

# Transitioning Youth Overview

***“All children have the right to live in a permanent family and to timely permanency decisions, as these are critical to the health and welfare of dependent children.”***

***- Mission & Guiding Principles for  
Pennsylvania’s Child Dependency System***

“All” children need a safe, permanent family. This is especially true for older foster youth making the multifaceted transition from childhood to adulthood. While some youth are ready and eager for the responsibilities of adult life, many are not. The support of a family in this transition can significantly help these young people. For foster youth, many who have experienced multiple placements, the transition to adult life can be overwhelming and have dismal outcomes. A permanent connection to a safe, loving family is vital for these foster youth.

With the overarching belief that older youth leaving care should have a permanent home and safe, adult connections; this section highlights the many challenges faced by “aging out” foster youth. Specifically this section encourages judges to address issues unique to this population and ensure older youth are fully prepared for and supported in their transition.

This section includes two primary articles that provide an overview of the topic and ten additional resource citations. The articles encourage judges to consider adoption as a permanence option for older youth, to seek kinship placements as a priority, and to ensure those youth “aging out” are prepared long before they leave care.

Finally, additional resources include a practitioner’s guide for judges and attorneys, a commonly asked questions citation and a report which draws conclusions primarily from the individual experiences of former foster youth. These additional resources, combined with the Dependency Benchbook Chapter 15.6 can assist judges as they ensure transitioning youth are well prepared for the many challenges and opportunities found in adulthood.

