

Youth Connections

Introduction:

Youth Connections is the agency process utilized for preparing youth 14-21 years for Adult Living. It provides a continuum of services which ensures youth an opportunity of having a life long family connection as they prepare for adulthood.

The initial Youth Connections Conference is convened when the youth is 14 years old and has no permanent family connection. Subsequent conferences are held when the youth is 15 ½ - 16 years old. At this point the youth is being introduced to preparation for adulthood through independent living skills training. Additionally, if there still is not a permanent family resource identified further exploration of possible resources is discussed at this conference. Between the ages of 17-21 the final Youth Connection Conferences are held to discuss Transition Planning, and if necessary the further exploration of Life Long Family Connections that the youth will have long after they transition from care.

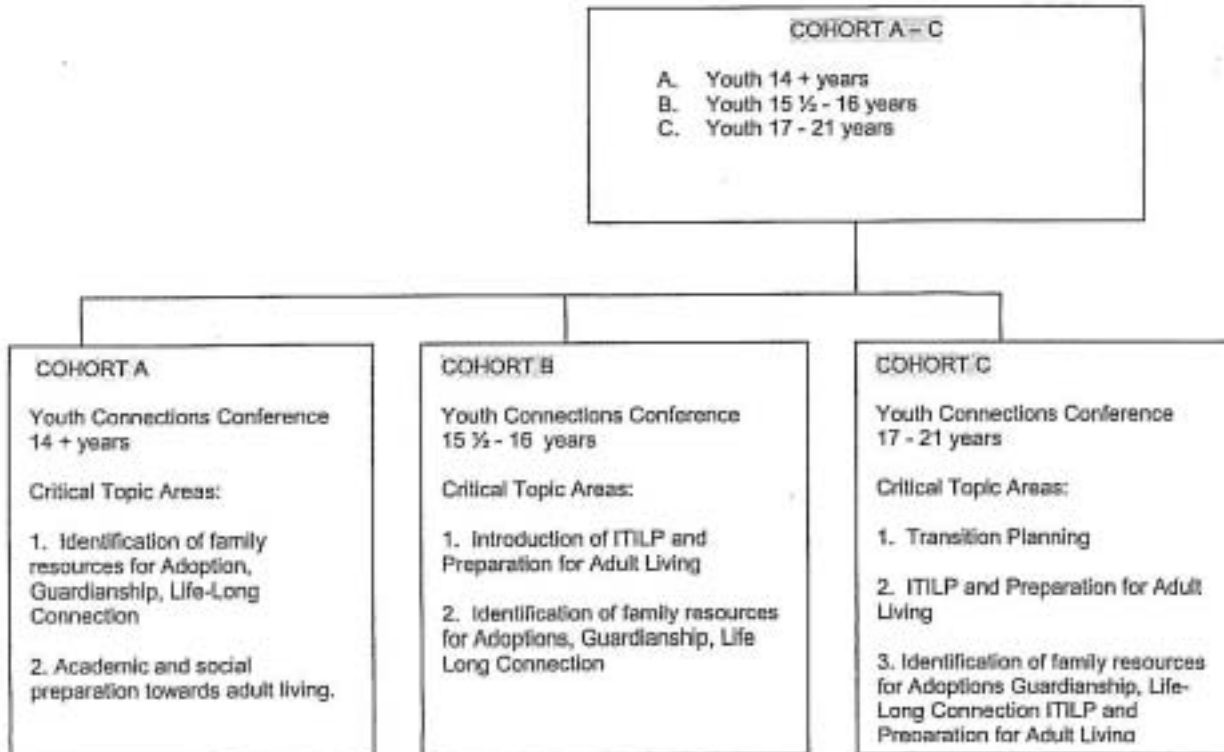
However, the model supports and allows youth to enter the continuum at any age and being eligible for a Youth Connections staffing to address specific goals appropriate for that youth to prepare for adulthood, explore a life long family connection and achieve permanency.

As a final process along the continuum, Youth Transition Planning Conferences (YTP) will occur with increased frequency and intensity to assist youth transitioning from care with a viable transition plan.

In partnership with Community Collaboratives, YTP Conferences will be held and a written transition plan shall be developed at least twelve (12) months prior to the youth's anticipated transition from care. Subsequent YTP follow-up conferences shall be coordinated and held by the Social Workers every three (3) months, within the twelve (12) months prior to the youth's anticipated transition from care.

The following chart depicts the process that the target population will move through in the permanency continuum.

Youth Connections



Brief description of the Youth Connections Implementation Plan

COHORT A

Youth Connections facilitator and social worker meet with youth to discuss permanency options. Youth identifies preferred option and indicates people whom s/he wants to invite to a planning meeting (YCC). The social worker suggests additional people that should be considered (i.e.: service providers, OYD advisory group member, etc.).

This information is shared with the YC coordinator who then manages outreach to invited participants, scheduling, conference logistics, etc.

The Youth Connection (YCC) is convened. Youth and guests participate. Facilitator guides process and discussion. The permanency plan is established which takes into account the following critical topic areas:

- 1. Identification of family resources for Adoption, Guardianship, Life-Long Connection.**
- 2. Academic and social preparation towards adult living.**

The social worker oversees the implementation of the plan, which may include any of the permanency options identified for the youth.

The YC Coordinator will follow-up with the social worker every 90 days until the permanency plan is achieved.

COHORT B

Youth Connections facilitator and social worker meet with youth to discuss permanency options. Youth identifies preferred option and indicates people whom s/he wants to invite to a planning meeting (YCC). The social worker suggests additional people that should be considered (i.e.: service providers, OYD advisory group member, etc.).

This information is shared with the YC coordinator who then manages outreach to invited participants, scheduling, conference logistics, etc.

The Youth Connection (YCC) is convened. Youth and guests participate. Facilitator guides process and discussion. The permanency plan is established which takes into account the following critical topic areas:

- 1. Introduction of ITILP and Preparation for Adult Living.**
- 2. Identification of family resources for Adoptions, Guardianship, Life Long Connection.**

The social worker oversees the implementation of the plan, which may include any of the permanency options identified in the Brief Description section of this paper.

The YC Coordinator will follow-up with the social worker every 90 days until the permanency plan is achieved.

COHORT C

Youth Connections facilitator and social worker meet with youth to discuss permanency options. Youth identifies preferred option and indicates people whom s/he wants to invite to a planning meeting (YCC). The social worker suggests additional people that should be considered (i.e.: service providers, OYD advisory group member, etc.).

This information is shared with the YC coordinator who then manages outreach to invited participants, scheduling, conference logistics, etc.

The Youth Connection (YCC) is convened. Youth and guests participate. Facilitator guides process and discussion. The permanency plan is established which takes into account the following critical topic areas:

1. **Transition Planning**
2. **ITILP and Preparation for Adult Living**
3. **Identification of family resources for Adoptions guardianship, Life-Long Connection ITILP and Preparation for Adult Living.**

Youth Connections facilitator will convene initial YTP conferences with social workers facilitating Subsequent follow-up conferences every (3) months within the twelve (12) months prior to the youth's transition from care.