

# *FosterClub* ↑ TRANSITION → *toolkit*



a tool for developing

a youth-driven transition plan

get educated  
speak up  
involved + informed



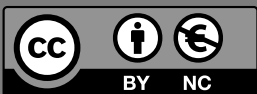
**FosterClub**

the national network for young people  
in foster care [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org)



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753 First Avenue  
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For more information, contact FOSTERCLUB at 503-717-1552 or visit [WWW.FOSTERCLUB.ORG](http://WWW.FOSTERCLUB.ORG).

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# REAL STORY: Transitioning out

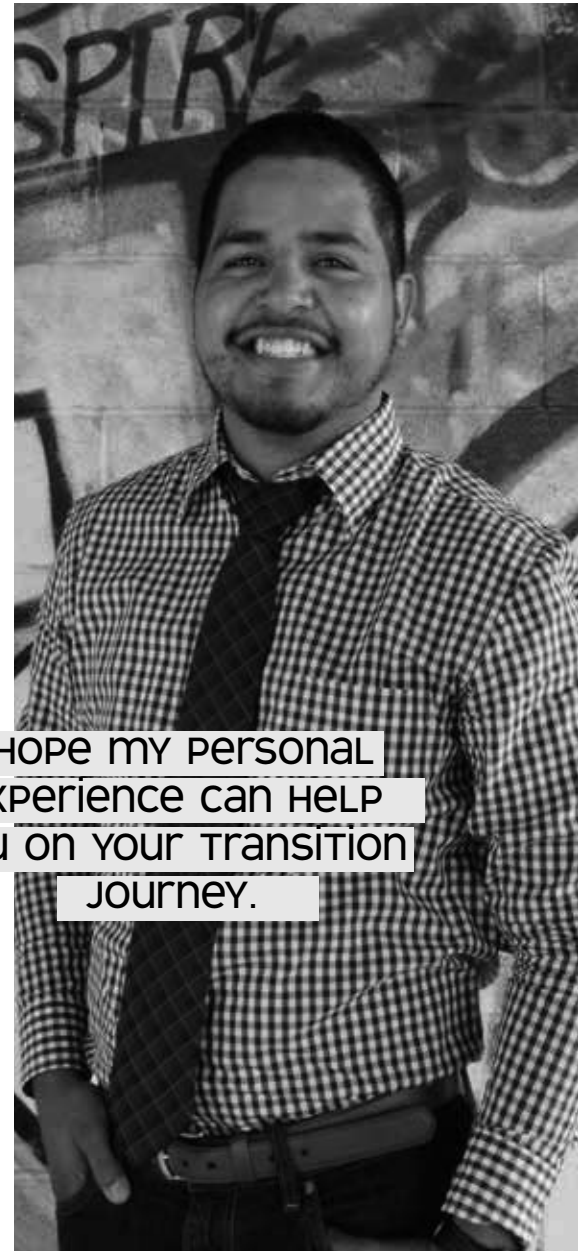
I aged out of care at the age of 19.

One of the biggest struggles I faced after exiting foster care was figuring out what to do with my spare time. I know it sounds odd, but I just spent the last 3 years of my life with very little, if any, ability to dictate my own schedule. The different check ups, appointments, visits, and court hearings were all scheduled for me - I learned to just “go with the flow.” At first I loved not having anybody check up on me. I felt so free. **Not long after, though, that freedom turned to loneliness, and sometimes, even fear.** I didn’t know what I wanted for myself and trying to figure it out on your own can be hard, especially when you don’t have a support system to lean on. **Being involved in the planning and decision making process well before you transition out will help give you a say in what you want to do with your independence.**

Another problem I faced after being on my own was no longer being qualified for resources because I was now “too old” to receive them. I remember learning about all of the educational and housing benefits and thinking just how far into the future college seemed. **Things such as healthcare, insurance, and taxes are things you don’t think about until you need them, or they are all of the sudden brought to your attention.** By the time I started asking questions about what I could receive help on; it was usually too late. Don’t put off your future; take advantage of the support and resources before you leave care. The last thing I would share is the **lack of preparation on dealing with**

**family;** that being foster family, adopted family, or biological family. I struggled, and continue to struggle, with how to balance the relationships I have with my bio-family and my foster parents. There is always a sense of guilt that I don’t spend enough time with, or make enough of an effort towards, my bio-family and then there is a feeling of not being appreciative and grateful for all that my foster parents did for me. ***NOBODY ever talked to me about that, let alone helped me prepare for it.***

**I owe a lot of my success in life to my Transition Support Team** I had while I was exiting foster care. They placed emphasis on education, making sure that I was on track to graduate high school and completing all the necessary steps for me to continue my education after high school, if I so chose. There were also classes and workshops that I attended which focused on teaching “basic” life skills such as: cooking, budgeting, finding housing, car maintenance, etc. I have benefited a lot from having participated in those classes, but I still feel there are a few things that I could have been better prepared for.



**I HOPE MY PERSONAL  
experience can HELP  
you on your transition  
Journey.**

## **RICKY BALLESTEROS, FOSTERCLUB 2015 ALL-STAR INTERN**

*At 16, Ricky was placed in state’s custody due to his parents’ involvement with drugs. With the help of supportive foster parents and a transition team, he navigated through Utah’s foster care system. Since his release from care, Ricky has strived to be an advocate for youth in foster care serving as the chair of Utah’s Northern Youth Council and is a member of the State Youth Council. Currently, Ricky is a student at Weber State University pursuing a degree in Social Work, while working as a Transition to Adult Living (TAL) specialist for the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). Ricky is an advocate, a husband, a soldier, a runner, a student, a Mormon, and a foster youth.*



# in Transit From FOSTER CARE TO ADULTHOOD

For most youth in foster care, **these are uncertain times**. Today more than ever, if you want to travel successfully (and safely) to life on your own, you need a plan for your trip.

FosterClub created the Transition Toolkit to help you develop a team of adult supporters, take inventory of your current assets, identify your resources and map out a plan for the challenges after foster care.

It's your life - take control and let your journey begin! Welcome to the FosterClub Transition Toolkit.

## WITHOUT a map, YOUR transition PLAN COULD BE IN TROUBLE

Suddenly you age out of foster care, you're too old to receive foster care services, and you're hit with millions of adult decisions to make. Where will you live? What can you afford? Do I still have health insurance? Who will take you to school? How much money to you need to make to support yourself?

Most young adults in America are able to lean on their parents to help with some of this support in to their late 20's. As a young person in foster care, it's possible that you can't count on support from your parents. Therefore, you need to make a plan.



This FosterClub Transition Toolkit is a map to guide you out of foster care and on to a safe, independent adulthood. This is your transition plan.

### WHAT IS A TRANSITION PLAN?

Federal law requires that all states must develop a transition plan for foster youth during the 90 day period before the youth leaves foster care at age 18, 19, 20 or 21. The plan must be individualized to the young person and must be developed with the young person. Among the issues to be addressed are specific topics of housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors, and workforce supports and employment services.

### TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR FUTURE

The good part about the law is that the Federal Government clearly states that a foster youth needs a transition plan and that the youth has to be involved in developing it.

Our view at FosterClub is that this is your life. What happens should primarily be your say, and not dictated by a judge's or a caseworker's opinion.

You owe it to yourself to get the facts and start working on your transition plan as early as you can. The law states a 90 day period to develop a plan for your life. Is that enough time? The sooner you start, the more control you'll have. Two or three years before leaving the foster care system is not too soon to start working on your transition plan.

You've dreamed about those days of independence after foster care. With the FosterClub Transition Toolkit, you can take charge and begin to make those dreams come true.

*Visit us online at [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org) for bonus Transition Toolkit materials and for stories about your peers' experiences aging out of the foster care system.*

## a message TO SUPPORTIVE ADULTS

Thank you for being a supportive adult for a young person transitioning from foster care. Your role is more important than you think, or the youth may know. Having committed and reliable adult supporters is the number one factor in success for a young person transitioning from foster care.

You can strengthen your role by:

- Read the information in this toolkit and visit [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org) for more tools to help youth prepare for life after foster care.
- Help the youth identify their strengths AND needs.
- Make it clear how you are willing to support the youth.
- Help keep the youth on track.
- Celebrate success.
- Be a mentor.

Remember that it's the youth's life — and it's their transition plan. Keep in mind that ultimately, the youth will be the one living out the plan.



# WHAT'S MY role?

It's your life, and participating in your transition plan will get you valuable connections and resources BEFORE you leave the foster care system. It is to your benefit to take full advantage and jump on board. Don't sit and watch your transition take place without your voice.

## HAVE A SAY, GET CONTROL

If — at any time — you feel that you are not being heard or getting the support you need to create and carry out your transition plan, make sure you let someone know.

Don't miss any chance to speak in court or talk with a judge before you transition out of foster care. The

judge holds the real power to get you the resources and services you need. Your transition plan will probably be reviewed by the court — so make sure you show up to answer any questions the judge might have and to speak up for what you care about and want for your life.

## Transition Team

Every successful adult has a team of supportive people, like an entourage. Just ask someone you know who's successful. Planning for your transition to adulthood can be a little daunting to tackle all by yourself. Don't worry; you can get others to help you. By recruiting a Transition Support Team, you'll have access to others who have already made the journey to adulthood. They can give you tips, information, advice, and access to resources along the way that will make your journey smoother.

Who should be on your team? Well, that is up to you, but try to **identify adults who have been supportive of you in a positive way**. A member of your Transition Support Team could be an adult who has given you good advice like:

- a coach or teacher
- a pastor or church member
- a neighbor or employer
- a CASA, attorney, or guardian ad litem
- a relative, foster parent or guardian
- the parent of a friend or classmate
- someone with a career you are interested in

Try for at least two or three adult supporters if not more. Speak to your caseworker or social worker about other possible members for your Transition Support Team.

Identify your team and ask for assistance along your journey. They will help you succeed!



FosterClub  
member Alex  
from Colorado



# WHAT WILL THE JOURNEY BE LIKE?

The FosterClub Transition Toolkit is a step-by-step transition plan designed as a subway map built around ten different categories or routes. For a successful transition to adulthood, we recommend taking or visiting each route.

Your routes are shown as lines on a subway map (illustrated on the next page.) Each stop on the subway route is an item for you to examine on your journey to leaving foster care. If you have questions or are unclear about items, remember your Transition Support Team can help you. All you have to do is ask.

At the stops, you'll clarify your goals, gather up resources, honestly evaluate your assets, and sharpen your skills for life on your own. With the FosterClub Transition Toolkit as your guide, you are the navigator to a successful future.

## Transition ROUTES:

Finances + money management

Job + career

\*

Life Skills

Identity

Permanence

Education

Self care + Health

\*

Housing

\*

Transportation

Community, Culture + Social Life

\*

\* Complete these items to comply with requirements of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increased Adoptions Law.

## Bonus Material:

Two additional transition routes are located at [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org). Select **Transition Toolkit** under **Books** to access the subway routes for Parenting and Pregnancy. The material is free!

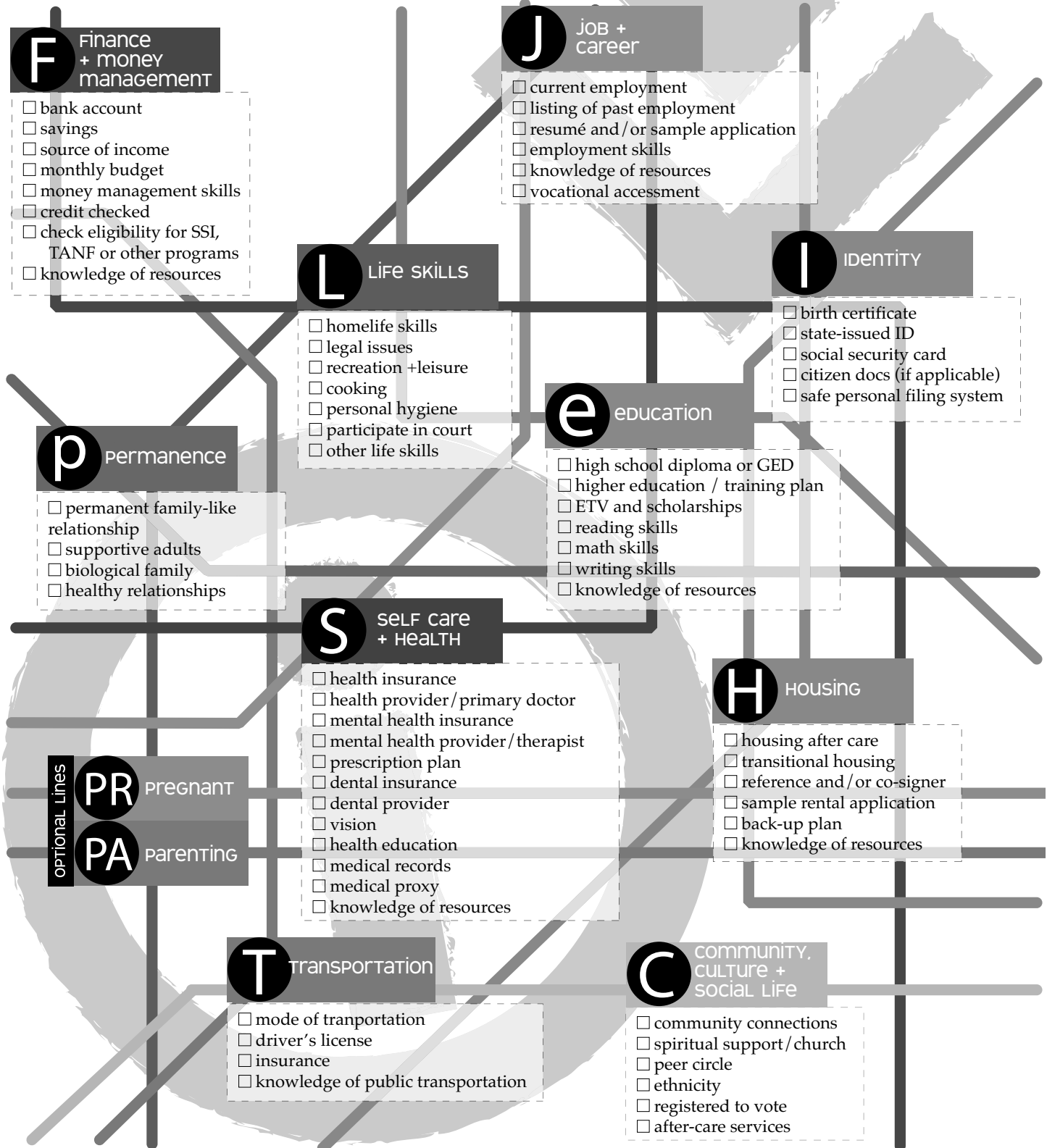
Pregnant

Parenting



# WHAT SHOULD I PLAN FOR?

That's up to you. This subway map provides a quick overview of the ten routes for transitioning. Just as a subway line contains many stops where you can get out and look around, each route contains several stops to explore. You'll notice assets and skills you'll want to pick up at each stop. They are your personal souvenirs on your journey to adulthood.



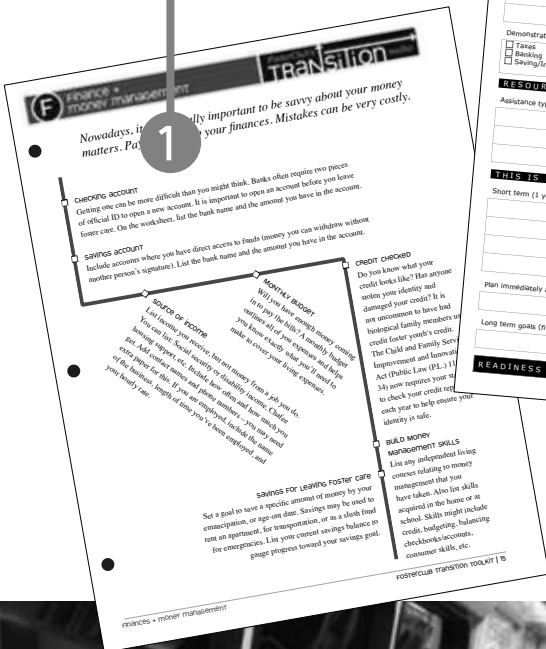
# creating your PLAN

There are ten different topic routes, like HOUSING or EDUCATION; you can include in your transition plan. It doesn't matter where you start, but you can expect similar components for each topic.

each transition route includes the following:

## MAP PAGE

Your transition routes are visually identified as a map of a subway line. They will contain many stops along the way with challenges for you to consider. Visit each stop and work the challenges.



## PLANNING WORKSHEET

When you've worked the challenges on the subway map pages, the transition planning worksheets will help you create a plan. Each of the worksheets has four parts:

**What I Have.** These are the assets that you already possess that will help you with the transition to adulthood. Only list items in this section that you ALREADY have.

**Resources Available to Me.** Use this section to document resources that are available from your foster care agency or other community resources.

**This is My Plan.** What do you want to accomplish? Use this section to document your goals and the steps you will take to get there.

**Readiness Scale.** Work with your Transition Support Team to score your readiness.



# HOW TO Track Your Progress

In order to create a good plan, it's important to know where currently stand. It's also important to track your progress, so that you can celebrate achievements and find opportunity areas for improvement.

**Readiness scale:** At the bottom of each transition planning worksheet is a "Readiness Scale." You and your Transition Support Team can rate how ready you are on a scale from 1 *Needs Work* (not ready yet) to 10 *Prepared* (completely ready) for each topic route.

## READINESS SCALE

Needs work ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☒ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 Prepared

once you've completed a route, LOG IT ON THE  
TRANSITION PLAN OVERVIEW WORKSHEET.

**Transition ROUTES:** Check the box next of the routes you've completed. Log the Readiness Score from the worksheet in column. You may see that you are stronger in some categories than in others. Tracking shows where you can improve in a category or compensate by building up other categories. The overall goal is to track your progress overtime; say, from month to month or year to year.

## Transition Routes

Check off the routes you finished in this transition plan, along with your Readiness Score (optional)

Completed Routes	Date of 1st score 1/2016	Date of 2nd score 5/2016
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finances & Money Management	6	7
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education		7
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Job & Career	5	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanence		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Life Skills	8	8
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community, Culture, & Social Life		6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	5	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identity	7	9
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing		8
<input type="checkbox"/> Self Care & Health		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list):		
Total Readiness Score:	31	58

You might hate keeping score or you might love it. Just know there's no pass or fail, no perfect or horrible score. The point system here is designed to only show where you are at on your transition plan. You should expect your "Readiness Scale" points to get higher as you get older. You at 14 years old would not fill in the worksheet as completely as you would at 18 years old.

# Travel TIPS

As you travel from foster care to adulthood, keep these tips in mind:

- 1 keep your Transition Plan in a safe Place**  
Some of the information you document may be personal. Protect yourself from identity theft by keeping your information secure.
- 2 ask For information and advice**  
The adults in your life have already made the transition to adulthood. Make use of what they know. Ask your Transition Support Team for guidance.
- 3 revisit & revise**  
Creating a transition plan shouldn't be a one-time event. Every 6 months, check your progress, see how your readiness improves, and update your goals.
- 4 Jump in and Learn more**  
Go to [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org) to find resources for foster youth and gather more information. Learn from your peers who are also making the transition from foster care to adulthood.



## ready TO GET started?

# Let's Get Started

## Instructions for using the Transition Plan Overview Worksheet

It is time to embark on your transition plan journey. What is the first thing you should do? Well, a good place to start is the **TRANSITION PLAN OVERVIEW WORKSHEET** on the very next page. This worksheet is your catchall for information. Continue to update this page as you build your transition plan.



### YOUTH information

Fill out the “My Information” section, which includes basic identity information and case information.



### additional plans

The “Additional Plans” section is for your caseworker, social worker or judge to fill out. A box might get checked off if you have another type of plan in place. If you are unsure about why a box is checked, you can always ask your caseworker or judge!

Transition Plan Overview Worksheet		FosterClub's Transition Toolkit	
<b>Youth Information</b>		1	
First Name and Initial	Last Name		
Case Number	Independent Living Provider or Case		
Date Plan Completed	Six month follow up due	Transition date	
Birth date (mm/dd/yy)	Current age	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
<b>Transition Domains</b>		2	
Indicate the domains included in this transition plan, along with the Readiness Score (optional)			
Completed domains		Date of 1st score	
<input type="checkbox"/> Finances & Money Management <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Job & Career <input type="checkbox"/> Permanence <input type="checkbox"/> Life Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Community, Culture, & Social Life <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Identity <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Self Care & Health <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list):		Date of 2nd score	
Total Readiness Score:		Date of 3rd score	
<b>Additional Plans</b>		3	
Have other community partners crafted a plan on behalf of the youth? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If yes, consider including as part of this transition plan in order to reduce redundant planning and improve agency collaboration in serving the youth:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Ansell-Casey Life Skills Plan ( <a href="http://www.casylifeskills.org">www.casylifeskills.org</a> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Education Plan (IEP) <input type="checkbox"/> Person Centered Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment Plan and Discharge Plan (D&A, Residential, Mental Health, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Voc Rehab/IPE (Individual Plan for Employment) <input type="checkbox"/> Development Disabilities Individual Support Plan (DD ISP) <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF/JOBIS) <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce Investment Act (WIA) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list):			
<b>Transition Team</b> Attach additional sheets as necessary		4	
Name	Role	Phone Number	
Name	Role	Phone Number	e-Mail
Name	Role	Phone Number	e-Mail
I participated in creating and approve of this Transition Plan. Youth's Signature: _____			

### Transition domains

Once you complete a topic domain (or route) such as education or housing, mark it off on the Overview Worksheet to update the “Transition Routes” section.

### transition team

If you have already identified supportive adults in your life, you can place their contact information under “Transition Team.” Please make sure you have had a conversation with your supportive adult and they have agreed to be on your team (or ask your caseworker to talk with the supportive adult). You can always add more team members later!



*It is time to start your journey and begin your transition plan!*

## My Information

First Name and Middle Initial	Last Name	
Case Number	Independent Living Provider or Case Manager	
Date Plan Completed	Six month follow-up date	Projected emancipation date
Birth date (mm/dd/yy)	What was your sex at birth? <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Intersex	What is your gender? <input type="checkbox"/> Male/Boy <input type="checkbox"/> Female/Girl <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/> Other

## Transition Routes

Check off the routes you finished in this transition plan, along with your Readiness Score (optional)

Completed Routes	Date of 1st score	Date of 2nd score	Date of 3rd score
<input type="checkbox"/> Finances & Money Management <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Job & Career <input type="checkbox"/> Permanence <input type="checkbox"/> Life Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Community, Culture, & Social Life <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Identity <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Self Care & Health <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list):			
Total Readiness Score:			

## Additional Plans

Have other plans been created that should be noted? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, consider including as part of this transition plan in order to reduce redundant planning and improve agency collaboration:

- ☐ Casey Life Skills Plan (lifeskills.casey.org)
- ☐ Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- ☐ Person Centered Plan
- ☐ Treatment Plan and Discharge Plan (D&A, Residential, Mental Health, etc.)
- ☐ Voc Rehab/IPE (Individual Plan for Employment)
- ☐ Development Disabilities Individual Support Plan (DD ISP)
- ☐ Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF/JOBS)
- ☐ Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- ☐ Other (please list):

## My Transition Support Team

Attach additional sheets as necessary

Name	Role	Phone Number	E-Mail

I, the foster youth, participated in creating and approve of this Transition Plan.

Your Signature:



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*Nowadays, it is especially important to be savvy about your money matters. Pay attention to your finances. Mistakes can be very costly.*

☐ **CHECKING ACCOUNT**

Getting one can be more difficult than you might think. Banks often require two pieces of official ID to open a new account. It is important to open an account before you leave foster care. On the worksheet, list the bank name and the amount you have in the account.

☐ **SAVINGS ACCOUNT**

Include accounts where you have direct access to funds (money you can withdraw without another person's signature). List the bank name and the amount you have in the account.

**SOURCE OF INCOME**

List income you receive, but not money from a job you do. You can list: Social security or disability income, Chafee housing support, etc. Include how often and how much you get. Add contact names and phone numbers – you may need extra paper for this. If you are employed, include the name of the business, length of time you've been employed, and your hourly rate.

**MONTHLY BUDGET**

Will you have enough money coming in to pay the bills? A monthly budget outlines all of your expenses and helps you know exactly what you'll need to make to cover your living expenses.

☐ **CREDIT CHECKED**

Do you know what your credit looks like? Has anyone stolen your identity and damaged your credit? It is not uncommon to have had biological family members use credit foster youth's credit. The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (Public Law (P.L.) 112-34) now requires your state to check your credit report each year to help ensure your identity is safe.

☐ **BUILD MONEY MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

List any independent living courses relating to money management that you have taken. Also list skills acquired in the home or at school. Skills might include credit, budgeting, balancing checkbooks/accounts, consumer skills, etc.

**SAVINGS FOR LEAVING FOSTER CARE**

Set a goal to save a specific amount of money by your emancipation, or age-out date. Savings may be used to rent an apartment, for transportation, or as a slush fund for emergencies. List your current savings balance to gauge progress toward your savings goal.





### WHAT I HAVE

Bank accounts: <input type="checkbox"/> Checking <input type="checkbox"/> Savings <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	Bank name:
--	------------

Savings for leaving foster care: Goal: \$                      Amount currently saved: \$	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly budget created
--	---

Regular sources of income (description):	Monthly Amount
	\$
	\$
	\$

Demonstrated money management skills (list):		<input type="checkbox"/> Credit checked (for identity theft)
<input type="checkbox"/> Taxes <input type="checkbox"/> Banking <input type="checkbox"/> Saving/Investing	<input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting <input type="checkbox"/> Lending / Financing <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency money matters	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME

Assistance type	Eligibility (what I need to qualify)	Who I contact (and how to apply)

### THIS IS MY PLAN

Short term (1 year) goals	Steps & services (and who will help me)	Progress

Plan immediately after I leave foster care:

--

Long term goals (five years from now, my financial goal is):

--

### READINESS SCALE

Needs Work   ☐1   ☐2   ☐3   ☐4   ☐5   ☐6   ☐7   ☐8   ☐9   ☐10 Prepared



*Explore these stops as you look for a place to live.*

**CALCULATE THE COST**  
Do a scan of the cost for rent in your area. Research the up-front or move-in costs, including security deposit/first-last month's rent, and application fees. Be sure to factor in the cost of utilities.

**KNOW YOUR RESOURCES**  
Make a list of money that might be available to you, like Chafee, ILP subsidies, financial aid, employment income, section 8, Social Security Income, relative and/or foster parent support. Make sure you know whether or not you're eligible, what the application process is, and how long you'll have to wait to start receiving assistance.

**SAMPLE APPLICATION**  
Complete a sample rental application to make sure you have all the information you'll need to apply, like references.

**secure a co-signer**  
Some places will require a co-signer for first-time renters. It can be difficult to find someone because they must be willing to take responsibility if you don't or can't pay rent.

## RESEARCH POST-EMANCIPATION OPTIONS

Check into subsidized housing (such as section 8 or public housing), adult service housing, apartments, shared housing, dormitory, relative or foster home.

## CONSIDER NEIGHBORHOODS & POTENTIAL HOUSING LOCATIONS

Identify social and supportive needs: proximity to family, friends, support groups, therapy, school, ideal roommate situation, and transportation availability.

## BUILD YOUR SKILLS

Learn skills and legal rights around housing. Familiarize yourself with Landlord/Tenant Law and housing rights, get contacts for renter's rights organization, discuss dealing effectively with landlords.

## GOT STUFF?

Identify furniture and household item needs, make a budget and plan for securing items. Find out if there is a "moving out" or transition items available from your agency.

## HAVE A BACK-UP PLAN

Make a list of fallback resources (family, friends, caseworker, renter's organizations, shelters). Locate a place where you can seek emergency shelter in the event that permanent housing is lost. Make sure you know how to get to this location. Write your emergency housing plan down.

## Decide Where To Live!

**make your move**  
Figure out how you will handle the moving process (secure furniture, truck, moving help).

**FIND OUT ABOUT TRANSITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS**  
Transitional housing programs can offer an opportunity to practice living on your own while providing you with tools for independent living. Find out what programs are available to you. Is there a transitional housing situation you prefer (like shared housing vs. living in your own apartment)?



## WHAT I HAVE

Where I live now:	Planned end date:
Housing after foster care (leave blank until arranged):	<input type="checkbox"/> Sample rental application completed
<input type="checkbox"/> reference or <input type="checkbox"/> co-signer Name:	Phone and/or email:
Back up plan (in case of emergency, this is where I'll go):	

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME

Assistance type	Eligibility (what I need to qualify)	Who I contact (and how to apply)

## THIS IS MY PLAN

Short term (1 year) goals	Steps & services (and who will help me)	Progress

Plan immediately after I leave foster care:

--

Long term goals (five years from now, my housing goal is):

--

## READINESS SCALE

Needs Work ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10 Prepared

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*By law, former foster are eligible for free health insurance until the age of 26. Find out about how to access when you transition.*

#### HEALTH insurance

Know what type of health insurance you have access to after you leave care. Find out what you need to do to maintain eligibility for health coverage. Research what it will cost if you have to pay for your own health care. List your medical insurance provider and your identification or client number.

#### HEALTH care PROVIDER

List your most current doctor, even if you no longer have health insurance. Compile medical records if multiple doctors/providers have been used. Confirm that your immunizations are up-to-date. Get a comprehensive health exam before leaving foster care, if possible.

#### MENTAL HEALTH insurance

Find out if your health insurance covers mental health issues if you are in need of such services. Find out what you need to do to maintain eligibility and what your “out of pocket” costs will be.

#### MENTAL HEALTH care PROVIDER

List your most current mental health provider, even if you no longer have health insurance. Compile medical records if multiple doctors/providers have been used.

#### FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU’LL need

Identify ongoing needs for physical health, mental health and substance abuse services (arrange comprehensive screenings, get physical, dental and vision examinations, along with developmental and mental health screenings.)

#### Prescriptions

Make a list of current prescriptions. Find out if health insurance will continue to cover the cost and for how long. Determine what the prescriptions will cost if you have to pay for them on your own. Learn about the side effects of stopping prescriptions without doctors’ orders. Figure out how to keep prescriptions in a safe place.

#### HEALTH SUPPORT

Identify supportive individuals who can help you stay healthy, including someone who would be willing to attend medical appointments with you and advise you in accessing resources.

#### IDENTIFY a HEALTH care PROXY

Complete a form called a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care that informs doctors and the court who you would like to make medical decisions in case you aren’t able to decide for yourself.

#### SUBSTANCE abuse TREATMENT

Demonstrate you know the signs of addiction, the consequences of substance abuse, and know where to go for help.

#### HEALTH education

Prepare yourself with health education, including healthy sexual decision making, awareness of birth family’s physical and mental health history, prevention and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, effects of trauma, substance abuse issues, constructive methods for coping with stress, addressing social and relational problems, anxiety, depression and other mental health issues.

**DENTAL**  
Schedule a complete dental checkup and take care of any dental issues before leaving care, if possible. Identify a dentist that you will continue to use and determine if coverage is available or what the cost will be if you have to pay.

**Vision**  
Arrange a comprehensive vision examination; determine a plan for meeting future vision needs (like glasses or contact lenses.)

**WHAT I HAVE**

Current <b>HEALTH</b> insurance coverage (name of company/plan):		Policy #:
Does current plan continue after leaving foster care? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure		Anticipated end date of coverage:
Current Primary Doctor:	Clinic or Hospital:	Phone #
Health issues:		Prescriptions:

Current <b>MENTAL HEALTH</b> insurance coverage (name of company/plan):		Policy #:
Does current plan continue after leaving foster care? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure		Anticipated end date of coverage:
Current Therapist:	Clinic or Hospital:	Phone #
Mental health issues:		Prescriptions:

Current <b>DENTAL</b> insurance coverage (name of company/plan):		Policy #:
Does current plan continue after leaving foster care? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure		Anticipated end date of coverage:
Current Dentist:	Clinic or Hospital:	Phone #
Dental issues:		Prescriptions:

<b>VISION</b> needs:	Prescriptions:
----------------------	----------------

Health education:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Substance abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Fitness	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Coping with stress	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy prevention	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/> Prevention of STDs	<input type="checkbox"/> Health self-advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

**RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME**

Assistance type	Eligibility (what I need to qualify)	Who I contact (and how to apply)

**THIS IS MY PLAN**

 Get ideas about how to make a plan at [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org)

Short term (1 year) goals	Steps & services (and who will help me)	Progress

Plan immediately after I leave foster care:

Long term goals (five years from now, my health, mental health, vision and dental goal is):

**READINESS SCALE**

 Needs Work ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10 Prepared


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# Real STORY: NAVIGATING HEALTHCARE

At 18, most young adults are gearing up for their first year in college, or still getting on their feet and living with family. **Aging out of the foster care system at 18 meant that I was taking complete responsibility for everything, from finances to health care.** With no family to turn to, I was completely on my own trying to navigate through the ‘real’ world. The reality was: I had to figure out how to stabilize and sustain myself--and quickly.



While in care my agency mandated annual physical, dental and vision check-ups. I even received mental health services to cope with my traumatic childhood. This made me extremely aware of the importance of my health physically and mentally.

After turning 21, I was no longer eligible for my health services. Anything I needed from that point on would have to be paid out of pocket including, but not limited to, medical, dental, vision, mental health services and medication. For a full-time college student with a part-time job, ‘out-of-pocket’ meant I would have to just do without. So I did.

**YOUTH WHO WERE  
IN FOSTER CARE AT  
AGE 18 OR OLDER  
QUALIFY FOR HEALTH  
INSURANCE COVERAGE  
UNTIL AGE 26,  
REGARDLESS OF  
INCOME.**

I honestly didn’t know when I would be able to afford simple things like a teeth cleaning, an eye-examination or a basic check-up at the doctor. These weren’t a priority when food needed to be put on the table, and bills and rent were due.

Well now thanks to the Affordable Care Act (aka “ObamaCare”), **youth who were in foster care in any state at age 18 or older qualify for health insurance coverage until age 26, regardless of income.** The ACA covers more than just medical, it covers dental and vision, mental health services and substance abuse counseling. **The best part is, it’s completely free!**

**PAULETTE CASTRO, FOSTERCLUB 2011 ALL-STAR INTERN AND 2015 LEVEL II INTERN**

*Paulette was removed from her mother’s care and remained in California’s foster care system for the next 14 years. She moved through numerous placements in both traditional and therapeutic care. During her time in care she experienced challenges with education, permanency, grieving and sibling separation. After aging out of care she went on to become a Newborn Audiology/Hearing Technician. After a switch of career, Paulette is now finishing up her last quarter at Cal State East Bay with a B.A. in Sociology. She hopes to utilize her degree to continue advocating for current and former foster youth.*



## *Jump on the education line!*

### ☐ SCHOOL RECORDS

Collect a copy of your school records, including a copy of official transcripts. Make sure you have records from ALL the middle and high schools you've attended.

### ☐ SCHOOL CREDITS

Evaluate current school credits and determine if you are on track to graduate. If you are behind, create a plan to make up missed credits or advocate for credit recovery for classes missed due to foster care moves.

### ☐ I.E.P. = INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN

If you have had an IEP, make sure you have a copy of your plan, understand the resources that are available to you, and find out how the plan might carry over to higher education.

### ☐ FINISH HIGH SCHOOL

Complete high school, GED or training program. If you won't finish high school by the time you are scheduled to leave foster care, talk to your caseworker about remaining in care so that you have the support you need to finish school.

### ☐ CALCULATE SENIOR FEES

Some agencies have funds available to help with any senior costs, and may be able to help with extras like senior photos, prom, etc. Make a list and provide it to your caseworker - well in advance of due date.

### ☐ Financial aid

Apply for financial aid, Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) and FASFA. Identify and apply for applicable scholarships.

### ☐ Higher education options

Identify and research colleges, vocational training or other higher education options. Determine which school to apply for based on achieved and desired skills, career goals, talents, abilities, etc. Attend college fairs and tours.

### ☐ Calendar

Create a calendar for school application dates, and scholarship deadlines.

### ☐ Testing

Identify, prepare for, and schedule required tests needed for college entry: PSAT, SAT, or ACT. Ask your high school counselor for assistance to determine which tests you should take. Ask about fee waivers - which are almost always available for foster youth.

### ☐ Apply

Submit applications to schools for higher education. Ask your high school counselor about application waivers.

## EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Current educational status: <input type="checkbox"/> Attending full time <input type="checkbox"/> Attending part time <input type="checkbox"/> Not attending	Last grade level completed:
---	-----------------------------

Most recent school attended:	G.P.A.:
------------------------------	---------

On track to earn: <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> GED or modified diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	Anticipated completion date:
--	------------------------------

Math Skills:	Reading Skills:	Writing Skills:	IEP? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
--------------	-----------------	-----------------	--

Previous school:	Last grade level completed:	Copy of records? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------	-----------------------------	--

Previous school:	Last grade level completed:	Copy of records? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------	-----------------------------	--

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME

Assistance type	Eligibility (what I need to qualify)	Who I contact (and how to apply)

## THIS IS MY PLAN

Short term (1 year) goals	Steps & services (and who will help me)	Progress

Plan immediately after I leave foster care:

--

Long term goals (five years from now, my educational goal is):

--



*Got skills? There are a lot of life skills that you can (and should) practice BEFORE you leave foster care.*

☐ LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT  
Be sure one or more members of your Transition Support Team can help you learn some of the life skills listed here.

☐ TAKE THE CASEY LIFE SKILLS assessment  
Check up on your life skills knowledge by visiting [lifeskills.casey.org](http://lifeskills.casey.org). It's a way for you to build your own personal checklist of skills and strengths. It shows you what you know already and what is possible to learn to help you in the future.

*There are lots of life skills you can learn and practice. We've listed some here, but we've left space for you to add more, like changing a car tire or traveling.*

- ☐ Laundry
- ☐ nutrition
- ☐ safety (Personal + Home)
- ☐ Legal issues
- ☐ etiquette

- ☐ GROCERY SHOPPING
- ☐ recreation + Leisure activities
- ☐ cooking
- ☐ cleaning
- ☐ PERSONAL HYGIENE
- ☐ communication

- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_



## WHAT I HAVE

Casey Life Skills Assessment: ☐ Completed ☐ In progress ☐ Not completed

Date Completed:

Demonstrated knowledge of life skills:

☐ Laundry☐ Safety☐ Legal issues☐ Etiquette☐ Recreation/leisure☐ Grocery shopping☐ Cooking☐ Cleaning☐ Personal Hygiene☐ Communication☐ Nutrition☐ Other:☐ Other:☐ Other:☐ Other:

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME

Assistance type

Eligibility (what I need to qualify)

Who I contact (and how to apply)


## THIS IS MY PLAN

Short term (1 year) goals

Steps &amp; services (and who will help me)

Progress


Plan after I leave foster care:

--

Long term goals (five years from now, my life skills goals include):

--

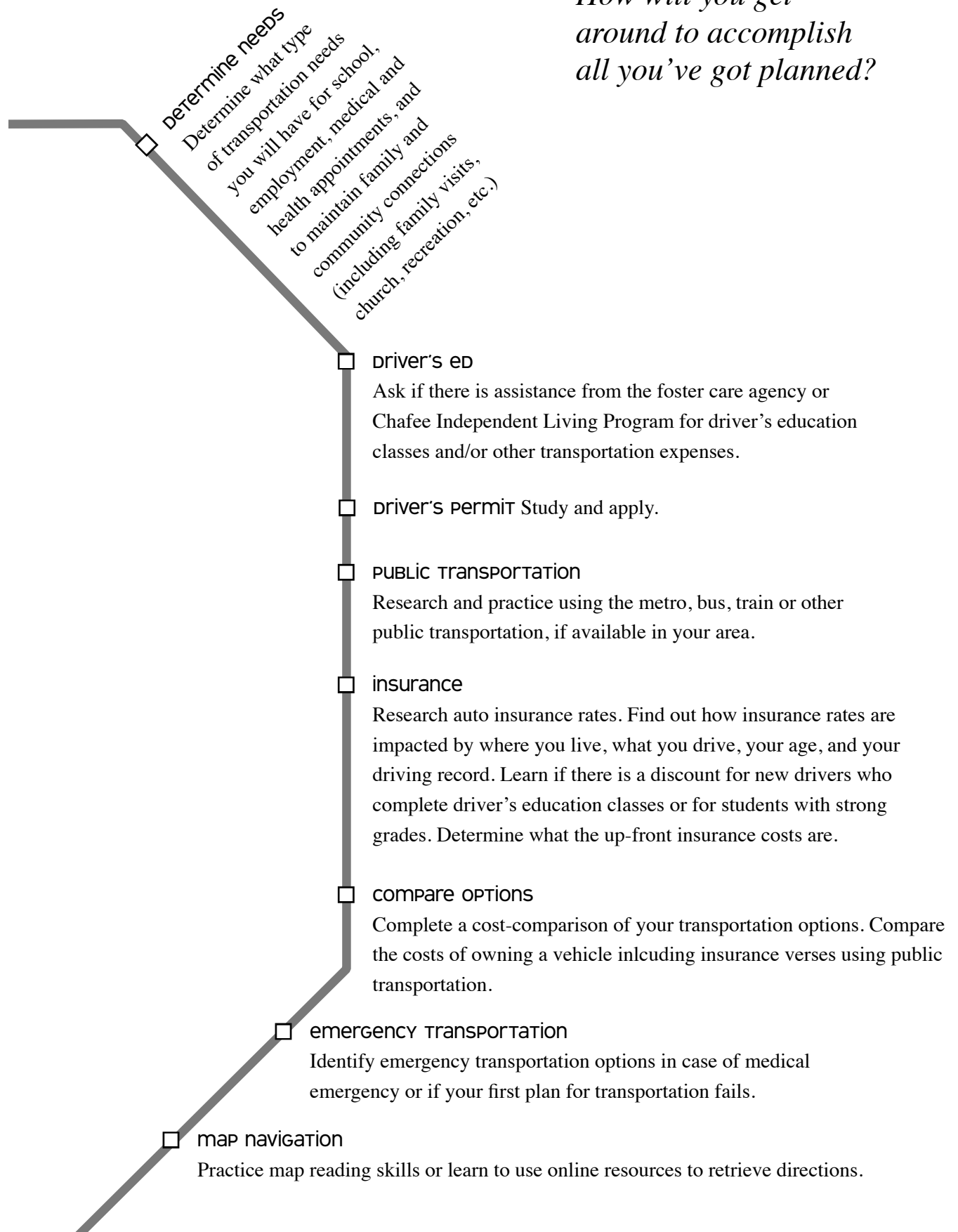
## READINESS SCALE

Needs Work ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10 Prepared

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*How will you get around to accomplish all you've got planned?*





## WHAT I HAVE

My current mode(s) of transportation:

☐ my vehicle ☐ friend/family provides ☐ public transportation ☐ bicycle ☐ walk ☐ other:

Transportation needed for (school, employment, recreation, etc.):

Driver's license status: ☐ have license ☐ have permit ☐ do not have

Date obtained:

Auto insurance (company name):

Policy number:

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME

Assistance type

Eligibility (what I need to qualify)

Who I contact (and how to apply)


## THIS IS MY PLAN

Short term (1 year) goals

Steps &amp; services (and who will help me)

Progress


Plan after I leave foster care:

--

Long term goals (five years from now, my transportation goal is):

--

## READINESS SCALE

Needs Work ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10 Prepared

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*Be sure to get all of your personal documents BEFORE you leave care. It's a lot harder to get some of these items after you exit the system.*

#### GET STATE-ISSUED OFFICIAL PHOTO ID

Photo identification is required on many occasions. Obtain a state-issued photo ID before you leave foster care (it's something your caseworker can help you do). It's smart to get a passport too, as extra identification (or if you want to travel outside of the United States).

#### DOCUMENTATION THAT YOU WERE IN FOSTER CARE

This may become important in qualifying for benefits, including financial aid for higher education. Get a letter from the court (ask your caseworker for help) that proves you were a ward of the state.

- ☐ OBTAIN AN ORIGINAL COPY OF YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY CARD  
Information about obtaining a replacement card can be obtained from [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). Understand the importance of guarding your social security number to protect against identity theft.
- ☐ OBTAIN A COPY OF YOUR BIRTH CERTIFICATE  
It should be a certified, or official, copy. Learn how to replace it if it gets lost.
- ☐ CITIZENSHIP DOCUMENTS  
If you were born in a country other than the United States, make sure you have a copy of all of your citizenship papers and understand completely what your citizenship rights and responsibilities are. If you think there may be an issue with citizenship, ask to be connected to an immigration attorney.
- ☐ CHECK YOUR CREDIT  
Ask to have a credit report run based on your social security number prior to leaving foster care. It is not unusual for young people from foster care to discover their credit has been damaged when relatives have "borrowed" their identity to get emergency funds or to get credit cards. The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (Public Law (P.L.) 112-34) now requires your state to check your credit report each year to help ensure your identity is safe.

#### ESTABLISH A PERSONAL FILING SYSTEM

You need to establish a method of keeping track of important documents. Methods could include a designated box, an FYI Binder (visit [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org) for information), a 3-ring notebook, a filing cabinet or a file-size expandable envelope. Understand the importance of keeping personal documents safe and secure.

#### REGISTER TO VOTE

At age 18, register to vote.

#### REGISTER FOR SELECTIVE SERVICE

A male at age 18 to 26, register for the selective service.





## WHAT I HAVE

Personal documents:	Status:	Possession: (who has them)
Birth certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> Have <input type="checkbox"/> Applied for <input type="checkbox"/> Do not have	
State-issued picture identification	<input type="checkbox"/> Have <input type="checkbox"/> Applied for <input type="checkbox"/> Do not have	
Social Security Card	<input type="checkbox"/> Have <input type="checkbox"/> Applied for <input type="checkbox"/> Do not have	
Citizen / immigration documents (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Have <input type="checkbox"/> Applied for <input type="checkbox"/> Do not have	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Have <input type="checkbox"/> Applied for <input type="checkbox"/> Do not have	

☐ Safe personal filing system in place☐ I know I may request a copy of my foster care case file

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME

Assistance type	Eligibility (what I need to qualify)	Who I contact (and how to apply)

## THIS IS MY PLAN

Short term (1 year) goals	Steps & services (and who will help me)	Progress

Plan after I leave foster care:

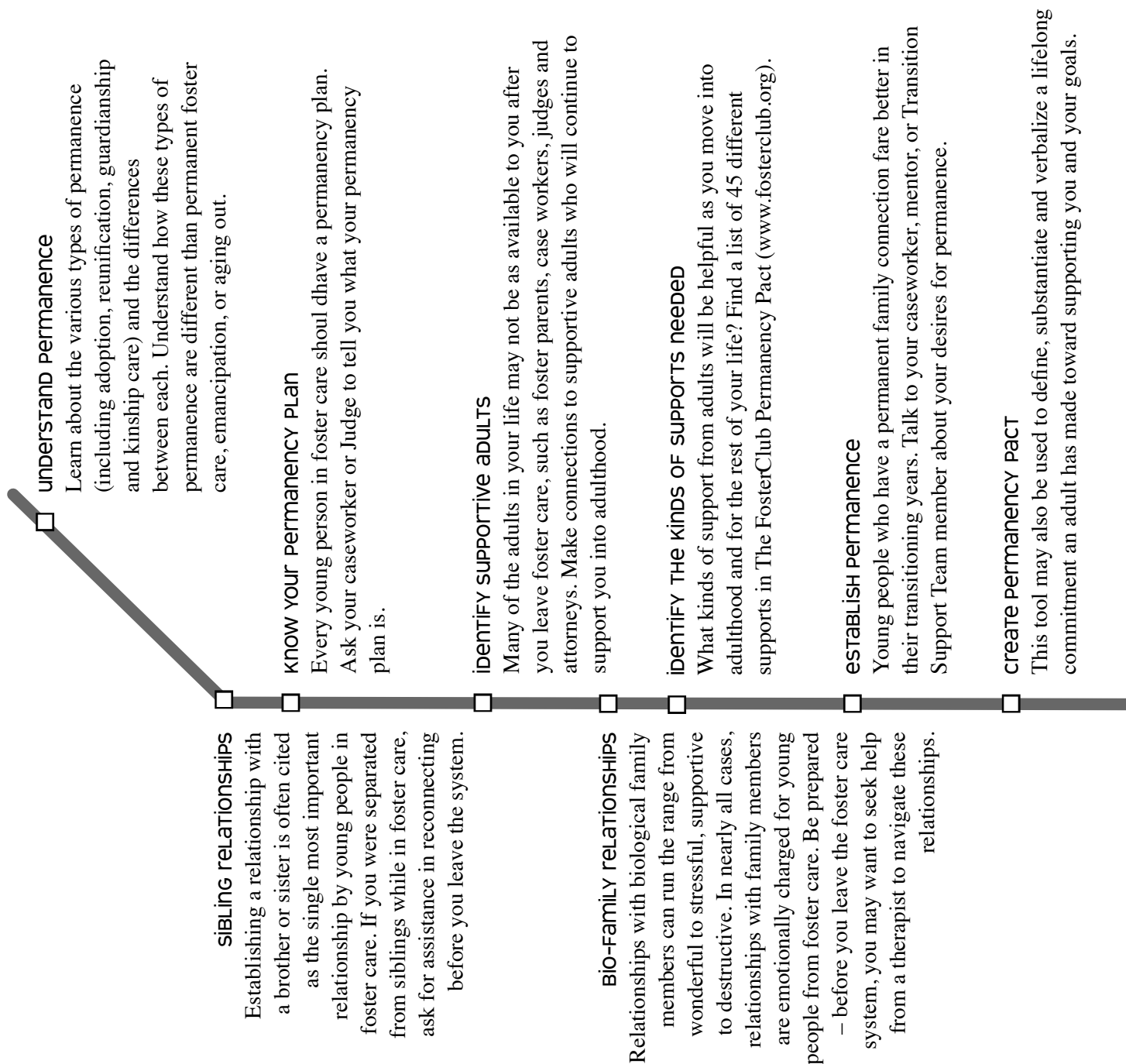
Long term goals (five years from now, my housing goal is):

## READINESS SCALE

Needs Work ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10 Prepared

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*Permanence is number one.  
It's the top reason young people successfully  
transition to adulthood.*



**WHAT I HAVE**

My current permanency plan:

☐ Reunification   ☐ Adoption   ☐ Kinship (live with relative)   ☐ Guardianship   ☐ APPLA   ☐ Not sure

If permanence has been achieved, who with? Name(s):

Phone:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

E-mail:

**OTHER SUPPORTIVE ADULTS**

Name(s):

Phone:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

E-mail:

Relationship &amp; supports provided:

☐ Permanency Pact  
completed

Name(s):

Phone:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

E-mail:

Relationship &amp; supports provided:

☐ Permanency Pact  
completed

Name(s):

Phone:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

E-mail:

Relationship &amp; supports provided:

☐ Permanency Pact  
completed

### RELATIONSHIP WITH BIOLOGICAL RELATIVES

Biological relatives (including siblings):	Relationship (parent, aunt, etc.)	Status

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME

Assistance type	Eligibility (what I need to qualify)	Who I contact (and how to apply)

### THIS IS MY PLAN

Short term (1 year) goals	Steps & services (and who will help me)	Progress

Plan after I leave foster care:

Long term goals (five years from now, my housing goal is):

### READINESS SCALE

Needs Work ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10 Prepared



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**ROSALINA H. BURTON,**

**2015 FOSTERCLUB ALL-STAR INTERN**

*"Sometimes it feels like you are climbing up a mountain that is too steep and you don't have the right shoes, every step you take forward you slide back two more." This is how Rosalina (Rosie) Burton, a former foster youth of San Diego, California, describes her transition out of foster care at the age of 19. This tough transition, 23 different placements and the numerous school changes during her 12 years in foster care are why Rosie began advocating for foster youth. Rosie enjoys working as a Mental Health worker at San Pasqual Academy, a residential facility for foster youth in San Diego County, and attending Palomar Community College. Rosie will obtain her Bachelors of Art and Masters in Social Work and/or Policy with a minor in communications. Rosie is hardworking, determined, ambitious, and a foster youth.*

**DOWNLOAD THE FOSTERCLUB  
PERMANENCY PACT AT  
[WWW.FOSTERCLUB.ORG](http://WWW.FOSTERCLUB.ORG)**

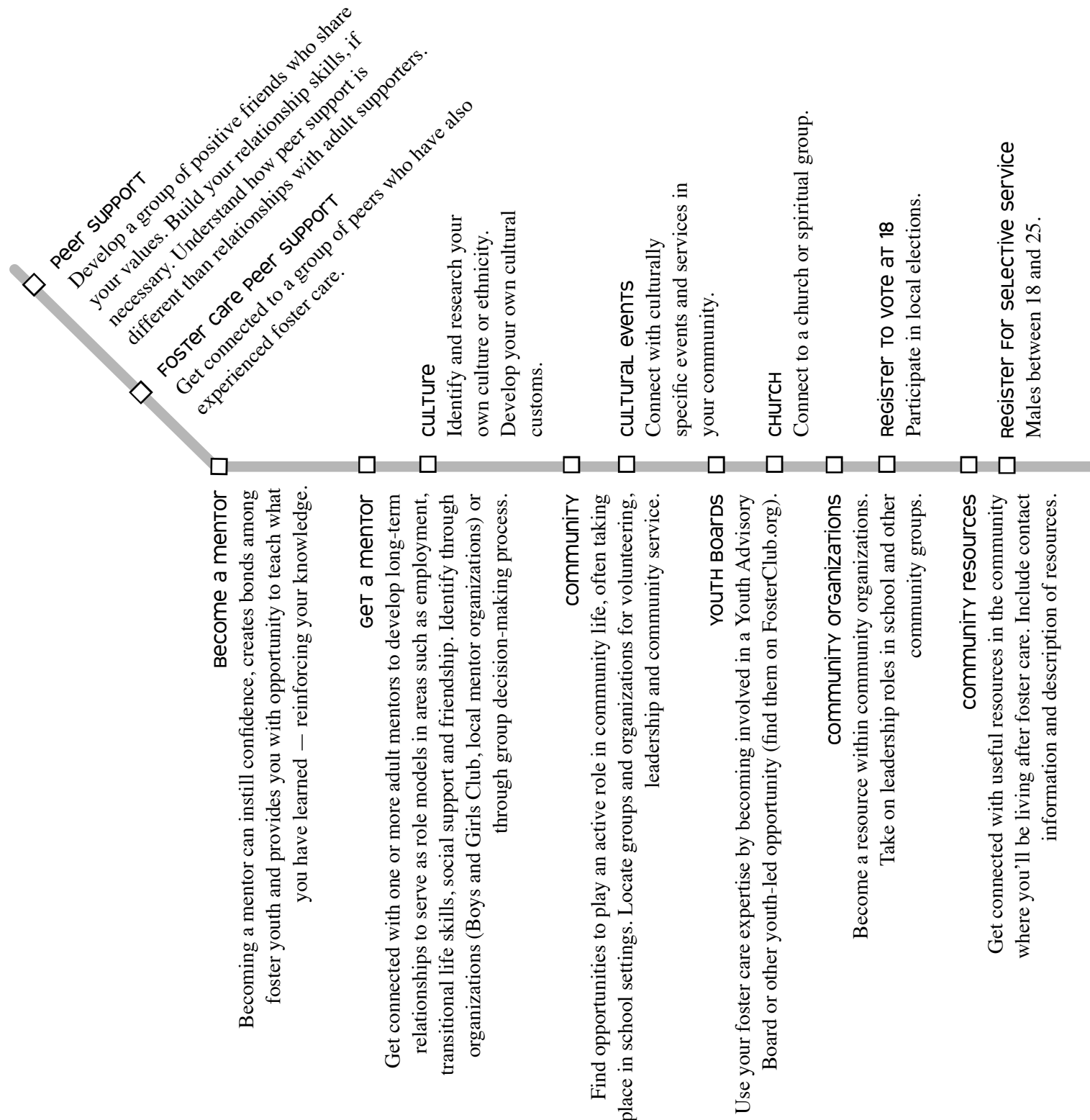
## REAL STORY: Permanence

I emancipated foster care feeling as though I was all-alone. I needed more support, but I didn't know how to ask for it. When I learned about the FosterClub Permanency Pact, it changed my life. I now had roles that I could fill with people in my life that I knew cared about me. I was also able to face the fact that I feared rejection. Because of the Permanency Pact I was able to talk openly with friends about our relationship so that we could build stronger connections.

For the first time in my life, I am not worried about the holiday season. I know I have supportive people to spend my holidays with if I need to, even if I don't want to.



*As a member of your community,  
you'll want to participate fully to  
receive benefits.*





## WHAT I HAVE

Community Connections (social groups, activities, volunteerism)

Contact person:

Phone:


Spiritual support / church:

Contact person:

--	--

Peer Circle (Names):

Length of time known

Phone


My ethnic heritage: ☐ Not sure

List:

☐ Registered to vote

☐ Registered for draft (if male)

--	--

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME

Assistance type

Eligibility (what I need to qualify)

Who I contact (and how to apply)


## THIS IS MY PLAN

Short term (1 year) goals

Steps & services (and who will help me)

Progress


Plan immediately after I leave foster care:

--

Long term goals (five years from now, my community, culture, and social life goal is):

--

## READINESS SCALE

Needs Work ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10 Prepared



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*This important part of your life deserves special attention.*

#### IDENTIFY EMPLOYMENT GOALS

What are your career interests? What are your desired occupations? What do you want to be doing three years from now? How do you see yourself when you are 30?

#### IDENTIFY LONG-TERM & SHORT-TERM EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Which jobs and/or programs are attainable at present and what employment opportunities should be available after taking strategic steps?

#### DEVELOP SKILLS FOR maintaining and advancing in JOB

Employer/employee relationships, continued education, assertiveness training, etc.

#### CONSIDER INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

While they may not pay well or may not pay at all, volunteer and internship opportunities are a great way to build skills, add depth to your resume, and create strong references. Sometimes these volunteer positions turn into paid positions.

- ☐ IDENTIFY NATURAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES  
Think about what you enjoy doing, where you excel and how your talents, skills and abilities can translate into employment opportunities. Consider taking a career assessment test (ask your high school counselor about options).

- ☐ IDENTIFY EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING NEEDS TO ATTAIN CAREER GOALS

- ☐ What steps do you need to take to achieve long-term employment goals? Do you need training or schooling? Do you need experience in the field? Research and compare training options through Job Corps, college, apprenticeship, job shadows, etc. Ask your school if there is a career fair scheduled in your area.

- ☐ DEVELOP JOB SEARCH SKILLS

- ☐ Discuss where to look for employment: newspapers, Internet, signs, boards, word-of-mouth and your network. Practice doing mock job interviews. Research appropriate attire for a job interview. Identify follow-up actions that should be done after a job interview.

**BUILD YOUR RESUME**  
Add extra-curricular activities, volunteerism, and take classes to build skills that will be seen as an asset to future employers. Check and double-check spelling.

**KNOW YOUR RESOURCES**  
Where can you go for help getting a job? Can you get assistance with creating a resume? List resources and supportive adults you can turn to for assistance.

#### GET A JOB

There's no better way to learn about being employed than to... well... be employed.

**EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**

Current employment status: <input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> Part time (Hours per week:       )		Position:	Pay rate:
Employer:		Phone:	
Address:		City, State, Zip:	
Supervisor:	Supervisor's Position:	Supervisor's Email:	

Special Certifications:

Employment Skills:

☐ Résumé completed    ☐ Sample employment application completed**PAST EMPLOYMENT**

Employer		Phone:
Address:		City, State, Zip:
Position:	Dates of employment: to	Reason for leaving:

Employer		Phone:
Address:		City, State, Zip:
Position:	Dates of employment: to	Reason for leaving:

Employer		Phone:
Address:		City, State, Zip:
Position:	Dates of employment: to	Reason for leaving:



**RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME**

Assistance type	Eligibility (what I need to qualify)	Who I contact (and how to apply)

**THIS IS MY PLAN**

Short term (1 year) goals	Steps & services (and who will help me)	Progress

Plan immediately after I leave foster care:

Long term goals (five years from now, my job and career goal is):

**READINESS SCALE**Needs Work ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10 Prepared



**angelica COX, 2015 FOSTERCLUB ALL-STAR INTERN**

*Angelica entered the Michigan foster care system when she was eleven years old and was placed into kinship care. To help escape the trauma in her life, Angelica focused heavily on her academics and became involved in several extra curricular activities at school. In 2013, she graduated from high school in the top ten of her class with high honors before heading to James Madison College at Michigan State University. Her dream is to become a Child Advocate Lawyer so she can be a legal voice for children in the foster care system. Angelica's motto in life is "when life knocks you down, get back up and fight harder." Angelica is a scholar, an optimist, a leader, and a foster youth.*

## REAL STORY: career OPPORTUNITIES

I spent most of my childhood on the fast track to a life destined for failure. Although my childhood created an environment of heartbreak and limited expectations, I never gave up because those painful experiences could become my future. **Instead, I made the decision to overcome those tragedies from my past and to embark on a journey to college with nothing but my desire to succeed.** I did not have a forever family to aid me, but even though I could not control my past, I could control my future because my destiny was up to me.

As a freshman, I had one goal in mind: get an internship at the Michigan House of Representatives. I sent in my application to numerous offices and the following week I received an interview with State Representative Henry Yanez. The night before I researched his political standpoints, but it wasn't my well-researched answers that landed me an internship in his office. The Representative hired me because he admired my passion and desire to learn. Seeking more responsibility, I landed my second internship with State Representative Andy Schor. **This internship advanced into a paid position, which means I have the financial means to support myself while in school.**

Working at the House of Representatives has opened many doors for me. Due to my political connections, I was able to be an active stakeholder in the Michigan Foster Children's Bill of Rights. This bill is still making its way through committee right now, but I will have the opportunity to testify on behalf of this bill as it moves closer to a vote.

When I think about the next step that I want to take in life, nothing excites me more than the prospect to lobby on behalf of my foster youth in the most powerful place on the planet. That is why I have applied for an internship with Voice for Adoption in Washington D.C. It would give me the chance to help foster youth on a federal level. **Also, it would help me network with people for future career opportunities and give me experience in the field of my dreams.** Foster care is a social justice issue that has been ignored for too long and I am determined to change that.

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more: sign up at FOSTERCLUB.ORG**

# ROADBLOCKS and CHALLENGES

The exit from foster care can become more difficult based on paths you choose to take and circumstances put in front of you. The green section lists a selection of challenges and roadblocks that can make your journey to adulthood more difficult. If you have one or more of these challenges, it does not mean that you won't be successful as you transition out of foster care, but it does mean that you will need to do additional planning to overcome the challenges and ensure your success.

Some of these challenges you may have control over - like becoming a smoker or young parent - and others you may have no control over - like a physical disability.

Think about how you might be able to improve your odds, or your Readiness Score, by increasing your preparedness other areas such as increasing your EDUCATION or LIFE SKILLS training.

**age.** It is almost always a disadvantage to leave foster care too young. You receive additional points on your Readiness Score as you are able to develop, mature and stay in the system until you "age out" with the support of additional caring adults.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE and ADDICTION.** A high percentage of youth in care have parents with drug or alcohol dependency problems. Youth transitioning out of care should take conscious steps to avoid the dangerous pitfalls of alcohol and drug abuse.

**SMOKING.** Smoking is a high-risk activity that can cause significant health problems.

**INCARCERATION or criminal record.** Youth who avoid illegal behavior are more likely to stay safe and succeed as adults. Felony crimes make it very difficult to rent an apartment or obtain employment, which may need to be taken into consideration when rating your readiness.

**YOUNG PARENT.** Teens and young adults who have become parents face additional challenges than their peers. Establishing yourself with education, housing, career, and finances before becoming a parent is highly recommended. If you are a teen parent, you can still have a successful transition with your family. Work on increasing your Readiness Score in areas such as PERMANENCE, FINANCE and HOUSING.

**DISABILITY.** Young people who have physical, developmental, learning, or mental health disabilities may have additional difficulties transitioning into adulthood. Look for additional resources that might be available to assist you if you have disabilities.



# THINKING ABOUT Leaving care early?

Most young people know that it's important to have a plan before leaving foster care. But each year, FosterClub hears from youth who have left foster care early and lost out BIG. They regret that they didn't have the information they needed to make an informed decision. Don't let it happen to you. At the very least, **make sure you've checked into the following four items and know what you're getting into by leaving foster care before you "age out."**

## 4 THINGS Before You Go

1

Find out if you'll lose benefits, like money, if you leave foster care before turning 18. This can happen if you don't complete certain applications.

3

Have at least one "go-to" person. It should be someone that is willing to mentor you through tough situations and will provide you with a way to contact them 24/7 in case of an emergency.

2

Check if you can come back to foster care if you want or need help. Ask your caseworker or judge.

4

Read the FosterClub 21 THINGS checklist filled with things you should have **before** you leave foster care (at the very least, you'll know what you're missing!) Go to [fosterclub.org](http://fosterclub.org) and search 21 Things.

*If you are REALLY serious about making a successful transition to adulthood, you'll need a complete transition plan to prepare you for the journey... this Transition Toolkit can help you map a plan for your future.*



# FosterClub

The pinwheel is an enduring symbol of the happy, carefree childhood all kids deserve. For kids who experience the U.S. foster care system, childhood has been interrupted by abuse, neglect or abandonment. The FosterClub network gives young people in foster care a new spin on life.

Every 2 minutes, a child enters the foster care system. There are more than 400,000 young people living in foster care across the United States. FosterClub is their club - a place to turn for advice, information and hope. A place where they can connect to other foster youth who are going through what they are going through.

the national network  
for young people  
in foster care

**Our nonprofit mission is to lead the efforts of young people in and from foster care to become connected, educated, inspired and represented so they can realize their personal potential and contribute to a better life for their peers.** We believe that young people in and from foster care deserve to be: **CONNECTED** to a peer support network and to people in the community who care; **EDUCATED** about their rights, how the foster care system works, self-advocacy strategies, and how to locate resources to help them succeed; **INSPIRED** and empowered through the stories of people who have succeeded after foster care; **REPRESENTED** by having their voices heard by policy makers, the public, and others who influence the system that profoundly impacts their lives.

**We want to make sure every young person who experiences foster care has what they need to thrive.**

The FosterClub family is filled with resilient people determined to build a better future for themselves and for other kids coming up through the system behind them. Their success depends on the generosity of concerned individuals and collaborations with partner organizations.

To learn more about FosterClub and how you can support young people in and from foster care, visit [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org) or call 503-717-1552. FosterClub is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, EIN 93-1287234.



built for youth

powered by youth

changing life in foster care

[fosterclub.org](http://fosterclub.org)

ISBN 978-0-9791162-9-2 \$6.95  
50695>



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