

Connecting *YOUth* News

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A diverse group of stakeholders participated in a simulation of current child welfare needs and explored possible system improvements.

Did YOU know?? The Feds call this project YARH? See their logo below! NJ picked our own project name, Connecting YOUth! Who knew?!



THANK YOU!!!

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

Thank you for participating as an invested stakeholder during the recent Systems Mapping Meeting on June 26th! The information obtained through the mapping process was indeed helpful in gaining a better understanding of how young people experience the child welfare system in New Jersey. It also provided valuable insights for the New Jersey Department of Children and Families-Office of Adolescent Services (DCF-OAS) as it moves forward with the Connecting YOUth federal planning grant, supporting youth as they age out of foster care.

Below you will find the recommendations identified through the systems mapping process. Through the Connecting YOUth project, DCF-OAS is diligently assessing each of these recommendations. We believe that the recommendations identified, coupled with statewide collaboration, will lead to significant progress toward putting our young people on a path to successful adulthood.

Your contribution to this important process is appreciated. Thanks again for participating, and thanks in advance for your continued collaboration as New Jersey moves forward in its efforts to improve outcomes for children and families.

Sincerely,



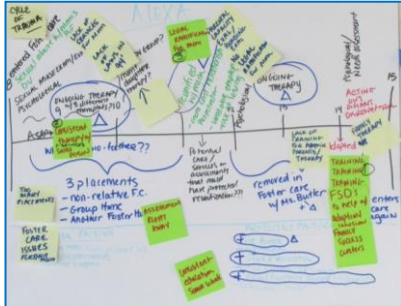
Jessica Trombetta, LCSW

NJ-DCF-Director of Adolescent Services

Recommendations Identified by Stakeholders During Systems Mapping:

I. Services

- Housing provided until age 26
- More housing options for expecting/parenting youth
- Extend life skills and independent living to age 25
- More emergency housing



Experts defined a systems map that shows how youth move through the child welfare system.



Comments or questions?

Get in touch with us!

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Recommendations continued:

II. Training

- Understanding adolescent development (resource parents, biological families, adoptive homes, caseworkers, stakeholders, and youth)
- Review and expand PRIDE training
- Communication (workers/resource parents, between service providers, regarding resources for youth with specific needs)
- NJFC Scholar training for workers

III. Practice

- CP&P cases stay open until age 25
- Better inform staff about services and adolescent issues
- Evaluating case closure based on need versus age
- Ensure consistent therapy throughout time in care

IV. System of Care

- Smoother transition from child welfare to the adult system
- Long term case management until age 25
- Statewide access to services
- Strengthen education process with NJFC Scholars

What's Around the Corner...

- Currently, OAS is working with Child Trends, Inc. to analyze data on three populations: (1) youth entering foster care between ages 14-17; (2) youth aging out of foster care between ages 18-21; (3) youth who are currently homeless (up to 21) with a history of foster care.
- October 30, OAS, in partnership with the Corporation for Supportive Housing, will host a "Charrette" -- a solution focused planning meeting. This session will focus on strategies to improve outcomes for youth.
- Fall 2014, Youth Advocates will hold a series of focus groups to engage youth perspective of those currently in care.

STAY TUNED!!!!