



Addressing the Needs of Youth in Foster Care: A Primer for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Grantees

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Child welfare agencies may remove children and youth from their homes after a finding of abuse and/or neglect. When removals are warranted, children and youth are typically placed in foster care (also known as out-of-home care), including family foster homes (i.e., care by unrelated individuals); group or residential homes; and kinship care (i.e., care by relatives). Youth in foster care may face many challenges including poverty, lower educational attainment, and teen pregnancy and parenting. Because many of the youth in foster care have experienced trauma prior to, and in some cases while in foster care, they need specialized services to address these adverse childhood experiences. To help young people transition into healthy, successful adults, the Children’s Bureau and the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) offer states, tribes, and local organizations grant funding to serve youth in foster care and to support their caregivers.

This resource guide provides information and resources that the Children’s Bureau and FYSB promote to encourage the healthy development of children and youth in foster care. The goal of this resource guide is to illustrate how the collaboration between these two ACF agencies serves as a model to enhance services to this vulnerable population of youth, particularly those who are pregnant or parenting.



Foster Care Facts

- In the United States, 437,283 children were in foster care in 2018; 122,155 were 12–17 years of age.¹
- Of the 262,956 children entering foster care in 2018, 9,894 (4%) were removed from their home due to sexual abuse.¹
- 49% of females in foster care reported being forced to have sex, compared to 11% of females never in foster care.²
- Youth in foster care are more likely to become pregnant than youth not in foster care;³ 25% of youth completing all three waves of the National Youth in Transition Database survey had a child by age 21.⁴

WHAT PROGRAMS DO THESE AGENCIES OFFER TO SERVE YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE?

FYSB’s *Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (APP)* program and the Children’s Bureau’s *Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee program)* share several common goals and are well positioned to work together to impact outcomes for youth, particularly youth who are pregnant or parenting while in foster care. Collaboration between these programs can streamline service delivery and increase access to needed resources and supports.

FYSB’s APP program administers the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) and Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) Program. PREP has four funding streams (State PREP, Competitive PREP, Tribal PREP, and Personal Responsibility Education Innovative Strategies) that are designed to provide youth with education to prevent pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, through programming on abstinence, contraception, and adulthood preparation topics. SRAE has three funding streams (General Departmental SRAE, Title V State SRAE, Title V Competitive SRAE), each of which is designed to provide educational programs that normalize the optimal health behavior of refraining from non-marital sexual activity and other risky behaviors. SRAE also includes research projects that evaluate the effectiveness of program components. Both PREP and SRAE target vulnerable youth, including those who are homeless, in foster care, living in rural areas or areas with high teen birth rates, and minority groups.

APP Grant Program	Eligibility and Key Goals
State Personal Responsibility Education Program (State PREP)	State PREP funds states and territories to educate young people on abstinence and contraception to prevent pregnancy and STIs. Projects also incorporate at least three of six adult preparation subjects (i.e., adolescent development, educational and career success, financial literacy, healthy life skills, healthy relationships, parent-child communication). State PREP projects replicate effective, evidence-based program models or substantially incorporate elements of projects that have been proven to delay sexual activity, increase condom or contraceptive use for sexually active youth, and reduce pregnancy among youth.
Competitive PREP	Competitive PREP provides grants to organizations in states that did not accept State PREP funding to educate young people on abstinence and contraception to prevent pregnancy and STIs, with similar requirements to State PREP grants.
Tribal PREP	Tribal PREP funds tribes and tribal organizations to develop and implement programs to educate American Indian/Alaska Native youth on abstinence and contraception to prevent pregnancy and STIs, including HIV/AIDS. Programming is intended to honor tribal needs, traditions and cultures.
Personal Responsibility Education Innovative Strategies (PREIS)	PREIS funds competitive grants to organizations for research and demonstration projects that implement innovative strategies for preventing pregnancy and STIs among youth between the ages of 10 and 19, with a focus on interventions that fill gaps with new promising program models.
General Departmental Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (GD SRAE)	GD SRAE funds competitive grants to organizations to educate youth on how to voluntarily refrain from non-marital sexual activity and the benefits associated with self-regulation, success sequencing for poverty prevention, healthy relationships, goal setting, and resisting sexual coercion, dating violence, and other youth risk behaviors such as underage drinking or illicit drug use without normalizing teen sexual activity.
Title V State Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (Title V State SRAE)	Title V State SRAE funds states and territories to implement education exclusively on sexual risk avoidance. Grantees teach participants to voluntarily refrain from sexual activity and other risky behaviors. Programs address personal responsibility, self-regulation, goal setting, healthy decision-making, a focus on the future, and the prevention of youth risk behaviors.
Title V Competitive Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (Title V CSRAE)	Title V CSRAE provides competitive grants to organizations and communities in states that did not accept Title V State SRAE funding to implement projects that contain messages that normalize the optimal health behavior of avoiding non-marital sexual activity. Projects address the social, psychological, and health gains of engaging in healthy relationships and refraining from non-marital sexual activity.

The Children’s Bureau’s Chafee program provides funds to states and tribes to offer a range of services for older youth in foster care. These services are designed to help youth aged 14–21 successfully transition from foster care into adulthood.^a This Children’s Bureau program funds two types of services: The Independent Living (IL) and the Educational and Training (ETV) program. At the core of the Chafee program is the coordination with other federal programs that can serve youth in foster care. The Chafee program can provide services and supports to youth who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older^b as they develop into adults through transitional services such as training and opportunities to practice daily living skills (such as financial literacy training and driving instruction), substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention), as well as other educational and employment services.



Foster Care Facts

States and certain tribes operate foster care programs that provide for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and youth who are unable to remain at home. All states and certain tribes operate foster care programs until the age of 18, but many states offer either federally funded or state-supported, extended foster care programs to the age of 21. While in foster care, there are many placement types that qualify as foster care, including foster homes, relatives’ homes, and others. After age 18, states may allow young adults in foster care to live in other settings, such as in dorms, in independent living programs, or other transitional programs.

States and tribes operate their foster care programs differently. These programs can be either state- or county-administered. In some states, foster care is privatized.

For more information on foster care, see:
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/outofhome/>

Children’s Bureau Chafee Program	Focus of Program
Chafee Independent Living (IL) services and programs	The Federal Chafee programs fund state and tribal programs to assist youth in a successful transition to adulthood. Programmatic activities include help with education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support, and assured connections to caring adults for older youth in foster care. IL services can start at age 14 and usually end at age 21. Some states and tribes provide services to age 23. States and tribes have flexibility in what services are provided and how they are offered.
The Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) program	The ETV program provides resources specifically to meet the postsecondary education and training needs of youth aging out of foster care, including postsecondary educational and training vouchers. This program makes available vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year per youth for postsecondary education and training for eligible youth.

HOW ARE SERVICES IN THESE PROGRAMS GEARED TO THE NEEDS OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE?

Both FYSB’s APP and the Children’s Bureau’s Chafee/IL programs provide services that are designed to meet the needs of youth in foster care. This begins with shared goals of promoting healthy transitions to adulthood, incorporating training in self-sufficiency and self-regulation, addressing adverse childhood experiences, and preventing teen pregnancy.

^a Some states and tribes elect to serve youth up to age 23.

^b States and tribes are able to design their programs flexibly within the eligible criteria of the federal program.

Shared Goal	APP Grant Programs Features	Chafee/IL Programs Features
Promotes healthy transitions to adulthood	APP programs incorporate a positive youth development approach to programming, which is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families.	Chafee/IL programs help children who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older engage in age- or developmentally appropriate activities, positive youth development, and experiential learning that reflects the experiences of their peers in intact families.
Incorporates training in self-sufficiency and self-regulation	PREP programs include education on adulthood preparation subjects and the SRAE programs require education on success sequencing and self-regulation.	Chafee/IL programs provide transitional services, including assistance in obtaining a high school diploma and postsecondary education, career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention, and training and opportunities to practice daily living skills.
Addresses adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)	APP programs adopt a trauma-informed approach, support mental health, develop coping strategies, increase protective factors, and provide referrals to mental health and other services.	Although addressing ACEs is not one of the expressed purposes of Chafee/IL programs, most service providers use a trauma-informed approach to serve youth. Chafee/IL programs support youth participating in age-appropriate and normative activities as a means of promoting healthy development and reducing trauma.
Prevents teen pregnancy and STIs	APP programs support state, tribal and community efforts to teach sexual risk avoidance, abstinence, contraceptive, and STI prevention education that is medically accurate, culturally relevant, and age appropriate.	Chafee/IL programs promote transitional services, including preventative health activities such as pregnancy prevention.

HOW CAN APP PROGRAMS AND FOSTER CARE AGENCIES ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION?

Although APP and Chafee/IL programs work independently through separate funding sources, the programs have overlapping features and goals. Collaboration between APP and Chafee/IL services and providers can lead to several benefits:

- Maximize resources.
- Develop shared strategies, thereby strengthening both programs and avoiding reinventing the wheel.
- Improve efficiency.
- Facilitate sustainability.
- Ensure youth in care have access to as many resources, supports, and opportunities as possible.

TIPS FOR FOSTERING COLLABORATION

1. Contact and Communicate

Collaboration starts by reaching out. Identifying, contacting, and learning about the programs and services in your state and area, both APP and Chafee/IL programs, as well as other programs that support youth in foster care, is the first step in building partnerships that can increase impact and improve outcomes.

- *Know your counterparts across programs and states.* For APP grantee contact information, see FYSB's interactive grantee map: [Grantees of the Family and Youth Services Bureau](#). For Chafee/IL state coordinators, see [State Independent Living and Education and Training Voucher \(ETV\) Coordinators](#).
- *Identify existing relationships to build on and increase efficient collaboration across programs.*

- *Find state and community programs that are working to support youth in foster care.* When possible, conduct onsite visits to understand how other programs are working in practice.
- *Hold routine meetings and cross-program trainings to enhance collaboration.* Consider factors like level and frequency of training, as well as logistics of training parameters such as location and costs.

2. Share Information

Sharing information about the funding opportunities and legal requirements lays a foundation for aligning services.

- *Understand the funding opportunities for these programs in the states.* APP and Chafee/IL programs can establish a joint website or other public space to promote funding opportunities and existing programs that service providers can access.
 - Within APP programs, State PREP and Title V State SRAE grants accept applications from every state and territory. In 2019, 53 states and territories had State PREP grants, and 39 states and territories had SRAE grants. Competitive PREP and Title V Competitive SRAE grants are open to organizations in any state that do not have a State PREP/Title V State SRAE grant. Tribal PREP grants are open to tribes or tribal organizations. There are no restrictions on who may apply for PREIS or GD SRAE grants, except for individuals and foreign entities.
 - For Chafee/IL programs, every state and certain tribal organizations receive an allocation of Chafee/IL funding. Within the seven program purposes, states determine how they will provide services to youth in transition from foster care. In most states, dedicated IL staff provide the services to youth.
- *Understand the state or legal requirements around the funding.* In APP, requirements for pregnancy prevention work are driven by the conditions that are set out by the particular grant program. However, local school districts may have regulations that limit the curricula to be implemented. Grantees need to check requirements regarding reproductive health education. Most states have education department websites that specify this information.

Additionally, each state has its own requirements regarding who can give permission for a youth in foster care to participate in APP programs. When considering collaboration between APP and Chafee/IL programs, it will be important to determine whether universal consent can be granted.

3. Recognize That the Language Used in the Two Agencies May Be Different

Programs can reduce duplication of strategies and more effectively support youth by increasing their understanding of the terms they each use, being intentional about language use, and adopting common terms. Some examples of terms that are used in APP and Chafee/IL programs include:

Term	APP Programs	Chafee/IL Programs
Pregnant and Parenting	Pregnant and parenting youth who are less than 21 years of age are targeted populations for services in State PREP, Competitive PREP, Tribal PREP, and PREIS grant programs.	Youth in foster care who are pregnant, expecting or have become parents while residing with kin, or in foster homes, treatment homes, or residential programs are targeted.
Foster Care	Youth in or aging out of foster care are a targeted population for services in all APP grant programs, including all foster care settings.	Children and youth in foster care may live with relatives or with unrelated foster parents. Foster care can also refer to placement settings such as group homes, residential care facilities, emergency shelters, and supervised independent living. Youth in foster care, potentially up to age 21 (depending on the state) are candidates for Chafee/IL services and programs.

Term	APP Programs	Chafee/IL Programs
Pregnancy Prevention	APP programs target prevention of pregnancy and the spread of STIs among adolescents through sexual risk avoidance, abstinence, and contraceptive education.	Education can provide young people with the tools they need to promote positive, healthy relationships. Education is also important to prevent unintended pregnancies and the spread of STIs. Youth should have access to programs that promote and support healthy relationships and strategies for preventing teen pregnancy and early parenthood.
Youth	APP programs cover adolescents and young adults between the ages of 10 and 19, and if pregnant and parenting, up to age 20.	The term “youth” is used to refer to those between the ages of 14 and 23 and includes both adolescents and young adults. This definition encompasses youth in states with extended foster care, as well as those who have left foster care but still receive transitional services.

4. Understand the Population Being Served

The key to providing services that meet the needs of the population is knowledge about which programs provide the best match for a specific population and what opportunities, referrals, and connections are available in the state or community. Importantly, service providers need to be aware that some youth in care may require trauma-based services rather than typical community-based services and activities.

5. Identify and Support a Champion of Youth in Foster Care

Champions are individuals or organizations that understand the unique needs of youth in foster care and, through their work, support youth in their efforts to attain self-sufficiency and successfully transition to adulthood. Champions include volunteers who directly work with youth; policy organizations that advocate for supporting youth in foster care as they age; and juvenile and family court judges who address the issues faced by youth in foster care. The following are examples of champions that advocate for youth in foster care:

- The National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association, along with its state and local member programs, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy. The program is designed to ensure that children in foster care in the United States are safe and have a permanent home and the opportunity to thrive. CASA has developed the *Fostering Futures* curriculum to help volunteers better support youth, and the organization offers a list of resources (see Resources section).
- The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is a nonprofit organization that operates as a policy think tank. ECS partners with educational policy leaders to address state education issues. Higher education for foster care youth is one of the issues that ECS has addressed.
- Staff who serve youth also need to be recognized as champions. Identifying and showcasing staff who demonstrate persistence, leadership, and creativity in engaging pregnant and parenting youth can create opportunities to promote effective and innovative approaches across programs and states. These champions need guidance, encouragement, and support in establishing and maintaining relationships to build collaborative practices.

CONCLUSION

The tips provided in this resource guide are designed to help APP grantees and Chafee/IL program coordinators work together to serve youth in foster care, especially those who are pregnant or parenting. We have included practical ideas about ways to communicate, share resources, coordinate goals, and maximize opportunities for partnership. Through collaboration, professional staff across the two programs can work together to best serve youth in foster care.

For additional information, please see *Addressing the Needs of Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care: A Primer on Interagency Collaboration for Children’s Bureau Grantees*
<https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/youth-development/pregnant-parenting-youth>.

RESOURCES

For information regarding how to contact APP grantees in your state, check out the interactive [FYSB Grantee Map](#).

Consult the [Child Welfare Gateway](#) to obtain contact information for state statutes related to child welfare, the National Foster Care and Adoption Directory, lists of state-related organizations, and other information.

Resource Type	Resource & Where to find it
Relevant APP Webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating the Needs of Foster Care Youth in Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Programming: Trauma-Informed Approaches • Trauma-Informed Care
Helpful Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Exchange • National Conference of State Legislatures, Supporting Older Youth in Foster Care • Juvenile Law Center, Foster Care Law Center, Foster Care
Publications and Other Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) Snapshot—Input and Outcomes: PREP Programs Serving Youth in Foster Care • Policies to Support the Postsecondary Success for Foster Youth • Addressing the Educational Needs of Children in Foster Care • Foster Care and Education

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