

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING RESOURCE FOR INDIVIDUALS AGING OUT OF THE FOSTER  
SYSTEM

by

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of the

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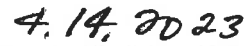
## APPROVAL

This scholarly project submitted by Stephanie Coauette is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Occupational Therapy Doctorate from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisor under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.



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Faculty Advisor



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Date

## PERMISSION

**Title:** Life Skills Training Resource for Individuals Aging Out of the Foster Care System

**Department:** Occupational Therapy

**Degree:** Occupational Therapy Doctorate

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project was to create a training resource for foster families regarding life skills for the population of individuals aging out of the foster care system. There is an identified need for resources for individuals who age out of the foster system for life skills training and basic activities of daily living (ADL) training (Paul-Ward & Lambdin-Pattavina, 2016). Aging out of the foster system means that an individual has turned 18 years old without a legal adoptive family taking responsibility for them (Scannapieco et al., 2007). There is a need for the individuals who are preparing to age out of the system to have life skills training and accessibility to local resources should they need help with daily life activities. Many of these individuals do not know how to navigate social systems as they do not have biological or legal support systems to reference for guidance (Scannapieco et al., 2007). The individuals aging out have no legal ties to the family that they are currently living with and there are few effective transitional programs to have been found useful for this population and the issues present. Independent living is a challenge that individuals aging out of the foster system face as it is unclear what path in life is going to be most fitting for many individuals (Scannapieco et al., 2007). There is an opportunity for the occupational therapy profession to support individuals aging out of the foster care system through numerous avenues including provision of a resource designed specifically for this population.

**Methodology:** A thorough literature review on the needs of individuals aging out of the foster system was completed as a precursor to an embedded experience at an agency that services foster youth who are preparing to age out of the foster system and after they have aged out. The literature review included review of, current trends, and problems related to what individuals need after aging out of the foster system. The occupation-based Person

Environment Occupation (PEO) model was used to guide the literature review and assist with navigating information and needs (Law et al., 1996). Development of this scholarly project occurred alongside a doctoral experiential placement which further informed the development of this project.

**Results:** This project outcome is an occupational therapy practice guide for leading life skills training sessions and/or providing resources for individuals who are aging out or have aged out of the foster system without legal guardianship or adoption happening prior to aging out. This guide is a resource that can be developed for local social service agencies to provide to individuals and families of those who are preparing to age out of the foster system to better the community as a whole and change lives of the individuals aging out.

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Chapter I Introduction provides an overview of the needs of the population of individuals who are experiencing foster care and are preparing to age out of the foster system. The needs of the individuals in North Dakota who choose to provide care for the foster youth population as foster parents are also addressed throughout this chapter. In 2020, there were currently 426,566 foster children in the United States who are aged 0-18 years old (Statista Research Department, 2022). Among these numbers, are youth who are preparing to age out of the foster system and nearing the 18 years old mark without an adoptive family leaving them with limited social supports and permanent connections. This scholarly project was created through a literature review and based on a needs assessment. The final project was finalized through an embedded learning experience at a partnering agency in North Dakota. Included at the end of Chapter I are key terms that are used throughout the entirety of the project.

Individuals in the foster care system who are nearing age 18 years old are identified as aging out of the foster care system or transitional age within the foster care system (Dorsey et al., 2008). Due to the unique life experiences of youth who enter the foster care system, there is a need for foster parents to be trained to successfully care for these youth as they are navigating living in new environments or with new people. As foster youth grow throughout their time spent in the foster care system, life skills and typical developmental milestones may not be achieved due to inconsistency in a natural living environment (Spinelli et al., 2020). If the foster care system as a whole in the United States can bring more trauma informed services into the lives of families who care for foster youth and provide adequate training for independent living, foster



families may be better equipped to serve this vulnerable population of youth who desperately need support (Dorsey et al., 2008; Spinelli et al., 2020).

The targeted population for this project includes foster parents in North Dakota who are caring for foster youth aged 13-18 years old without a legal adoptive family, otherwise known as aging out of the foster system. The client population includes those youth in the foster care system who are nearing the age of aging out of the foster care system (13-18 years old). These populations were chosen based on the services provided by a partnering agency and the accessibility to resources for the populations. The focus is on providing foster care providers with resources and information on how to elicit problem-solving skills while teaching life skills in the natural home environment. Included are activities, interventions and resources for the foster families that are to be used in collaboration with the foster youth within the home.

Based on the evidence gathered from a literature review, and specifically the evident need of life skills training for this population of foster youth, it was clear that the training begins with the foster family as this is where the foster youth will be spending a majority of their time. The product was intended to provide foster families with resources and activities regarding life skills that are most prevalent for needing resources within the agency. The life skills were selected based on feedback from foster families, foster youth, and agency stakeholders. The activities and resources are evidence-based and the document is to remain fluid to keep up with current trends. Provided below is a detailed description of the different aspects included in the product and how they were developed to increase occupational performance of the foster care youth (Law et al., 1996). The project was designed to be sustainable and can be revised as needed as trends within and needs of the foster care system change.

The Person Environment Occupation (PEO) model was used to guide the literature review and the product development. The PEO model is an occupational therapy model that emphasizes increasing occupational performance through the fit between person, environment, and occupation (Law et al., 1996). With each placement of a foster youth, the fit between the person (foster youth), environment (foster family), and occupation (life tasks) are considered by the social service agency (Dorsey et al., 2008; Law et al., 1996). The greater the fit is between these aspects, the better occupational performance will be achieved by the person (Law et al., 1996). The model was used to develop the product that is focused on aspects of the person (role, personality, cognition etc.), environment (physical, emotional, social, cultural, institutional), and occupation (tasks in everyday life), and how these can be blended together to create the best fit thus increasing occupational performance (actions and abilities in everyday life) (Law et al., 1996).

### **Key Terms**

These are terms used frequently throughout the project. To ensure accurate understanding and consistency throughout the definitions of each term is included below.

**Adoption:** A social, emotional, and legal process that involves legally taking responsibility for another individual who is under age 18 and raising the youth. All legal responsibilities of a parent for this youth are on the adoptive parent(s) (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020).

**Aging Out:** Anytime a youth exits a formal system of care usually due to a certain chronological age (Best & Blakeslee, 2020).

**Foster Care System:** Foster care is considered out of home care and is a temporary service that is provided by respective state licensed families or relatives of the foster youth (Best & Blakeslee, 2020; Paul-Ward & Lambdin-Pattavina, 2016).

**Foster Family:** The family that is licensed in their respective state and is caring for a youth who may be up to age 23 years in North Dakota (Best & Blakeslee, 2020; North Dakota Department of Human Services, 2016).

**Occupations:** Everyday activities that are done in a person's life that they must do, are expected to do, or want to do each day (American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 2020).

**Occupational Therapy:** A healthcare profession that involves assessment and interventions for individuals who want to recover from or maintain meaningful activities (occupations) that they want to continue doing (AOTA, 2020). Occupational therapy brings a unique scope of practice to various settings by incorporating meaningful occupations into interventions to enhance patient experience (AOTA, 2020).

**Transition Age Youth:** The age group of youth between ages 13-18 years who are preparing to exit the foster system either with or without an adoptive family or guardian (Courtney et al., 2012).

Chapter I Introduction was comprised of an introduction to the scholarly project. Chapter II Literature Review provides a review of published evidence starting with information on the foster care system in the United States, theoretical basis that guided the creation of the product, professional roles of individuals involved in a foster youth's life, and an overview of occupational therapy and how this profession has an opportunity to intervene with clinical expertise. Chapter III Methodology outlines the methods used to create the final product. Chapter IV Product provides an overview of the different chapters and the content included within each section of the final product. Finally, Chapter V Summary includes an overview of the strengths and limitations, suggestions for future use, recommendations, and a conclusion.

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

Chapter II literature review is comprised of a review of the published evidence regarding youth in foster care who are nearing the age of 18 years old and aging out of the foster care system and those who have already aged out of the foster care system. The literature review has been viewed through the lens of an occupational therapy model. The Person Environment Occupation (PEO) model is focused on occupational performance through analyzation of transactions between the person, environment, and occupation (Law et al., 1996). The PEO model has subcategories that lie within the three areas of the model. When referring to the *person* within this model, aspects regarding identity, experience, and abilities were analyzed (Law et al., 1996). Within the *environment* category, the physical, social, cultural, and socio-economic factors are included (Law et al., 1996). The construct of *occupation* refers to the functional tasks and activities in which the individual engages (Law et al., 1996). Within this scholarly project, the person will be referred to as individuals who are transitioning out of the foster system, the environment will be the local community, foster families, and agency workers and the occupation will be life skills and activities of daily living (Law et al., 1996).

The problem regarding lack of life skills training for the individuals aging out of the foster system has been addressed through the presentation of literature and conclude with a project introduction that is based on the needs assessed within this literature review. The headers present in this literature are aligned with the PEO model and sub headers address the problems and needs of the target population.

#### **Foster Care System in the U.S**

Children in the foster system are ages newborn through 18 years old unless they sign an agreement with their corresponding state social service agency re-enlisting them in the foster

care system until age 23 years old. The individuals who are the focus of this project within the foster system are of transitional age or aging out of the foster system, which is anywhere between 13-18 years old. Transitional age means that the individuals are at the age that requires they will soon exit the foster system which will result in them being without a legal or adoptive family (Paul-Ward & Lambdin-Pattavina, 2016). In short, they will be responsible for themselves. As of 2020 there were 55,905 foster children aged 15-18 years old in the United States (Statista Research Department, 2022). The foster youth are currently residing with local foster families, who are within a geographical range closest to the youth.

A foster care family is comprised of people (i.e., the family) who are licensed in their respective state and caring for a youth who may be up to age 23 years in North Dakota (Best & Blakeslee, 2020; North Dakota Department of Human Services, 2016). Licensed foster families must undergo training, inspections, and legal background checks to become licensed based on the state and county in which they serve. Each county within the state is responsible for creating their own protocol, alongside national laws, of procedures that each licensed foster parent must attain prior to caring for a foster child (Dorsey et al., 2008). Training for foster parents is federally mandated and supported by almost all states (Dorsey et al., 2008). There are many agency workers including case workers, social workers, state coordinators, and other support staff who work hard to ensure the needs of foster care youth are being met.

Social workers and case managers in each county where foster care services are provided have various job roles and caseloads depending on the need of the county and availability of staff. Case managers oversee each child's case within the system and are responsible for providing clinical and technical support to the child and foster family with whom the child is placed (Dauber et al., 2012). The case managers may provide in home visits, inspections,

appointment transportation for children in the foster system, and various other daily activities (Dauber et al., 2012). Social workers are responsible for checking in on the foster families living environments and making sure they are keeping up with the set protocol and standards, offering support and resources for foster families and children, and helping secure placement of a foster child with a family (Dauber et al., 2012).

### **Societal Barriers**

There is a societal problem that has been identified with the population of youth transitioning out of the foster system and that problem is that many of the individuals lack skills that are needed to support their success in life activities. Only 50% of youth who age out of the foster system have a General Educational Diploma (GED), meaning youth who age out of the foster system are automatically faced with the disadvantage in life skills as compared to those who graduate high school with a GED (Liu, 2020; Paul-Ward & Lambdin-Pattavina, 2016). A successful transition for this population during this time in their lives is fundamental for success in the future of their education, housing, and independent environments (Liu, 2020). It is important to address the needs of the youth aging out of the foster care system through changing the environment to help them thrive with the resources they are given. Perspectives of individuals in the foster care system are needed to develop programs that are client-centered, occupation-based, and aimed at promoting independence. There is an identified need and area of further exploration for the occupational therapy profession to contribute to the development of programs that support developing independence (Paul-Ward & Lambdin-Pattavina, 2016).

### **Relevance of Problem for Stakeholders**

The youth population of individuals transitioning out of the foster system have expressed a want of emerging gradually into adulthood rather than all at once at age 18 years old (Berzin et

al., 2014). Specifically, the youth feel “in between” when considering the roles of adolescents and adults (Berzin et al., 2014). This feeling is typical for individuals this age developmentally as they are developing critical thinking skills, entering independence, and developing an identity while integrating personal values, morals, and beliefs (Busch et. al., 2016). For the youth in foster care, their life experiences are congruent with those developmental stages but differ as they are shaped by unique experiences. The youth in foster care have similar characteristics around identity development, self-focus, instability, and optimism that are experienced by youth who are not experiencing foster care (Berzin et al., 2014).

### **Person**

The *person* within the literature represents the youth population that is preparing to transition out of the foster system (Law et al., 1996). Specifically for this project, the population is youth preparing for transitioning out of the foster system meaning they are nearing 18 years old without a legal guardian or adoptive family and will soon expire from the legal obligation of a foster family. Each year in the U.S., 20,000 children that are in foster care “age out” of the system (Courtney et al., 2012). Aging out of the foster system means that the foster youth will turn 18 years old while residing with a foster family, but the legalities surrounding the foster family’s responsibility for the foster child change. This is problematic as licensed foster parents are the primary contributor for educating the children in their home on appropriate life skills (Courtney et al., 2012). According to Courtney et al., (2012) social support was identified as a significant contributor when it comes to overall well-being and building life skills. Target areas for life skills are money management, food preparation, transportation and employment, educational planning, using community resources, interpersonal skills, legal skills, and parenting; if needed (Courtney et al., 2012). In the same study, Courtney et al., (2012) found 32% of foster

parents received professional training in teaching life skills to the foster children that were placed with the parents, which also means that 68% of foster parents received no professional training in teaching life skills to foster children. These statistics suggest there is a need for providing foster care providers educational opportunities about how to provide transition age youth with education regarding life skills that continue into the youths' lives after they age out of the foster care system.

Research has been published on educational programs that are provided to the population of individuals who are preparing to transition out of the foster system. The results of three randomized control trials showed that there is a significant gap in the educational programs that are provided to individuals living in foster homes with providing adequate life skills training including coping with emotions and self-esteem building (Berzin et al., 2014; Jordaan et al., 2018; Mohammadzadeh et al., 2019). Within these three studies, all individuals were between the ages of 18-25 years old with engagement in a life skills program. Results showed that those who engaged in the programs were better equipped to handle their daily stress, regulate their emotions in the long term, refrain from avoiding making decisions in short term, and make proper decisions in the short term than those in the control group (Berzin et al., 2014; Jordaan et al., 2018; Mohammadzadeh et al., 2019). Navigating life skills training within foster homes becomes a case-by-case basis for local foster care agencies to regulate depending on the life experiences of the foster child.

## **Environment**

The *environment* for all individuals is built upon many components including physical, social, cultural, and socio-economic factors (Law et al., 1996). The home environment regarding stability and consistency for the youth transitioning out of the foster system is crucial for



survival. Contextual factors including ever-changing physical environment has an impact on youth in foster care. With every changing physical environment, foster youth are having to build new relationships with social support including case managers, social workers, foster parents, peers at a new school, etc. (Leathers et. al., 2009). Environment includes where the individual will live upon aging out of the foster system, what supports and barriers they will have within their social network, physical resources, institutional environment (school, work), and routines in which they involve themselves in.

### ***Physical***

The physical environment is the home and tangible living environment in which the individual lives (Law et al., 1996). It can also be other physical settings in which the individual engages in activities such as a school, health care facility, etc. For youth aged 14-21 years old, skills development is best taught among peers in a natural environment (Dorsey et al., 2008). Learning alongside peers can happen at home, school, on sports teams, within academic clubs, or outside of institutional environments with friends. Prior to 21 years old it is important for this age group to develop problem solving skills and executive functioning processes that are necessary to live independently (Leeb et al., 2020). One way to simulate this in a foster home environment prior to the individual aging out of the foster system is for the foster parent(s) to observe life skills that the foster child currently possesses, then offer opportunities to learn in the home environment with “real life” situations. These situations may include learning how to change a smoke detector, how to budget for groceries, cooking, laundry, etc. Youth preparing to transition out of the foster system may not have access to or remember where they have received care or how to access their medical records because it may be inconsistent with many geographical changes, and case management changes (Leeb et al., 2020). When foster parents

cannot care for children effectively, they end up moving from foster home to foster home, sometimes leading to costly institutionalized environments with their behavior becoming more challenging for caregivers to provide appropriate care, making it less likely that the next foster parent will be successful in being able to maintain them in their home environment (Dorsey et al., 2008). The best way to accommodate for a changing physical environment is to assist the foster youth in making permanent connections with social supports that are embedded within each physical environment (Dorsey et al., 2008).

### ***Social***

The social environment is the connectedness between the person and other people within different physical environments (Law et al., 1996). Social supports that contribute to well-being are positive relationships that aid in supporting an individual's lifestyle. Better yet, if these supports are consistent and remain in place as a stable support for individuals aging out of the foster system, they become positive permanent role models who provide the individual with support in life. Social supports include people who are involved in the lives of an individual whom they keep in contact with and have a relationship with whether they are biologically or related or not. Social supports may include friends, teachers, foster parents, siblings, coaches, teammates, etc. Having appropriate social supports provides additional reinforcement and positive influences for the population of individuals who are preparing to transition out of the foster system.

Some local social supports are limited to individuals who have a specific diagnosis needing medical attention or extra support in institutional environments (Leeb et al., 2020). There are many children who are not formally diagnosed with a disorder or disability fall through the cracks with transition planning for specific criteria that is set in schools or

institutions (Leeb et al., 2020). There is evidence to support there is a higher mortality rate for individuals who do not have continuity with health care because information gets lost in translation from one health facility to the next (Leeb et al., 2020). These individuals are having to establish relationships with doctors and repeat their medical relations with each home change (Leeb et al., 2020). This process can be mentally and physically exhausting for this crucial transition period on top of all the other “normal” changes that come with transitioning to adulthood (Leeb et al., 2020).

Adolescents and young adults often engage in social learning as a primary mode of learning. According to Mohammadzadeh et al. (2019), adolescents living in a foster care home environment learn best from their peers. Peers may be other students at school who are around the same age, or other youth age individuals engaged in the same activities as those who are in the foster system preparing to transition out of foster care. Similarly, researchers have found that in life skills group training programming, skills that involved peer feedback and learning from peers was the most effective in carry over of information later in life (Mohammadzadeh et al., 2019). The youth involved in Mohammadzadeh et al. (2019)’s research engaged in the life skills training program and provided feedback regarding the program’s efficacy and areas for improvement. These same programs have increased the emotional wellbeing of the children living outside of their biological homes or in an institutionalized environment (Mohammadzadeh et al., 2019). As youth experiencing foster care, they may have had to mature faster emotionally and in their life roles as compared to their peers for survival (Kelly & Simmel, 2020; Mohammadzadeh et al., 2019). Attaining permanent social connections as other aspects of the environment are changing provides consistency and support for the youth experiencing foster care. Even though a foster youth may age out of the foster system, previous foster care providers

are encouraged to keep in contact with the youth (if the situation is appropriate) so as to be a permanent support for the individual who experienced foster care.

### ***Cultural***

The cultural environment relates to individual's religious practices, values, morals, and personal beliefs (Law et al., 1996). Developing the adequate skills needed to thrive can help this population increase self-esteem and decrease anxiety (Kelly & Simmel, 2020; Leeb et al., 2020; Mohammadzadeh et al., 2019). Foster parents are the primary influencers on the children residing in their home environment and thus influences the child's cultural environment. Having a supportive cultural environment and healthy habits and routines provides a sense of consistency for the population of youth transitioning out of the foster system. If the population of youth experiencing foster care can be equipped with interpersonal skills, habits, and routines related to the ability to live independently prior to aging out of the system, they may have a smoother transition to independent adulthood.

Often, the first step in aging out of the foster care system is finding housing (Brisson et al., 2020). This can be a difficult aspect of independent living to tackle for youth who do not have experience living on their own and have to quickly transition to fulfilling a new adult role; one that is independent of their foster family from who they no longer have legal support (Brisson et al., 2020). If this population is equipped with the necessary tools regarding personal skills, beliefs, and resources they should be more likely to be able to fulfill their new independent adult life role (Brisson et al., 2020).

### ***Socioeconomic***

The socioeconomic environment relates to the resources available to the person and the opportunities they may have due to monetary value (Law et al., 1996). Accessing proper and

consistent medical care is essential for adolescents and adults to achieve long-term health (Leeb et al., 2020). There are many state and local funding opportunities for the population of transition age youth in the foster system. State funding has been extended (including adoption assistance and kinship guardian payments) to age 21 years old, however many children aging out of the foster system at age 18 years old may be expected to be fully independent (Kelly & Simmel, 2020). According to Kelly and Simmel (2020), while there are resources and transitional programs available, many of them are ineffective for the intended purpose. There are over 28,000 children aging out of foster care with significant lack of resources and knowledge of services/life skills (Kelly & Simmel, 2020). Every year many governmental dollars are spent on the post home transition of foster care youth (Chor et al. 2008). There is money to be spent elsewhere to invest in the well-being of the children who are utilizing the monetary sources for housing, education, and other things (Chor et al. 2008). There is opportunity for investing in transitional programs and areas for professionals to intervene their expertise to help build personal skills rather than provide monetary sources (Chor et al. 2008).

### ***Resources for the population***

Establishing routines and habits is an important part of building programming for youth transitioning out of the foster care system. Armstrong-Heimsoth et al., (2021) purported that “the need for normalcy was highlighted as foster youth performed their daily routines often in different environments as they frequently moved from one living situation to the next. Normalcy was also needed in social contexts to model relationships and behaviors” (p. 8). In short environment plays an important role in the success and failure of thriving in life for youth transitioning out of the foster system (Armstrong-Heimsoth et al., 2021). A direct quote from a participant in a study by Berzin et al. (2014) captured the experience of a youth in transition, “I

am an adult . . . at the same time, I am still learning, still a child.” (p.624). This quote illuminates the need for direction or a program for youth aging out of the foster care system as they navigate adulthood.

## **Interventions**

There is a lack of evidence for the type of training and interventions that foster parents receive regarding developmental milestones in children, and specific skills that they should acquire over time as they age. The Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) and Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) are the most commonly used programs for educating foster care providers in the United States (Dorsey et al., 2008).

MAPP can be used for partnerships among formal organizations like foster care agencies and local community resources (healthcare, funding, etc.) (National Association of County & City Health Officials, 2008). This approach is ideal to use when developing programs that intend to serve a population of individuals that need many different avenues of resources. Individuals preparing to transition out of the foster system need many supports and resources, and few organizations can be the sole provider for these many resources. It is necessary to partner with the resources available in a geographical location to serve this population of individuals at a time when they most need support.

The PRIDE training is comprised of a 9-session training to aid the licensing process for foster families in North Dakota (North Dakota Department of Human Services, 2016). North Dakota is one of the six states that uses the PRIDE model to train potential foster families (North Dakota Department of Human Services, 2016). Within the model in North Dakota, foster parents are educated on the competencies that are necessary to become a successful foster family, the

importance of family relationships and roles, attachment, loss, discipline, and preparing for changes (North Dakota Department of Human Services, 2016). This model is used for families that are preparing to assist a foster child in a transition whether it be to another foster home or back into the biological familial home (North Dakota Department of Human Services, 2016).

Digital life skills programming is an alternative avenue that involves resources online for teaching life skills rather than attending formal in person training (Paz Castro et al., 2022).

Adolescents who participated in a digital life skills program that aimed to prevent substance use and promote mental health engaged with the intervention (Paz Castro et al., 2022). This means that incorporating a digital element to intervention with this population is effective at teaching valuable skills that are transferrable in multiple environments. Efforts must be made to ensure that interventions are engaging and powerful across different educational levels. Results indicate that higher engagement with digital life skills programs could be associated with receiving the intended outcomes for the population (Paz Castro et al., 2022). The digital element of this intervention added a social network for members to engage online and support one another through sharing similar life experiences.

As modern technology is becoming advanced, an easily accessible platform for training both foster youth and foster families happens digitally. Creating a more cohesive training for life skills is needed to assist youth who are preparing to age out or after they have aged out of the foster care system. Information regarding money management, obtaining housing, maintaining a home, transportation, education, and work are some of the areas lacking within current training programs.

### **Problem Statements & Areas of Need**

Overall, while there are valuable programs in place for provision of education of foster families and youth there is a lack of programming available for teaching life skills to the population of youth preparing to age out of the foster system. Programming for this population is best achieved through collaboration between the foster family, child, and social service agency workers. There are gaps in training and carry-over of information for foster families that are caring for individuals preparing to transition out of the foster system (Paz Castro et al., 2022). Training sessions vary in terms of foundations of development and their purpose. Some training sessions that are currently being employed in various states, are not evidence based and require ongoing research to determine if they are effective (Dorsey et al., 2008). According to Dorsey et al. (2008), it is extremely beneficial for all parties involved to use evidence-based interventions and educational sessions to have effective outcomes for both foster parents and the children living with them. There is also a need for specific resources to aid foster families in successfully caring for the individuals close to aging out of the foster system. The resources that are needed involve adequate life skills training that can happen in the most natural environment where the individuals spend the majority of their time and can use the skills in an authentic environment

There is a need for caregiver training and family training that inform foster families and the children that they are caring for about transitional resources and advocacy for consistency (Dorsey et al., 2008). Transition planning may be used within a life skills training course for individuals lacking the necessary skills they need to be equipped with to live independently (AOTA, 2020). Transition planning may include a referral to an occupational therapy practitioner with clinical expertise in what it takes to gain the necessary life skills to thrive (AOTA, 2020). Life skills are the set of skills needed to take care of oneself or live independently and may include but are not limited to personal care, daily routine, critical



thinking, problem-solving, coping and planning that may be adapted based on each individual's unique need (Prajapati et al., 2016).

### **Needs of Foster Youth & the Interprofessional Team**

The needs of foster youth are being constantly addressed by foster families, case managers, social workers, and school professionals. There is no doubt that the children experiencing foster care are looked after by many individuals with specialized training to facilitate the youth's development.

Activities of laily Living (ADL's) are daily activities that someone will engage in to support self-care or are necessary for survival (AOTA, 2020; Armstrong-Heimsoth et al., 2021). ADL's include personal hygiene, eating, grooming, feeding, and many other activities that someone will engage in each day. There is a need for consistent routines for completing ADL's with ever changing environments for transition age youth. Evidence is consistent with the assumption that these children need guidance and rules for transition services. The goal of the team and foster care system that is providing care for a foster youth is reunification with the originally family and home (Brown et al., 2014).

The roles of the professionals in a foster child's life may differ within different states and agencies based on policy and county. The role of the case manager is to oversee the child as they transition from different foster homes and provide resources to the family as well as assisting with appointments and any other assistance the foster family may request (Brown et al., 2014). The role of the social worker is advocating for the individual experiencing foster care and keeping safety at the forefront of the services they provide (Brown et al., 2014). This group of professionals may be referred to as the resource workers and remain the direct point of support for foster families (Brown et al., 2014). Embedded within these agencies are providers who train

and educate foster families, these providers may be individual people, agencies, or other outside resources. There is an opportunity for occupational therapy practitioners to contribute to the work of the team in facilitating the individual's growth and development through the provision of clinical expertise and resources regarding education and learning translation in the natural environment specifically for the population of individuals preparing to transition out of the foster system. Occupational therapy as a profession provides individuals with the experience to engage in meaningful life roles and routines that evolve into the identity of an individual. Life skills are essential in developing a personal identity and allowing people to reach their highest potential.

### **Occupational Therapy**

According to the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) (2020), Occupational therapy (OT) is a profession dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals through engagement in valued occupations. Occupations are things such as self-care activities, personal hygiene, dressing, eating, and various other activities that one would engage in over the course of each day/night, including sleep. Occupations are at the core of each individual's identity and personal beliefs (AOTA, 2020). There is a need for education on skills regarding budgeting, seeking employment, and life skill development for independent living (Paul-Ward & Lambdin, 2016). For youth experiencing transitions out of the foster system, occupational therapy could fulfill a unique role with facilitating the transition process and the skill development that these individuals need to function as adults (AOTA, 2020; Magnuson, & Mohler, 2011).

Occupational therapy as a profession has an opportunity to intervene as transitional care professionals for supporting the youth who are aging out of the foster care system in developing life skills as a measure to improve occupational outcomes as these individuals age out of the

foster system or preparing to do so. While occupational therapy practitioners are qualified to address the needs of young adults who are transitioning out of the foster care system, but the profession has been lacking in this specific field. There is a need for program development for this population, and for life-skills.

### **Conclusions**

The most recurring areas of need within the literature review was the absolute need for a life skills program for the population of individuals preparing to transition out of the foster system (Kelly & Simmel, 2020; Leeb et al., 2020; Mohammadzadeh et al., 2019). Each child within the foster system comes from a different home life background and engages on a different journey within the foster system. These individuals need to be provided with the appropriate resources so that they can thrive in their environments and have the opportunity to further build life skills that may still need development, skills that may have been hampered in the individual's journey within the foster system (Dauber et al., 2012; Dorsey et al., 2008). All aspects of these individuals' environments are changing with each foster family placement change that they undergo (Dauber et al., 2012; Mohammadzadeh et al., 2019). Accompanying the changes in environments are the negative mental health aspect that foster children experience due to childhood trauma and everchanging environments that were described throughout published sources (Dorsey et al., 2008; Kelly & Simmel, 2020).

The experience of training regarding life skills and providing support to foster child placements varies across the nation (Courtney et al., 2012; Leeb et al., 2008). Some aspiring foster parents are required to attend classes and training regarding life skills and others are not based on state and county requirements (Courtney et al., 2012). More than two-thirds of foster parents do not complete professional training related to teaching life skills (Courtney et al.,

2012). Leeb et al., (2008) stated that access to comprehensive and coordinated programs and services as well as provider training was limited and needs to be addressed to by social service agencies.

There is a need for occupational therapy practitioners to make a difference in the transition age youth aging out of the foster system through developing a daily routine that can be done in a variety of environments and remain consistent with the person even though their environment is changing. There is a need for clear rules when it comes to providing services for the youth population that is transitioning out of the foster system (Armstrong-Heimsoth et al., 2021). Instability is another common theme among the youth transitioning out of the foster system (Berzin et al., 2014; Liu, 2020). Instability regarding various environments for living and lack of consistent routine for youth in this age category may lead to never developing the skills necessary to thrive in life. There is an absolute need for this population regarding resources and unique programming that can be made available and accessible to them and to foster families who care for them, to ensure they will not miss out on developing crucial life skills that are essential for independent survival.

The purpose of this literature review was to provide an overview of individuals in the foster system who are transitional age preparing to exit the foster system and to identify the gaps in services intended for those individuals. The secondary intent was to highlight the opportunities of occupational therapy practitioners to intervene prior to developing a resource for the targeted population. There are three primary conclusions that have arisen within this literature review. The first need is stability and continuity of services and resources regarding life skills and navigating adulthood for youth aging out of the foster system (Dauber at al., 2012; Dorsey et al., 2008). The second is life skills training for foster children prior to aging out of the foster system

and learning how to navigate the resources available while being left with limited legal supports. Lastly there is a clear need for advocacy for the population of individuals preparing to age out of the foster system and bringing awareness to the barriers that they are faced with outside of their control. Chapter II Literature Review was comprised of evidence supporting the clear need for effective programs and resources for life skills training within the population of individuals who are preparing to age out of the foster system without a legal guardian. Chapter III Methods includes an overview of the processes used within this scholarly project.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

Chapter III Methodology consists of the process of topic selection, literature review steps, and development of the product. The topic was chosen due to my personal experience with individuals experiencing foster care, and even deeper passion for the population of individuals who age out of the foster system without a legal guardian. The purpose of this project was to develop a resource to be used with foster families who are hosting individuals in foster care who are preparing to age out of the system, the individuals in the foster system who are considered preparing to age out of the foster system are 13 years old to 23 years old. I conversed with individuals at local resource centers who provide services for this population and engaged in discussions about their personal experiences and where they saw the need for occupational therapy to intervene.

Prior to beginning this project, a literature review matrix was compiled between May 2022 and November 2022. This consisted of locating evidence pertaining to the topic of interest being foster care youth aging out of the foster system and life skills within that population. Journal searches were conducted through using the Cumulated Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), PubMed, Google Scholar, OT Seeker, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), and UND Scholarly Commons. Key terms included in the search were *aging out*, *transitioning out of foster care*, *life skill development*, *foster children aging out of the foster system*, *life skills interventions*, *occupational therapy*, and *person environment occupation model*. The first phase of the needs assessment was fulfilled and there was an identified need after completing the literature review.

### **PEO Model**

I utilized the Person Environment Occupation (PEO) to guide my literature review and search because of the similarities between this model and the many impacts occupation and environment has on a foster child. The PEO model is focused on occupational performance through analyzation of transactions between the person, environment, and occupation (Law et al., 1996). The PEO model has subcategories that lie within the 3 areas of the model. When referring to the person within this model, aspects regarding identity, experience, and abilities are analyzed (Law et al., 1996). Within the environment category, the physical, social, cultural, and socio-economic factors fall inside (Law et al., 1996). When looking at occupation, this refers to the functional tasks and activities that the individual engages in (Law et al., 1996). The PEO model has guided this project as it will be useful to identify the fit between the person, environment, and occupation. This model will also help me analyze the transactions between these three aspects. Using the PEO model, a program developed targeted at building life skills and increasing accessibility to resources will be made.

The second phase of the needs assessment was gathering feedback from the agency stakeholders including case workers, independent living coordinators, Chafee program supervisors, and social workers to gain their perspective on what they feel a need for serving the population of youth aging out of the foster system is. Gathering feedback occurred through in person meetings with individual workers including the foster parent licensing team, and also in group settings with agency staff across North Dakota. Discussions were informal and allowed for open discussion among the staff where more ideas and areas of needs arose. As the discussions occurred, I took notes that were later referenced when developing the product.

The third phase was the development of the product considering the literature that was reviewed and what arose as the outcome of conversations with agency stakeholders. Within the

evidence I reviewed, some factors were presented that I need more information on that is limited in research evidence. The most prevalent piece of information that we do not know is exact statistics regarding youth in the foster system that are exposed to community resources and programs related to life skills. Another area of need while discussing with the agency stakeholders is that the PRIDE training may be outdated and there is room to grow in developing a program specifically related to teaching life skills within the natural home environment. Multiple drafts were constructed and feedback from the site supervisor, faculty advisor, and peers was given to aid in the final construction of the project.

### **Final Product**

The final product title was “Fostering Independence: A Guide to Help Foster Parents Navigate Teaching Life Skills to Youth Aging out of the Foster System”. Included in the guide are multiple activities that are split up by chapter regarding specific life skills. In the appendices of the guide is a resource for case managers who are navigating the agencies educational program including resources that are organized to assist with identifying where and what classes can be used for specific topics. There is also a youth resource guide that is meant to be given to the foster youth to serve as a starting point for building the network of local resources and assist with identifying who to reach out to for problems or concerns in everyday life. The last resource in the appendices is a developmental milestones guide and age appropriate activity handout for foster parents who are struggling with identifying problem behaviors and when to be concerned about a developmental milestone.

### ***Parent Guide***

The first part of the product is the parent guide that was created to be distributed either online or in person to foster families who are requesting more resources for caring for youth who



are preparing to age out of the foster system. Included in the guide are multiple resources and activities for foster families and youth to use in collaboration with their foster youth regarding money management, employment, education, transportation, and home management. The activities were created in collaboration with the agency supervisor and utilizing occupational therapy textbooks. The font, pictures, colors, and readability were tailored to the population using resources for education (Bastable et al., 2020).

A motivation and self-care components were added after multiple conversations and meetings with agency staff regarding common themes among the population of foster care youth who are preparing to age out of the foster system. After presenting to the staff about what occupational therapy is there were many individuals who expressed that motivation and self-care were components of care that are lacking and affect many areas of occupation. The activity pack was created through the lens of PEO and separated regarding the person, environment, and occupation (Law et al., 1996). It was created with the intention that the activities can be used in conjunction with each other or independently to create the best fit for the person completing the activities. Developing this resource was done in collaboration with the agency stakeholders and through utilizing occupational therapy specific resources. Positive affirmations have been shown to help individuals with overcoming self-doubt and increasing positive thoughts that translate into positive actions (De Buissonje et al., 2017). The positive affirmation activity was added to increase confidence and motivate the person completing the activity to do good things. An activity that was developed after this was to take this and create a vision board to place in the home environment. Having the positive affirmations displayed as a visual cue may elicit positive thoughts and actions.

### ***Resources for Case Managers***

With developing resources for foster families, there was a clear need to develop something to equip case managers with regarding resources for the population of youth preparing to age out of the foster system. The idea to create a developmental milestones guide for this population of youth came to light after discussion the needs of the agency with the foster care licensing director. She stated that many parents are not prepared to take in a foster youth who is preparing to transition out of the foster system so having a quick reference guide for things to “expect” from these youth would be a valuable resource for foster families. In collaborating with a peer who is completing the DEP at a foster care agency, we were able to share resources and add to each other’s products to come up with beneficial resources that are specific to each of our agencies (Knust, 2023; Myott et al., 2016).

Another tool that was created for case managers was a quick reference guide for resources including presentations and handouts that are available within the agencies training program, regarding specific concerns that arise while caring for foster care youth. The quick reference guide is made to help case managers navigate online resources and share them with the foster families they serve, or to educate the case manager on common situations that arise so they are better equipped to handle them.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Throughout development of these resources, readability was considered through the “Word” program to produce material that is appropriate for the intended audience. Edits, colors, fonts, and words were decided using this tool and the readability resources in a textbook (Bastable et al., 2020). Ethical considerations for the product development remained central to beneficence in occupational therapy practice meaning to protect the population of youth experiencing foster care. Though there are many resources available to foster families, there are

areas that are lacking and need representation especially regarding life skills and the transition out of a foster home. Another ethical consideration throughout the development of this product was autonomy and respecting the privacy of clients as well as the foster families (AOTA, 2020). Lastly fidelity was considered as the development of this product included many ongoing conversations with staff, foster families, and clients within the agency (AOTA, 2020).

## **Chapter IV**

### **Product**

Caring for youth aging out of the foster system can be a tricky and uncharted path for foster parents to follow. The youth who are preparing to age out of the foster system often have lived in many different home environments with many different life exposures, leading to inconsistent learning and lack of adequate life skills needed to live independently. The product I developed for the site is a guide for foster parents who are caring for youth aging out of the foster system. The guide will be given to foster parents who request additional resources after completing the state required training to become a foster parent. Specifically, the guide will be used for parents who are caring for youth aged 13 years old to 23 years old who are not considered likely to be adopted by a legal guardian or foster parent. The reason this guide is created for those aged 23 years old and not 18 years old is because the partnering agency provides resources to former foster care youth up until they reach 23 years old.

The project has many resources for foster parents to use themselves or use collaboratively with the foster children that they currently have. The guide is for teaching life skills within the natural home environment that can later be translated into the real world upon aging out of the foster system. The specific tasks and activities were created and included based on conversations with current foster parents, licensed social workers case managers, and foster parent licensing staff. This project was decided through ongoing collaboration between a community agency that serves the foster youth population who are aging out of the foster system in a rural area as well as with case managers and social workers who work directly with this population of youth. The discussions and collaboration among this group resulted in the need for the agency being a guide for teaching life skills and problem-solving within the natural environment for the population of

youth preparing to age out of the foster system. The theoretical framework that guided this project is PEO. The PEO model was used to conceptualize and articulate the best fit between the person, environment, and occupation within everchanging environments ultimately resulting in increased occupational performance (Law et al., 1996). The final guide consists of life skills activities and resources regarding transportation, education, employment, money management, home management, and motivation and self-care, a case manager reference sheet, and an age expectations reference sheet.

### **Parent Guide**

The parent guide is comprised of different activities and ideas that foster parents can include while caring for the foster children who are currently in their home. The title of the parent guide is “Fostering Independence: A Guide to Help Foster Parents Navigate Teaching Life Skills to Youth Aging out of the Foster System”. The activities were selected with considerations for occupations and life skills while collaborating with site staff about what topics of education they feel is best for parents to be equipped with on top of the required licensing process for foster care youth who are preparing to age out of the foster care system (AOTA, 2020). The occupations have been split up into chapters, including the corresponding activities within each chapter. Independent living is something that happens life-long and cannot be limited to set “skills” that can be conquered to be successful with living independently. The purpose of this parent guide is to elicit problem-solving skills within the home that the foster youth can learn prior to moving out of the foster home and living on their own. The guide is designed to translate to the agencies training program to be carried on and assigned to foster families in the future and to be a resource that is available to those who need it.

### ***Transportation***

Included in the transportation chapter of the guide are topics regarding transportation and community navigation. First there is a section on getting a drivers permit and how a youth should begin this process. Next, there is a section on getting a driver's license. The activities are meant to assist the foster youth in attaining a driver's license or using public transportation to get around in the community. Included in this chapter are links for resources in North Dakota that can be used to get a driver's license. The section is about filling a gas tank and how the conversation can be initiated with important facts about filling a car gas tank included. These sections can be used as a conversation guide and they can be simulated in the community. There are objectives at the beginning of the chapter to measure the foster youths understanding of the information presented.

### ***Money Management***

Included in the Money Management chapter of the parent guide is first an activity for grocery shopping and using the activity for building a grocery list for one person that can be done prior to going to the grocery store. There are recommendations within this section for how much money should be allotted for this activity. Next, there is information presented about how to start a savings account and who is appropriate to reach out to for this task. Many local banks in North Dakota will offer services for teaching budgeting skills. There are links for resources and informative videos on applying for a credit card and how to file taxes included in this section. The sections were decided based on the need of the agency and common issues that were brought to attention. The tasks for the foster parents in this chapter include explaining why paying bills is necessary and demonstrating money management tasks in everyday living. There are measurable objectives at the beginning of the chapter for the foster parent to check the youths understanding of the topic presented.

### ***Employment***

Included in the Employment chapter is an activity and resources for building a resume along with links for templates that explain in depth about what should be included on a professional resume. There is an activity for career planning and exploring different interests that can be integrated in a professional career. A link has been included in this chapter for a North Dakota government website on how to attain a Real ID and a checklist for obtaining important documents that you will need to apply for this ID. Tasks for parents in this chapter include monitoring computer usage when necessary and assisting the youth in setting up various accounts. There are measurable objectives listed at the beginning of this chapter to check the youths understanding of the information presented by the foster family.

### ***Education***

The Education chapter of this parent guide is specifically made for foster youth after high school. There are measurable objectives listed at the beginning of this chapter to check the youths understanding of the information presented by the foster family. The first activity included is a checklist for applying to school after high school. This school can be a trades school, university, cosmetology school, two year programs etc. This section includes a link for applying for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and instructions on what to do if the foster youth is part of different programs that are offered by this agency. There is an activity in this chapter for exploring different majors and minors that are typically offered at schools.

### ***Home Management***

Included in the *Home Management* chapter are objectives listed at the beginning with bullet points on important tasks that are within home management. The sections represent

different tasks that need to be done for managing a home, these sections are applicable to apartments and other rented living spaces.

Included in the *Home Management* chapter of the parent guide is a medication management reference guide that can be used by case managers, parents, and foster youth for managing medication in a new environment. When a living environment changes, typically so do daily routines. Using this medication management guide may be useful with remembering to take medication and developing a new daily routine in a new environment after aging out of the foster system and home. Case managers may use this with a foster youth who has already aged out of the foster system if they express concern with managing a medication schedule.

Another resource included in this chapter is a cleaning schedule that can be followed and used by an individual in foster care who is preparing to age out or has already aged out of the foster system in various living environments. This cleaning schedule outlines when various rooms and things in a home should be cleaned or checked. There are four different columns including daily weekly, monthly, and annual cleaning activities.

The next resource in this chapter is the tote system hand out. Included in this are six different areas of the home that need different items when moving from place to place, especially if this is the first place a youth will live independently. They can be used as notes on large storage totes or they can be used as a list guide when preparing to move out for the first time. Following this activity is a handout on how to obtain an apartment and the steps that come with renting an apartment space.

### ***Motivation and Self-Care***

The final chapter in the parent guide is the Motivation and Self-Care chapter and it includes activities and resources for motivation and self-care activities. This chapter is broken up by the



different aspects of the PEO model (Law et al., 1996). The first activities are regarding the person aspect of the model and begin with an activity about positive affirmations. There is a word bank included for reference when filling out the prompts below. These activities can be done independently or in conjunction with other activities that are included. They are organized alphabetically, and the boxes are in different shades of color to help the reader distinguish different sections. The second activity is self-care activities that can be done with the individual and no other objects required. There is a section on deep breathing, self-compassion, and positive affirmations. Directions are included in each box and the activities do not have to be done anywhere specific.

The next activities are regarding the environment and ways that the foster youth can use the environment they are currently in to support motivation and self-care (Law et al., 1996). The first activity is for using an online resource and incorporating the final piece that will have personal positive affirmations in it either in their bedroom, bathroom, or simply setting it as a home screen on a device.

The last activities utilize occupation for motivation and self-care (Law et al., 1996). The first activity is a letter to my future self. Directions are included for every activity, and they can be done independently or with the foster parent(s). The second activity is using the independent living plan table for various areas of occupation and goal setting within each section of the corresponding occupation. Each area of occupation is described, and examples are provided for those who are unfamiliar with each area of occupation. There is a table included that can be used to write on or for reference during a conversation with the foster youth. For each goal there is a tasks section that can be used for writing down specific tasks that need to be done to achieve the goal. The last activity is regarding advocacy and things that can be done for self-advocacy. There are 10 different

sections of prompts regarding advocacy and how these skills can be integrated each day to build advocacy skills.

### **Case Manager Quick Reference**

Case managers have access to many classes that are offered in the programming that is used for training at this agency. The Case Manager Quick Reference sheet was created for the case managers to use to navigate the programming that is available to them and additional resources they can turn to for themselves or to share with foster families. The Case Manager Quick Reference sheet was divided by commonly asked questions and topics that foster parents typically need clarification on when caring for youth who are nearing the age of transitioning out of the foster system. The topics are listed on the left hand side of the sheet with appropriate resources in the column following the topic. Resources were provided in the sheet that are from the training platform that the agency uses to train all staff and foster families for licensing. An additional column was added for additional resources that are found either on the agency website or other reliable webpages. This handout can be found in Appendix C of the parent guide.

### **Age Expectations Handout**

The third component of the project is the developmental milestones guide that can be given to foster parents who request more information regarding what to expect when caring for a foster child who is nearing aging out of the foster system and is the *Age Expectations* handout. The product I included in this project is a developmental milestones guide for youth aged 13 years old and above on what to expect from their behaviors. This guide will serve to foster normalcy among the foster youth population rather than blaming certain behaviors on the youth being a “foster child” but rather what behaviors are typical for their age group. When discussing resources with the licensing director at this agency, she mentioned that the majority of foster

parents in North Dakota request that they care for youth under the age of 5 years old and many foster homes are not expecting to get a foster youth who is above at 16 years old. The outcome of this discussion lead to further discussion with my peer, Emily Knust as she is completing a project at a similar agency (Knust, 2023). I had written permission from the author, Emily Knust (2023) to build upon this handout. We shared resources and built upon each other's resources to cater them to our project. This handout can be found in Appendix B of the *Parent Guide*.

### **Youth Resource**

This *Youth Resource* was added in the appendix within the resource guide after multiple conversations with agency stakeholders who verbalized the need for foster youth having a resource guide for navigating different living scenarios. The guide is comprised with a table that is broken up into emergencies and non-emergencies. The phone numbers for 911, poison control, and the crisis line for the human service center are included. Within the non-emergency section are resources regarding dating violence, transportation, car trouble, money management, mail, and medical services. This guide can be found in Appendix C of the *Parent Guide*.

### **Agency Training Module**

With the final product that was created, I made a training module to be added on the agencies training program that includes the parent guide and how to use it. The training is not required to utilize the parent guide on its own but rather it is supplemental. Within the store and go training, I walked the attendee through the *Parent Guide* and activities in detail about how they can be used with foster families. The assessment method of this training is represented by questions at the each of each chapter of the parent guide that may be answered prior to moving to the next section of the guide. This online training module can be found in Appendix B.

Chapter IV Product was comprised of an overview of the completed project including the supplementary sheets that are included within the guide. The PEO aspects embedded within each session are adjusted to match the fit between the person, environment, and occupation based on the activity (Law et al., 1996). The full product can be found in Appendix A of the *Parent Guide*.

## **Chapter V**

### **Summary**

Chapter V summary is comprised of an overview of the project and the various sections. The strengths and limitations of the project are described and suggestions for continued development and research are included. Recommendations for product use and how to implement it in family services are included.

There is a need for more life skills training for foster parents who are caring for youth aging out of the foster system and nearing age 18 years old (Berzin et al., 2014; Best & Blakeslee, 2020). The purpose of this project was to create a resource for foster parents to use with the youth they are caring for who are aging out of the foster system to help better equip those youth with the necessary life skills for independent living beyond the foster home environment. The hope is that if the foster parents can understand this guide and use it in collaboration with the foster youth that is living with them, that the fit between the person, environment, and occupation will be the best and enhance the occupational performance of the foster youth (Law et al., 1996). With ever changing environments for this population of youth aging out of the foster system, there needs to be continuity and stability within some areas of their lives and developing personal skills that can be translated beyond a foster home (Courtney et al., 2012).

The product of this project resulted in an evidence-based parent guide and training program to be implemented with the agency for foster families in North Dakota who care for foster youth aging out of the foster system; nearing age 18 years old but may be used with individuals up to 23 years old as that is the population that the agency serves. Within the parent guide are several chapters regarding different areas of life skills that are needed for independent

living. The topics and chapters were decided among the agency stakeholders and foster parents in North Dakota. Recurring themes throughout discussions that were held with the agency and foster parents in North Dakota while developing this product were included in the final guide along with activities and resources that go with the subject. In the appendices of this guide are resources including an age-expectations reference sheet, *Case Manager Resource Reference* sheet, and a *Youth Resource* guide. The age-expectations sheet can be utilized by foster parents when they are questioning certain behaviors by the youth and if that is considered “typical” for their development or if it is something to become concerned about. The *Case Manager Reference* includes training and educational resources for case managers to share with foster families regarding common behaviors that arise among the population of youth who are aging out of the foster system. The youth resource guide is meant to be used by the foster youth when practicing for the transition to adulthood beyond a foster home setting and includes phone numbers and resources for emergencies and non-emergencies.

### **Strengths & Limitations**

Strengths of this product include the platform that the final product is shared on being within the agency and able to be shared with foster families virtually. The guide can be printed off and used on paper or as a PDF file on the computer thus making it accessible for a variety of people. The information included in the parent guide is evidence-based and was formatted based on the intended population. It is well organized including a table of contents and can be used in small parts or as one cohesive document. Limitations for this product include future development on topics regarding the outcomes of implementing the activities included in the guide and measurability for skills that are translated into various environments outside of the foster home. Though there are many resources for the foster youth population, there is still much work to be

done within the child welfare system as a whole and simply all of these topics could not be covered and defined within this parent guide, but it is designed in a way that other professionals can build upon the guide and it can remain as a fluid document for many others to use as time and technology progresses.

## **Recommendations**

The recommendations for use are to distribute this product to foster parents and allow them to take the online training course through the agency program. Doing this would allow the attendee to learn about how to use the product and where the information can be found in a way that is accessible for them. It is recommended that the activities in the guide are used in collaboration with the foster youth that are being cared for by the foster parent utilizing the guide. The bullet points within each chapter can be more of talking points and optional activities to be simulated in “real life” situations.

Next steps to be taken are for other professionals to build upon this guide and add more resources and recommendations for other common issues that arise and are not yet covered within the guide. Following the guide in a chronological order would allow the foster parent to cover many aspects of independent living with the foster youth as they are still living in their home. Using the activities as collaborative as possible with the youth will provide increased social support and advice from the foster families. The *Case Manager Quick Reference* document can be used by case managers when they are wanting to learn more about a certain subject if families are coming to them with concerns regarding specific behaviors of youth in the foster system who are aging out or near age 18 years old. These resources can then be shared among foster families and they can be provided with information both verbally from the case manager and on paper. The *Age Expectations* hand out is for foster families and can be given to

newly licensed foster families as they are navigating different behaviors that foster youth may be presenting with. The youth resource guide is specifically for the foster youth to use independently when they are navigating the transition to adulthood and attempting to problem-solve real life problems on their own with the resources they are given. This may also be used as a point of reference if they are unsure who to call in various scenarios.

## **Conclusion**

This parent guide titled “Fostering Independence: A Guide to Help Foster Parents Navigate Teaching Life Skills to Youth Aging Out of the Foster System” is an evidence-based informed product that serves as a guide for foster families in a rural geographical setting. Implementation of this product will enhance the best fit between person, environment, and occupation of a foster youth preparing to age out of the foster system resulting in increased occupational performance. I hope this product can be used in the next years to come and continue to be built upon to keep up with everchanging technology and new information. Continuing research for this population regarding how to best teach life skills in the home environment will only increase the success of independent living for our foster youth population as a nation.



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Appendix A

*Fostering Independence: A Guide to  
Help Foster Parents Navigate Teaching  
Life Skills to Youth Aging Out of the  
Foster System*

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## Introduction

Caring for foster youth who are preparing to age out of the foster system can positively impact both their lives and yours. This resource is meant to be a guide for those caring for foster children preparing to age out of the foster system. Included in this guide are many activities and resources that can be used to help build the skills needed to live independently outside of the foster home environment.

**Who:** All foster parents complete training required by the state of North Dakota. This guide builds on that training through education on other topics that are important to families. Included in the guide are resources and activities made for youth aging out of the foster system. This guide can be distributed to foster families by agency employees including social workers, case managers, direct support professionals, and support staff.

**What:**

**Parent Guide:** This guide contains resources and activities that can be completed with foster youth in a foster home who are between the ages of 13-23 years old. The activities are designed to be led by the foster parent(s). This guide can be used as a starting point when navigating how to “teach” life skills within the home environment. The activities are meant to elicit problem solving skills and help the youth develop independent living skills that are necessary to be successful upon leaving the foster system.

**Agency Resources:** There is a case manager quick reference sheet included in the appendix on various topics of conversation and resources.

**Extras:** There is an age expectations and developmental milestones document included in the appendix. This is a reference for all supportive individuals in a foster youth’s life regarding what is typical at various ages. There is also a youth resource guide which includes who to call in the case of emergent and non-emergent situations.

**How-To:** The reader can start at the beginning of this manual and look one page at a time or you can use the table of contents and select topics that are most important to you and the youth you are caring for. Included in each chapter are objectives for measuring learning after completing the activities and reading. Use these objectives with the foster youth and address any confusion or unclear information that comes from them. Always reach out to your case manager or social worker for direct information that may not be available in this guide alone. All of the activities related to each chapter can be found within the chapter following the bulleted lists.

## ***Chapter 1: Transportation***

---

### *Objectives:*

- By the end of this chapter, the youth will be able to earn a driver's license or get around the community without a personal driver's license.
- By the end of this chapter, the youth will be able to fill a gas tank without help from an adult.
  
- *Opportunities for Working with Youth:*
  - **Getting a driver's permit (13-14 years old)**
    - Encourage the youth to email or talk to a teacher at school to learn about what information might be there that they can use for obtaining a permit. When the youth does this they will gain confidence as well as learn communication and problem solving skills.
    - Ask the youth to bring the information home so you can look at the information together and figure out next steps.
    - Resources for studying for the ND drivers permit test:
      - Practice exam: [https://www.dmv-test-pro.com/north-dakota-dmv-practice-test?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4Lm-y8i4\\_QIV1AN9Ch2-fweNEAAYASAAEgJ0pfD\\_BwE](https://www.dmv-test-pro.com/north-dakota-dmv-practice-test?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4Lm-y8i4_QIV1AN9Ch2-fweNEAAYASAAEgJ0pfD_BwE)
      - Study guide: <https://driversedhub.com/northdakota/>
  - **Getting a driver's license (15-16 years old)**
    - Once the person has had a North Dakota driver's permit for at least 6 months, has finished 30 hours of classroom training, and completed 6 hours of behind the wheel training with a certified instructor the individual may take the drivers test at a ND Drivers License Site.
      - ND Drivers License Site:  
<https://www.dot.nd.gov/divisions/driverslicense/docs/Drivers%20Lic%20Sites.pdf>
      - ND ID Checklist:  
<https://www.dot.nd.gov/divisions/driverslicense/docs/real-id-checklist.pdf>
  - **Filling a gas tank**
    - This skill is best taught using real life situations. The next time you need to fill your car with gas, invite the youth to come with you and talk through the steps of filling the car with gas. Have them practice doing this.
    - Talk about different gas types and what is used in your car.
    - Talk about how to pay for gas (pre-paying inside, paying at the pump with a card, paying after filling at the tank, using cash, using a credit card, etc.).
  - **Using other transportation**
    - Community resources (bus)

- Talk about a bus pass and paying for the city bus in your area, locate bus stops and a bus route. Talk about time management and how long it would take following a bus route to get to various areas of town.
  - Taxi
    - Talk about when you might use a taxi.
    - Talk about how to call a taxi company and provide different addresses. Talk about how to pay for a taxi, is it cash or card over the phone?
  - You can remain in your role as a foster parent by following the bus route to make sure the child is getting off at the correct spot, track the uber/lyft, etc. while allowing them to learn about getting around town.
- **Car trouble**
  - Ask the child to simulate what to do if they were to be in a car accident (calling police if necessary, locating car insurance, etc.).
  - Ask and explain what to do if you have a flat tire.
  - Refer to the youth resource guide in Appendix C.
- *Tasks for Parent*
  - Decide how the youth is going to practice driving (with your personal vehicle or an ND behind the wheel training resource etc.)
    - If you are not using your personal vehicle with the foster youth, here is something you can do:
      - Drivers' education courses in North Dakota have qualified teachers for completing behind the wheel hours.

If the answers here are yes, move on to the next chapter. If the answers are no, just revisit this chapter when you can.

- 1.) Can the youth get a drivers permit?  yes  no
- 2.) Can the youth get a driver's license?  yes  no
- 3.) Can the youth fill a gas tank?  yes  no

## **Chapter 2: Money Management & Grocery Shopping**

---

### *Objectives:*

- By the end of this chapter, the foster youth will be able to manage money to grocery shop.
- By the end of this chapter, the foster youth will be say how to start a savings account, file for taxes, and apply for a credit card.
- *Opportunities for Working with Youth:*
  - **Grocery shopping**
    - An idea to incorporate when teaching your child about how to grocery shop is to let them be in control of a certain dollar amount each week. It may start with \$40 for the week. Allow the child to pick out food items at the grocery store that will be nutritious for them with the money allotted. As time progresses, the money amount may increase per week, as able.
    - Ask the youth to come up with a grocery list of food items prior to grocery shopping.
      - *The 10-item grocery list for 1 method* to build a grocery list for one person and meal plan before going to the grocery store.
    - Ask the child to find recipes that they would like to follow with the food items that they can buy for the week.
  - **Start a savings account**
    - Encourage the youth to call the local bank (depending on age and availability) to ask about setting up a savings account.
    - If appropriate and necessary, encourage the youth to go to the bank to set up the account and begin placing money in the account.
  - **Apply for a credit card**
    - <https://www.bankrate.com/finance/credit-cards/first-credit-card/#best-cards>
    - This is a resource for starting to decide what credit card is going to be best and how to go about obtaining the card. Always inquire with your local bank about what one is best for your current financial standing.
  - **Filing taxes**
    - Often communities will have resources for filing taxes for free, be sure to look around and see what is available to you.
    - <https://www.khanacademy.org/college-careers-more/personal-finance/pf-taxes>
- *Tasks for Parent*
  - When paying a bill or setting up auto-pay for various accounts, invite the youth into the environment of completing this. Allow them the opportunity to ask questions and observe what you are doing while explaining the importance of the process. For example:

- “It is important to set up auto-pay on this account because I don’t use it often.”
- “I need to pay the electric bill so that we can use the lights, wi-fi, appliances, and water in our home.”
- Some local banks offer classes regarding budgeting, taxes, etc. reach out and see what they may offer for the youth you are caring for!

If the answers here are yes, move on to the next chapter. If the answers are no, just revisit this chapter when you can.

- 1.) Can the youth manage money to grocery shop?  yes  no
- 2.) Can the youth say how to start a savings account?  yes  no
- 3.) Can the youth file for taxes?  yes  no
- 4.) Can the youth apply for a credit card?  yes  no

## 10-item Grocery List for 1 Person

This activity is designed for 1 person to be able to build a grocery list to prep meals for the week while getting the proper nutrients within each meal. There are examples of food in each box, these are meant to serve as a guide, but you can produce your own! Pick one food from each box (or your own in the same category) and add to each line of the list. There is an additional list for extra items that may be needed.

<u>Fruit</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Berries</li> <li>• Grapes</li> <li>• Bananas</li> <li>• Oranges</li> <li>• Apples</li> <li>• Mangoes</li> <li>• Melons</li> </ul>	<u>Raw Vegetable</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celery</li> <li>• Avocado</li> <li>• Cucumber</li> <li>• Carrots</li> <li>• Peppers</li> <li>• Lettuce</li> <li>• Asparagus</li> </ul>	<u>Vegetable to Cook</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrots</li> <li>• Spaghetti squash</li> <li>• Zucchini</li> <li>• Peppers</li> <li>• Brussel sprouts</li> </ul>	<u>Protein/Meat</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chicken</li> <li>• Beef</li> <li>• Turkey</li> <li>• Salmon</li> <li>• Shrimp</li> <li>• Tofu</li> </ul>	<u>Starch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potatoes</li> <li>• Tater tots</li> <li>• Fries</li> <li>• Sweet potatoes</li> <li>• Noodles</li> </ul>
<u>Filler</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rice</li> <li>• Corn</li> <li>• Beans</li> <li>• Quinoa</li> <li>• Lentils</li> <li>• Noodles</li> <li>• Chickpeas</li> </ul>	<u>Dairy</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Cheese</li> <li>• Yogurt</li> <li>• Sauces</li> <li>• Butter</li> <li>• Sour cream</li> </ul>	<u>Breakfast</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protein bar</li> <li>• Oatmeal</li> <li>• Cereal</li> <li>• Granola</li> <li>• Pancake mix</li> </ul>	<u>Pantry</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bread</li> <li>• Canned soup</li> <li>• Jarred jam</li> <li>• Spices</li> <li>• Sauces</li> </ul>	<u>Wildcard</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Tortillas</li> <li>• Candy</li> <li>• Dessert</li> </ul> <p><i>Use this category to prepare for next week!</i></p>

(Rose, 2022)

### Groceries

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

### Extra Items

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## ***Chapter 3: Employment***

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### *Objectives:*

- By the end of this chapter, the youth will be able to describe the importance of employment.
- By the end of this chapter, the youth will be able to do the steps to apply for employment.
- By the end of this chapter, the youth will be able to obtain important documents using the ND resource for social security card, birth certificate, and state issued ID.
  
- *Opportunities for Working with Youth:*
  - **Setting up an E-mail account**
  - **Resume building**
    - Describe the importance of having a resume for jobs that require it. The resume should be completed on a platform that can be accessed in multiple locations (i.e., Google docs) to be sure the document won't be lost.
      - *Utilize the Resume Building activity*
  - **Identify a job that is a good fit for the foster youth**
    - There are career exploration activities available online that can be used in addition to the resources available in this chapter of the guide.
  - **Getting a driver's license or state ID and other important documents**
    - North Dakota Real ID checklist:  
<https://www.dot.nd.gov/divisions/driverslicense/docs/real-id-checklist.pdf>
  
- *Tasks for Parent*
  - Setting up a computer to be safe for the youth to use or another device
  - Taking them to the library to use the computers there
  - Help them set up a google account and set up google docs so they have a way to access important documents from any device
  - Role playing a job interview with the youth

If the answers here are yes, move on to the next chapter. If the answers are no, just revisit this chapter when you can.

- 1.) Did the youth set up an e-mail account?  yes  no
- 2.) Can the youth build a resume?  yes  no
- 3.) Can the youth identify a job that is a good fit for them?  yes  no

## Resume Building

\*\*\* *This activity is meant to be given to the youth independently.*

### Directions:

1.) Choose a resource to use for building a resume:

- [www.google.com/docs](http://www.google.com/docs)
  - o Use Google Docs to create your resume so it is available to you anywhere with internet.
  - o Open Google and create an account if you haven't done so yet
  - o Go to the Docs section.
  - o Click "template gallery" & select a resume template that interests you.
- <https://www.resumebuilder.com/>
- <https://zety.com/resume-builder>

2.) When building your resume, consider using these helpful hints:

- *Personal Information:* Include your name, phone number, full address, and email.
- *Skills:* Include skills that are related to the job you are applying for. For example: software skills, computer skills, language skills, listening skills, customer service skills, problem-solving skills, leadership skills, management skills, etc.
  - o *Also included in this section can be any additional training or certifications that you have for example CPR certification, coaching licenses, therapeutic response training, computer software training, etc.*
- *Experience:* List any previous job experience that you have, be sure to include relevant job skills that may be used in the job you are applying for. Also include anywhere you have volunteered within this section.
- *Education:* You can list education here. This can be high school. If you took college classes in high school you can list those here too. If you have done extra training like first aid, list that here too.
- *Awards:* List any awards you have received throughout your academic and professional career thus far. This may be things like "most valuable player" on a sports team, employee of the month, volunteer awards, successful assignments or publications at the college level, internships, promotions, etc.

3.) Ask a trusted adult to proof-read your resume before sending it to your potential job.



## Career Planning Activity

1.) **Top 3 Dream Jobs:**

1.)

2.)

3.)

2.) **Now, choose 1 to complete the rest of this activity for and repeat steps 3-10 as you wish with other careers.**

3.) **What steps are necessary to attain this job?**

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Experience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Skills:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

4.) **How will you overcome the steps you just listed to attain this job?**

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5.) **What made you choose this job to explore further?**

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6.) **List 3 places you can job shadow this career and write down phone numbers and/or emails of those people or places.**

1.)

#: \_\_\_\_\_

@: \_\_\_\_\_

2.)

#: \_\_\_\_\_

@: \_\_\_\_\_

3.)

#: \_\_\_\_\_

@: \_\_\_\_\_

**7.) What does someone in this career do each day? What are specific skills they need to complete their job(s)?**

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**8.) What (if any) geographical location can you do this job in?**

<b>Midwest</b>	<b>East Coast</b>
<b>West Coast</b>	<b>Southern</b>
<b>Northern</b>	<b>Southwest</b>

**9.) Are there any states or locations you would prefer to engage in this career in?**

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**10.) What other resources do you need to explore to begin the path to engaging in this career?**

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## ***Chapter 4: Education***

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### *Objectives:*

- By the end of this chapter, the foster youth will be able to identify the importance of education beyond high school if that is their goal.
- By the end of this chapter, the foster youth will be able to apply for and begin education beyond high school.
- By the end of this chapter, the foster youth will be able to explain how to apply for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and determine a major.
  
- *Opportunities for Collaboration with Youth:*
  - **Apply for post-secondary education**
    - Applying for school beyond high school comes with many different tasks and keeping track of them all can be confusing. Consider using the checklist that is included in this guide to start the process if post-secondary education is something that the foster youth is considering.
      - *Applying for Post-Secondary Education Checklist*
  - **Apply for grants/FAFSA**
    - If the foster youth is involved with Chafee:
      - Chafee is for youth who have been in at least 1 day of foster care that provides monetary resources for various
      - ETV application process– Chafee program coordinator will assist the participant in applying for ETV.
    - If the child is NOT in Chafee:
      - Encourage the individual to reach out to Chafee coordinator to consider re-entry to Chafee.
    - FAFSA is a governmental resource used for individuals who are interested in furthering their education beyond high school (university, trade school, etc.). By filling out the application form, the youth may be eligible for loans to be used for education.
      - <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
  - **Determine a major**
    - This resource has majors and minors that can be achieved at universities or technical schools. This resource is meant to serve as a reference and starting point for deciding an emphasis or major while enrolling in post-secondary education. It is important to note that not ALL majors/minors are listed on this.
    - This resource can be used in conjunction with other activities that are provided in this guide.
      - *Major/Minor Exploration resource*
- *Tasks for Parent*

- Assist with setting up the FAFSA account
  - A how-to video on filling out the FAFSA form:
    - <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out>

If the answers here are yes, move on to the next chapter. If the answers are no, just revisit this chapter when you can.

- 1.) Did the youth apply for education if necessary?  yes  no
- 2.) Did the youth apply for grants/financial aid?  yes  no
- 3.) Can the youth identify a major/minor if necessary?  yes  no

## **Applying for School, After High School**

- Create a list of potential schools that interest you.
  - Schools can include but are not limited to trade school, universities, cosmetology school, any educational program outside of high school.
  - Include deadlines for the applications in a planner.
  - Note that there may be application fees – write them down and budget for them.
- Schedule a tour of the campus(s) (if necessary).
- Decide a type of school.
  - Trade school
  - Technical college
  - University
- Fill out FAFSA.
  - Log into FAFSA.com.
    - Gather materials you will need for the application:
      - Social security number
      - Driver’s license
      - Tax information
      - Current bank statements (if any)
  - Create a FAFSA ID.
    - Important to remember this and keep it in a safe place!
  - Enter financial information.
    - Required to disclose any financial support you have received over the years
  - Submit the application.
- Begin the application for schools of interest.
  - Gather commonly required documents:
    - High school code
    - High school transcript
    - Any college transcript you may have
- Obtain any test scores (ACT, etc.).
- Have at least 2 people proofread your application prior to submitting it.
  - Make proper edits and have 2 more people proofread the application before sending it.
- Submit the application.
  - Accept the school you decide to go to.
  - Notify other schools that you decline the offer.

# MAJOR/MINOR EXPLORATION

## Business

- Accounting
- Business Administration
- Finance
- Marketing
- International Business
- Business Communication
- Real Estate
- Human Resource Management
- Sales
- Communications
- Entrepreneurship
- Project Management
- Healthcare Administration
- Sports Management
- Small Business Management

## Health & Medicine

- Athletic Training
- Clinical & Laboratory Science
- Music Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Physical Therapy Assistant
- Occupational Therapy
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physician Associate
- Nutrition & Dietetics
- Speech Language Pathology
- Veterinary Science
- Dental Hygiene
- Radiology Technician
- Pharmacist
- Pre-Medicine

## Public & Social Services

- Development
- Economics
- Public Health
- Management
- Psychology
- Social Work
- International Education
- Journalism
- Public Administration
- Public Policy Analysis
- Professional Writing
- Adult Teaching Strategies
- Gender Studies
- Elementary Education

## Engineering

- Chemical
- Electrical
- Mechanical
- Civil
- Biomedical
- Industrial
- Nuclear
- Aerospace
- Petroleum
- Agricultural
- Environmental
- Health & Safety
- Marine
- Material
- Software

## Computer Science

- Information Technology
- Computer Science
- Information Science
- Computer Animation
- Graphic Design
- Cybersecurity
- Computer Forensics
- Computer Programming
- Database Management
- Web Development
- Data Analytics
- Information Technology
- Software Development
- Health Information Management

## Vocational

- Electrician
- HVAC
- Plumbing
- Mechanic

## ***Chapter 5: Home Management***

---

### *Objectives:*

- By the end of this chapter, the foster youth will be able to explain the tasks that go into managing a home environment.
- By the end of this chapter, the foster youth will be able to engage in chores, laundry, and medication management.
- By the end of this chapter, the foster youth will be able to explain the importance of preparing for independent living beyond the foster home and after age 18 years old.
  
- *Opportunities for Collaboration with Youth:*
  - **Cleaning**
    - Cleaning skills are best taught in real life situations, but the cleaning schedule resource is a great starting point for youth to see what cleaning tasks should be done and how often.
      - *Cleaning Schedule resource*
  - **Laundry**
    - Invite the youth into the laundry process in the home or bring them to a laundry mat to prepare for living situations that may not have in-unit laundry resources.
  - **Medication Management**
    - While the youth are living in your home, they develop a routine with or without your help for managing medications each day whether it is vitamins or their prescribed medication. Moving into a new environment comes with many changes but remaining on top of medication is an important aspect of life that should remain as consistent as possible. This resource can be implemented in the foster home or as the youth is living independently.
      - *Medication Management Tip Sheet*
  - **The Tote System**
    - Gathering the material for a brand-new apartment may seem overwhelming at first and can be costly if it is done all at once. Consider using the tote method while the youth are still in your home and as you are getting new appliances, pots/pans, etc. place the gently used ones in totes that are labeled with each room of a new place for the youth to take beyond your home.
      - *Tote System Resource*
  - **How to Get an Apartment**
    - This is a collaborative opportunity to show the youth the steps it takes to obtain an apartment.
      - *Obtaining an Apartment Checklist*
  
- *Tasks for Parent*

- Invite the child into the cleaning process and assign appropriate chores each day and week. Utilize the developmental milestone guide that is included in appendix A of this guide for reference as to what cleaning tasks are appropriate for their age.
- Talk about the “why” behind certain chores

If the answers here are yes, move on to the next chapter. If the answers are no, just revisit this chapter when you can.

- 1.) Can the youth use and follow the cleaning schedule?  yes  no
- 2.) Can the youth complete laundry?  yes  no
- 3.) Can the youth manage medications independently?  yes  no



## Cleaning Schedule

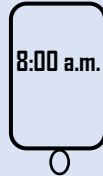
Following a cleaning schedule may help prevent things piling up all at once. Following and maintaining a tidy home can lead to more positive mental health outcomes. Simply assigning a cleaning chore to each day for the week makes it easier to manage a home independently. Having a visual aid to follow for cleaning may also be helpful in managing a home and maintaining a tidy environment.

<b>Daily</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make bed</li> <li>● Wipe down countertops</li> <li>● Wash dishes and/or load dishwasher</li> <li>● Wipe bathroom mirror</li> <li>● Sanitize shower</li> <li>● Check mail</li> <li>● Take out trash</li> <li>● Sanitize toilet bowl</li> <li>● Tidy bedroom and place dirty clothes in basket</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wash bedding</li> <li>● Wash clothing</li> <li>● Wash bath &amp; kitchen towels</li> <li>● Clean kitchen</li> <li>● Clean bathroom</li> <li>● Wash and put away laundry</li> <li>● Vacuum a room of choice</li> <li>● Throw away expired food in the fridge</li> <li>● Shake out rugs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sanitize frequently touched surfaces</li> <li>● Dust ceiling fans</li> <li>● Maintain the yard (mow, shovel)</li> <li>● Scrub stovetop and oven</li> <li>● Clean windows</li> <li>● Clean light fixtures</li> <li>● Vacuum under couch cushions</li> <li>● Mop hard floors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wipe baseboards</li> <li>● Dust lamp shades</li> <li>● Clean curtains</li> <li>● Clean fridge and freezer interior</li> <li>● Clean pantry shelves</li> <li>● Pull out appliances and clean behind them</li> <li>● Clean furnace filter</li> <li>● Shampoo carpet</li> <li>● Clean washing machine</li> </ul>

(Molly Maid, n.d.)

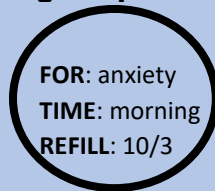
## Helpful tips to manage medication in a new place

### Setting phone alarms



Set an alarm on your phone each day when you are going to be near your medication as a reminder to take it when needed. Making the alarm recurring and happening at the same time each day will make sure you are staying on a schedule with your medication (i.e. every morning at 8:00 a.m.) (Mickelson & Holden, 2018).

### Labeling the pill bottle(s)



Creating a simplified label on the side or top of a pill bottle will help with organizing medication and reminding you what the medication is used for. Use a sticky note or piece of paper with marker that is easy to see to create your own label to put on the lid or side of the bottle, whichever you see easiest. Include on the label: *time of day to take the medication, what it is for, and when to refill* (Mickelson & Holden, 2018).

### Using a visual chart

Use this chart and place it somewhere that you see each morning preferably next to your medication to serve as a visual aid and something you can physically reference and check off to manage your medication. A helpful tip is to laminate the chart and use dry erase marker to re-use each day/week (Mickelson & Holden, 2018).

Medication	Time	Check
(daily vitamin)	(8:00 a.m.)	✓

## Other

- Setting the medication out the night before or morning of
  - Use a bowl or dish placed in a safe space you are going to see it during the day to put medication in either the night before or the morning of with the appropriate pills to take at a certain time of the day.
- Pill boxes
  - Pill boxes are a great resource for preparing medication that needs to be taken each day while also preparing you for when medication needs to be refilled. Typically, pill boxes come in week increments and need to be filled once per week. Using this method in addition to another method listed above may be beneficial in helping you remember to take the appropriate medication.
- Write in planner or on the pill bottle when to call for refilling a prescription (i.e., 10 days before the pills are gone)
  - Remembering to take medication each day comes remembering to fill prescriptions when necessary. To fill a prescription, call your pharmacy and read them your prescription number to refill the medication. If you have any questions about the medication, be sure to ask the pharmacist or your prescribing physician.

## The Tote System

Gathering the things needed for a new home can be an expensive and time-consuming chore. Using this tote system can help with starting to gather supplies, dishes, blankets, furniture, etc. prior to actually moving out of the home. Use this chart for labeling different totes that can be stored prior to moving out of the home as a way to gather materials needed for a new home before it becomes overwhelming in the process of moving out.

### **BATHROOM**

- Toilet brush
- Hand soap
- Toilet bowl cleaner
- Wash cloths
- Body & hand towels
- Shower curtain & liner
- Shampoo/Conditioner, Body Wash
- Plunger

### **KITCHEN**

- Plates & Bowls
- Utensils
- Set of Knives
- Toaster
- Pots & Pans
- Large utensils (spatula, spoon etc.)
- Wash rags
- Paper towels

### **BEDROOM**

- Sheets
- Comforter
- Blanket(s)
- Pillows
- Mattress protector
- Power cord
- Laundry basket
- Hangers

### **LIVING ROOM**

- Power strip
- Couch
- TV
- Wi-Fi router
- Curtains
- Lamp
- Blanket

### **CLEANING SUPPLIES**

- Hand soap
- Dish soap
- Glass cleaner
- Laundry soap
- All purpose cleaner
- Vacuum
- Broom & pan
- Swiffer or mop

### **OTHER**

- Packing tape
- First aid kit
- Shoe rack or hanging organizer
- Light bulbs
- Can opener
- Oven mitts
- Scissors

## Obtaining an Apartment Checklist

- Determine a budget and location
- Find a roommate if necessary
- Determine the timeline of how long you need this apartment for:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Locate 3 apartments that is in appropriate proximity for your job or education and list them below.
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Tour all of these apartments
- Choose one that is going to be the best fit for you regarding expenses and location. Lean on your trusted adults and case workers for feedback and advice when choosing a place to live.
- Make sure the apartment you are looking at is within your price range and you will be able to continually afford rent.
  - \*\*\*\*\*A tip is that you should have enough money to be able to pay 2 months' rent to be “affording” the place you are living.
- Consider getting renters insurance
- Gather commonly required documents for leasing an apartment:
  - Driver's license or state issued ID
  - Pay stub(s)
  - Letters of reference (if necessary)
  - Co-Signer
  - Social Security Number
- Fill out the application for the management company
- Pay the apartment application fee
- Expect background checks
- Take time to read and understand the lease before you officially sign the lease and ask questions to management if you have any

- Set up any additional accounts you need to have (electrical, wi-fi, etc.)
- Sign the lease and start your countdown to move in!  
Congrats!

## ***Chapter 6: Motivation & Self-Care***

---

### *Objectives:*

- By the end of this chapter, the foster youth will identify and engage in self-care activities independently.
- By the end of this chapter, the foster youth will describe the importance of motivation in independent living.

### **Motivation & Self-Care Exploration Activities**

This quick reference guide focuses on using the Person, Environment Occupation (PEO) model to assist foster youth preparing to age out of the foster system in developing motivation and practicing self-care. Unique life experiences and ever-changing living environments can place significant amounts of stress on an individual, especially one who has not reached adulthood yet. Bettering the fit between a person, environment, and their valued occupations, will lead to increased occupational performance is the basis of the model used throughout (Law et. al., 1996).

The first interventions are focused on the *person* aspect of PEO and offers various personality activities and self-identifying activities. Allowing youth to complete these activities and identify positive traits about themselves is helpful for enhancing motivation and creating a positive environment. Assuming that the individuals completing some of these activities may have no material with them to write things down, complete an online activity, or physically use there are activities included that do not require anything and may be done with just their individual self.

The second interventions use the *environment* around the person to practice self-care strategies. These interventions focus on activities that can be done by using the home, school, or work environment. Having positive affirmations and vision boards in the natural environment serves as a constant visual cue to elicit positive thoughts.

The third interventions are related to *occupations* and how to use occupation to kickstart motivation. Integrating occupation into learning life skills is a vital part in long-term success and increased occupational performance (AOTA, 2020; Law et. al., 1996). Occupations are things that each person wants to do, needs to do, or is required to do each day (AOTA, 2020). Activities in this category can be used with other categories to create the best fit for the person completing the activity and providing them with resources that are going to help increase positive behavior and motivation.

Each intervention can be used with the foster youth and their foster parent. These are meant to be collaborative and helpful in simultaneously building trust between the foster youth and the parent and by empowering the foster youth to use these interventions to develop motivation and self-care skills. Each intervention may be paired with interventions from each section.

If the answers here are yes, move on to the next chapter. If the answers are no, just revisit this chapter when you can.

- 1.) Did the youth participate in the “person” activities?  yes  no
- 2.) Did the youth participate in the “occupation” activities?  yes  no
- 3.) Did the youth participate in the “environment” activities?  yes  no



## Person

### **Activity 1A: Finding You**

This activity can help the foster youth see the good things about themselves. Identifying the good things about themselves helps confidence go up and when confidence goes up, things that you care about are easier to do. The person completing this activity may use the word bank or choose their own positive words to fill in the prompts.

<b>Word Bank</b>				
Adaptable Achieved Accomplished Artistic Able	Beaming Beautiful Brilliant Brave Bright	Calm Courageous Collected	Delighted Dedicated Determined	Excited Eager Energetic Enjoyable
Funny Favorable Futuristic Famous Friendly	Generous Gifted Good Genuine Genius	Hilarious Happy Honest Helpful Healthy	Instinctive Intriguing Interested Impulsive	Joyful Jolly
Kind Keen Knowledgeable Kindhearted	Likable Laidback Lavish	Meaningful Motivated Moving Magical Magnificent	Nice Neat Noble Nifty Natural	Optimistic Open-minded Overjoyed Open-hearted Organized
Personable Patient Peaceful Perky Philosophical	Resourceful Respectful Radiant Reachable	Super Sincere Silly Safe Sociable	Terrific Talkative Talented Thoughtful Thrifty	Upbeat Upstanding Ultimate
Vivacious Vibrant Valid Valuable	Warm Well Welcoming Wholesome Wholehearted			

(Park, n.d.)

- 3 of my greatest strengths are:
  - 
  - 
  -
- Something I love about myself is that I am:
  - 
  - 
  -
- Each day I want to remind myself that I am:

- - 
  -
- Somethings I am proud of are that I am:
  - 
  - 
  -
- My friends think that I am:
  - 
  - 
  -
- My family thinks that I am:
  - 
  - 
  -
- I want to work on being more:
  - 
  - 
  -

## Activity 1B: Self-Care Activities

### Deep breathing

The 4-7-8 breathing technique helps with reducing anxiety and increasing quality of life when performed correctly (Aktaş & İlgin, 2022). This is an activity that can be completed anywhere and does not require any material to successfully engage in.

- 1.) Find a quiet place to sit comfortably to complete this activity in. This may be your room, living room, in your car, anywhere that is going to be comfortable and safe for you.
- 2.) Close your mouth and inhale through your nose for a count of 4. A helpful tip would be to use the tips of our fingers to tap on your leg for a count of 4.
- 3.) At the top of this, hold your breath for a count of 7 using the same finger tapping method if that helps you complete this.
- 4.) Exhale through your mouth for a count of 8 making a “who” sound with your lips.
- 5.) Take note mentally of how you are feeling after completing this and remember this moment whenever you feel anxious or stressed in a situation.

(Aktaş & İlgin, 2022).

### Self-compassion

Setting your alarm for 7 minutes before you normally wake up will allow you to engage in this activity. The importance of this activity is that it allows you to set an intention for the day and begin the morning on a positive note (Gold, 2020).

- 1.) When you wake up in the morning, begin by placing your hand on your chest and feeling your heartbeat.
- 2.) Speak out loud things like “Good morning (your name)” “I love you (your name)” “I am so proud of you (your name)”.
- 3.) Notice how saying these things makes you feel. Set an intention and take 3 deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- 4.) When getting out of bed, if writing things down about how this experience made you feel helps set your intention, keep a journal next to your bed and use this to write down about the experience right after completing it.
- 5.) While getting ready in the morning, say things in the mirror that you said while lying in bed to enhance the effects of beginning the day on a positive note.

(Gold, 2020)

### Positive Affirmations

Affirmations can be spoken, written down, or just thought about (De Buisonjé et al., 2017). This activity does not require any material to complete and can be done in any safe environment.

- 1.) You may use activity 1A or come up with your own personal affirmations for example:
  - “I am worthy” “I am a good person” “I deserve to be happy” “I can do anything I set my mind to” “I will figure it out” “I am kind”.
- 2.) Write down a list of 10 positive things about yourself
- 3.) Now rank these qualities from 1-10 with 1 being the thing you are most proud of.
- 4.) Repeat these positive affirmations to yourself out loud in a safe setting where you feel comfortable doing so.

(De Buisonjé et al., 2017)

### Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a meditation practice that can be done anywhere and does not have any physical requirements. Here are some ways to practice mindfulness:

1. Think about the touch, smell, sight, and taste of what you are currently doing.
2. Lie on your back with your legs down and palms up, focus on deep breathing as you do this, be aware of how your body parts feel and the emotions that come through as you are moving each body part.
3. Find a quiet place about 20 feet in length and begin to walk slowly, with each step take a breath and think about the body movements required for each step.
4. Find a seated position and rest your palms on your knees and slowly close your eyes while breathing steadily. Think about each breath and maintain an upright posture.
5. As you are thinking about various scenarios and judgement about yourself squeeze your fists together and take a deep breath, when you are ready release those fists and visualize these thoughts floating far away.

(Kristeller, 2007)

## *Environment*

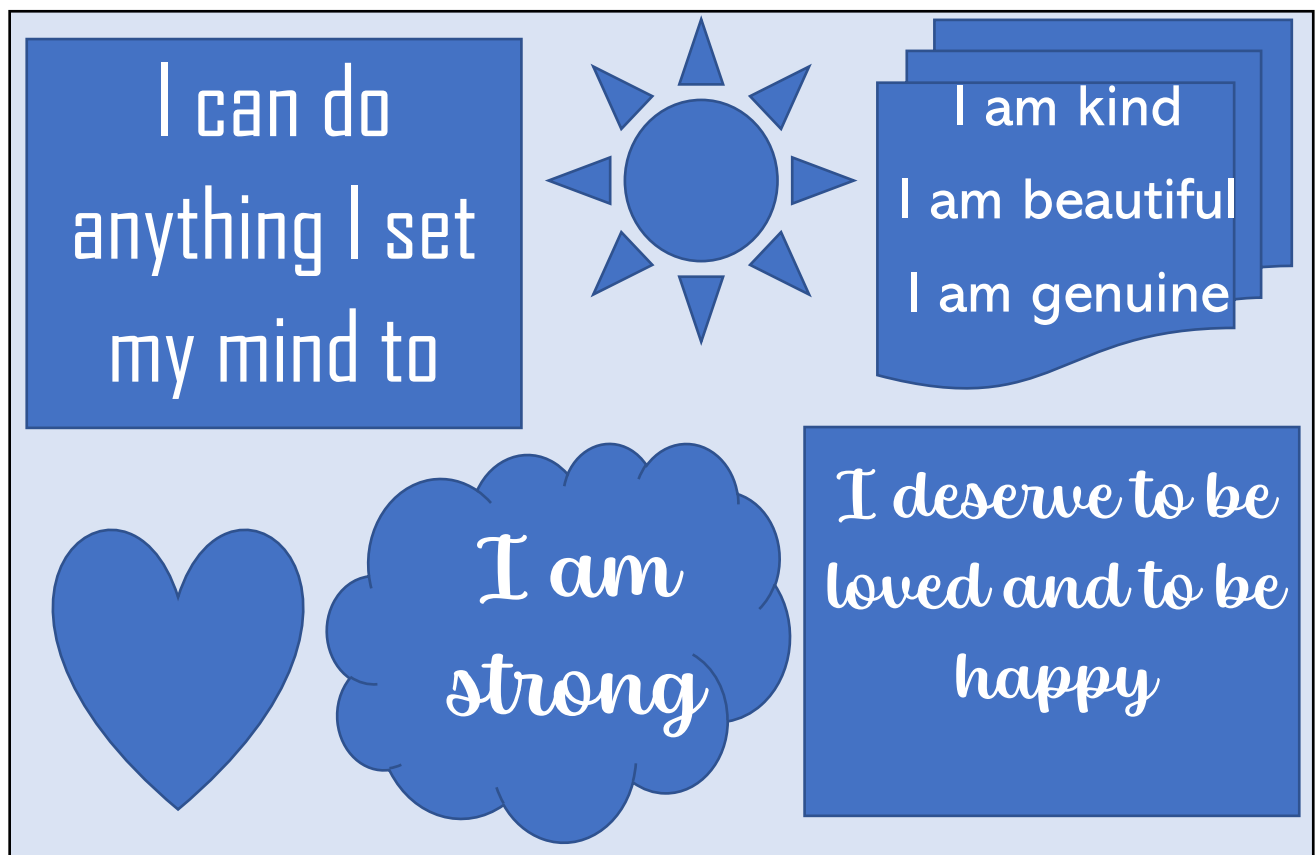
### **Activity 2A: Personalize your environment**

Use this to create a vision board on Canva : <https://www.canva.com/create/vision-boards/>

*Directions:*

- 1.) Open the webpage using the link above
- 2.) Select a template on the website that is appealing to you
- 3.) Use activity 1A to fill in the template
  - Use creative freedom and choose a color that will match the area you wish to hand this vision board.
  - Use photos that are meaningful and inspirational for you.
  - Use colors that are appealing to you or make you feel happy
  - Use the activity to fill in the boxes with words and things you love about yourself.
- 4.) If you have access to a personal computer, set this as your lock screen! If able, you can print this and hang it in your bedroom or bathroom. Somewhere you are going to see it every day.

Example:



## Occupation

### **Activity 3A: Letter to Future Self**

This activity is meant to be done independently and the final product can either be saved or you can throw it away when you are done. The purpose of this letter is to write down goals, aspirations, and dreams that you have for your future self. The letter can be addressed to be opened within the next 5 years or not until 10 years down the road. Use this rough outline to begin your prompts and letter if you choose.

	Dear _____,
	<p>I hope you are _____. I know you were working really hard to do _____. Right now, I am feeling _____. I hope that I have worked hard to become _____. I hope you are different in the sense that you are _____. Remember that time when you _____. I hope you are currently working hard to _____. How are you different right now than you were? What are some things that you want to change? What are your dreams for the next 5 years? The lessons I have learned thus far in life are _____. Are there things that scare you about the future? What have you learned from your past experiences?</p> <p>In the next 5 years I hope you _____. After reading this letter write another letter to your future self that you can open whenever the time is right. I love you and I am so proud of you!</p>

### **Activity 3B: Independent Living Plan Sheet Conversation/Activity**

Consider using this sheet as a collaborative activity or just a conversation guide between the foster parent and youth who are living together when planning for the future of the foster youth. Thinking about big life decisions and planning for independent living is an ongoing process and this activity can serve as a starting point for the youth. Make sure that goals are measurable and are within reach for the youth completing this activity. Use this first part and the bullet points as talking points or choose to use the table below in conjunction to have a tangible goals sheet as a visual aid for the youth.

#### ***Work***

Begin by asking the youth about what they would like to do for work. There are other activities included in this guide that can assist with deciding interests or settings of work.

- Then continue to the goals section and list what goals are in alignment with the youth's dream job.
  - *Examples of goals are:*
    - Begin working at McDonalds by (date).
    - Begin working as a certified nursing assistant by (year).
- Then continue to the tasks section. Tasks are smaller things that need to be done to achieve the goal that is set forward.
  - Examples of tasks are:
    - On (date) I will apply for 3 jobs.
    - By (date) I will locate 5 different jobs that I want.

#### ***Education***

Begin by asking the youth about what kind of education they are interested in beyond the high school setting. Maybe education is not a goal for these youth, that is okay you can omit this section of the activity.

- Continue to the goals section
  - Examples of goals are:
    - I will begin classes at (school) on (date).
    - I will enroll in classes at (school) by (date).
    - I will graduate from (school) by (date).
- Continue to tasks section. Tasks are things that need to be done to achieve the goal
  - Examples of tasks are:
    - I will identify 5 schools I want to go to by (date).
    - I will apply for 3 schools by (date).

#### ***Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL's)***

IADL's are things you do each day to take care of yourself and your home. These can include housekeeping, caring for pets, caring for siblings, using the phone, shopping, medication management, etc. Consider brainstorming a list of important IADL's for the youth before filling out this section.

- Continue to the goals section

- Examples of goals are:
  - I will use a plan to be independent with grocery shopping with 1 or less cue by (date).
  - I will use a plan to become independent with managing my medication with no cues by (date).
- Continue to tasks and list things that need to be done to achieve the goals
  - Examples of tasks are:
    - Use a medication management technique with help for 1 week.
    - Use a shopping list and complete grocery shopping with help.
    - Utilize a cleaning schedule to maintain bedroom.

### ***Activities of Daily Living (ADL's)***

Activities of daily living are things that need to be done each day by an individual to get through the day and can include things like getting dressed, grooming, toileting, bathing, eating, maintaining a daily routine, etc.

- Brainstorm a list of ADLs that the youth may currently be struggling with and prioritize the most important ones that you would like to set goals for.
  - Continue to the goals section
    - Examples of goals for ADL's are:
      - I will independently maintain my daily routine for 1 week by (date).
      - I will complete all morning tasks without cues by (date).
  - Continue to the tasks section and list what needs to be done to achieve goals
    - Examples of tasks are:
      - I will create a morning routine that I can complete with help as needed.
      - I will independently wake up and get dressed without cues by (date).

### ***Social Participation***

Social participation includes any social activities that the youth engage in. This may include conversing with peers and teachers at school or with adults in the home environment. Developing solid social skills before exiting the foster home environment is essential for independent living skills.

- Brainstorm and talk about important individuals in each day that your youth will be social with. Determine what social skills are the most important to develop for independent living.
  - Continue to the goals section
    - Examples of goals are:
      - I will establish and maintain positive social connections with at least 1 peer at school.
      - I will engage in 3 conversations that I initiate at school by (date).
      - I will practice using social skills and verbal communication at home at least 3 times per day with (person) by (date).



- Continue to the tasks section
  - Examples of tasks are:
    - I will practice a verbal conversation with myself in the mirror.
    - I will identify who to develop a social relationship with at school.

### ***Play/Leisure***

Play and leisure activities are things that are done of the person's choice outside of obligations like work or school. Leisure activities can include reading, playing, exercise, sewing, etc. Play activities are for younger youth and can include fine and gross motor skills development within play activities like building blocks, puzzles, playing with dolls, etc.

- Compile a list of leisure activities that are most important to the youth and choose the most important ones to focus on for the activity.
  - Continue to the goals section
    - Examples of goals for play/leisure are:
      - I will engage in 2 activities of my choice per day for 2 weeks every day.
      - I will choose an activity that is new to me to engage in by (date).
      - I will spend at least 20 minutes per day doing (activity).
  - Continue to the tasks section
    - Examples of tasks are:
      - I will identify 5 leisure activities I enjoy.
      - I will spend 20 minutes doing a quiet activity at home at least 3 times per week.

### ***Rest/Sleep***

Rest and sleep are essential for being able to engage in all other areas of life each day. If we are not getting enough sleep, then we are not going to be able to perform our best in daily life and other areas of our lives. It is important to explain the importance of engaging in a healthy sleep routine to the youth.

- Coming up with a plan to engage in a healthy sleep routine includes many things like nighttime routine, setting alarms, diet, and exercise. Use these aspects to come up with a healthy sleep routine that is going to be achievable for the youth.
  - Continue to the goals section
    - Examples of goals are:
      - I will get at least 8 hours of sleep per night for 1 week straight.
      - I will engage in a nighttime routine for 1 week without cues.
  - Continue to the tasks section
    - Examples of tasks are:
      - I will create a nighttime routine and write it down as a visual reminder.
      - I will utilize an alarm to wake up in the morning and for going to bed.

<b>OCCUPATION</b>	<b>GOALS</b>	<b>TASKS</b>	<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Work</i>				
<i>Education</i>				
<i>Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL's)</i>				
<i>Activities of Daily Living (ADL's)</i>				
<i>Social Participation</i>				
<i>Leisure / Play</i>				
<i>Rest and Sleep</i>				

<b>PERFORMANCE PATTERN</b>	<b>GOALS</b>	<b>TASKS</b>	<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Date Accomplished</b>
<i>Habits</i>				
<i>Routines</i>				
<i>Roles</i>				
<i>Rituals</i>				

(AOTA, 2020)

### **Activity 3C: Advocacy**

Speaking up for yourself can be challenging in various places. It is important to speak up for your needs and use skills to do things that you need to do. Use these prompts and practicing reading aloud what you have listed in each of the boxes to yourself or use it as a tool for developing self-advocacy skills.

*\*\* This activity and the questions were developed using self-determination theory of motivation (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ryan & Deci 2000).*

<b>Activities that I am good at are:</b>	<b>I feel my best when I am:</b>
<b>Something that makes me different from others is:</b>	<b>Things that I need help with are:</b>
<b>While at home I can get help from these people if needed:</b>	<b>Asking for help looks like:</b>
<b>To be a better communicator I am going to:</b>	<b>Somethings that I want are:</b>
<b>To get the things I want I need to first:</b>	<b>Positive skills or talents about me are:</b>

### **Activity 3D: Communication Types**

Initiating conversations about situations or problems that arise can be difficult for many people. Utilize this sheet as a resource when you need help communicating with people inside and outside of the foster home. There are many ways that communication can happen and it is important to be aware of all aspects of communication, below is a chart about communication types and different ways to start communication with someone:

#### **Verbal**

Verbal communication includes all language that is spoken out loud either by someone's voice or by a communication device such as a tablet or phone. Other aspects of verbal communication include:

- **Tone of voice**
- **Volume of voice**
- **Amount of words**
- **Accent**

Verbal communication can be initiated by starting with a calm quiet volume voice if you want to have a conversation that includes feedback from the other person. Begin the conversation with a greeting such as "Hi" or "How are you doing?" prior to stating a problem or concern you have. This allows the tone of the conversation to be calm and you are more likely to have a positive outcome and get your point across in a respectful way.

#### **Non-Verbal**

Non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal and can speak volumes as to how a person is feeling. Forms of non-verbal communication include:

- **Eye-contact**
- **Body positioning**
- **Movements**
- **Head gestures or nods**
- **Hand gestures**
- **Posture**

To begin a conversation that fosters calmness and respectfulness have a relaxed posture with your hands at your side while keeping eye contact. Keep facial expressions neutral and avoid raising eyebrows or pursing lips.

#### **Written**

Written communication can be useful for those who tend to avoid confrontation or are not comfortable speaking in person with others. Beginning a conversation with written communication may avoid impulsive comments and allows the person to think through what they want to say before saying it. Written communication can be:

- **Written letters/notes**
- **Text messages**
- **E-mail**

Use words that are clear and can be interpreted for what they mean. Be aware that sometimes written communication can be misinterpreted due to lack of non-verbal cues and delivery of words. Follow up the written communication with a conversation in person to avoid any miscommunication.

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## Appendix A

### Age Expectations for Transition Age Youth

This table is a developmental milestones quick reference for individuals aged 13 years old to 19 years old. This table was created collaboratively between 2 occupational therapy students. Navigating what may be abnormal behavior or what is typical for development can be confusing especially if you are new to caring for youth in this age group. Use this as a reference to understand what is considered typical behavior and development regarding the age of the youth you are caring for. Know that these milestones and behaviors are “normal” for youth in this age group and there are resources to help navigate their changing lives.

\*\*\* *This resource was co-produced with permission from the author (Knust, 2023).*

Age	Milestones	Presenting Behavior
<b>13 years old</b>	<p><u>Physical:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth at this age should be able to set an alarm and wake up to engage in a morning routine.</li> <li>• Anxiety surrounding body changes may occur</li> <li>• May exhibit wide range of growth patterns</li> <li>• Able to manage changes in body through self-hygiene</li> </ul> <p><u>Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical thinking is progressing</li> <li>• Begin to find justice and equality more important</li> </ul> <p><u>Social-Emotional &amp; Expected Behaviors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May struggle with cause of actions long term</li> <li>• May reject solutions offered by caregivers</li> <li>• May question authority figures</li> <li>• Increase in concern about appearance and physical features</li> <li>• Concerns of seeing themselves as center of attention</li> <li>• Strive for independence; however, continue to require adult approval</li> <li>• Begin to explore social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth at this age may not want to listen to advise you have to give or they may do the exact opposite of something you suggest like an outfit choice or going to a certain event.</li> <li>• You may find that at this age the youth are getting in more “trouble” at school or involving authority figures, know that it is typical at this age to question authority and present with “naughty” behavior that seems defiant.</li> <li>• Present opportunities to them that involve personal choice rather than giving them directions to support independence and problem-solving skills.</li> <li>• They may have an apathetic or dismissive attitude about things that would typically interest them, for example not liking a certain TV show, food, clothing item, etc.</li> <li>• May start to isolate self in room and express emotions larger than they used to (stomping out of</li> </ul>



		room, slamming doors, grunting, yelling, etc.)
14 years old	<p><u>Physical:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth period may stall for girls or increase for boys</li> <li>• Independent in all aspects of personal hygiene</li> <li>• Being to take care of own laundry</li> </ul> <p><u>Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being to volunteer and advocate about preferred activities</li> <li>• Begin planning for future education</li> <li>• May challenge solutions presented by adults</li> <li>• Complete homework without being reminded</li> </ul> <p><u>Social-Emotional &amp; Expected Behaviors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May begin to explore romantic relationships</li> <li>• Make preferences known</li> <li>• Expresses options and thoughts</li> <li>• May have friend group conflicts</li> <li>• Able to regulate self, following conflicts</li> <li>• Set personal goals</li> <li>• May be embarrassed by caregivers</li> <li>• Begins to recognize strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Has large social group of both sexes</li> <li>• May have mood variations with changes in physical development</li> <li>• May feel a lot of sadness or depression which can lead to poor grades, alcohol/drug use, unsafe sex, and other problems</li> <li>• Express less affection towards parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth at this age may begin to ask more questions about the “why” behind certain activities or chores that are delegated. This may come off as challenging or questioning what you are saying, be sure to explain why for example cleaning the bathroom is important because of sanitary reasons and staying healthy.</li> <li>• Making preferences known may present as wearing different clothing or jewelry than usual, customizing personal items through writing or painting on them.</li> <li>• Youth who are this age may appear as standoffish and verbally communicating less with caregivers.</li> <li>• Allowing the youth alone time and not pushing verbal conversation is beneficial at this age.</li> </ul>
		<p><u>Physical:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin learning to drive</li> </ul> <p><u>Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore job opportunities</li> <li>• Explore additional education outside of school</li> </ul>

<p><b>15 years old</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep track of deadlines and important dates</li> </ul> <p><u>Social-Emotional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May experience over confidence in new independence</li> <li>• May enjoy alternative forms of communication (text, social media)</li> <li>• Begin to show concern about future</li> <li>• Develop work habits and motivation</li> <li>• Explain reasoning for decisions</li> <li>• Able to regulate everyday emotions with accuracy</li> <li>• May struggle with peer pressure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversating through different forms of communication rather than strictly verbal may be beneficial. Consider using a notepad on the kitchen counter or sending them a text, even though you may be present with them physically.</li> <li>• They may express worry about the future and plans that are upcoming, provide them with resources and options when supporting them through the life transitions that occur during this age.</li> <li>• With the many physical changes happening at this age, sleep is important, and you may find that the youth is sleeping more than usual, this is normal and healthy!</li> </ul>
<p><b>16 years old</b></p>	<p><u>Physical:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning to drive</li> <li>• Girls have reached full development</li> <li>• Boys continue to grow and develop</li> <li>• Weight gain may occur and need to be monitored</li> </ul> <p><u>Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore college and after high school opportunities</li> <li>• Participate in after school activities</li> </ul> <p><u>Social-Emotional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have issues with being over scheduled</li> <li>• May need assistance managing stress and workload</li> <li>• Exhibit difference in behaviors and language from school to home</li> <li>• Increase in work habits</li> <li>• May begin to form deep relationships with more connections</li> <li>• Have deeper capacity for caring and sharing and for developing relationships</li> <li>• Spend less time with parents and more time with friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having “slang” vocabulary and using words that you may have not heard before is typical for this age and they may not want to share the meaning behind this newfound vocabulary.</li> <li>• You may notice they have a steadier friend group or relationship with individuals at school and within their social networks.</li> <li>• Feeling emotions of sadness or hopelessness may present with dropping grades at school or disconnecting from social groups that they once were a part of. Know that some of this is typical but be aware of the signs of anxiety and depression to be safe.</li> <li>• The youth may isolate themselves in their room at this age, it does not always mean they are upset. Wanting increased alone time and space is typical for this age.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navigating social and romantic relationships at this age may lead to heightened emotions and stronger feelings. Try your best to understand and support what the youth is going through and don't minimize their feelings. Validation is important for respect and feeling safe with conversating with trusted adults.</li> </ul>
<b>17 years old</b>	<p><u>Physical:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have reached full puberty and height</li> <li>• Participate in work activities</li> </ul> <p><u>Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to identify college and post high school options</li> <li>• Begin to job shadow future careers</li> </ul> <p><u>Social-Emotional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating on adult level; however, may use slang</li> <li>• Increased coping skill development</li> <li>• Begin to resist peer pressure</li> <li>• May need increased space for personal identification</li> <li>• Increase in relationship meaning</li> <li>• Begin to search for deeper intimacy</li> <li>• Be able to make and keep commitments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow for more natural consequences to happen at this age. At this point in their lives, they are almost 18 and depending on the youth, they may not be legally tied to you when they reach age 18 years old.</li> <li>• Introduce logical consequences and talk about the differences that happens in regard to legal responsibilities when the youth turns 18 years old.</li> <li>• Attitude at this age may present as "I'm almost an adult I can do anything". Allow them to feel this and allow natural consequences to occur while they are still in your care.</li> <li>• Commitments like plans with friends, clubs, or school organizations may become more important at this age as these involvements all contribute to the youth's newfound identity.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Physical:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to have community mobility</li> <li>• Able to shop, prepare, and cook for oneself</li> </ul> <p><u>Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased independence and less check in on academics in preparation for college</li> <li>• Decide on post high school plans</li> <li>• Explore potential career through job shadowing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May engage in impulsive behavior because of the age milestone and legal opportunities that come with this monumental age.</li> <li>• More avoidant and sharing less about their personal life with you, try to respect their boundaries and support safe decisions that they make.</li> </ul>

<p><b>18 years old</b></p>	<p><u>Social-Emotional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to make and maintain functional schedule</li> <li>• Work toward long term goals</li> <li>• Set relationship limits and compromises</li> <li>• Have sense of insight and empathy</li> <li>• Make plans for future and long term</li> <li>• Full responsibility and regulation of emotions</li> <li>• Increase in ability seeking adult advice</li> <li>• Acceptance of adult responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their personal choices and decisions are not always reflective of representations that you have shown them, as long as they are safe decisions try to support what they are doing.</li> <li>• Don't hesitate to reach out for additional resources when facing barriers and obstacles that come with this huge shift at this age.</li> <li>• Validation at this age is important for decision making and they may seek your help and advise more often.</li> <li>• You may observe them reaching out to other individuals for support, it is normal for this age group to explore options outside of what has been provided to them thus far.</li> <li>• They may be hanging out at different physical social settings and trying to explore new environments.</li> <li>• Express support to them through guidance rather than trying to tell them the "right" decisions to make.</li> </ul>
<p><b>19 years old</b></p>	<p><u>Physical:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full maturity</li> </ul> <p><u>Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates in college education or post high school employment</li> </ul> <p><u>Social-Emotional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to manage all social relationships</li> <li>• Displays professional behavior at job tasks</li> <li>• Shows interests in forming connections</li> <li>• Able to manage all emotions and regulate with minimal assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged in a steady hobby, job, or educational activity.</li> <li>• Expressing more interest in their future and surer about what life path to take.</li> <li>• Newfound confidence in their abilities and identifying positive qualities about themselves.</li> <li>• Spending more time with family and committed relationships and less time exploring new social relationships.</li> <li>• A greater understanding of how actions impact others and themselves. May appear as more empathetic or caring than usual.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication style and vocabulary may present differently than it once has.</li></ul>
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## Age-Appropriate Activities

Listed below are age-appropriate activities regarding typical chores or activities that can be done in the home or community. Reference this list when choosing chores for the youth in your care (Myott et al., 2016).

<b>13 years old</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk/feed/water pets</li> <li>• Put away all belongings             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Backpack</li> <li>○ Clean laundry</li> <li>○ New items (toys)</li> <li>○ Hygiene items</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Help keep up with family calendar Move furniture and clean underneath</li> <li>• Help with light yard work (water plants, rake leaves, shovel snow)</li> <li>• Clean dirty dishes and put away</li> <li>• Sanitize counter surfaces</li> <li>• Setting the dinner table</li> </ul>
<b>14 years old</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare simple family meal/clean-up of meals</li> <li>• Maintain a clean environment             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keeping up with bathroom duties</li> <li>○ Making bed everyday</li> <li>○ Vacuuming</li> <li>○ Dusting</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Fold/put away laundry</li> <li>• Empty trash and take the garbage out</li> <li>• Cooking simple family meals</li> <li>• Helping younger siblings with homework</li> <li>• Help with yard work (weeding the garden, trimming trees)</li> </ul>
<b>15 years old</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing lunch for school</li> <li>• Help with yard work (mowing the lawn, weed whacking)</li> <li>• Helping younger siblings with homework</li> <li>• Grocery shop according to a list with mild supervision</li> <li>• Care for younger siblings in moderation</li> <li>• Organize a pantry or refrigerator</li> </ul>
<b>16-18 years old</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independently complete errands/grocery shopping according to written or verbal instructions (i.e., grocery list)</li> <li>• Help with meal planning &amp; prepare family meals</li> <li>• Help making appointments (haircut, dentist, etc.)</li> <li>• Wash outside windows</li> <li>• Clean areas of the house (vacuum, sweep, dust, pickup)</li> <li>• Pressure wash sidewalk/driveway/house</li> <li>• Help with management of personal finances &amp; obtain and hold parttime job outside of home</li> </ul>

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## Appendix B

### Case Managers Quick Reference Sheet

This guide is meant to serve as a quick reference for case managers when foster families come to them with questions or concerns regarding a foster child placement. A common theme that foster families have in North Dakota is that they prefer to care for the younger population for youth in the foster system. Often, these families are then placed with youth who are above the age of 14 and turn to their case manager for resources to care for the child. With caring for a transition age youth, there are many barriers that arise as any individual experiences as they prepare to navigate adulthood.

Case managers and workers at Nexus-PATH are equipped with online learning modules that they have access to and can use with foster families when necessary. Navigating all of the courses and finding the appropriate resource to share with a foster family can be time consuming and the titles of trainings are not reflective of the valuable information present in them. It is the goal that this guide can be used by case managers to inform the family and share resources with foster families that have common questions when caring for transition age youth. The additional resource section of this guide was made by using the Nexus-PATH public website, discussion with agency stakeholders, and internet searches on reliable resources to use.

Concern	Relias Course	Additional resources
Alcohol / Drugs	Best Practices in Alcohol Use Disorder Assessment & Treatment  Prevention of Substance Use for Transitional Aged Youth  Trauma & Substance Use  Use of Mindfulness in Recovery	Nexus-PATH website “Talking to your kid about their drug or alcohol problem” <a href="https://www.nexusfamilyhealing.org/blog/talking-your-kid-about-their-drug-or-alcohol-problem">https://www.nexusfamilyhealing.org/blog/talking-your-kid-about-their-drug-or-alcohol-problem</a>  Preventing, Identifying, and Treating Substance Use Among Youth in Foster Care: <a href="https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/bulletins_youthsud.pdf">https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/bulletins_youthsud.pdf</a>  Help line and additional resources <a href="https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline">https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline</a>  Evidence-based tips for talking with teens about drugs and alcohol <a href="https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/teens-and-drugs-5-tips-for-talking-with-your-kids-2018081614565">https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/teens-and-drugs-5-tips-for-talking-with-your-kids-2018081614565</a>
Risky Behavior	Teaching New Behavior  Reinforcement Schedules	Nexus-PATH website <a href="https://www.nexusfamilyhealing.org/advice">https://www.nexusfamilyhealing.org/advice</a> ‘Dear Dr. Michelle’ – advice section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “My sons behavior scares me how do I safely confront him”.</li> </ul>



	<p>Consequence Interventions</p> <p>Decreasing Behavior</p> <p>Increasing Behavior</p> <p>Addressing the Needs of Transition Age Youth</p>	<p>Information and additional resources including how to take action <a href="https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/behaviour/behaviour-questions-issues/risky-behaviour">https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/behaviour/behaviour-questions-issues/risky-behaviour</a></p> <p>A blog including statistics about risky behavior and effective methods to cope with teenage behavior <a href="https://www.talkitoutnc.org/blogs/risky-behavior/">https://www.talkitoutnc.org/blogs/risky-behavior/</a></p> <p>How to avoid risky behavior and parent tips <a href="https://foreverfamilies.byu.edu/helping-teens-avoid-risky-behavior">https://foreverfamilies.byu.edu/helping-teens-avoid-risky-behavior</a></p>
Self-harm	<p>Suicide in Adolescents and Transition age Youth</p> <p>Trauma and the Brain</p>	<p>Nexus-PATH website <a href="https://www.nexusfamilyhealing.org/advice">https://www.nexusfamilyhealing.org/advice</a> ‘Dear Dr. Michelle’ – advice section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I am worried my daughter is suicidal”.</li> </ul> <p>Informative website for parents <a href="https://www.myteam.org/how-to-talk-to-your-teen-about-self-harm">https://www.myteam.org/how-to-talk-to-your-teen-about-self-harm</a></p> <p>Information and resources including a live chat with a professional <a href="https://www.crisistextline.org/topics/self-harm/">https://www.crisistextline.org/topics/self-harm/</a></p>
Motivation & Self-care		<p>Nexus-PATH self-reflection worksheet <a href="https://www.nexusfamilyhealing.org/sites/default/files/u-17/Self%20Reflection%20Workbook%20Content%20Marketing.pdf">https://www.nexusfamilyhealing.org/sites/default/files/u-17/Self%20Reflection%20Workbook%20Content%20Marketing.pdf</a></p> <p>There is a motivation and self-care resource pack with activities found in chapter 6 the “<i>Fostering Independence</i>” guide.</p>
Personal Safety		<p>How to avoid exploitation <a href="https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/relationships/exploitation/ways-protect-yourself-being-exploited/">https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/relationships/exploitation/ways-protect-yourself-being-exploited/</a></p> <p>Setting healthy boundaries &amp; reconnecting with biological family <a href="http://www.nmoi.org/articles/Boundaries.html">http://www.nmoi.org/articles/Boundaries.html</a></p> <p>A blog post written from the biological family members point of view: <a href="https://www.adoptimist.com/adoption-blog/setting-healthy-boundaries-with-your-childs-birth-mother">https://www.adoptimist.com/adoption-blog/setting-healthy-boundaries-with-your-childs-birth-mother</a></p>

## Appendix C

### Youth Resource Guide

Use this guide when situations come up as you are making the transition to adulthood. Some situations require immediate attention, and others do not. If you are ever in an unsafe situation and don't know who to call, always call 911. If you have access to a smart phone or internet, a simple google search for local phone numbers is the fastest way to contact a service you may need!

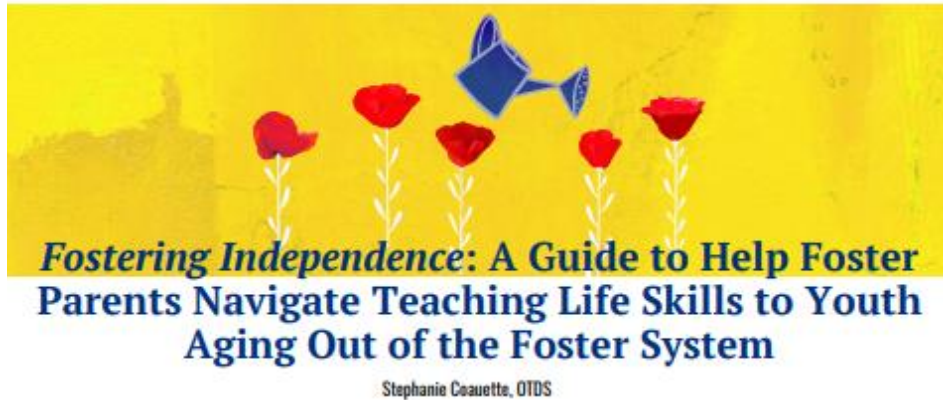
	<u>Problem</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>
<b><u>Emergency</u></b>	<p>You or someone around you is in severe pain or has been injured/unconscious/choking</p> <p>Your home/car/anything is on <b>fire</b></p> <p>You notice your home has been broken into</p> <p>Car accident</p> <p>Someone around you is in danger (someone with a weapon, acting violent, etc.)</p>	<b>911</b>
	Consumed an unfamiliar product (cleaner, medication, etc.)	FIRST call <b>911</b> if non-emergent than call: <i>Poison Control</i> <b>(800)-222-1222</b>
	Crisis hotline from the human service center to talk with a community resource specialist who can connect you with further community resources.	<b>211</b>
	Suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming yourself	<b>988</b>

<b><u>Non-Emergency</u></b>	<b>Non-Emergent Incident</b> Non-emergent fire, gas smell in the home, standing water, etc.  If you see suspicious activity in your neighborhood or wherever you are and feel the need to report it is when you should call the non-emergency police department line. If you are in a vehicular accident where there are no immediate injuries.	Non-emergency fire station phone number.  Non-emergency police department phone number.
	<b>Dating Violence</b>	<b>1-866-331-9474</b>  Contact your local Community Violence Intervention Center (CVIC)  National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline: <b>1-800-799-7233</b>
	<b>Transportation</b>  <i>**if you find yourself in a situation where you need a ride somewhere and a trusted adult or friend can't transport you, use a local taxi service (or Uber/Lyft if above age 18 years old and access to the smartphone app).</i>	Call a local taxi service or utilize a ride app to schedule a ride to and from where you need to go.
	<b>Car Trouble</b>  <i>**If you find yourself in a situation where your car is making an unusual noise, or a light is flashing get to an auto shop ASAP.</i>	<b>Problems</b>  <i>Flat tire: Call roadside assistance or a towing company if you are on the side of the road.</i>

	<p><b>** Your car should be serviced at least 1 time per year or every 12,000 miles.</b></p> <p><b>**Oil change should happen every 5,000 miles or every 3 months.</b></p>	<p><i>Light on in vehicle, unusual noise:</i> Call local auto mechanic shop.</p> <p>Maintenance</p> <p><i>Oil change:</i> Local Valvoline – drive up service without an appointment.</p>
	<p><b>Money Management</b></p>	<p>Call your local bank to inquire about questions you may have regarding setting up a savings account, taking money out of your account etc.</p>
	<p><b>Mail</b></p>	<p>U.S Postal Service <b>(800) -275-8777</b></p> <p>Changing your address: <a href="https://www.usa.gov/post-office">https://www.usa.gov/post-office</a></p>
	<p><b>Medical</b></p> <p><b>** If you feel yourself becoming ill or unwell and it does not require immediate attention, call a local walk-in clinic or your provider to schedule an appointment.</b></p>	<p>Local Walk-In Clinic</p> <p><i>Grand Forks: 701-780-5000</i> <i>Fargo: 701-364-6600</i> <i>Bismarck: 701-323-5740</i> <i>Devils Lake: 701-662-2157</i> <i>Dickinson: 701-456-6000</i> <i>Jamestown: 701-401-8496</i> <i>Minot: 701-838-3150</i> <i>Williston: 701-577-6337</i> <i>Turtle Mountain: 701-477-6111</i></p>

	<b>Home Management</b>	<b>Problem</b>
	<p><b>**</b> If you live in an apartment or rented housing call your landlord <b>FIRST</b> and allow management to handle issues you have. If you own a property, use the resources listed.</p>	<p><i>Heat/AC not working:</i> Call an HVAC service near you</p> <p><i>Ceiling leak, toilet not flushing, sink overflowing, clogged drains:</i> Call a Plumbing service near you</p>

## Appendix B



## Background

- Literature review

- Transitional Age Youth (Paul-Ward & Lambdin-Pattavina, 2016; Statista Research Department, 2022).
- The Gap
- The Youth (Berzin et al., 2014).
- Resources for the population
- Areas of need
  - Lack of programming
  - Caregiver training

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## Guiding Model

The *Person Environment Occupation* model was used to inform this project (Law et. al., 1996).



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## Methodology

- Topic selection
- Literature review
- Needs assessment
  - Phase 1
  - Phase 2
  - Phase 3

## Chapters

- Chapter 1: Transportation
- Chapter 2: Money Management & Grocery Shopping
- Chapter 3: Employment
- Chapter 4: Education
- Chapter 5: Home Management
- Chapter 6: Motivation and Self-Care

## Chapter 1: Transportation

- Getting a driver's permit
- Getting a drivers license
- Filling a gas tank
- Using other transportation
- Car trouble



## Appendix C: Youth Resource Guide

	Phone	Location/Address
<b>Emergency</b>	<p>911</p> <p>1-800-368-6868</p> <p>1-800-368-6868</p> <p>1-800-368-6868</p>	<p>911</p> <p>1-800-368-6868</p>
<b>Car trouble</b>	<p>1-800-368-6868</p>	<p>1-800-368-6868</p>
<b>Accident/Injury or damage of property/loss</b>	<p>1-800-368-6868</p>	<p>1-800-368-6868</p>

Non-Emergency	How to Contact	What to Expect
	<p>1-800-368-6868</p>	<p>1-800-368-6868</p>
	<p>1-800-368-6868</p>	<p>1-800-368-6868</p>
	<p>1-800-368-6868</p>	<p>1-800-368-6868</p>

Emergency	Non-Emergency	What to Expect

Emergency	Non-Emergency	What to Expect



## Chapter 2: Money Management & Grocery Shopping

- Grocery shopping
- Starting a savings account
- Applying for a credit card
- Filing taxes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Onions</li> <li>• Potatoes</li> <li>• Carrots</li> <li>• Apples</li> <li>• Bananas</li> <li>• Citrus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cider</li> <li>• Apples</li> <li>• Carrots</li> <li>• Cakes</li> <li>• Peppers</li> <li>• Lemons</li> <li>• Avocados</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leafy Greens</li> <li>• Cucumbers</li> <li>• Spinach</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Peppers</li> <li>• Beans</li> <li>• Potatoes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chicken</li> <li>• Beef</li> <li>• Pork</li> <li>• Fish</li> <li>• Seafood</li> <li>• Deli</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pasta</li> <li>• Rice</li> <li>• Beans</li> <li>• Canned</li> <li>• Soup</li> <li>• Jams</li> <li>• Spices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peanut</li> <li>• Butter</li> <li>• Candy</li> <li>• Cookies</li> <li>• Breads</li> <li>• Snacks</li> </ul>
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Groceries

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
0. \_\_\_\_\_

Extra Items

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
0. \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 3: Employment

- Setting up an email account
- Identifying a job
  - Career planning activity
- Getting a new license or other state issued documents
  - North Dakota Real ID checklist: <https://www.dot.nd.gov/divisions/driverslicense/docs/real-id-checklist.pdf>
- Resume building
  - Resume building activity

## Chapter 4: Education

- Apply for post-secondary education
- Apply for grants/FAFSA
- Determine a major/minor or career field





## Appendix A

- Age Expectations for Transition Age Youth (Myott et al., 2016; Knust, 2023).
- For ages 13-19 years old
  - Age
  - Milestones
  - Presenting behavior

## Appendix B

- Case Manager Quick Reference Sheet
  - Alcohol/drugs
  - Risky behavior
  - Self-harm
  - Motivation & self-care
  - Personal safety

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## Appendix C

*E-mail coorespondence with occupational therapy student for permission to adapt the developmental milestones guide she initiated. 4/3/2023*

Hello Stephanie,

I give you full permission to use and adapt the Developmental Milestones chart as you see fit from my *Trauma-Informed Parenting Toolkit*.

Thank you for the request and best of luck!

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