



# **Transition Age Youth Conference**

**Transitioning to Brighter Futures:  
Serving transition age foster youth in  
the child welfare and probation systems**

**February 6, 2018**

**Holiday Inn Downtown Sacramento**

**Hosted by:**

**The California Department of Social Services and  
The Child and Family Policy Institute of California**

# Overview

## *Transitioning to Brighter Futures:*

Serving transition age foster youth in the child welfare and probation systems

The last two decades have seen an increased focus on the transition to adulthood for youth entering or staying in foster care at older ages with efforts being made to improve outcomes for this population. This conference provides an opportunity to take an in-depth look at transition age youth programs to celebrate achievements and share best practices while recognizing the challenges that still exist and offering innovative ideas to address them.

Participants will hear about the state of the extended foster care, independent living and other transition age youth programs from the following speakers:

- Keynote Speaker Dr. Mark Courtney
- CDSS Director Will Lightbourne
- Youth panel

There will also be an opportunity to participate in multiple break-out sessions on high-interest topics involving transition age youth and to collaborate with other stakeholders from throughout the state in topic-focused discussions.

### **We are encouraging the following to attend:**

- Youth
- County social workers, eligibility workers and administrators
- County probation staff and administrators
- Care givers
- Transitional housing providers
- Juvenile court attorneys and judicial officers
- Advocates

### **YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS**

We have a limited number of scholarships available for youth to attend. The scholarship includes free conference registration fees and travel costs. Youth must fill out the scholarship application before January 5, 2018 to be considered. ("Youth" means people currently or formerly in foster care who are 24 years old or younger).

The application can be found at  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TAYscholarship>

### **INFORMATION TABLES:**

We will have information tables available if you are interested in bringing resources to share with others. We only ask that you pick up the items that are remaining at the end of the day and take them back with you.

### **Special accommodations:**

If you require reasonable accommodations related to facility access or communication, please contact us directly at: [cathy@mwmanagementgroup.com](mailto:cathy@mwmanagementgroup.com).

# REGISTRATION FEES & HOTEL INFORMATION

## Registration Fees

**\$100** per Person includes a light breakfast and lunch

**Registration Deadline: January 26, 2018**

### Registration Fees Cancellation Policy:

If cancellation occurs before January 5, 2018, the registration fee will be refunded less a \$25 administration fee. No fees will be refunded for registrations that are cancelled after January 5, 2018.

## Hotel Information

**Holiday Inn Downtown Sacramento**  
300 J St. Sacramento

Sleeping room rate is \$132 per night  
single or double occupancy.  
Deadline to receive this rate is January 8th  
(or before if room block fills up.)

**Link to make your reservation:**  
<https://tinyurl.com/TAYhotel>



**Or call (800)-HOLIDAY and refer to the Group Code "ACD"**

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

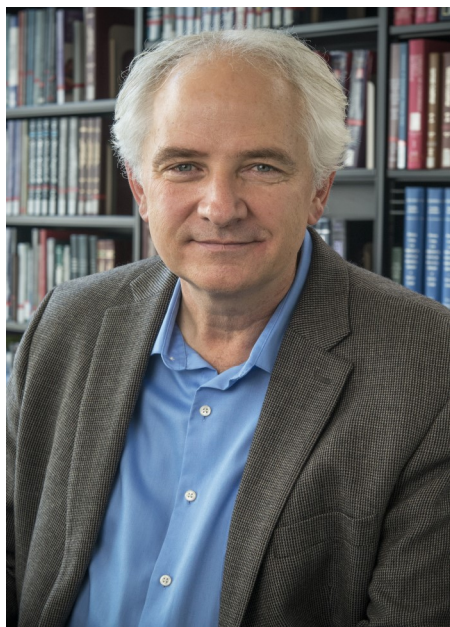
## Tuesday

February 6, 2018

8:00 am	- 8:45 am	Conference check-in. Continental Breakfast Served
8:45 am	- 10:30 am	Opening Plenary Session
10:45 am	- 12:00 pm	Learning Session A
12:00 pm	- 1:00 pm	Lunch & Keynote Speaker
1:00 pm	- 2:15pm	Learning Session B
2:30 pm	- 3:45pm	Learning Session C
3:45 pm	- 4:45pm	Collaboration/Networking
4:45 pm	- 5:00pm	Closing Session

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

### Dr. Mark E. Courtney



Dr. Courtney is a Professor in the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. His fields of special interest are child welfare policy and services, the connection between child welfare services and other institutions serving families living in poverty, the transition to adulthood for vulnerable populations, and the professionalization of social work. He is a faculty affiliate of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, which he served as Director from 2001 to 2006. Dr. Courtney is a Fellow of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare and the Society for Social Work and Research. Dr. Courtney received the 2010 Peter W. Forsythe Award for leadership in public child welfare from National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators and the 2015 Distinguished Career Achievement Award from the Society for Social Work and Research. He obtained his MSW and PhD degrees from the School of Social Welfare at the University of California at Berkeley. Before moving into academia, he worked for several years in various capacities providing group home care to abused and neglected adolescents. Dr. Courtney has served as a consultant to

the federal government, state departments of social services, local public and private child welfare agencies, and the philanthropic community.

# Workshop Schedule at a Glance

## Learning Session A (10:45 am—12:00 pm)

- Case Management and Housing: Service Models for Transition-Age Youth in Extended Foster Care
- SSI for TAY with Special Needs
- An Alternative to Traditional Systems Change: The Sonoma County Coalition for Foster Youth
- The Dream Center
- LA Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth: Dismantling Systemic Barriers to Reproductive Health
- Accelerating Success for Foster Youth at Community Colleges

## Learning Session B (1:00 pm—2:15 pm)

- Los Angeles County Probation Department Youth Development Services-Independent Living Program Best Practice Programming To Effectuate Improved TAY Educational Successes
- Implementing an Effective Peer-to-Peer Advocacy Model in the 18 & Up Court
- Work to Live: A 7-Step Program for Foster Youth Employment
- Expectant and Parenting Foster Youth: Opportunities, Challenges and Resources
- Child and Family Teaming: Engagement and Partnership with Transitional-Aged Youth
- Youth Rights in Group and Transitional Housing Programs

## Learning Session C (2:30 pm—3:45 pm)

- Beyond SILPs: Housing for NMDs
- 4 Highly Effective Ways to Increase High School Graduation for Foster Youth
- Moving Forward With My Own Talents and Strengths
- Beyond the Safety Net: Promoting Post-Secondary Educational Achievement Among Foster Youth in the Era of Extended Foster Care
- Youth Empowerment Training Initiative (YETI): An Innovative Approach to Help Develop Basic and Advanced Life Skills for Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Who Are Preparing for Independent Living
- How the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) is Serving Youth with Complex Needs
- Determining the Needs of Transition Age Youth with the Level of Care (LOC) Protocol

### A1 Case Management and Housing: Service Models for Transition-Age Youth in Extended Foster Care

**Marla McDaniel**, Senior Research Associate, Urban Institute; **Amy Dworsky**, Research Fellow, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago; **Michael Pergamit**, Senior Fellow, Urban Institute

We will bring together findings from federally-funded research exploring how states have carried out extended federal foster care to transition-age youth – particularly states’ approaches to providing housing and case management. Learn about efforts and challenges developing housing options and case management services that best meet the unique needs of young adults versus children in state-supervised care. Participate in a facilitated discussion delving into questions that were posed to child welfare administrators who participated in the research study. Questions like “what are some of the challenges that housing young adults in extended federal foster care present?” “Should all transition-age youth in extended foster care receive case management?” And, “are there core functions that specialized case management for transition-age youth can and should perform?” Leave with new understanding and insights to case management and housing.

### A2 SSI for TAY with Special Needs

**Nisha Kashyap**, Staff Attorney & **Angie Schwartz**, Policy Director, Alliance for Children's Rights

Too often, TAY with disabilities encounter substandard medical care, homelessness, or incarceration when they age out of foster care. As a child welfare professional, learn how you can ensure that TAY with disabilities access Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a federal disability benefits program. Securing SSI benefits can help TAY maintain a stable home and medical care, and avoid separation from caregivers. Using case studies and group discussion, we will cover counties’ legal responsibilities to screen youth for SSI eligibility, best practices for obtaining and maintaining SSI benefits for non-minor dependents, and solutions to common barriers to accessing SSI benefits.

### A3 An Alternative to Traditional Systems Change: The Sonoma County Coalition for Foster Youth

**Amber Twitchell**, Director, VOICES Youth Centers; **Nick Honey**, Director, Sonoma County Family Youth & Children's Division; **Sunshine Hartwell**, Youth Advocate, VOICES Youth Centers; **Mitchell Findley**, Director, Sonoma County Coalition for Foster Youth

The Sonoma County Coalition for Foster Youth brings together youth and adult experts from various sectors with the sole mission of implementing the ideas put forward by youth. Representatives from this Coalition will share their experiences, discuss the tools that have promoted the group’s success and will encourage attendees to see young people as valuable community assets necessary to make real change. Come learn about Sonoma County’s journey of empowering youth leaders to develop high-level change recommendations for the child welfare system and the strategy that the County is utilizing to ensure these recommendations become a reality.

### A4 The Dream Center

**Miriam Ocampo**, Program Specialist, Kern County Dept of Human Services; **Jayme Stuart**, Child & Family Services Coordinator, Kern County Network for Children; **Brenda Story**, TAY Supervisor, Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery

Come experience “The Dream Center”, an innovative resource center for foster youth that serves as an easily accessible, inviting hub for comprehensive, integrated services and unique skills building/training for youth in Kern county. The Center started in 2008 but recently expanded and moved into a new location where additional services were added. It is a collaboration between the Kern County Network for Children, Dept of Human Services and Superintendent of Schools, among other partners. Hear how The Center assists current and former foster youth transition to independence and self-sufficiency by providing services that utilize a formal case management system, with co-located staff from seven different Kern county agencies.



### A5 LA Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth: Dismantling Systemic Barriers to Reproductive Health

**Lesli LeGras**, Director & **Luciana Svidler**, Policy Associate & Coordinator, LA Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth, Children's Law Center of California

Teen pregnancy rates are at historic lows in the United States - but not for all youth. Young women in the foster care system are far more likely to experience teen and unintended pregnancy and childbirth. Although California has an important network of laws in place to ensure access to contraception and reproductive health services, foster youth often face critical barriers to making their reproductive rights a reality. Launched in March 2017, the Los Angeles Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth (LA RHEP) is a partnership of cross-sector stakeholders working to dismantle systemic barriers in an effort to improve access to sexual and reproductive health care services for youth in care and decrease rates of unintended pregnancy.

Utilizing a collective impact strategy to coordinate efforts, the National Center for Youth Law provides strategic guidance as the backbone agency. Other members of the LA RHEP Leadership Team include: LA County Department of Children & Family Services, Alliance for Children's Rights, Children's Law Center of California, John Burton Advocates for Youth, Public Counsel, and Seattle Children's Hospital. Participants will be provided with an overview of the unique barriers that young people in foster care face related to accessing reproductive health services and how LA RHEP is addressing this through their collective impact model. Additionally, the presentation will provide information about current local and state policy (SB 89) impacting reproductive health services for foster youth.

### A6 Accelerating Success for Foster Youth at Community Colleges

**April Allen**, Vice President, Innovation and Strategy, Educational Results Partnership; **Debbie Raucher**, Project Director, California College Pathways, John Burton Advocates for Youth

This workshop will share newly released information about foster youth outcomes at California's community colleges and provide individuals who support transition age youth with data driven approaches to address identified barriers. Findings highlight pathways and predictors of foster youth success and provide insights for local and statewide policymakers to help remove barriers to getting transition age youth to and through college. We will provide several opportunities for participants to dialogue regarding promising practices identified at several bright spot colleges that have positive academic outcomes for foster youth.



### **B1 Los Angeles County Probation Department Youth Development Services-Independent Living Program Best Practice Programming To Effectuate Improved TAY Educational Successes**

**Monique Chanaiwa**, Supervising Deputy Probation Officer, **Alan Brown**, Deputy Probation Officer II, and **Claire Roberson-Brown**, Deputy Probation Officer II, L.A. County Probation Department YDS-ILP; Youth TBD

Come learn about two best practice programs, the College Summit and Success Is Our Future. Both developed by the Los Angeles County Probation Department's Youth Development Service-Independent Living Program (YDS-ILP). The two programs are education-focused and aim to provide current and former probation foster youth with the means to pursue their post-secondary education and build self-esteem, including celebrating their high school graduation with scholarships for their post-secondary educational pursuits. Hear about the programs' challenges from financial support to recruitment of eligible graduates and the rewards and positive impacts experienced by the participants. Also hear directly from youth how these programs have impacted their lives.

### **B2 Implementing an Effective Peer-to-Peer Advocacy Model in the 18 & Up Court**

**Rosalee Villalobos-Conger**, Resource and Support Supervisor, **Jennifer Lorson**, Attorney Supervisor, **Sondra Sanford**, Peer Advocate & **Erika Murillo**, TAY Case Manager, Children's Law Center (CLC) of California

A diverse panel including a CLC Peer Advocate, TAY Case Manager, a Non-Minor Dependent Supervising Attorney, and Resource and Support Supervisor will lead a discussion on program implementation and incorporation of peer advocates into the judicial process. Participants will learn how the judicial system can better serve transition age youth (TAY) by incorporating peer led practices, with an emphasis on the courtroom setting. You will be provided specific steps, considerations and examples of implementing a peer advocate program that best fits the needs of transition age youth. Also learn about Los Angeles County's 18 & Up Court specifically designed for 18-21 year old clients.

### **B3 Work to Live: A 7-Step Program for Foster Youth Employment**

**Serita Cox**, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, iFoster; **Tim Walther**, iFoster Alumni employed at Safeway; **Kira O'Rourke**, iFoster Alumni employed at Starbucks; **Abrina Lemar**, iFoster Alumni employed at CALPERS

iFoster believes that a solution to chronic foster youth unemployment exists by matching supply/demand with a supportive pathway that addresses the unique needs of foster youth and prepares them to earn their first job, achieve self-sufficiency, and continue their education and career. Join us in exploring the iFoster Jobs Program, which is designed to enable transition-age foster youth (TAY) to earn competitive, permanent livable-wage jobs. Co-founder and CEO, Serita Cox and alumni will talk about the 7-step program model, the value these young adults gained from it, and the impact employment has had on their self-sufficiency and life trajectory.

### **B4 Expectant and Parenting Foster Youth: Opportunities, Challenges and Resources**

**Barbara Facher**, MSW, Senior Social Worker, Alliance for Children's Rights; **Mara Ziegler**, LCSW, Senior Social Worker, Public Counsel; **Brenda Dabney**, Esq., Northern California Regional Director, Children's Law Center of California

How do we address the intergenerational cycle of foster care? By identifying the emotional and practical challenges experienced by current and former expectant and parenting foster youth. We will highlight the services, supports and resources available to help overcome these challenges and build their resilience as individuals and parents. Utilizing a strengths-based, two generational framework, participants will learn concrete strategies to enable this population to parent effectively and transition successfully to adulthood. A successful program in Los Angeles County will be highlighted and relevant handouts provided, including model child welfare policies and statewide resources.



## Learning Session B Continued

### 1:00 pm—2:15 pm

#### **B5** Child and Family Teaming: Engagement and Partnership with Transitional-Aged Youth

**Catalina Ortiz-Hillestad**, Program Consultant & **Lupe Grimaldi**, Manager, Integrated Services Unit, California Department of Social Services

Why is it important to reach TAY who are choosing not to participate in Child and Family Teams (CFTs)? This population has crossover demographics in Probation and High Needs, necessitating a mindful, heightened engagement approach. The specificity and unique needs in this population will be discussed and you will leave with a new awareness of integrated strategies and resources for authentic engagement in the lives of these youth within a CFT framework.

#### **B6** Youth Rights in Group and Transitional Housing Programs

**Leah Gasser-Ordaz**, Staff Attorney & **Liza Davis**, Staff Attorney, Public Counsel

Come hear an in-depth analysis of housing rights for youth living in group homes and transitional housing. Youth, nonprofit housing providers, and social workers/youth counselors will receive an overview of housing laws and the rights transition aged youth have when living in and exiting from housing. Participate in real case summaries and role-play to develop practical advice to provide to youth who are experiencing common scenarios. You will leave with a summary of the information provided in the presentation, and flyers/referral sheets to share with youth clients.

## Learning Session C

### 2:30 pm—3:45 pm

#### **C1** Beyond SILPs: Housing for NMDs

**Nisha Kashyap**, Staff Attorney & **Angie Schwartz**, Policy Director, Alliance for Children's Rights

Despite the creation of new housing options for NMDs, homelessness remains one of the greatest barriers TAY face. This session will focus on the housing rights of NMDs and best practices to ensure that NMDs are stably housed while in extended foster care. We will include an overview of NMDs' right to an appropriate placement, the legal duties of child welfare to provide appropriate placements, and best practices for identifying the most appropriate placements for NMDs. Through a case study, attendees will discuss the statutory criteria to determine the appropriate placement for NMDs and steps child welfare professionals can take to minimize placement disruption and homelessness.

#### **C2** 4 Highly Effective Ways to Increase High School Graduation for Foster Youth

**Lori-anne Elinsky**, Supervising Social Service Practitioner, San Bernardino County CFS

Foster Youth: Your Diploma is our Mission! Foster Youth having experienced trauma plus challenges and obstacles in the academic arena have resulted in poor graduation rates, and far worse higher educational success. In fact, foster youth are the lowest performing subgroup in the educational population. Come explore the 4 highly effective ways to identify barriers to educational progress and overcome them utilizing the unique systems that San Bernardino County uses to attain a high rate of graduation. Help identify barriers and how to overcome them by leveraging existing education laws; Child Welfare Core Practice Model efforts, which include promising practices; and the importance of the Educational Rights Holder's role to the children in foster care. In our program, youth get more than an education with a diploma, they get opportunity.

## Learning Session C Continued

### 2:30 pm—3:45 pm

#### **C3 Moving Forward With My Own Talents and Strengths**

**Christine Mattos**, *Specialist and Coach, UC Davis, Extension--Resource Ctr for Family-Focused Practice*

Push the pause button on the complex nature of life for 75 minutes in order to reconnect with yourself--to learn and/or remember the natural inclinations you already have when it comes to your own unique talents. Based on research conducted by Gallup, related to the Clifton StrengthsFinder, a handout will be provided for use in partnership with colleagues during this workshop. You will explore one or more specific goals and objectives and will be supported in tapping into the strengths you can bring to reality by way of concrete and achievable accomplishments--effectively planning for next steps in a relevant area of life including, but not limited to, developing new or deeper relationships, planning for transitions, education or employment.

#### **C4 Beyond the Safety Net: Promoting Post-Secondary Educational Achievement Among Foster Youth in the Era of Extended Foster Care**

**Simone Tureck**, *Associate Policy Director, John Burton Advocates for Youth*; **Erica Stowers**, *Assistant Director, Steps to Success, First Place for Youth*

Six years out from implementation of the California Fostering Connections to Success Act, many of us are asking, “is Extended Foster Care working?” In the area of post-secondary education, data suggest foster youth may indeed be experiencing improved outcomes with an 18% increase in community college enrollment since 2012-13. However, important questions remain: is remaining in foster care “enough” to improve college outcomes, or is it necessary to change the practice of the sector to increase emphasis on college? This workshop will share findings from a pilot to transform housing providers into college success programs.

#### **C5 Youth Empowerment Training Initiative (YETI): An Innovative Approach to Help Develop Basic and Advanced Life Skills for Transitional Age Youth Who Are Preparing for Independent Living**

**William Race**, *Social Worker & Heather Brindley*, *Social Worker, Environmental Alternatives*

Participants will understand how and why YETI has been an effective tool to maintain compliance in the Transitional Housing Program (THP) as well enhance daily living skills. YETI is a collaborative approach where the attendees are the drivers and designers of the month long cohort. This allows for better group collaboration, active involvement of learners, designed task orientation, group/peer accountability, experiential exposure and re-exposure to goals and tasks. See examples of practical exercises used with Transitional Age Youth (TAY) and learn how YETI utilizes the expertise of career social workers and therapists to design and teach a weekly 2 hour class that addresses the common issues within the population and creates a sustainable foundation of skills to enhance positive outcomes in the life of a TAY. Understand the measurable benefits of utilizing the YETI approach in the specific TAY population and how to tailor the program to various populations.



## Learning Session C Continued

### 2:30 pm—3:45 pm

#### C6 How the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) is Serving Youth with Complex Needs

**Ashley Bray**, Manager, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Unit, **Christina Oliver**, Manager, Interstate Compact Unit, and **Theresa Thurmond**, Manager, Continuum of Care Reform, CA Dept of Social Services

Learn how CCR is serving youth with complex needs, helping them to achieve placement stabilization in family-based settings and form permanent connections through innovative programs and services.

Hear from a youth who can speak to what services were helpful when in foster care. CDSS staff from the Children and Family Services Division will discuss how their work overlaps to provide services and outreach across California in serving our vulnerable populations. Participants will gain a better understanding of CCR and how the reform effort is working with child welfare, mental health, probation, education, and the provider community.

The workshop will explore what is being done to serve youth with complex needs, including victims of CSEC, probation, and the developmentally disabled youth. The panel will review the work the Department is doing to assist high needs youth, including the no eject/no reject policy and an All County Letter on trauma informed care.

#### C7 Determining the Needs of Transition Age Youth with the Level of Care (LOC) Protocol

**Erin Thuston**, Research Program Specialist & **Daisy Braxton**, Staff Services Manager, CA Department of Social Services

What is the Level of Care Rate Protocol? It is a brand-new tool for rate methodology designed to identify the individual care and supervision needs of a foster youth which are translated into an appropriate LOC rate to support their placement. Care and supervision needs are identified based on five core domains and scored based on a weighted point system. The Core Domains in the protocol tool are: Physical, Behavioral/Emotional, Educational, Health and Permanency/Family Services. Come learn about the LOC Protocol, understand the five LOC Domains, and highlight the benefit to resource families and transition age youth in home-based foster care, especially in regards to independent living skills.

