Supporting the Transition of L.A. Youth out of Foster Care:
Implementation and Evaluation Strategies of an Individualized Transition Skills Program

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Children’s Institute, Inc.
Los Angeles
Today’s Agenda

• Introduce Children’s Institute, Inc. (5 mins)
• Provide an overview of the program structure for the Individualized Transition Skills Program (20 mins)
• Review the program’s evaluation protocol (10 mins)
• Share aggregate outcomes from the program’s evaluation (20 mins)
• Discussion/questions (10 mins)
Weather Check-In

Sunny
Partly Sunny
Partly Cloudy
Sun & Rain
Raining
Thunderstorms
Snowing
Cloudy
Windy
Rainbow
Tornados / Hurricanes
Clear
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Children’s Institute, Inc.

CII helps children in Los Angeles’s most challenged communities heal from the trauma of family and community violence, build the confidence and skills to break through the barriers of poverty, and grow up to lead healthy, productive lives.
Children’s Institute, Inc.

2017 at a Glance

27,388 children and family served

606 full-time staff

162 full-time clinicians

9,074 professionals trained

3 main campuses

4 centers

$66 million operating budget

26 early childhood centers
Individualized Transition Skills Program (ITSP)
What is ITSP?

Individualized Transition Skills Program

- All service planning catered to individual needs
- The skills necessary to transition out of foster care and into adult life
Definitions

Transitional Development Specialist (TDS)

Transition Age Youth (TAY)

Service Planning Area (SPA)
Program Inception

1986 • Public Law #1

1999 • Public Law #2

required an Independent Living Program (ILP) for youth be implemented in the Child Welfare and Probation systems

2010 • DCFS Request for Proposals

2014 • ITSP begins at CII
Ferry to Catalina Island
Requirements for Participation

TAY must...

- Be eligible for DCFS’ Independent Living Program (ILP)
- Reside in Los Angeles County (SPA 5-8)
- Be at least 16 years old
- Be referred to the program by their social worker or probation officer before their 18th birthday
Program Structure

- Voluntary, 2-year program
- Service plans in 6-month increments
- 3-5 hours of individual session per month
- Monthly group sessions
- Regular events and field trips
- Incentivized goal completion
Chafee Goals

- Have sufficient **economic resources** to meet daily needs
- Have safe and stable **housing**
- Attain **academic or vocational education goals** that are in keeping with the youth’s abilities and interests
- Receive high school **diploma**
- Have a sense of **connectedness** to persons and community
- Avoid illegal and high risk behaviors
- Postpone parenthood until financially established and **emotionally mature**
- Have access to **physical and mental health services**
- Learn skills for **self-sufficiency**
## Service Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Plan</th>
<th>6-month Service Plan</th>
<th>12-month Service Plan</th>
<th>18-month Service Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-month plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-month plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-month plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Graduation cap icon
- Briefcase icon
- House icon
- Person icon
- Dollar sign icon
Any questions so far?
Individual Sessions

It’s a lot of field work!
Individual Sessions
Individual Sessions
Activity: Linking Individual Sessions to the Chafee Goals
Chafee Goals

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- Attain **academic or vocational education goals** that are in keeping with the youth’s abilities and interests
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ITSP Group Sessions: “TAY Talk”

• Every other month
• Open forum discussion
• Each session related to Chafee goals
• Guest speakers
ITSP Sub-Program: Fostering Social Skills (FS²)

A social & leadership skills controlled group focused on cultivating the abilities of Transition Age Youth to succeed individually & collectively in becoming young leaders.
## ITSP Sub-Program: Fostering Social Skills (FS²)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Topic</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Best of Me</strong></td>
<td>Individuality, self-awareness, and reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversity</strong></td>
<td>Understanding forms of diversity; dealing with being stereotyped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My Team</strong></td>
<td>Maintaining healthy relationships; teamwork and leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome to Adulthood</strong></td>
<td>Life and career goal development; creating a five-year plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Health</strong></td>
<td>Principles of sexual health; having healthy sexual conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Health</strong></td>
<td>Prevention, noticing the signs and symptoms, stigma, assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substance Abuse</strong></td>
<td>Identifying types of addiction; substance abuse prevention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chafee Goals

- $$ (Financial Management)
- 🏠 (Housing)
- 📆 (Education)
- 🔴 (Health and Safety)
- 💟 (Employment)
- 🌟 (Vision and Goals)
Events and Field Trips
## Sample Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Meet with TDS</td>
<td>Meet with TDS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Go to job center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group: TAY Talk or FS²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Any questions so far?
Program Evaluation
**Program Demographics**

- **N = 2,051**

### Gender
- Female: 58%
- Male: 42%

### Race
- Black: 49%
- Latino: 40%
- White: 6%
- Other: 6%

### Age
- Age 18: 36%
- Age 17: 45%
- Age 16: 19%

### Probation
- Probation: 94%
- DCFS: 6%

### Other
- Other: 6%

---

N = 2,051
Service Delivery

Average length:
12 months

Average time:
3.5 hours per month

Early disenrollment

- Youth unable to commit: 49%
- Unable to contact: 34%
- Youth moved: 12%
- Other: 5%

N = 2,051

N = 722
Measures

1. Casey Life Skills Assessment (required)
   - Daily living
   - Self-care
   - Relationships and communication
   - Housing and money management
   - Work and study life
   - Career and education planning
   - Looking forward
   - Permanency

2. Social Support Survey
3. Community Resources Survey
4. Financial Literacy Survey
5. Youth Services Survey
6. Client Employability Profile
Casey Life Skills Assessment

- Daily Living
- Self Care
- Relationships and Communication
- Housing and Money Management
- Career and Education Planning
- Looking Forward
- Permanency

Level 1
- Typical functioning

Level 2
- Need extra support

Level 3
- May need clinical intervention
### Casey Life Skills Assessment

#### Daily Living

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are the following statements like me</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Mostly No</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Mostly Yes</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know where to go to get on the Internet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can find what I need on the Internet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use my email account.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Housing & Money Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are the following statements like me</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Mostly No</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Mostly Yes</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand how interest rates work on loans or credit purchases.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the disadvantages of making purchases with my credit card.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures

1. Casey Life Skills Assessment (required)
   - Daily living
   - Self-care
   - Relationships and communication
   - Housing and money management
   - Work and study life
   - Career and education planning
   - Looking forward
   - Permanency

2. Social Support Survey
3. Community Resources Survey
4. Financial Literacy Survey
5. Youth Services Survey
6. Client Employability Profile
**Evaluation Protocol**

**Started July 2016**

1. **Client enrolls in ITSP**
2. **Client completes intake packet with help of TDS within 14 days**
3. **TDS submits packet to REC**
4. **REC generates intake report and submits to TDS and supervisor within 1 week**
5. **REC sends monthly reminders to ITSP staff**
6. **After 3 months, client completes follow-up packet**
7. **TDS submits packet to REC**
8. **REC generates follow-up report and submits to TDS and supervisor within 1 week**
Activity:
Interpreting and Responding to Client Individual Reports
Individual Report: Barriers to Employability

- Housing: 1
- Job Search Skills: 4
- Communication: 2
- Education and Training: 3
- Transportation: 1
- Mental Health: 0
- Child Care: 3
- Prior Record: 0
Individual Report: Life Skills

- Daily Living: 4.1
- Housing and Money Management: 2.2
- Self Care: 4.5
- Relationships and Communication: 2.7
- Work and Study Life: 3.7
- Career and Education Planning: 5
Individual Report: Financial Knowledge

Apply for credit card: 1
Manage credit cards: 2
Get credit report: 1
Improve credit score: 1
Open checking account: 2
Create household budget: 3
Pay bills on time: 4
File taxes: 1
Pay off debts: 4
Find financial resources: 3
Any questions so far?
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Program Outcomes
Casey Life Skills Levels (required)

After twelve months...

Level 1: 70% → 93%
Level 2: 
Level 3: 

N = 149
Casey Life Skills

After six and twelve months...

- Career & education planning: +20%
- Housing & money management: +20%
- Work & study life: +12%

N = 149
Social Support

After twelve months...

To turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem
Who you can count on to listen when you need to talk
To give you good advice about a crisis
To share your most private worries and fears with

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intake</th>
<th>12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who you can count on to listen when you need to talk</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To give you good advice about a crisis</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share your most private worries and fears with</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All % change significant at $p < .05$

High needs clients only, $n = 76$
Social Support

After twelve months...

None of the time  A little of the time  Some of the time  Most of the time  All of the time

High needs clients only, n = 76
Financial Knowledge

After twelve months...

- How to apply for a credit card: +110%
- How to get my credit score: +203%
- How to understand and improve my credit score: +215%
- How to create a household budget: +125%
- How to file my taxes: +260%
- How to pay off debts: +147%
- How to find financial resources: +151%

All % change significant at $p < .05$

$N = 149$
Financial Knowledge

After six months...

N = 149
Financial Knowledge

After *twelve months*...

- Almost nothing
- A little
- Some
- Quite a bit
- A lot

*N = 149*
Satisfaction with Community Resources

*After twelve months...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Intake</th>
<th>12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All % change significant at \( p < .05 \)  

\( N = 149 \)
Satisfaction with Community Resources

After **twelve months**...

Very satisfied

Neutral

Satisfied

Very dissatisfied

$N = 149$
Youth Services Survey (YSS)

- 97% Satisfied with program
- 90% Got as much help as needed
- 95% Felt respected by staff
- 83% Doing better in school
- 84% Better at handling daily life

N = 149
Leaf was very supportive through all drastic situations in my life and helped me see things in different perspectives. I really enjoyed every moment of it.

This program has helped me and is consistent, and if I ever needed something, they've shown that they would be happy to help.

I appreciate all the little steps that we took together your always there when I need you the most always.

I appreciate my mentor for going above and beyond in doing his job. I never have to bug him, he always gets stuff done in a timely fashion, and he is great for suggestions.

Leaf was very supportive through all drastic situations in my life and helped me see things in different perspectives. I really enjoyed every moment of it.

Very professional, well educated staff who know what they're doing and serve the right population of people in good manner.

Leaf is amazing, most nicest person I've seen in my life, changed me in a good way.

Natalie is a great worker. I mean it. I've had many. I enjoy spending time with her. She's always on everything, managing time, providing me with things I ask for! Thank you <3
Ask a TDS: Common Challenges

- Keeping the momentum
- Building rapport
- Multiple workers
- Program duration
- Age of referral
- Drug use
- Education credits

“Foster youth move a lot, sometimes in the middle of the school year, and their credits won’t always transfer. Grades can start to slip. We try as much as we can to make sure they have all the credits they need to apply to college but it’s not always possible.”

- Leaf
Ask a TDS: Rewards

- TAY meeting goals and being proud
- Seeing self-advocacy and independence develop
- “The little things”

“I have one TAY whose case I am always on about the way she writes emails. The other day she cc’d me on a nice email to her lawyer and she had included all of the required documents and was able to take care of the issue herself. That was a great feeling.”

- Jacqueline
Ask a TDS: Why does ITSP work?

- Individualization
- TDS as role model
- Field-based approach
- Focus on building trust
- Focus on building self-sufficiency
- “Whatever it takes”

“The most important thing is consistency, keeping your word. We show up every time, for the good and the bad. If we didn’t, we’d be recycling what the system may already have been doing to them for years.”

-Kayo

https://youtu.be/I88pRqkkF6g
Two Case Studies
Any questions?

Email: vstieflerjohnson@childrensinstitute.org