

Ready, Set, Go Guide

What is the Ready, Set, Go Guide?

The Ready, Set, Go Guide (the Guide) is a practical but detailed document intended to help children's aid societies (societies) better support children and youth as they prepare to transition to adulthood.

The Guide was developed in response to concerns from key stakeholders, including youth with lived experience and youth-serving agencies that planning for youth leaving care is inconsistent across the province and lacks focus on preparing the youth for the transition and life afterwards. The ministry also heard from children's aid societies that operational supports to help children and youth prepare would be helpful.

The Guide responds to research which indicates that outcomes for youth in and leaving the child welfare system are typically worse compared to the general Canadian youth population and that outcomes can be improved through a consistent and comprehensive approach to individualized planning.

The Guide provides a new approach to leaving care focused on the unique pathway of every youth in care. The Guide seeks to support youth in developing skills and abilities necessary for adulthood based on the youth's perspectives on their goals, progress, and views on what services and supports would help them prepare for adulthood.

The Guide is intended for use with children in care as young as 13 to prepare for adulthood. Societies are required to use this Guide to develop plans for youth between the ages of 15 and 22 who are receiving supports through the Ready, Set, Go (RSG) Program. For the purposes of this guide, where the term "young person" is used, it is meant to refer to both children and youth. The term "young person" does not reflect the definition contained in the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, 2017.

To support development of the Guide, the ministry engaged with youth with lived experience, service providers, advocates, Indigenous partners and other key stakeholders, and undertook an extensive review of current research, best practice, and youth leaving care policy and programs in other jurisdictions.

The structure of the guide

The guide is organized in three main parts.

Part 1 (page 6) provides an overview of the new policy and program for youth leaving care, as well as background information. This includes current outcome disparities for youth in and from care, a summary of requirements for societies and how the Guide fits within those requirements, the legislative context for youth leaving care supports and services in Ontario, information on how this Guide was developed, and how use of this Guide will improve the effectiveness of transition for young people from care. Lastly, it provides information on the importance of ensuring services to youth leaving care are responsive to their unique and diverse identity characteristics.

Part 2 (page 16) provides operational direction to societies to support children as young as 13 prepare for adulthood. Societies are required to use this Guide to develop plans for young people between the ages of 15 and 22.

Part 3 (page 19) consists of the nine indicators developed by youth with lived experience that build upon the six life dimensions identified in regulation (health, education, identity, family and social relationships, emotional and behavioural development, and self-care skills). Each of the indicators includes activities and markers of progress for the society to consider and incorporate in planning.

Documentation (page 19) This section includes activities associated with supporting a young person to obtain important documentation and ensuring the young person has strategies in place to protect this documentation.

Education, Training and Employment (page 20) This section includes activities associated with supporting a young person to explore education and training goals, complete secondary school, and pursue a post-secondary education or training pathway, including any financial support that may be available to the young person to do so. This section also includes activities associated with supporting a young person to explore careers paths, identify employment goals, understand community

employment resources and supports, secure employment, and strategies for maintaining employment.

Financial Stability and Financial Literacy (page 24) This section includes activities associated with supporting a young person to become financial stable, supporting financial literacy through education and training, and developing financial management skills.

Health and Wellbeing (page 25) This section includes activities associated with supporting a young person's access to relevant healthcare professionals, prescribed medications, knowledge of healthcare benefits they are entitled to, and access to supports and services to promote wellness.

Housing (page 27) This section includes activities associated with supporting a young person to understand different housing options that are available, skills associated with obtaining safe and affordable housing, and strategies and skills for home management and housing retention.

Identity, Culture and Belonging (page 28) This section includes activities associated with supporting a young person to develop and maintain connections to individuals, communities, and activities which support their identity characteristics, culture and heritage.

Relationships and Professional Supports (page 30) This section includes the activities associated with supporting a young person to establish personal connections, identify significant adults and peers, and seek professional supports consistent with their needs and goals.

Rights, Responsibilities and Self-Advocacy (page 31) This section includes activities associated with supporting a young person to understand their right, responsibilities, and the importance of self-advocacy.

Self-Efficacy (page 32) This section includes activities associated with supporting a young person to develop skills that promote self-efficacy and emotional regulation.

Contents

PART I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	6
1. Overview	6
1.1 Transitioning to Adulthood.....	8
1.2 Outcomes for Youth Leaving Care.....	9
1.3 Legislative Context.....	10
1.4 Development of the Ready, Set, Go Guide	11
1.5 How the Ready, Set, Go Guide fits with Policy Directive CW003-23 Preparing Youth for Successful Transition from the Care of Children's Aid Societies and the Ready, Set, Go Program.....	13
1.6 Prioritizing Connections to Culture, Identity and Community in Transition Planning.....	14
PART II: USING THE READY, SET, GO GUIDE	16
2. How to use the Guide.....	16
2.1 What are the Key Indicators?.....	17
PART III: INDICATORS TO GUIDE PLANNING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE	19
3. Reviewing the Indicators with Young People as Part of Planning	19
3.1 The Indicators	19
1. Documentation.....	19
2. Education, Training and Employment.....	20
3. Financial Stability and Financial Literacy	24
4. Health and Wellbeing	25
5. Housing.....	27
6. Identity, Culture and Belonging.....	28
7. Relationships and Professional Supports	30
8. Rights, Responsibilities and Self-Advocacy	31
9. Self-Efficacy.....	32

PART I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Overview

The purpose of the *Ready, Set, Go Guide (2023)* (the Guide) is to promote a consistent approach to planning, preparing, and tracking of progress for youth transitioning from the care of children's aid societies (societies) across the province of Ontario.

The Guide is being introduced to support the new policy and program for youth leaving care that comes into effect on April 1, 2023. The policy and program have been introduced through amendments to Ontario Regulation 156/18 made under the *Child, Youth and Family Service Act, 2017 (CYFSA)* entitled "General Matters Under the Authority of the Minister" (the Regulation) and issuance of Policy Directive CW003-23 Preparing Youth for Successful Transition from the Care of Children's Aid Societies (the Policy Directive).

The core features of the new policy and the Ready, Set, Go (RSG) program are:

- Strengthened accountability for societies with respect to preparing youth to successfully exit their care, including requiring societies to:
 - Work with youth from the age of 13 to prepare them in advance of exiting care;
 - Offer a conferencing option to youth after they turn the age of 15 that would facilitate formal planning for transition;
 - Provide youth with an information package prior to the youth's 18th birthday and ensure a worker completes a basics checklist so youth can successfully leave care; and
 - Continue providing support to youth with pathways to school, training, and employment including ensuring youth are aware that post-secondary activities raise their funding by \$500/month at age 20.
- Increased age of eligibility for supports and services to the youth's 23rd birthday.
- Increased financial supports for eligible youth leaving care to enhance safety and stability.
- Additional financial support for eligible youth pursuing post-secondary studies or training.

- Detailed operating requirements and checklists for preparing youth for transition.
- Individualized work with youth, through the use of this Guide, to identify their strengths and areas that require support and development and measure progress during the Ready, Set, Go (RSG) program (e.g., housing, education, employment, supportive relationships).

The new policy and program will empower youth leaving care to thrive after care through life skills development, post-secondary education or training, and/or pathways to employment.

The new initiative supports the Ontario Government's priority to improve outcomes for youth transitioning to adulthood as identified in the Child Welfare Redesign Strategy (2020). The Guide should be used in conjunction with, and inform, all other required transition planning resources including the Plan of Care and Ready, Set, Go (RSG) Youth Plan. The Guide does not replace any requirements for children in residential care under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, its regulations, and ministry directives.

The Regulation and Policy Directive require that children's aid societies begin work with youth at the age of 13 and as part of developing the Plan of Care consider the foundational work that will need to begin in order to prepare the youth to be ready to leave care. Societies are required to consider six life dimensions including health, education, identity, family and social relationships, emotional and behavioural development, and self-care skills.

This Guide can be used to support those conversations and planning at 13, recognizing that some of the contents may be better suited as the youth matures. Each of these six life dimensions are later reflected in the nine indicators.

The Regulation and Policy Directive also require that societies increase their focus on preparing youth to be ready to leave care as the child approaches their 16th birthday. No later than three months before the youth turns 16, the society is required to offer the youth a conference, or other forum, that is specifically focused on preparing the youth to leave care.

This conference will include all the supports in the youth's life, both personal and professional, who can assist the youth in thinking about their long term goals and

wishes for the future and developing a plan to achieving those objectives. Use of the Guide is required at this juncture in the youth's life, regardless of whether they are interested in participating in a conference and can help facilitate planning discussions.

The Guide is intended for use with young persons as set out in the Directive and builds on the transition work that begins at the age of 13. There are elements of the Guide that can be used at 13, but the guide must be used in a more comprehensive way beginning before their 16th birthday and continue through participation in the RSG program until the young person reaches the age of 23, or voluntarily leaves the RSG program.

It is important to note that some Indigenous societies have developed transition planning approaches and resources for First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth that recognizes their cultures, heritages, traditions, connection to their communities and concept of the extended family. As such the Guide can be modified to reflect these existing practices.

Furthermore, when providing services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, societies must ensure they are complying with their consultation obligations pursuant to s. 73 of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*.

1.1 Transitioning to Adulthood

Transitioning to adulthood is a major life event for all young people and for most, the process is gradual, well supported, and occurs over a prolonged period. For example, in Canada 62 percent of young people ages 20 to 24 reside with their parents.¹ In contrast, youth in care face an abrupt transition to adulthood at the age of majority, regardless of their ability to manage the process.²

Child and youth advocates have long recommended a new approach to youth leaving care. This approach recognizes that the needs of youth in care do not

¹*Census Brief: Young adults living with their parents in Canada in 2016, Statistics Canada, 2017*

²*Children Aging Out of Care: Policy Bench, Fraser Mustard Institute of Human Development, University of Toronto, 2020*

immediately end when they reach the age of majority and the importance of providing continued supports to youth to develop their skills and abilities.³

Evidence demonstrates that the best outcomes for youth transitioning from care to adulthood are more likely to be achieved when the process is gradual, well supported, based on strong preparation and planning, with access to tailored supports to increase life skills and foster stability.⁴

1.2 Outcomes for Youth Leaving Care

Outcomes for youth leaving the care of societies are typically worse than their same age peers. Children in care have experienced traumatic events and circumstances and separation from their families and communities. Without a stable home environment and strong relationships with peers and adults, youth in and from care are more likely to experience a range of negative outcomes.

- Lower educational attainment and academic achievements, including a lower likelihood of completing high school or pursuing higher education (46% of children in care graduate from high school vs 87% of their peers⁵).
- Unemployment or underemployment including difficulty finding and maintaining employment, and lower earnings among those who are employed.
- Housing insecurity/instability and homelessness, often moving around several times after leaving care (57.8% of youth experiencing homelessness reported child welfare involvement⁶).

³ *Children Aging Out of Care, Policy Bench*, Fraser Mustard Institute of Human Development, University of Toronto, 2020

⁴ *Young People Leaving Care and Protection: A report to the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme*, Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, 1999

⁵ *Gateway to Success: Cycle Three*, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, 2014

⁶ *Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey*, 2016

- Poverty and reliance on social or income assistance (57% of young people who were formally in care rely on social assistance⁷).
- Pregnancy and early parenthood.
- Involvement in the criminal justice system as well as victimization, including physical and sexual abuse.
- Poor physical and mental health; including post-traumatic stress, with difficulties accessing health care (58% of children in care experience mental health issues⁸).
- Substance abuse.
- Loneliness and isolation, with a fragile social support network.⁹

1.3 Legislative Context

The paramount purpose of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)* is “to promote the best interests, protection, and well-being of children”.¹⁰ This purpose should remain at the forefront during preparation for a youth's transition to adulthood. Further, societies have a legislated function to “provide care for children assigned or committed to its care”.¹¹ This legislated function includes a responsibility to prepare children for successful transition from care.

In accordance with the CYFSA, court-ordered care of a youth by a society expires at the time of their 18th birthday. Similarly, care by agreement (i.e., Voluntary

⁷ *Half the Time I Felt Like Nobody Loved Me: The Costs of Aging Out of State Guardianship in Ontario, Stepstones for Youth Report, 2021*

⁸ *2020 Children in Extended Society Care Review Data, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services*

⁹ *List of outcomes from: Children Aging Out of Care: Policy Bench, Fraser Mustard Institute of Human Development, University of Toronto, 2020*

¹⁰ *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, s. 1*

¹¹ *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, s. 35*

Youth Services Agreement, customary care agreement) expires at the time of their 18th birthday.¹²

Section 124 of the CYFSA requires that societies provide continued care and support to eligible youth. This support was previously provided through the Continued Care and Support for Youth (CCSY Program). On April 1, 2023, *Ontario Regulation 156/18 General Matters under the Authority of the Minister* was amended to extend the eligibility for continued care and support to the youth's 23rd birthday. The regulation was also amended to hold societies clearly accountable for preparing youth to successfully exit their care.

Policy Directive: CW003-23 (effective April 1, 2023) establishes requirements for societies with respect to preparing a youth for transition from care. One of the requirements of the directive is the use of this Guide to support planning for youth in and transitioning from the care of societies. The directive also introduces the Ready, Set, Go (RSG) program to support youth leaving the care of societies.

1.4 Development of the Ready, Set, Go Guide

Advocates have long raised the issue of worsened outcomes of youth leaving care and the need for a new approach. As such, the Child Welfare Redesign Strategy intends to strengthen supports for youth leaving care including the temporary moratorium on youth 'aging out' of care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In recognition that youth voice must be at the centre of a redesigned approach to youth leaving care, the ministry publicly committed to work with former youth in care and related advocates to explore options for a new youth leaving care policy and program. The ministry recognized that firsthand experience and perspective were essential as well providing young people a voice in how they can be better supported with transitions from care to adulthood.

To support the youth engagement process, three advisory tables were established with participation of former youth in care and related advocates and professionals

¹² This is what is colloquially referred to as "aging out of care."

across three diverse groups: First Nation, Inuit and Métis (FNIM); African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB); and Mixed (representing diverse identities and experiences).

As a result, youth with lived experience participated in 13 sessions which helped shape the new Ready, Set, Go (RSG) program. Engagement included youth from various backgrounds and cultures including Indigenous, Black and racialized youth, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit and queer (LGBT2SQ), persons with disabilities and youth from urban and rural communities.

The core focus of engagement of youth with lived experience was to inform the development and deepening of six life dimensions identified in regulation (health, education, identity, family and social relationships, emotional and behavioural development, and self-care skills) critical to successful transitions from care. These dimensions are reflected in the nine indicators listed below:

1. Documentation
2. Education, Training and Employment
3. Financial Stability and Financial Literacy
4. Health and Wellbeing (this includes emotional and behavioral development)
5. Housing
6. Identity, Culture and Belonging
7. Family and Social Relationships and Professional Supports
8. Rights, Responsibilities and Self-Advocacy
9. Self-Efficacy (this includes self-care).¹³

In addition to engagement with youth with lived experience, the ministry engaged service providers, advocates, Indigenous partners and other key stakeholders, to hear how youth preparing to transition from care can best be supported. These engagements included a review of current youth leaving care policies and programs, as well as advice on developing policy and program options.

¹³ Note Readiness Indicators are listed in alphabetical order throughout the Transitions Guide in recognition that there is no particular order of importance.

This extensive engagement was further supported by review of current research, best practices, and youth leaving care policy in other jurisdictions to create the new policy and the Ready, Set, Go (RSG) program.

1.5 How the Ready, Set, Go Guide fits with Policy Directive CW003-23 Preparing Youth for Successful Transition from the Care of Children's Aid Societies and the Ready, Set, Go Program

This Guide will assist young people, and the adults that support them, through a consistent approach to individualized planning, preparation, and tracking of progress. The Guide is intended to improve the effectiveness of transitions for young people from care by supporting young person to:

- have adequate preparation and planning to empower them to make informed decisions about their future;
- have support to identify and develop skills and resources necessary to grow into adulthood;
- have supportive relationships relevant to their identity characteristics, cultural and linguistic needs, regional differences and, wherever possible, that support connections to their communities. In addition, for First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth connections to cultures, heritages and traditions, communities and extended families; and
- have ongoing opportunities to review and update their transition plan in response to individual needs and changing circumstances.

Through use of this Guide, support for young people transitioning from care will not end when they reach the age of majority. Rather individual needs will be identified early and progress will be tracked as a young person obtains the skills and abilities necessary for a successful transition to adulthood. As best outcomes are achieved for youth leaving care when the transition to adulthood is a gradual process, this Guide can be initiated to support required planning for children in extended society

care at the child's 13th birthday and is required for use beginning prior to their 16th birthday, and every six months thereafter in conjunction with the Plan of Care.

Where the young person is in agreement and wishes to participate in transition planning, it can also be used with children in interim society care, in customary care agreements, or in a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement (VYSA) as part of their planning processes. This Guide is intended for use throughout the youth's participation in the Ready, Set, Go (RSG) program until the young person has left society care or has reached the age of 23.

1.6 Prioritizing Connections to Culture, Identity and Community in Transition Planning

Positive outcomes and well-being are increased when children and youth feel connected to their cultures and communities and have relationships and services that support their identities¹⁴.

In accordance with the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)*, all services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis children should be provided in a manner that recognizes their cultures, heritages, traditions, connection to their communities, and the concept of the extended family.¹⁵

Ontario Regulation 156/18 General Matters under the Authority of the Minister requires that decisions about a child that materially affects, or are likely to materially affect, the child's interests take into account regional differences and the child's identity characteristics which includes the child's race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, family diversity, disability, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or cultural or linguistic needs.¹⁶

¹⁴ Quinn, A.L. *Experiences and well-being among Indigenous former youth in care within Canada. Child Abuse & Neglect, v.123.*

¹⁵ *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, s. 1(4)6*

¹⁶ *Ontario Regulation 156/18 General Matters under the Authority of the Minister, s. 3(1)*
Ontario Regulation 156/18 General Matters under the Authority of the Minister, s. 2

As such, it is critically important that all services for youth leaving care are responsive to their unique and diverse identity characteristics, their cultural and linguistic needs and regional differences and wherever possible, maintain connections to their communities. In addition, all services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth should be provided in a manner that recognizes their cultures, heritages, traditions, connection to their communities, and the concept of the extended family. A youth's identity characteristics should remain a core consideration at all points of transition planning and use of this Guide. Youth should have access to appropriate resources and supports that reflect their identity characteristics and have meaningful opportunities to their respective communities.

PART II: USING THE READY, SET, GO GUIDE

2. How to use the Guide

This Guide is an instrument which focuses on the young person and empowers them to define their goals and priorities in navigating a successful path to adulthood and independence. The young person and society worker will work through the Guide to identify areas requiring support and development as the young person prepares for adulthood.

The Guide is not intended for use as an actuarial tool or clinical assessment. It is intended to be used as a discussion aid to help young people identify their goals and priorities related to transition planning. Information gathered should direct all planning activities and be formalized in the Plan of Care or Ready, Set, Go (RSG) Youth Plan.

When using this Guide, and considering each indicator, special consideration should be given to ensure:

- the views and perspectives of the young person are central
- planning for each indicator is based on how soon the young person is expected to transition out of care
- planning is comprehensive and tailored to the young person's individual needs
- planning is flexible and responsive to changing circumstances
- planning is responsive to the young person's self-identified identity characteristics
- planning for First Nations, Inuit and Métis young persons recognizes their cultures, heritages, traditions, connection to their communities, and the concept of the extended family
- the young person is supported to increasingly take responsibility for progress towards goals

2.1 What are the Key Indicators?

The core focus of engagement of youth with lived experience was to inform the development of key indicators that are critical to successful transitions from care. The advice provided by youth reflect a deepening of six life dimensions identified in regulation (health, education, identity, family and social relationships, emotional and behavioural development, and self-care skills). These dimensions are reflected in the nine indicators listed below:

1. Documentation
2. Education, Training and Employment
3. Financial Stability and Financial Literacy
4. Health and Wellbeing (this includes emotional and behavioral development)
5. Housing
6. Identity, Culture and Belonging
7. Family and Social Relationships and Professional Supports
8. Rights, Responsibilities and Self-Advocacy
9. Self-Efficacy (this includes self-care).¹⁷

Important Note: It is important to understand that the planning process for leaving care occurs on a continuum. As such, not all indicators will be applicable at each required review of the Guide. Review of each indicator should focus on those that are most applicable to a young person's plan at each required review of the Guide.

When using the Guide:

- Make sure the young person understands and is engaged in reviewing each indicator.
- Build on the young person's aspirations and strengths.
- Use point form and plain language in documentation.
- Specify who will have primary responsibility for each planned action – if this involves a group of people, underline who will coordinate.

17 Note that the indicators developed by youth are listed in alphabetical order throughout the Transitions Guide in recognition that there is no particular order of importance.

- Specify when any service will be provided, or the action taken – **'as soon as possible' is not an appropriate description of timelines.**
- Determine the next review date for the Guide.

PART III: INDICATORS TO GUIDE PLANNING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

3. Reviewing the Indicators with Young People as Part of Planning

The indicators in this Guide should be reviewed with the young person in preparation for developing the Plan of Care (pre-18) or Youth Plan (18-22). Each new planning process is an opportunity to consider the overall goal, the activities the young person has been engaging in to achieve the goal, and the progress demonstrated since the last planning process.

When reviewing the indicators with the young person, and developing the plan, the society worker should work with the young person to identify personal or professional supports and timelines for goals and activities. The worker will also support the young person to engage these individuals in the Guide review and planning process if the youth wishes.

For each indicator the worker should consider the following:

1. **Goal:** to be achieved prior to transitioning to adulthood.
2. **Activities:** how the youth will achieve the goal.
3. **Progress:** activities completed to demonstrate progress.

3.1 The Indicators

1. Documentation

Government Issued Documentation

Young person has:

- support in obtaining government issued documentation (e.g., Social Insurance Card, birth certificate, Secure Certificate of Indian Status, membership documents issued by a band and/or First Nations, Inuit and Métis community, health card, permanent resident card, Canadian citizenship certificate, passport)

- photo identification (e.g., driver's license, photo identification card)

Personal Records

Young person has:

- support in obtaining necessary personal records (e.g., medical history, immunization record, educational transcripts)
- understood the processes to obtain personal records, and to replace them if lost

Documentation Verifying Status with Children's Aid Society

Young person has support in obtaining documentation verifying status or former status with a Children's Aid Society (e.g., extended society care, customary care agreement, Voluntary Youth Services Agreement).

Protecting Documentation

Young person has:

- knowledge of protecting personal information
- support to determine safe and secure storage of government issued documentation and personal information
- strategies to protect personal information
- has identified a plan for the safe and secure storage of government issued documentation and personal information (e.g., binder, filing cabinet, with a trusted family member or friend).

2. Education, Training and Employment

Education and Training Exploration

Young person has:

- been offered aptitude/vocational assessments to help determine areas of interest
- support in exploring education or training pathways (e.g., skills-training, apprenticeship, trade certification or post-secondary education)

- knowledge of mentorship opportunities to assist in navigating the path to education or training, including developing educational or training plans with guidance counsellors
- support to participate in extra-curricular activities, including those that align with their education and training goals
- support to explore education or training pathways by attending information sessions and institutional visits (e.g., community lecture at a local post-secondary institution) or tours

Supports to Complete Secondary School

Young person has:

- support to complete secondary school or equivalency, including support for those who require more time, and those who have left school and return
- access to tutoring opportunities to assist them in completing secondary school or equivalency
- knowledge of the option to continue living with their caregiver to finish secondary school through a Stay Home for School Agreement
- support to complete secondary school prerequisites required for education or training pathways of interest, where applicable

Education and Training Pathways

Young person has:

- support to pursue post-secondary education or training pathway
- completed application processes necessary for education or training pathway (e.g., skills-training, apprenticeship, trade certification, college diploma, bachelor's degree)
- knowledge of the mature student pathway where appropriate
- enrolled in education or training pathway or has developed a plan for future completion of education or training

Current and Future Financial Assistance

Young person has:

- knowledge of all sources of financial assistance they are entitled to receive, including eligibility criteria and application fee waivers
- support to complete applications
- completed, where appropriate, applications for all financial assistance, and/or scholarships and bursaries, they are eligible to receive (e.g., Registered Education Saving Program, Living and Learning Grant, Ontario School Assistance Program, funds available from their bands and or First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, bursaries and scholarships including, tuition coverage programs from select colleges and universities for youth from care)
- knowledge of all scholarships and bursaries available, including those specific for youth leaving care and other intersectionalities
- knowledge of all post-secondary institutions that provide free tuition to current and former youth in care

Important Note: this section, and perceived aptitude, should not be used for streaming purposes into one type of post-secondary opportunity. The youth's personal life goals should direct the pathway. If there are gaps, then a plan should be developed to overcome them.

Career Exploration

Young person has:

- support to determine career paths that align with skills, abilities, and personal goals, including aptitude/vocational assessments to help determine areas of interest
- knowledge of the benefits of volunteering, job shadowing, workplace tours, internships, and participation in the workforce, to gain information about career paths of interest
- identified employment goals, including education, skills, training required for careers of interest

- has developed a career plan including short-term and long-term employment options, considering what employment is attainable at present and what employment opportunities would be available after taking further steps (e.g., experience, training, education)

Employment Supports and Resources

Young person has:

- knowledge of supports available to assist in finding employment, including community resources and government programs
- support to access employment counsellors for ongoing guidance in job acquisition, including resume and cover letter development
- understood how to search for employment and utilize community resources and government programs (e.g., Employment Ontario, Youth Job Connection)
- completed a resume and cover letter and knows how to complete a job application
- identified references for job applications
- appropriate interview attire

Securing and Maintaining Employment

Young person has:

- support in securing employment, including interview preparation
- has secured employment
- identified a resource for support in reviewing contracts
- knowledge of employer and employee rights
- knowledge of the skills and behaviors necessary to maintain employment
- knowledge of behaviors and skills that affect employment retention and advancement (e.g., effective communication, conflict management, appropriate workplace attire)

3. Financial Stability and Financial Literacy

Current and Future Financial Assistance

Young person has:

- secured employment and has income
- knowledge of all sources of financial assistance they are entitled to receive, including eligibility criteria and applications process
- completed, where appropriate, applications for all financial assistance they are eligible to receive (e.g., Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent Saving Program, Ready, Set, Go (RSG), Victim Quick Response Program+)

Income Source

Young person has:

- stable source of income to practice and implement financial skills
- has access to sufficient and consistent income to meet ongoing needs

Financial Literally Education and Training

Young person has:

- knowledge of ongoing opportunities to participate in financial literacy education and training
- participated in financial literacy training and demonstrates ability to apply financial literacy skills (e.g., manage a budget, strategies for saving, accessing credit rating, building credit, managing debt, completing income tax returns)

Financial Management

Young person has:

- knowledge of services provided by financial institutions and how to utilize them
- knowledge of skills required to manage personal finances
- has a bank account and understands purpose of multiple accounts (e.g., checking, savings, TFSA)
- understands credits cards and the importance of responsible credit card use

- has practice with a secured credit card and/or has a credit card
- demonstrates the ability to manage personal finances (e.g., budget funds to cover living expenses)
- has a personal financial plan based on all income sources (e.g., amount of monthly income, fixed monthly expenses, savings plan and/or financial goals for trips, school, car or home purchase, down payments)

4. Health and Wellbeing

Access to Healthcare Professionals

Young person has:

- knowledge of ongoing physical and mental health needs, including access to appropriate healthcare providers
- has identified ongoing physical and mental health needs and has access to relevant healthcare providers (e.g., primary care physician, dentist, optometrist, psychologist, naturopath, nutritionist, Elder/Knowledge Keeper)
- contact information (names, telephone numbers, and addresses) of healthcare professionals and appropriate referrals have been made

Access to Prescribed Medication

Young person has:

- knowledge of all prescribed medications, including how to access refills and the importance of safe storage
- access to a practitioner to review medication regimen

Aftercare Benefits Initiative (ABI)

Young person has:

- knowledge of benefits and services provided through the Aftercare Benefits Initiative (ABI)
- has support with ABI enrollment, and knowledge of ABI eligibility requirements

- enrolled in the ABI and understands eligibility requirements (e.g., eligibility of dependants, changes in eligibility if receiving other government supports, or opting into another benefits plan)
- understands processes related to accessing services and benefits (e.g., prescription drug coverage, dental care, vision care, medical items, professional services, counselling, and life skills support services) through ABI

Wellness and Self-care

Young person has:

- knowledge of wellness and self-care activities, including culturally specific practices
- has support to explore and discover personal interests and has ongoing opportunities to access recreational programming in the community (e.g., arts, music, sports, fitness, culture, advocacy)
- has identified community organizations and resources which provided wellness and selfcare activities (e.g., mindfulness training, stress management workshops, trauma-informed healing, self-development courses)
- identified and connected to culturally specific activities, programs and community groups
- knowledge and access to of health supports and services including nutrition, sexual health, family planning, substance abuse prevention, harm-reduction
- connected to community resources and programs that promote healthy behaviours and improve health outcomes (e.g., peer support networks, recovery groups, educational programming, advocacy groups)

5. Housing

Housing Planning

Young person has:

- knowledge of different housing options available and the costs and benefits to each model (e.g., renting versus ownership; shared versus individual accommodation; post-secondary accommodations)
- has developed a housing plan, including budget and needs (e.g., proximity to family, friends and community supports, transportation availability) to inform housing selection
- identified future housing goals (e.g. ownership, single accommodations, different city) and has a long-term plan

Housing Supports and Assistance

Young person has:

- knowledge of housing support resources and financial assistance they are entitled to receive, including eligibility criteria and application processes
- knowledge of necessary costs associated with setting up a tenancy
- connections with programs and organizations that can assist in obtaining permanent housing (e.g., Housing Support Worker Program, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, regional supportive housing programs)
- completed applications for housing assistance they are eligible to receive (e.g., Canada Ontario Housing Benefit)
- acquired financial resources to cover housing start-up costs (e.g., deposits, utilities, essential furnishing, personal household items)

Securing Housing

Young person has:

- support in obtaining safe and affordable housing, including assistance in completing housing applications, reviewing a lease, identifying a co-signor
- secured stable housing

- developed a back-up housing plan in place in the event of an emergency and/or lose of housing

Home Management and Tenancy Skills

Young person has:

- knowledge of home management and tenancy skills and access to resources to support skills development
- knowledge of resources available to help with housing related issues
- knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords
- understands life-skills related to home management (e.g., meal preparation, grocery budgeting/shopping, housekeeping, home maintenance, fire safety, cleaning) and tenancy (e.g., paying rent on time, following rules of a tenancy agreement, boundary-setting with guests, being respectful of neighbours), and is able to seek out additional community resources where necessary
- connected to community programs and resources that assist in maintaining stable housing (e.g., emergency financial assistance, eviction prevention programs)
- understands processes to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants (e.g., Landlord and Tenant Board) and how to access a housing advocate and/or legal representative to assist with housing related issues (e.g., Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario)

6. Identity, Culture and Belonging

Family of Origin

Young person has:

- knowledge of family of origin
- access to their family history
- arrangements to maintain contact with family and/or significant community members where appropriate

Identity Formation

Young person has:

- knowledge of heritage and cultural background
- knowledge of traditions, customs, ceremonies and history related to ethnic and cultural background
- identified significant person in their life that can support the development of their identity and culture
- ongoing opportunities to meet people from their own ethnic or cultural background (including, for First Nations, Inuit and Métis young people, from their own bands or FNIM communities)
- knowledge of cultural programs and resources in their community
- access to cultural events and activities
- access to language training

Cultural Connections

Young person has:

- knowledge of individuals, activities and experiences that will maintain links with family, extended family, community and culture
- a plan to support their connection to their community, culture and identity, including opportunities to practice their cultural or spiritual affiliations (including traditions, religious services, language acquisition, festivals and holidays, prayers, fasting, clothing, food, pow wow, land-based programming)
- connected with community organizations and resources that support connection to their community and culture

Identity Characteristics

Young person has:

- knowledge of, and support to explore, all characteristics of their identities, including race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, family diversity, disability, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, culture and language

- connections to significant individuals, community organizations and resources that support their unique identity characteristics

7. Relationships and Professional Supports

Planning Conference

Young person has:

- been offered a conference or other forum where personal and professional contacts are invited to participate in the youth's transition planning
- identified their goals and activities (including timelines and professional and personal connections) to achieve those goals

Family of Origin

Young person has:

- been supported in developing connections to family of origin, including siblings and extended family members where appropriate
- connected with family members, including siblings and extended family, with whom they can maintain a supportive relationship (where this is helpful to the youth)

Long-term Supportive Relationships

Young person has:

- support in developing connections to significant adults and/or peers committed to providing ongoing support
- permanent connections established with a significant adult, mentor, community advisor, and/or Elder/Knowledge Keeper, and connections in the community where they live, through peer networks
- identified three significant adults/peers they can contact in the case of an emergency

Professional Supports

Young person has:

- knowledge of professional relationships necessary to support a successful transition to adulthood
- identified relevant professional supports required as they transition to adulthood (e.g., bankers, counsellors, health professionals, social workers) and has established connections to these professionals
- support to obtain drivers licence, including drivers training course

8. Rights, Responsibilities and Self-Advocacy

Understanding of Rights

Young person has:

- knowledge of rights post age of majority (e.g., enter a contract, sue/be sued, inherit property/money, implications of various marital arrangements, parental rights, estate planning)
- knowledge of civil and criminal legal processes (e.g. accessing legal services when rights have been violated, if victim of a crime, or charged with a criminal offence, driving offences, civil claims, family court)
- understands right to access records regarding time in the care of a Children's Aid Society
- understands how to make a complaint to the Ombudsman
- understands how to access legal services and seek legal advice (e.g., Legal Aid Ontario, paralegals, lawyers)

Understanding of Responsibilities

Young person has:

- knowledge of responsibilities post age of majority
- knowledge of civic responsibilities, including voting in local, provincial, and federal elections, and volunteering in the community

- understands responsibilities post age of majority (e.g., following terms of lease agreement/contract, on-time bill payment, attending scheduled appointments)

Self-Advocacy Development and Resources

Young person has:

- support to understand their rights and needs, and how to communicate these rights and needs to others
- knowledge of resources to support self-advocacy
- identified needs and has the skills to communicate needs to others within different service systems (e.g., education, health, employment, housing)
- practiced advocating for better terms at the bank, cell phone or internet providers, etc.
- connected to resources and identified individuals (e.g., friends, family, professionals) to assisting in advocating for their rights and needs (e.g., accommodations to support learning)

9. Self-Efficacy

Self-Efficacy Development

Young person has:

- access to a career counsellor, life coach, mental health professional, Elder/Knowledge Keeper
- knowledge of skills required to pursue goals and manage challenges encountered
- knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses, including recognizing when a challenge can be faced independently and when support is needed
- demonstrated skills (e.g., decision-making, problem-solving, negotiation, managing stress) to solve problems that keep them from achieving goals
- identified opportunities to utilize their strengths, build their confidence, and perform tasks independently (e.g., mentoring, volunteering, peer-support)

Emotional Regulation

Young person has:

- access to a career counsellor, life coach, mental health professional, Elder/Knowledge Keeper
- access to mindfulness training or resources
- access to nutritionist and fitness professional
- knowledge of how thoughts and feelings impact their behavior and how to manage these in challenging circumstances
- knowledge of resources to assist them when they are struggling with emotional regulation
- demonstrated skills to recognize how they are thinking and feeling, and to manage their behaviour accordingly (e.g., go to school/work or attend appointments despite how they feel, deal appropriately with a challenging landlord)
- identified resources and options for when they feel they are struggling with emotional regulation
- been supported to participate in confidence building activities (e.g., social events, travel, team events, competitions, extra-curricular activities)

Ready, Set, Go Guide

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