

Creating a "Picture of a Life"

for Transitioning Youth with DD in Foster Care is a state-wide project that will focus on training person-centered planning facilitators to develop life plans with community involvement for foster youth with DD ages 16-18 to plan and mobilize services to meet their individual needs. Additionally, youth will have the opportunity to learn self-advocacy and determination skills through a partnership with Arizona independent living centers.



Creating a "Picture of a Life" receives primary support and funding from the **Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council**.

It is a collaborative initiative of the **Sonoran UCEDD** (University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities) and the Arizona Department of Economic Security, **Division of Developmental Disabilities** (DDD) to improve outcomes for foster youth with DD.



ONE Community Working Together



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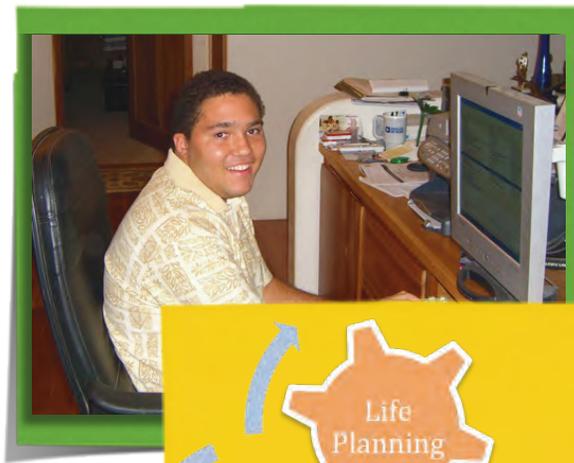
Life Planning -- Life Building

Needs of Youth Transitioning to Adulthood

A healthy transition to adulthood for youth should be the primary concern for all. Too many negative implications are associated with youth not becoming healthy, productive, economically sufficient adults. Unfortunately, a large number of youth with disabilities transitioning out of foster care end up disconnecting with society and are unable to reconnect for one reason or another. Transition is a daunting experience for youth with disabilities in the foster care system. They often need more services than average youth, require the support of more caring adults in their lives, and must also understand a whole host of laws, regulations, and policies that will aid them in the transition process. They need to know when their Medicaid benefits expire, how to access independent living skills programs, and whether they are eligible for various community supports.

WHAT IS PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING?

Life planning is a guided process that assists people in identifying the steps to make their dreams a reality. Youth and the important people in his or her life get together to explore a vision for the future based on the individual's strengths, interests, and preferences as well as health and safety concerns. Person-centered planning can be a very helpful process for young adults who are transitioning from school to adult life.



The Goal

To prepare youth with DD who are about to exit foster care to exercise choice, promote the use of informal and community supports, and to make knowledgeable decisions on community living and work.

The project intends to improve transition outcomes for these youth.

LIFE PLANNING

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WHO CAN PARTICIPATE:

- 16 - 18 years old, living in AZ
- Receives services from DDD & CPS
- DDD identifies and recruits youth

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- a safe and stable home
- self-determination and self-advocacy
- framing a vision for their future
- a support system to help with decision making
- ongoing circle of natural/informal support
- employment exploration and opportunities

Ultimately, the project will help to improve services for individuals with DD in foster care by offering a mechanism for youth to exercise meaningful choice about their living arrangements, work life, social networks and services.