

Promoting Permanency and Successful Adult Outcomes for Transition Age Youth



Turning 18 represents a pivotal point in life—the transition to adulthood—with new life experiences like college, entering the workforce, living independently, or other exciting and challenging responsibilities. For many youth, this point in life includes the support of biological parents and other natural networks who help guide them and are available when navigating new experiences. Unfortunately, this is not often the case for older youth who are in and transitioning out of the foster care system.

Transition age youth—age 14 to 21—are older youth in the foster care system transitioning to permanency with a caregiver or aging out of the system to adulthood. Transition age youth often struggle with this life transition due to unique circumstances with being a foster child. Not always having adequate planning and support services to ease the transition can lead to poorer outcomes that have life-long impacts.



Compared to their peers in the general population, transition age youth experience poorer outcomes by 21 years old:

Only
49% have full or part-time employment

At least
25% have not graduated or obtained a GED

Approximately
37% do not have stable housing

HB 1866, introduced by State Rep. Karen Boback, would help older foster youth find permanency by:



Documenting family finding efforts. County practice varies regarding the locating of, outreach to, and inclusion of kin in case planning. Documenting these efforts also varies and is not always available to the youth. The bill would require a record of family finding efforts, including contact information, for youth when they are independent and no longer in the system.



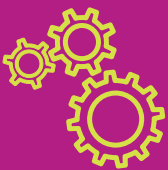
Increasing opportunities for permanency. Currently, the goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement – or APPLA – can be assigned to youth ages 16 and older. However, this often leads to the discontinuation of attempting to find long-term family placement, allowing youth to languish in congregate care settings and leave care without an established family. Increasing the allowable age to assign the goal of APPLA to 18 will require county agencies to continue promoting permanent living arrangements in the most family-like setting and ensure that youth are not exiting to homelessness.



Enhancing court accountability. During dispositional court hearings, the assigned judge would find that a suitable transition plan has been developed for the youth and that services were provided to aid in the transition to adulthood.



Maintaining supportive adult connections. Transition age youth need natural support networks when the system is no longer involved. Currently, it is required that one supportive adult connection be identified and included in transition planning. Increasing to two supportive adult connections will assist with building a safety net when paid professionals are no longer involved.



Improving data collection. There are currently six different case management systems that the 67 county child welfare agencies utilize, which leads to inconsistencies in the process and, ultimately, minimal statewide outcomes for this population. The bill would lead to more consistent data collection, add new elements, and streamline data at the state level.

**How can you support transition age youth in Pennsylvania?
Support HB 1866—increased permanency planning and transition policies will help ensure that youth can succeed in adulthood.**



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