

# Module 3: Life Skill Development

## 1. Intro

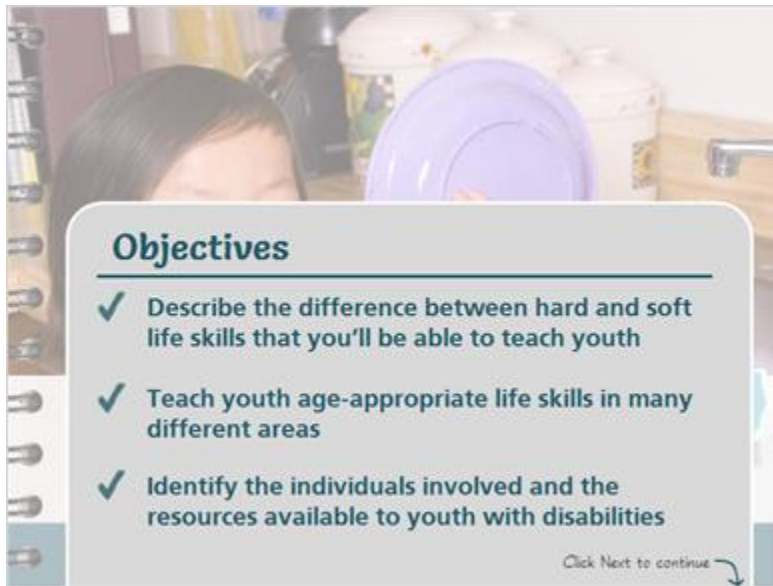
### 1.1 Introduction



#### Notes:

This module will review the expectations of foster parents and caseworkers in helping youth transition from out-of-home care and gain skills necessary for independent living. You will learn about the importance of significant adults in a youth's life, the expectations and responsibility of foster parents in teaching and providing life skills, the role of the youth's caseworker, and specific examples that can be used to teach life skills. You will also be introduced to special considerations for specific populations, such as youth with IEPs and youth with disabilities.

## 1.2 Objectives



**Objectives**

- ✓ Describe the difference between hard and soft life skills that you'll be able to teach youth
- ✓ Teach youth age-appropriate life skills in many different areas
- ✓ Identify the individuals involved and the resources available to youth with disabilities

Click Next to continue →

### Notes:

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

- Describe the difference between hard and soft life skills that you'll be able to teach youth
- Teach youth age-appropriate life skills in many different areas, and
- Identify the individuals involved and the resources available to youth with disabilities

## 1.3 Your Role as a Foster Parent



### Notes:

As a foster parent, you are a vital part of a youth's successful transition into adulthood. With constant guidance and support, children are better prepared to live independently when they move out on their own. You can teach and provide many life skills to the youth living in your home. It is part of your role to teach life skills appropriate to the developmental level of children throughout their lives and to begin teaching life skills early on in order to give youth increased independence and responsibility as they get older.

## 1.4 Hard vs. Soft Skills

**Hard Skills**

- cooking
- shopping
- doing laundry
- cleaning
- hygiene
- being on time
- searching for employment
- managing money

**Soft Skills**

- exploring one's values
- making good decisions
- problem solving
- setting goals
- communicating with others
- managing time
- dealing with anger
- managing relationships
- sexual development

**Managing Money**  
(hard skill)

**Setting Goals**  
(soft skill)

*They 'just know' how to do it...*

**This may not be true.**  
You'll need to work with the children in your home to determine areas of need.

### Notes:

There are many life skills you can teach to youth in your home. These life skills can be divided into “hard skills” and “soft skills.” Some examples of soft skills are: personal skills, such as exploring one’s values, making good decisions, problem solving, setting goals, communicating, managing time, anger management, managing relationships and sexual development. Some examples of hard skills include: cooking, shopping, doing laundry, cleaning, hygiene, being on time, searching for employment, and managing money. Behind every hard skill there is a soft skill that aids in its development. You will learn specific ways you can help youth gain these skills later in this module.

Many daily tasks that you or your children seem to “just know” may be tasks or skills that a child in foster care needs to learn. You’ll need to work with the children in your home to help figure out what skills they already know and what skills you can work on together. We will discuss some specific examples of how you can work with the youth in your home to build these skills later during this module.

## 1.5 Importance of Significant Adults

### *in a Young Adult's Life*



#### **Notes:**

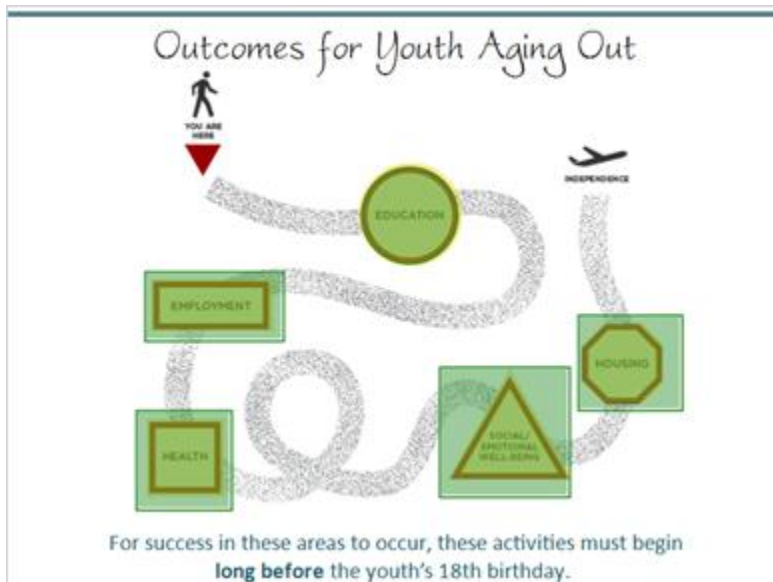
Think back to when you were 18. How much did you rely on your family? What type of assistance did your parents provide you to help you get ready to live independently?

After thinking about this question, you probably came up with a few different ways that your parents have helped you, such as giving you a place to do your laundry, giving you a warm meal, giving you advice, lending an ear when you needed someone to listen, helping you problem solve, sending you care packages while you were away at school, helping you get a job, giving you somewhere to store your things, loaning you money or emergency cash, and co-signing for an apartment lease or loan.

Independent living preparation does not begin or end at a specific age. It is a process that begins when children are very young and advances over time.

When children are not taught the skills they need for a successful transition to adulthood, they are more likely to experience unemployment, homelessness, imprisonment, and victimization. Some children in foster care may need extra help to learn what it means to be independent and what skills they need to be successful on their own.

## 1.6 Outcomes for Youth Aging Out



### Notes:

In Wisconsin, we have divided outcomes for youth aging out of foster care into five areas: education, employment, health, social-emotional well-being, and housing. Each of the areas has a set of goals important for a youth to achieve before they move out on their own, with the help of their foster parent(s), caseworker, and other team members.

For success in these areas to occur, these activities must begin long before the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Click on each success area shown on the path to independence to learn about them.

### Education:

Youth should graduate or be on track to graduate high school on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. They should also have adequate funding secured for postsecondary education, such as savings, grants, student loans, and scholarships.

### Employment:

Youth should have experience volunteering or working prior to exiting care, and youth should have at least two employment references. You will need to assist youth in finding opportunities to volunteer or work. Specific examples of how this can be done will be discussed later in this module.

### Health:

Youth should have their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met and they should be able to have access to services when needed. For example, youth should be in counseling, if needed, and should see their doctor for a yearly physical exam. Youth should also have the knowledge to access to these



services themselves.

### **Social-Emotional Well-Being:**

Youth should have a connection to at least one lifelong caring adult. That adult(s) could be their foster parent(s) or a former foster parent(s), a coach, teacher, neighbor, family member, church leader, or a mentor. Young people must also feel connected to their school, community, and culture.

### **Housing:**

Youth should have a plan for housing if they are aging out of care. This plan should include a safe and stable living arrangement. However, youth should also have a back-up plan if this plan falls through. Later in this module we will discuss ways you and their caseworker can work with them to build skills necessary to finding and maintaining safe and stable housing.

## **1.7 Life Skill-Building in Children and Youth**



### **Notes:**

As a foster parent, you have the crucial role of identifying and providing activities that will help teens meet their goals and gain life skills. Because foster parents are a consistent presence in a youth's life, you are available daily to model behavior, coaching, and feedback for youth as they become more independent. There are a variety of life skills you can teach to the youth in your home. In the following slides we have divided these skills into hard and soft skills and grouped them by category. We've also given you resources for each set of hard skills to help you teach those skills to the children and youth in your home. This list is just a starting place - feel free to find other ideas to use in your home!

For the hard skills, which you'll see on the next slide, we have broken up each category into four age groups to give you some ideas of activities to do with youth to help them build their skills in each area. In addition to what is on these slides, we have a resource for you, called "Ideas for Teaching Life Skills," which you can download and print. Feel free to download it now and take notes on it as you go through the next few slides.

## 1.8 Hard Skills



### Notes:

Click on each of the hard skill areas shown and make note of specific ideas you want to try.

### **Money Management:**

Age 8-10:

- Start a piggy bank, and then open a savings account once the piggy bank is full. Look over the account statements together so that they can see the interest they are earning on their money.
- When you buy something, have youth look at the receipt to see how much was added to the cost due to sales tax. When youth want to buy something, have them calculate the sales tax.
- Talk with youth about your views on money and about their views on money, understanding that culture plays a role in these perspectives.



- Start a family savings jar to save up for special events, treats, or to give to charity. Plan together what the goal will be and discuss what each member can contribute.
- Teach youth that doing it yourself saves money - if you make your lunch at home instead of buying it at school, you “earn” the money that you would've spent on lunch at school!

#### **Age 11-14:**

- Work with youth to plan a sample budget. Youth should be given opportunities to budget for their “wants” in addition to their needs.
- Ask youth to identify income sources and expenses that might be overlooked, such as taxes, car insurance, rent deposits, and car repairs. In addition, discuss potential financial problems they could face, such as unexpected car repairs or unemployment.
- Encourage youth to have a savings plan, and to split their money into short-term and long-term savings, pocket money, and charitable giving.
- Have youth keep receipts for a month and enter their purchases into a computer program to track their spending habits.

#### **Age 15-18:**

- Help youth to open a checking account and teach them how balance a checkbook. Have them research different banks and evaluate the fees; show them how to write checks and use online banking.
- If you've already opened a savings account, put some money into the account if possible, as well as teaching youth about the benefits and risks of credit cards. Talk with youth about how credit can be helpful - such as in emergency situations or for buying things online or reserving hotel rooms.
- Talk with youth about paying taxes and where that money goes. Have youth look at your tax forms as you fill them out to see what information they will need to fill out the form themselves.
- When youth want to make a large purchase, help them create a savings plan to determine how much they'll need to save each week or month to get to their goal.
- When youth are working, have them look at their pay stub to see how much was taken out of their wages for payroll taxes. Describe gross and net wages, FICA, etc.

#### **Age 19 and older:**

- Try using the envelope system to learn budgeting: give the youth envelopes with cash for each category of spending and when the money is gone, it's gone. (More information about this in the Resources section).
- Have youth identify places that sell money orders, determine their fees, and choose the place they'll buy the money order from should they need one.
- Teach youth about credit by loaning them money to buy a larger item. Set an interest rate, a payment plan and consequences for late payments. At the end, show them the original cost and the total cost due to the interest.
- Ask youth to describe what seems important to different people based on how they spend their money, and then ask what their priorities are for their own money.

The following links will give you information to help teach youth about budgeting and managing their finances:

- Dave Ramsey Quick-Start Budget: This provides a template for creating “your first budget” and helps youth start to build their financial skills:  
[http://a248.e.akamai.net/f/1611/26335/9h/dramsey.download.akamai.com/23572/daveramsey.com/media/pdf/forms/fpu\\_qbudget.pdf](http://a248.e.akamai.net/f/1611/26335/9h/dramsey.download.akamai.com/23572/daveramsey.com/media/pdf/forms/fpu_qbudget.pdf)
- Dave Ramsey Monthly Cash Flow Plan: This provides a template for figuring out where your money goes every month:  
[http://a248.e.akamai.net/f/1611/26335/9h/dramsey.download.akamai.com/23572/daveramsey.com/media/pdf/forms/fpu\\_monthly\\_cash\\_flow\\_plan\\_forms.pdf](http://a248.e.akamai.net/f/1611/26335/9h/dramsey.download.akamai.com/23572/daveramsey.com/media/pdf/forms/fpu_monthly_cash_flow_plan_forms.pdf)
- Dave Ramsey Envelope system: This page explains the “envelope system,” one simple way to manage your money: <http://www.daveramsey.com/blog/envelope-system-explained?ictid=btxt>

### ***Community Resources:***

#### **Age 8-10:**

- Encourage youth to volunteer, and take them along when you volunteer. Have them identify activities that they would like to volunteer in.
- When you are traveling with youth, help them to learn to notice landmarks and street signs.
- Take a family field trip using public transportation to help youth become comfortable with it. Have youth choose the destination, and help them map the route and determine the fare.

#### **Age 11-14:**

- Help older youth to read maps and to estimate travel times between destinations.
- Encourage youth to research information that they need and use often, such as movie times or where to get their hair cut, and keep a list handy.
- Ask youth where they would call for help in different scenarios, such as when would they call 911 and how would they know who to call? Which neighbors could they turn to for help in an emergency or if they needed to borrow sugar?

#### **Age 15-18:**

- Introduce youth to agencies that work with housing needs, such as tenant’s rights’ groups or loans for first time home buyers.
- Help youth register to vote and discuss candidates and how to learn more about the issues they stand for.
- Set aside a drawer or file for each youth for them to store important documents, such as their birth certificate and Social Security card.

- Have youth research what is involved in getting their driver's license, and make a list of the steps involved.
- Take youth to job training centers to fill out career assessments.

### **Age 19 and older:**

- Take youth to health clinics and tenant resource centers to acquaint them with community resources.
- Help youth prepare to manage their file of important documents: start with the file you've created together and help them learn to manage it on their own.

*The following links will give you information to help teach youth about accessing community resources:*

- Career Assessments: to help children and youth decide on a career path and career goals:
  - [http://www.ehow.com/about\\_6732853\\_career-assessment-kids.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_6732853_career-assessment-kids.html)
  - <http://www.nkces.org/vocational-assessment1.html>
- Kids Search career assessment tool, geared toward younger children: <http://www.vaview.org/k5/check-it/kids-search/>
- Career assessment for teens that gives some guidance for college courses: <http://www.educations.com/career-test>
- Career information and assessment from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/k12/content/students/careers/career-exploration.htm>
- Occupational Outlook Handbook from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics - here youth can search over 580 occupations listed in the handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

## ***Housing:***

### **Age 8-10:**

- Talk with younger children as you pay housing bills, and have older youth create lists of housing expenses and what those might cost.

### **Age 11-14:**

- Discuss with youth the process of finding housing. Talk with them about how you found your first apartment or home. Show them how to use the internet or other resources to find housing.
- Have youth practice completing a lease application to see what information they will need.

### **Age 15-18:**

- Help youth make appointments to view apartments, giving them guidance on what to say when calling to make the appointment.
- Take youth to look at an apartment or home for rent. Talk with them about

apartment conditions, security, communicating with the landlord, reading a lease and completing a lease application.

- Look at rental ads with older youth and discuss the terms and costs in the ad (such as security deposit and utilities), as well as those not in the ad (such as application fee or pet deposit). Talk with youth about utilities, and show them how to set up utilities and pay utility bills.
- With your youth, practice how to interview with a landlord.

Age 19 and older:

- As youth prepare to move out, help them create a list of things they will need, as well as a budget that includes these items, including costs such as security deposits, utility hook-ups, and installation fees.
- Talk with youth about having a backup plan about paying for housing if they were laid off, fired, or quit their job. Discuss the importance of saving money for emergencies.
- Discuss the idea of having a roommate, and ask youth to list pros and cons. Help youth to make a list of questions to ask a potential roommate.

The following links will give you information to help teach youth about accessing and maintaining their housing:

- Leasing applications to help youth prepare for what information they will need when they apply for housing:
  - <http://www.sellingcolumbiasc.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Rental-Application.pdf>
  - <http://www.wikifoms.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/WisconsinRentalApplication.pdf>
- Cosby Show 'Regular People' episode - a fun illustration of helping youth learn what they'll need to obtain and maintain housing: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1t9dq5dzQo>

Child Welfare Information Gateway - Leaving Your Child Home Alone: a resource kit for you and the youth in your home to help you all feel more comfortable about youth being home alone: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/homealone.pdf>

## ***Employment:***

### **Age 8-10:**

- Ask youth to list reasons why people need to work. Add to their list your reasons for working.
- When youth need to make a decision, have them list pros and cons and discuss outcomes. Evaluate the decisions with them and ask about the choices that led to the decision.

### **Age 11-14:**

- Take youth to work with you if possible so that they can see what is involved in

your workday and that of your coworkers. Encourage them to talk with your coworkers to learn about aspects of their job as well as your own.

- Pick up job applications with youth and help them fill them out. Ask them what information they will need to fill out the application and review it once they are finished.
- Help youth create a resume and identify references for a job application.
- Ask youth to list different ways they could find out about job opportunities, such as the newspaper or online. Suggest asking friends with jobs about openings, or ask friends of yours if they might be hiring.

### **Age 15-18:**

- When youth look for jobs, suggest focusing on their interests - if they love pizza, they could work at a pizza place!
- Discuss career exploration with youth by asking them what their career goals and dreams are, and what steps they would have to take in order to reach their career goals. Share your own career dreams and goals.
- Attend a career fair with youth to help them learn about different jobs and careers. Have youth make a list of questions to ask employers while at the career fair.
- Have youth keep an employment file of jobs and volunteering positions they have had. Help them create a resume and include individuals who are willing to act as references, and any clubs they belong to or have in the past.
- Before youth have an interview, have them make a list of questions an interviewer may ask them, as well as a list that they want to ask. Also discuss the importance of following up after the interview, and ensure they do so. Role play the interview with them.

### **Age 19 and older:**

- Talk with youth about what it means to be a good employee. When it comes time for youth to leave their jobs, discuss what it means to give notice and why it is important to leave a job on good terms.

The following links will give you information to help teach youth about obtaining and maintaining employment:

- Sample job applications, to help youth see what information they will need to complete a job application:
  - <http://www.topjobapplications.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/walmart-job-application.pdf>
  - <http://www.topjobapplications.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/pizza-hut-job-application.pdf>
  - <http://www.topjobapplications.com/>
- How to Answer the 31 Most Common Interview Questions - tips for youth before an interview: <https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-answer-the-31-most-common-interview-questions>

- Resume Builder to help youth create their resume:  
<http://rwz.myperfectresume.com/rwz/template/how-it-works.aspx>
- Resume Template for youth with no prior work experience:  
<http://www.olinda.me/2013/high-school-resume-sample-no-work-experience-954/>
- There are also resume templates in Microsoft Word
- Tips for Goal Setting to help youth create short-term and long-term goals:  
<http://www.mindtools.com/page6.html>

## ***Education:***

### **Age 8-10:**

- Help youth figure out what type of learner they are: visual, auditory, or kinesthetic (hands-on), by how they study - do they look at pictures, read the directions, or just do it? Help them use their style to study most effectively and create an environment that supports education and studying (such as regular homework time in a specific place, reading to children, and visiting the library).
- If youth struggle with staying on task for studying and completing homework, set incentives. Discuss them with youth and have them choose ideas with you so that they are things they'll work toward.
- Continually ask youth what they want to be when they grow up and look for opportunities to discuss different jobs/careers, such as when you're watching TV together or driving by businesses, or talking with people you know in different careers
- Monitor academic achievement and help youth with homework.
- Be involved in school activities, such as participating in parent-teacher conferences and volunteering in the classroom and at school events or field trips.

### **Age 11-14:**

Have youth study in different places, such as at a desk, listening to music, or at the kitchen table. Ask them where they were able to best concentrate and have that be their dedicated study spot.

- Attend all education meetings with youth to make sure the youth is getting all of the information they need to make a decision about their future.
- Encourage youth to take advantage of programs and resources designed to inform and promote education beyond high school. School counselors in middle and high schools are a great resource! Encourage young people to have some fun and find sites with helpful information that is new to them, such as <http://www.college.gov>. Wisconsin youth can learn a great deal about planning and preparing for college at KnowHow2GO Wisconsin. Check it out at <http://knowhow2gowisconsin.org/>.
- Have youth develop their interests by participating in school, community and volunteer activities
- Initiate a meeting with school counselor and your youth to discuss the youth's



strengths and opportunities to learn about careers and discuss options for high school courses.

**Age 15-18:**

- Encourage older youth to help younger children with schoolwork as this will help the older youth reinforce their learning and build self-esteem and will help the younger children learn their material.
- Encourage and assist in exploration of postsecondary choices:
  - o Tour campuses with your youth or allow them to go as part of a school or pre-college activities. Discuss the pros and cons of each campus and why they may like one campus over another.
  - o Assist youth in requesting, obtaining and completing admissions and financial aid information and applications. Ask for help from a school counselor if needed.
- Assist youth in initiating a meeting with the school counselor to discuss career and college planning. Identify any needed support or services, such as tutoring, evaluation, advanced courses, your youth needs and discuss with the school counselor to access services.
- Add report cards and transcripts to the youth's educational file.
- Discuss Pre-college programs, which are available in many recreational and academic areas throughout Wisconsin. For information, call the UW HELP at (800) 442-6459 or use the searchable database of pre-college programs at <http://www.uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/precollege>.
- Identify opportunities for job shadowing through school or friends and relatives and help your youth arrange to spend a half day shadowing a particular job or career. Sometimes schools set up these types of opportunities as part of the school day.
- Age 19 and older: Address and help to resolve any barriers to education, such as parental signatures, fees, medical needs, or transportation.
- For youth attending college:
  - o Assist in completing the annual Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA), which is mandatory to receive financial aid for college. College Goal Wisconsin (<http://www.collegegoalwi.org>) helps students and families complete the application.
  - o Help youth determine where they can go for holidays and breaks when dorms may be closed.
  - o Look together for scholarship opportunities at sites such as Fastweb at <http://www.fastweb.com> and College Board Scholarship Search at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/pay/index.html>. In addition, help youth apply for the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Scholarship: [http://dcf.wi.gov/forms/pdf/dcf\\_f\\_cfs2197.pdf](http://dcf.wi.gov/forms/pdf/dcf_f_cfs2197.pdf)
- Introduce your youth to the Occupational Outlook Handbook (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>) to learn about different careers and what each entails. It's a great first step to exploring different careers and can also be a good way for a youth to decide which career not to pursue.

## ***Preparing Meals:***

### **Age 8-10:**

- Follow a recipe and measure ingredients while you cook the meal.
- Have youth prepare one item for a meal, such as making a salad or grating cheese.
- Ask youth for suggestions for side or main dishes for the family menu.
- Have youth take turns setting the table for meals.
- Have family members help clean up after meals: younger children can clear the table; older youth can wash and dry dishes and fill the dishwasher, and clean the counters and the kitchen.

### **Age 11-14:**

- When grocery shopping, have youth choose healthy snacks, and ask them what makes the snack healthy.
- Have youth make the grocery shopping list for the week, and have them shop with you and keep track of the cost of all of the groceries as you shop. As you shop, have youth compare brands to determine which item is the most economical, explaining that quality matters also.
- Talk with youth about the nutritional value of food and its importance in our growth and development. When eating fast food, ask youth to guess the nutritional value of the foods. Look up the different parts of the meal and discuss the fat, calories, and other aspects of the meal.

### **Age 15-18:**

- When eating out, encourage youth to help you calculate the tip.
- Experiment with food storage: place a small amount of cooked and raw food in the fridge (stored appropriately) and leave them for about a week. Have the youth guess which will spoil first. Talk with youth about how soon food should be eaten, and if anything can be frozen to make it last longer.

### **Age 19 and older:**

- Have the youth choose a recipe, plan the meal and determine what groceries are needed, go grocery shopping with you, and prepare the meal once per week.
- Have youth plan the menu for a week and prepare meals together.

*The following links will give you information to help teach youth about food preparation and cooking:*

- Grocery list templates: Options of templates for youth to use when they are helping you to plan your grocery shopping trip:
  - Template for younger children: <http://img.docstoccdn.com/thumb/orig/101016204.png>
  - Template for adolescents: <http://www.notquitesusie.com/wp->

<content/uploads/2011/02/grocery-list-template-preview.jpg>

- Meal planning templates: <http://www.superhealthykids.com/resources>
- Cookbook for teens: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/healthyliving/childfamily/Documents/MO-NUPA-TeenCookbook.pdf>

## **Health:**

### **Age 8-10:**

- Make hand-washing a part of youth's routine after using the bathroom and before meals, and tooth-brushing a part of their morning and evening routines. Let youth pick out their toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss.
- Encourage youth to find ways to deal with stressful situations, whether that be exercising, deep breathing, talking, or taking time alone. Show youth the constructive ways you deal with stress.
- Invite youth to exercise with you and participate in any rewards that you give yourself for consistent exercise. Give youth an opportunity to participate in sports or activities that they enjoy.
- When you take youth to a medical appointment and you are filling out forms, ask the youth to answer the questions that they know the answers to as you fill out the forms. Older youth can fill out the forms and you can review.

### **Age 11-14:**

- Help youth recognize how they feel when they are sick and to know their symptoms. Have older youth research their symptoms to see what they might do to feel better and to read medication labels to know the correct dosage.
- Role play with youth different situations that they might be confronted with - ask what they might do if they are at a party and are offered a beer or drugs. Tell them how you've handled peer pressure in the past.
- Discuss basic anatomy with youth, teach them anatomical terms for their body parts, and give them honest, age-appropriate answers to their questions about sex and sexuality.
- Talk with youth about pregnancy, how women become pregnant, and how pregnancy can be prevented. Talk with them about making safe choices if they choose to be sexually active, as well as knowing early signs of pregnancy.

### **Age 15-18:**

- Talk with youth about health insurance - who pays for it, how long they'll have it, and what it covers. Talk about your own insurance coverage as well.
- Help youth make appointments with their physician and practice speaking to their physician.
- Talk with youth about the consequences of drinking and driving, as well as the dangers of using drugs and driving. Also discuss the risks of texting and driving.

- If youth are taking prescription medicine, talk about why they are taking it, what it is for, and if and how it helps. Discuss possible side effects and how to recognize them.
- Keep a medical file for each youth, and as youth get older, have them add to this record as they attend their medical appointments.

### **Age 19 and older:**

- Talk with youth about their health care proxy and about who youth would want to designate as a person to make health care decisions for them should they be unable to do so for themselves. Discuss with them how they go about filling out this form once they turn 18.

- Talk with youth about which medical facility (doctor's office, urgent care, emergency room) is appropriate for which medical need.

The following links will give you information to help teach youth about their medical needs and health insurance information:

- Health Care Forms: go over these with youth so they understand what information they will need to fill them out, as well as explaining what each form does for them:
  - Power of Attorney for Health Care Form (Health Care Proxy): <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/AdvDirectives/F00085.pdf>
  - Declaration to Physicians (Living Will) Form: <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/AdvDirectives/F00060.pdf>
- Health care coverage after leaving care: helpful links for youth to understand their healthcare and insurance once they leave foster care:
  - BadgerCare Plus: <http://www.badgercareplus.org/>
  - Affordable Care Act: <https://www.healthcare.gov/>

## ***Daily Living Skills***

### **Age 8-10:**

- o Discuss appropriate manners with youth and model them for youth.
- o Develop a chore chart, and have youth help you think of all the chores that need to get done around the house. Once the chores are done, they get checked off the chart.
- o Give each child their own laundry basket. Younger children can help with laundry by measuring soap and folding clothes. Teach older youth the settings of the washer and dryer so that they can do laundry on their own. Take older youth to a laundromat to show them how to use the machines there.
- o Have youth help you replace batteries in smoke detectors.
- o Discuss proper hygiene with the youth. Talk with youth regarding how often to bathe, the kind of soap to use, how often to get a haircut, the use of deodorant, dental care, and shaving.

### **Age 11-14:**

- Explain the importance of fire safety by showing youth the fire safety plan and route to leave the house in an emergency.
- Take youth to use a Laundromat in the neighborhood, as well as how to remove

stains from clothing, how to wash light versus dark clothing, how much detergent to use, and what kind of detergent to use.

- Put together a personal hygiene kit which includes products they will need, such as soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste, shaving cream, safety razors and sanitary pads. Tailor the contents of the kit to the youth's unique special needs. Label each product and piece of equipment.
- Teach youth what different cleaning supplies are intended for and how to use each of them. Have youth be responsible for helping to clean a different area of the house.
- Teach youth how to read a map and practice this skill, as well as using GPS on electronic devices to find a destination.

### **Age 15-18:**

- Show youth how to use tools and have older youth help you with home repairs.
- Teach youth how to hang a picture, replace a light bulb, and complete basic home maintenance.
- Teach youth how to read the bus schedule, how to purchase bus tickets, and where to board a bus. In addition, talk with youth about other forms of public transportation, such as taxi cabs, trains, subway systems, airplanes, and charter buses. Have youth practice the skill of using public transportation by finding their way to a specific destination.
- Help youth keep track of important documents by helping them set up a drawer or file for these documents like their birth certificate, social security card, immunization and medical record, report cards, pictures, driver's license, passport, and important school work.

### **Age 19 and older:**

- Have youth help you complete a home inventory, and discuss the importance of homeowners and renter's insurance.
- Have youth help you with minor home repairs.

*The following links will give you information to help teach youth daily living skills:*

#### *Cleaning and Laundry:*

- Stain Removal Tips:
  - [http://www.clorox.com/cleaning-and-laundry-tips/laundry/removing-stains/?qclid=CKi\\_iK29i8ACFQcwaQodjLkA2Q](http://www.clorox.com/cleaning-and-laundry-tips/laundry/removing-stains/?qclid=CKi_iK29i8ACFQcwaQodjLkA2Q)
  - <http://stylecaster.com/how-to-remove-stains/>
- Chores and Home Maintenance:
- Chore Chart Printables to help you and the children and youth in your home keep track of their chore responsibilities: <http://www.ishouldbemoppingthefloor.com/2014/01/free-printable-chore-charts.html>

- 10 Awesome Ways to Make Cleaning Fun for Kids:  
<http://innerchildfun.com/2012/03/10-awesome-ways-to-make-cleaning-fun-for-kids.html>
- Top Five Tips for Successful Cleaning Routines for Kids:  
<http://theinspiredroom.net/2012/03/21/cleaning-routines-for-kids/>
- Home Organization Tips for Teens: <http://www.confessionsofanover-workedmom.com/2013/03/home-organization-tips-for-teens.html>
- Tool DIY and instructions for kids (there are multiple tutorials on this page):  
<http://www.familyhandyman.com/tools/diy-for-kids#step1>

5 Home Repairs You Really Should Know How to Do Yourself - try these with youth:  
<http://home.howstuffworks.com/home-improvement/repair/5-home-repairs-you-should-do-yourself.htm#page=0>

1 Map Reading and Transportation:

- Basic Map and GPS Skills:  
[http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/downloads/Map\\_Skills\\_Booklet.pdf](http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/downloads/Map_Skills_Booklet.pdf)
- Google Maps Help Center: <https://support.google.com/maps/?hl=en#topic=3092425>
- Map Reading: Learning Map Skills: [http://kidsactivitiesblog.com/27694/map-reading-2#\\_a5y\\_p=655456](http://kidsactivitiesblog.com/27694/map-reading-2#_a5y_p=655456)
- How to Teach Map Reading of Cities: [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_5087776\\_teach-map-reading-cities.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_5087776_teach-map-reading-cities.html)
- How to Map Distance Between Cities: [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_6546154\\_map-distance-between-cities.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_6546154_map-distance-between-cities.html)
- Help youth learn to read a bus route map
  - An example bus route map can be found here:  
<http://www.cityofmadison.com/metro/schedules/SystemMaps/WeekdayMap.pdf>

Show youth how to plan their trip using the online bus route system. An example Trip Planner can be found here:

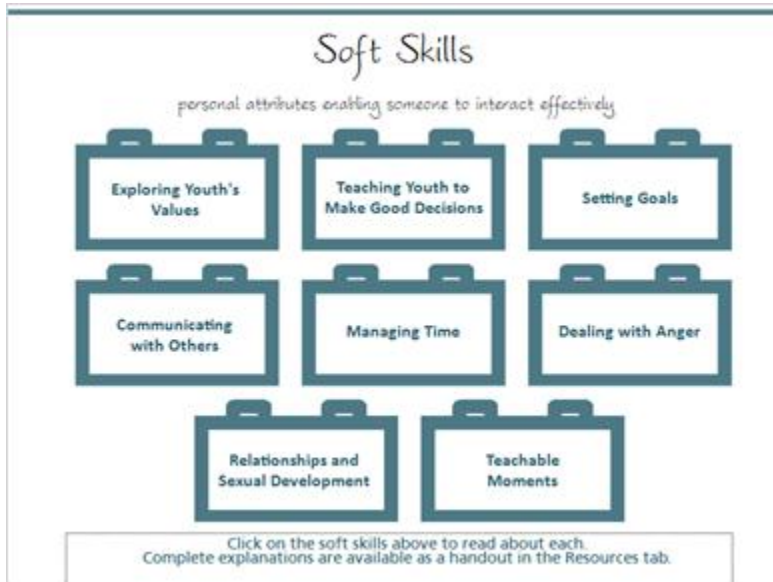
<http://www.cityofmadison.com/metro/google/index.cfm>

1 Hygiene:

- Watch a video such as this with teen girls which provides health and hygiene tips:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7czeYsgjJM>.



## 1.9 Soft Skills



### Notes:

### SOFT SKILLS:

As you learned earlier, soft skills build on and aid in the development of hard skills. Soft skills help us to interact with others and develop our own personal values. Working with youth to develop soft skills will help them to build upon the hard skills you've taught them and to build their interpersonal skills. Soft skills can be built at all ages, with respect to the child's age and developmental stage.

### *Exploring youth's values:*

Help youth explore and develop their own values by talking with them about values, including what is important to them and their goals for the future. Talk to youth about the differences between right and wrong and about why it is important to have values in different areas of their lives. For instance, discuss why it is important not to cheat and steal and why honesty is so important, and about how the ends don't always justify the means. Discuss why it is important to have the right priorities and to be good to others. Give examples of situations where youth may need to make a decision based on their own values, such as if they are with someone who tries to steal or they see someone drop money, or if they are asked to go to a party where their friends will be drinking. Ask youth what they would do in these situations.

In addition, model "good" values for youth. Take youth to volunteer, which promotes good values (such as work ethic and self-esteem) and relates to a hard skill mentioned previously.

Praise youth when they do something that shows good values. A lot of youth love to be complimented and you can help reinforce the behavior by telling them that you are proud of them when you observe them doing something positive.

### ***Teaching youth to make good decisions:***

Youth learn to make good decisions when they understand which ones get them more of what they want, and which ones result in more of what they don't want. You need to be ready to allow youth to make their own decisions and encourage them when they are making good decisions, and process when they've made a poor choice. Ask them how they might choose differently next time - what might they change? Help them to experience the natural consequences of poor decisions while still being supported.

You can go over a scenario or conflict with a youth and ask them, "What do you think you could do?" Go over the pros and cons of each option and help the youth make a decision.

When they make a decision, talk to them about what happened, even if the outcome wasn't ideal. Discuss what the youth might do differently the next time and avoid being judgmental.

Give youth positive feedback when they make decisions and tell them that you are proud that they took on the responsibility of making their decision. Help the youth to understand the difference between wanting something, like a new outfit, and needing something, such as groceries or paying the utility bill.

### ***Setting goals***

Talk with youth about setting goals. Encourage youth to be as honest as possible when discussing and setting goals. In addition, do not discourage youth or respond negatively when they set their goals. Talk with youth about what steps will be needed to help them achieve their goals and begin laying out those steps with youth. If the goals are unrealistic, this will reveal itself in the planning process. To help youth set goals, ask them some of the following brainstorming questions:

- What do I want out of life?
- What do I most enjoy doing?
- What do I value?
- Who is someone I admire and what characteristics do they have?
- What am I good at?
- What makes me motivated?

### ***Communicating with others:***

Talk with youth about communication skills. Discuss non-verbal communication and the importance of listening to others, as well as verbal communication and practice effective communication in your home. Practice basic communication skills in a number of different ways:

- Play a game at the dinner table where everyone says the same phrase, such as “I had a nice day,” using different facial expressions. Talk with youth about how the same words can come across differently depending on the facial expression used. Also talk about how communication is made up of words, tone of voice, and body language.
- Teach youth to become better listeners by reading them a story and asking them questions about it. Role model listening skills by staying quiet while they answer and maintaining eye contact.
- Practice using the phone with youth. Have the youth practice how to answer the phone and what they should say when they answer the phone. In addition, talk with youth about how to take a message and leave a voicemail. Discuss how to handle salespeople and what information to never give out over the phone, such as address, credit card information, or other personal information. Discuss with youth that the same applies for sharing information over email, texting, social media, and the internet.

### ***Managing time:***

Talk with youth about the importance of managing time at home, work, and school. Tell youth that good time management can help reduce stress and anxiety, and that good time management can help them be on time for important events or appointments, such as a job interview, test, or their job. Help youth learn to manage their time by helping them create a daily schedule.

Discuss how being organized can aid in time management. Help youth make a “to-do” list. Once the list is made, help them to prioritize which items on the list need to be completed first. You can also talk to the youth about setting deadlines for items on their list and completing those items by the set deadline. Ask them how good it feels to cross things off their list!

Talk with youth about the importance of writing appointments on a calendar. If needed, help the youth pick out and buy a calendar or choose an app to use on their mobile device and then assist them in writing down any upcoming appointments, such as meetings with social workers, doctor’s appointments, due dates for school work, or any plans with family and friends.

Discuss limiting certain activities, such as talking on the phone or watching TV, so they have more time to complete the items on their to-do list, as well as let them know that they can (and should!) reward themselves once they complete a task by reading a book, having a snack, playing a game, or doing something else fun!

## ***Dealing with Anger***

Experiencing anger is a natural occurrence. Youth face many challenges in their environment and personal history which can cause anger. However, how youth choose to express their anger is a choice. Youth have many tools they can use to help them manage their anger, but they often need to be taught how to use these tools. You can help youth learn to use these tools in a productive way, by doing the following things:

- Ask youth what helps them when they get angry - does it help to talk about it? Write about it? Run around to get their energy out? Youth usually have a good idea what is most helpful for them. Offer ideas about what helps you when you get angry as other ideas for them.
- Talk with youth about and teach the youth how to be self-aware. Help youth identify what is angering them. Is it sadness, embarrassment, guilt, or annoyance? If the youth is able to identify the cause of the anger, they will be better able to manage the anger.
- After a conflict in the home, be sure that everyone apologizes to each other. If the youth has damaged property, give them the opportunity to replace the object or perform some type of restitution.
- Hold regular family meetings where everyone has a chance to discuss the things that are causing them stress. Ask family members what is upsetting them and how each member of the family can do things differently. Have a rule during these meetings that each family member must be respectful and be sure to end each meeting on a positive note.

## ***Relationships and Sexual Development***

Talking to youth about developing healthy relationships and sexual development is an important piece of building life skills. Talk with youth about what makes a relationship healthy and help youth identify healthy and positive relationships in their lives.

Sit down with youth and talk with them about their support system. Help youth identify who in their lives are supportive and should be included in their support system. Who can they depend on to tell them what they need to hear, not necessarily just what they want to hear?

You can discuss the quality of a good friendship or dating relationship while watching TV or a movie with youth. You can discuss the qualities of a healthy dating relationship, as well as the qualities of an unhealthy relationship. You can talk with youth about how they would handle an unhealthy relationship, such as using counseling with the person involved, ending the relationship, and letting someone know if they feel unsafe.

Discussing sex and sexuality with a youth can be challenging for any parent. This can be even more challenging for youth in care, as they may have experienced trauma that compounds the issues of sex and sexuality. Talk with youth about the importance of abstinence and the benefits of delaying intercourse, and tools to abstain from unwanted sexual advances. If a youth expresses a desire to have sex, you can discuss ways they can protect themselves through contraceptives, but that the only way to remain 100%

free from disease and pregnancy is abstinence. Youth are discussing these issues at younger ages than you may have, so you'll need to be prepared to have these conversations. If you have concerns about a youth's sexual activity, you are encouraged to seek information and guidance from the youth's therapist or physician. For more information about talking with youth about safer sex, read through this pamphlet from the Healthy Teen Network:

<http://www.healthyteennetwork.org/vertical/sites/%7BB4D0CC76-CF78-4784-BA7C-5D0436F6040C%7D/uploads/%7B412E87C6-AED5-4133-997C-D9A839F854FD%7D.PDF> .

In addition to discussing sex, you may have children in their care who have sexual orientations different from you, and these youth may have many questions about their feelings. A youth's need to feel normal can lead to internal struggles about their own sexual identity, and they may want to talk to you about that. You will need to be prepared to have these conversations and be comfortable discussing issues of sexual orientation. If you have concerns about discussing these issues based on your values or beliefs, you should talk to your licensing worker.

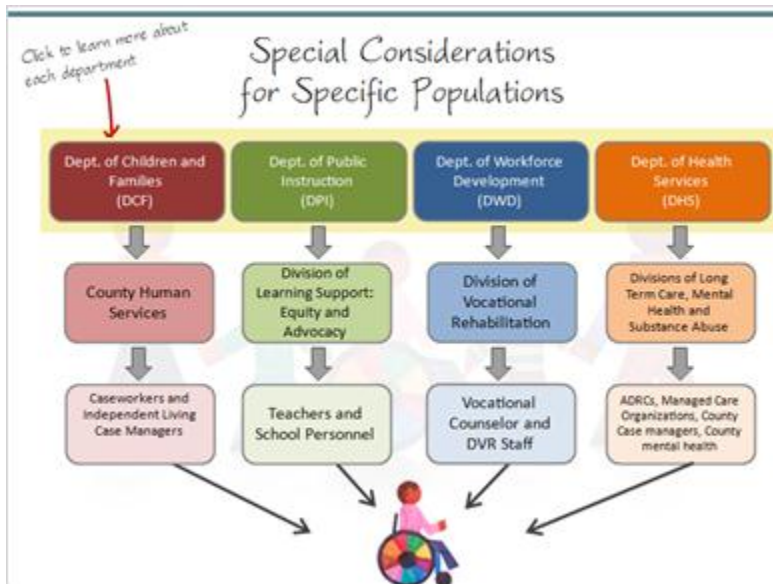
### ***Teachable Moments***

Look for teachable moments and use them to point out and reinforce lessons. Teachable moments are opportunities that can present themselves every day. These moments often occur when a teen wants, needs, or shows interest in something. For example, if you are cooking dinner and the teen asks what smells so good, ask them to help taste test, stir, mix, or prepare the meal in some way.

In addition, you can create teachable moments by using many of the examples listed previously in this module, such as planning a meal, filling out a job application, or doing laundry.

Now that you've learned these skills and been given some ideas, click on this link for another resource, called "Ideas for Teaching Life Skills," which will give you some additional ideas to help build independent living skills for the children and youth in your home. [Link to handout]

## 1.10 Special Considerations for Specific Populations



### Notes:

It is important to remember that youth with disabilities will also be independent; however, their level of independence will be appropriate to their developmental level. Youth with disabilities have many different agencies and individuals involved with their daily lives who are all working to help the youth achieve an appropriate level of independence.

Youth with disabilities are involved with workers and case managers from the Department of Children and Families, such as county human services, county social workers and independent living case managers. They are also involved with individuals from the Department of Public Instruction, such as special education teachers and other school personnel. In addition, these youth are involved with workers from the Department of Workforce Development (specifically the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, also called DVR), such as a vocational counselor and DVR staff. Lastly, youth with disabilities work with individuals from the Department of Health Services, such as case workers from Aging and Disability Resource Centers, managed care organizations, county case managers, and county mental health workers.

*Click on the departments to read more about the role of each:*

**Department of Children and Families:** Youth in foster care are assigned a county social worker who works with the youth, their family, and the foster family. County social workers should work with the youth to develop a Life Skills Assessment and Independent Living Plan. The youth may also work with an independent living case manager, who may help the youth develop their assessment and plan, as well as help the youth plan for their future and build independent living skills and goals.

**Department of Workforce Development:** Youth with disabilities may also be working with counselors and staff from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. These individuals will work with the youth to provide information on the DVR program, develop

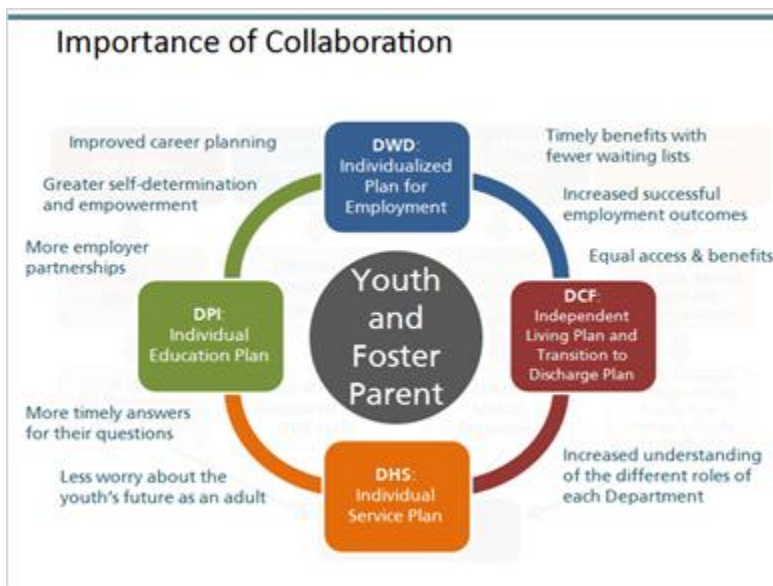


an Individualized Plan for Employment or an IPE, identify a work goal on the youth's IPE, and provide services to assist the youth in achieving their IPE goal(s).

**Department of Public Instruction:** Youth with disabilities will be involved with their teachers and other school personnel to continue to develop and meet the goals of their Individual Education Plan or IEP. Youth work with school staff to identify goals for work and living after high school, identify resources to assist in achieving their IEP goal(s), coordinate services, and to make referrals to outside resources. At age 14, or earlier if needed, youth can expect school personnel to help them identify their goals for work and living post-graduation, as well as help in identifying activities that will assist the youth in meeting their goals.

**Department of Health Services:** Youth with disabilities may be working with a variety of individuals through the Department of Health Services. These individuals will work with the youth to develop the youth's Individual Service Plan or ISP. In addition, these case workers will provide the youth with information about available options, eligibility, and services while they are in school and after they graduate, as well as participating in post-high school planning discussions.

### 1.11 Importance of Collaboration



**Notes:**

As you can see, youth with disabilities are involved with many different individuals who assist the youth in developing a variety of different case plans and transition plans. Child welfare agencies work to ensure there is collaboration between the plans and that they remain consistent. It will be important for you to be involved in the planning and discussions of all of these plans, as well as assisting the youth in understanding each of these plans and meeting the goals laid out in their plans. You can act as an advocate for the youth during meetings to develop these plans.

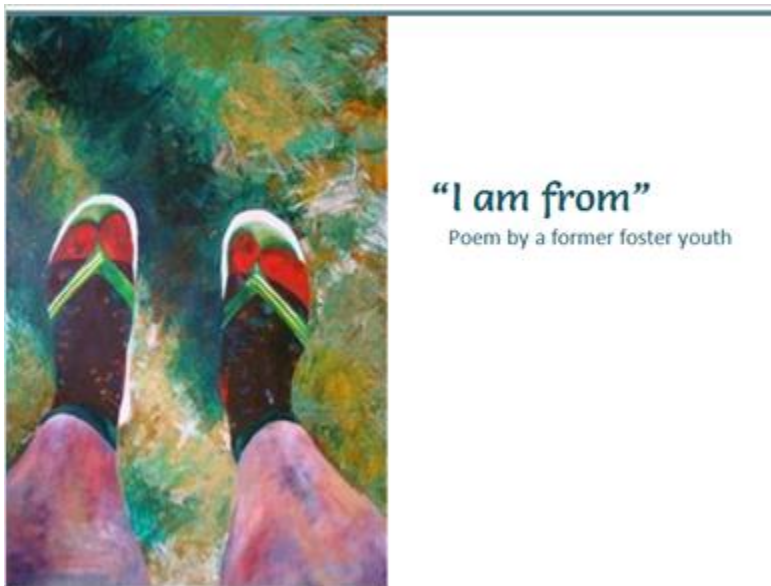
When you collaborate with case workers in each of these areas, youth can expect benefits in the following areas: improved career planning, timely benefits with fewer waiting lists, greater self-determination and empowerment, increased successful employment outcomes, more employer partnerships, and equal access and benefits. In addition, you will find they have more timely answers for their questions, an increased understanding of the different roles of each Department, and less worry about the youth's future as an adult.

### **1.12 Check Understanding: ILP vs. ILTDP**

**True or false:**

There are additional independent living services available to youth with disabilities.

### **1.13 Poem: I am From**



**Notes:**

“I am from”

I am from chunky mashed potatoes,  
A long line of strong women named Margaret,  
Days of using care bears as a moral compass,  
Playing titanic on my water bed,  
And standing in line for the newest beanie babies at 5 am

I am from “someday you’ll understand”,  
Running away from home to a snow fort in the front yard with a bag of fruit roll ups and a cup of apple juice -  
Wishing she would divorce him already. And when she finally did, understanding why she didn’t.

I am from placements spent trying to protect my little sister, breaking down with the realization that I couldn’t,  
Guardian ad litem, specialists, and successful scapegoats for abuse like parental alienation, Munchhausen’s, and father’s rights.

I am from a mom trying so hard to get someone to listen, and her desperate pleas only playing like putty in their hands  
I came from so many people with so much power who knew so little  
Reading three books a day, adopting other’s stories when my own was too painful.

I am from the closet that housed too many skeletons,  
Therapists, I statements, renewal centers and pie communication  
I am from a daddy who was hospitalized for wanting to kill me as an infant, later being hospitalized for wanting to kill myself at thirteen. (What a beautiful family tradition).  
Crying, panic attacks, pills, self-injury, apologies and the realization my family defined broken home.

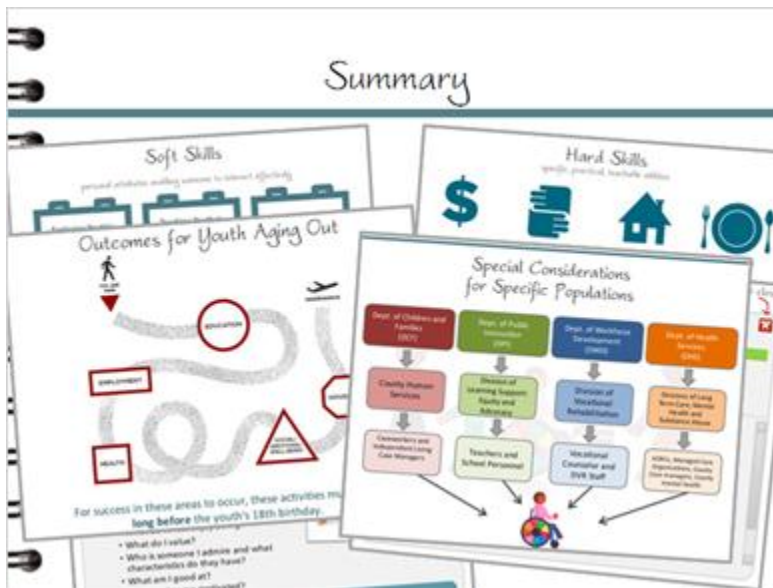
I am from being snatched without warning wearing Christmas socks and flip-flops,  
Put in a group home, then becoming a foster kid and second-class citizen.  
Only real family gets real dishes, as they set down the paper plate in front of me.  
Regular late night talks with my foster sister, and we became each other’s family,  
I am a ward of the state, returned home at seventeen,  
Night classes three days a week on top of high school and a job to graduate with my peers.

I am from a scholarship and a whim leading me to college, figuring out what it feels like to be able to focus on school for the first time ever, and liking it.  
I am from the Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council, motivated to change the foster care system, shocked that my experiences and opinions are valid and critical to influential grown-ups.

It’s not perfect, my room is never clean, I skip classes sometimes, I’m always poor, I don’t pay as much attention to my pug as I should, I make bad choices with men. They are my choices, though, and I have never been given that before.

I am from another scholarship, an internship, and being so happy I can’t believe I came so close to missing all of it.

## 1.14 Summary



### Notes:

In this final module, you have learned about the difference between hard and soft skills and examples of how you can guide the youth in your care through the skill-building process, which you now know can start at a very early age. You also learned about the five different areas in which that skill-building happens: education, employment, health, social-emotional well-being, and housing, and what skills youth should have as they exit foster care. And finally you learned about considerations given to foster youth in special populations, and how services are offered to those youth and their caregivers.

Once you complete the following reflection exercise, you will have finished the Building the Path to Independence training. Please remember that this training will be here as a resource for you as you continue to care for youth.

## 1.15 Reflect

Reflect Click to email your reflections

Module 3 enter email & click email icon to send

What are some skills that you have that you can pass on to the youth in your home?

What are some things that you wish you had known when you moved out of your parents' home?

click to type your thoughts here

Continue after you have printed or emailed your thoughts.

These reflection questions are meant to help you think about using this information in your home, and completion of the questions does not verify that you have completed the training modules. Verification of completion will be done with the Licensor Guide, a tool that your licensing worker will go through with you.

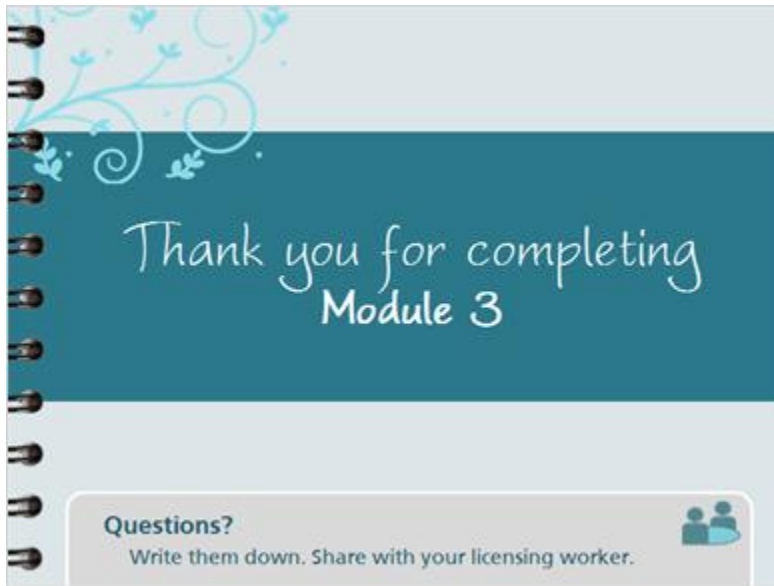
### Notes:

Knowing what you know now about building life skills with youth in your home, what are some skills that you have that you can pass on to the youth in your home?

What are some things that you wish you had known when you moved out of your parents' home?

As you remember from the Introduction Module, these reflection questions are meant to help you think about using this information in your home, and completion of those questions does not verify that you have completed the training modules. Verification of completion will be done with the Licensor Guide, a tool that your licensing worker will go through with you.

## 1.16 Conclusion



### Notes:

Thank you for completing Module 3.