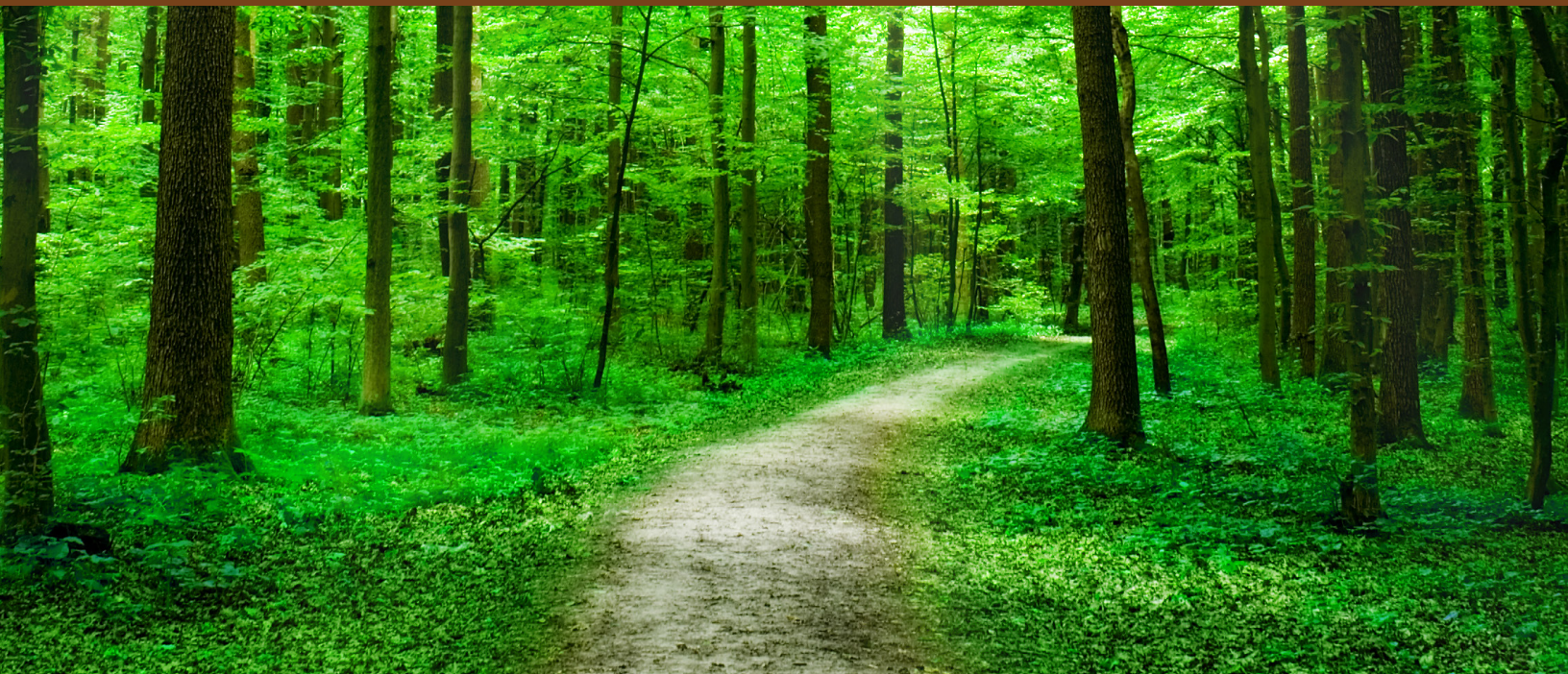


THE BENEFITS OF STAYING IN CARE:



A PATHWAY TO SUCCESS



This document highlights the advantages of remaining in foster care in Pennsylvania, emphasizing the positive outcomes associated with extended care. By continuing their involvement in the system, youth in care gain access to essential resources and support networks that help them transition successfully into adulthood. The document explores key areas such as emotional support, stability, educational opportunities, health and wellness, and life skills development. These resources are designed to assist youth in overcoming the challenges they face during this critical phase of their lives.

Additionally, foster care ensures that fundamental needs such as food, clothing, and shelter are consistently met. This secure foundation is crucial for youth to focus on their personal growth, educational success, and future goals without the constant worry of meeting basic needs. The provision of these essentials allows them to fully engage in opportunities like attending school, participating in extracurricular activities, and receiving necessary medical care. With these basic needs taken care of, youth are better equipped to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally, setting the stage for a successful transition into independent adulthood.

Emotional Support: **How Remaining in Care Fosters Strong Relationships**

One of the primary benefits of staying in care is the emotional support provided by dedicated friends, family, professionals, mentors, and caseworkers. This support helps youth build strong, trusting relationships that provide a sense of security and guidance. Staying in care allows youth to continue working with trained staff who understand their individual needs and challenges, ensuring they have a stable emotional foundation as they navigate the transition to independence.

[Permanency Pact](#)



Stability: The Importance of a Consistent Living Environment

Stability is a crucial factor in the success of youth transitioning out of foster care. Youth who remain in care have access to consistent living environments, which contributes to their emotional well-being and overall success. In Pennsylvania, youth who stay in care until age 21 experience significantly higher rates of stable housing and employment compared to those who age out at 18. This stability is particularly important for youth facing challenges like homelessness or unstable housing after aging out of the system. “Chapin Hall” has even identified significant benefits associated with extending foster care to youth until age 21. Benefits include reducing the likelihood that young adults experience homelessness or an economic hardship while they remain in care

[Extended foster care](#)



Educational Opportunities: Access to Resources, Mentoring, and Financial Support

Remaining in foster care offers youth access to valuable educational resources, mentoring programs, and financial support that greatly enhance their chances of academic success. Youth who stay in care are more likely to graduate from high school, pursue higher education, and receive the necessary support to succeed academically. In Pennsylvania, youth who remain in care are 70% more likely to graduate from high school and 25% more likely to earn a college degree by age 26. Programs such as the Chafee Foster Care Program offer educational assistance, scholarship opportunities, and connections to mentors who help guide youth through their academic journey.

[Chafee Program](#)

Health and Wellness: **Regular Medical Check-ups and Mental Health Support**

Youth who stay in foster care on or after their 18th birthday are entitled to regular medical check-ups, mental health support, and access to essential health services that may not be available once they leave the system. In Pennsylvania, youth who remain in care, as well as those who have aged out, benefit from programs that offer not only physical health support but also services aimed at enhancing mental wellness and emotional stability. These comprehensive services ensure that young adults are physically and mentally prepared to handle the challenges of independent living. Additionally, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) provides continued health care coverage through Medicaid until the age of 26 for youth who were in foster care at age 18 or older. These resources, along with life skills training and educational support, play a critical role in preparing young adults for long-term success and a healthy, stable future.

- [Protect Our Care Congressional Fact Sheet](#)
- [Affordable Care Act Flyer](#)



Life Skills Development: **Programs for Independence and Job Readiness**

Pennsylvania's Independent Living Program (ILP) offers foster youth life skills training, financial literacy, and housing support to ensure a smooth transition to self-sufficiency. By staying in care, foster youth can access these tailored opportunities for education, hands-on work, and employability skills, ensuring a pathway to success and independence.

Additionally, IL workers can support youth with programs like PA CareerLink® and the U.S. Department of Labor's Youth Employment Fact Sheet, offer job search assistance, training, and career counseling to help them gain employment and build a stable future.

- [CareerOneStop's Get My Future](#)
- [PA CareerLink® - Students and Youth](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor's Youth Employment Fact Sheet](#)

The Role of Supportive Networks and SWAN Services

Remaining in care allows youth to establish strong supportive networks, including relationships with mentors, peers, and permanent connections which are crucial during the transition to adulthood. Pennsylvania's Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) offers a variety of services aimed at ensuring all youth have permanent connection and supportive adults in their lives. SWAN services include counseling, permanency planning, and resources that help youth prepare for transitioning to successful adulthood.

- [SWAN Units of Service](#)
- [SWAN Brochure](#)
- [Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network](#)

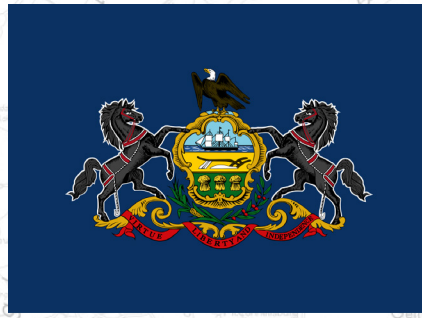
Access to Financial Support: Housing and Normalcy

The Pennsylvania Independent Living Program provides essential support to foster youth aged 14-21, helping them transition into adulthood with housing assistance. Transitional living services, such as the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, assist youth aging out of foster care with financial aid for housing, utilities, and daily expenses, as well as job training. The Independent Living Program (ILP) in Pennsylvania specifically supports foster youth with financial literacy, and housing assistance,



all designed to help youth successfully transition to independent living. Foster youth can also access state and federal benefits like housing, and basic needs as they work toward independence. These services highlight the benefits of staying in care, as continued support and resources provide Permanency, helping them develop the necessary skills to succeed in life, avoid homelessness, and achieve greater stability. Staying in care offers youth the time and resources needed to build a solid foundation for adulthood, reducing the risks associated with aging out of the system prematurely.

- [John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program](#)



Pennsylvania Insights

Here is more information supporting the benefits for you as a youth to remain in care.

Aging Out Statistics in Pennsylvania

In Pennsylvania, approximately 40% of youth in foster care exit the system at age 18. However, research shows that youth who remain in care until age 21 have better outcomes, including higher rates of high school graduation, employment, and college enrollment. Extended care provides critical support that helps you.

Employment Outcomes

Youth who participate in extended services are twice as likely to find stable employment compared to those who exit care at age 18. These services help youth build job skills, gain work experience, and connect with employers, significantly improving their chances of financial independence.

Success Rates Comparison

- High School Graduation Rates: Youth who remain in care are 70% more likely to graduate from high school.
- College Graduation Rates: Youth who stay in care are 25% more likely to graduate from college by age 26.
- Preparedness for Independent Living: 80% of youth in care feel prepared for independent living when they receive ongoing support.
- Homelessness: Youth who stay in care have a 50% lower incidence of homelessness post-transition.

These resources offer a wide range of support for youth in care in Pennsylvania, focusing on education, employment, housing, and legal rights. Encouraging youth to connect with these organizations can help them navigate the challenges of transitioning out of foster care and achieve successful outcomes.

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