Planning for Transitions

Supporting Foster Youth with Disabilities in College

June 24, 2009

Web Seminar of the California College Pathways

Web Seminar Technical Details

- Click on unique link forwarded in email invitation

- To access audio, either listen on computer OR,
  1. Call: 312-878-0218, access code 141-252-444
  2. Enter Access Code: 582-838-909
  3. Enter unique PIN that is on screen

To submit live questions, click on the "Question and Answer" arrow on your screen, type your question, and click "Send."

California College Pathways Project

Technical Assistance & Training

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For more information, visit **www.cacollegepathways.org**

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Agenda

- Challenges, barriers and issues faced by foster youth with disabilities during the transition from K-12 to college.

- Disability rights and responsibilities.

- Assessments and accommodations for various disabilities.

- Best practices and resources that can assist foster youth.

- Project announcements

- Q&A

Panel Participants

- Cheryl Theis, Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)
- Paul Miller, Cal State Fullerton
- Dr. Catherine Schmitt-Whitaker, Cal Poly Pomona

Moderator: Jenny Vinopal, CSU Office of the Chancellor

Unique Challenges: What We Know

- Almost ½ of foster youth have identified special education needs, a number that is probably low.

- Involved, committed parents often struggle to navigate the special education system and secure effective individualized plans for their children.

- Foster youth often have no such advocate.

- Foster youth will experience multiple changes in placement and support relationships.

- Problems in school and lack of appropriate intervention and support not only impact educational success- they "blow up" placement and prevent permanency and success for many youth.

5.

Unique Challenges: What We Know

- Foster youth are often not referred for special education eligibility assessment, or are assessed only after the situation escalates into a crisis.

- Children who are not identified often continue to struggle. They are more likely to:

  - Be retained

  - Leave school prematurely

  - Be subject to expulsion if learning challenges play out behaviorally.

What Laws Protect Students with Disabilities in School and College?

- ADA Americans with Disabilities Act

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

- FERPA: Family Education Rights Privacy Act

- Title 5 of California Education Code

All apply, BUT

- IDEA 2004 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) protection ends with graduation/diploma or at age 22 or no longer eligible. THERE ARE NO IEP'S IN COLLEGE!

- www.ncld.org/at-school/your-childs-rights/iep-aamp-504-plan/section-504-and-idea-comparison-chart

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Transition Plans: What's Missing?

- Were less likely to include goals for postsecondary education.

- Were less likely to include goals for developing independent living skills.

- Did not focus on career development.

- Schools failed to invite the student's caseworker to the IEP/TP meeting.

Solution: Build accountability into all aspects of process and engage the student early and directly. Identify stakeholders and invite into team.

The Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) Meeting:

Question:
Who Should be There?

The Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) Meeting: Who Should Be There?

- Child welfare caseworker
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
- Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)
- Centers for Independent Living (CIL)
- Dependency attorney
- Independent Living Skills Program worker (ILP/ILSP)
- Group home or foster family agency counselor or social worker

- Department of developmental services (DDS/Regional Center) caseworker
- School District Foster Youth Services Liaison (FYS)
- Workability staff/ job coaching program
- Housing program staff
- Vocational assessment professional
- Health care coordinator, social worker, therapist
- Any other agency or individuals that may be responsible for input or delivery of plan services.

The Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) Meeting

- Ask the youth who they want to come to the meeting.

- Interagency collaboration is essential for foster youth!

- Key issue: Colleges require current documentation of disability. IEP or 504 is not sufficient. Make sure student receives current assessment while IN last two years of high school and while they still have health insurance in place! Recommendation: Put on Meeting agenda at 16

Postsecondary Issues: Students may lack skills

- Budgeting scarce financial resources
- Securing necessary health care
- Making appropriate nutrition and recreation choices
- Structuring and organizing time effectively
- Seeking academic support early and regularly

- Knowing where to turn after a failure and how to repair mistakes
- Develop supportive, caring relationships and effective social connections from scratch
- Utilize help from those in authority

Postsecondary Issues

- Recommendations:
  - Include these skills as transition goals in an ITP and ILSP if appropriate
  - Teach these skills directly and measure success concretely
  - Connect with services on college campuses prior to first day of classes—take a field trip to a local college, and meet with DSP staff
  - Identify mentors willing to actively check in during critical first semester.
  - Make sure youth have ways to concretely practice self advocacy skills, such as taking them to get a copy of their Social Security Card, or completing a resume and the FAFSA—with support!
  - Identify "bridging" opportunities and develop plan for summer before college.

Postsecondary Issues

- Recommendations:
  - Identify mentors willing to actively check in during critical first semester.
  - Connect youth with those already IN college, and arrange an overnight visit when possible (stay in dorms, visualize new situation)
  - Anticipate roadblocks—teach resiliency!
  - Directly teach students their RIGHTS—not just around disability, but around housing, law enforcement, etc.
  - Identify what supports are available on campus (tutoring, mentoring, groups, clubs, leadership opportunities) and help youth connect with these before they leave high school
  - Develop a letter of introduction to instructors while in high school, with needed accommodations written out. Relieves pressure to "talk" to strangers early on

Transition Into College: Expectations

- Academic requirements of higher education
- What colleges can and cannot do
- Skills students need to be successful

Transition Into College: Assessment

- Those with IEP in high school are not guaranteed services with Disability Services.

- Learning, mental health or physical disabilities

- CSU not required to do the assessment but do them on case by case (limited) not on all CSU campus

- Currently enrolled student who was referred (responsibility/demonstrate disability rest on individual)

- Person must qualify to be in the college environment-

- IQ cut off, language barrier

- Math (need documentation from high school, good faith effort to do the three year of math and or in community colleges, will consider a substitution)

- Have a major that Math is not a core requirement.

Transition Into College: Legal Rights

- 504

- IDEA- New Changes

- Responsibilities of the two systems (K-12 and higher education)

- FERPA- There are several limitations as to how to handle issues.

- Role for foster parents and advocates

- Tips for foster parents and advocates

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Differences between K-12 and college

K – 12 (IDEA)	College (504/ADA)
Right to free public education	Qualified student with a disability
Student identified and evaluation	Student's responsibility to provide evaluation documentation
Services determined by education plan	College policy on eligibility and services
Fundamental alteration permitted as identified in IEP	No fundamental alteration permitted
Personal services may be provided (attendant)	Personal services is student's responsibility
Student pulled out of class to receive services	Student needs to request services from disability office

Transition Into College: Connecting to Resources

- Regional Center during high school move to Department of Rehab when they get to community colleges
- Services Include: Habilitation piece (disabled at young age) in Department of Rehab
- Would coordinate with Regional Center
- Independent of university
- Financial support: fees, books, supplies
- Requires a stand alone application for DR to get
- Must be assessed for being employment
- Shelter, enclave or – Independent employment

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Transition Into College: Connecting to Resources

- **Social Security Administration-**
  - Two types of disability benefit programs that provide income and medical services.
    - Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)
    - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
  - Work Incentives
    - Gain work experience, earn money towards goals and keep SSI/SSDI benefits
    - "The Redbook: The Guide to Work Incentives" www.ssa.gov/redbook/eng/main.htm

Disability Services at College

Prescribe accommodations and services based on information gained during intake and documentation to meet individual need

- Accessible parking (with appropriate decal)
- Alternate media
- Assistive technology & lab
- Disability-related counseling and advising
- Liaison with faculty and staff on campus
- Mobility assistance

- Note taking
- Priority registration
- Real time captioning, sign language interpreting or use of assistive listening devise (ALD)
- Testing accommodations
- Some colleges may offer
  - Specialized courses
  - Tutoring

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General Process for College

- **Initial Inquiry**
  - Current documentation (within 3-5 years)
  - Referred out for assessment
- **Submission and review of documentation**
- **Intake with disability specialist**
  - Learning Disabilities Specialist
  - Mental Health Specialist
  - Support Services Advisor

Examples of Accommodations and Services

- **Low Vision**
  - Large print handouts, signs, equipment labels, overheads
  - Computer screen enlarger program
- **Blind**
  - Braille and tactile handouts
  - Talking calculator
- **Learning Disability/Attention Deficit Disorder**
  - Use of computer for note taking
  - Electronic course materials to see and hear at same time
- **Mobility/Physical Disability**
  - Adjustable tables and chairs, lab equipment located within reach

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Network of Support Services

- Campus Support Programs (e.g., Guardian Scholars , Renaissance Scholars)

- Counseling & Psychological Services

- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP/EOPS)

- Learning Resource Center

- Student Health Center

- Student Housing Services/Residence Halls

- Tutoring Services

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Sensitive Approaches- Possible Questions

Explaining that everyone is on a spectrum of learning and functioning and disability services creates access to and an equitable learning environment

- Do you have an individualized educational plan (IEP) in high school?

- Are there barriers getting in your way of learning? (Such as difficulty concentrating for periods of time, organizing things in your life or understanding material)

- Are there subjects that you really struggle to learn while others come more naturally to you?

- Do you feel that you study a lot more than your peers but have difficulty remembering the information?

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Resources

- ADA Q&A: http://www.pacer.org/publications/adaqa/504.asp
- Cal State Fullerton Disabled Student Services: www.fullerton.edu/disabledservices/
- Cal Poly Pomona Disability Resource Center (DRC): http://dsa.csupomona.edu/drc/
- Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund: www.dredf.org
- Go to College: http://www.going-to-college.org/
- National Center for Learning Disabilities: www.ncld.org/at-school/your-childs-rights/iep-aamp-504-plan/section-504-and-idea-comparison-chart
- Shared Work: www.Sharedwork.org
- Transition 2 Employment: www.transition2employment.com

California College Pathways Announcements

- **Educational Planning Guide for Foster Youth**
    - Electronic version and print version now available
    - Visit www.cacollegepathways.org to get a copy today

- **Special College Graduation Edition Newsletter is coming this July**

- **Please complete an online web seminar training evaluation from Survey Gizmo**

Questions or Comments?

Enter questions on your screen now by clicking the "Question and Answer" arrow, typing your question, and clicking "Send."

Or direct questions or comments to:

Jenny Vinopal, Assistant Director of Foster Youth Programs
CSU Office of the Chancellor
401 Golden Shore, 6th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802-4210
(562) 951-4734
jvinopal@calstate.edu