




**Tom C. Rawlings**  
Director



**GEORGIA RESILIENT.** YOUTH-CENTERED. STABLE. EMPOWERED.

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**JOHN H. CHAFEE PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD**



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To provide eligible youth with opportunities to successfully prepare for adulthood through appropriate referral resources and connections provided by community partners. For years, adolescents who left foster care have experienced significant challenges in successfully transitioning to adulthood.

Georgia recognized that without appropriate services, planning and support, these youth demonstrated higher rates of homelessness, unemployment, poverty, delinquent or criminal behaviors, and dependence on various types of public assistance.

In response to these identified transition challenges, Georgia implemented standards in support of Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Education Training Vouchers (ETV).



# OUR MISSION



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To ensure youth are stable, healthy,  
connected, employed, and educated.



**OUR  
VISION**

# Eligibility Requirements:

Young people in foster care ages 14-21 may be determined eligible for the Independent Living Program when the following criteria are met:

- The youth has been adjudicated as dependent or as a child in need of services (CHINS) by a Georgia Juvenile Court; and
- The youth is or was in foster care for at least (6) months prior to reaching the age of 18;
  - *All eligible youth must be in care at some point on or after their 14th birthday. A youth could accumulate the six months prior to 14 years old and be eligible for some after care services.*
- Youth 18-21 is a citizen and/or permanent legal resident of Georgia.



The GARYSE Chafee Program focuses on building the following protective and promotive factors for youth in foster care, based on the Youth Thrive Framework:

- **They are physically and emotionally healthy**
  - *Assuring the youth can meet their own physical and mental health needs by ensuring access to health insurance*
- **They become hopeful, optimistic, compassionate, curious, and resilient**
  - *Avoidance of High-Risk Behaviors: Empowering youth to be productive and responsible members of the community*
- **They are able to form and sustain caring, supportive, and committed relationships**
  - *Ensuring youth have permanent social connections with responsible and supportive adults and peers*
- **They are successful in school and work**
  - *Achievement of high school diploma, GED, & hopeful completion of a secondary education program*
  - *Financial self-sufficiency through employment and community service opportunities that allow the youth to develop job readiness skills*
- **They are able to obtain and maintain stable housing to prevent homelessness**



**We don't have much time!**

**Intact Families**

18 Years

216 Months

939 Weeks

6,574 Days

157,776 Hours





## We don't have much time!

Intact Families	FC ILP-14+
18 Years	4 Years
216 Months	48 months
939 Weeks	209 Weeks
6,574 Days	1,461 Days
157,776 Hours	35,064 Hours





## We don't have much time!

Intact Families	FC ILP-14+	Average Time In Care 14-17 Years
18 Years	4 Years	About 2 Years
216 Months	48 months	21.47 Months
939 Weeks	209 Weeks	94 Weeks
6,574 Days	1,461 Days	658 Days
157,776 Hours	35,064 Hours	15,792 Hours



How are we  
preparing them?



# Case Planning From a Legal Perspective





Why involve youth in case planning? Um well cause....

# Fostering Connections Act of 2008

- Requires that a transition plan is developed for youth exiting foster care
- Must be developed at least 90 days before the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, or the age required by the state for aging out of care
- Must be developed with the youth, their case manager, and other representatives of the youth's choosing
- Should include elements such as housing, education, employment, mentoring, and continued supporters.

# Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014

- Requires that children age 14 and older be consulted in the development of their case plan
- Directs states to allow youth to invite TWO other members identified by the youth (other than their foster parent or case worker) to be a part of the case planning team\*
- Requires states to provide a written list of “Youth Rights” to youth ages 14 and older outlining their rights to education, healthcare, visitations, court hearings/participating, and the right to stay safe
- Requires states to provide youth with a free credit report



# Planning

## *Written Transitional Living Plan (WTLP)*

The WTLP is a written description of the programs and services that will assist the youth in preparing for the transition from foster care to independent living. Should be developed with the youth during a Transitional Round Table.

The WTLP serves as the guidepost to the internal and external programmatic connections necessary to support the youth's success.

### ***The WTLP must be completed within 30 day of:***

- A youth 14 years of age or older entering foster care; or a youth in foster care reaching 14 years of age;
- A youth reaching 18 years of age and participating in Extended Foster Care (EFC)
- A youth's participating in EFC after exiting custody at 18 years of age or older;
- Identifying additional needs for a youth with an existing WTLP, including those identified upon completion of the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA);
- New outcomes and tasks being ordered by the court; or g. The WTLP outcomes being achieved.



What's  
the  
plan?



# Transitional Meetings

The transitional meeting jointly develops specific plans to address permanent connections, housing, health insurance/health needs, education, job skills, independent living skills.

During these meetings – the youth's Written Transitional Living Plan is reviewed and discussed.

All transitional meetings begin at age 16 and must be held every six months after the initial meeting and continued through the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.



# Case Life Skills Assessment

- The Division utilizes the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA) to assess the life skills, strengths and vulnerabilities of youth ages 14-17 in foster care.
- It is administered within 15 calendar days of a youth ages 14 -17 entering foster care or a youth in foster care turning age 14.
- It measures a youth's confidence in their future and permanent connections to supportive adults
- Designed to be free from gender, ethnic or cultural biases
- The results of the CLSA are incorporated in the WTLP – and supportive life skills workshop trainings are provided to support identified needs

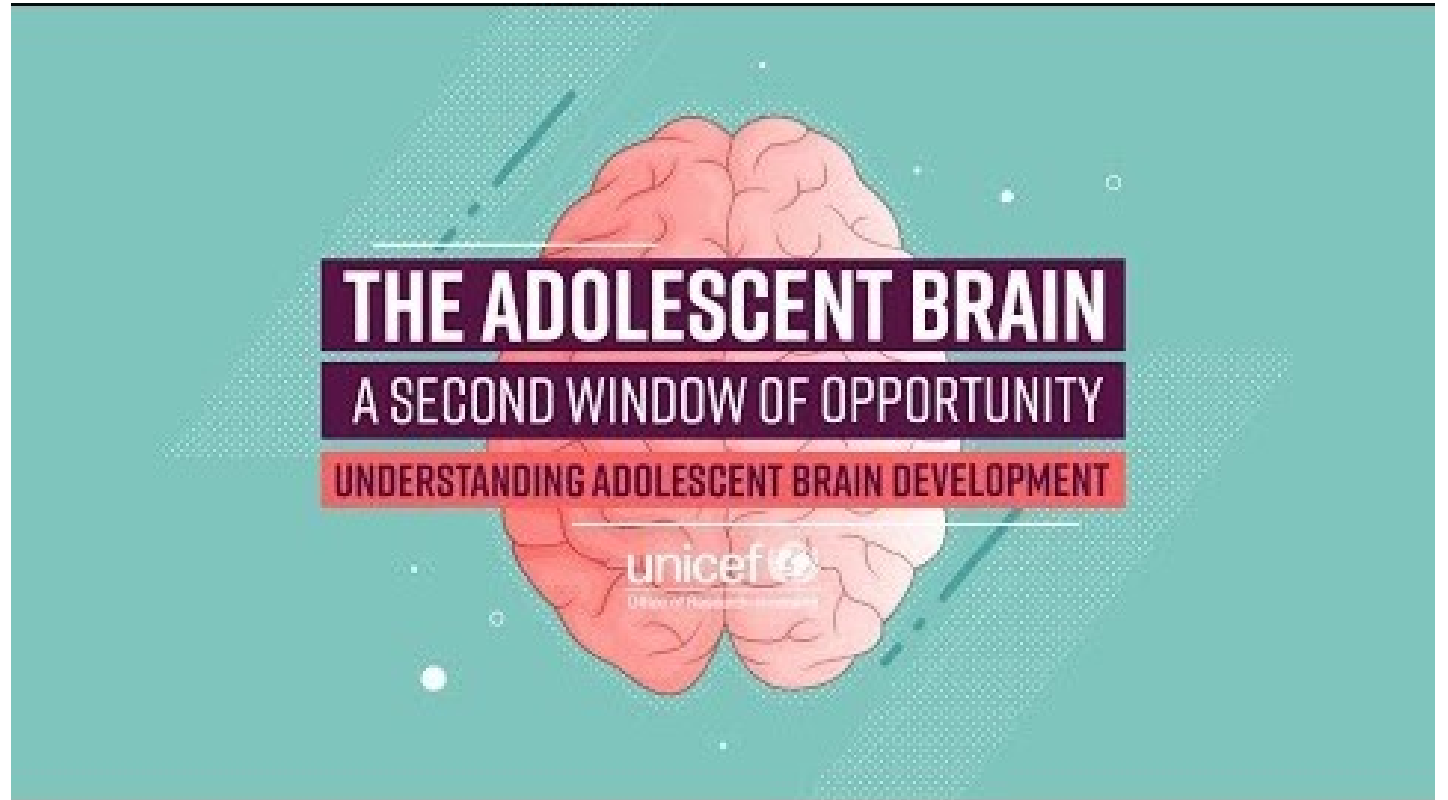




# Case Planning from A Physiological Perspective



But first let us  
discuss what's  
happening in  
their heads....







Midbrain

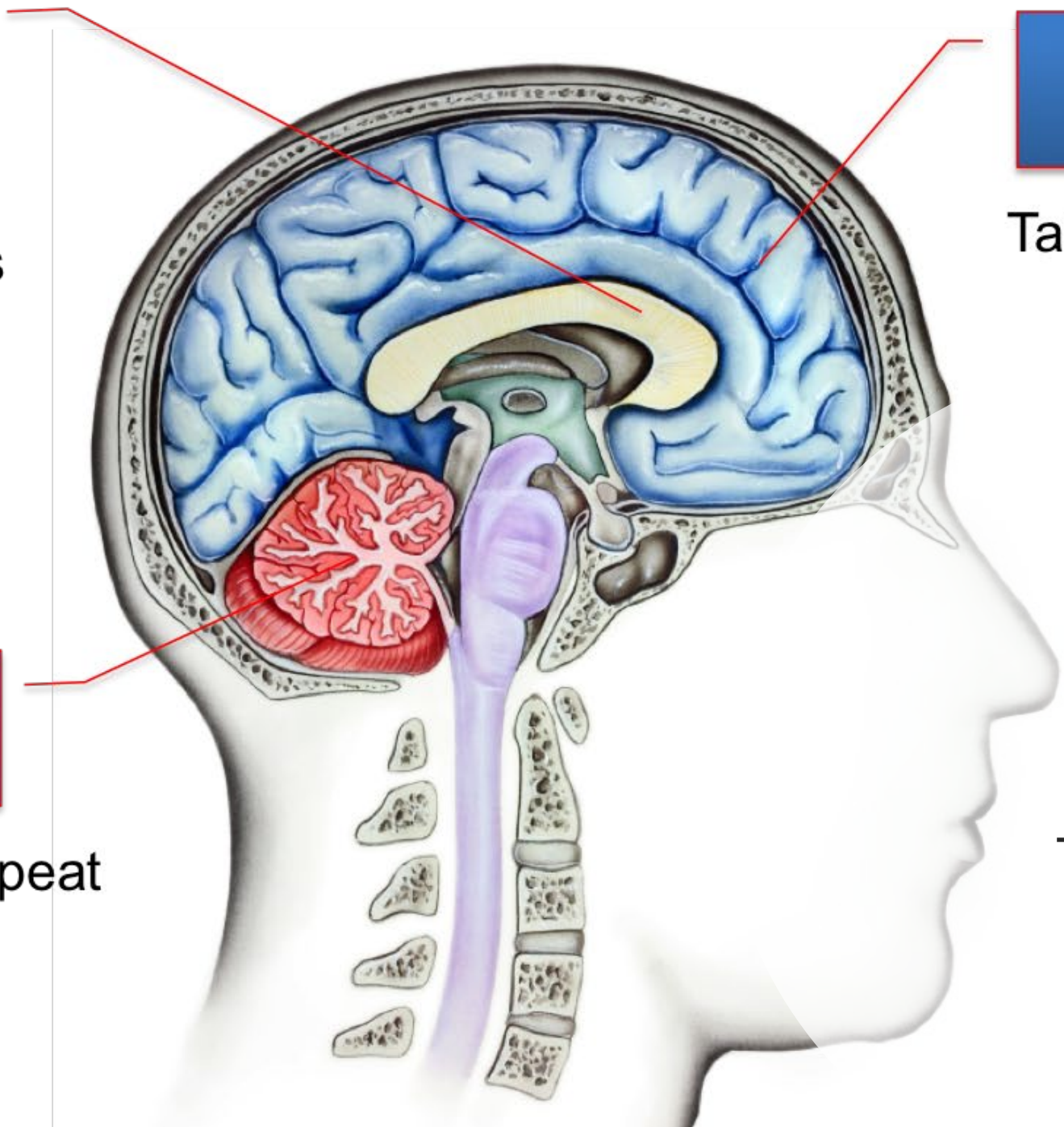
Feel – Remember  
Interact with others

Neocortex

Talk – Think – Move  
Create - Learn

Reptilian Brain

Survive – React – Repeat  
Repeat-Repeat



# What's happening in their heads when they are at the table...

- Rely heavily on the emotional center of the brain for decision making and are more likely to engage in risky behavior
- In foster care – youth experience stressful situations more frequently than their peers - vulnerable to making decisions under “hot cognition” – based on emotional arousal or peer pressure
  - Examples of “hot cognition” – changes in housing, facing discrimination, getting in trouble with peers, and feeling blamed
- Planning meetings present a space of “hot cognition” if the youth is not prepared or not given adequate time to process what is happening
- If they experienced a recent stressor before the planning meeting – they may be functioning in that space and operating from their reptilian brain

# Remember that they've experienced trauma....

- Trauma impacts key structures of the brain
  - Hippocampus that helps with memory and spatial navigation
  - Amygdala helps with emotional processing
  - Cortex – cognition and personality expression and moderating social behavior
- Trauma causes an intense, biological alarm state – a rush of adrenaline, cortisol and other hormones, as well as intense fear
  - They are not thinking – instead they are thinking on how can they fight against or flee what they perceive to be a threatening situation
  - Have trouble processing information
  - Brain adapts for survival



# Adolescent Stages of Development

## **Middle Adolescence (ages 15-17)**

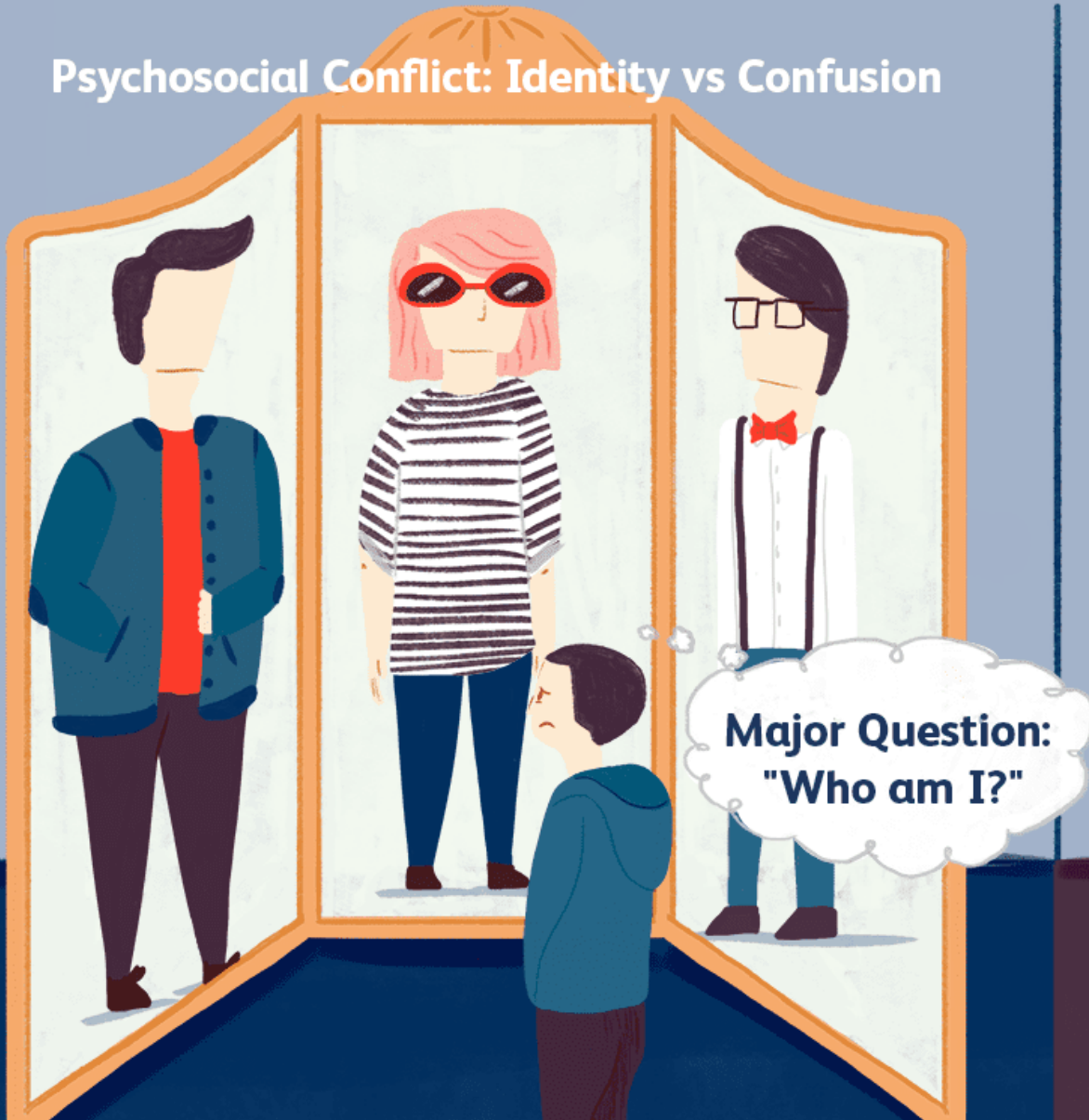
- Begin to set long-term goals
- Growing capacity for abstract thought
- Become interested in the meaning of life and moral reasoning
- During this stage they experience numerous social and emotional changes, increased self-involvement, and increased drive for independence

## **Late Adolescence/Young Adulthood**

- Fewer physical developments – more cognitive
- Gain ability to think rationally and delay gratification
- Plan for the future and gain a firm sense of identity
- Increased emotional stability and independence

# Adolescent Psychosocial Development

Psychosocial Conflict: Identity vs Confusion



Basic Virtue: Fidelity



Important Event: Social Relationships



Supporting Opportunities for  
Normalcy

The Pathway to  
Independence



# Opportunities for Normalcy

The GARYSE Chafee Program can provide fiscal support for youth to participate in activities that foster normalcy and independence. Such as:

- Engagement in extracurricular activities – *such as Band, Sports, School Clubs, etc.*
- Driver's Education Fees, Driver's License, and State ID
- Attendance to Prom
- Graduation Fees – *school pictures, class ring, senior portraits, yearbooks, announcements and invitations*
- Summer School attendance
- Providing Laptops/Computers



# Life Skills Workshops

The goal of the GARYSE/The Chafee Program Life Skill workshops are structured to provide ILP eligible youth with opportunities to learn valuable life skills designed to assist them in being self-sufficient when they decide to leave foster care at 18 or age out at 21.





# Life Skills Workshops Focus Topics....



Academic Support



Mental and Physical Well-being  
Awareness



Post Secondary Education Assistance



Career Preparation



# Life Skills Workshops Focus Topics....



How to build health  
relationships




Budgeting and Financial  
Management



Household Management



# Preparing for Transition

 The Pathway to  
Independence



# Extended Foster Care Provisions – County Letter August 2020

- A. Can remain in care until age 21
- B. Can return up until age 20 (*removes requirement of 6 months after 18<sup>th</sup> birthday*)
- C. Signing of VPA – within 5 days of 18 birthday, or their request to return to EFC if they previously opted out.
- D. Engagement with juvenile court – submission of court report to include the WTLP
- E. Establishes EFC criteria:
  - 1. Completing a secondary education or program leading to an equivalent
  - 2. credential (e.g. high school or GED);
  - 3. Enrolled in an institution which provides postsecondary or vocational education;
  - 4. Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment;
  - 5. Employed for at least 120 hours per month;
  - 6. Employed for 80 hours per month, provided that they are engaged in one of the activities described in 1-3 above or can only work 80 hours per month due to a medical condition; or
  - 7. Incapable of doing any of the activities described in 1- 4 above due to a medical condition, which incapability is supported by regularly updated information in the case plan of the young adult.

*Note: The 2020 Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act that has allowed exceptions for EFC due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Those exceptions expire 09/30/21.*

A woman with curly hair, wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt, is sitting on the floor in a room filled with cardboard boxes. She has her arms raised in the air and a joyful expression on her face, looking upwards. The boxes are stacked around her, some with red accents. One box in the foreground has a checklist with the following items:  KITCHEN,  LOUNGE,  GARAGE, and  OFFICE. Another box to the right has a checklist with:  DINING ROOM,  GUEST ROOM,  BATHROOM, and  BEDROOM. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a window is nearby.

# Determining Readiness for Independent Living Placement

Scattered Site Placement Readiness Assessment

# Determining Readiness for Scattered Site Placement Settings

Completion of the Scattered Site Placement Readiness Assessment – will be completed by the Independent Living Specialists for the youth's legal region

The purpose of this assessment tool is to determine participant readiness for placement in an Independent Living Scattered Site Placement setting on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **Scattered Site Placement Eligibility Requirements (*Non-negotiable*):**

To be considered for an Independent Living Scattered Site Placement the proposed participant must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Have a High school Diploma or GED

# Assessment Completion Timeline

- ▶ **Initial Assessment** - must be completed during the Transitional Meeting that occurs 90 Days Prior to the participant's 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday.
- ▶ **Re-Assessment After Denial** - participant cannot be reassessed for placement before 90 days following their initial assessment. *(e.g. Initial Assessment Denial occurs on 01/01/2021 – participant cannot be reassessed before 04/01/2021)*
  - *Participant will be empowered to submit their request for reassessment after the 90 day wait period. The participant must provide evidence of completion of readiness activities, goals, etc. during the re-assessment.*
- ▶ **Pre-Emptive Assessment** - An assessment may be completed no sooner than 6 months prior to the participant's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (17 years 6months). However, this option is only available if/when the participant may have areas that need to be addressed to improve the likelihood of placement when they turn 18. (e.g., participant experiences frequent placement changes, behavioral health needs, or other factors that impact their readiness). **This does not mean a participant may be placed prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.** This will allow the participant and their support network to develop an action plan to improve the participant's readiness upon reaching age 18.

# Assessment Criterion

The Prospective Participant will be assessed in a series of areas that were identified to determine their readiness to live independently with limited oversight and an expansion of liberties.

This tool will replace the Universal Application and may only be submitted to Scattered Site Placement Providers when the participant is approved for such placements.

A participant's functional capacity to live independently is determined by their knowledge, skills, and their behavioral history. Participant in foster care who have reached age 18 have the right to be assessed but are not guaranteed approval for placement.

This assessment will be a tool to assist the participant and their support network with determining whether they are ready for such placement. Participant do not have to demonstrate knowledge or capacity in every skill area to be approved.

However, elements of the assessment that attribute to concrete safety concerns for the participant, other placement residents, or the general public could adversely affect the participant's readiness (e.g., recent arrests for violent crimes, placement history, hospitalizations, self-harm tendencies).

If a participant is determined to not be ready for placement, an action plan must be developed. The length of time needed to complete identified action items may vary and should be commensurate to the participant's identified areas of need and availability of applicable and appropriate resources. Action items should not exceed six (6) months for completion.

# Assessment Criterion Areas

- **Self-Development and Independent Functioning**
- Education
- Household Management and Life Skills
- Mental Well-Being
- **Placement History**
- **Criminal History**
- Substance Abuse/Misuse
- Expectant and Parenting
- Physical and Reproductive Health
- Employment
- Financial Literacy/Understanding Credit
- Participant's Support Network





*Fiscal Supports for  
Former Foster  
Youth*

# Post-Foster Care Resources

# Post Foster Care Resources

*Child Welfare Policy Section 13.11*

The GARYSE Chafee Program provides the following Post Foster Care (PFC) services, as funding permits, to ILP eligible youth:

1. **Transitional Living Supportive Services:** Provides eligible youth with supportive services to assist in the development of daily living skills and supports the youth's transition from foster care to self-sufficiency;
2. **Emergency Financial Assistance:** Provides eligible youth with emergency financial assistance for up to 90 days in order to stabilize living conditions and/or personal circumstances;
3. **Post-Secondary Education Financial Support:** Provides eligible youth or youth who were adopted from foster care at age 16 or older with funds to provide financial support toward the completion of post-secondary education



# Independent Living Specialist

*Our Role in Supporting Youth Transition*



# Independent Living Specialist

Supports ILP eligible youth in foster care with connection to resources and supports

Works closely with case managers, placement providers, supportive connections, and external partners.

Processes fiscal requests for ILP related services

Attends TRTs, reviews WTLP's, and supports monthly life skills trainings





Public Private Partnerships

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# The State GA RYSE/Chafee Program Team

**Director: Candis Jones, LAPC**

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**State Independent Living Program Specialists:**

Region 1: Jershaun Roberts

Region 2: Fallecia Gee

Region 3: Shakeria Jones

Region 4: Gerrica Morton

Region 5: Jo Thomas

Region 6: Latrice Bakon

Region 7: Larissa Thompson

Region 8: Angela Davis

Region 10: Leslie Blease

Region 11: Caitlin Giles

Region 12: **Vacant** (*L. Bakon*)

Region 13: Simone Adderly (Cobb); Shante

Campbell (Clayton); Hannah Harris (Gwinnett)

Region 14: Barret Askew & Kathleen Edwards

Dekalb; Contessia Hoover (Fulton)

State ILP Supervisor: Takisha Hossley

State ILP Supervisor: Steven Kinney

Business Operations Specialist: Tara Kelly

Program Consultant: Erika Dennis

Credit Reporting Specialist: Devin Martin

Additional Information on the  
GARYSE Chafee Program may be found  
by accessing:

[www.GARYSE-ILP.org](http://www.GARYSE-ILP.org)