

# Pregnant & Parenting in the Child Welfare System & Beyond

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# Goals for the Session



Legal Rights and Responsibilities of Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents



Impact of Being Both a Parent and a Youth with Child Welfare Involvement



Engagement Strategies: How to Partner with Youth



Advocacy Strategies for Working with Clients Transitioning from Care

# Legal Rights of Adolescents

## Consent to Medical Treatment

- Age 14 for mental health treatment
- As a parent may consent to their child's care
- When pregnant, may give effective consent to all care

## Sexual Relationships

- Age of consent is 16
- If age 13-15, you cannot consent legally to a sexual relationship with anyone who is 4 years or older than the teen

## Contracts

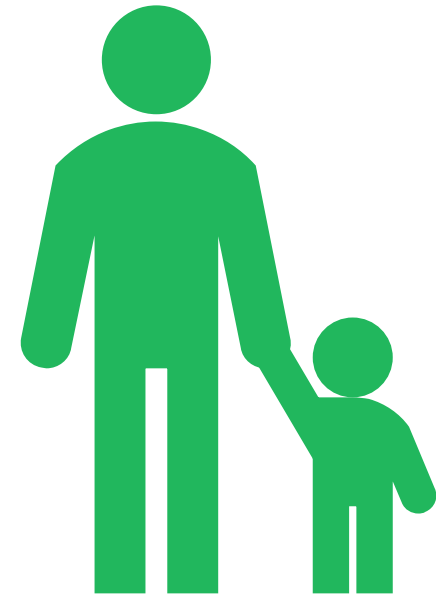
- Minor under the age of 18 is not able to enter into a contract
- Certain actions may be considered to emancipate a minor

# Legal Rights of Youth in Foster Care

- Legal Representation (Child Advocate)
- Placement in the least restrictive environment
- Health Care (automatic eligibility for Medicaid)
- Utilities (eligible for LIHEAP, CAP, etc.)
- Benefits (including TANF and SNAP food stamps)
- Remain in care until age 21
  - If in school, working 80 hours a month or engaged in other activity
- Services to Transition to Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangements (Housing, Budgeting, Life Skills)
- Transition Plan and Discharge Plan
- Return to care up until age 21 if....
  - Discharged after 90 days before turn 18

# Legal Rights of Parents

- **Custody of their Child**
  - Regardless of their age or whether they are in foster care
- **Decisions about their Child's Care**
  - Caregivers and Babysitters
  - Medical Decisions
  - Daycare
  - School
- **Education**
  - Under the law, permitted to remain in school
  - Cannot be required to do home bound work or get their GED
- **Involvement with Child Welfare**
  - Only when there is an issue of safety
  - Is AWOL'ing a safety issue?



# TRANSITION AGE YOUTH in Pennsylvania

## T H E F A C T S

33% of PA's foster youth are transition age youth

8,639 YOUTH



47% of transition age youth are in group homes or institutions

49% age out of care, instead of being connected to family

25% of transition age youth have been in 2+ placements while in care

42% of have been in 3+ placements



## B Y A G E 2 1 . . .



37% experience homelessness or unstable housing

Just 44% of transition age youth have full or part-time employment



Only 75% earn a GED or high school diploma, compared to 92% of their peers

**WE HAVE THE TOOLS TO  
CHANGE THE STORY FOR  
TRANSITION AGE YOUTH.**

# Issues Faced by Youth in Care



Lack of housing upon discharge



No services or support



Financial Instability and Unemployment



Lack of savings



Threats to custody of their child(ren)



# Partnering With Youth

- Youth empowerment and engagement strategies
  - Listen to youth and respect their perspective, opinions and concerns
- Strengths Based and Trauma Informed
  - Every youth comes with strengths and supports
- Partner with your Client to Plan
  - Short-Term and Long-Term Planning
- Life Skills and Supports
  - Remember the majority of youth who are APPLA will leave care without a permanent family resource

# Advocacy Strategies



Attend court with your clients



Provide updated letters about client's participation and progress



Reach out to CUA and SILP caseworkers



Reach out to the assigned child advocate



Attend family service plan, individual service plan and transition/discharge planning meetings

QUESTIONS?