WHAT’S NEW WITH THE CALIFORNIA FOSTERING CONNECTIONS TO SUCCESS ACT
The Basics

Jennifer Lorson, Children’s Law Center
Overview and Eligibility of Extended Foster Care
Extended Foster Care Goals

- Help youth establish lifelong connections to caring adults before transitioning to full independence
- Create a collaborative youth-centered environment
- Work proactively with youth in developing and reaching their independent living goals
- Allow youth to gain real life experience with independence and allow them to learn from their mistakes
- Provide a safety net for the most vulnerable youth so they can be successful as independent adults
- Promotes permanency for foster youth
Who is Eligible?

Eligible youth include:

- Nonminor dependents who had an order for foster care placement on their 18th birthday and who have not reached 21 years of age are eligible to re-enter.
- Nonminor former dependent youth with relative guardian and non-related legal guardians or who was adopted who experienced the death of a legal guardian or adoptive parent(s) and who still satisfy age criteria (18-20).
- Nonminor former dependents whose former guardian or adoptive parents no longer provide ongoing support to, and no longer receive payment on behalf of, the nonminor and who still satisfy age criteria (18-20).
  - New as of January 1st, 2015 (AB 2454)
NMD = Open Court Case

- 18-21 years old
- Open court case under
  - dependency (300),
  - transition (450) or
  - delinquency (602) jurisdiction
- Foster care placement order on 18th birthday
EFC Participation Requirements

Youth **MUST** Meet One of the following:

1. Be enrolled in high school or equivalent program;
2. Be enrolled in college/vocational school in at least 6 units;
3. Work at least 80 hours/month (this CANNOT be an unpaid internship);
4. Participate in a program/activity that helps you find a job or removes barriers to employment; and/or
5. Be unable to do one of the above because of a medical or mental health condition, that has been diagnosed by a physician.
Impact of Extended Foster Care

602 and 450 Youth

1) Wards still on probation who had the order for placement on their 18th birthday ("602 NMDs").

2) Wards over 17 yrs, 5 months in placement who have met their rehabilitative goals are eligible to have delinquency jurisdiction modified to transition jurisdiction ("450 NMDs” if 18 or over, OR “transition dependents” if younger than 18).
450 Youth: Transition Jurisdiction

- **How is this different from delinquency jurisdiction?**
  - Youth are not subject to any terms or conditions of probation. *WIC 451(b)*
  - The case is managed as if the youth is a dependent (if the youth is a minor) or a non-minor dependent (if the youth is an adult). *WIC 451(b)*

- **Why create this new jurisdiction?**
  - Important for eligible youth to be able to take advantage of extended benefits without remaining on probation/under delinquency supervision.
  - Encourages former delinquent youth who may otherwise opt out to participate in services.
Youth in Guardianships and Adoptions

- Non-Related Legal Guardian can continue to receive AFDC-FC benefits until the youth is 21 no matter when the guardianship was established.

- Relative receiving Kin-GAP can continue to receive until youth is 21 if Kin-GAP payments commenced when youth was age 16 or older OR Youth has verified disability.

- Adoptive parents can continue to receive AAP until the youth is 21 if AAP payments commenced when youth was age 16 or older OR youth has “mental or physical handicap Section content.”
Who May Re-enter?

- If a meets the definition of NMD, they may re-enter foster care until their 21st birthday

- Non-minors eligible for re-entry:
  - Relative guardian or adoptive parent (created after age 16) passes away before youth turns 21.
  - AB2454 – no support by guardian or adoptive parent after youth turns 18 but before turns 21.

- Youth not eligible for re-entry:
  - Home of Parent/Probation before 18
  - Emancipated before 18
Placement Options and Financial Benefits

Hellen Hong
First Place for Youth
Placement Options for Non Minor Dependants (NMD)

- **Traditional placement options still available to NMDs:**
  - Foster Home:
    - Approved home of relative or Non Relative Extended Family Members
    - Home of a Nonrelated Legal Guardian
  - Foster Family Home
  - Certified home of an FFA (includes ITFC)
  - Group Home (with limitations)
  - Small Family Home/Dual Agency Regional Center Homes

- **2 New Placements for NMDs**
  - THP+Foster Care
  - Supervised Independent Living (SILP)
Deeper into Eligibility

• THP + Foster Care and SILPs are only available to **Non-Minor Dependents**.

• The following are **not** NMD and **not** eligible:
  - Court case closed before 18th birthday
    - Non minor former dependents living with Non-Relative Legal Guardians
    - Non minor former dependents living with relatives and receiving KinGap funding
    - Non minor former dependents who were adopted out of foster care and are receiving Adoption Assistance Program (AAP)
  - Any youth who are in guardianships established in probate court

• **Other Exclusions:**
  - Married youth
  - Youth in the military
THP+FC Housing Models

- **Host Family**: Where the NMD lives with a caring adult who has been selected and approved by the transition housing placement provider.

- **Single Site**: Where NMD lives in an apartment, condo, or single family dwelling, rented or leased by THP+FC Provider, in which one or more adult employee of the THP+FC provider resides on site.

- **Remote Site/Scattered Site**: Where NMD lives in a single housing unit rented or leased by the Housing Provider. NMD lives independently but receives regular supervision from the Provider.
Supportive Services

- Furnished Apartments
- Monthly Allowance for NMD to purchase food and personal items (if required by contract)
- Skill building for independent living
  - Supporting Educational Goals
  - Financial Literacy and Budgeting
  - Employment Training
  - Daily Living Skills
- Building Permanent Connections and Navigating Community Resources
- Focus on education and employment
The First Place Program

**Safe, Stable Housing**
Scattered-site apartments are conveniently located with access to public transportation, community colleges and work opportunities.

**Intensive Case Management**
Youth Advocates (case managers) support young people in setting goals to develop self-esteem and move them toward greater independence.

**Education and Employment**
Staff specialists give youth the tools to finish high school, enroll in post-secondary education and secure sustainable living-wage employment.

**Healthy Living Skills**
Community resource centers offer workshops to help youth balance physical, mental, and emotional health, covering everything from financial literacy to personal well being to parenting skills.
A NMD’s Point of View

SIERRA ROOKS
## Learnings

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<td>Navigating new systems as a placement option</td>
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<td>Working to move youth from dependence to interdependence</td>
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<td>Increase of youth in high school or in need of GED completion</td>
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<td>Guiding basic life skills in an independent setting</td>
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<td>Younger parents, education and parenting support, retaining custody, childcare and pregnancy prevention</td>
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<td>Safety and violence in the community</td>
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<td>Youth learning to balance increased freedom with accountability</td>
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<td>Helping youth transition into responsible adulthood</td>
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## Tips

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<td>Keep multiple copies of “Ward of the Court” letter for each department (Financial Aid, Registrar, etc)</td>
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<td>Ensure youth maximizes priority registration</td>
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<td>Walk through simple processes that may impact Youth – Ex: Not paying Health Fees that may impact registration</td>
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<td>Provide Partners (CASA, Providers etc) deadlines for book vouchers, process to support</td>
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<td>Ease into the PSE with a balanced course load based on youth to build early success (I.e., 3 courses instead of full load)</td>
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<td>Invite Case Manager/Support persons to meetings</td>
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<td>Connect with tutoring and directly connecting them with campus resources (personally walking them over and introducing them to another contact)</td>
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Contacts Resources

- THP Plus Contacts:
  - County Contacts:
  - Provider Contacts (and type of housing):
- THP+FC Provider Contacts (and type of housing):
Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) settings may include but not limited to:

- Apartment living
- Renting a room (*including w/ a relative*)
- Shared roommate settings
- Dorms
- Living situations with adult siblings, appropriate extended family members, tribal members, NREFM or mentors should be explored
SILP Monthly Benefit

- Limited to the basic rate ($859/month)
- NMDs can receive the foster care benefit directly
- Clothing allowance available
- Parenting NMDs receive the infant supplement ($411/month)
- Parenting Support Plan ($200/month)
- Specialized care increment not available
SILP Approval Process

Youth finds place to live
Requests SILP approval
Readiness assessment
Home Inspection
Readiness Assessment

- Required for all NMDs in SILPs *except* those in student approved housing/dormitories
- NMD & SW/PO should work together to assess readiness
- Some SILP types require more independence than others
Readiness Assessment

To assess whether NMD has a feasible financial plan:
- can afford identified housing
- has stable income

To assess whether NMD has knowledge of financial skills:
- e.g. budgeting, managing money

To assess whether NMD is developmentally ready to handle daily tasks on their own:
- e.g. grocery shopping, preparing meals, self care, paying bills, transportation, etc.

To assess whether NMD has the ability to handle independence:
- e.g. waking up in time for work or school, stress/anger management, decision-making
Helpful tools for NMDs who express need for assistance with preparing his/her budget for readiness assessment:

- Budgeting tool included in *Young Adult’s Guide to Housing*
  - Select option 1: Reality Check
  - Tool is great for NMDs to explore housing costs in their county
Readiness Assessment Denials

- Rent & utilities exceed income
- Unstable income
- No knowledge of how to manage money
- Unable to care for self without assistance due to a medical or mental health condition (as cited in ACL 11-77)

Examples of reasons for denial:
Finding and Maintaining Housing

- *Foster Youth’s Guide to Housing* can be found at [http://www.cacollegepathways.org/college-housing-options-foster-youth](http://www.cacollegepathways.org/college-housing-options-foster-youth)

- Guidebook provides resources and direction on:
  - Budgeting
  - Searching for housing
  - Applying for housing
  - Getting established
  - Maintaining housing
Resources for Foster Youth

- [WWW.ILPONLINE.org](http://WWW.ILPONLINE.org) DCFS’ TAY website
- [WWW.211.org](http://WWW.211.org) Click on “Youth Services”
- [WWW.ifoster.org](http://WWW.ifoster.org) iFoster: Free resources
- [WWW.mylifemyrighst.org](http://WWW.mylifemyrighst.org) Public Counsel
- [http://kids-alliance.org/app/](http://kids-alliance.org/app/) “Know Before You Go (B4UGO)” smartphone application by Alliance for Children’s Rights
- [WWW.clccal.org](http://WWW.clccal.org) Children’s Law Center Los Angeles
Questions?