

FOSTER CARE LIASON 101 TRAINING

EDUCATION REACH FOR TEXANS 14TH ANNUAL CONVENING

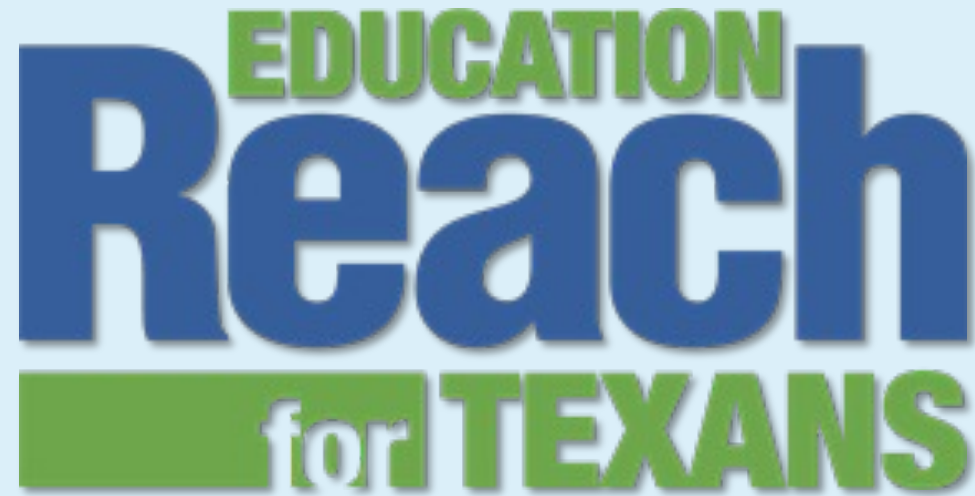
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April 3, 2023 – PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

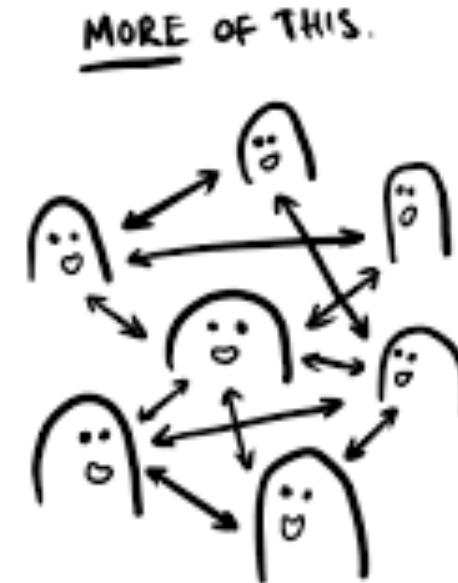
Understanding Foster Care





Building Community

- Safe/Brave Space
- Agreements
- Introductions
- Ice-breaker Activity



What is Foster Care?



When the Court gives legal possession (conservatorship) of a child to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services due to confirmed abuse or neglect



Intended to be temporary



Intended to protect the child from harm or further harm



May include placing a child in an emergency shelter, foster home, group home, residential treatment center or with a kinship caregiver



Could include extended foster care for youth over 18 years old



Requires a court order

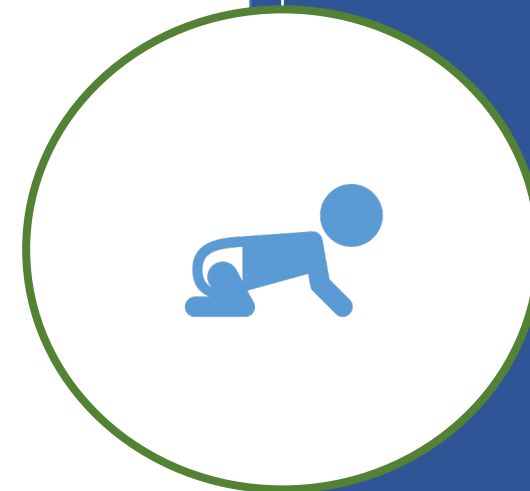


How Children Come Into CPS Custody

- Reports of child abuse and neglect can be made either by telephone or online
 - **(800) 252-5400**
 - <https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx>
 - Remember... a reporter's job is only to suspect, not be positive about whether abuse has actually occurred

Lousy Parenting....

does not always equal dangerous parenting...



What Constitutes Abuse or Neglect

Physical
Neglect

Neglectful
Supervision

Physical
Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Abandonment

Labor & Sex
Trafficking

Medical
Neglect

Emotional
Abuse

As defined by the Texas Family Code Section 261.001

FOSTER CARE 101: How Does A Youth Enter Foster Care?



A child or youth enters the foster care system when there is a “reason to believe” allegation of abuse and/or neglect.



CPS must petition the court for approval to remove a child from his or her home because of safety concerns.



CPS makes reasonable efforts to safely maintain children with their families before a decision is made to remove a child.



To ensure that reasonable efforts are made to keep children in their homes, courts must approve all decisions to remove a child from their home.

FOSTER CARE 101:

Where Does a Child or Youth Live When Placed in Foster Care?



Kinship
Caregiver



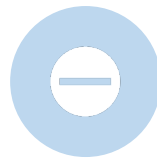
Foster Home



Emergency
Shelter



Group Home



Residential
Treatment
Centers (RTC)



Extended
Foster Care



Supervised
Independent
Living (SIL)
program



Permanency
Outcomes

Exiting Foster Care



Family Reunification



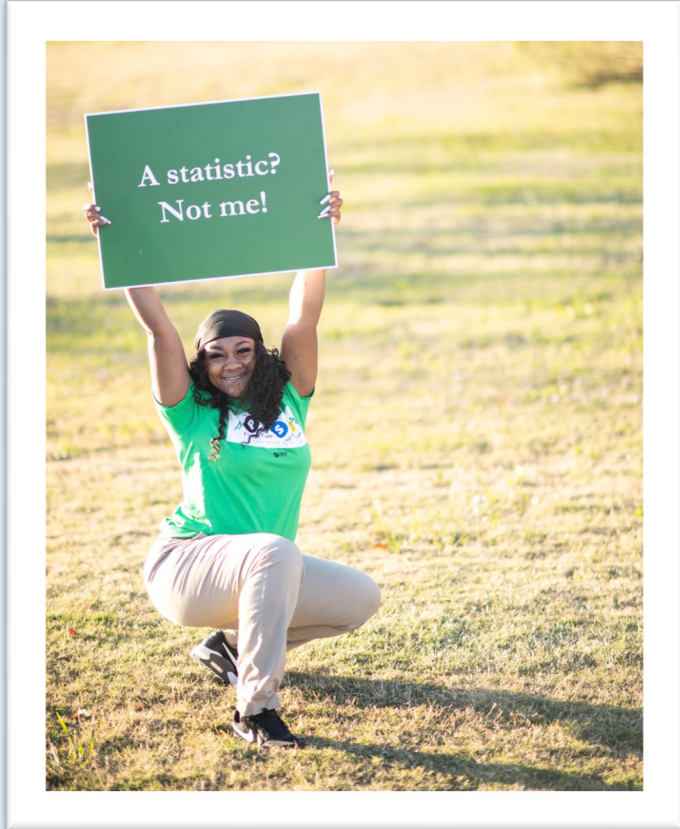
Adoption by relative,
kin, or unrelated
person



Permanent Managing
Conservatorship to
relative or suitable
individual



Another Planned
Permanent Living
Arrangement (e.g.
Independent Living)

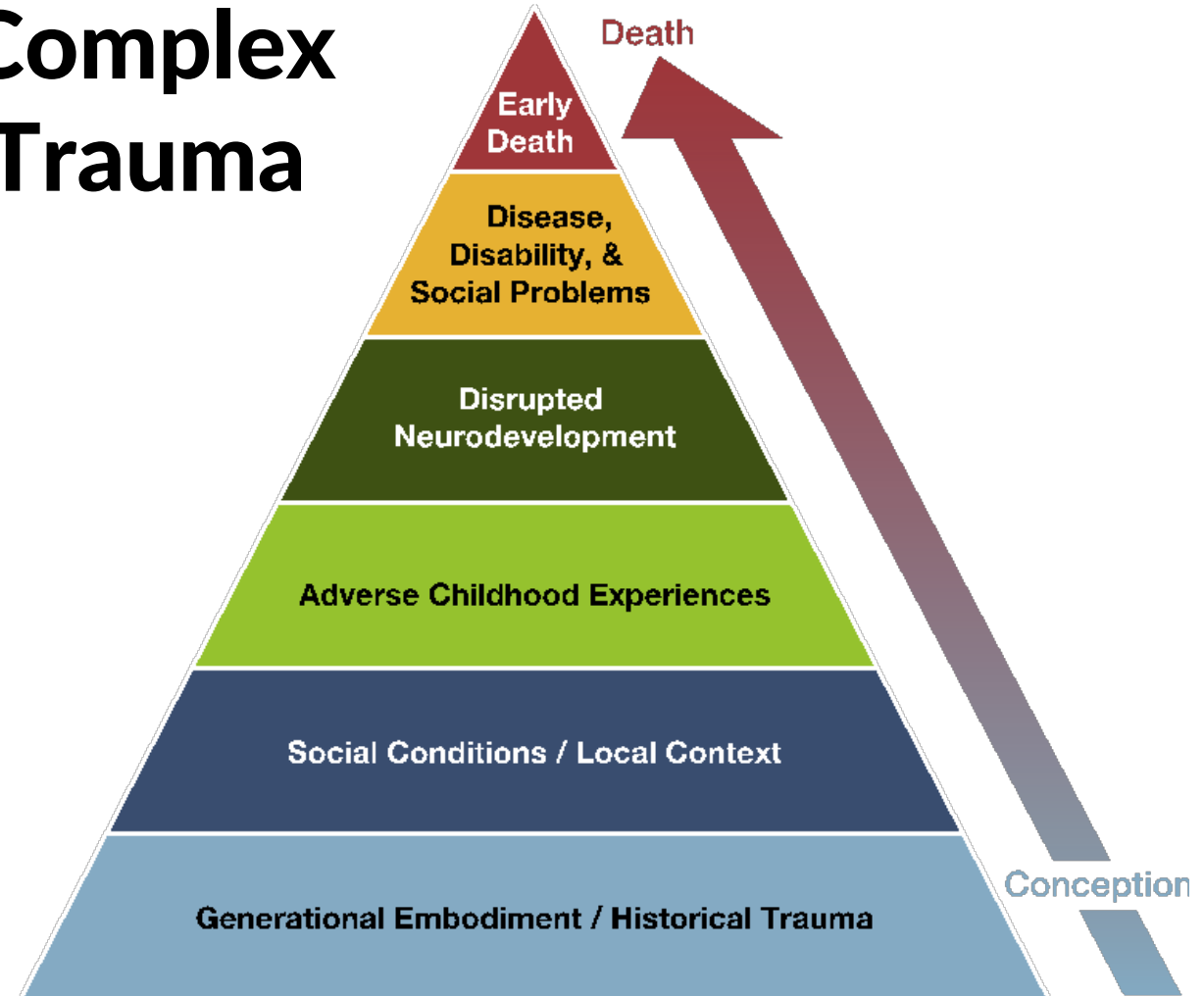


What Makes This Student Group Unique?



Understanding Complex Developmental Trauma

Adverse
Childhood
Experiences





The Effects of Trauma on the Brain

Understanding the neurobiology of trauma...

<http://trauma-recovery.ca/impact-effects-of-trauma/the-continuum-of-trauma/>





Overcoming the Trauma Paradox



Guiding Principles of Trauma Informed Care

SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach, 2014 <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4884/SMA14-4884.pdf>

Safety

Throughout the organization, staff and the people they serve feel physically and psychologically safe.

Trustworthiness and transparency

Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency and the goal of building and maintaining trust among staff, clients, and family members of those receiving services.

Peer support and mutual self-help

These are integral to the organizational and service delivery approach and are understood as a key vehicle for building trust, establishing safety, and empowerment.

Collaboration and mutuality

There is recognition that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making. The organization recognizes that everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach. One does not have to be a therapist to be therapeutic.

Empowerment, voice, and choice

Organization aims to strengthen the staff, client, and family members's experience of choice and recognizes that every person's experience is unique and requires an individualized approach. This builds on what clients, staff, and communities have to offer, rather than responding to perceived deficits.

Cultural, historical, and gender issues

The organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases, offers culturally responsive services, leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognizes and addresses historical trauma.

Each year approximately **1,200** youth age out of foster care in Texas.



Statewide Context Child Welfare:

Statistics Of Those Who Age Out – Outcomes At Ages 23/24

25% will experience homelessness before their 22nd birthday.

Within 12-18 months of leaving care

- 33% will be on some form of public assistance
- 40% will not have completed high school
- 50% will be unemployed

Within 18 months of leaving care

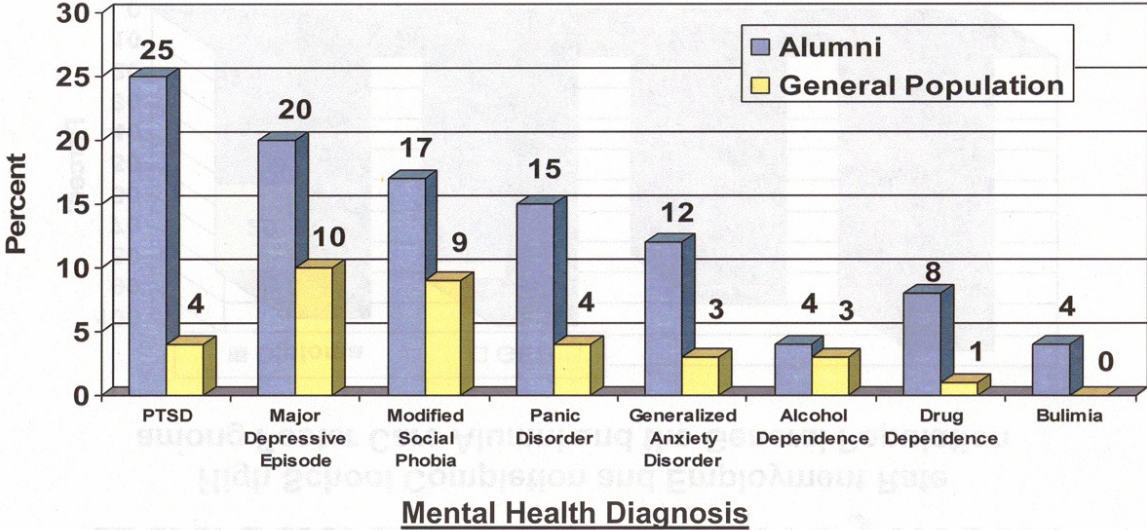
- 26% Of the young ladies will have a child outside of marriage.

70% of youth leaving foster care report a desire to attend college.

In reality, less than 3% actually obtain a college degree.

Mental Health

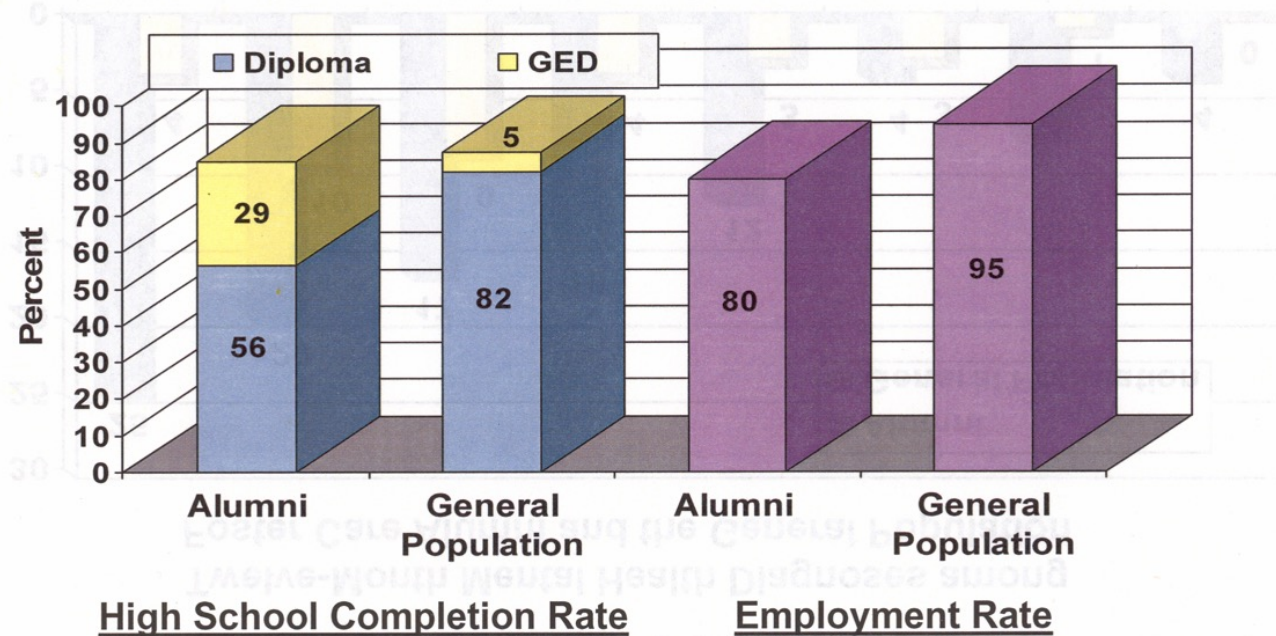
Twelve-Month Mental Health Diagnoses among Foster Care Alumni and the General Population



Source: Pecora, P. J., Kessler, R. C., Williams, J., O'Brien, K., Downs, A. C., English, D., White, J., Hiripi, E., White, C.R., Wiggins, T. & Holmes, K. (2005). *Improving Family Foster Care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study*. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs. www.casey.org

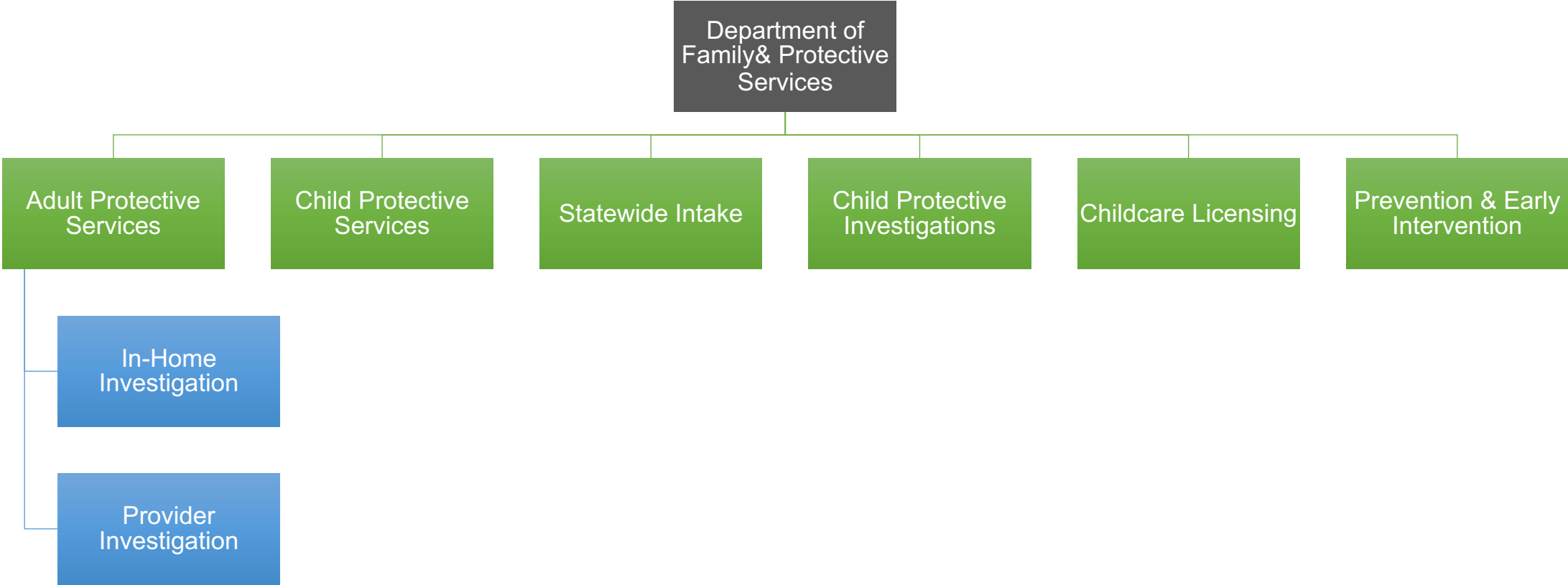
Education and Employment

High School Completion and Employment Rate among Foster Care Alumni and the General Population



Source: Pecora, P. J., Kessler, R. C., Williams, J., O'Brien, K., Downs, A. C., English, D., White, J., Hiripi, E., White, C.R., Wiggins, T. & Holmes, K. (2005). *Improving Family Foster Care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study*. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs. www.casey.org

Statewide Context Child Welfare: The TDFPS Umbrella

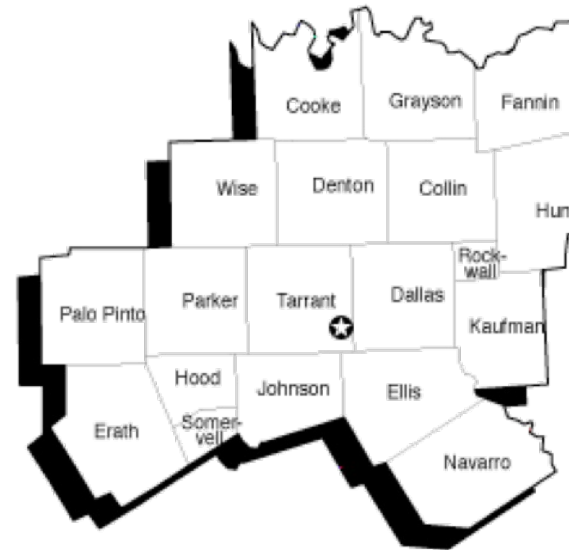


Statewide Context Child Welfare:

Texas Department Of Family & Protective Services Regional Map



Region 3



Overcoming Barriers: Stories from former foster youth...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ezUEiwCFTg>





Higher Education Foster Care Liaison

EDUCATION
Reach
for **TEXANS**

Texas Education Code Section 51.9356

Passed by the 84th Legislature (HB 3748) and requires:

- Each institution of higher education in Texas must appoint at least one employee to serve as a liaison for students formerly in the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Passed by the 86th Legislature HB 1702:

- Adds the following, "The institution shall identify those students from information provided in admissions or financial aid application or other available resources."
- Also includes information on training, publicizing campus resources, and foster care liaison information.



Texas Education Code Section 51.9356

This includes:

- Any public technical institute
- Public junior college
- Public senior college or university
- Medical or dental unit
- Public state college or any other educational institution as defined by law

Duties of the Higher Education Foster Care Liaison

Provide information to SEFC regarding support services

- Resources and Benefits provided through DFPS

Inform SEFC about other resources available at the institution

Provide other relevant information to assist the students



Duties of the Higher Education Foster Care Liaison

On campus:

- Coordinate interactions between SEFC and college and university staff/faculty who serve the specific needs of students (financial aid, housing, etc.)

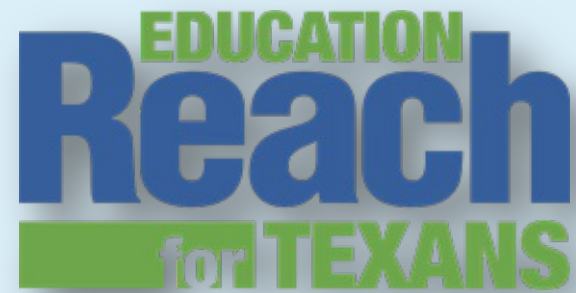
Off campus:

- Collaborate with higher education professionals interested in networking with SEFC across campuses
- Foster care liaisons at local independent school districts or charter schools
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Texas Education Agency
- Child welfare stakeholders including DFPS, Court Appointed Special Advocates, Child Placing Agencies, etc.





Campus Support



REACHing Past Red Tape



Identifying Students with Experience in Foster Care On Campus

 Request a list of students formerly in foster care using Tuition and Fee Waivers (Financial Aid, Registrar)

 Use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Request a list of Education and Training Voucher Recipients

 Admissions-Apply Texas list

 Cover your campus with posters, flyers, brochures

 Develop a network across campus (Campus Champions)

 New student orientation

Maintaining Student Privacy

- FERPA
 - Working with high school students
 - Students on college campuses and gaining access to information
 - Knowing who your FERPA people are
 - Legitimate educational interest



Casey Family Programs Supporting Success Model

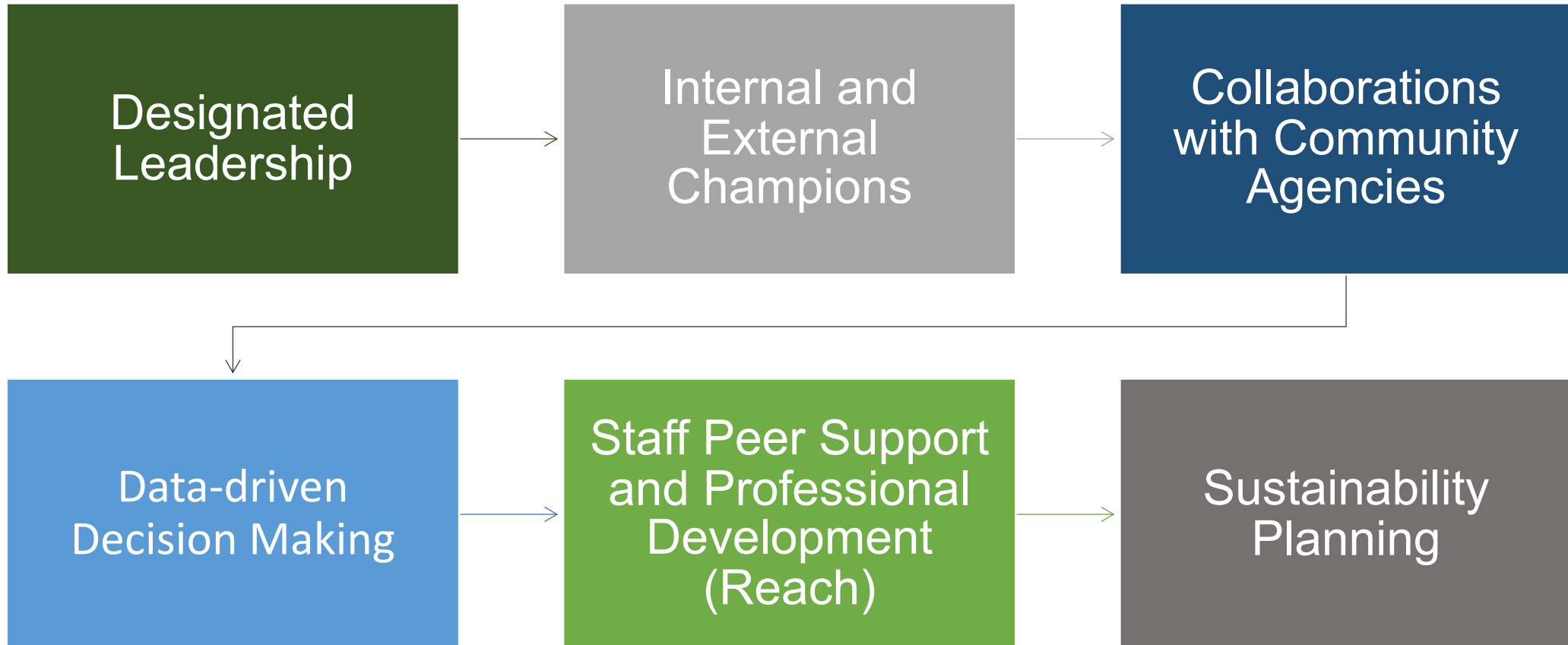
Designated Point of Contact

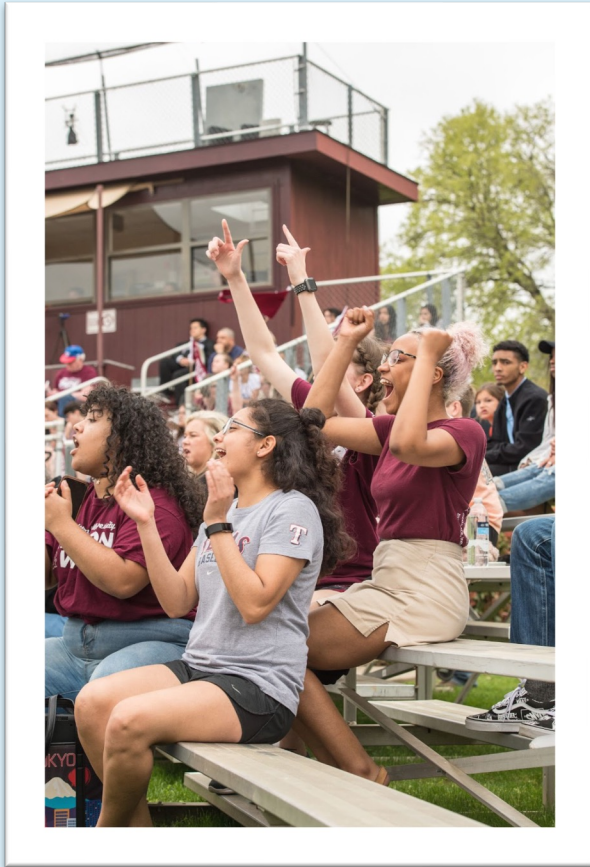
- Campus Champions
- Training of Campus Champions

Start Small and Prioritize Basic Needs First (Use Stakeholders to Assist with Prioritization)

- Phase 1: lay ground work (sustainability)
- Phase 2: year-round housing, financial aid, academic advising
- Phase 3: counseling, engagement in university, transition assistance

Core Elements For Program Development





Student Organizations & Engagement

REACHing Past Red Tape

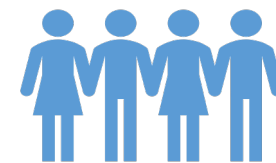
Engaging Students on Your Campus



- Have a Designated Point of Contact (Casey Family Programs Supporting Success)
- Recruit Campus Champions
- Form a Student Organization for students with a background in foster care
- Resource Provision (If you give it, they might come!)
- Campus Programming
 - Financial Literacy
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Life Skills Building
 - Career Planning
 - Tutoring/TRIO
 - Academic Advising

Student Organizations

- Dedicated to SEFC
- Can/should allies participate?
- Require additional support than traditional organizations
- Normalizing activity as a collegiate experience
- Helps students locate each other on neighboring campuses creating a network
- Isolating SEFC further?



Illusion Of Order

I'm a senior...

VP wants to
start...



Grant opportunity

I'm an office of one



“The world breaks everyone,
and afterward, some are
strong at the broken places.”

~ Ernest Hemingway



Helpful Resources



Education Reach for Texans

<http://www.educationreachfortexans.org/>



Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

<http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/financialaid/tofa2.cfm?ID=429>



Texas Foster Youth Justice Project

<https://texasfosteryouth.org/>



Transitional Living Services

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/



Casey Family Programs

<https://www.casy.org>

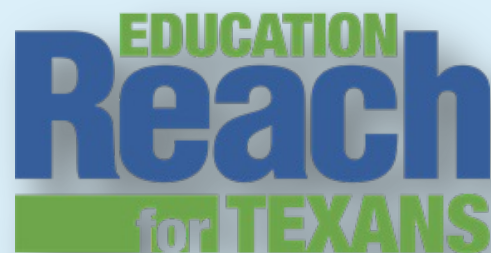


Together We Rise

<https://www.togetherwerise.org/about-us/>



Benefits



REACHing Past Red Tape





Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni

- Preparation for Adult Living (PAL)
- State of Texas Tuition and Fee Waiver
- Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV)
- PAL Transitional Living Allowance
- Supervised Independent Living Program
- Extended Foster Care
- Transition Centers
- Former Foster Care Children (FFCC) Healthcare Program and Medicaid
- Housing Vouchers via Foster (Youth to Independence, Family Unification Program and Project 811)
- Grants (Pell) and Scholarships



Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni: Preparation for Adult Living (Pal)

- The purpose of Preparation for Adult Living program is to help youth transition to a successful adulthood through coordinated permanency and transition planning as they leave foster care and after.
- The program provides services, benefits, resources, and supports to youth and young adults up to age 21. The PAL staff or Aftercare case manager serve as the subject matter experts for the Transitional Living Services Program.
- Services provided:
 - Transition Support Services
 - After Care Room and Board
 - Transitional Living Allowance (up to \$1,000)
 - State of Texas Tuition and Fee Waiver Letter
 - Chafee Education and Training Voucher
 - Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth
 - Former Foster Care Youth In Higher Education Healthcare Program
 - Extended Foster Care



Benefits Available To Foster Care Alumni: Tuition & Free Waiver Letter

- The waiver provides exemption of tuition and fees at Texas public institutions of higher education for youth formerly in Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) conservatorship, adopted youth, and certain other youth. Students must enroll in a state supported school or a dual credit course by their 25th birthday.
- There are two state laws that exempt or waive payment of tuition and fees at state supported colleges or universities for foster youth:
 - TEC 54.366 Exemption for Students Under Conservatorship of DFPS
 - TEC 54.367 Exemption for Adopted Students Formerly in Foster or other Residential Care

Fees that are required for educational purposes are covered with this waiver.

Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni: Education & Training Voucher (ETV)

ETV is a federally-funded, state-administered grant program for some youth or young adults who experienced foster care.

Eligible population includes youth 16+ currently in foster care, young adults who aged out of foster care, and those who were either adopted or subject to a Permanency Care Assistance agreement after the age of 16.

Based on the cost of attendance as established by higher education institutions, eligible youth may receive this assistance each year until their 23rd birthday to help reach their postsecondary educational goals at accredited or pre-accredited, nonprofit, private, or public institutions of higher education.

Students must submit a FASFA when applying for ETV.

Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni: PAL Transitional Living Allowance



Must have completed PAL training and aged out of care



Be in a Independent Living Situation



Must have been in paid placement 24 months prior to requesting



Must be attending school, working 20 hours a week, or attending vocational program



May receive up to \$1,000 in two payments of \$500

Benefits Available To Foster Care Alumni: Extended Foster Care

- A voluntary program that offers young adults (ages 18 up to 22) opportunities to continue their foster care placement and facilitate the transition to independence with DFPS supervision, if there is an available placement.
- To qualify, a young adult must have been in DFPS conservatorship the day before his or her 18th birthday.
- Criteria
 - 18 to 22 years old and...
 - Regularly attending high school or enrolled in a program leading toward a high school diploma or school equivalence certificate (i.e. GED)
 - 18 to 21 years old and ...
 - Regularly attending an institution of higher education or a post-secondary vocational or technical program (minimum 6 hours per semester); or
 - Actively participating in a program or activity that promotes, or removes barriers to, employment; or
 - Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
 - Incapable of doing any of the above due to a documented medical condition, which includes receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Benefits Available To Foster Care Alumni: Supervised Independent Living (SIL)

SIL is an option for young adults in Extended Foster Care to live in a variety of settings including apartments, dorms, and shared housing. SIL allows young adults to live independently with increased responsibility and without 24-hour supervision. Young adults placed in SIL settings receive minimum case management services.

Allows young adults to practice necessary independent living skills and achieve self-sufficiency in a supportive environment before leaving the placement.

While in SIL, young adults have increased responsibility such as managing their own finances, making their own medical appointments, finding their own means of transportation, buying and preparing their own food, and learning how to work with a landlord.

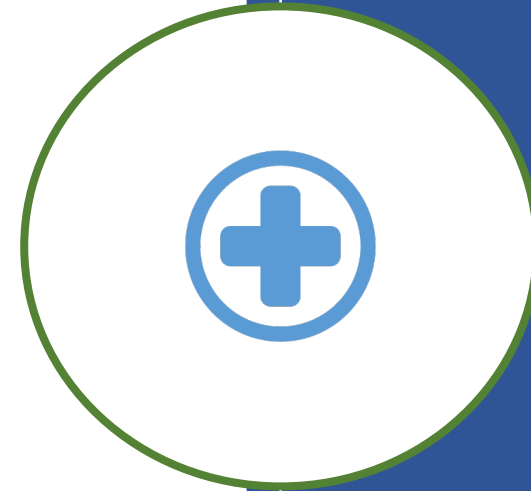
Case managers assist young adults with learning valuable life skills, engaging in community resources, achieving educational goals, and making connections to caring adults.

Housing Vouchers

- **Foster Youth To Independence (FYI) Vouchers**
 - Age 18 and not yet 24 years old
 - Was in foster care
 - Homeless or at risk of homelessness
 - Last 3 years, with possible 2 year extension (or until 24th birthday)
- **Family Unification Program (FUP) Vouchers**
 - Age 18 and not yet 24 years old
 - Was in foster care or will leave in 90 days
 - Homeless or at risk of homelessness
 - Last 3 years (or until 24th birthday)
- **811 Project Rental Agreement Program**
 - Age 18 to 62 years old
 - Youth with disabilities who were in foster care
 - Project based rental assistance for low income
 - No term (participant may remain until age 62)

Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni: Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth (MTFCY)

- MTFCY provides medical coverage to young adults ages 18 through 20 not eligible for the FFCC program because they were not receiving Medicaid at the time they aged out of foster care.
- Eligibility criteria:
 - 18 through 20 years of age
 - In Texas foster care at age 18, or older
 - No other healthcare coverage
 - Meet program rules for income; and
 - A U.S. Citizen or have a qualified alien status





Benefits Available to Foster Care Alumni: Grants (Pell) & Scholarships

Freshman Success Fund for Foster Youth

- Grant for first time college freshman formerly in foster care. Each year there will be four one-time grants of \$1,000 available for one young adults enrolling in their freshman year. These grants are to cover basic non-tuition related expenses such as books, supplies, computers, software, tools, uniforms, and transportation. Student must be enrolled in Texas state-supported college, university, or vocational/technical school that accepts the state college tuition and fee waiver.

C. Ed Davis-PAL Scholarship

- For basic non-tuition needs for former foster youth who are majoring in government, political science, history, or another pre-law field. Scholarships are for \$1,000 per academic year and are available to sophomore, junior, or senior year students.



Potential Challenges

- Identifying and locating students
- Engaging students and building trust
- Privacy issues and helping students avoid stigma
- Remembering the effects of and helping students cope with adverse childhood experiences and trauma
- Vulnerability