



College Positive Activities to Do with Foster Care Youth

FOSTER CARE YOUTH

415,000 children are in foster care. These students face unique and significant barriers in higher education. They contend with histories of abuse, neglect, trauma, and frequent educational disruption caused by mobility. They struggle without parental care or other adult support, and frequently lack the basics that most of us take for granted, like shelter and food. They often lack the support network to help them navigate a complicated higher education and financial aid system; as a result, too few homeless and foster youth are able to enroll in or afford college, let alone graduate with their degree. -NAEHCY

EXPLORING YOUNG VOICES

There are tools for success especially created for those going through hardships that often times youth in foster care experience or witness, such as having incarcerated parents, violence, suicidal tendencies, involvement with gangs, substance abuse, pregnancy, disability, runaway and homeless, mental health, juvenile, and bullying. The importance of this long list is that foster care youth are most in need of mentors to overcome struggle as well as resources that aid in transition to full independence.

Important topics to cover if working with youth in foster care include:

- Education
- Financial Aid
- Career Path
- Health
- Housing
- Identity
- Social Life
- Life Skills
- Transportation

EXTRA HELP

For extended foster care:

- <http://independence.wa.gov/programs/extended-foster-care-program/>

CHOOSING A COLLEGE

College Searches: utilize websites to look for suitable colleges with the youth. Help them find a college to best fit their preferences and interests while staying realistic about cost, location and admission. Consider classroom size, location, financial aid, offered remedial courses, active residential life, and accessible faculty:

- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>

First Year Supportive Programming – When choosing a college, investigate their Equal Opportunity Programs (EOPs), often labeled as First-Year Experience Programs, Summer Bridge Programs, Freshman Seminars, and others. These programs are made to support and aid in the success of foster care and first-generation youth in the transition to college.

Foster Care Alumni Services- Schools may offer services especially for foster care youth such as housing during

holiday breaks, consider these. Be aware of some of the struggles youth in transition face and when searching for colleges, be sure to look for available programming for these youth.

FINANCIAL AID

- **College Scholarships For Foster Kids** – list of grants and scholarships for foster youth
<http://www.collegescholarships.org/scholarships/foster.htm>
- **The National Voice of Foster Parents** – Youth Scholarship and Other Scholarships Available
<http://nfpaonline.org/nfpascholarship>
- **Foster Care to Success**
 - **Education and Training Voucher (ETV Program)**
The ETV provides up to \$5,000 per year for college or other post-secondary education. Funds may be used to pay for tuition, housing, books, to avoid taking out student loans. Youth are eligible even if they were adopted on or after their 16th birthday. Application must be submitted before the youth's 21st birthday and funds are available until the age of 23.
 - **Other Scholarships**
<http://www.fc2success.org/programs/scholarships-and-grants/>
- **Kids Matter INC – Financial Aid & Scholarships**
 - <http://www.kidsmatterinc.org/foster-youth-and-foster-alumni/education-and-employment/financial-aid-and-scholarships/>
- **Casey Family Scholars Program** – This is a scholarship opportunity for youth that have been in foster care for one consecutive year at the time of their 18th birthday or high school graduation.
 - Visit www.casey.org for more information.

FAFSA HELP

Filing a FAFSA for an independent youth is a fairly easy and quick process. For help filling out the form, visit <https://www.csuohio.edu/sites/default/files/UniqueSituation.pdf>. For additional questions direct the youth to their school counselor or to a financial aid representative from the college they plan to attend.

ENROLLMENT IN TRIO PROGRAMS

TRIO programs: These programs are set up on college campuses and help prepare youth and young adults for post-secondary enrollment. These programs are offered to low-income and first generation (first in the family to attend college) youth. For enrollment information contact your local college, a guardian's consent is required to enroll:

- **Upward Bound (a TRIO program):** Helps high school students up to age 19 prepare for post-secondary education by offering tutoring, mentoring, and college planning.
- **Talent Search (a TRIO program):** This program offers academic, career, and financial aid counseling to prepare students up to age 27 for post-secondary education.
- **Educational Opportunity Centers (a TRIO program):** Encourage young adults, 19 and older to contact these centers for help in choosing post-secondary institutions and filing financial aid.

FOSTER TO FAMOUS

Visit www.fosterclub.com/famous and have a discussion about famous people who grew up in foster care. Find a person who succeeded in the area the youth is interested in and explain that it can be a complex but rewarding journey. Explain that a higher education can help youth in their path to success.

FOSTER CARE STORIES

Special tab for foster care youth is on this page:

- <http://engage.youth.gov/tools-for-success>

Youth and foster alumni stories:

- <http://www.adoptuskids.org/join-the-conversation/real-foster-care-and-adoption-stories/youth-and-foster-alumni>
- <http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/multimedia/keep-in-touch/english.htm>
- <http://youth.gov/youth-voices>

STATE-LEVEL RESOURCES

Look for social services and scholarships in your state available for foster care youth pursuing college. Many religious services provide extra care for homeless and foster youth. Don't forget that you can also call higher education institutions directly to inquire about opportunities that would suit the individual.

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Please Contact Campus Compact with questions or to share more information.