

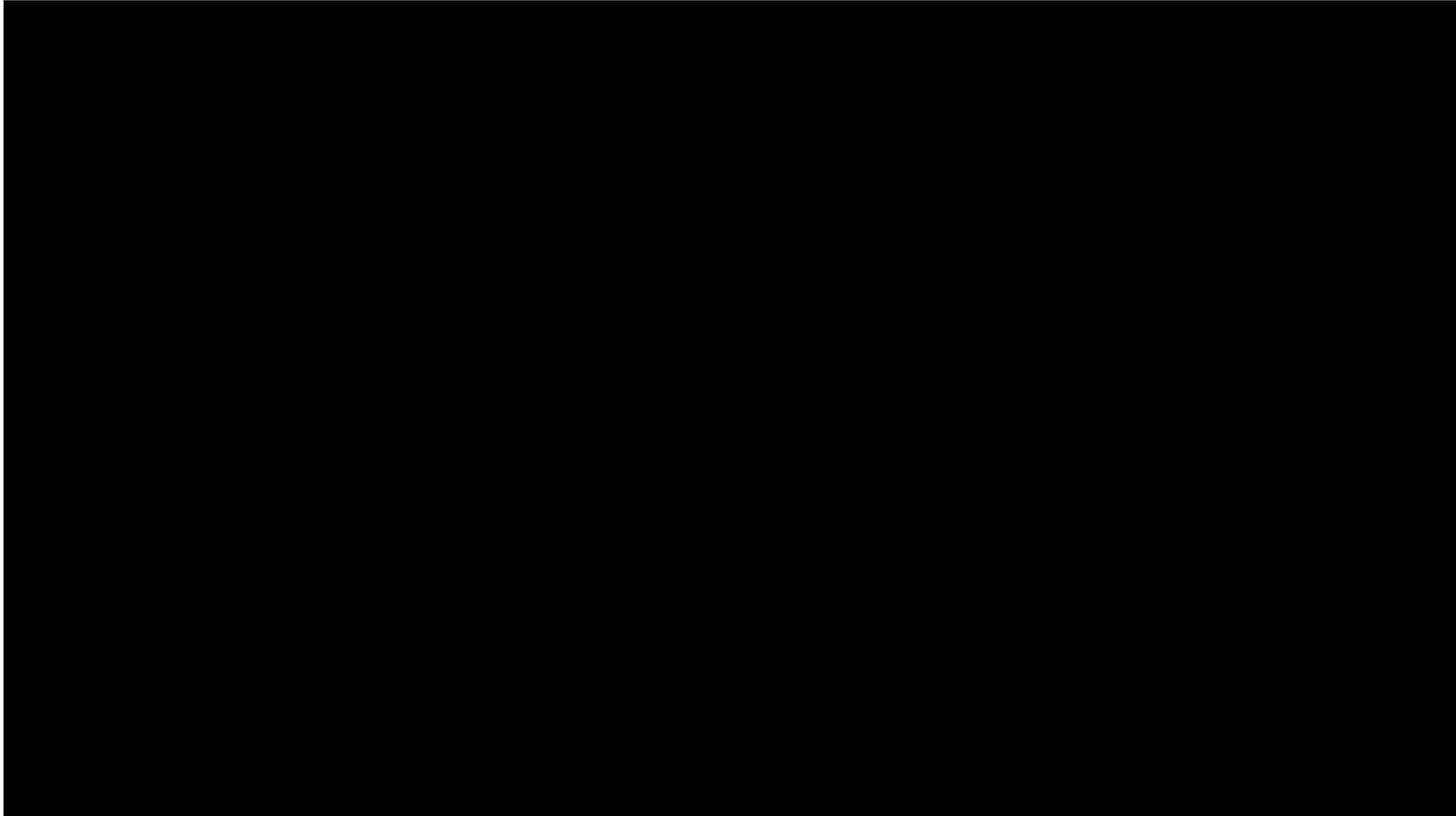
# **Tougher Being A Foster Teen: How to Assist in the Journey to Independence**

**EVERY KID IS  
ONE CARING  
ADULT AWAY  
FROM BEING  
A SUCCESS  
STORY.** — Josh Shipp





# Teenagers In Foster Care





# Teens in Foster Care

- Less likely to find adoptive family.
- More likely to have multiple placements.
- More likely to be placed in group home or residential setting .



# Teens in Foster Care

## Higher Risk of Mental Health Issues

- 7 times as likely to experience depression.
- 6 times as likely to exhibit behavioral issues.
- 5 times as likely to experience anxiety.

# Teens in Foster Care

## Higher Risk of Other Health Issues

- 3 times as likely to have attention deficit disorder, hearing impairment, and vision issues.
- 2 times as likely to have a learning disability, developmental delay, asthma, obesity and speech issues.



# Teens in Foster Care

Higher Risk of :

- Substance Abuse.
- School Dropout.
- Incarceration.
- Homelessness.
- Human Trafficking.
- Teenage Pregnancy.

Survival mode  
is supposed to be  
a phase that helps  
save your life.

It is not meant  
to be how  
you live.

*Quote attributed to*

Michele Rosenthal  
*Your Life After Trauma*

# Other Challenges

**Can be in “Survival Mode.”**

**Can have difficulty with basic activities including setting up bank accounts, budgeting, household chores, etc.**

**Can have difficulty with relationships.**

**Can have difficulty maintaining employment.**

## On Becoming Trauma Informed



*"I'm right there in the room, and no one even acknowledges me."*

# Trauma Informed Care

## On Becoming Trauma Informed



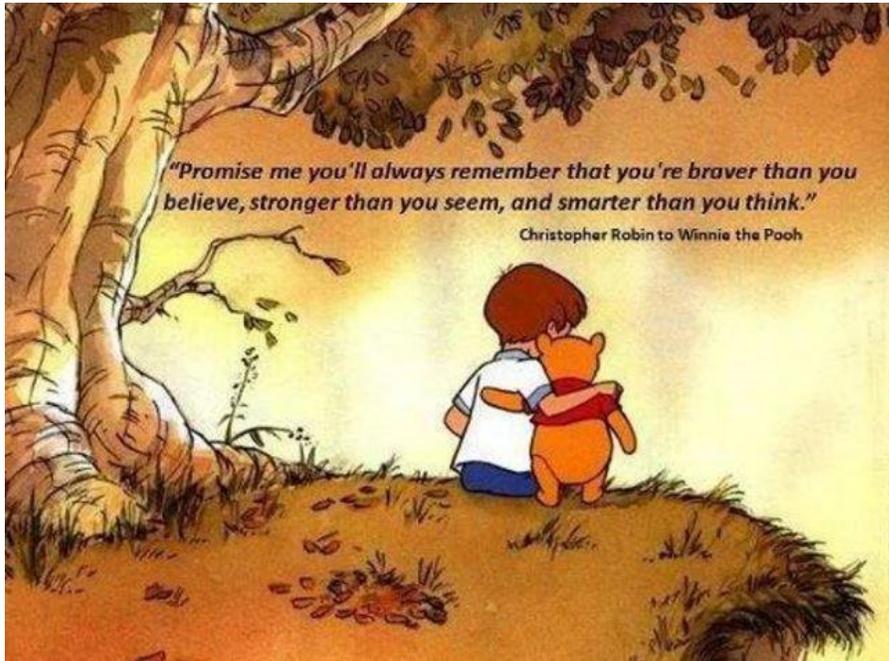
*"I'm right there in the room, and no one even acknowledges me."*

# Trauma Informed Care

Recognizes the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Approaches situations from viewpoint "What's happened to you?" instead of "What's wrong with you?"

Promotes strength and resilience.



# Trauma Informed Care

## Focuses On:

- **Safety**
- **Trust**
- **Dependability**
- **Collaboration**
- **Empowerment**
- **Voice**
- **Choice**



# Trauma Informed Care and Interacting with Teens in Foster Care

- **Realize** the impact of their trauma, both the initial trauma that caused them to be in care and the ongoing trauma of instability.
- **Recognize** the reason behind their behavior and attitude.
- **Respond** to situations taking in trauma history.
- **Reassure** that they are safe.

Trauma  
Informed  
Care  
Promotes  
Healing and  
Hope.





# Other Challenges

Can be involved in “Crossover Cases,” which means they have concurrent cases such as delinquency or criminal proceedings.

Has separate representation in those proceedings.

Needs support and advocacy in all proceedings.



# Independent Living: Helping Youth Transition to Adulthood.

# Independent Living

Youth in Foster Care from age 13 to 18 should be receiving independent living services. They may have an independent living case worker assigned.

The foster home or group placement are required to provide informal or formal life skills training including:

- Hygiene.
- Money management.
- Grocery shopping.
- Laundry.

The DCF case manager must report to the court on the youth's progress of acquiring these skills.



# Independent Living

There should also be a focus on **Normalcy**.

Normalcy means they need the opportunity to participate normal activities like their peers. This could include:

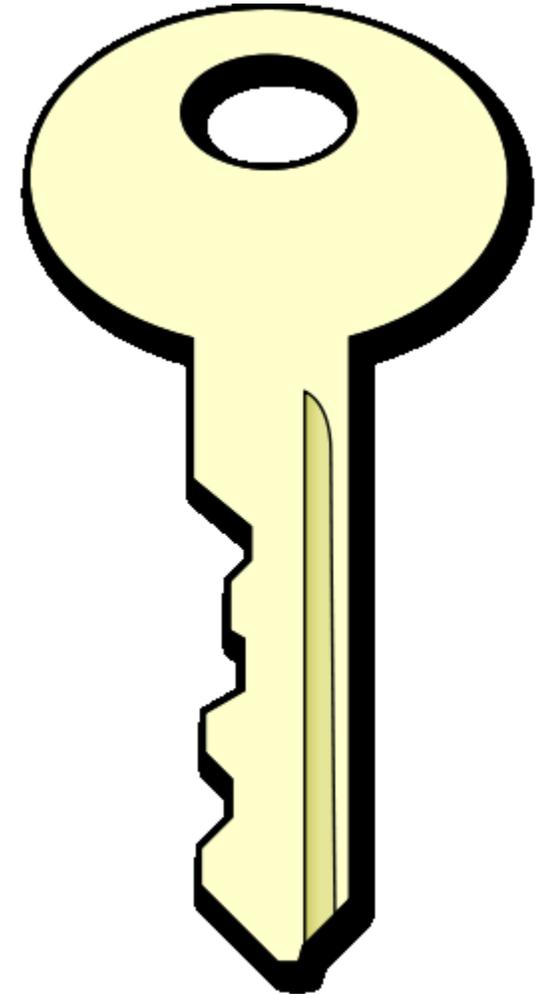
- Getting a driver's license.
- Participating in extracurricular activities and sport
- Going to prom.
- Having a cell phone.
- Going on overnight field trips.
- Getting a part time job.



Foster parents and caregivers can make “reasonable and prudent parent” decisions regarding youth’s activities.

# Keys to Independence

- Fla Stat. 409.1454.
- Available for youth ages 15 to 21 in out-of-home care.
- Provides reimbursement for costs related to attaining drivers license and motor vehicle insurance.
- Since program began in 2014, over 10 times as many teens in out of home care have gotten their drivers license.
- For more information, visit [www.k2i.us](http://www.k2i.us).



# Transition Planning

The Department must work with the youth to create a transition plan. The youth must be involved.

The plan is developed within 6 months of the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Must address:

- Housing
- Healthcare
- Driver License
- Employment
- Education
- Personal support services.





The Department is required to provide the following to the youth **PRIOR** to his/her 18th birthday:

- Educational Records
- Health and Medical Records
- Process for Accessing Case File
- Medicaid Card & Information
- Certified Copy of Birth Certificate
- Florida ID or Driver's License
- Master Trust Accounting, if Applicable
- Information Regarding PESS, EFC & Aftercare Services
- Interviewing Skills Training
- Open Bank Account or Obtain ID Necessary
- Living Arrangements – Housing Issues
- How Expenses Will Be Paid
- School Information
- Notice of the Right to Extend Foster Care
- A letter providing the dates the child will be under court jurisdiction
- Removal of Disability of Non-Age – Banking, Utilities, Lease

# How to Assist in Transition

- Discuss youth's interests and goals.
- Encourage youth to participate in normal activities.
- Assist youth with life skills.
- Discuss educational and long term plans with youth.



# How to Assist in Transition

- Check with youth to see they receive the necessary documents, such as birth certificate and social security.
- Encourage youth to be engaged in transition planning process.
- Discuss ways to achieve goals, such as education or securing housing.

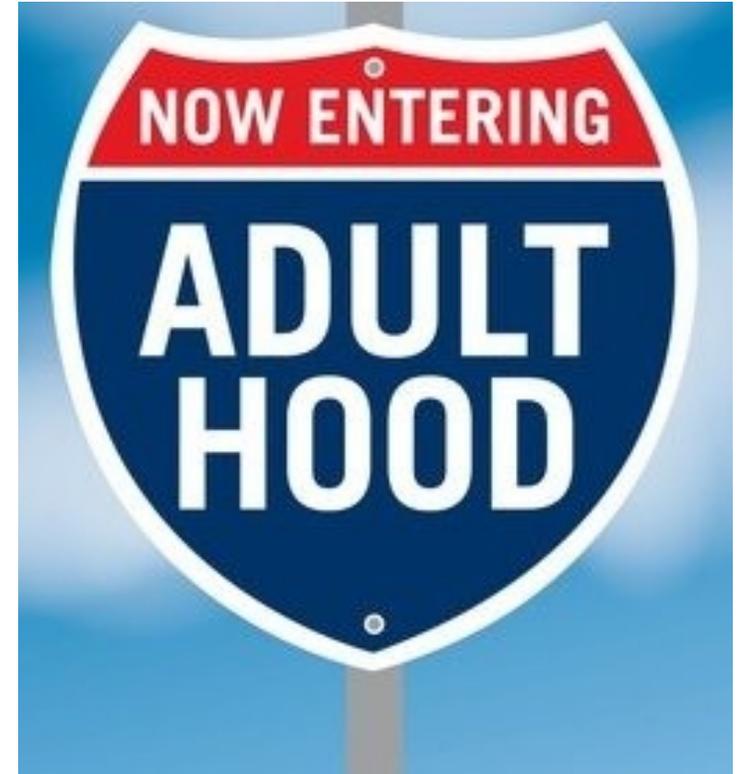


# After 18

In 2014, the Common Sense and Compassion Independent Living Act took effect. This law provided youth in foster care more choices and flexibility when they turn 18.

The law includes:

- Extended Foster Care
- Postsecondary Education Services and Support
- Aftercare Services





# Extended Foster Care

- Fla Stat. 39.6251.
- Youth who age out of care can remain in licensed foster care under the protective supervision of the Department of Children and Families and under the jurisdiction of the Court.
- Has certain requirements, such as being enrolled in school or having part time employment.

# Extended Foster Care

## Benefits:

- Financial.
- Support System. Will have case worker and can remain in the GAL Program.
- Resources.
- Can remain in placement or other supervised living environment, such as dorm.



# Post Secondary Support and Services (PESS)

- For full time students 18- 23 who were in foster care at least 6 months and either turned 18 while in foster care or adopted from foster care after the age of 16.
- Provides monthly stipend if attending a college that is Florida Bright Futures eligible.
- No restrictions on living arrangements and not under court supervision.
- Can be married or have children.



# Aftercare Services

- Available for former foster youth ages 18 to 23 who are not participating in EFC or PESS.
- Services include:
  - Mentoring.
  - Tutoring.
  - Mental Health.
  - Substance Abuse.
  - Counseling.
  - Parenting.
  - Job and career skills training.
  - Temporary financial assistant.



# Other Resources

## Tuition and Fee Exemptions.

- Fla Stat. 1009.25
- Valid at State Colleges/ Universities.

## Scholarships.

## Medicare.

## Support Groups.

- [Foster Care Alumni](#)
- [Florida Youth Shine](#)



Teens in foster care  
are just like all teens  
with the same needs,  
issues and potential.





However, they have additional challenges and risks due to the trauma they have experienced.

They lack the necessary support system.



# Questions And Comments