



THE BLAST

Your Source for Everything Y.A.B.

YAB Updates!

The Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board (YAB) will be working on several projects in the upcoming months in order to create positive change in the foster care system. Any youth are welcome to join these projects and more at their regional or local meetings!

1) The long awaited completion of the Developmentally Appropriate Freedoms and Normalcy Guide will be ready for distribution in just a few months. Youth will be needed to talk about why normalcy is important to them!

2) "Fostering Older Youth: The Teenage Experience," will be a workshop that has been developed at the statewide YAB meetings. A small workgroup of dedicated youth will be putting the finishing touches on this training for foster parents over the summer.

3) The Youth Quality Improvement Specialists will also be making their rounds visiting your regional YABs. During our time with you, we will be discussing a new law that was passed last year. It needs your voice to be implemented well!

4) The June Leadership Summit will take place at the Child Welfare Resource Center, and it is a great opportunity to share your voice, learn about leadership and meet youth from across the state of Pennsylvania!

You can find out more about the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board by attending any of the regional meetings (listed to the right) and networking with other youth!

Upcoming Dates

Statewide Dates

Summit- CWRC
6/17 and 6/18

Statewide—CWRC
9/17/15 at 10am

Regional Dates

North Central—Lycoming
4/16/15 at 5:30pm

North East—Lackawanna
5/7/15 at 5pm

North West—Erie
4/22/15 at 4:30pm

South Central—Lancaster
5/14/15 at 5pm

South East—Montgomery
4/23/15 at 5:30pm

PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

is comprised of current and former substitute care youth ages 16-21. Youth leaders on the YAB educate, advocate, and form partnerships to create positive change in the substitute care system.

You Should Know! The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (reprinted from Fosterclub.com)

Throughout 2013, multiple members of Congress proposed multiple ways to improve foster care with their own individual bills. In an effort to work together, Congress agreed to make one new bill, combining parts of the old ones. H.R. 4980, sponsored by Representative Dave Camp, has several parts and many important new rules to help foster youth everywhere in the United States. Most importantly, these new rules were a result of conversations with foster youth.

Yep, you heard it: Lawmakers heard your voice and are making improvements to the foster care system as a result.

Some important parts of the bill:

- **Youth Rights:** States are required to provide any youth age 14 or older with a list of their rights, as well as a signed acknowledgement that the youth received the list.
- **Prudent Parenting:** New requirements for “prudent parenting” standards (this means states will make plans to allow foster parents and group homes, instead of just caseworkers or agencies, to decide whether a youth can participate in age appropriate activities like sports or other extracurricular activities).
- **Normalcy:** For older youth, the ability to participate in “normal”, age appropriate activities must be discussed at the youth’s case planning meetings; Congress has also given money to pay for these activities starting in 2020.
- **Case Planning:** Starting at age 14, youth will be given the opportunity to become involved in the development of their case plan and transition plan; youth will also have the option to invite two people of their choice to attend planning meetings.
- **Preventing Long Term Foster Care:** Discourages the use of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) as a permanency option for youth; requires states to provide more evidence to the court that aging out is the best option for older youth in care.
- **Documents when exiting care:** Youth must be provided a copy of birth certificate, social security card, driver’s license or state ID, health insurance and medical records.
- **Tracking Disrupted Adoptions:** Requires states to track disrupted and dissolved adoptions and guardianships.
- **Sex Trafficking Prevention:** Requires states to track the sexual exploitation of foster youth and youth who runaway and/or are missing from care; increases training requirements for those who work with youth to identify sex trafficking as it occurs.
- **Adoptions:** Makes adoptions and guardianships easier for families revising incentives for those families.

Youth from across Pennsylvania will be asked in a series of focus groups how they feel that this new law should be practiced. Stay tuned as we visit your regions!

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