

The 411:
A Young Adult's Guide to
Planning for the Future



At My Fingertips - Important Numbers To Know

My Provider Worker:

Name: _____
Agency: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Supervisor's Name: _____
Phone#: _____

My DHS Worker:

Name: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Supervisor's Name: _____
Phone #: _____
DHS Case#: _____

My Family Doctor:

Name: _____
Phone: _____
Address: _____
Insurance Company: _____
Member ID #: _____

My Child Advocate/Attorney:

Name: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

My Family:

Mom/Caregiver: _____
Phone: _____
Dad/Caregiver: _____
Phone: _____
Siblings: _____



Emergency: 911

Child Abuse Hotline: 215-683-6100

State Child Abuse Reporting Number:
1-800-932-0313

Suicide Hotline:
Philadelphia area: 215-686-4420
Nationwide: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Department of Human Services (DHS):
215-683-4DHS (4347)

Department of Human Services
Commissioner's Action Response Office (to file a grievance)
888-808-0066
dhs_caro@phila.gov

Court Operations
(To find out the name of your child advocate or when your next court date is scheduled): 215-686-4028

Achieving Independence Center:
215-574-9194

Juvenile Law Center:
215-625-0551
www.jlc.org

Education Law Center:
215-238-6970
www.elc-pa.org

Support Center for Child Advocates:
215-925-1913
www.advokid.org

The Defender Association - Child Advocacy Unit:
267-765-6987

The 411: A Young Adult's Guide to Planning for the Future

TABLE OF CONTENTS

At My Fingertips – Important Phone Numbers	Inside Front Cover	
Part 1: Introduction		
Why Am I Here?	2	
When Can I Go Home?	2	
Can I Still See My Family?	2	
How Often Can I See My Family?	2	
What if My Family Needs Help Paying for Transportation?	2	
What if I Want to Visit Other Relatives?	2	
Part 2: Out-of-Home Care		
Types of Living Placements	3	
Is My Information Confidential?	3	
Roles and Responsibilities	3	
Part 3: Legal Info		
What Do These Words Mean?	5	
Family Court	5	
Types of Court Hearings	6	
Tips for Court	6	
Questions to Prepare to Answer in Court	7	
Part 4: Advocating for Yourself		
How Do I Advocate for Myself?	8	
What Do I Do if Things Go Wrong?	8	
Part 5: Other Things to Know		
Education	10	
Employment – Getting a Job	12	
Life Skills	13	
Housing – Finding a Place to Live	14	
Health Care	14	
Counseling	15	
Sexual Health & Family Planning	15	
Part 6: Preparing for Discharge		
What is Discharge Planning?	16	
How Do I Get a Board Extension?	16	
What Do I Do Before I Leave Care?	17	
Part 7: Centers to Help Youth Prepare for Adulthood		
Achieving Independence Center	19	
Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN)	20	
Job Corps	20	
Part 8: Immigration Issues		21
Part 9: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)		22
Part 10: Philadelphia Resources		23
Part 11: Personal Notes		30
Part 12: Appendices:		
Glossary of Terms	31	
Sample Forms – Youth Resource List, Discharge Checklist	33	

Part 1: INTRODUCTION

This handbook was put together by the City of Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS), with the help of youth who are in, or have been in, DHS care. It is our hope that this handbook will help answer some of the questions you have about being in out-of-home care, your placement, and the child welfare system.

While this handbook will not be able to answer all of your questions, we hope it will give you a better understanding of what to expect while in care, the things you need to do, and information and resources that can help you.

This handbook uses the term “parent” to refer to the person who is legally responsible for you and takes care of you. This could be your mother, father, grandmother or other adult who has legally taken responsibility for your care and well being.

If you have questions after reading this handbook, you should talk to your DHS worker or provider worker to get answers.



WHY AM I HERE?

DHS understands that this is a very upsetting time for you. To help you get through this tough time, you can reach out to your DHS worker, provider worker, therapist/counselor or other adults for help.

The reason you are in care, and what must be done

before you can go home, are outlined in your **DHS Family Service Plan (FSP)**, which should be shared with you (see p. 3 for information on an FSP). If you have not seen your FSP, please talk to your DHS worker or provider worker.

WHEN CAN I GO HOME?

Although DHS can't give you a definite time for when you may go home, it is important for you to know that everyone involved with you is working hard to either send you home to live with your parent or find another living arrangement for you.

CAN I STILL SEE MY FAMILY?

DHS understands that visiting your family may be important to you and is a part of working towards being reunified with your parent. DHS wants to make sure you visit with your parent/custodian at least every other week, unless the court decides it is not in your best interest.

Since DHS wants to reunify you with your parent, under no circumstances should your provider agency punish you by stopping you from seeing them. If this happens, tell your DHS worker. If visiting with your parent upsets you, contact your DHS worker, provider worker and/or child advocate to discuss how to feel supported during visitation.

HOW OFTEN CAN I SEE MY FAMILY?

You will be able to have visits with your parent/custodian at least every other week. If the Judge believes that you and your parent/custodian have made progress completing the goals of your FSP, he/she may decide to allow you to visit without supervision.

WHAT IF MY PARENT NEEDS HELP PAYING FOR TRANSPORTATION?

If your parent needs help paying for transportation to and from visitation, DHS should provide tokens or cash or help your provider worker with making arrangements.

WHAT IF I WANT TO VISIT OTHER RELATIVES?

If you have other relatives you would like to visit, talk to your provider worker. Your provider worker is responsible for discussing visitation resources with you and completing the **Youth Resource List** (see Appendix p. 36).

The Youth Resource List helps you think about positive adult relationships that mean something to you. Use this as an opportunity to talk to your provider worker about the people in your life who mean something special to you. Your provider worker should share the information with your DHS worker so they can look into potential visiting resources. The Youth Resource List should be updated and discussed at your **Individualized Service Plan (ISP)** meeting every six months. (See p. 3 for information in your ISP)

WHAT IF I CAN'T GO HOME?

If the Judge decides that living at home with your parent is not in your best interest, DHS is responsible for finding another permanent place for you to live. You will hear people say the words **Adoption**, **Permanent Legal Custodianship**, and **Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)**. These words describe other types of DHS goals, besides **Return to Parent**.

- **Adoption** – The creation of a new, permanent legal family for a youth. The adoption process involves the termination of the biological parents' rights and gives new caregivers those parental rights.
- **Permanent Legal Custodianship (PLC)** – PLC makes another person the permanent legal guardian and is intended to be a permanent arrangement. Unlike adoption, PLC does not involve termination of the parents' rights. Under PLC, parents may retain certain rights, such as visitation.
- **APPLA** – An alternative goal for youth who do not want to be adopted or do not have the option of returning home, being adopted or achieving PLC. However, it's important to know that this goal is not emotionally or legally secure.

Part 2: OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Out-of-home care should be as short as possible. During placement, DHS, providers, parents, foster parents and you must work together to do what is necessary to return you to your home or to secure another living arrangement for you. Out-of-home-care must be safe and provide you with services to meet your needs.

Where you go depends on your needs and age. Sometimes a Judge will decide what type of placement is best for you. This means that a Judge gives a **court order** for placement and DHS must send you to that placement type.

Types of placement:

- **Family Foster Care** – A family-like setting in the private home of adults who are trained.
- **Treatment Foster Care** – A family-like setting in the private home of adults who are trained. A TFC home gives special care to youth with behavioral, emotional and/or medical needs. The foster family gets special training and support.
- **Kinship Care** – A type of foster care in the private home of a relative, approved by DHS.
- **Group Home Care** – A licensed facility with 24-hour staff, serving up to 16 youth. Education may be provided by an on-grounds school. Youth in GHC are encouraged to participate in the community.
- **Residential Treatment Facility** – Licensed as a Mental Health provider, this facility provides Mental Health treatment in a residential setting. This level of care is Mental Health treatment, rather than a dependent/delinquent placement setting. Medicaid reimbursement requires “medical necessity” determined by a psychiatrist for admission; discharge planning is a function of mental health treatment progress. A licensed facility with 24-hour staff, for youth who will benefit most from a well-structured and supervised group living environment and provides access to a range of specialized services on site.
- **Institution** – A licensed facility with 24-hour staff, serving more than 26 youth in one facility. Residential services which provide a high level of structure 24 hours a day and provide access to all specialized services on site.
- **Transitional Living Placement** – A supervised, subsidized placement for youth to experience apartment or shared home living with the guidance and supervision of caring adults as a step toward independence.
- **Supervised Independent Living Placement** – A semi-supervised, subsidized placement to experience apartment/shared living with less supervision and increased independence.
- **Shelter** – A facility that provides care for youth who are experiencing homelessness, or have a need for short-term housing.

WHAT ARE FAMILY SERVICE PLANS (FSP) AND INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICE PLANS (ISP)?

You and your family have a **Family Service Plan (FSP)**. This is a written document completed by your DHS worker. It gives the reasons why you are in DHS care and your family's goals. An FSP also details everyone's responsibilities in working towards those goals, including you, your parent, your provider and DHS.

You are an important person in the development of your FSP. If you are 14 or older, you should attend the meeting to develop this plan. You should receive a written notice 15 days before the FSP meeting, inviting you to attend. Talk to your provider worker and DHS worker about attending your FSP meetings.

An **Individualized Service Plan (ISP)** is created by the provider agency to plan for you on a daily basis. An ISP describes your needs and goals.



IS MY INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL?

Confidentiality means that information about you and your situation is private. However, in order to get to know you, understand your needs and help you plan for your future, professionals must share information about you with other professionals working with you. You can discuss confidentiality with your provider worker and DHS worker if you have more questions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You

It is very important for **you** to have a voice in the decisions that are made about your life. In fact, the law requires that all youth ages 14 and older be included in their case planning and decision-making.

In order for you to feel involved, you should participate in making decisions about your life. For this to happen, it is your responsibility to:

- Work with your provider worker to try to adapt to a new environment
- Work with your provider worker to help you get the confidence and skills needed to participate in a way that will help you be heard
- Attend your FSP meetings and court hearings
- Share your thoughts even if you are unable to attend meetings and hearings
- Participate in family visits and group activities
- Ask for help when needed
- Work on the goals and activities in your Individual Service Plan (ISP)
- Go to school and do your best to work towards your high school graduation
- Prepare for living on your own

Your Family

Your parent also has responsibilities when you are in out-of-home care.

Family responsibilities include:

- Staying in contact with you and your provider worker
- Visiting with you
- Attending meetings and court hearings
- Participating in making service plans to work on your needs and goals
- Identifying your family strengths and sources of support
- Working on the goals in the FSP



Your DHS Worker

DHS is responsible for ensuring that you are safe and cared for, that your parent receives the supports and services needed and that all legal requirements and timelines are met. DHS works with your provider agency to achieve these goals.

DHS responsibilities include:

- Working with your family to figure out your needs
- Having FSP meetings that include you, your parent and child advocate
- Giving your parent advance notice of FSP meetings
- Tracking everyone's progress towards meeting FSP objectives
- Communicating with you, your parent and your provider worker as needed
- Meeting with you face to face at least every six months
- Attending court hearings and preparing required court documents
- Keeping records for you and your family
- Monitoring your medical and educational needs
- Monitoring visitation with your parent
- Working with your provider agency to develop your discharge plan
- Ensuring that your provider agency is helping you get the skills needed to live as an independent adult

Your Provider

Provider agencies provide services to you on a daily basis. Provider agency responsibilities include:

- Caring for you on a daily basis
- Developing your Individual Service Plans (ISP)
- Preparing you and your parent for FSP and other meetings
- Engaging you and your parent in discussions about returning you to your home or finding another place for you to live
- Arranging transportation for visits, medical appointments, school and other needs
- Being accessible and available at all times to you and your family - this includes giving you their 24-hour contact information in writing
- Making sure you are prepared for court hearings
- Working with you when you are moving from one placement to another
- Working with DHS to develop your discharge plan

Part 3: LEGAL INFO

WHAT DO THESE WORDS MEAN?

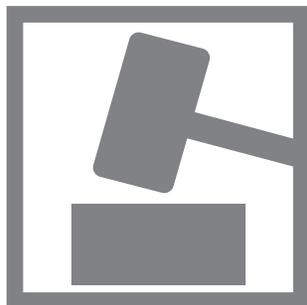
- **Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA):** A Federal law that sets a time limit on how long it can take to return youth to their family, move youth towards adoption or find another living arrangement for youth.
- **Child Advocate/Guardian ad Litem:** The lawyer who will represent a youth in the child welfare system in all court proceedings.
- **Dependent:** The term used to describe youth when the court determines that youth require care or supervision by DHS.
- **Petition:** A legal document filed by DHS explaining the reasons for DHS removing youth from their home and the necessity of court intervention and placement.
- **Voluntary Placement Agreement:** When a parent signs a voluntary placement agreement for their child, they transfer care and custody rights over that child to DHS. In other words, the parent no longer has custody of their child.

FAMILY COURT

Court hearings related to youth in out-of-home care are called **dependency cases**. Dependency cases are reviewed in Family Court, located at 1801 Vine Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

If you are 16 or older, DHS encourages you to attend your court hearings. Judges have the responsibility to make good decisions about you and your placement. However, they can only make good decisions if they receive good information. It is important for you to stay informed about court hearings, attend if possible, and participate in the process.

If you have questions about court proceedings or the time of a hearing, you can talk to your provider worker, DHS worker, child advocate, or call the **Court Operations Office at 215-686-4119**.



Child Advocate & Guardian ad Litem

All youth in Pennsylvania who are involved in the child welfare system are entitled to the representation of a lawyer. Sometimes your lawyer is called a Child Advocate or Guardian ad Litem. Your lawyer represents you, and does not work for DHS or your parents/custodian. Your lawyer should meet with you and find out how you are doing. In court your lawyer should tell the judge what you want to happen and where you want to live. In most cases, your lawyer will also tell the judge what he/she thinks is in your best interest.

Biological parents may also have attorneys represent them throughout the legal process.

The **City Solicitor**, an attorney for DHS, represents DHS workers and ensures that all court documents are filed in a timely manner.

All attorneys must follow "rules of ethics" to work responsibly with their clients. These responsibilities include:

- Keeping their client informed of their rights and the steps of the legal process



- Returning phone calls and responding to questions or concerns
- Coming to court prepared to represent their client
- Participating in other case-related activities and meetings as requested
- Ensuring that the case proceeds in a timely manner and meets all legal requirements

If you have questions or concerns about the court process it is important for you to bring these concerns to your DHS worker, provider worker or court advocate.

Family Court Judge

It is the Judge's responsibility to make decisions according to the facts and the law. To do this, the Judge will:

- Maintain an orderly courtroom and treat everyone with respect
- Make sure that everyone has been notified of all court hearings
- Schedule hearings so that timelines can be met
- Make sure everyone is represented by an attorney
- Listen, ask questions, and understand the situation
- Issue court orders that everyone understands

TYPES OF COURT HEARINGS

There are five major types of court hearings in dependency cases. These are the stages of those court hearings:

- **Detention Hearing:** The first hearing that takes place 72 hours after youth are removed from their homes. The Judge decides whether placement was necessary and decides whether to allow youth to remain in out-of-home care until the next hearing.
- **Adjudication or Adjudicatory Hearing:** The second hearing when the Family Court Judge reviews the allegations presented by DHS to remove youth from their home. This hearing is held 10 days after the Detention Hearing or within 30 days of the voluntary placement agreement (VPA).
- **Permanency Hearing:** The hearing five months after youth have been placed in out-of-home care to determine a secure permanent placement for them. This hearing takes place every five months until a permanent living arrangement is achieved.
- **Termination of Parental Rights (TPR):** If family reunification has been ruled out and adoption is a reasonable possibility for youth, DHS requests the termination of parents' rights. If the court terminates parental rights it means youth can be adopted, if a family resource has been found. It also means that parents have no legal rights pertaining to their child anymore.

Why Would Parental Rights Be Terminated?

Terminating parental rights is not an easy thing to do. DHS must file a **petition** to terminate parental rights. This allows youth to be legally adopted by someone. Parental rights might be terminated because:

- The parent has not resolved the problem that caused the youth to be removed from their home
- The parent has abandoned the youth, or stopped regularly visiting or financially supporting the youth

HOW LONG DOES A HEARING LAST?

Hearings are different for everyone. Depending on your situation and the Judge, the time it takes to complete a hearing varies. It's also important to know that although your hearing is scheduled for a specific time, you may have to sit in the waiting area for a while before your case is presented to the Judge.

YOUR ROLE IN COURT

Remember, you are an important part of the team. Your input is important to making sure your best interests will be met. It is normal to feel nervous about participating in court. Being prepared will help you to feel less nervous. Here are some tips to help you participate in the court process.



Tips for Participating in Court

1. Talk to your provider worker and stay informed about court dates and times.
2. The federal law requires that the court consult with the youth, especially as they begin to get older and prepare to leave the child welfare system.
3. Speak up and ask for information if you do not feel you are getting what you need.
4. Prior to your court date, ask your provider worker and child advocate to explain the purpose of the hearing and help you understand your role.
5. Talk with your child advocate and provider worker to prepare for your court hearing, including knowing what to expect and how to participate. Also discuss what will happen after the hearing.
6. Always arrive at least 15 to 30 minutes early for court hearings to allow time to get through security and find the correct courtroom. Don't be late!
7. Dress up – you want to look good for court!
8. Bring any notes or information that you would like to share with your child advocate or the Judge. You may want to bring a copy of your grades, certificates from the Achieving Independence Center (AI Center) (see p.19), or other positive things that you are proud of. Keep in mind that any written materials you bring may be requested and copied by all attorneys for the official record.
9. Speak directly to the Judge. Give all of your answers out loud, do not simply nod or shake your head. Refer to the Judge as "Your Honor."
10. Be as clear and complete as possible when responding to questions or offering information.
11. When you are asked to give sworn testimony, make sure you have discussed this with your child advocate and understand what this means.
12. If your religious beliefs prevent you from taking an oath, inform your child advocate and DHS worker ahead of time so that another pledge can be arranged.
13. If you are comfortable, it may be helpful to talk to other youth about their experiences in court.
14. Relax, and remember you are the most important person on the team.

QUESTIONS TO PREPARE TO ANSWER IN COURT



The Judge may ask you questions about how things are going in your placement. You should be prepared to answer the Judge directly, so think about the questions carefully. Here is a list of questions that the Judge may ask you:

1. Have you been informed by your child advocate about today's hearing?
2. Have you been consulted about permanency planning? Have you been asked to identify permanency resources?
3. Did you attend your last Family Service Plan (FSP) meeting?
4. Do you understand what the main objectives of your FSP are and what is expected of you? Your family?
5. Have you been referred to the Achieving Independence Center? Have you attended the AI Center?
6. What services are being provided to you in order to meet your independent living/transition needs?
7. Are you being given the opportunity to visit with parents and other family resources?
8. Are there other adult mentors or resources with whom you can visit?
9. What school do you attend? How are your grades? Do you like school?
10. If you are in Special Education, are you involved in your Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings?
11. What services have you received to prepare for post-secondary education or employment training?
12. Are you up-to-date on medical care?
13. Do you have any health care needs?
14. Do you feel like you have something that is bothering you or that you want to talk about?
15. Do you have any drug and alcohol problems?
16. How many placements have you been in since the last review hearing?
17. Do you have the names and phone numbers of your DHS worker and child advocate?
18. Be aware that the Judge may ask you if you have plans after high school.

Part 4: ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF

WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE?

An advocate is someone who supports a person or a cause that means something to them. An advocate speaks out and asks for things to be done fairly. An advocate asks for their voice to be heard.



HOW DO I ADVOCATE FOR MYSELF?

Being in care can be very confusing and frustrating. Many people may be involved, such as:

- Your child advocate who can help you work your way through the Family Court system.
- Your DHS worker can secure safe and appropriate placements and help coordinate services.
- Your provider worker can help meet your needs on a daily basis.

However, it is your responsibility to work with everyone to make sure things happen. People will be there to help you along the way, but it is up to you to advocate for yourself so that your life will go in the direction you want it to.

As you try to get what you need, remember a few helpful hints when advocating for yourself.



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND...

DO know that you have a right to ask for help.

DO ask for help from an adult that you trust.

DO know that you have control over some things, even though it feels like everyone else has control. You can control:

- Who you ask to help you
- Following up with your workers and their supervisors, if necessary
- Speaking your truth

DO be clear about:

- What's happening
- What's needed
- How you feel

DO understand that although you may be angry, it is important to control your anger in order to be heard.

DO think about different solutions and back up plans.

DO be honest and truthful.

DO be ready to negotiate and compromise.

DON'T feel like you are bothering people.

DON'T hesitate to ask for help.

DON'T think that you have no control.

DON'T think you have to go through this by yourself.

DON'T think it's too late.

DON'T start without thinking things through.

DON'T use sarcasm or abusive language.

DON'T swear or name-call.

DON'T pre-judge others.

DON'T let your frustration get the best of you.

DON'T give up!

WHAT DO I DO IF THINGS GO WRONG?

If you think you are treated unfairly, you should:

- Talk with your DHS worker about the grievance policy.
- Talk with your Child Advocate who may also help you in filing a grievance (your complaints) or explain options available to you.
- Talk with your provider worker if you feel that they can help resolve your concern.
- If you feel that these options will not work for your situation please call the DHS Commissioner's Action Response Office (CARO) (the office that deals with concerns and grievances) at 888-808-0066. You may send a complaint to DHS_CARO@phila.gov .
- Talk with someone you trust and tell them about the grievance policy so that they can help you.

FY! A grievance is a formal complaint. Your DHS worker and provider worker should explain the grievance policy to you. They should give you a written copy of the policy when you come into care. You should not be punished for filing a grievance.

Things to Think About When Leaving a Message for Your DHS Worker

Whenever you call your DHS worker, or anyone for that matter, it is important to speak clearly so they understand what you are saying. It is reasonable to expect a return of your phone call from your DHS worker if you leave a message clearly stating your name and a number where you can be reached. Occasionally, your DHS worker may be out of the office for a number of days. If you do not get a response to your message after a couple of days (or sooner if it is a critical matter), your provider should be able to help you contact your DHS worker's supervisor or administrator to resolve your request.

Make sure you give the following information when you leave a message:

- Your name
- Date and time of call
- Reason for your call
- What you need to be done regarding your situation
- When you need this task to be completed
- Number to reach you (even if you think they already have it)

Here is an example of what to say when you call your DHS worker...

"Hi, it's John Doe. It's Monday May 1st at 2pm. I'm calling because I need to get a copy of my high school transcripts in order to complete my college application process. I need you to help me get my transcripts by May 30th. Please call me back at 215-000-000. Thank you."



Part 5: OTHER THINGS TO KNOW...**EDUCATION**

Every youth has the right to be in school. If you are new to placement, your provider worker is expected to do their best to enroll you in school as soon as possible so that you do not fall behind. Your provider worker must work with DHS and your parent to obtain

documentation and get you enrolled in school.

The following documents are required to enroll in school:

- Proof of date of birth (birth certificate)
- Immunization records or assurance from former school district or doctor that immunizations are up to date
- Proof of residency (this can be a letter from your provider worker)
- Parent Registration Form (this can be completed by your provider worker)
- Some schools require transcripts and an IEP (Individualized Education Plan)

If all of the documents listed above are submitted, the expectation is that it should take no more than five days for your provider worker to enroll you in school. However, it is important for you to know that it may take longer.

Special Education

If you are having problems in your school program, it is important that you talk to your provider worker and teachers because they may not know that you are struggling.

Sometimes you will take tests at school with psychologists to find out what your educational needs are and to set you up with a school program that will help you succeed. Remember, it is very important to tell the adults in your life when things are not going well in school. It is your right to have school services that will help you learn. This includes, but is not limited to, tutors, special education classes, social workers, modified workload, classes that better meet your needs.

If you need special education services, your school will set up an **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** meeting. An IEP is a written plan that discusses what the school will do for you in order to meet your educational needs. This meeting includes teachers, parents, provider workers, foster parents, DHS workers and other people working to help meet your school needs.

Getting a High School Diploma Versus a GED

What exactly are the differences between a high school diploma and a GED? You may wonder why you should

finish years of high school in pursuit of a diploma when you can take a few tests and get a GED.

A high school diploma usually requires a student to complete their curriculum (courses) at a traditional public school. A student must complete a set of coursework determined by the school district, which takes about four years to complete. If you dropped out of school, you can return to complete your high school diploma within three years after turning 18. There are alternative programs such as Twilight Programs available if a traditional classroom setting or schedule is not right for you.

Most students who have a high school diploma qualify for entry-level jobs and typically earn more than those who lack a diploma. It is important to note that many employers, colleges, universities, military branches, and law enforcement agencies prefer applicants with a traditional high school diploma rather than a GED. However, there are some benefits to earning a GED.

A GED is given to students who completed a series of tests in five academic subjects. In order to pass a test, students must score higher than 60% of the sample set of graduating seniors. Typically, students must study very hard to pass all tests. Students who wish to take the GED may not have graduated or may still be enrolled in high school and they must be over 16 years old. The exams take about seven hours to complete. Some students take preparation courses before taking the GED.

Many community colleges do accept applicants possessing a GED. Students who have difficulties completing high school, who don't have time, or who failed to complete high school and wish to have better employment opportunities may greatly benefit from the GED. It is the closest thing to the high school diploma, but it has limitations. Not all institutions and academic organizations consider it sufficient for admission or employment.

What Do I Do If I Want To Continue Beyond High School?

It is important for you to think about continuing your education as soon as you enter high school. It may seem overwhelming but four years goes by fast! In 10th grade you should seriously decide whether or not you will want to continue to get an education beyond high school. You should talk to your school guidance counselor and provider worker to discuss what your options are. Sometimes your high school may offer college preparatory classes or advanced classes to help you prepare for college or vocational training school. Talk to your guidance counselor to see if your school has this option and if you could be considered to take these classes.

Applying to college, technical school, trade school, or another school takes a long time to process. Talk to your provider worker about what your plans are and ask for support. Also, talk to your high school guidance counselor so that they can help walk you through all the steps and help you complete the application process.

What To Do If You Decide To Continue Beyond High School

Course Requirements

1. Talk to your guidance counselor at the beginning of every year to make sure you are taking the right classes to prepare you for college. (There are specific English, Math and Science classes you will need to take while in high school to be eligible for college)
2. Start asking as early as possible, at the end of middle school or in 9th grade of high school.
3. If you are in 10th-12th grade and are just considering college, go to your guidance counselor immediately and ask them about your options. It is never too late!

Take the Appropriate Standardized Test

1. Learn about the colleges and other schools you are interested in attending to find out what, if any, standardized tests they require.

FYI:

- You should take standardized tests between the end of your junior year of high school and the beginning of your senior year. This will give you enough time to receive your scores and retake the test if you wish.
 - Community colleges typically do not require that you take any standardized tests.
 - Most 4-year colleges require that applicants submit their Standardized Assessment Test (SAT) scores.
2. Register for the SAT. For information on the SAT and registration go to: www.collegeboard.com or call 1-800-927-4302.

FYI:

- There is a \$41.50 fee for the SAT. This fee may be waived (excused) if you meet income guidelines or are in out-of-home care. To determine if you are eligible for a fee waiver contact your school's guidance counselor or talk to your provider worker.
- The fee waiver will also allow you to get application fees waived at some colleges and universities.
- You may qualify for funding from the State Independent Living Program to pay for the SAT. For the application to apply for this funding, Check with the State Independent Living Worker at the Youth Advisory Board website: www.independentlivingpa.org. You can also go to the AI Center website for information www.aiphilly.com

Some schools require that you take another standardized test called the ACT test. This test is similar to the SAT but has a different format and different scoring guidelines. Information on the ACT test is available at www.act.org.

There are review classes and study guides for the SAT and ACT tests. Check with your guidance counselor at school to see what resources are available in your area. You can also go to the Achieving Independence Center for help in

getting the resources needed to prepare for standardized testing.

Complete School Applications

Each school, college and university has a different application process. Some require an essay, standardized test scores, and letters of recommendation. Others do not.

All schools require that students submit their high school transcripts or GED scores. Once you complete the application, talk to your high school guidance counselor about obtaining your transcripts.

Many schools have an application fee. You may be able to get the application fees waived. Talk to your guidance counselor, and call the school's admissions office to find out how to apply for a fee waiver.

If you want, you can provide the school with documentation that you are in out-of-home care. This will allow the school to understand your background and your life experiences. It will also help explain to the admissions officers why you were transferred to different schools. It may also determine your eligibility for different scholarships and grants.

Make sure you send your application in **before** the application deadline!

Obtain Your High School Transcripts

Talk to your DHS worker. He/she should help you gather your high school transcripts.

For information on getting transcripts in the Philadelphia school district call 215-400-4780. You can also go to the following website:

<http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/faqs/general/transcripts.html> to download a copy of the form needed to make the request. The first page must be printed, filled out and submitted but it is very important that you carefully read the second page of the form. The second page contains instructions on where the form should be sent.

Apply for Financial Assistance

The first step when applying for financial aid is to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form. Filling out this form will allow you to apply for all federal financial aid including both grants (money you do not have to pay back) and loans (money that you will have to pay back).

Many colleges use the FAFSA to determine eligibility for their own scholarships and grants. The FAFSA can be completed on paper or online. You can get a paper copy of the FAFSA in your guidance counselor's office or at any college admission or financial aid office. To apply online go to www.fafsa.ed.gov.

If you are struggling to complete the FAFSA application, talk to your guidance counselor. You can also ask for assistance in order to be sure that the information you fill in is accurate by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID. Someone will be available by phone to answer your questions. (The Achieving Independence Center is also a great resource for help in completing applications)

Ongoing Financial Assistance

While you are in college, you must continue to resubmit a FAFSA form **every year**.

- If you completed your form over the Internet, you can sign on with your password to renew your FAFSA each year.
- If you completed a paper FAFSA, then a renewal FAFSA will be sent to you at the mailing address listed on the original application.

The FAFSA is made available on **January 1st** for the school year beginning that fall. Deadlines for completion vary depending on which schools you are applying to. Try to get your FAFSA in as soon as you can, so that you do not miss any deadlines.

Is there financial aid for youth in care or who have been in out-of-home care?

Yes. There are some scholarships that are for youth who are, or have been in out-of-home care. Please talk to your DHS worker and/or AI Center coach to discuss scholarship opportunities. Also, see the scholarships section of Part 9: Philadelphia Resources (p. 28).

What About Vocational Training?

Be careful! Get advice before you enroll at a trade school that is very expensive, requires that you take out a lot of loans, and makes promises that seem too good to be true.

Make sure the school you want to enroll in is accredited. If it is not, it may not accept any state or federal financial aid. If the school does not accept financial aid, you will have to pay for the school through scholarships and loans. Make sure you talk to an adult before signing up for some kind of vocational training. You can talk to your provider worker, DHS worker, AI Center coach or a counselor or teacher at school.

EMPLOYMENT – GETTING A JOB WHILE IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Getting work experience is one of the best ways to build a resume, save money, learn how to budget and ultimately prepare you for living on your own. You should be supported in developing a sense of responsibility for your future, a commitment to maintaining a job and learning how to communicate and relate to others so that you can achieve successful employment.

DHS expects that most older youth will have the opportunity to work. Your provider worker and DHS worker will discuss and make a decision about when, under what conditions, you will have the opportunity to begin and continue to work. The discussion should consider your educational status and schedule, level of responsibility, and independent living and permanency plans. You should not be disciplined by being denied the opportunity to work or by being forced to quit your job.

Your provider agency is responsible for giving you career counseling, job readiness and job placement services in order to help you learn the skills necessary to get and keep employment. You can also check out the Achieving Independence Center (see p. 19). The AI Center can help you by setting you up with a coach who will answer your questions and help you organize what you need to do.

Career Counseling

In order to prepare you for the workforce, your provider worker should teach you the value of getting and keeping a job. Working with your provider worker on career counseling activities may include:

- Helping you realistically look at your interests and abilities
- Discussing your thoughts and feelings about work
- Reviewing the skills necessary to get and keep a job
- Helping you learn appropriate work behaviors and set realistic goals
- Referring you to the AI Center or community-based vocational counseling

Job Readiness

If you are not ready to have a job, your provider worker should work with you on job readiness activities and supervised volunteer opportunities that can help build your confidence and prepare you for planning to get a job in the future.

These activities may include:

- Helping you prepare for a job and the responsibility of maintaining employment
- Helping you access vocational training programs in your community and school that will help you focus and develop your interests
- Helping you locate positive role models in the community
- Following a mentor or positive role model to work to determine whether you could potentially see yourself doing the job (job shadowing)
- Helping you find community volunteer opportunities
- Helping you learn good ways to manage your time

Job Placement

If you are prepared to have a job, your provider worker should help you find a job and do your best to keep a job. Keeping a job is often difficult because of the responsibilities that come along with it. Some of these responsibilities include, getting to work on time, complying with your job responsibilities and being reliable.

You and your provider worker should do the following activities together:

- Develop a resume
- Purchase appropriate clothing for a job interview
- Develop interviewing skills, such as active listening, eye contact, developing questions, and explaining what you are capable of doing
- Review job requirements and help you determine whether or not the job is appropriate for your situation
- Evaluate your abilities and job performance skills and appropriate work behaviors

Who Gets a Work Permit?

Youth between the ages of 14 and 17 who have not graduated from high school or obtained a GED must have a work permit in order to be legally employed in Pennsylvania.

FYI:

- Youth under the age of 14 can not legally work in Pennsylvania
- Youth 14-15 years old can obtain a work permit that is specific to one place of employment
- Youth 16-17 years old may obtain a work permit that is valid until their 18th birthday
- A 17 year old who has already graduated from high school or received a GED does not need a work permit

How Do I Get a Work Permit?

- A work permit is issued through your school district
- To obtain a work permit in Philadelphia:
 1. Obtain an application from your school's guidance office or online at www.phila.k12.pa.us
 2. Get a physical from your doctor and have your doctor complete Section D of the application
 3. If you are under 16, get your potential employer to complete Section C of the application
 4. Contact your local public high school or The School District of Philadelphia Education Center at (215) 400-4000 to find out what days and hours they are open to complete working paper applications.
 5. A parent or guardian must accompany you and sign the application in front of the school district representative.

****NOTE:** During the summer, you must call for an appointment at most application sites. If you are more than five minutes late for your appointment, you will often be asked to reschedule for another day and time

- An adult (parent/custodian, DHS worker) must go with you to sign the application in front of the school guidance counselor
- If you are under 16 years of age, you must have the place of employment fill out a section on the application

LIFE SKILLS

As with all young adults, there are many things you need to learn in order for your life to run smoothly. Learning daily living skills – including meal planning, grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning, laundry, and home safety – are important to make sure that you know how a home functions and how to maintain your own home.

The Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment and Guidebook

In order for your provider worker to help you identify your areas of strength and the areas that you need help improving, you will complete the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA). The ACLSA evaluates your independent living skills. It contains statements about life skills that you and your caregivers complete.

You should discuss your assessment results with your provider worker and discuss the areas that you may need help with. Your provider worker should work with you to develop a learning plan, using the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Guidebook. The learning plan should focus on the areas you need help with and provide opportunities to learn and gain skills that will move you towards taking care of yourself and living on your own.

Using your learning plan, you should gain increased independence and take responsibility for accessing community resources for health care, education, employment, recreation, and transportation. In addition, you should learn how to find people in your community who will support you and help you make decisions.

Chores

Chores are an important function of all households. There are certain responsibilities that must be completed in order for a house to run smoothly. In order to participate in the smooth functioning of your household, whether in a foster home or group home, you maybe assigned daily or weekly chores. Chores are not meant to a punishment, but a way to prepare you for how to live on your own. For example, learning to do laundry, vacuum, and make and change beds are important things to know for living on your own and taking care of yourself.

Homemaking Skills

Your provider worker should work with you to develop skills for maintaining a home, such as:

- Doing laundry
- Basic housekeeping skills – such as making and changing beds, cleaning bathroom fixtures, vacuuming, sweeping, and washing floors
- Menu planning, shopping, and meal preparation
- Simple household repairs – replacing light bulbs and using a bathroom plunger
- Knowing how and when to ask for assistance with maintenance and repairs

Money Management Skills

Your provider worker should work with you to learn appropriate money management skills, such as:

- Counting money and making change
- Knowing banking skills – opening an account, making deposits and withdrawals
- Budgeting and saving money
- Balancing a checkbook
- Paying bills and using credit
- Learning how to prevent financial problems by avoiding impulse buying, misusing credit cards, borrowing money from others, providing friends access to your bank accounts and credit cards, making late payments on rent or utility bills
- Learning where to seek money management and consumer advice

You may receive an allowance to help you experience the value of possessing money and learning how to use it properly. Your provider agency decides the amount of your allowance but it often depends on how old you are.

How to Find Housing and Be Able to Keep It

Your provider worker should help you learn how to find and keep a place to live. Some activities that are helpful include:

- Finding a residence and using real estate or rental agents
- Reviewing, understanding and signing a lease
- Knowing how to communicate with a landlord
- Knowing tenant rights and responsibilities
- Preventing actions that might lead to eviction



HEALTH CARE

While in out-of-home care, DHS is responsible for either securing insurance for you or paying for it. You may be eligible for Medical Assistance (MA) or some other form of medical insurance (for example, CHIP). MA is health insurance that covers all

your physical health needs. It also covers behavioral health care needs that a doctor says are "medically necessary."

Your provider worker and/or foster parent is responsible for ensuring that your medical needs are provided for. You should talk to your provider worker and/or foster parent about taking an active role in your health care. You learn how to do the following:

- Identify your health plan company name and policy number
- Be involved in selecting your health care providers and making appointments
- Find doctors and service providers who are covered under your plan
- Learn how to locate, select, and access emergency and routine health care services so that you are prepared for living on your own (this is necessary as you will lose eligibility for Medical Assistance when you leave care)



Consent

- You can consent to mental health treatment without the consent of a parent/custodian when you are age 14 or older.
- You can consent to substance abuse treatment without the consent of a parent/custodian at any age.
- You can consent to testing and treatment related to sexual health and family planning(except abortion). This includes obtaining contraceptives, testing for pregnancy, STI's and HIV, and counseling for pregnancy, STI's and HIV.
- To obtain an abortion you must have the consent of your parent/custodian. You may get a court order that will allow you to proceed with an abortion without the consent of your parent/custodian.

Medication

You should only take medication as prescribed by your doctor. If you choose to take vitamins or other legal over-the-counter medications, you must discuss this with your provider worker and/or foster parent. If you have questions about your medications, you should talk to your provider worker and/or foster parents and schedule an appointment with your doctor. It is important for you to feel comfortable about the medications you take.

Counseling Services

You should have access to counseling services and/or therapy whenever you need to address things that are troubling you. In order to help you work through issues with past relationships and help you develop skills for healthy future relationships, your provider worker should involve all people important to you in counseling services.

Counseling should give you:

- Support in helping you understand your options, make appropriate choices and understand the possible outcomes of your decisions
- Feedback regarding your ability to exercise good judgment
- A safe place to explore new options and practice new skills

Sexual Health & Family Planning

You should receive counseling and sexual education to help you understand your sexuality, develop a healthy attitude towards sex and sexuality, and develop a sense of responsibility for your sexual behavior.

Your provider worker should provide or help you get information on the following topics:

- The human body and how it functions
- Personal hygiene
- Communication skills
- Personal, family and cultural values
- Long-term and permanent friendships, relationships with family, self-respect and its relationship to sexual behaviors
- Understanding sexual orientation
- Information on sexually transmitted diseases (STIs)
- Pregnancy prevention
- Pregnancy options
- Information on how to identify and prevent sexual abuse and other forms of sexual victimization and harassment
- Date Rape and Dating Abuse Prevention

The AI Center is a good resource for learning about sexual health, Sexually Transmitted Infection prevention and family planning options (see p. 19).

If you need counseling about reproductive health and family planning, please ask for help. There are many hotlines and centers that provide counseling and information.

- **DHS Health Management Unit Hotline** – 215-683-6263
- **Planned Parenthood (at the AI Center)** – 267-514-3556 ext:156

Part 6: PREPARING FOR DISCHARGE FROM CARE

DISCHARGE PLANNING

Since the goal of DHS and the provider is to keep you in out-of-home care for the least amount of time necessary, effective discharge planning must begin at the time of placement. Discharge planning should address issues for preparing you for leaving care and living on your own.

There are several different ways you can leave DHS care:

- Reunification
- Permanent Legal Custodianship (PLC)
- Adoption

However, sometimes circumstances make it impossible for youth to return home to their family. Some youth **Age Out** of DHS care, either because they turn 18 and do not receive a Board Extension (see below for Applying for a Board Extension) or because they have turned 21 and are no longer eligible to receive services.

As early as the age of 15, it is important for you to think about what you want your life to be when you leave care. *What kind of job do you want to have? Where do you want to live? How will you budget your money? Where will you go when you get sick? How will you get to your job?* These questions are important to think about and plan for **before** leaving care.

Prior to your last court hearing, your provider worker must complete the Discharge Checklist (See Appendix p. 33) with you. This Checklist is meant to be a review for you and your provider worker of the preparation done prior to you leaving care. Please review the Checklist and become familiar with what is expected of you AND your provider worker in preparation for leaving care and living on your own.

WHAT IS A BOARD EXTENSION?

If you are in out-of-home care before your 18th birthday, you may request that the court continue to keep you in care after you turn 18 until you are 21. This is called a board extension. The expectation is that with the support of your DHS worker and provider worker, you will assume more responsibility for planning and completing your transition to self-sufficiency.

Eligibility and Requirements

- You must be in DHS care prior to your 18th birthday
- You must be engaged “in a course of treatment or instruction” including educational and training programs such as high school, college or vocational program.
- You agree to comply with the objectives of the FSP and ISP
- Participate in FSP and ISP meetings and periodic court reviews
- Participate in strength-based assessment and develop a plan to meet your needs through the AI Center.
- If you are a teen parent, participate in parenting classes as described in your FSP/ISP and ISP

How do I receive a board extension?

Talk to your provider worker and DHS worker approximately six months before your 18th birthday if you feel like a board extension might help you. Ask them to review the Board Extension policy with you and assist you in applying. This will include you writing a formal request letter to the court and if your request is granted, signing the Board Extension agreement. You should read the board extension agreement, and recognize that although you are an adult, you are authorizing DHS and the provider agency working with you to access information regarding your education, training, and/or treatment programs.

What are my responsibilities now that I have a board extension?

Board extensions are granted in six month intervals so you will have to re-apply if you intend to keep your Board Extension. You will also:

- Be required to notify your DHS and provider workers immediately of any changes or if you are no longer attending your education, training, or treatment program.
- Be expected to provide documentation that you continue to meet the requirements for board extension including:
 - Verification of participation at the AI Center
 - Documentation of enrollment in your program, and records indicating satisfactory attendance, grades, or progress towards goals
 - Compliance with rules of your placement
 - Application for financial aid, SSI, or other potential benefits, if applicable

WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE I LEAVE CARE?

WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED IN MY ADULT LIFE?

Your provider worker should help you get the documents that you will need as an adult. These documents are important when you want to apply for a job or go to college. Every adult needs to make sure that they have their Birth Certificate, Social Security Card and a valid ID. Here is some information to help you get these documents.

Birth Certificate

A birth certificate is an important record used to prove someone's identity and nationality and to assist with getting other documents such as a passport or driver's license.

A Birth Certificate contains:

- A person's name at birth
- Date and time of birth
- Sex
- Place of birth
- Birth registration number
- Name of legal parent(s)

How to get a Birth Certificate

You request a birth certificate from the Division of Vital Records (see below for address) of the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The request may be made by mail, in person, and by the internet if you have a credit card.

If you do not have a birth certificate, ask your provider worker to help you get one.

To get your birth certificate you must:

- Be at least age 18, or
- If you are under 18, the request must be made by a family member, child advocate or provider worker

To make the request, you need to provide the following information:

- Your name
- Date of birth
- City and county where you were born
- Your parents' names
- Your signature
- Government issued picture ID (if you are under 18, the person requesting the birth certificate on your behalf must provide the picture ID)

There is a \$10 fee to get a birth certificate. To download the application for a birth certificate, go to www.dsf.health.state.pa/health.

Mail completed applications to:

Division of Vital Records
101 South Mercer Street Room 401
P.O. Box 1528
New Castle, PA 16101

Social Security Card

A Social Security number (or SSN) is a 9-digit number issued to United States citizens, permanent residents, and temporary (working) residents by the Social Security Administration, an agency of the Federal Government.

If you do not have a Social Security Card, ask your provider worker to help you get one.

Social Security cards are:

- A necessary piece of documentation required by the U.S. government to track individuals for taxation purposes.
- Required when you apply for a job

If you do not have a social security card, ask your provider worker to help you get one.



How to get a Social Security Card

You request a social security card from the Social Security Administration. You need to make the request in person at your local Social Security Office. To get your social security card you must:

- Be age 18 or older AND
- Have a picture ID

It doesn't cost anything to get a social security card. To download an application for a social security card, go to www.socialsecurity.gov.

To find a Social Security office near you, call 1-800-772-1213.

Getting Your Pennsylvania State ID Card

A Pennsylvania State ID Card is a picture ID that proves your identity. If you are not interested in obtaining a driver's license, a picture ID will serve as a substitute picture ID.

If you do not have a State ID, ask your provider worker to help you get one. You must have a birth certificate in order to apply for a State ID.

How to Get a PA State ID Card

You must be 16 or older to get your PA State ID card. For information on obtaining a Pennsylvania State ID card, go to <http://www.dot3.state.pa.us>.

If you do not have any of the items listed below to show residency, you can have your provider worker write a letter explaining your housing situation, your PA residency status and current mailing address.

If you are a 16 or 17- year-old resident of Pennsylvania you will need to show:

- Your Social Security Card
- Proof of identity (choose one of the following)
 - Official birth certificate with raised seal
 - Certificate of U.S. Citizenship
 - Certificate of Naturalization
 - Valid U.S. Passport

If you are 18 years of age or older and you are a resident of Pennsylvania you will need to show:

- Your Social Security Card
- Proof of identity (choose one of the following)
 - Official birth certificate with raised seal
 - Certificate of U.S. Citizenship
 - Certificate of Naturalization
 - Valid U.S. Passport
 - Proof of residency (choose two of the following)
 - Tax records
 - Lease agreements
 - W-2 forms
 - Mortgage documents
 - Current utility bills (water, gas, electric, cable)

NOTE: For current utility bills: cellular/mobile or pager bills are not acceptable. If you reside with someone, and have no bills in your name, you will be required to bring that person you reside with along with their driver's license or ID card, to a Driver License Center.

State law requires DHS to provide you with your birth certificate and social security card. Your provider and DHS worker should work together to secure these important documents, including your educational and health record. These documents should be kept in your file and return the originals to you prior to being discharged from DHS care.

Part 7: CENTERS TO HELP YOUTH PREPARE FOR ADULTHOOD

Here are three important resources in the Philadelphia area that can help you prepare for adulthood. If you are interested in looking into these resources, please talk to your provider worker.

ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE CENTER (AI Center)

1118 Market Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-574-9194
www.aiphilly.com

The AI Center is a "one-stop" center designed to help young people between the ages of 16 and 21 achieve their future goals of self-sufficiency. It is a collaborative model that partners with many Philadelphia-based groups dedicated to providing high-quality programs for youth. Offering flexible scheduling, the AI Center includes the key elements needed for a successful transition to adulthood, including employment, education and training, and supportive services. You should talk to your provider worker if you are interested in going to the AI Center and obtaining the skills needed to invest in your future.

At the Center, you will work with a coach who will help you achieve your goals. Whether you are looking to complete high school, enter college or vocational training, get a job or a place on your own, AI Center staff help build a personalized plan for you.



Here is a list of programs and services provided at the AI Center:

- **Education** – High school support and retention, college support and retention, college preparation, tutoring in general subjects, tutoring and preparation for college entrance exams, career counseling, financial aid application, scholarship applications.
- **Employment** – Job readiness, training instructions, summer employment, linkages to summer internships, linkages to full and part-time employment.
- **Technology** – Keyboard training, Microsoft office training: Word, Excel, Power Point, Access, computer literacy, and career counseling.
- **Housing** – Transitional housing, housing education, emergency housing, linkages to permanent housing.
- **Life Skills Training** – Instructions in money management, decision making, anger management, work ethics.
- **Mentoring** – Linkages to adults in the community who will serve as a mentor, group, cultural, civic and educational activities, career information.
- **Healthy Relationships** – Educational workshops on fact-based sexuality education, supportive counseling, distribution of safer sex supplies, access to Planned Parenthood clinics, STD testing.
- **Risks N Choices** – Educational workshops that focus on sexually healthy behaviors, supportive counseling and case management, group support where members can freely express concerns, comments, or questions regarding sexuality. HIV/AIDS testing.
- **Parenting Classes** – Educational workshops that focus on key skills for parents.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible youth must be between 16 and 21 years of age and be in or have been in out-of-home care at the age of 16.

PHILADELPHIA YOUTH NETWORK (PYN)

PYN helps youth in Philadelphia become contributing members of the workforce by working with organizations, such as the AI Center, to help youth achieve their job goals.

E3 Power Centers (Education, Employment and Empowerment) – The Centers work with at-risk students and out-of-school youth residing in the city's three Empowerment Zone neighborhoods to connect them to education, training, and employment opportunities.

The three E3 Power Centers are located at:

Girard Branch

1215 Germantown Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19122
215-763-8870 ext:7500

North Broad Branch

1231 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19122
215-763-2393

West Branch

4111 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-387-2134

Logan Branch

5201 Old York Road, Ground Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19141
267-339-0240

Southwest Branch

2210 S. 71st Street
Philadelphia, PA 19143
484-483-4746

Eligibility Requirements

The Centers serve youth ages 14-21 seeking to improve their skills and work toward long-term goals. The Centers' service delivery structure is designed to help youth achieve long-term goals in the areas of education, occupational skills, life skills and employment.

JOB CORPS

Job Corps is an alternative for youth who are interested in furthering their education but can't afford or don't want to attend the traditional two- or four-year college. Job Corps provides assistance with job placement, follow up support and a chance to learn the practical skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

Career training options include:

- Health care
- Computer technology / IT
- Culinary arts
- Auto repair
- Clerical
- Accounting
- Hospitality
- Retail
- Construction
- Carpentry
- Nurse's aide / CNA
- Pharmacy technician
- Electrician
- Security

Additionally, Job Corps offers housing, driver's education, health and dental care, a spending and clothing allowance and meals and supports students' efforts after they graduate by helping them to find housing, day care, community resources and rides to work, as well as assisting with a number of other important issues faced by young people seeking to be independent. All programs offered by Job Corps are 100% free of charge to participants.

For more information on Job Corps, please go to the following website:

www.thehighschoolgraduate.com/profiles/Jobcorps/index.htm

Eligibility Requirements

Job Corps provides hands-on training to youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who meet the economic requirements.

Part 8: IMMIGRATION ISSUES

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL IMMIGRANT JUVENILE STATUS

If you were born anywhere other than the United States or are not sure of your immigration status, it is important that you speak to your child advocate, provider and DHS worker about your immigration status. Undocumented status can affect college plans, legal employment, and ultimately can lead to removal from the country. It is important to talk to someone as soon as possible because some of your options may not be available after you turn 18. There is help out there. You just need to ask for it.



Part 9: Frequently Asked Questions

Will I See My Brothers and Sisters?

Whenever possible, DHS prefers placing siblings together. However, if a psychologist, psychiatrist, doctor or certified social worker says it is not in your best interest to live with your siblings, or if a placement cannot accommodate you and your siblings, you will be placed separately.

If you are placed apart from each other, talk to your provider worker to try to arrange for you to have visits and be able to talk to each other on the phone.

Can I Get a Driver's License?

DHS leaves the decision to individual provider agencies. Talk to your provider worker and DHS worker to find out whether or not you can get your driver's license while in care.

For specific information on obtaining a driver's license in PA, go to www.dmv.state.pa.us.

If your provider allows you to get a driver's license, you must go through three different steps, required for all new drivers in Pennsylvania:

1. Learner's Permit: To obtain a Learner's Permit you must be at least 16 years of age. To complete this process you are required to:

- Have a physical exam at a doctor's office
- Have a vision screen that is completed at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
- Pass a written skills test that will evaluate your knowledge of street signs and PA driving laws. (To get a study guide for this test, go to any DMV location or www.dmv.state.pa.us/drivers_manual/index.shtml)

Required documentation that you must bring to your written test:

- proof of your date of birth
- proof of your identity
- social security card or proof of your social security number

There is a \$31 fee for the initial learner's permit and four-year license, which must be paid at the time the permit is issued.

If you are under 18, there is a six month period for skills-building between obtaining the learner's permit and taking the road test. In that time you must complete 50 hours of behind-the-wheel skills building. Your parent or guardian must certify that this has been completed.

A licensed driver 21 years old or older must accompany you when you have your learner's permit and are driving.

You will not be able to operate a vehicle between the hours of 11:00 pm and 5:00 am.

2. Junior License: You will get a junior license once you have completed all of the requirements of the Learner's Permit and have passed the road test. You still cannot

drive past 11:00 p.m. unless you have documentation that you have employment, volunteer work, or a school related activity during that time.

3. Unrestricted License: You are usually eligible for an unrestricted driver's license at age 18. It provides unlimited driving privileges. There are some situations where you can apply for an unrestricted license before turning age 18. This is possible if you have been crash and conviction free for 12 months and have completed an approved driver's education course.

Can I Have a Cell Phone or Pager?

Each provider agency has its own policies regarding whether or not you may have a cell phone. If you are interested in having a cell phone or pager, talk to your provider worker. But remember, your provider agency is not responsible for paying for these items. If you are allowed to have them, you will be responsible for paying the bill!

Can I Have a Social Life?

You should talk to your provider worker and DHS worker about community and school activities that you are interested in. Also, ask for the policies on dating and hanging out with friends. Remember, your provider worker is responsible for ensuring your safety and well-being.

Can I Keep My Baby While in Care?

As a parent, you should be given the opportunity to parent your child as any other parent would and have full rights to your child.

All efforts will be made to place you with your child unless the court decides it is in your interest to be placed separately. You may be moved to a new placement in order to provide the best services to help you care for your baby.

In some situations DHS may decide that a young mother is unable to care for her baby. If this occurs, DHS files a petition with the court and the baby is removed from their care. Then the baby is placed in foster care, has an open case with DHS, and is represented by his/her own child advocate. In this case, you have a right to be represented by an attorney/parent advocate who will protect your rights as a parent.

Do I Have Rights if I am a Father?

Yes. Fathers in out-of-home care have the same parental rights as mothers in out-of-home care. If you are a father, you should talk to your provider worker and DHS worker.

Fathers in out-of-home care can:

- Ask to be placed with your child
- Ask for parenting services and supports
- Ask for visitation with your child

FYI: If you are a parent (even if you are under age 18) in out-of-home care, who does not live with your baby, you can be required by court to pay child support. Being a parent has certain responsibilities and paying child support is one of them. If you have questions, you should talk to your child advocate.

Part 10: Philadelphia Resources

Welcome to the Resource Section! Our goal is to share resources that may be helpful to you as you prepare for your future. There are a variety of different organizations, web sites, and resources listed here that do good work. It is by no means a complete list. If you have questions about something that one of the resources below does not address, please talk to your DHS or provider worker.

This section has resources on the following topics:

1. Out-of-home care
2. Court and Legal
3. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning
4. Academic and College Programs
5. Online Academic, tutoring and College Resources
6. Health and Family Services
7. Independent Living
8. Housing
9. Jobs & Career Development
10. Scholarships
11. Immigration Issues
12. Useful Websites

1. OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Philadelphia Department of Human Services

1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-683-4DHS (4347)
www.phila.gov/dhs

Services Offered: DHS works to protect children from abuse, neglect, and delinquency and to ensure their safety and permanency in nurturing home environments. DHS works to strengthen and preserve families by enhancing community-based prevention services.

www.fyi3.com

A web site that gives foster youth between ages 14 and 23 opportunities to become involved, informed and independent in their transitioning journey towards adulthood.

2. COURT AND LEGAL

Philadelphia Family Court

1801Vine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-686-4000

Services Offered: The Family Division is composed of two major divisions or branches: the Juvenile Division and the Domestic Relations Division. Juvenile Branch programs include Juvenile Court Operations, Juvenile Probation, and Children and Youth Services (Adoptions). The Juvenile Division deals with juvenile delinquency cases, juvenile dependency cases, and adoptions. The Domestic Relations

Division deals with paternity, support, custody, visitation, and divorce. Domestic violence cases are also assigned to the Domestic Relations Branch.

Juvenile Law Center (JLC)

The Philadelphia Building
1315 Walnut Street, 4th floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-625-0551
<http://www.jlc.org/>

Services Offered: JLC provides information and advocacy on laws and issues affecting children in out-of-home care and represents some children in Family Court.

The Defender Association

1441 Sansom Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
267-256-0844

Services Offered: Attorneys represent clients in adult and juvenile state and federal trial and appellate courts and at civil and criminal mental health hearings as well as state and county violation of probation/parole hearings. Association attorneys also serve as the Child Advocate in neglect and dependency court.

Support Center for Child Advocates

1900 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-925-1913
<http://www.advokid.org>

Services Offered: provides free legal and social services to abused and neglected children with the goal of securing a permanent, nurturing environment for each child.

Community Legal Services, Family Advocacy Unit

1424 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-981-3700
<http://www.clsphila.org>

Services Offered: The Family Advocacy Unit are legal advocates and social workers who help parents involved with the child welfare system maintain custody of or reunite with their children.

Philadelphia Legal Assistance, Custody, Child Support, Protection from Abuse Orders

42 South 15th Street Suite 500
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-981-3800
<http://www.philalegal.org>

Services Offered: Full-time attorneys, paralegals, and clerical staff specialize in areas of law such as Mortgage Foreclosure, Consumer, SSI Disability, Welfare, Divorce, Child Support, Custody, Domestic Violence.

Women Against Abuse, Protection from Abuse Orders

100 South Broad Street Suite 1341
Philadelphia, PA 19110
Hotline: 1-866-723-3014
www.womenagainstabuse.org

Services Offered: legal advocacy and representation in domestic violence-related matters.

HIAS, (Immigration Issues)

2100 Arch Street 3rd floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-832-0900
www.hiaspa.org

Services Offered: Immigration Counseling and Representation for issues such as Family reunification including Petitions for Alien Relatives, Political asylum, Adjustment of status, Relief from removal (deportation), Replacement of documents, Travel documents, Citizenship applicants, with a focus on serving the elderly, homebound and disabled, Extension or change of immigration status, Representation in US Immigration court.

3. LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUESTIONING

The Attic Youth Center

255 S. 16th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-545-4331
www.atticyouthcenter.org

Services Offered: Counseling, support groups, after-school programs, free HIV testing and social and educational programming.

Equality Advocates

(formerly the Center for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights)

1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 605
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-731-1447
www.center4civilrights.org
c4crinfo@center4civilrights.org

Services Offered: Advocacy and legal services for gay and lesbian people in Pennsylvania.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.

1201 Chestnut Street, 15th floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-496-0330
www.coloursinc.org

Services Offered: Support groups and prevention case management centered on HIV/AIDS education and awareness for LGBTQ youth ages 24 and under.

Mazzoni Center

1201 Chestnut Street, 2nd floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-563-0652
www.mazzonicenter.org

Services Offered: Free counseling for LGBTQ youth between ages of 12 and 23 through the Open Door Program. Provides counseling for parents with LGBTQ youth and referrals to psychiatric and other psychological services as necessary.

Philadelphia Family Pride

P.O. Box 25223
Philadelphia, PA 19119
215-844-3360
phillyfamilypride@hotmail.com
www.phillyfamilypride.org

Services Offered: Support groups, parenting workshops and social activities for LGBTQ families in Philadelphia.

4. ACADEMIC AND COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Looking for homework help, tutoring, or college preparation services? Many of the following organizations offer academic and college readiness services as well as social opportunities, mentoring and other activities.

www.educationplanner.org

Scholarship Search at Education Planner links users to 1.6 million scholarships, grants, and awards totaling almost \$7 billion. This website helps students develop their lifelong education plans from middle to higher education and beyond.

A Better Chance

P.O. Box 60491
King of Prussia, PA 19406
Phone: 610-992-0995
www.abetterchance.org

Services Offered: A Better Chance recruits, identifies, and develops leaders among young people of color in the United States. A Better Chance refers students entering 6th through 11th grades to some of the nation's finest independent and public schools to be considered for placement and financial aid. Students in the program receive access to educational and leadership opportunities.

AES/PHEAA

(American Educational Services / Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency)

215 S. Broad Street, 2nd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: 215-735-2877
Fax: 215-735-1463
www.aessuccess.org

Services Offered: AES/PHEAA offers college and higher education planning assistance to students and families in the Philadelphia region. They help students and families learn about scholarships and financial aid in Pennsylvania and nationwide.

Educational Advancement Alliance

4601 Market Street, Suite 310, Philadelphia, PA 19139
 Phone: 215-472-2500
 Fax: 215-472-2440
www.eaalliance.org

Services Offered: The Educational Advancement Alliance offers after-school and Saturday programs focused on academic enrichment and college preparation. They also offer social opportunities such as college visits and peer support groups.

LEAP Program – Free Library of Philadelphia

1901 Vine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103
 Phone: 215-686-5372
 Fax: 215-686-5374
 Email: topss@library.phila.gov
www.library.phila.gov

Services Offered: The LEAP After-school Program provides homework assistance, computer literacy, library skills and multicultural enrichment activities for school age students in grades 1 – 12. LEAP is in operation after school Monday through Friday from September until June. High school students participating in LEAP have the opportunity to apply for paid positions at their local libraries. These positions include Saturday trainings in leadership, life skills, college and career readiness, and more.

Philadelphia Futures

230 S. Broad Street, 7th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19102
 Phone: 215-790-1666
 Fax: 215-790-1888
www.philadelphiafutures.org

Services Offered: Philadelphia Futures prepares students from low-income families, who are attending Philadelphia's neighborhood high schools, to enter and succeed in college by providing mentoring, academic enrichment, college guidance and financial incentives starting in 9th grade through the end of college.

YMCA Achievers Program

2000 Market Street, Suite 750, Philadelphia, PA 19103
 Phone: 215-963-3700
 Fax: 215-569-3830
www.phillyyachievers.org

Services Offered: YMCA Achievers is a career mentoring and academic enrichment program for teens in 7th through 12th grades. The program meets at Drexel University on the first and third Saturdays of the month between September and June as well as periodically at the neighborhood YMCA branches.

College Access Program (CAP) – Philadelphia Education Fund

www.philaedfund.org/collegeaccess/

Services Offered: The College Access Program operates three centers in West, North, and Center City Philadelphia that serve college-bound individuals from the community. The staff provides guidance and access to college reference materials, computer labs, financial aid and scholarship information, "virtual" campus tours, and standardized testing information for over 8,000 students and city residents each year. The College Access Program also operates at middle and high schools around the city, providing college readiness services including college and career workshops, individual advising, motivational speakers, and information on scholarships and financial aid.

CAP Gallery Center

The Gallery I, Street Level
 9th & Market Streets (19107)
 Phone: 215-574-1341
 Fax: 215-574-1535

CAP North Philadelphia Center

The Rivera Building
 2603 N. 5th Street, 4th Floor (19133)
 Phone: 215-739-9360
 Fax: 215-739-8550

CAP West Philadelphia Center

Mail Box 164548
 Market Street
 Phone: 215-476-2227
 Fax: 215-476-3670

5. ONLINE ACADEMIC, TUTORING AND COLLEGE RESOURCES

ACADEMIC

Community Literacy Programs from Mayor's Commission on Literacy: www.phillylitlink.org

Philadelphia ASAP (After-school Activities Partnership): www.phillyasap.org

Black Excel's List of 100+ Summer Programs: www.blackexcel.org/summer-progs.htm

Penn State University Youth Programs: www.pennstateyouth.org

TUTORING

eCLAS (Continue Learning After-school) at School District of Philadelphia: www.phila.k12.pa.us/students/eclas/

Free Library of Philadelphia: www.library.phila.gov
Click on "Homework Help" seven days a week from 2 PM – 11 PM to get homework help from an online tutor!

United Way's The Beehive: www.thebeehive.org

1. Go to the "Local" button and choose "Philadelphia, PA"
2. Click on "School" at the main Philadelphia website
3. Click on "high school" – now you are at the site for Philadelphia high school students!
4. You can also search other areas of Philadelphia's Beehive for information on family services, computer training and technology centers, advice, and more!

Dr. Math: mathforum.org/dr.math/

Discovery School
(over 700 links to sites that can help you with your homework): www.discoveryschool.com

Internet Public Library: www.ipl.org

Information Please Knowledge Center
(online dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, and more): www.infoplease.com

Homework Spot: www.homeworkspot.com and www.libraryspot.com

Links to lots of Writing Tips and Tutorials: www.academicinfo.net/engwrite.html

COLLEGE PREPARATION

Free Library of Philadelphia College Prep Resources: www.library.phila.gov

Click on Electronic Resources, then click on Education/Careers. Click on LearningExpressLibrary to take practice SATs.

Higher Education Resources from the School District of Philadelphia: www.philsch.k12.pa.us/osess/edforemp/higher_ed/

American Education Services (AES/PHEAA): www.educationplanner.com

US Department of Education: Think College Early: www.ed.gov/thinkcollege/early/

College Student Life in Philadelphia for college students: www.onebigcampus.com, www.campusphilly.org

SallieMae's Planning for College Website: www.wiredscholar.com

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

The College Board (College Admissions testing dates, registration, and tips): www.collegeboard.com/?student

SAT Prep Center Online: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html

The Princeton Review (college admissions test (SAT) preparation): www.princetonreview.com

The Common Application: www.commonapp.org

Many Schools (over 250) accept the same application. You can print or fill out the Common Application at this website.

6. HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

ActionAIDS Central Office

1216 Arch Street, 6th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: 215-981-0088
Fax: 215-864-6930
www.actionaids.org

Services Offered: ActionAIDS serves individuals and families living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. They also educate youth and adults in diverse communities throughout the Philadelphia region.

BEBASHI

1217 Spring Garden Street, 1st Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19123
Phone: 215-769-3561
Fax: 215-769-3860
www.bebashi.org

Services Offered: A full-service HIV/AIDS case management agency with a special interest in serving low-income people of color with HIV disease by providing culturally sensitive health related information, counseling, research, and testing services.

CHOICE

1233 Locust Street, 3rd Floor, Philadelphia PA 19107
Phone: 215-985-3300, Spanish: 215-985-3350
Email: info@choice-phila.org
www.choice-phila.org or www.choiceteens.org

Services Offered: The CHOICE Hotline answers questions about birth control, contraception, pregnancy, prenatal care, abortion, HIV/AIDS, and STDs. Teens can also become involved as peer educators by presenting and distributing information on sexual health.

Family Planning Council

260 S. Broad Street, Suite 1000, Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: 215-985-2600
Fax: 215-732-1252
Email: nursekathy@familyplanning.org
www.familyplanning.org

Services Offered: The Family Planning Council provides access to family planning and reproductive health care services. They answer questions over the phone or via email regarding reproductive health.

Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania

1144 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: 215-351-5500
Fax: 215-351-5595
Email: education@ppsp.org
www.ppsp.org

Services Offered: Planned Parenthood has clinics that provide access to reproductive healthcare services and promote sexual health.

Y-HEP (Youth Health Empowerment Program)

112 N. Broad St., 9th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: 215-564-6388
Fax: 215-564-5360
www.yhep.org

Services Offered: Y-HEP works to empower youth and reduce the spread of HIV and other STDs. Y-HEP runs a drop-in center that offers workshops, discussion groups, and classes in art, dance, and computers. Y-HEP also provides neighborhood outreach.

7. INDEPENDENT LIVING

Achieving Independence Center

1118 Market Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-574-9194

Services Offered: A "one-stop" center providing real life tools, resources and opportunity for Philadelphia youth transitioning to independence. Youth in out-of-home care age 16 and older are eligible for services.

Healthy and Ready to Work

www.hrtw.org

Services Offered: Information and connections for helping teens with special needs transition into adulthood.

www.independentlivingpa.org

Services Offered: A web site created by foster youth for foster youth. Their mission is to improve the foster care system by giving youth a voice.

Social Security Online

http://www.ssa.gov/

Services Offered: The official website of the U.S Social Security Administration provides instruction on how to get a social security number and card and much more.

Department of Motor Vehicles

www.dmv.org

Services Offered: DMV.org was created to provide easy-to-access information and resources for all your Department of Motor Vehicles needs! This site will provide you with information about driving records, driver's licenses, and vehicle history reports as well as links to forms for vehicle registration, title transfer, bill of sale, and smog check.

8. EMERGENCY SHELTER

Covenant House

Community Service Center
417 Callowhill Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
215-923-8350
www.covenanthousepa.org

Crisis Center
31 East Armat Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144
215-951-5411

Services Offered: Covenant House Pennsylvania is the largest provider for services to runaway, homeless and at risk youth in Philadelphia. Services include Street Outreach, a 51-bed Crisis Center, transitional living programs, Rights of Passage (ROP) and Rights of Passage Apartment Living (ROPAL) and Community Service Center (CSC).

Women Against Abuse

100 South Broad Street Suite 1341
Philadelphia, PA 19110
Hotline: 1-866-723-3014
www.womenagainstabuse.org

Services Offered: The 24 Hour Emergency Shelter provides free services to women and children who are victims of domestic violence.

Office of Emergency and Shelter Services (OESS)/Adult Supportive Services

www.phila.gov/oess

Services Offered: OESS assists/prepares adults and families for self-sufficiency and independent living. OESS offers a network of shelters, boarding homes, and refers families, couples and single individuals to available housing resources. Services available to OESS clients include: Intake Services, Mental Health Services, Outreach Services, Emergency Shelter Services, Case Management Services, Adult Protective Services, State Emergency Food Distribution Program, Referrals to Housing Services, Emergency Response Services, Eviction Prevention Services, Transitional Housing Services, Shelter Plus Care, Permanent Housing Services.

9. JOBS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

444 North Third Street, 5th Floor
Department of Labor
Philadelphia, PA 19123
215-560-1900
www.dpw.state.pa.us/omr/Employment/omrEmploymentDirectory.asp

Services Offered: Assists youth with special needs as they transition into vocational education or the workforce.

Greater Philadelphia Federation of Settlements

1315 Walnut Street
Suite 1401
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: 215-989-3566
Fax: 215-989-3568
www.greatsettlements.org

Services Offered: Greater Philadelphia Federation of Settlements is made up of fourteen settlement houses and community centers located around the city. These agencies offer Skills for Life, an academic and social enrichment program for teen residents of public and assisted housing. They also offer YouthWorks, a city-wide employment and job training program. Greater Philadelphia Federation of Settlements provides referrals to callers interested in learning more about services in their neighborhoods.

Career Resources from School District of Philadelphia

www.philsch.k12.pa.us/osess/edforemp/higher_ed/career_explor.htm

10. SCHOLARSHIPS

White-Williams Scholars

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

Services Offered: White-Williams Scholars is a nonprofit organization dedicated to encouraging, supporting, and rewarding high achievement by Philadelphia public high school students from low-income families. The organization awards monthly stipends to high-achieving, low-income Philadelphia public high school students as long as they maintain A's and B's in their classes. The stipends help students pay school-related expenses such as transportation, meals, supplies, activities and other school related expenses. To apply for the Scholars program, youth must complete an application found here: <http://www.wwscholars.org/apply/wws-app.pdf>

Casey Family Scholarship

www.orphan.org/

Services Offered: This scholarship is administered by the Orphan Foundation of America. It offers up to \$10,000 in scholarships to youth under age 25 who resided in foster care for at least 12 months and were not adopted. Scholarships are awarded to youth in pursuit of post-secondary education including college, career schools, and vocational training programs. The deadline to apply for this scholarship is in March, but the exact date varies every year.

Chafee Education and Training Grant

To apply you must complete the FAFSA and the Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant Program Application.

To obtain this application call 1-800-831-0797

Go online at www.pheaa.org or www.independentlivingpa.org.

This grant is administered by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Association (PHEAA) and provides up to \$5,000 per academic year to meet unmet costs for the post-secondary institution.

To apply for the Chafee Grant, you must be eligible for services under the State's Chafee Foster Care Independence Program: you must be adopted after attaining age 16, or be a youth who is 16 or older and in care, or under 21 and in care at age 16 or above. Eligible youth can receive the grant up until turning age 21 (23 if you were receiving the ETG at age 21).

In order to be awarded this grant you must be enrolled at least half time in an approved career school or college, and you must "maintain satisfactory academic progress."

National Foster Parent Association Youth Scholarship

Offers scholarships to foster youth for college, vocational training schools, correspondence courses and even GED prep programs. They award five scholarships of \$1000 each. Three are awarded to foster youth and two are awarded to birth or adoptive children residing in a foster home.

To apply you must complete the application, obtain two letters of recommendation, and write an essay. For more information, go to:
<http://nfpainc.org/awards/youthScholarships.cfm?page=6>

The Taylor J. Ertel Foster Children Foundation Scholarship

Awards scholarships of no more than \$2000 a year to any youth who has resided in a foster home for any amount of time. Scholarship payments are made directly to your school's business office. For more information, go to:
www.tjefoundation.org

College Board

Scholarship search asks detailed questions about the applicant and then matches them to scholarships for those in similar situations: www.collegeboard.com

Negro Education Emergency Drive

Offers scholarships to African Americans who are pursuing post-secondary education: www.need.org

United Negro College Fund

Provides scholarships to African American students who attend United Negro College Fund member colleges and non-member colleges. Search database of UNCF and non-UNCF scholarships at the site: www.uncf.org

The Ellis Trust

215 S. Broad Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107
 Phone: 215-735-4480
 Fax: 215-735-4485
 Email: info@wvscholars.org
www.wvscholars.org/ellis/

Service Offered: The Ellis Trust provides grants to girls in grades 9 to 12 from single parent families in need of aid to complete their high school education. Grant money can be used toward tuition, tutoring, college visits, college application and entrance test fees, college courses, visual and performing arts lessons, and more.

The Pittsburgh Foundation

www.pittsburghfoundation.org

The Foundation offers students a searchable database of 166 scholarships. Pittsburgh Foundation scholarships focus on both academic ability and financial need. Some are designated for students associated with a particular high school, college, business or organization. Others focus on a specific activity or course of study.

11. IMMIGRATION ISSUES

HIAS and Council Migration Service of Philadelphia

For help finding a lawyer who can help with immigration issues.

215-832-0900

info@hiaspa.org

Child Care Information

To determine if you are eligible for subsidized child care while in out-of-home care, call 1-877-4-PA-KIDS or 1-800-392-313.

You can also find information at:

www.dpw.state.pa.us/child/childcare/003670483.htm.

To qualify for subsidized child care, you must work at least 25 hours per week, make at least minimum wage or attend an educational program. If you are attending high school full time, there may be some exceptions to the work requirement.

12. USEFUL WEBSITES

Achieving Independence Philadelphia

www.aiphilly.com

A web site for Philadelphia youth transitioning from the foster care system to adulthood. Includes resources and supports to help youth gain the knowledge to become independent and opportunities for creative expression and connections with other youth in foster care.

Teen Philly Resource Guide

<http://www.wvscholars.org/guide>

A resource guide for Philadelphia high school students that will help you find the services you need including jobs, sports, arts, tutoring and health and family services.

Philly SOS

www.phillysos.com

Your lifeline for Philadelphia social services. Philadelphia's most up-to-date searchable web site containing information on thousands of social service resources in the Philadelphia and surrounding areas.

E3 Power Centers

www.e3philly.org

The Centers work with at-risk students and out-of-school youth residing in the city's three Empowerment Zone neighborhoods to connect them to education, training, and employment opportunities.

PA Independent Living

www.independentlivingpa.org

This website provides an overview of various resources for youth in care including housing, employment, education and mental health.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abuse, or Child Abuse: An injury or pattern of injuries to a youth that is non-accidental and the result of acts or omissions of a youth's caregiver. Types of abuse include physical abuse, sexual abuse and denial of critical care including medical or psychiatric care.

Access Card: In Philadelphia, this is another name for the Medicaid program, which provides access to medical and mental health care for youth in out-of-home care.

Achieving Independence Center: Philadelphia's "one-stop" center for the provision of many services, including Independent Living services for youth in out-of-home care who are approaching adulthood.

Adjudication or Adjudicatory Hearing: The hearing when the Family Court Judge reviews the allegations presented by DHS to remove you from your home. This hearing is held 10 days after the Detention Hearing or within 30 days of the voluntary placement.

Adoption: The creation of a new, permanent legal family for a youth. The adoption process involves the termination of the parents' rights and the creation of parental rights in a new caregiver. Adoptive families may or may not be related to the youth before adoption.

Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA): A Federal law intended to shorten the amount of time that you spend in out-of-home care. It does this by setting a time limit on how long it can take to return you to your family, move you towards adoption or find another permanent plan for you.

Aging Out: Youth can stay in care until age 21 if they came into care before turning age 18 and are in a program of treatment or instruction. Under the law, the only time a youth must "age-out" is when they turn age 21. At all other times youth should leave care with a plan that helps them achieve permanence.

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA): An alternative permitted under ASFA, which allows youth to have a goal of permanence that is not return home, adoption or PLC.

Appeal: A request for a hearing to change the court's decision. A final court decision is subject to an appeal.

Advocate, Child Advocate or Legal Advocate: The person who will represent you in all legal matters and court proceedings. A Child Advocate works in the "best interest" of the youth and is legally responsible advocating on behalf of those interests. Sometimes, a child advocate is referred to a Guardian Ad Litem (GAL).

Child Welfare System: The child welfare system is the governmental agency that is responsible for taking care of youth who are abused or neglected, or whose parents are not able to take care of them. In Pennsylvania, the state child welfare system is called the Office of Children, Youth, and Families and is a department within the Department of Public Welfare.

County Child Welfare Agency: The agency that is responsible for providing care and assistance to children when their families are not able to care for them, they are abused, or they are neglected. In Philadelphia, this agency is the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA): A person who is appointed by the court to look at all aspects of your case and to report to the Judge about how you are doing. Not all youth have a CASA, but all dependent youth should have a child advocate/attorney.

Delinquency: When the Juvenile Court finds that a youth has committed a crime.

Dependent: The term used to label youth when the court determines that you require care or supervision by DHS. When a court determines that a youth is dependent, everyone has to come to court so that the Judge can make sure that he or she is doing okay.

Detention Hearing: The hearing that takes place 72 hours after youth are removed from your home. The Judge decides whether placement was necessary and decides whether to allow the youth to remain in out-of-home care until the next hearing.

DHS Worker: The person assigned to a youth by DHS. The worker provides reports to court and must visit youth at least once every 6 months if placed through a private provider. DHS workers must make sure youth are safe and that their needs are met.

Family Service Plan (FSP): The plan that lays out the goals for youth and their family. These can include goals like reunification, adoption, or emancipation/independence. The FSP establishes responsibilities for youth, their family, and DHS.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): The application for federal student aid that must be completed to receive financial aid from the federal government. This application is also used to determine eligibility for state and local student aid programs.

Independent Living Coordinator: This is the person who makes sure youth who are 16 and older are receiving independent living services.

Chafee Independent Living Services: The services all youth in care who are 16 and older should receive to become independent and productive adults. These services include: preparation for education, vocational training, job readiness, job placement, budgeting, apartment searching and financial management.

Youth eligible for Chafee Independent Living Services:

- are, or have been, in out-of-home placement on or after age 16; and
- are at least 16 years old but less than 21 years old; and
- have been adjudicated dependent OR dually adjudicated dependent/delinquent.

Chafee Independent Living Aftercare Services:

Youth who were eligible for IL services while they were in placement can get the IL services listed above when they leave care as long as they were in care at age 16 and are still under age 21.

Youth who leave care at age 16 or older and move to another county in PA or even another state are entitled to receive Chafee Independent Living Aftercare Services in that county or state. Contact the local child welfare agency to find out what Chafee Independent Living Aftercare Services are offered that you could receive.

Individualized Service Plan (ISP): This is a plan for youth that is created by the provider agency directly providing your care.

Medicaid (Medical Assistance): Medical insurance for all youth in care that covers physical and mental health treatment. When youth leave care, they may not be eligible for Medicaid. They will need to reapply or look for other health insurance options.

Permanency Hearing: The hearing five (5) months after youth have been placed in out-of-home care to determine a secure permanent placement for youth. This hearing takes place every five (5) months until permanence is achieved.

Permanency Planning: Services and placement to help the youth and family fix the problems that led to the youth being placed out of the home. The permanency plan for youth should assure a long-term, stable, family-like setting for the youth.

Permanent Legal Custodianship (PLC): PLC is when another person becomes the permanent legal guardian. Unlike adoption, PLC does not involve termination of the parents' rights. Under PLC, parents retain certain rights, such as visitation.

Petition: A legal document filed by DHS that explains the reasons for DHS removing you from your home, the necessity of court intervention and out-of-home care placement.

Provider Agency: DHS enter into a contract with a provider agency that provides placement and services to children, youth and families in the child welfare system. Provider workers deliver services and provide direct supervision to youth. Your DHS worker is still involved in the case, but the provider agency works with you day-to-day.

Solicitor for the County: The attorney who represents DHS and its workers at permanency review hearings.

Supervised Independent Living (SIL) Placement:

A placement in which youth 16 or older live in their own apartment and receive services from the county or private agency while youth are still in children and youth care. These placements help prepare older youth for handling the responsibilities of being an adult. Youth can be provided this placement while still in care.

Termination of Parental Rights (TPR): If family reunification has been ruled out and adoption is a reasonable possibility for youth, DHS requests for termination of parents' rights. If the court terminates parental rights it means youth can be adopted, if a resource has been found. It also means that parents have no legal rights pertaining to their child(ren) anymore.

Transitional Living Placements: A placement where youth 16 and older live with no more than 4 other youth. In a TLP placement youth are given more responsibility and have less supervision. TLP programs are great for preparing youth for taking on the responsibilities of adults.

Voluntary Placement Agreement: When a parent signs a voluntary placement agreement for their child, they transfer care and custody rights for that child to DHS. In other words, the parent no longer has custody of their child.

DISCHARGE CHECKLIST

Cover Sheet

- Discharge planning must begin on the first day of placement into care.
- Discharge planning must be an on-going process that includes the youth, biological/legal parents, Provider Worker, DHS Worker, Attorney/Child Advocate and other relevant adults in the youth's life.
- The Discharge Checklist must be completed for all youth being discharged from care to independence in order to ensure a successful transition.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE DISCHARGE CHECKLIST

1. The Discharge Checklist must be completed by the Provider Worker **AND** youth at the Discharge Planning Meeting (i.e. last ISP/FSP meeting) in preparation for the final Permanency Hearing.
2. Please put a checkmark in the box of the completed item.
3. Please make sure that all answers are as accurate as possible.
4. If more space is needed in order to complete the form, attach additional paper to the back of the Checklist.
5. The youth, biological/legal parents, Provider Worker and DHS Worker are required to sign the Discharge Checklist. If, for some reason, the DHS Worker and/or biological/legal parents are unable to be present for the Discharge Planning Meeting and do not sign the Discharge Checklist, the provider worker must provide documentation of attempts to invite and include them in the discharge planning process.
6. The completed Discharge Checklist must be filed in the youth's case record.
7. The youth must receive a copy of the completed Discharge Checklist in preparation for the last Permanency Hearing, along with the necessary documents relevant to the youth's successful discharge from care (birth certificate, social security card, working papers, medical information, etc.)
8. The DHS worker must receive a copy of the completed Discharge Checklist in preparation for the last Permanency Hearing. The copy should be filed in the DHS case record.

GENERAL INFORMATION

A discharge planning meeting (FSP/ISP) with the youth, family, and all parties occurred in preparation for discharge.

Date of meeting: _____

Youth understands that s/he may be eligible to stay in care until the age of 21, if s/he is in a program of treatment or instruction.

A Board Extension request has been made.

Date of request: _____

The conditions for maintaining a Board Extension have been discussed with the youth.

Youth understands that if s/he is discharged from the system at age 18, or any point thereafter, s/he cannot re-enter the system.

Youth has been referred to the Achieving Independence Center (AIC).

Date of referral: _____

Youth understands that s/he may receive services at the AIC until age 21.

EDUCATION AND CAREER PLANNING

Youth is enrolled in an educational or training program.

(Please specify program)

Youth has a plan for post-secondary education/training.

(Please specify program)

Youth has completed a financial aid application (FAFSA) in order to complete further schooling.

Date of application: _____

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Youth is familiar with the resources available in the area in which the youth will be living. Check items that apply to youth.

Hospitals

Library

Churches, mosques, synagogues, temples

Community centers

Health / family planning clinics

Other _____

Other _____

EMPLOYMENT AND MONEY MANAGEMENT

Youth has an identified source of income and/or stable employment plan after discharge.

Job Title: _____

Employer Name: _____

Youth has opened a checking account.

Bank name: _____

Youth has opened a savings account.

Bank name: _____

Youth has designed a budget in order to pay bills in a timely manner.

HOUSING AND DAILY LIVING

Youth has identified a housing resource upon discharge from care.

Independent

Parent

Family Member _____

Friend

Adult Group Home

Supervised Independent Living (SIL)

Youth understands public housing options. (Project Based, Section 8).

Youth understands tenant & homeowner rights.

Youth has an identified adult who is available for advice in emergencies.

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Youth is familiar with daily living tasks associated with taking care of self and housing arrangement.

Laundry

Cleaning

Budgeting

Buying groceries

Food preparation and Nutrition

Family planning & Parenting

Fire safety

Emergency contact information (911)

Other _____

Other _____

MEDICAL COVERAGE AND SERVICES

- Youth has an established source of future medical coverage.

 (Identify source of medical coverage)
- Youth has secured medical health services.
 Doctor: _____
 Dentist: _____
- Youth has secured mental health services.
 Therapist/Counselor: _____
 Psychiatrist: _____
- Youth has secured services from the Office of Mental Retardation (OMR).
 Date of referral to the OMR: _____
 List services received through OMR:

- Youth has secured drug & alcohol treatment services.

 (Outpatient Service Provider)
- Other _____

BENEFITS

- Youth understands the benefits of Medical Assistance (MA).
- Youth has completed an application for Social Security Insurance (SSI) (if applicable).
- Youth understands that receiving SSI as a juvenile does not guarantee that s/he will receive SSI as an adult.
- Youth has gone through the process of "Age 18 Re-determination" to determine if s/he meets eligibility criteria.
- Youth understands the benefits of Cash Assistance.
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance (GA)
- Youth understands the benefits of Food Stamps.
- Youth understands the benefits of Energy Assistance (LIHEAP).

OTHER THINGS TO DO PRIOR TO DISCHARGE...

- Obtain a social security card
- Obtain a birth certificate
- Obtain an official picture ID
- Obtain a driver's license
- Obtain information about how to register to vote
- Obtain contact information about siblings, if still in care
- Attend, or plan to attend, last Permanency Review Hearing

REQUIRED SIGNATURES

(Youth Signature & Date)

(Caregiver Signature & Date)*

(Provider Worker Signature & Date)

(DHS Worker Signature & Date)*

*If unable to attend meeting, please attach documentation of invitation to meeting and efforts to include them in the discharge planning process.

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

YOUTH RESOURCE LIST

The Youth Resource List must be completed within the first 15 business days of placement. The Provider Case Worker must facilitate conversation with youth regarding existing family resources, possible caregivers, and visitation resources. The Youth Resource List must be an on-going dialogue between youth and Provider Case Worker to assist youth with successfully maintaining family and community connections. The Youth Resource List must be reviewed every six (6) months at the ISP meeting with youth, family, DHS worker and other service providers.

Youth Name: _____ DHS #: _____

Current Placement: _____ Goal (circle one): Reunification Adoption PLC APPLA

MY FAMILY RESOURCES

Relationship	Name	Age	Address	When I think of this person I feel...
Mother				
Father				
Sibling				
Grandmothers				
Grandfathers				
Aunts				
Uncles				

<p>Of the family members listed above, I wish ...</p> <p>Who I want to be more involved in my life</p>	<p>What needs to be done in order for this to happen</p>	<p>What I need to do to make this happen</p>

MY CAREGIVERS

I have lived with the following caregivers. A caregiver is someone who is responsible for my safety and well being, someone with whom I live.

Age	Baby (Birth-2 years)	Toddler (3-6 years)	Pre-adolescent (7-11 years)	Adolescent (12-15 years)	Older Adolescent (16-19 years)
Where I lived (home, foster care, relative, group home)					
Who I remember especially well (father, aunt, sibling teacher, social worker, foster mom)					
What I miss about them (made me laugh, took care of me, took me shopping)					

I wish that I could re-connect with the following caregivers:

Name	Reason	I Would Live With This Caregiver (YES or NO)

MY VISITATION RESOURCES

I currently visit with the following people:

Who (parent, sibling, relative, friend)	S/U*	How Often I Visit With Them (once per week, 2 times per month)	Number Of Hours	Location (home, DHS, community)

*S= Supervised Visit U= Unsupervised Visit

I would also like to visit with the following people:

Name	Relationship	Address	Phone Number

SIGNATURE PAGE

Please check the items below and sign.

- I have engaged in a conversation with the Provider Case Worker regarding existing family resources, possible caregivers, and visitation resources.
- The information provided is correct, to the best of my knowledge.
- The Provider Case Worker encouraged me think about the positive relationships in my life that can help me transition to adulthood.
- The Provider Case Worker made me feel comfortable in identifying the people in my life who mean something to me.
- I believe that the Provider Case Worker is committed to helping me maintain family & community connections.
- I have received a copy of this Youth Resource List.

Youth Signature

_____ Date

Provider Case Worker

_____ Date

A copy was sent to the youth's DHS worker for review (to be filed in DHS case record)

Department of Human Services



We Make A Difference
In The Lives Of Philadelphia's
Children And Families