

SAVE THE DATES!

The State Youth Advisory Board Youth and Adult Leadership and Empowerment Conference presents:

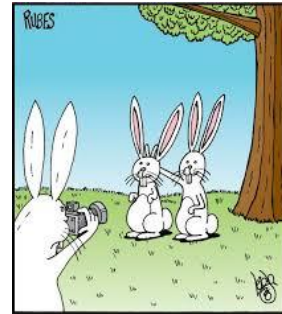
“We Were, We Are, We Will Be”

July 29-31, 2019

CAPITOL PLAZA – JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

The conference will consist of a variety of workshops and activities including a carnival, dance, Sheltered Reality drum group, and a presentation from the Coterie Theatre. Food, lodging, and other daily events will also be provided.

Anyone over the age of 15 participating in Chafee or Transitional Living Program can attend



The 2019 SYAB Youth and Adult Leadership Empowerment Conference is fast approaching and has the potential to be the best conference yet. What is an SYAB Youth conference? What do you do at a conference? I'm here to answer those questions for you. Let's start with the basics. This year's theme is "We Were, We Are, We Will Be" which is meant to get you thinking and in the right mindset. The whole conference is to prove to you that you can be better than you were, better than you are, and to help you become the best version of you possible. When and where is it at? The conference will be held July 29-31, 2019 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City. What do you do at a conference? The conference will consist of a series of breakout sessions to give everyone an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities such as the Life Course Game, The Ties That Bond, Know When To Zen, and a Resource Round Robin. Excited Yet? Well the fun doesn't stop there though. Alongside the main events there will be other activities: carnival, dance, talent show, and glow in the dark dodgeball. Food and housing will also be provided. I'm sure you can't wait to get the party started. Am I right? If you decide that this year's conference is for you then contact your Chafee Specialist, Specialist, or CD worker to get signed up. There's only a number of spot's open so hurry and get signed up. We would love to see you there and hope you can join us.

A special invitation from our State Youth Advisory Board Media Consultant Matthew F.



Credit Reports: Why They Matter to You

Credit reports matter because they affect other areas of life and important goals like getting a job, buying a car or renting an apartment. Do you want to do any of these things in a few years, few months, or a few weeks? If so, this topic is important to understand. People who make decisions about hiring, offering a loan and housing usually look at credit reports of applicants. If they see too many negative items, they are less likely to hire someone, offer them a good loan or rent them a place to live. If they see enough positive items, the chances are better that they will.

A credit report is like a resume of financial history, listing many experiences with money, lenders, and making payments. This is called a credit history. Depending on life experience, a credit history might include items such as medical bills, student loans, car payments, personal loans, utility payments and applications for credit cards or loans. Each item is seen as either positive or negative. Generally it's positive when it's being paid on time and shows responsibility without having too much debt. Generally it's negative when payments aren't being made on time, and shows irresponsibility with too much debt. Sometimes there are errors on a credit report. This can be by accident if records aren't communicated correctly. Or it can happen when someone intentionally uses another person's name or identifying information to open accounts which is called fraud. Fraud creates a negative credit history because it doesn't reflect reality and usually the debts are too high and don't get paid.



When you turn 18 you can do a lot to create a positive credit history. Here are some basic tips:

- **Pay your loans on time, every time.**
- **Only apply for credit that you need.**
- **Fact-check your credit reports.**
- **Talk with the trusted adults in your life about money decisions.**

Find more at

ConsumerFinance.gov

Children's Division has a responsibility to protect youth against fraud by checking and correcting credit reports every year for youth ages 14 and over. Minors under the age of 18 should typically not have a credit history because legally they cannot have credit card or enter into a contract or agreement requiring them to pay money. However, if someone has committed fraud using a youth's information, a history will be created, and becomes harmful to the youth's future goals. Children's Division runs a credit check and case workers are responsible for working with youth to correct any mistakes. Youth 18 and over might have a credit history such as student loans, utilities or a vehicle loan. Case workers for these youth should work with them to run their report, review it with them to make sure it is correct and work together to correct any mistakes. By doing these things the goal is to make sure that youth in care have a positive credit history so they can accomplish their future goals without fraud or a negative credit history getting in the way.

You Make a Difference

Thank You for all you do!

There are lots of caring and dedicated individuals throughout the state working with older youth. We would like to introduce you to one of them - meet Deanna Allsman who works at Epworth, St. Louis' Chafee Program:



Deanna Allsman is pictured on the right, second person back. She specifically shared a picture with her teammates. 😊 They were wearing green in recognition of National runaway prevention month.

St. Louis Older Youth Transition Specialist Sarah Ballard interviewed Deanna Allsman, Older Youth Services Assistant Director at Epworth. Sarah Ballard works closely on a daily basis with Deanna Allsman and is inspired by her dedication to older youth.

Deanna began her career working with youth in 1991 where she worked for the Division of Youth Services. After starting a family, she decided to work part time between the years of 1998 and 2008. During that time she was contracted through the Children's Division to provide life skills services. In 2008 she went back to work full- time and was hired on at Epworth to oversee the Chafee contract. She developed protocols and has been overseeing the program since then. Deanna has 27 years of experience working with older youth!

Deanna loves working with older youth and stated that she likes learning from them and teaching them as well. She enjoys making a difference in their lives. She sees herself and her agency as being a support for the older youth when often they do not have anyone. Deanna likes overseeing such a large group of youth, making sure they understand their rights, teaching them that they have a voice and empowering them for when they are no longer in their lives. What she finds most rewarding is when the lightbulb goes off with the youth; when they get it. She finds it rewarding watching them grow and especially when they work with the youth from age 14 to 21. They may have come into the program a very immature teenager but at 21 they are a young adult. She likes to see the youth use the information that they were given and make it meaningful in their lives. The very best part is when youth come back when they are 23 and 24 sharing all of their successes!!

Here are some examples of when Deanna and her team have advocated for youth (It was hard for Deanna to just pick one or two!): Recently a youth was about to age out of foster care and the plan was for her to live independently. The youth was going to be coming from a foster home to her own apartment with no income. Deanna and her team advocated for the best interest of the youth and what the youth was expressing their needs were. Deanna put several hours in making phone calls, sending emails, talking with the team members, and most importantly talking to the youth. Deanna was monumental with securing supportive/transitional housing for this youth where she was interviewed and accepted. The youth was able to move in right before she turned 21 and she now has supportive mental health services with her housing. They are helping her finish the Social Security Income process and assisting her with employment. She is able to practice the life skills she has along with learning new. Another example that was fresh on Deanna's mind was advocating for an empowering a youth that was going to be released from care but she didn't want to be. A meeting was scheduled and the assigned Chafee case manager attended the meeting and also the court hearing. The youth ended up staying in care. These are just two examples of countless stories of advocating and empowering youth.



So, you are thinking about your exit from foster care into being on your own. Maybe you are wondering “What if…” about any number of things that you could encounter. You may feel you don’t have resources or help available for some of your times of need.

Consider some of the following scenarios of needs or wants that could occur:

- It’s late at night and you have a flat tire.
- You’re toward the end of your paycheck, and you need to do some laundry, but don’t have enough money for the laundromat.
- Your bank has informed you that your account is low on funds, and you can’t figure out your balance.
- Because of your bank account mess, you aren’t able to buy groceries for supper tonight.
- You have some free time and you just want to do something for fun.
- You would love to try a new food for a meal, but are sort of unsure of how to cook it.
- You want a new job and are having difficulty filling out the job application.
- You finally worked a job and now it’s time to do your income taxes, but it’s scary.

Sure, you may have friends who can step in and help with some of those scenarios, but sometimes our friends are in the same boat. You probably got some information and practice with some of this when you participated in the Chafee Program, but hey, this is “adulthood” now. Wouldn’t it be great if someone with a bit more experience or resources could help navigate through some of this?

Before you exit foster care, it would be a good idea to develop a Permanency Pact.

What is a Permanency Pact?

The Children’s Division defines a Permanency Pact as “a pledge by a supportive adult to provide specific supports to a young person in foster care.” The Children’s Division also states “A Permanency Pact creates a formalized, facilitated process to connect youth in foster care with a supportive adult. The process of bringing the supportive adult together with youth and developing a pledge or ‘Permanency Pact’ has proven successful in clarifying the relationship and identifying mutual expectations. A committed, caring adult may provide a lifeline for a youth, particularly those who are preparing to transition out of foster care to life on their own.”

What are some supports that a supportive adult can offer a youth?

Here are a few:

- A place to go for the holidays
- A place to do laundry
- A place to stay for a short time if between housing options
- Job search assistance
- Transportation to get to an important appointment
- A place to store household/personal items

These are just a few of the ways a supportive adult can help. Maybe you find an adult who can help with a couple of your needs, and another adult to help with other needs. A Permanency Pact can be developed with as many or as few supportive adults as desired to meet your needs.

If you do not have a Permanency Pact established with any supportive adult(s), you can ask your case manager to assist you in getting this started. It really does help to have people in your life who can help during times of difficulty and need.

More information can be found at

<https://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/cwmanual/section4/ch23/sec4ch23sub5.htm>
https://www.fosterclub.com/sites/default/files/Permanency%20Pact_0.pdf



A happy story from the Kansas City Region!

We wanted to tell a story from Jackson County about how it is never too late to be adopted. A youth named Makiya, who wondered at times whether she wanted to be adopted or not, will soon be adopted alongside four siblings ages 10, 8, 6 and 3. The best part about this is that Makiya is 18, she's in college at MIZZOU and she lives in the dorms. Sometimes youth, community partners, other stakeholders and Children's Division staff are not always aware that adult adoption is an option, but it is!!! Makiya comes home every weekend to be with her family and wants to be adopted. She does very well in college and is very smart. When asked about the adoption, Makiya said "I just want a family and want to be with family". The children's adoption attorney is filing Makiya's adult adoption along with her siblings pro bono so all five children can be adopted together on the same day! No youth should leave foster care without being in connected with a caring adult that can be counted on. You can partner with your social worker to achieve permanence and you should be involved in finding your own permanent connections. There are a range of permanency options for you to consider as you prepare to transition from care and making peace with your past is an essential part of this.

Did you know the
Children's Division has
a Facebook page
devoted to Older
Youth?

Check us out:
"Missouri's Older
Youth Program"

Check out these videos produced by the 32nd Circuit
(Bollinger, Cape Girardeau and Perry Counties) to help
youth prepare for court:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFO3nqVL5MY> How
to Prepare for Juvenile Court (11 minutes)

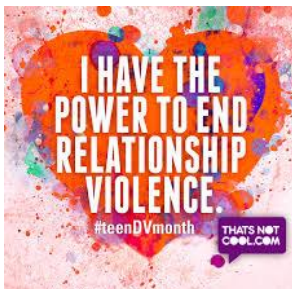
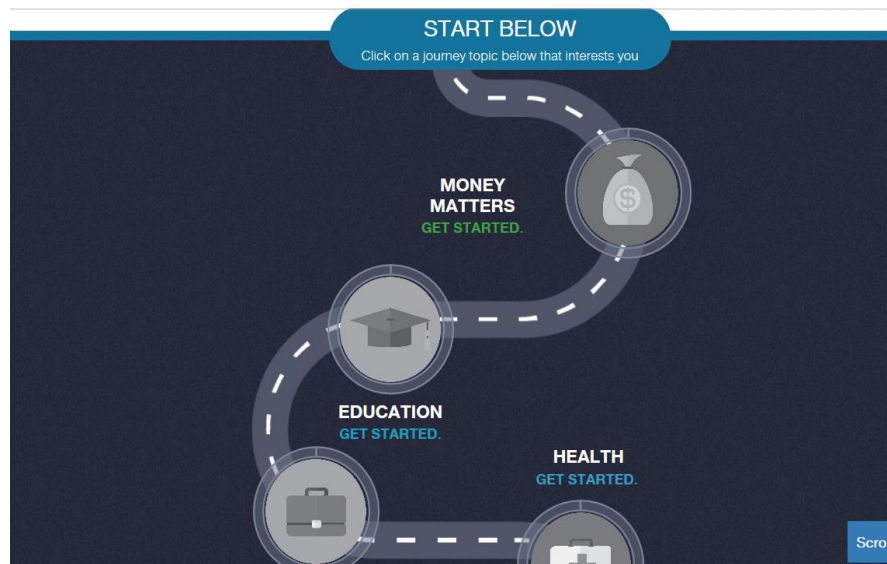
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKgy_YxF2rg The
Juvenile Court Explained for Older Youth (5:40 minutes)



On My Way Game by United HealthCare

Hey! If you are a teen or young adult who is getting ready to live on your own, United HealthCare on My Way (United HealthCare OMW) is for you. You'll learn what it takes to be independent, like finding housing, getting a good job, managing your money – and more. It is a game which is easy, fun, and your go-to source to help make the move from foster care to independent living easier. There are different tracks which can be selected, points earned, badges earned, and a leaderboard so you can challenge your friends to also play. You just need to enter name, an active email address, state (for resources specific to Missouri), date of birth, and gender (male/female/not specific). Please check you are in foster (or adoptive) care – some situations are directed toward foster youth only. It is recommended for teens and young adults ages 14-26. You do not have to be a United HealthCare participant or enter a Member ID number.

The game can be found at www.uhcomw.com.



February was Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. The link below is to a website that includes a wealth of information and resources for teens, young adults and providers:

<https://www.loveisrespect.org/>



Preferred Family Healthcare (PFH) hosts Making Proud Choices (MPC) Classes throughout Northwest, Southwest, and Southeast Missouri. MPC is an evidence based curriculum designed to teach youth between the ages of 14-19 years old about HIV/AIDS, STD's, and Pregnancy Prevention. This curriculum is taught by trained MPC instructors through ten modules that include; lecture, video as well as individual and peer activities.

Module 1: Setting the Stage and Making Your Dreams Come True

Module 2: Relationships and the Consequences of Sex

Module 3: The Consequences of Sex: Pregnancy

Module 4: The Consequences of Sex: STDs

Module 5: The Consequences of Sex: HIV Infection

Module 6: Attitudes and Beliefs about HIV/AIDS and Condom Use

Module 7: Sexuality 411

Module 8: Strategies for Preventing HIV Infection: Stop, Think and Act

Module 9: Developing Condom Use and Negotiation Skills

Module 10: Enhancing Refusal and Negotiation Skills



During the 2017-2018 year, PFH served over 200 youth in MPC classes throughout Missouri. On average, youth in PFH MPC classes saw increases in their ability to answer more sexual health questions after completing MPC as compared to before the classes.

For more information on MPC classes in the area around you, please contact the following individuals:

Northwest/Southwest Missouri

Kari Twombly ktwombly@pfh.org 417-438-2003

Or

Jay Briggs jbriggs@pfh.org 417-862-1753 Ext. 234

Southeast Missouri

Jennifer McKnight jmcknight@pfh.org 573-308-3400

What is a Guardian *ad Litem* (GAL)?



Kathy Rodgers, Director of the Office of the Guardian *ad Litem*, Kansas City

- **How does my GAL figure out what is in my best interest?** Your GAL will talk to you, your case worker and service providers such as therapists, maybe your teachers. Your GAL will read reports that have been written. Your GAL takes all that information to make a recommendation that she thinks will keep you safe and in a stable placement whether that is home with your parents or with someone else.
- **How often should I expect to meet my GAL?** That depends a lot on your circumstances and how close you live to where your court case is being heard. You should see your GAL before and at court hearings. You should have your GAL's phone number so you can call even if you can't see the GAL in person. Most GALs have email addresses that you could use.
- **How can I be an effective self-advocate?** Make a list of what is important to you so you don't forget what you want to discuss at the meeting. If you have asked for something, such as a clothing voucher before and it hasn't happened, it will help to know when you first asked. Think about something you wish had been talked about at the last meeting and bring that up.



Belinda J. Dantley, Assistant Director of City CASA and Legal Programs, Voices for Children/CASA of St. Louis

- **What does "Guardian *ad Litem*" mean?** An attorney/ lawyer who has been appointed by the court to advocate for the best interest of children and youth in court proceedings.
- **Wait, I didn't think I was in trouble! Why do I need a lawyer?** Children and youth have rights in court proceedings just like adults; the GAL is there to ensure that those rights are protected.
- **How can I make my wishes known to the judge?** When the judge in court asks you if you have anything to say, that is your time to let them know about you and your needs. If you are not going to be present in court you can write a letter and have one of your team members, including your GAL, bring it to court and read it for you.
- **What is your favorite thing about being a GAL? What type of education and training is needed?** I love helping young people figure out how to solve issues in their lives. To become a GAL, finishing high school and going to college are the first steps. Then you will need to apply to, attend and finish law school. The last steps are passing the Bar Exam and completing a training on advocating for children and youth.



Kristoffer R. Barefield, GAL in Springfield

- **What is the role of my GAL? How is this different than the JO and the caseworker?** Your GAL works for the Judge and is responsible for investigating your case and making recommendations as to what is in your best interest. They are also responsible for advocating to promote your best interests to the Court, your school, your caseworker and other people/organizations.
- **What type of things should I notify my GAL about?** You should stay in touch with your GAL and keep them informed about things that are going well for you as well as things that you are worried about. Ask for a phone number or email address and reach out to them regularly.
- **Another other comments?** Your case is all about YOU. GALs work on YOUR behalf to promote YOUR best interests. It's vitally important that YOUR voice is heard loud and clear. Don't be shy or intimidated. Give your GAL a call or email today.



**Preferred Family Healthcare/Chafee
B.L.A.S.T Classes
Basic Life Awareness Skills Training Classes**

Chafee in the Northwest through Preferred Family Healthcare currently hosts monthly Basic Life Awareness Skills Training (BLAST) classes in 4 locations throughout the region. These classes allow youth in Chafee services to learn a different independent living skill monthly in a group setting on top of regular individualized Chafee services. These classes are currently hosted in Marshall, Harrisonville, Sedalia, and St. Joseph. For more information on each class, please contact Kari Twombly: ktwombly@pfh.org or 417-438-2003

January – Financial Management/Budgeting
February – Finding a Job
March – Post Secondary Education Preparation
April – Health and Wellness
May – Automotive
June – Developing and Maintaining Positive Relationships
July – Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS)
August – Personal Organization
September – Finding a Job
October – Developing/Maintaining Community Resources
November – Personal Security
December – Developing and Maintaining Positive Relationships

**Locations are subject to change based on the amount of youth attending per area.
Each youth attending the classes needs to RSVP no later than 5pm the day before each class date to ensure there is enough food and supplies for all youth attending.**

[Kari Twombly \(417\)438-2003 ktwombly@pfh.org](mailto:ktwombly@pfh.org)





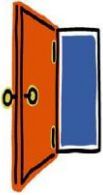
Informed Consent is the agreement given to any medical or mental health treatment after the child, parent, and/or legal custodian has had the opportunity to receive sufficient information from the medical provider about the risks and benefits. If your doctor recommends a medication, a medical test, a medical procedure or surgery, you and those responsible for your care should know a few things first, like:

- What exactly is the recommended treatment and why is the doctor prescribing this particular course of treatment?
- What is the provider trying to treat or make better with this treatment?
- If a medication, what is the dosage, the possible side effects, and what does the provider expect the medication will do or make different?
- Is there any follow-up or monitoring required; if so, what is it?
- What are the alternatives? Specifically, are there other options to consider besides the one the medical provider proposes, or are there interventions we can try that do not include medications?
- What is the prognosis, or prediction of what's likely to happen, if consent is not given to the recommended treatment of medication?

That's a lot to think about! If you're under the age of 18, laws require a parent/guardian ask these questions and agree to any treatment or medication for you. Recent changes in Children's Division policy requires your case manager make certain decision, where your resource parent can make others. Regardless, what you think and want is important to us. You have a right to know your diagnosis, understand all the treatment options, as well as the benefits and side effects. What your parents think or want is important to us as well. So, although only one of us can give the "OK" and sign the consent forms, we all need to talk it over and see what we agree on to be in your best interest.

If you are 18 years old or over, you become you own consentor. The ability to give consent or refuse treatment is transferred to you! Your physician or other care providers will recommend certain treatments or medications for you and you are in charge. You will want to be prepared to ask questions and ask for better explanations of things that are unclear so you can make a decision that's best for you. You don't have to give your health care provider an answer the day you see them. If you need more time to think about the recommendation, research it, talk to someone else, that's okay. You can just tell your provider you need some time to think about it and then let them know once you've decided. Your case manager or other supports in your life are great resources if you need someone to talk to. And, if you want someone to go to the health care visit with you, just ask!

Missouri law allows minors – youth under the age of 18 – to obtain birth control without parental consent. However, some medical providers may not do this without a parent/guardian's consent. If this happens, youth can either work with their resource parent to provide the consent, or the minor can locate another medical provider who will accept the minor's consent.



Re-entry may be an option for you after leaving care. Youth who leave care of the Children's Division after the age of 17 but are not yet 21 may choose to come back into care (per Missouri law [Section 211.036](#)).

Why would I want to re-enter Foster Care? If you find yourself out of care unprepared emotionally, socially, financially or lacking stability you may want to consider re-entry as an option. If you are homeless or not able to provide for yourself, you may want to consider this as an option for support to be independently successfully.

How do I request re-entry? Contact your local Children's Division office, your previous Children's Division Worker or a Juvenile Officer. You will be asked to complete a Chafee Foster Care Independence Support Application [CS-ILP4](#). Make sure to include how re-entry would be in your best interest when answering the question "What would you like the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program to do for you?" and include what help you will need.

Once you submit your application, Children's Division staff will make a referral to the Division of Legal Services (DLS) for help with a petition for re-entry. DLS may need additional information in order to file the petition. The attorney assigned to your case will reach out to you if more information is needed. A petition for re-entry can be filed in the court that previously exercised jurisdiction, the county where the youth resides or an adjacent county.

What happens when I come back into care? Once you are back in care of the Children's Division, normal case-opening procedures will be followed. All case management services you would have received if you remained in care, such as placement, adult support, and clothing allowances, may resume. You will be expected to participate in your case plan and meet with your Children's Service Worker, Juvenile Officer and Chafee provider, and/or go to school and work to show you are making an effort towards independence.

What if I need help immediately? If you are in need of help through our services immediately, a referral for aftercare services can be made if you were released from care at 18 or older. A petition for re-entry may take some time to be heard in court.

<https://dss.mo.gov/cd/older-youth-program/files/re-entry.pdf>



You can find contact information for Children's Division Older Youth Transition Specialists throughout the state and Central Office staff at this link:

<https://dss.mo.gov/cd/older-youth-program/counties.htm>



CHAFEE

The [Family First Prevention Services Act](#) (FFPSA) was signed into law on February 9, 2018. Here are some of the changes the law made that will be helpful to you:

Missouri Children's Division receives federal grant money to provide "Chafee" services. FFPSA changed the ages in which youth can receive Chafee services:

Chafee is now available to youth who left care any time after the age of 18-21 **up to age 23**.

- If a youth remains in care until 21, these will be considered "full" services. The services used to end at 21.
- If a youth leaves care at age 18, 19, or 20 these services will be considered "aftercare."

The difference is aftercare services are crisis oriented and short term whereas full services can be anything towards life skills assistance that you need help with as long as you need help up to the age limit of 23.

- Chafee will be available to youth who were adopted or obtained legal guardianship after age 16 up to age 23 – these will be considered "full" services. The age used to be up to 21.



Changes were also made to the Educational Training Voucher (ETV) Program. This program provides money and support services to youth for post-secondary attendance.

- Youth participating in the ETV program will now **remain eligible until they attain 26 years of age**, as long as they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.
- You must be in foster care at age 18, left foster care after age 18 and not yet be 26 to be eligible.
- The expansion of eligibility to age 26 includes youth who have obtained guardianship or adoption after age 16.
- Participation, regardless of eligibility, will be **limited to 5 years**. So this means between the time you begin accessing ETV, up to age 26, nor more than 5 years will be funded if you meet the other criteria. So let's say you are 18 and go to school for five years in a row, then your ETV funding will end at age 23. Let's say you start college at age 23, then your ETV will end at age 26 as that is the oldest age you can be to receive ETV. Another example – let's say you are 18 and go to school for one year. Then when you are age 22 you decide you want to go back to school - you can go back until age 26 as you will then meet the maximum age and had not used all of your five years.
- Take your time and decide what the best path for you is upon graduation!

Because of the age changes for eligibility, you may know a youth who could benefit from either Chafee or ETV services who is "older" and no longer in care and did not know about this. If you do know someone eligible no longer in care, please share this information with them so they can get these services!

Youth Panel Educates Attorneys about Court Experiences

On October 25, 2018, Children’s Division hosted training in Jefferson City that included a very impressive panel of youth who are currently or formerly in foster care. The training was part of the agency’s new “Permanency Attorney Initiative” – a program which will assign attorneys in certain regions to advocate in court. These lawyers will help caseworkers prepare for hearings and ensure that the law is followed and the legal rights of everyone involved in each case are respected. Their goal is to help achieve “permanency” for youth in foster care, which means to make sure that youth are reunified or achieve guardianship or adoption whenever possible and appropriate.

The youth panel was moderated by Children’s Division Manager Ivy Doxley. The panelists shared their experiences in foster care and in the courtroom. Some youth shared that it is helpful to talk to their caseworker or GAL before court to understand what may happen and communicate any requests that they have for the judge. If a youth decides not to attend court, panelists emphasized that it is important that youth are informed about what happened in a timely way.

One audience member asked the youth about whether they wanted to participate in hearings that may involve sad or stressful topics. The panelists agreed that the choice to participate should be left up to the youth themselves. One young person explained that she already understands what is going on in her own family and so she wants to be involved in the court hearings to receive the most up-to-date information. Overall, the panelists’ opinions matched the theme often discussed by the State Youth Advisory Board: “Nothing About Us, Without Us.”

Over twenty attorneys attended the panel and described it as “excellent,” “amazing,” “insightful” and “eye-opening.” Hearing directly from youth will help Children’s Division’s attorneys to be better advocates in court and ensure that the needs of youth are honored at all stages of a case. This training was truly a highlight and the Children’s Division is deeply grateful to the panelists who shared their time and stories with the group!



Nina Stein and Annaliese Williamson participated in the youth panel on October 25th.

Do you have an article you would like to write and submit for consideration? We want to feature your voice and recognize your talents and achievements. Please send ideas and articles to Sally.A.Gaines@dss.mo.gov