# Child Welfare Workgroup Notes

**9/25/18**

Attendance

Emily Green, Franklin County Children Services

Kristina Knight, My Place

Cassie Snyder, FCCS

Nicki Thomas, Children’s Defense Fund

Melanie Gunther, Huckleberry House

Tom Albanese, CSB

Donta’ Green, FCCS

Brad Gregg, FCCS

Aliyah, YAB

Oak, YAB

Kyra, YAB

Candelaria “Candy” Mota – NYAP

Chynna Kelley, Bridges

Aubre Jones, CSB

Destany H., YAB

Lisa Dickson, Foster Action Ohio

Jennifer Foster, Contract Work (former TVN)

Jennifer McKenzie – Starfish Alliance

## Gaps/Needs

* Better understanding of how youth interact with the foster care and homelessness.
  + Some youth go into the foster care system because they are minors and present as homeless
  + Some youth are in foster care and then are adopted or reunited with family before age 18 and therefore do not technically age out of foster care, and therefore do not qualify for some services.
  + Other foster involved youth, will emancipate before their 18th birthday, meaning they may not have any formal supports.
  + Some youth stay in foster care until their 18th birthday and age out of the system with no formal long-term supports outside the foster care systems.
* More data and information related to how pregnant and parenting YYA interact with the child welfare systems
  + Need to recognize the unique needs of young parents whose homelessness and unstable housing may result in a referral to FCCS.
  + Children who are experiencing homelessness whose children are not in their care due to FCCS involvement, but who would like to be reunified with their children
* Problems with how permanency is defined for older youth, which may contribute to youth being at-risk for homelessness.
  + Permanency planning involves decisive, time-limited, goal-oriented activities to maintain children within their families of origin or place them with other permanent families.
  + Recommended to make the rules for permanency more lenient for older youth
* Issues with foster care youth case planning, when concurrent planning is not used.
  + Youth aging out of the foster care system, are held accountable to the plan set by them and their case work. If this plan, does not work out they can be denied services, which could contribute to homelessness.
  + Concurrent planning is where youth have multiple plans on what an acceptable course of action is. For example, plan A may be to attend college, if this doesn’t work out for any reasons, Plan B is to live with Uncle Sam, if this doesn’t work out it is to go to Grandmas, etc. This allows success to be more fluid and allows for backslides that natural occur with these populations. Systems should acknowledge this.
* Foster Care Parent and Kinship Care Accountability
  + Training for these providers regarding the importance of life skills and normalcy and to allow the young adult to mess up and explore life on their own
  + Allowing the foster parent to allow youth to fumble and learn for themselves
* More programs like My Place
  + It provides a fluid plan. It prepares emancipated youth who want to return to their families as a way to do so.
* Youth want to be with their families? How do we work harder and more strategic with families, so youth can be reunited?
* Post emancipation programs
  + Lighthouse in Hamilton County makes a lot of sense and provides a continuum of care. It anticipates and understands the backslides youth might experience. It has foster homes, scattered site apartments, and case workers are within the housing complex.
  + Case workers are involved with the community work. The landlords are told instead of evicting a youth to call them, the case worker will get the youth out, avoiding an eviction on the record and finding another housing option.
  + It has group homes
  + As young adult’s mental health or family needs change, youth float within the system and will go to their own apartment, back to a group home, and then back to their own home.
  + There is also a community building comment – which is working on life skills, and building relationships, which increase social supports.
* There is a gap in quality of life skills received by youth in Franklin County
  + Foster parents need to be better trained in life skills
  + A more consistent model and quality checks of life skill improvements. Results depend on the privatized agency. There needs to be a system of accountability – pre and post test. Is this foster parent equipping this foster youth for success?
  + Youth example: I was in kinship care, no one taught me how to have meaningful life skills.
  + We wait until a youth is in the juvenile justice center or near homelessness before we intervene.
  + Youth don’t have the opportunity to use the life skills because the system does not provide those opportunities.
* Lack of navigation support
  + In Florida, as soon as young adult is 18 an independent work is assigned, we wait too late to give them an independent worker – teach them how to learn to drive, get documentation, and too long to step in.
  + Not using the life skills they need because of the systems. Two glaring gaps – one is thinking about training and relying of foster parent and expectation. At the end of the day signed up for.
* Examine how we revise the system, so our youth are not aging out of system into poverty, with no supports and help for self-sufficiency.
  + Better understanding of the cultural contexts and why youth may be coming through the homeless corridor to receive services – they have learned this is how it is done. “If I go to shelter, I will go through CPO management”
  + Former Foster Youth Story: When I had a child at 24, I didn’t know you had to pay for childcare. If youth are growing up in a home with poverty – we need access to other ideas and understanding of other pathways.
  + More support for youth who have not been the foster care system – who need the support, but do not have the Plan B and finding a support system like Star or Huckleberry house that talks more about why are you here and how can we help on ongoing plan for multiyear.
* Lack of crisis planning and ongoing support
* Benefits cliff and the lack of the family support
* Safety for younger youth because they were not street wise
  + They don’t know if someone is trying to manipulate or pathological liar
  + Emotional abuse and not recognizing the signs of this
  + Understanding the cultural dynamics of youth in the system
* Youth who were not raised to put their name in a system – too much pride to ask for help
  + Work to destigmatize the system
* Lack of navigation services
  + Don’t know who qualifies for what programs and what is out there
  + Confusing and difficult to get linked to needed services and benefits
* Lack of services and supports for low functioning youth and young adults who do not meet the DD services qualifications. Yet, they are unable to maintain support for themselves.

## Dream Big – What Services Should We Have to Address Needs/Gaps?

* More Housing Options with programming attached to them
  + Can we have My Plan, Star House, Huckleberry House, or Lighthouse Model with more beds
  + Covenant House as a model to examine -- crisis shelter, transitional shelter, and apartments
  + Beyond housing work on Developmental piece, life skills
  + Like My Place – staff on sight 24/7; they work and walk youth through their problems
* Youth-Focused Shelter
  + Shelter specific to youth (broken it up by age)
  + Staff who understand youth and trauma
  + Provide services on sight – classes, benefits, day care, etc., help getting transcripts, etc.
* One stop shop – for youth
  + Example models – Dayton, Reeb, etc.
  + Day Care
  + JFS that can screen for everything – housing, transition, navigation support, where youth can go, ect.
  + Structural activities for recreation and place for connectedness and structure
  + Linkages and build social connected – link them to bigger communities.
  + Multiple locations
  + Collocated in libraries and or rec centers
  + Rehab abandon buildings to rehabilitate them
* Transitional shelter
  + Longer length of says 6-9 months
  + A door that shuts – a place where they youth can feel safe and switch over to the part of their brain that allows them to think and reason.
* Housing for Families
  + Single fathers
  + Non-married nuclear families
* Increase training for foster parents and child welfare staff
  + Life skills – interviewing, confidence, self-esteem, budgeting, cooking
  + Intervention of these things at a much younger age
  + Individualize plans as youth look very different
  + Accountability – foster parents will not get paid if they do not provide these things
  + are properly trained on life skills – interviews, confident, self-esteem skills, budget, cook, intervene at a much young age – we might solve the problem, staffing, individualized, and very kids are different. You will not get paid if you do not teach them these life skills.
* Extending foster care to age 21
* Host Homes
  + Temporary 90 day stay
  + Crisis host homes
  + Transitional host home.
* After Care Programs: Examine for who qualifies for programs liked Bridges and COVA, and for those who do not, create other programs
  + Bridges – to qualify need to be enrolled in secondary education (accredited by department of ed) or post-secondary, or working 80 hours of month average, or participating in a program to reduce barriers to employment, or incapable of doing any of the other above due to physical or meeting a tradition. Need to have aged out of foster care on or after your 18th birthday to qualify.
  + CCAP???
* Youth Resources Navigator/ Rights Navigator
  + Advocacy support for pregnant and parenting youth/ Navigation support
* Have nothing for parenting youth under 18 who do not want to be reunited to my family.
* Mobile App
  + Virtual assistant
  + Have youth design it
  + Make it anonymous to use, useless it is appointments.
  + If they can get to any spot that has the Wi-Fi – virtual access to assistance. Youth design it and not having to put a name – anonymous – appointment some services and shared between profile. Virtual assistance – care coordinator – advise and connect COTA, employment app, more self-directed and center around the person.
* Evaluating the services and make sure they are successful and providing accountability and checking
* NCH – being the accountable care organization to provide care coordinated?
  + As long as young adults get good services. If it is done right.
  + Monitoring and evaluation – youth should be involved in providing their feedback.
  + People with lived experiences or work closely with these populations
  + Would want the staff who have lived that experience and or trained how to connect.
  + Must have the training with this population. If staff doesn’t understand what trauma-informed for trauma care.
* Peer-to-peer support is best