



Independent Living (IL) and Transition Planning Town Hall

Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2022- 5:00pm to 7:00pm
Virtual Meeting

Welcome and Introductions

DCYF Statewide Program Manager, Sherrie Flores, and DCYF Adolescent Transitions Program Manager, Gavyn Tann welcomed attendees and introduced the Independent Living (IL) and Transition Planning Redesign Project.

Independent Living (IL) and Transition Planning Redesign Project

<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we are using inclusive language, can we also use the words kinship care and not define all as foster? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, thank you for calling that out. • Were there 2 different provisos: one for IL & one for transition planning? Or were both IL & transition planning included in the same proviso? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One proviso came through that addressed IL and transition services. The proviso also asked for a legislative report. • Can someone send out the power point presentation for us to have after the meeting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, share your email and name and we will follow up with you. • You mentioned the institution programs and Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR). JR has community programs which includes parole. There are 8 secure facilities across the state, outside of the institution. For us, IL is something we have been searching for feverishly for the last few months. Please include communities as well as institutions. • Regional Administrators (RAs) don't know of the conversations we have had. I (Ryan Pinto) would be willing to be the contact for the community programs if you guys want to invite more people to the table. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, please put your name and email in the chat. And we will connect. • I would like the 17.5 to be more celebratory like they used to be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That's a GREAT idea. ○ 17.5 is way too late to start planning, especially for special needs kiddos. ○ I agree. • What is the Independent Living program? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I think IL should go up to 25. Many youths over 18 are or will be parents. ○ I'm a parent: support group for mental help. ○ We should work with the young person and all of their supportive people ○ I think we should look at expanding the age for identified special needs to starting at 13 and expand it up to 25. ○ I think there is an assumption (or hope) that IL support will 'deter' future recidivism. I believe it is also critical to engage in longitudinal study of youth transitions to better understand how IL may have measurable impact (over time). ○ Wondering if there could be "Big Brothers and Big Sisters" for these youth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are you thinking more closely linked mentors for these young folks? Someone they can see themselves in and connect with more regularly? ▪ Yes, my son had a big brother in elementary school. It was really helpful because as a parent, you can only do so much. When that ended, there was a void. A connection for these youth can be good, because sometimes
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you just can't connect with your family the way you can with someone else.

- We should serve youth 15-24. In rapid rehousing programs they go up to 24, so it could mirror that housing assistance that is already out there.
- All the healthy supports are helpful
- It is really tricky to say when to start transition planning because youth could have six placement changes in a year, and that means potential dream and plan changes for that youth. It is more about having the conversation and keeping that transition planning conversation alive and dynamic.
- Your experience over the last year and doing that dual work can be extremely helpful as we do this work. I hope we can continue to connect.
- Will the other 3 town halls share the same info or will the content evolve over time?
 - The other town halls will cover where we are in the redesign. We will have new information to share Tuesday, April 26.
- What is Transition Planning?
 - Transition planning should be based on a youth's interests instead of just promoting secondary education, 4 year colleges, etc.
 - We have to treat these young people like they are indeed going to exit care and they won't have the safety nets that the typical 18-year-old has. We have to remember that and consider it when decisions are made.
 - Having trainings or a book, that says "here is the process when you have a foster child and here is how often the caseworker will come to your house and how many caseworkers you will have, etc.". The process is so different from one child to another.
 - We have had youth grow up in the system, gone through transition planning in great detail, and still ask (earnestly) "so who is going to tell me where to go when I'm 18?" It is a huge shift for young people who have been "controlled" by the system with no voice for years/decades.
- What skills, tools, and supports do youth need to be successful?
 - Youth need more problem solving skills! Some educational institutions are so stuck on rote learning that youth don't know how to think through and try to problem solve on their own.
 - Basic life skills: financial budgeting, cooking, cleaning, minor repairs
 - Staff have a really hard time relating to this generation of young people that we have now. They believe that kids have no respect or ability to do anything. How do you teach the young people that there are different expectations? How do people who have hard time relating to this generation now, instill foundational skills? How do folks in a different generation relate to the current generation?
 - I think you are speaking to a staffing issue! Finding and retaining the right staff who can stay current on youth issues and the supports they need in a "new" time.
 - I am speaking more about educating the young people that there are generational differences and that young people will have to navigate different expectations.
 - You are touching on communication skills and navigating relationships. I think it is more our job to meet the youth where they are, not the youth needing to adjust to staff. But I think you are speaking more towards the "outside" world who may be judgmental.
 - Yes, I think we need to give young people the honest feedback that the world is not full of social workers. Engaging young folks in critical thinking:



how do you think you would respond in a situation with an adult from a different generation who doesn't understand all of your needs?

- The skill to deal with failure(s). To learn that every one of us experiences failures and disappointments.
- If you have peer to peer or someone near the age bracket of that person, they will hear them better because that person can relate to them.
- That would be a very valuable resource. It can be difficult to find healthy peers with lived experience to partner youth with.
- I have children in grades 8 and 10. My oldest has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). I think children need more support because now they are not going to be well prepared to go to college or finish 12th grade and find a job. Ages 3-5 there is so much support, like family support specialists, but in high school or middle school they just have one counselor for many children. I think children need more support as they get older. They need to focus on the needs of the individual, so children don't get left behind.
- What barriers or obstacles make it difficult to be successful?
 - Social networks and (appropriate) role models
 - Sometimes barriers include mental health/substance use. There is a lack of community resources in the King County area.
 - Serving large areas means large caseloads and providers are stretched too thin to provide the quality services young people need and deserve.
 - Extra personal influences on identity
 - In theory, networks can be built through 'networking opportunities' but these often have invisible social barriers to entry or acceptance. If we think about more privileged youth, they grow up with more effective networks through family, neighborhood, schools, college, affinity groups, and employment. Disadvantaged youth lack many of these.
 - Understanding the difference in networks between youth with more privilege (family privilege, religious belonging, etc.)
 - Positive role models can certainly be made available through mentoring programs and careful matching. That can also provide an entry point to new social networks.
 - Is burn out from covid or something that has been long lasting?
 - I would say systemically it has been happening for a long time. Covid has blown it up, but it was an issue prior to the pandemic.
 - Staff/youth/young adult ratio is too high. The caseloads are too high. We need smaller caseloads so we can reach out to youth more and increase the intensity and quality of our services.
 - And be much more personalized to the youth.
 - Smaller caseloads - yes. I also think case workers could be more consistent. they vary on what one does and another won't do.
 - That's so huge. IL cannot work if a kid is not safe in their internal world.
 - Effective mental health services