

TOPIC:

Essential Life Skills to Teach Teens

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOSTER PARENT TRAINING CREDIT:

**Read through this self-study then fill out the "CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING" Questionnaire*

**Return to ACRF for 1.0 hour of training credit.*

"They'll be gone before you know it" is a common phrase heard about raising children. While this can be a reminder for parents to appreciate the time they have with a child, it can also cause anxiety for both parents and children. For foster teens who may be aging out of foster care it can be an especially anxious time. They may have a lot of concerns and questions about their future. Where will I go? How will I take care of myself? Who can I depend on? What do I want to do with my life?

If you are caring for a teen in foster care it may be difficult to reassure them because of the uncertainty of their situation, but it's important to let them know you will assist them to learn the important things that will help them be successful. In addition to learning basic self-care skills, there are many real-world skills a teen needs to navigate their life and feel more confident about moving forward. We've created a checklist of items to review, practice and implement with your teen. Teens may already have some of these skills or just need to practice them more frequently (making a bed, cooking) so you or the teen can choose the items as they become pertinent, but encourage the teen to look over this list to get them thinking about their future while reassuring them you will be there to help them tackle these tasks.

Daily Living

- **Home care** – *How to:* Plunge toilet Turn off main water valve Use basic tools for repairs Turn off/change batteries smoke alarm Use fire extinguisher Do Laundry-sorting/using detergent/using bleach Change/wash bedding Sew a button/mend & iron clothes
- **Food** - *How to:* Shop for food on a budget Compare prices Plan menu/make shopping list Read nutrition labels/choose healthy food How to store food properly (what should be refrigerated?) Follow recipes Prepare food
- **Eating Out** – *How to:* Make a reservation Calculate appropriate tip
- **Obtaining Important Documents** – *How to obtain:* Driver's license Certified copy of birth certificate Passport
- **Pets** – Understand responsibilities/cost of owning a pet Understand restrictions on pets when renting

Self-Care

- **Self-care** - Practice good grooming habits Administer first aid Understand sexual consent
- **Medical** – *How to:* Choose doctor Schedule/change/cancel medical appointment How to find emergency medical care How to fill/refill prescription Complete health intake forms and/or health insurance forms Prepare for appointment/ask doctor questions Obtain and use birth control
- Understand the difference between doctor appointment/urgent care/ER Understand health insurance/copays

Work and Study

- **Emails/Phone calls/Letters** – *How to:* Write a professional email/letter Write thank you note Address envelope Purchase stamps Mail package via USPS/FEDEX/UPS Discuss when it's appropriate to email vs call vs text
- **Further Education** – *How to:* Research career options Complete applications Apply for and maintain scholarships/financial aid Find academic help/tutors/mentors Think about the importance of communicating with

instructors regarding assignments, attendance issues, questions. Do you have their contact information? Learn how to advocate for yourself if you have special education needs

● **Work** – *How to:* Write resume Apply for job Determine who to list as references Dress for interview Do practice interviews (think about what kind of questions you might be asked depending on the job you are applying for) Using a calendar to: manage time, meet deadlines, remember and recognize important dates for yourself (appointments) and others (birthdays, anniversaries)

Housing and Transportation

● **Housing** – *How to:* Look for rental Apply for rental Determine who to list as references Learn about/purchase rental insurance

● **Public Transportation** – *How to:* Use ride share apps Call taxi Understand bus routes/purchase bus pass Discuss ways to stay safe when using transportation Make an airline reservation

● **Automobile** – Purchasing a car-new vs. used/applying for a loan Purchasing insurance/determining type of coverage Maintaining the vehicle/following maintenance schedule *How to:* Change a tire Use jumper cables Deal with a car accident

Financial

● **Money** – *How to:* Set up bank checking/savings account Deposit/withdraw/transfer funds (Understand transfer/overdraft fees) Use debit (ATM) card (Understand usage fees) Monitor account balance Discuss a plan for contributing to savings account regularly how to do taxes,

▪ **Credit Cards** – *How to:* Apply for and use responsibly Read and understand credit card statement Understand interest fees Report lost/stolen credit card

▪ **Taxes** - Understand pay stub/income withheld Understand a W-2 Learn how/when to file taxes

▪ **Paying Bills** – *How to:* Set up Auto-pay/ensure funds are available Understand payment due dates/late fees

Legal Forms/Important Documents

When a teen turns 18 they are considered an adult in the medical and legal world. There are some important legal forms that should be reviewed and considered.

● **Legal Forms** - HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) Power of Attorney

● **Things to memorize** - Social Security Number Student ID Emergency contact number

Some people find it difficult to memorize things so you might explore some memorization techniques online or establish a plan to keep them accessible without risking their security.

● **Important documents** – Determine which documents are important Learn how and where to store them

This list is just to act as a starting point for addressing skills needed for everyday living. Start reviewing this list together when a teen is placed in your care to help empower them to have a sense of control about their future.

To Earn 1.0 Hour Foster Parent Training Credit (Alaska Foster Parents Only) COMPLETE [QUESTIONNAIRE](#)

Links for further information and resources:

State of Alaska Independent Living Program (Offers Information about Education and Training Funds, Independent Living Funds, Provides Resource Links): <http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/independentliving/default.aspx>

Ready, Set Fly: A Parent's Guide to Teaching Life Skills (An in-depth guide of life skills and how to teach them): https://www.casey.org/media/CLS_ResourceGuides_subdocs_ReadySetFly.pdf

Memorization skills: <https://kidsdiscover.com/teacherresources/8-ways-to-boost-memorization-skills/>

Organizing important papers/Documents foster youth need: <https://finallyfamilyhomes.org/organize-papers/>

Information on ACRF website:

Publications (Under 'Other Publications'): <https://www.acrf.org/self-study/publications>
Adolescent Healthcare Transition Tools, Foster Care Transition Tool Kit

Self-Study Course: <https://www.acrf.org/self-study/self-study-resources/written-courses>
Supporting Legal Rights for Teens

Webinars: <https://www.acrf.org/self-study/self-study-resources/webinars-and-videos>
College Funding and Higher Education Supports for Current and Former Foster Youth

Micro Trainings: <https://www.acrf.org/self-study/self-study-resources/micro-trainings>
*Foster to College, Presidential Waiver Flyer (Notice of Tuition Waiver Scholarship),
Supporting Your Teen for Her First Visit to a Gynecologist*

Micro Video Trainings: 6 videos under the heading 'Eating and Hygiene Issues'

Audio teleconference – Under 'General Topics, Parenting, Mental Health'
<https://www.acrf.org/self-study/teleconference-audio-trainings/parenting-mental-health-family>
Health Transition for Youth into Adulthood