top qualities college admissions officers look for in prospective students which are shown below:

1. Challenging high school curriculum.
2. Grades that represent strong effort and an upward trend.
3. Solid scores on standardized tests (ACT and SAT).
4. Passionate involvement in a few activities, demonstrating leadership and initiative.
5. Letters of recommendations from teachers and counselors that give evidence of integrity, special skills, positive character traits and an interest in learning.
6. Special talents or experiences that will contribute to an interesting and well-rounded student body.
7. A well-written essay that provides insight into the student's personality, values and goals.
8. Enthusiasm in attending the college.
9. Work and community service experiences that show dedication and responsibility.
10. Demonstrated intellectual curiosity through reading, school and leisure pursuits.

## **Changing the Conversation about Workforce Development: Getting from Inputs to Outcomes**

In this report the Harvard Family Research Project looks within and across four human service sectors -- early childhood, child welfare, juvenile justice, and youth development -- along with public school education, to determine what research and evaluation reveal about the ways investments in the workforce lead to better child and youth outcomes. The review of the empirical research resulted in a preliminary framework, or logic model, describing how workforce elements could lead to improved outcomes. [http://www.cornerstones4kids.org/new\\_reports.htm#anchor5](http://www.cornerstones4kids.org/new_reports.htm#anchor5)

## **Transitions to Permanency**

### **Preparing Youth for Permanent Family Connections - Preparing Everyone for Permanency Family Connections**

This one-day curriculum from the Bay Area Academy in California is designed to train child welfare professionals in preparing youth for permanent placements. It provides step-by-step instructions for providing training that addresses: the definition of permanence as it pertains to youth in foster care; assessing whether a "permanency orientation" has been incorporated into personal and agency practices; critical stages of youth development that impact the ability to think, communicate, and make decisions about permanence; respectful and effective approaches to communicating with youth and their surrounding support systems regarding permanence, including respectful listening, engagement, and follow-up; the development of youth-specific permanency plans in collaboration with youth; appropriate strategies to assist youth in preparing for family living; and meaningful records-search when reviewing a case record. Exercises are included to foster understanding of key concepts.

<http://bayareaacademy.org/downloads/Youth%20Perm%20Curriculum-2.pdf>

### **Connected by 25 Information Resource Center for Youth Transitions Initiatives**

This site provides links to resources on research, best practice, policy and funding as well to organizations working on issues affecting youth in care. It includes resources that specifically address youth aging out of foster care, as well as more general youth resources that can inform the development of supports for youth transitioning from care.

<http://www.financeproject.org/irc/yti.asp>

### **Strategies for Community Engagement**

Programs that focus on engaging community residents may achieve better and more sustainable outcomes for children and families. That was one of the conclusions in a recent issue of the *Casey Connects* quarterly newsletter, which highlighted community engagement strategies used by Annie E. Casey Foundation's initiatives in neighborhoods across the country. Several promising strategies were described, including:

- Study and family circles
- Network organizing
- Community organizing and mobilization
- Resident leadership institutes
- Trusted advocates

The articles give real-life examples of these strategies in action and their impact on the communities they serve. By engaging trusted advocates in the neighborhood, programs can develop resident leaders who encourage other residents to address local challenges and strengthen social networks in the community. This "give-get model" of social networking means residents get a lot out of their community involvement but also give back, thereby creating a more durable positive change in the neighborhood. The programs found that residents who are engaged feel more invested in the outcomes and are even more willing to coordinate data collection for evaluation efforts. The articles are available for download on the Annie E. Casey Foundation website: [www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/Spring07\\_connects\\_Final.pdf](http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/Spring07_connects_Final.pdf)

## **Mental Health, Ethnicity, Sexuality, and Spirituality Among Youth in Foster Care: Findings from the Casey Field Office Mental Health Study**

With assistance from Casey Family Programs' direct services offices, interviewers from the University of Michigan completed interviews with 188 adolescents in Casey care. The survey included questions about mental health, spirituality, ethnic identity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. <http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/CFOMH.htm>

## **Assessment and Intervention Strategies**

### **Caught Between Two Courts: Maintaining and Enhancing Child Welfare Services for Older Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System**

This article in The Link from the Child Welfare League of America describes efforts being made in Pennsylvania to improve supervision services and supports for juveniles returning to the community from residential placements.

<http://www.cwla.org/programs/juvenilejustice/thelink2007fall.pdf>

### **Resiliency Skills and Drop-Out Prevention**

Every nine seconds, a student drops out of school in America. The most recent studies put our national graduation rate just under 70 percent. Although no single factor predicts drop-out, a new review of the literature by a University of Colorado researcher says considering multiple conditions can help identify those at risk. The paper looks at what's known about who drops out and why, what factors can help students graduate and what schools can do to curb drop-out. Fostering resiliency -- limiting negative behaviors associated with stress, encouraging skills and relationships to adapt and succeed -- can be very effective.

[www.scholarcentric.com](http://www.scholarcentric.com)



### **OAS Report Presents "A Day in the Life of American Adolescents"**

According to a recent report published by the Office of Applied Studies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, in 2006, one third of U.S. youth age 12 to 17 drank alcohol and one fifth used an illicit drug in the past year. The October 18, 2007, issue of The OAS Report draws on the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health and other data to describe "A Day in the Life of American Adolescents: Substance Abuse Facts." To access the report and related resources, visit

<http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k7/youthFacts>

### **Reducing Poverty Rates for Young Men and Teens**

When you think *poverty*, do you think *single mothers*? With some recent gains in poverty reduction among single moms, many anti-poverty efforts are now focusing on male adolescents and young men -- who face disproportionate rates of delinquency, school dropout, unemployment, non-marital fatherhood and poverty. A recent Brookings Institution panel discussed what works to help young men boost their employment and earnings to reduce poverty and related social problems. The transcript is online. [www.brookings.edu](http://www.brookings.edu)

### **The ABA Youth at Risk Initiative**

The American Bar Association (ABA) Youth at Risk Initiative is the theme of the July 2007 issue of *Family Court Review*. The initiative focuses on how attorneys and the legal system can better help teenagers whose family or behavioral problems place them at a significantly higher risk of involvement with the courts. These teenagers may come to the court's attention through the child welfare or juvenile justice system. The articles in this special issue address the following topics:

- Youth aging out of the foster care system
- Girls, particularly girls of color, involved with the juvenile justice system
- Abused and neglected adolescents
- Youth placed in unregulated treatment facilities

Several articles discuss the findings and policy recommendations of the ABA in such areas as licensing, regulation, and monitoring of residential facilities serving at-risk youth; enhanced support for foster and homeless youth and juvenile status offenders; and improving laws and policies related to youth exiting the foster care system. To access the reports, go to

[www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org).

## Reconnecting Youth

### Engaging Youth ... On Their Turf: Creative Approaches to Connecting Youth through Community

The publication from the Healthy Teen Network offers professionals new approaches to engaging teens. It highlights six examples of programs that reach out to youth in non-traditional communities. [www.healthyteennetwork.org](http://www.healthyteennetwork.org)

### The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development

Here's more evidence that quality youth programs can benefit young people and communities alike. When communities, families and schools give young people access to development programs and opportunities for adult interaction and mentoring, youth succeed -- that's the main finding of a national longitudinal study released by the National 4-H Council. [www.fourhcouncil.org](http://www.fourhcouncil.org)



### A Place to Call Home Act

As we approach Thanksgiving, our thoughts turn to those less fortunate than ourselves. This includes the 3 million young people in the United States who lack safe places to live. The National Network for Youth is championing legislation to prevent and end youth homelessness. The Network has an action alert on the Youth Policy Action Center asking concerned adults to contact elected officials with the message that every young American needs a place to call home. [www.youthppolicyactioncenter.org](http://www.youthppolicyactioncenter.org)



## Training and Curricular Resources

**Helping Fathers Support Their Children:** Children's Bureau Express Online Digest [http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/articles.cfm?issue\\_id=2007-09&article\\_id=1399](http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/articles.cfm?issue_id=2007-09&article_id=1399)

**Addressing Substance Abuse and Child Maltreatment:** Children's Bureau Express Online Digest [http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/articles.cfm?issue\\_id=2007-09&article\\_id=1393](http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/articles.cfm?issue_id=2007-09&article_id=1393)

### CWLA Expands the PRIDE Training Program

Two new modules for the PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education) Advanced and Specialized Training program have been released by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA).

The first, *Preparing Youth for Successful Adulthood*, provides caregivers with the knowledge and skills necessary to assist youth with their healthy transition into adulthood. The four-session module focuses on the development of life skills for youth, such as getting a job, going to school, and learning how to cook. In addition, the training provides an integrated model that focuses on the importance of stable, consistent, and healthy relationships in helping youth learn life skills and, in turn, transition effectively into adulthood.

The second new module, *Working Together to Improve Educational Outcomes for Youth in Care*, is intended to enhance participants' knowledge and skills that will enable them to act as an education advocate and improve educational outcomes for youth in care. This includes youth living with foster parents or with kin. The information may also be helpful to adoptive parents and to staff of residential group care facilities. To read more about the PRIDE program or to access ordering information for these training modules, visit the CWLA site:

[www.cwla.org/programs/trieschman/pride.htm](http://www.cwla.org/programs/trieschman/pride.htm)

## Funding Opportunities and Sustainability

**Grant: Safe and Vital Communities** – For projects related to youth anti-violence, neighborhood revitalization and teen safe driving, as well as for tolerance, inclusion and diversity. Funder: Allstate Foundation. Eligibility: Nonprofits. Deadline: Open. Amount: Varies. Contact: [www.allstate.com/citizenship/foundation/funding-guidelines.aspx](http://www.allstate.com/citizenship/foundation/funding-guidelines.aspx)

### **Funding Partnerships for Youth in Transition**

The Finance Project's Vulnerable Children and Youth Practice Group recently developed three publications exploring strategies for financing supports and services for youth currently in or transitioning from foster care. The strategy briefs aim to help policymakers, child welfare administrators, program developers, and community leaders. They outline the players, funding sources, and financing strategies that can support youth entrepreneurship opportunities, asset-building and financial education programs, and workforce development programs and services. You can access these publications at [www.financeproject.org/publications](http://www.financeproject.org/publications): *Financing Entrepreneurship Programs for Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care*, *Financing Asset-Building and Financial Education Programs for Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care* and *Financing Workforce Development Programs for Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care*.

### **Understanding Federal Funding Sources for Child Welfare**

States and communities use a variety of financing strategies to support comprehensive services and supports for children and families in the child welfare system with behavioral disorders and their families. This chart from the Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health identifies Federal funding sources dedicated to child welfare through Title IV-B and Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and Community Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (CBCAP). Federal sources of non-dedicated child welfare funding are Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Children (TANF), and the Social Service Block Grant.

<http://www.tapartnership.org/advisors/ChildWelfare/faq/sept07.asp>

### **Positive Youth Development**

#### **Pennsylvania Youth Summit -- Save the Date!**

Youth in IL programs throughout the state are invited to the first Youth Summit, which will be held at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program offices in Mechanicsburg on March 25-26, 2008. The summit is youth-led and youth-focused and is a direct result of the youth self-assessment work that is being done for the upcoming Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) in 2008. Please watch your e-mail box for more information. If you have any questions about the Youth Summit, please contact the CWTP youth ambassadors, Nakiba Givens or Alyshea Santos at 717.795.9048.

### **Professional Development Opportunities**

**IL/SWAN Winter Statewide Meeting:** Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center, State College. January 29-30, 2008. More information and registration materials coming your way soon.

**Pathways to Adulthood National IL Conference,** Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. May 14-16, 2008.

**16<sup>th</sup> Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference,** "Embracing the Journey. Lancaster Host Conference Center Hotel, July 9-11, 2008.

### **People in Transition –**

**Mike Holiga**, the IL and life skills coordinator at Keystone Adolescent Center in Greenville, Mercer County is taking a new position at his agency. **John Englert** will be taking over the IL program.

**Jackie Jones** at Ward Home in Pittsburgh recently became a mom. Her son and she are both doing well.

**Regina Dennis-Walker** has joined the community liaison staff of the Auberle Education Center's IL program in Allegheny County.

**Melvin Isaac** is a new transition specialist in the R U Ready IL program at Circle C in Allegheny County.

## Legislative Update

### The Medicaid Coverage Act of 2007

The U.S. House of Representatives is currently considering a bill that would make it **mandatory** to extend Medicaid coverage to foster care youth that age out of the system. HR 1376 would provide health insurance coverage to our IL Aftercare youth up until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. How many of you or your staff work with youth that lose their coverage after leaving the system and cannot get enrolled in Medicaid, do not have the money to purchase private insurance, or cannot get onto the waiting list for Adult Basic coverage? This has been and continues to be a major issue for Aftercare youth.

The bill is currently in the Health Subcommittee. Please work with your youth and colleagues to contact your US Representative. This website - <http://www.house.gov/> - will allow you to enter your zip code in order to find your US Representative. Please send letters, make phone calls, and/or visit your Congressperson in his/her local office to discuss this important bill.

### The Fostering Independence through Education Act

The Fostering Independence through Education Act (FIEA) will help Pennsylvanian youth who have aged out of foster care and youth who have been adopted from the child welfare system to pursue post-secondary education or training so that they can lead a productive and positive adult life. The Act will waive the tuition of youth who attend colleges, community colleges and trade schools that are owned by Pennsylvania or are considered Pennsylvania-related institutions.

This bill was recently introduced into the PA House of Representatives. Please work with your youth and colleagues to contact your local representative in the PA House.

This website - <http://www.house.state.pa.us/index.cfm> allows you to search for the Representative(s) in your local legislative districts. Please send letters, make phone calls, and/or visit your state representative in his/her local office to discuss this important bill.

### Contact Information:

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