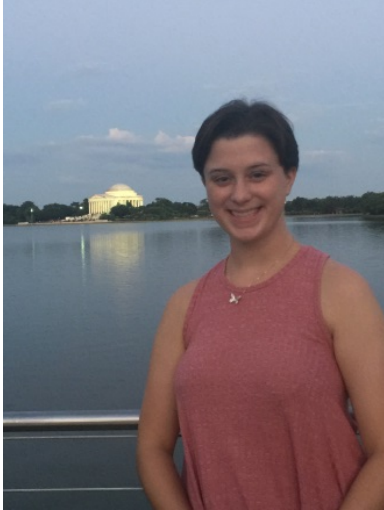


2018 Youth Ambassador



Faith Burtenshaw, from Franklin County, Northwest Region, attended the Chafee and Educational Training Voucher Independent Living Coordinator's Federal Meeting in Washington, DC from July 18-20, 2018 as a Youth Ambassador.

At the meeting, Faith and other youth from across the nation shared youth perspectives on ways to improve child welfare outcomes, specifically using National Youth in Transition Database, Children and Family Service Reviews, Continuous Quality Improvement, Program Improvement Plans, and youth engagement strategies. Participants also discussed the Families First Act.

Faith said this about the experience, "I just really enjoyed being able to meet so many youth from all over that are all so willing to be involved in changing the system to better benefit the youth. Also, the young adult consultant positions were very interesting to learn about, and I am very interested and am thinking of applying. The whole trip is something I will never forget."

Faith is a former State Youth Advisory Board member serving from September 2016 through June 2018. She was Co-Chair of the board from September 2017 through June 2018. She is a freshman at Missouri State University in Springfield majoring in special education. This was Faith's first time flying and visiting our nation's capital. While there, Faith got to do a little sightseeing!

Faith was selected to participate due to her involvement on the State Youth Advisory Board and willingness to work on special projects outside of the meetings. Although traveling out of state is a rare opportunity, there are ways for youth to get involved throughout the state to have meaningful participation in child welfare outcomes such as your Local Youth Advisory Board.



STATE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD (SYAB) 2018-2019 OFFICERS

At the September State Youth Advisory Board meeting, new officers will take over the leadership of the board and meetings. Elections were held in June. For the 2018-2019 year, a new position has been created entitled Media Specialist. Our Media Specialist helped write this article and will help with more to come in future newsletters. Let's meet our State Youth Advisory Board Officers:



Chair ~ Christopher Lawson (21)

Chris is from the Northwest region, and is currently a sophomore at Missouri Valley majoring in Broadcast Journalism. While attending MVC, he is a part of numerous organizations such as Fellowship Christian Athletics (FCA), a student ambassador for Viking athletics and with all that he manages to be a student athlete. He is on the MVC Cheer Squad. Chris has been in cheer for six years. A fun fact and reason why he started cheer is because growing up he wanted to be a Power Ranger. Chris originally joined the board in 2014 for two years. After his departure he was re-elected as a member in 2017. While he is in office, he plans on building a relentless board that is fearless. Chris is super excited for the 2019 youth conference and hopes that you attend because as he would say, "It's going to be lit!" He is known by his peers for his outgoing personality and athletic abilities. **As Chair, Chris is responsible for leading the meeting, interviews of potential new members, calling for and counting votes during the meeting, recognizing speakers, and maintaining order in the meeting.**



Co-Chair ~ Nina Stein (19)

Nina currently resides in the Southwest region. She has been an active member on the board for one year. Her hobbies include track and cross country. Running has been a passion of hers since fourth grade. She is about to enter her freshman year at Missouri State University (Go Bears!). Her major is Pre-Med. She works as a phlebotomist to start her career in the medical field and explore her interests in helping others. Fun Fact about Nina is that after 5 years of being in care, she has found a family that plans to adult adopt her. "I joined SYAB not entirely sure what it would entail, but the minute you walk in the door of the meeting and start listening to others speak about their experience within the foster care system, you realize what an amazing chance this is to make a difference. The help you give and the ability to give a louder voice to all the kids residing in the foster care system just gives you a sense of belonging and empowerment for not only you, but those you speak for." **As the Co-Chair, Nina assists the Chair with duties as necessary and fills in as the Chair when the Chair is absent.**

Scribe ~ Caitlin S. (17)

"I am from the Southeast region. I was originally from Saint Louis. The reason why I joined the board is to speak up for foster youth whose voices are not able to be heard. I've been on the State Youth Advisory Board for 18 months. I've learned so much on being on the board as a leader and as an Officer. I want to continue to make it my goal to lead, help, and direct youth in the right direction on my State Youth Advisory Board and Local Youth Advisory Board. On the State Youth Advisory Board I will continue to make my goals by being a kind example - helping people on the board and be understanding to the board. Why I think being an advocator is so important is because I think it showcases standing up for what's right - advocating for those who need a foot in the right direction and showcasing roles of many leadership qualities. The State Youth Advisory Board has been such a wonderful opportunity to be a part of. I will continue to lead, advocate, and grow through being on the State Youth Advisory Board. Caitlin plans to go to college to get a Master's degree in Forensic Science and her favorite hobby is dancing. *As the Scribe, Caitlin takes the minutes of the meetings, types other information as needed, and takes attendance.*



Co - Scribe ~ Kenneth Rose (20)

Kenneth, known as Kenny by all his loved ones, is from the North Central Region. "My name is Kenneth Rose. I am 20 years old. My nickname is Kenny. I have been on the board for two years now. I am Co-Scribe, and I love to read and listen to music. I am currently seeking employment, and I hope to return to college classes, attending Mizzou, come spring semester." *As the Co-Scribe, Kenneth has the same duties as the Scribe and fills in for the Scribe when absent.*



Censor ~ Ashlee Mitchell (21)

Ashlee, nicknamed Beth, currently works at Wendy's and lives in the Northwest region. "I am proud to say that I have been an active member of the SYAB for two years in hopes of securing a bright future. I graduated from Central R-3 High School in Park Hills, Missouri in 2015, a year early, ahead of my class, and I'm interested in animals. I have two cats and a bearded dragon so together have three animals. I'm interested in exploring new things and trying to go to college. I am trying to get my driver's license and get a car and have my own place. The reason why I joined SYAB is to help other kids in foster care and it's also helped me open my eyes and learn different things about what other people have gone through. It has inspired me to do more things. Although I'm not in foster care anymore, I still love going just because it helps me advocate for other kids." *As the Censor, Ashlee assists the Chair in maintaining order, circulates the room during meetings to sustain attention, holds instructions for Robert's Rules of Order, distributes handouts and other materials, ensures the meeting starts on time and members are at the meeting location on time, orientates potential new members by reviewing the handbook, and facilitates interview order for potential new members.*

Media Specialist ~ Matthew F. (16)

Matthew F. has been a proud member of the SYAB for 11 months representing the Southeast Region. Matthew currently works at Culver's, and plans on pursuing a career in Law Enforcement. His hobbies include football and volunteering at a local residential facility. *As the Media Specialist, Matthew is responsible for writing articles about youth achievements and State Youth Advisory Board happenings for newsletters, creating brochures, and other items to share information.*

This year's main focus of the State Youth Advisory Board is planning for the July 2019 Youth and Adult Leadership and Empowerment Conference "We Were, We Are, We Will Be." We hope everyone can come and meet our officers in person and enjoy the conference that we are planning for this next year. We will have a carnival, dance, and many sessions on topics that our board thinks you will like. You can read more information about the State Youth Advisory Board at this link: <https://dss.mo.gov/cd/older-youth-program/syab.htm>. And don't forget that our last newsletter had information on how you can get involved in your Local Youth Advisory Board: <https://dss.mo.gov/cd/older-youth-program/syab.htm>.

Older Youth 2018 Graduate Celebrations



Jackson County Celebrates 2018 Graduating Youth

The Kansas City Region, with the support from New Life Church in Oak Grove, held the 2nd annual graduation party to honor graduating seniors. Thirteen youth from schools across the state were recognized for this milestone in their life. Special thanks to Pastor Todd and Tiffany Blansit for all the work they did to make this party a success. Bates City BBQ provided the food and several other churches helped to make this a wonderful event for the youth. Tim Decker, former Children's Division Director, gave the opening remarks. One of the highlights was the guest speaker who herself had been in the foster care system. Her words of encouragement and challenge were an inspiration to the young people. Youth and adults had a lot of fun utilizing the Photo Booth for some great pictures. Everyone had a great time and we can't wait to celebrate our next year graduates!

Southeast Region Celebrates Summer with Picnic to Honor Graduates and Youth

Over 100 youth celebrated with us! Volunteers, Chafee Specialists, and Children's Division Staff brought gifts for every youth that attended. Among the attendees were Youth from across the region that included Local youth Advisory Boards members and State Youth Advisory Board members. The former Director of Children's Division, Tim Decker, spent his final hours as director at the picnic sharing with us his passion and inspiration. Tim Decker has made a lasting impression on all who have had the chance to get to know him. His leadership and willingness to walk by our sides has been a true blessing.

The community pulled together to offer games, art activities, a dunking booth, obstacle course, BBQ, gifts, career exploration with local Fire Fighters and Marines, opportunities to give thanks, and recognized the graduates in the Southeast Region. The youth were excited to share with others what the next event will be. October 6th the members of the Local Youth Advisory Board in Cape Girardeau area are partnering with Hope for One More to have a Carnival and Movie Night. Money raised from this event will help the Local Youth Advisory Board, Children in Foster Care and Foster Families.

Submitted by Bobbie Thomas Schiller,
Southeast Older Youth Specialist



FosterClub Outstanding Young Leaders

Each year, the FosterClub recognizes Outstanding Young Leaders from youth who have experienced foster care by celebrating the success and achievements of these young people.

These youth are now giving back to their communities and helping to dispel negative stereotypes about foster children using their personal experiences of perseverance through adversity and challenging circumstances as foster youth.

Congratulations to Alecia Bennett, Weston Charles-Gallo, and Latreace Ward who are from Missouri and were recognized for this honor.

You can read more about this program and the youth selected at FosterClub's website: <https://www.fosterclub.com/about-us>



Latreace Ward has been in the foster care system in the state of Missouri since the age of five.

Latreace and her brother were taken care of by a family friend who later received power of attorney. Currently in a Transitional Living Program where she was able to get support for housing. Latreace, a very hard worker, earned a place on her high school's honor roll. Latreace volunteered at the YMCA last summer and has a passion for helping kids who need extra support.

Latreace plans to go to college to earn a degree in elementary education so that she can become a teacher.



Alecia Bennett has spent 10 years in the Missouri foster care system.

Alecia was in 6 different placements during time in care. Alecia is the President of her local Youth Advisory Board, and holds the position on the Missouri State Youth Advisory Board.

Alecia enjoys volunteering for her church. Alecia spends her time giving back by helping feed the homeless and being a summer camp counselor.

In the future, Alecia wants to become a school counselor and help young people across the country to face their difficulties and coach them in being resilient leaders as herself. Alecia is spontaneous, caring, and determined in all she does.

Information for this article obtained from the FosterClub website at <https://www.fosterclub.com/about-us>.



Weston entered the foster care system at age 14 when his biological parents neglected him for identifying as gay. After hospitalizations, shelters and foster home placements, he found his forever family with his two dads and six siblings. Now Weston is a LGBTQ youth advocate for foster care youth. He was a member of the Youth Speak Out Team, which works to raise awareness of the experiences of foster youth and the challenges they face. Weston worked on a Bill of Rights for Foster Care Youth and in the summer of 2017, the bill was passed and signed by the Governor of Missouri. Weston is a former Youth Ambassador for the Human Rights Campaign, where he shared his voice and experiences, raising awareness for LGBTQ issues that youth across the country are facing every day. Recently he was awarded the FosterClub Outstanding Young Leader Award for his continuous work advocating for foster care youth in the LGBTQ community. Weston is now a freshman in college seeking a bachelor's degree in Communication with an emphasis in Mass Communications where he aspires to be a motivational speaker sharing his lived experiences to youth across the country and hopefully working for the largest civil rights organization in the country, the Human Rights Foundation. In his spare time, he enjoys spending it with his family and friends and living his authentic self every day.





LIVING ON YOUR OWN



Living on your own after leaving foster care can be scary! Some youth may be apprehensive about how they are going to make ends meet with only working part-time and going to college. Youth may need a little extra help after they age out of foster care; even the best prepared youth aging out of foster care could benefit from support. Stable and affordable housing is a great need for youth aging out of foster care. Youth can talk to their local Children's Division (CD) office or a Chafee provider in your area of the state to see what options may be available.

St. Louis has a new and exciting housing option called INTRADA. INTRADA is an intergenerational apartment complex in St. Louis located on S. Grand across from Carondelet Park. Ten studio apartments are designated for youth aging out of foster care or former foster youth. The only requirement is that the youth is an Epworth client; this can be through Chafee/Chafee Aftercare, Transitional Living, residential care, and street outreach. Epworth is an agency in St. Louis that holds many CD contracts including the ones mentioned here. They also operate a street outreach program at their Drop in Center at 7520 Natural Bridge Rd that serves various homeless youth including former foster youth.

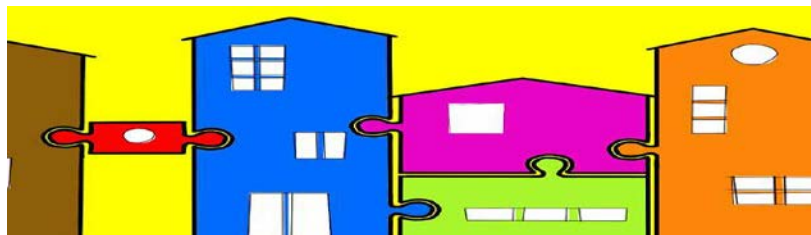
In July 2018, three youth had already been placed in a studio apartment through INTRADA. The St. Louis CD Older Youth Transition Specialist, Sarah Ballard, was able to actually observe part of the process. Sarah walked through several apartments with one youth who was given the opportunity to choose which apartment they wanted. Although the apartments are studio style; they are spacious and beautifully furnished. For one aftercare youth, Epworth was able to purchase an apartment start-up kit for the youth and pay their first month's rent.

Youth residing at INTRADA are responsible for their own utilities and maintaining employment. Their rent is only \$155 per month, and there is one utility bill. Case management services are available to youth on site. The complex has a fitness center, a library with computer access, and a large room they can rent out for an event. Youth can reside in a studio apartment for up to two years, and at that time they can apply for a larger apartment but their rent will change to the normal rate.

The youth are referred to INTRADA by **Epworth only**. If you are interested in learning more or to have a youth referred, please contact the individual at Epworth who is assigned to the youth. Although this housing option is in St. Louis, youth placed in St. Louis from various parts of the state may also have the opportunity for this housing option.

For more information about INTRADA, check out <http://stlouis.weareintrada.com>

There are six Older Youth Transitions Specialists in Missouri, one for each area, who work with the Chafee and TLP providers to oversee that the Chafee and TLP programs are providing appropriate services to youth in foster care and youth about to exit foster care. If you know of other housing options available to youth after leaving foster care, please contact a local Children's Division office or Chafee provider with the information which can be shared with the Older Youth Transition Specialist in the area to help other youth transitioning to living on their own.





10 HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS

Do you think of yourself as a smart student? If you are like most students, you probably think you're an okay student at best, and you probably feel that you take a while to grasp new concepts, or that you don't perform up to expectations because of exam stress.

It seems as if successful students are born smart. No matter what else is going on in their personal lives or extracurricular activities, they always get good grades.

What if I were to say that successful students aren't more intelligent than other students? They're just more disciplined and focused, and they've developed winning habits.

So even if you don't feel as if you're a smart student, don't worry.

Here are some tips about how to be successful in school, even if you don't think of yourself as a good student:

1. **Get Organized.** Making a plan for what you're going to do and when you're going to do it will make sure you're always ahead of the curve - literally.
2. **Don't multitask.** Studies have shown that multitasking is physically impossible. Your brain retains information best when devoted to one primary task at a time.
3. **Divide it up.** Studying may not be fun for you to begin with, and forcing yourself through a study marathon will only make it worse. Dividing your work into manageable chunks and rewarding yourself when you finish each chunk will make studying (more) fun.
4. **Sleep.** Don't underestimate the importance of those eight hours of zzz's every night! Getting a good night's rest will sharpen your focus and improve your working memory.
5. **Set a schedule.** Do you work better right after school or after you've eaten dinner? Are you more productive in 90-minute blocks or half-hour spurts? Find a schedule that works for you, and stick to it.
6. **Take notes.** Taking notes will not only keep you more engaged during class, but will also help you narrow down what you need to study when exam time rolls around. It's much easier to reread your notes than to reread your entire textbook!
7. **Study.** This one might be obvious, but did you know that there's a right and a wrong way to study? Review your material several days ahead of time, in small chunks, and in different manners (for example, write flashcards one day and take practice tests the next). In other words, don't cram.
8. **Manage your study space.** Find a place that will maximize your productivity. Look for places away from the television and other distractions. Whether it's your local library or just the desk in your bedroom, set aside a study space that you'll want to spend time in.
9. **Find a study group.** Sitting down with a group of people who are learning the same things as you is a great way to go over confusing class material or prepare for a big test. You can quiz each other, reteach material, and make sure that everyone is on the same page. After all, teaching someone else is the best way to learn.
10. **Ask questions.** You're in school to learn, so don't be afraid to do just that! Asking for help - from a teacher, a tutor or your friends - is a surefire way to make sure you truly understand the material.

Adapted from Opportunity.org

CRASH COURSE IN CREDIT REPORTS AND SCORES

What is a credit score?

This is a three-digit number assigned to a person that lenders use to show a person's capability to repay a loan.

Credit Scores can range from 300-850.



What is my credit score used for?

Your credit score can affect many things in your life. Lenders use your score to determine if they will loan you money as well as how low or high your interest rate will be. Your score may also be used to determine whether a deposit is required for utilities or if you will be approved for that apartment you want.

What affects my credit score?

Several things directly affect your credit score. Payment history generally accounts for 35% of your score. The length of time you have had credit, the kind of credit you have (such as a credit card, retail credit card and/or installment loan), the length of time since you have applied for new credit, as well as your total balances and debt all make up your credit score.

What are some ways I can raise my credit score?

- ✚ Consistently pay your bills and any other obligations you have on time.
- ✚ Pay down your balance.
- ✚ Avoid overextending yourself, or in other words, avoid spending more money than you can afford to spend.
- ✚ Refrain from applying for credit needlessly.
- ✚ Check your credit report for inaccuracies and clear them up right away.
- ✚ Guard yourself against identity theft.

How do I find out what my credit score is?

If you are in Children's Division custody and are between the ages of 14-17, state office obtains a credit history for you in order to look for identity fraud. It is very important that you talk to your case manager about the results of this check to determine if further action should be taken. Your case manager is responsible for entering the date that this check was completed on your Adolescent FST Guide.

If you are 18 and older, you can request a free credit report online at [AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com). Your Children's Service Worker is able to assist you in interpreting your credit report and resolving any inconsistencies. You can also talk to your Chafee worker about your credit score. It is very important that you check your credit history yearly.

What is shown on my credit report and what actions need to be taken, if any?

- ✚ Your report will show credit card balances, loans, payment history, or you have been turned over to collections. Ensure that you discuss any suspected errors with your case manager, as any errors should be remedied as soon as possible so your credit score is not affected. Tips for correcting errors can be found at: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0151-disputing-errors-credit-reports>
- ✚ An inquiry from an attempt to obtain something where a credit check was ran, such as a phone or credit card. Although an inquiry at a very young age would be concerning, there would not be anything to remedy. If an inquiry shows on your report, you will want to learn how to protect your identity from misuse in the future.

YOU CAN GET THERE FROM HERE

By: Albert Grieve

I grew up in domestic violence. I was thrust into the system after witnessing an event that resulted in the death of a loved one. After nearly wandering astray, I went on to college and graduated valedictorian. I was a police officer for a few years, and then attended law school. I am now an attorney with for the Children's Division. I am married with two children.

I don't know what your individual story is, but I am sure you have experienced things that should not have happened. Just for a moment, set aside life's troubles. Cast away your fears, your worries, and your doubts. Imagine what you would love to do in life – anything. Move beyond basic sustenance and necessities and let your mind wander. If you could do absolutely anything, what would it be? Now, envision yourself doing what you imagined, and hold on tight to that picture. ***You can get there from here.***

Like you, I was in state custody. I did not know what tomorrow would bring, yet alone the future. At times I was blinded by frustration, regret, and hopelessness. The baggage of my past, things I had seen, or what had happened to me was overwhelming and burdensome. Fear was the greatest of all because I did not know what tomorrow would bring, and that fear was fueled by the day to day happenings in my life which I felt I had little control over and rarely went my way.

What is the purpose of dreaming in a life like this? Why try? I refused to believe that the world was just a horrible place. As bad as my life seemed, I was cognizant of the fact that there are others who had gone through worse or were still experiencing the negative aspects of society which I had been pulled from. From this I drew courage. I was in a safer place. Although I did not realize it at the time, I had absolute control over my narrative because my future would be shaped by how I moved forward and what I did each day.

When I first came into care, I was placed in a group home, staffed by strangers working eight-hour shifts. They were clueless to the atrocities I witnessed and to which I fell victim, so how could they relate to me or even try? I felt that life was horrible, and everyone owed me something. At times, I may not have been on my best behavior. I drew comfort from those who shared negative experiences and distrusted "the system." However, I found myself fighting those who were trying to help me, and I started traveling down the wrong path. Reality set in when they threatened to place me in a higher-level residential facility. I was an angry kid with my fists clinched and my eyes shut tight.

Life was hard, but I fought back and took control. Fear yields to hard work, preparation, and resolve. I stopped ditching classes and reached out for help. To my amazement, when I opened my eyes I saw there were people that were trying to help me. Just a few at first, but those numbers began to grow as I worked hard each day to improve myself. I soon realized that people are willing to invest in you if you are willing to invest in yourself. I learned if you don't care about yourself or what happens to you, others may be reluctant to spend time, money, or energy on you. This is when I began writing my own narrative.

Once I was in the driver seat – truly in control of my actions and not influenced by negativity – I began to soar. As my trajectory rose, so did the number of people willing to help me. I found out that there were organizations with grants or scholarship money and not enough applicants. It took time to fill out applications, but it paid off. I received funding from most of the sources to which I applied. I not only went to a university without being overburdened by student loans, but I received scholarships and grants to attend law school as well.

You have a story to share. People want to know how you succeeded despite adversity. Unfortunately, there are far too many who have been in our shoes and lost control. You are reading this article, which means you are alive and breathing. I would remind myself that this is more than some can say, so I should make the best of it.

Never once did I say that life is easy or that you can achieve your dreams by snapping your fingers. If I did, that would be a lie and you deserve the truth. However, you already have the tools necessary to achieve anything. You have overcome; you have survived. You have resilience and you have persevered. Take those tools and fight for what you want. Do not take "no" for an answer. Speak up, and people will listen. Invest in yourself, and it will pay dividends as others do the same. Use your past as your driving force. Use your experience to empower and propel you, not imprison you.

Did I achieve my dreams? Yes and no. Concerning my occupation, I am in a position to do what I dreamed of as a child in the system, but I am doing something far greater. I fulfilled my dreams through internships, but there is more out there than what I envisioned as a child. When you truly open your eyes, you can see the world as an infinite universe. The job I have today is something I could not dream of as a child, and I chose this position because I can achieve a greater good than what I pictured as a child.

Most importantly, I have a wonderful family and two amazing children. I always wanted to give my children the life I never had, and I am situated in a manner that I am actually doing it. My life is greater than I dreamed of as a child because I did not know the things I am doing today existed. It all began with my deliberate acts to control my future through my day to day decisions. You can absolutely get there from where you are today. The best news is that once you intentionally embark upon your journey, you will see there will be greater destinations – all within your reach.

MO HealthNet and Managed Care News

New Email for General Health Care Questions

Email address CDMHNQuestions@dss.mo.gov has been created to have one central location for questions regarding MO HealthNet and Managed Care issues specific to children and youth receiving medical coverage through the Children's Division. Medical coverage can be tricky, so the hope is to provide a resource to help with questions.

Types of situations to email about are: to update your address (be sure to put your full legal name and date of birth and DCN if you know it), phone numbers and contact names for each Managed Care plans, seeing if medical coverage is active, what Managed Care plan you are enrolled in, and how to change plan enrollment.

Types of situations which cannot be answered are: questions about if a specific procedure would be approved or what specific doctor you can see. These would be questions for the plan directly.

If in doubt, email the question and the best answer or direction to an answer will be given.



Missouri HealthNet Managed Care Newsletters

Did you know each Missouri HealthNet Managed Care plan puts out an informational newsletter for their participants? Below you can find links to the page which has information for each plan.

Newsletters include important information on each of the plans and what is going on with the plan. They also include tips for healthy eating, staying active, taking control of your own medical care, and care management.

United HealthCare

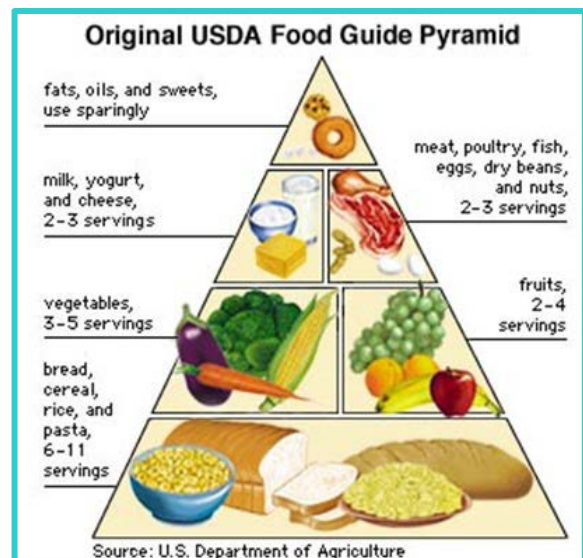
<https://www.uhccommunityplan.com/mo/medical/mo-health-net/member-information.html>

Missouri Care

<https://www.wellcare.com/en/Missouri/Members/Medicaid-Plans/Missouri-Care/Newsletters>

Home State Health Plan

<https://www.homestatehealth.com/members/medicaid/member-resources.html>



New Legislation: Youth Bank Accounts

A [law](#) was passed this legislative session that includes a new opportunity for youth ages 16 and over. The law states that, “A minor who is 16 years or older and who is in the legal custody of the Children's Division pursuant to an order of a court of competent jurisdiction shall be qualified and competent to contract for the opening of a checking or savings bank account with the consent of the Children’s Division or the juvenile court. The minor shall be responsible for all costs and penalties associated with the account.”



This law was designed to allow youth to start managing their own money when they get a job or are in a placement where they are receiving their maintenance payment directly. As youth prepare to transition out of foster care, it’s important they have some practice with money while they have foster parents, staff, and Chafee workers to help guide them through the process.

It’s important to include a trusted adult in this process because understanding the banking system can be difficult, and opening a bank account is a big responsibility. There are risks involved like possible fees, high interest borrowing, and just getting in over your head.

Be smart, and ask for help to get started. Here are links to some great resources too!

[Savings Tips](#)

[Checking Account Tips](#)

As always, reach out to your Case Manager or Chafee worker if you have any questions.





IS ANYONE REALLY NORMAL?



So what are normalcy and this reasonable and prudent parenting standard?

This term doesn't mean everyone is average, the same, or has the exact same experience. It's not that kind of normal. There are Federal and State Laws written to make sure youth in foster care have the same opportunities to experience life as their peers without "the system" getting in the way. It includes things like playing school sports, joining band, going on team trips, appearing in team/class photos, staying at a friend's house, getting a job, obtaining a driver's license and other things that most teenagers have the chance to do without a lot of barriers.

Some barriers foster youth have faced are: the need for the judge's permission to do certain things, their whole team agreeing to make a simple decision, or even background checks for their friend's parents. This can make people feel uncomfortable or even so awkward they would rather miss out on a good opportunity just to avoid all of the trouble. We want you to look at your life and feel like you have the same chances as your friends for fun, involvement, and opportunities for leadership and growth without this system getting in the way.

So what role do foster parents, case managers, family support team, and TLP or residential staff have?

The adults in your life are responsible for making sure we follow these laws so that foster care isn't a barrier to you having a great quality of life. Children's Division (CD) and our partners like Chafee and TLPs want you to be able to experience activities you're interested in and may even nudge you to try new things, participate in after school activities and explore job options.

Your 'reasonable and prudent parent' is your main caregiver, responsible for knowing you well enough to use their best judgment about what you're allowed to do. There are a ton of things they can decide about day to day life at home and in the community, similar to the decisions your friend's parents make for them. These are things like curfew, allowance, sports involvement, if you can go on a date, if you can go to the movies with your friends, if you can get the haircut you're asking for...the list goes on and on. These decisions should be made considering your goals, needs and wants, you as a person, your level of maturity and responsibility, your interests and values and NOT used to control you or punish you for things that are out of your control.

Most often, wherever you live will determine who your 'reasonable and prudent parent' is. So, if you are in a family foster home, it's your foster parent. If you live in a group setting, there is one person, like a cottage supervisor, who is designated as the 'reasonable and prudent parent'. If you don't know who it is, your case manager can tell you. Remember that the judge and your team are still involved in many decisions, but choices about your day to day living should mostly be made by the 'parent' where you live.

What to do if you don't agree with a decision made by your 'reasonable and prudent parent'?

First, remember it is totally normal for youth to disagree with their parent, whoever it may be, and if the decision can be considered reasonable, you may just choose to accept it. However, since you're in foster care, you have some special protections in case you're being mistreated. Your rights are described in the "What's It All About: A Guide for Youth in Out of Home Care", and you can find that on the CD website. It's important to know your rights so you can advocate for yourself if you feel you are being treated unfairly or being punished for something out of your control. You are encouraged to talk about your goals, preferences, wants, and needs with your caregiver in a respectful way so they can get to know the real you, see your strengths, and know where you need help. You can always reach out to your case manager if needed.

One more thing! If you are age 14 or over, you have the right to invite support people in your life to all of your meetings. Who do you feel comfortable with, trust to have your back, helps you speak up for yourself, and put you at ease? Who's a positive person in your life that makes



Here to help

you feel better just being around them? Consider inviting them to your meetings. If you feel nervous about asking, your caregiver, Chafee worker, Case Manager or GAL should be able to help you! You deserve to have someone to support you in everything you do!

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AMONG RUNAWAY/HOMELESS YOUTH

Did you know of the nearly 25,000 reported runaways in the United States in 2017, one in seven were likely victims of sex trafficking? Additionally, in 2018, 88% of reported runaways identified as victims of sex trafficking were missing from a foster care or group home placement! Why is that you may ask? Because of the vulnerability risk factor!

I'm sure you have heard of human trafficking, but do you really know what it means? Well, let's first start by differentiating between the two main types of human trafficking, labor trafficking and sex trafficking. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, both labor and sex trafficking are forms of modern day slavery. Labor trafficking is when individuals perform labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Sex trafficking, on the other hand, is when individuals perform commercial sex through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. You may ask yourself, "how does a person get into a trafficking situation?" Well, easier than you may think due to very manipulative and sometimes charming recruiters or exploiters.

Recruiters, exploiters, pimps, traffickers, they are all one in the same. Oftentimes they will create a seemingly loving or caring relationship with their victim(s) to establish trust and loyalty that remains even in the face of severe abuse. Unfortunately, traffickers are aware of factors that make children (or those under the age of 18) more vulnerable than others, and they use those vulnerabilities to their advantage. Traffickers will work to identify specific vulnerabilities in a child's life and use that to create a closer bond to the child and to maintain control.

Factors that make children particularly vulnerable include:

- A history of sexual abuse
- A history of running away or current status as a runaway
- An unstable home life
- Involvement in the foster care system



Where do traffickers find victims to recruit? They recruit victims in schools, online through social media, at shopping malls, bus stations, or even foster care/group homes. Sometimes traffickers even force their victims to recruit others in schools or group homes.

So, how do you know if you or someone you love is being trafficked? There are several warning signs. Some indicators might include:

- Travel to other states or staying at hotels when he or she runs away
- A history of running away or current status as a runaway
- Presence of, or communication with, a controlling older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Large amounts of cash, multiple cell phones or hotel keys
- Signs of current physical abuse and/or multiple sexually transmitted diseases
- Gang involvement, especially among girls
- Tattoos or branding related to money or ownership and/or the child is unwilling to explain



So, now you have all this information, but what do you do with it? If you believe you, or one of your friends or loved ones, may be a victim of human trafficking please call the National Cyber Tipline at 1-800-THE-LOST, 911, or your local law enforcement agency any time, day or night.

*References: <http://www.missingkids.com/> and <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>

Have a BLAST!

BLAST Classes stand for Basic Life Awareness Skills Training and were developed to give the youth served by Chafee extra supports in a group setting in between their individual meetings. The curriculum is modified based off the needs of the individuals in attendance at each class location. Chafee also incorporates guest speakers from the community in their lessons to assist the youth with developing these community resources.

BLAST Classes are hosted monthly throughout the Southwest and are open to any youth 14-21 years of age in Missouri State custody. Some of the class topics are as follows: budgeting, post-secondary support, health and wellness, developing community resources, developing positive relationships, obtaining/maintaining employment, Family Consumer Sciences, etc. These classes allow the youth to meet as a group in between LYAB meetings to learn important life skills together and develop their own friendships and natural supports within the class as well as work on team building skills. Past BLAST classes have included BBQ's, pool parties, college tours, etc. Food is provided at every meeting. If you have any questions please contact Justin Nations, Southwest Region Older Youth Transition Specialist, at 417-629-3952.

Here is when your local BLAST class meets:

Southwest Region

Joplin- Second Thursday of the month from 4:30-6:30 pm at the Preferred Family Healthcare office at 2000 S Maiden Lane, Joplin, MO 64804. RSVP at 417-389-1733

Nevada- Fourth Monday of the month from 4:30-6:30pm at the Preferred Family Healthcare office at 111 N Elm St, Nevada, MO 64772. RSVP at 816-590-4521

Springfield- Second Tuesday of the month from 6-7:30pm at the Preferred Family Healthcare office at 2626 W College Rd, Springfield, MO 65802. RSVP at 417-862-1753

Camdenton/Lebanon- Camdenton and Lebanon classes are held from 5:30-7:00pm. Camdenton classes are the second Thursday of the month at 924 N Business Rte 5, Camdenton, MO 65020. Lebanon classes are the third Thursday of the month at varying locations. RSVP to DBurt@pfh.org.

Southeast Region

St Francois / Madison/ Ste. Genevieve / Iron / Reynolds / Washington Counties - LIFE Lessons class in St Francois County First Tuesday of the month 5 pm to 7 pm at the Farmington Public Library. RSVP to Cat Leonard caleonard@pfh.org 573-431-5507.

Butler / Stoddard / Dunklin / Ripley / Carter Counties - LIFE Lessons class in Poplar Bluff every 3rd Thursday of the month 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm. RSVP to Bonnie Jaggie bjaggie@pfh.org 573-776-1941 no later than 5 pm the day before.

Crawford / Dent Counties - LIFE Lessons class Meet in Salem at Pizza Inn the 2nd Wednesday of every month at

6:00. Can transport Crawford County youth at this time. Looking for a new location in Cuba the 4th Wednesday of the month. RSVP Zakary Maedgen zmaedgen@pfh.org or 573-341-2606.

Northwest Region

Marshall – Second Wednesday of the month from 4:30-6:30pm at Great Circle Butterfield Campus at 1126 E Hwy WW, Marshall, MO. RSVP to Dianna Herzinger at 641-295-2163 or dherzinger@pfh.org or Kari Twombly at 417-438-2003 or ktwombly@pfh.org.

Trenton – Third Wednesday of the month from 4:30-6:30pm at the Preferred Family Healthcare office at 1628 Oklahoma Ave, Trenton, MO. RSVP to Dianna Herzinger at 641-295-2163 or dherzinger@pfh.org or Kari Twombly at 417-438-2003 or ktwombly@pfh.org.

Harrisonville – Third Tuesday of the month from 4:30-6:30pm at the Preferred Employment Services/Chafee Services office at 811 Westchester Ave, Harrisonville, MO. RSVP to Tracy Serna at 417-321-1214 or tserna@pfh.org or Kari Twombly at 417-438-2003 or ktwombly@pfh.org.

Sedalia – Fourth Tuesday of the month from 4:30-6:30pm at the New Haven office at 1714 S Ingram, Sedalia, MO. RSVP to Tracy Serna at 417-321-1214 or tserna@pfh.org or Kari Twombly at 417-438-2003 or ktwombly@pfh.org.

St. Joseph – Fourth Thursday of the month from 4:30-6:30pm at the Preferred Family Healthcare office at 1702 Buckingham, St. Joseph, MO. RSVP to Dianna Herzinger at 641-295-2163 or dherzinger@pfh.org or Kari Twombly at 417-438-2003 or ktwombly@pfh.org.



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>



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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