

# Module 2 - Child and Adolescent Development

## 1. Intro

### 1.1 Introduction



#### Notes:

In this module, you will learn about how development affects a child's ability to learn independent living skills, how to take advantage of teachable moments, and how you'll need to tailor your approach to life skill-building with each child. Some of this will be review from your Foundation training, and some of this module will be specific to how development affects a child's ability to learn independent living skills.

## 1.2 Objectives

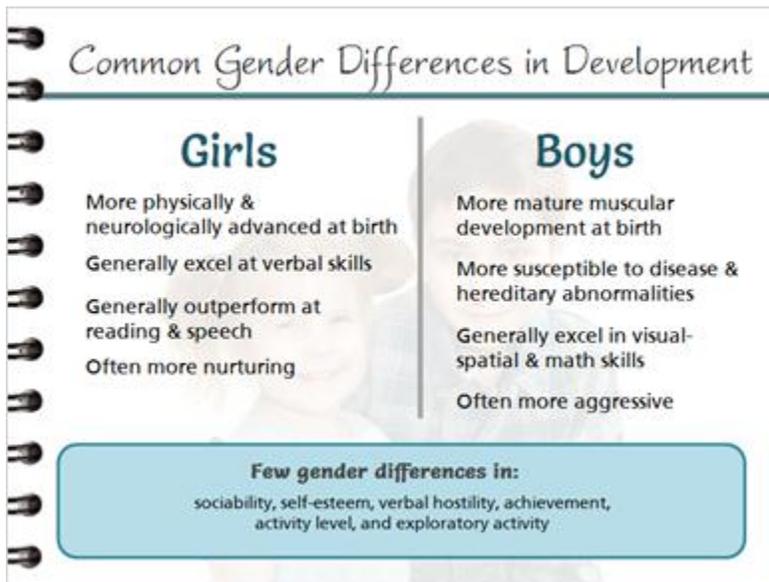


### Notes:

Upon completion of this module, you should have the knowledge and skills to:

- Compare the developmental differences between males and females
- Explain basic adolescent brain development
- Discuss the impact of maltreatment on a youth's development, and
- Teach life skills to children and youth at any age

## 1.3 Gender Differences in Development



### Notes:

As you have fostered children and maybe raised your own children, you have probably noticed that boys and girls do not develop in the same way and at the same rates. Why is that? On this and the next slide, we'll talk about gender differences in development and brain development.

Generally at birth, girls are more physically and neurologically advanced, and boys have more mature muscular development but are more susceptible to disease and hereditary abnormalities. At early ages, girls generally excel at verbal skills, while boys are more skilled in visual-spatial and math skills, specifically geometry. Girls outperform boys at reading and speech. Boys tend to be more aggressive, while girls are often more nurturing. Interestingly, there are few gender differences in sociability, self-esteem, verbal hostility, achievement, activity level, and exploratory activity.

### Notes:

Gender Roles and Gender Differences

2003 McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Neuroimage. 2007 Jul 15;36(4):1065-73. Epub 2007 Apr 6.

Sexual dimorphism of brain developmental trajectories during childhood and adolescence.

Lenroot RK1, Gogtay N, Greenstein DK, Wells EM, Wallace GL, Clasen LS, Blumenthal JD, Lerch J, Zijdenbos AP, Evans AC, Thompson PM, Giedd JN.

## 1.4 Behavior Patterns



Common Gender Differences in Development

Gender roles examined

**What research has shown about the absence of a father figure:**

- Leads to disruptions in gender roles for preteens
- ✓ Boys: absence leaves them without strong role model
- ✓ Girls: affects interaction with men into adult life

### Notes:

Children develop behavior patterns and preferences based upon their gender as early as 15 to 36 months of age, and girls tend to stick to these gender roles less closely than boys do. This is often true because the social pressure for boys to conform to typical masculine roles is higher than it is for girls to conform to the traditional female role. Research has shown that the absence of a father or father figure, which is a reality for many of our youth in care, leads to disruptions in gender roles for both preteen boys and girls. For boys, the absence leaves them without a strong role model, and for girls, the absence affects their interaction with men well into their adult lives, sometimes even affecting the choice of their partner.

Gender Roles and Gender Differences

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## 1.5 Activity: Gender Differences

Often excel at verbal skills at early ages

More physically advanced at birth

Often more nurturing

In general, more aggressive

At early ages, often have more advanced math skills

At birth, more susceptible to disease

Drag the statements to the correct box.

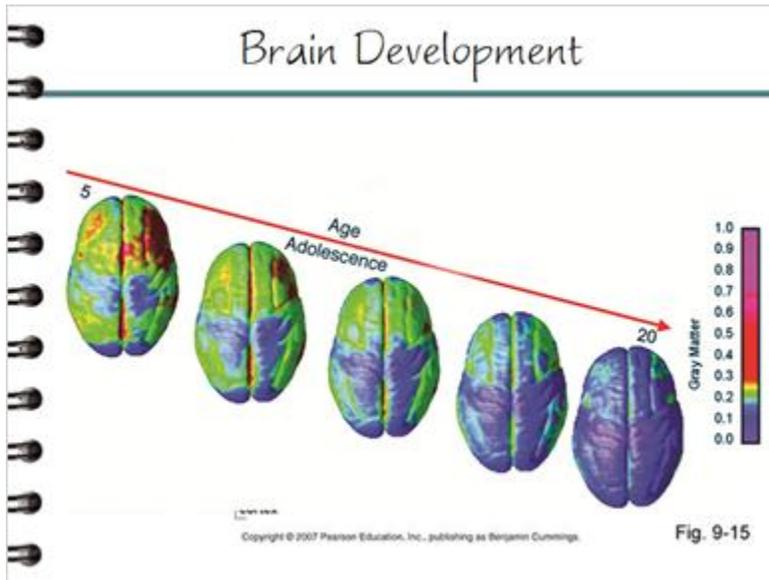
BOYS

GIRLS

Click Submit when finished

Item	BOYS or GIRLS
Often excel at verbal skills at early ages	
More physically advanced at birth	
Often more nurturing	
In general, more aggressive	
At early ages, often have more advanced math skills	
At birth, more susceptible to disease	

## 1.6 Brain Development



### Notes:

Now that you've learned a bit about the differences in how girls and boys develop, let's look at how the brain develops. For the purposes of this training, we will focus mainly on adolescent brain development. As we think about brain development, the teenage years are just as important as the first several years of life in that the brain has a surge of developmental growth.

## 1.7 Video: Adolescent Brain Development

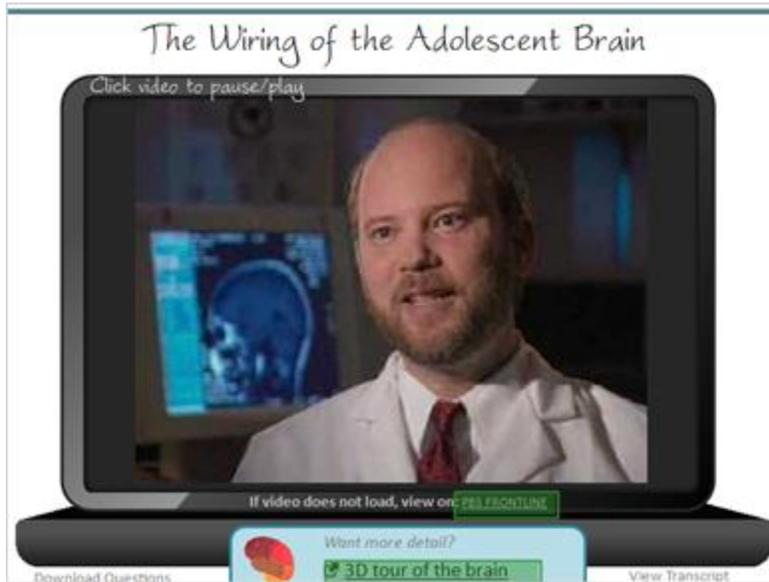


### Notes:

Let's watch this Frontline video called "The Wiring of the Adolescent Brain" to learn more about the importance of brain development in adolescence:

While watching the video, please download and consider the provided questions:

## 1.8 Video: Adolescent Brain

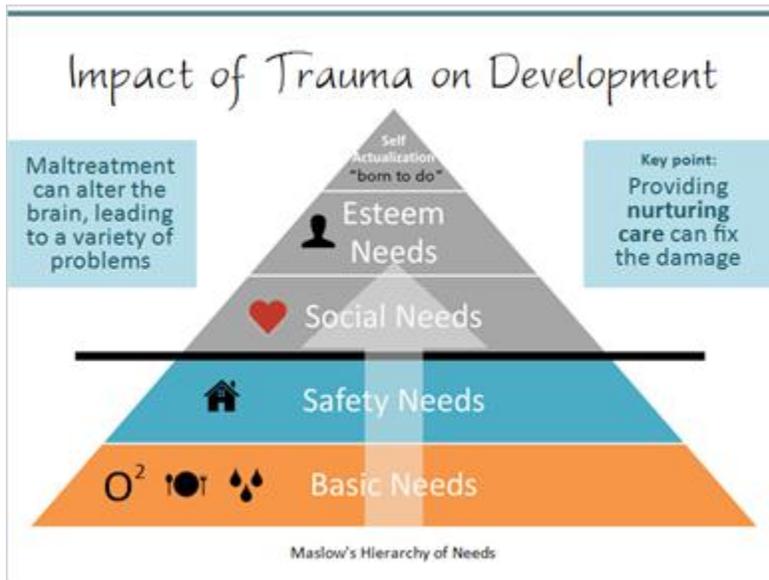


### Notes:

Full video transcript:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/etc/script.html>

## 1.9 Impact of Trauma on Development



### Notes:

Now that you've learned more about adolescent brain development as it relates to behavior, let's take a look at the effects of trauma on social and emotional development and behavior.

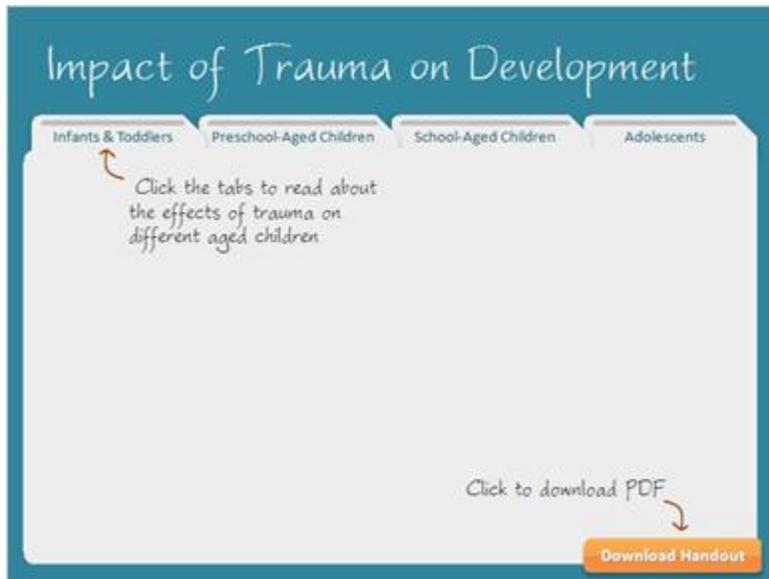
Think back to your Foundation training and what you learned about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and that in order for children to reach their developmental milestones, we as their caregivers must meet their needs consistently. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs shows us that in order for children's needs of love and affection (their Social Needs) to be met effectively, we must first meet their Basic and Safety Needs, which include their biological needs of oxygen, food and water, and their need for security. We can then meet their Social Needs, which we also call their need for love, affection and belongingness, and then they can move on to their need for Esteem, which include their self-esteem and the esteem and respect they get from other people. The need for Self-Actualization is, as Maslow says, the need to be and do that which the person was "born to do." You can see that these needs build on each other, as the layers in the pyramid build on one another, and that when one level of needs is not met, that a child cannot move onto the next level of needs. For instance, if a person does not have their Safety Needs met early in life, they cannot move on to have their higher level needs met and move on to the higher levels of development. A child or youth in this situation is constantly trying to meet their own safety needs and cannot focus on such things as time management and budgeting, or learning how to cook.

As a foster parent for a youth, it is important for you to understand that you must be able to meet their Safety Needs first before moving on to the higher level needs and levels of development and that before a child can develop self-esteem, their socialization needs must be met. This is crucial for adolescents.

Research has shown that maltreatment that occurs early in a child's life can actually alter the brain and leave children prone to depression, anxiety, and physical conditions

such as heart disease and cancer, among others. The positive news is that providing nurturing care can fix the damage caused by the maltreatment, sometimes along with therapy or medication, if needed. Children who have experienced trauma have not had their basic needs or safety needs met previously, so it is vital for us to meet these children's needs at all levels consistently and over time.

## 1.10 Impact of Trauma on Development



### Notes:

When children experience trauma or maltreatment and they are not getting their basic or safety needs met, the effects and behaviors are different based on their age.

We know that this is a lot of information, so we have created a printable resource for you to download.

### General Effects of Trauma and Maltreatment on Infants and Toddlers

- Absence of stimulation interferes with the growth and development of the brain. Generalized cognitive delay can result.
- They may fail to form attachments to primary caregivers or show insecure attachment.
- Maltreated infants often fail to develop basic trust. This will impair the development of healthy relationships.
- Maltreated toddlers typically exhibit language and speech delays. They fail to use language to communicate with others, and some do not talk at all.

### General Effects of Trauma and Maltreatment on Preschool-Aged Children

- Speech may be absent, delayed, or hard to understand. Some children do not talk even though they are able, which is called elective mutism.
- They may have an unusually short attention span, a lack of interest in objects, and an inability to concentrate.
- They may appear emotionally detached, isolated, and withdrawn from both adults and peers.
- They may be unable to take turns, share, or negotiate with peers; may be overly aggressive, bossy, and competitive with peers; and they may lack play skills or prefer solitary play.
- They may show signs of poor self-esteem and a lack of confidence.

#### General Effects of Trauma and Maltreatment on School-Aged Children

- They often feel inferior, incapable, and unworthy around other children, especially if they have not learned appropriate social skills.
- Abused children may learn that self-assertion is dangerous and may assume a more dependent posture to avoid injury; they may express few opinions, or show no strong likes or dislikes. It may be hard to engage them in productive, goal-directed activities.
- They may be unable to begin, participate in, or complete activities. They may give up quickly and lose interest when activities become even a little challenging. There is both a fear of failure and success (higher expectations) that underlies their behavior.
- Academic challenges can be threatening. Some abused children have developed few problem-solving skills, and may lack the confidence and persistence necessary to learn academic skills. However, other abused children are resilient and survive but may not be successful in school environment.
- Children who are anxious and depressed are typically unable to concentrate on schoolwork. They often do not do well in school.

#### General Effects of Trauma and Maltreatment on Adolescents

- They may have difficulty with self-control and may need clear external structure.
- They may need adult approval and support but be unable to seek or accept it. This is particularly true with youth who have attachment problems.
- They may be very delayed in academic skills and may not want to attend school. They may need considerable remedial tutoring in even basic skills.
- They may have difficulty establishing a solid sense of identity.
- They may exhibit truancy, use drugs or alcohol, or display behavior that is generally out of control and unruly.

## Infant toddlers (Slide Layer)

### Impact of Trauma on Development

Preschool-Aged Children | School-Aged Children | Adolescents

#### General Effects of Trauma and Maltreatment on Infants and Toddlers

- Absence of stimulation interferes with the growth and development of the brain. Generalized cognitive delay can result.
- They may fail to form attachments to primary caregivers or show insecure attachment.
- Maltreated infants often fail to develop basic trust. This will impair the development of healthy relationships.
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## Preschool (Slide Layer)

### Impact of Trauma on Development

Infants & Toddlers | School-Aged Children | Adolescents

#### General Effects of Trauma and Maltreatment on Preschool-Aged Children

- Speech may be absent, delayed, or hard to understand. Some children do not talk even though they are able, which is called elective mutism.
- They may have an unusually short attention span, a lack of interest in objects, and an inability to concentrate.
- They may appear emotionally detached, isolated, and withdrawn from both adults and peers.
- They may be unable to take turns, share, or negotiate with peers; may be overly aggressive, bossy, and competitive with peers; and they may lack play skills or prefer solitary play.
- They may show signs of poor self-esteem and a lack of confidence.



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## School Age (Slide Layer)

### Impact of Trauma on Development

Infants & Toddlers    **Preschool-Aged Children**    School-Aged Children    Adolescents

#### General Effects of Trauma and Maltreatment on School-Aged Children

avoid injury; they may express few opinions, or show no strong likes or dislikes. It may be hard to engage them in productive, goal-directed activities.

- They may be unable to begin, participate in, or complete activities. They may give up quickly and lose interest when activities become even a little challenging. There is both a fear of failure and success (higher expectations) that underlies their behavior.
- Academic challenges can be threatening. Some abused children have developed few problem-solving skills, and may lack the confidence and persistence necessary to learn academic skills. However, other abused children are resilient and survive but may not be successful in school environment.
- Children who are anxious and depressed are typically



[Download Handout](#)

## Adolescents (Slide Layer)

### Impact of Trauma on Development

Infants & Toddlers    Preschool-Aged Children    School-Aged Children    **Adolescents**

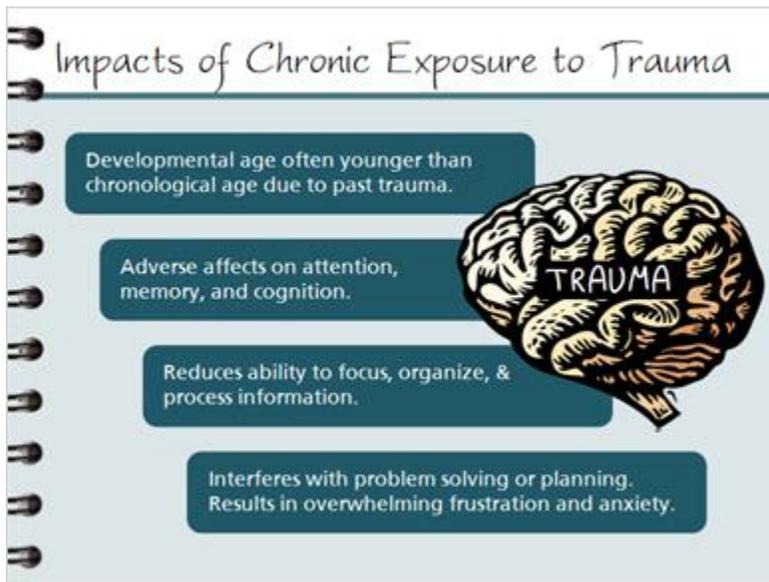
#### General Effects of Trauma and Maltreatment on Adolescents

- They may have difficulty with self-control and may need clear external structure.
- They may need adult approval and support but be unable to seek or accept it. This is particularly true with youth who have attachment problems.
- They may be very delayed in academic skills and may not want to attend school. They may need considerable remedial tutoring in even basic skills.
- They may have difficulty establishing a solid sense of identity.
- They may exhibit truancy, use drugs or alcohol, or display behavior that is generally out of control and unruly.



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## 1.11 Chronic Exposure to Trauma



### Notes:

As you have learned, youth in foster care often have a developmental age that is much younger than their chronological age due to past trauma. Chronic exposure to traumatic events, especially during a child's early years, has a complex effect on a child's brain. It can adversely affect attention, memory, and cognition; reduce a child's ability to focus, organize, and process information; interfere with effective problem solving or planning; and result in overwhelming feelings of frustration and anxiety into adulthood.

## 1.12 Check Your Understanding

Check Your Understanding:

**Knowing what you've learned about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, if we try to meet a child's Social Needs first, what other needs must we meet first?**

- a) Esteem
- b) Safety and Basic
- c) Basic
- d) Safety

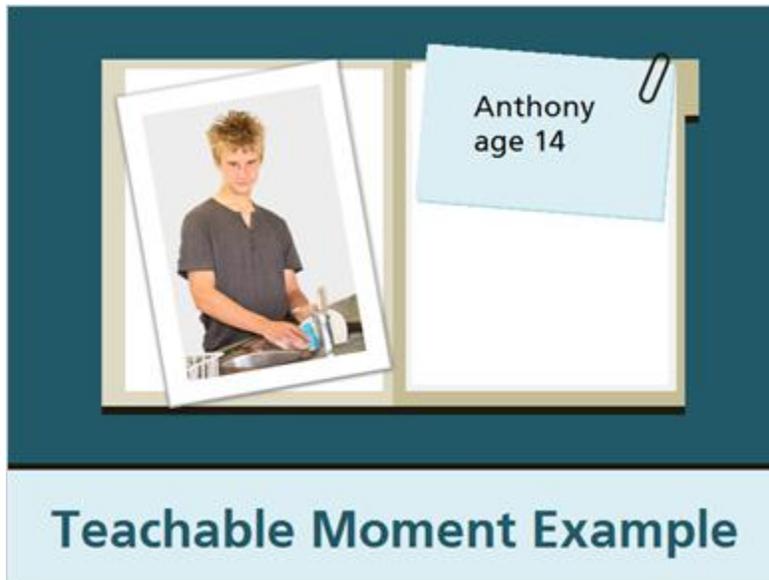
## 1.13 Independent Living Skills at Any Age



### Notes:

You are encouraged to teach life skills appropriate to the developmental level of the children in your home. While formal programming for independent living skills does not begin until age 15, these life skills can be taught at any age. Foster parents are in the best position to know the children in their homes and can take advantage of situations that may come up in a child's life that can become "teachable moments." You are a role model; someone who can demonstrate successful independent living on a daily basis. The daily tasks that you take for granted or do automatically may be skills that can be taught to the children and youth in your home. For example, while a three-year-old may not be able to start a load of laundry or cook dinner, they can certainly help you sort and fold the laundry or help you carry plates and cups to the table. This way, independent living skills can be expanded over time. While it may be hard to teach formalized budgeting to a 5-year-old, you can talk with them about how much things cost and help them save up for a toy that they want so that they can see how saving money pays off.

## 1.14 Teachable Moment Example

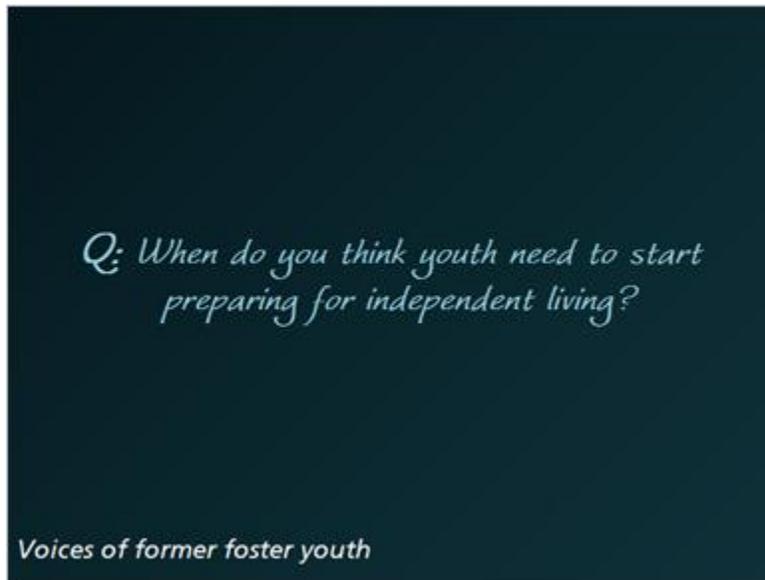


### Notes:

Consider the following scenario...

A young man named Anthony, age 14, had experienced significant physical abuse his entire life until he was placed in care at age 13. Although he was intelligent, due to his abuse, his social and emotional functioning was much lower. He enjoyed activities that boys much younger enjoy, such as playing with action figures, playing with bubbles in the bathtub and dressing up as a ninja. Doing the dishes was always a struggle until his foster mom realized that he did much better with her standing nearby and talking with him, showing him how to wash each dish and allowing him to play with the bubbles. At first Anthony only completed about half of the dishes, but after a few months, he completed his chore of doing the dishes just as well as the other youth in the home.

## 1.15 Voices of Foster Care: When to Start Preparing



### Notes:

Let's hear from current and former foster youth about why it is important for youth to become prepared to live on their own, and how you can help the youth in your home to feel more prepared.

Voices of former foster youth:

When do you think youth need to start preparing for independent living?

>> I think youth need to start being prepared for independent living from the moment they enter care. At some point in that child's life, they either experienced abuse and they had been living independently because of those actions in one way or another. Or they experienced neglect and children that are usually neglected are independent themselves. So when you bring children into care that have already experienced independence, it's important to nurture that and continue it.

Preparing children for independent living: teaching them to cook, clean, bills, anything along those lines is only a benefit. It can't hurt. And we might as well as foster that while we can.

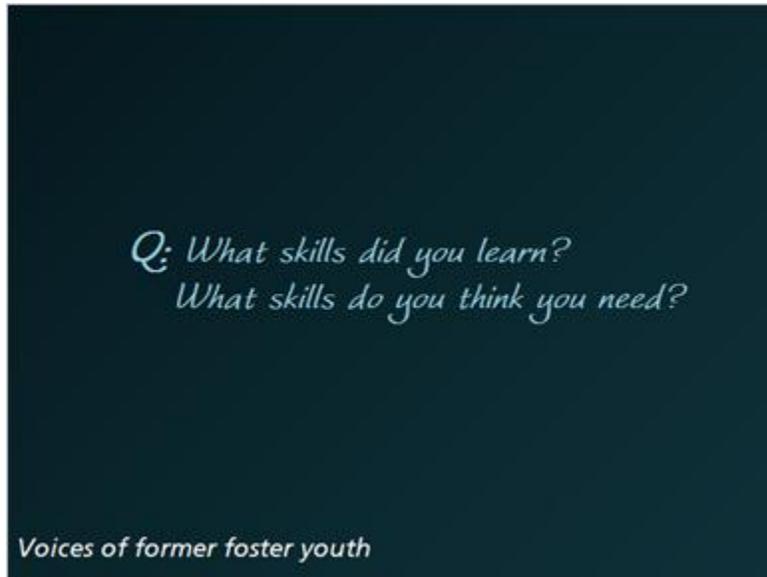
>> I think they should start at a young age so that as they grow they're not learning like, oh, how to sweep at 15. They should've learned that a while ago.

>> If you start the youth younger at possibly when they hit puberty or the age of 14 is a good age, usually kids have a sense or an idea of what they want to be when they become of age or when they're able to exit care. So the younger you start talking about the plan of exiting care, the more prepared they'll be because, when I was younger I didn't know what I wanted to do and I think if it was brought up to my attention at a younger age, I probably would've known more about money management which I didn't

know about.

>> I think youth should start preparing as early as possible because I think even young kids can start learning simple cooking skills or how to cook simple things in the kitchen. It's less overwhelming to build on skills over a period of several years rather than trying to learn everything all at once right before you age out.

## 1.16 Voices of Foster Care: Skills I Learned and Still Need



### Notes:

Voices of former foster youth:

What skills did you learn? What skills do you think you need?

>> I wish I knew more about how to save enough money for rent and I wish I had gotten a job during foster care and kept it. And saved money from that. And I kind of just wish someone would've showed me the realities of living on my own before I got out on my own. It's not as real as a child but it's get really real very quick.

>> I wish I knew more about looking for housing and more about how to manage my money better. But what I was well prepared for was looking for jobs, cleaning up, taking care of myself, scheduling my own doctor's appointments. You know taking care of myself as in washing my clothes, cooking, and cleaning.

>> I don't really feel like I learned too many new skills when I was in foster care but I could still use help with budgeting skills. I'm slowly getting better but I still definitely could use a little practice.

>> I learned how to be a good working adult in society and I think I still need a little bit of help learning how to do bills still.

## 1.17 Check Your Understanding

### Notes:

Which of the following might you see in adolescents who have been traumatized or maltreated? Please check all that apply.

- Difficulty with self-control and may need clear external structure.
- Speech may be absent, delayed, or hard to understand. Some children do not talk even though they are able, which is called elective mutism.
- May need adult approval and support but be unable to seek or accept it. This is particularly true with youth who have attachment problems.
- May assume a more dependent posture to avoid injury; they may express few opinions, or show no strong likes or dislikes.
- Often fail to develop basic trust. This will impair the development of healthy relationships.
- Delays in academic skills and resistance to attend school. They may need considerable remedial tutoring in even basic skills.

## 1.18 Reflect



**Reflect** Click to email your reflections

Module 2 enter email & click email icon to send

Think of a child in your home and think of ways that you can teach them age-appropriate life skills at every age. What are some of your ideas? Share them with your licensing worker.

click to type your thoughts here

Continue after you have printed or emailed your ideas.

**Notes:**

Think about what you learned from Anthony and what you heard from former foster youth in this module. Now think of a child in your home and think of ways that you can teach them age-appropriate life skills at every age. What are some of your ideas? Share them with your licensing worker.

**1.19 Conclusion**



**Notes:**

In this module, you have learned a lot about development - how boys and girls develop differently, about brain development, how trauma affects development, and how to teach life skills at any age. You've also heard from former foster youth on when they think children should start learning life skills and what they learned while in care.

Write down any questions that you might have about this information to share with your licensing worker.

When you're ready, please continue to the next module.