

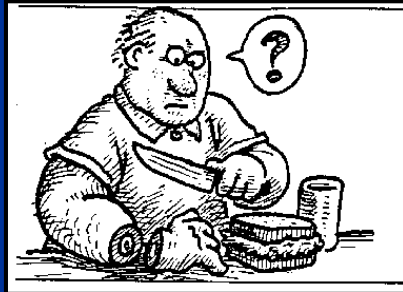
Independent Living “A celebration of excellence”



Judge Vincent C. Crawford
Associate Judge
DeKalb County Juvenile Court

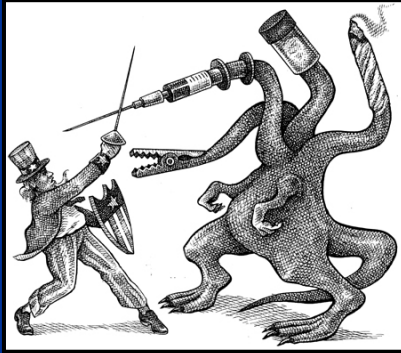
Surviving Without a Plan

- 46% lack a high school diploma



Surviving Without a Plan

- 46% battle drug addiction



Surviving Without a Plan

- 42% are teen parents



Surviving Without a Plan

- 51% are unemployed
- Those employed earn, on average, less than minimum wage



Surviving Without a Plan

- 27% have spent time in jail



Surviving Without a Plan

- 25% have been homeless



Surviving Without a Plan?

- 4% die



The End

Warning Education is Important

- The Child;
 - 1. Poor on Standardize test.
 - 2. High rate of grade retention.
 - 3. High Absenteeism
 - 4. Tardiness
 - 5. Truancy
 - 6. High Drop Out Rate
- The Adult
 - 1. High Rate of Instability
 - 2. Low expectation for self and children
 - 3. Poor Life Skills
 - 4. Lack Independence

Heritage Foundation

What's the difference?

Surviving
Without
a Plan



Living
With
a Plan

Constitution & Statutes

Foster Care Independence Act of 1999/Chafee Act

- Provides services for youth who are likely to remain in foster care until they are 18.
- While you are in care, the state must provide you with food, clothing, shelter, education and ordinary medical care.

State Statute O.C.G.A.

49-5-3 (12)

Social Services Manual

Section 1012.1-1012.15

What is the Goal ?

Adolescence is a time of preparation for the future. Many adolescents leaving Foster Care have significant difficulty making a successful transition to adulthood. Congressional findings indicate that “children aging out of foster care show high rates of homelessness, non-marital childbearing, poverty, and delinquent or criminal behavior; they are also frequently the target of crime and physical assaults” (42 USC 677). The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, hereafter referred to as Georgia’s Independent Living Program (ILP), was created to target youth that are vulnerable to these conditions.

What is this child thinking ?



The top ten Wants vs. Needs

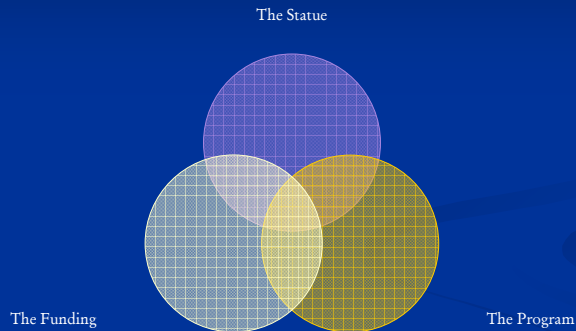
Categories	Wants	Needs	Comments	Total	%
Money	48	41		89	82.4%
Job / Career	29	51		80	74.1%
Clothes & Shoes	37	37		74	68.5%
Go to College	30	22		52	48.1%
Graduate High School	19	26		45	41.7%
Car / Lisence	29	16		45	41.7%
Apartment/Shelter/Home	23	15		38	35.2%
ID Documents	9	23		32	29.6%
Go back home / See family	14	15	"I need my mom and my brother."	29	26.9%

What's happening

- Georgia's emancipated foster youth do not receive Medicaid beyond age 18.
- Only 44% of eligible Georgia youth were served by ILP in FFY 2005.
- Only 24% of eligible Georgia youth ages 16-17 were placed in jobs through ILP and Teen Work in 2005.
- Only 18 youth were enrolled in the Transitional Living Program (TLP) between June 2004 and May 2005. In FFY 2005 there were over 1,800 ILP eligible youth age 18+.
- Demographic and fiscal data collected on eligible youth and services rendered is insufficient for program evaluation and reform.
- In State Fiscal Year 2004, ILP had \$1.9 million in unspent federal Chafee and ETV funds and in SFY 2005 that figure was \$2.4 million. States have 2 years to spend these funds.
- Existing evidence suggests that ILP services have a positive effect on transitioning youth to self-sufficient adults.

Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
By Clare S. Richie

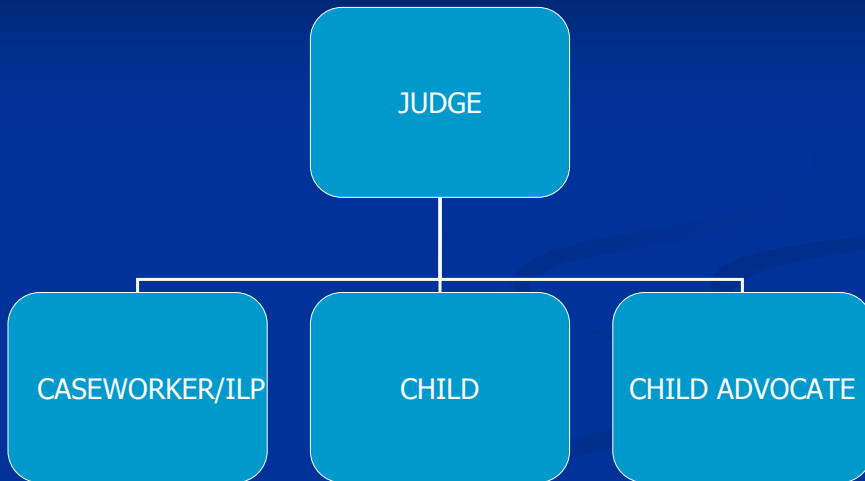
Imagine this ?



What should happen in Court ?



Who are the stakeholders ?



What is the role of the Judge ?



When do you have a permanency hearing ?

- **Permanency Hearings:** The Code provides that a permanency hearing may be held at the time of a custody extension.
- **Reasonable Efforts:** At the permanency hearing if the Court finds that the department cannot find a suitable living arrangement, the department can offer "another permanent living arrangement" (ie, long term foster care to transition into independent living)
- **Clear and Convincing Evidence:** There is a presumption that reunification services should not be provided if the court finds by "Clear and Convincing evidence" that another permanent planned living arrangement is acceptable. (WTLP)
- The WTLP and accompanying Case Plan Goals and Steps must be included in the Case Review process as mandated by Federal regulations. The WTLP, based on an assessment, must be developed and signed by the youth, SSCM and IL Coordinator. See WTLP Policy 1007.10.
- The SSCM, with input from the youth is responsible for updating the WTLP and with input from the ILC. All amendments to court ordered case plans must be submitted to the court for review and approval.
- Aftercare youth are entitled to six month reviews. FCM 1012.5

Questions for child from the bench

- Are you familiar with the Independent Living Program ?
 - What is your understanding ?
- Are you familiar with signing yourself back into care ?
 - What is your understanding ?
- Have you met and gone over plan with a representative from DFACS concerning ILP program ?
- Have you met and gone over plan with child advocate ?
- Are there any changes or amendments you would like to make to the plan

18 and older additional questions;

- Have they explained and you understand the benefits concerning;
 - Education
 - Housing
 - Financial
- Are you signing yourself back into care ? (60 Days from 18th birthday)
- Are you participating in the ILP program ?
- Did you sign a WTLP plan ?
- Are you satisfied with that plan ?
- You understand you have a right for that plan to be reviewed by DFACS or the Court every six months ?

What is the role of the Child Advocate or CASA?



What is the role of CASA/CA ?

- To meet with the child
- Develop trusting relationship
- Get to know the child
- Know the child's past
- Know the child's present situation
- Know the child's perspective about the future

How can a CASA help the child with the WTLP

- Find out what the child likes to do in spare time
- What are the child's strength and weakness in Education
- Are you participating in the ILP and what do you want from the Independent living program
- What do you want me to do as a CASA
- What are your goals for the year
- Come up with a timeline to achieve goals

What is the role of the Case manager ?



What is the role of the Case manager ?

All children require a wide variety of services to promote their health, well-being and safety. Due to the life experiences of children who enter care, most will have one or more needs that require immediate attention and sometimes, ongoing care and treatment. Foster care provides an opportunity to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the child's needs. Services to respond to those needs may require short-term interventions. Other, more serious needs will require ongoing treatment long after the child returns home or to another permanent living arrangement. Case Managers must be knowledgeable and resourceful in utilizing and developing resources to enable children to achieve the highest level of functioning possible

- Using the ILP referral form, which is available from the ILC, the Social Service Case Manager (SSCM) refers all eligible youth to the ILC serving their county. Referrals may be made 90 days prior to and no later than 30 days after the youth meets eligibility criteria.

Two Groups Pre-18 and Post-18

- Eligible youth must meet one of the two following criteria:
- Are ages 14 to 21 in the foster care system regardless of their permanency plan. (Can continue past 21 if still in School)
- Are under 21 and were eligible for ILP services when placement authority ended.
- Eligibility begins on the 1st day of the month of eligibility and expires on the last day of the month of eligibility. (Must have been in care for at least six months)
- *Foster Care Services Chapter 1012.2*
- *O.C.G.A. § 19-7-3*

What is the role of the child ?

- What makes you eligible ?
- How do I get it all started ?
- Who should you talk to once I become eligible ?
- What should my WTLP look like or have you ever seen your plan ?

The Who, What and When of a Written Transitional Living Plan *(Foster Care Manual 1007.10)*

A WTLP is completed as part of the CPRS within 30 days for each youth (age 14 and older) who enters foster care and within 60 days for a youth who is already in care (i.e., foster care or placement system) and reaches his/her 14th birthday.

1. Refer all youth age 14 to the Independent Living Coordinator (ILC) closest to their county of residence.
2. With the input and assistance of the ILC, conduct an assessment of the youth's transitional living skills and needs.
3. Complete a separate WTLP with each young person, age 14 and older.
4. Document fully the information requested on the WTLP concerning the youth; e.g., transitional living strengths/needs; mutually identified goals/steps which will ultimately result in successful emancipation; time frames for achievement, etc.

What should you be looking for in a Written Transitional Living Plan ?

The purposes of the WTLP are:

- To serve as a guide or "road map" for the young person, parent or extended family member, foster care provider and the Case Manager in determining the needed services; e.g., educational, tutorial, counseling, etc.
- To identify strengths and needs as well as steps and goals which will ultimately lead to the successful transitioning of the young person;
- To clarify the roles and expectations of the "team;" that is, those individuals who will work together in preparing and supporting the young person in emancipating;
- To provide a mechanism by which the progress of the young person can be measured as he/she moves toward the stated WTLP goals;
- To establish a framework for decision-making that is inclusive of all members of the team, including the youth.

Who's eligible for aftercare services ?

- The youth must continue to receive ILP services after 18th birthday until age 26, whether in care or not. (Must be in School to receive services pass 21)
- Youth may remain in foster care or receive aftercare services for six (6) months beyond their 21st birthday under special provisions; e.g., completion of educational goal as specified in the WTLP. The division director must approve the written transitional living plan.
- Youth must request services

Foster Care Services Chapter 1000, § 12.10 Aftercare Services

What are the living arrangements for aftercare youth ?

- Youth will obtain an Application for Transitional Living Assistance from the ILC, complete the application and return to ILC.
- ILC will coordinate a comprehensive TL assessment to determine the youth's readiness for Transitional Living. The results of the assessment will be reviewed in a Transitional Living Conference that will include the youth, SSCM, ILC, care givers, parents, family members, and other concerned persons. A new WTLP will be developed that will reflect the results of the assessment and its recommendations.
- The amount and duration of financial support will be specified in the WTLP.
- The ILC will initiate a written contract with the youth, to ensure compliance with Transitional Living guidelines. Continued financial assistance is contingent upon the youth's compliance with the contract.
- ILC is responsible for coordinating TL services with private providers and other agencies TL services.

What are the post secondary educational related expenses ?

- Any youth who has completed high school or is attending post-secondary schools.
- The SSCM or youth should contact the ILC in writing to request financial assistance.
- The ILC and SSCM should jointly identify educational/vocational goals and determine the financial need of the youth based on the WTLP.

What are the allowable expenses ?

- Application fees (waiver of fees should be requested)
- Registration fees
- Tuition
- Room and board (On campus housing and meal plans must be used, if available)
- Course books & supplies
- Driver's Education
- Tutoring
- Testing (SAT, ACT, etc)
- Educational stipends for hygiene and personal maintenance (\$50.00/month maximum)
- Educational supplement up to age 26
- Transportation assistance

Are post secondary expenses unlimited ?

ILP funds are provided to supplement rather than replace other financial assistance for youth to complete post-secondary education programs. (i.e., \$5,000 limit for college related expenses. It is now a \$5,000 limit per child. This is not law or written policy)

College Applicant must;

- 1. Apply for a Job**
- 2. Apply for Financial Aid**
- 3. Apply for Scholarships**

Scholarships

- The [Casey Family Scholars Scholarship](#) attempts to reduce the financial barriers foster children may encounter when considering entering higher education. By providing scholarships of up to \$10,000, the Casey Family Scholars Program offers foster youth under the age of 25 the opportunity to attend the national college or university of their choice.
- The [Darko Rapotez Memorial College Scholarship Fund for Aged Out Foster Youth](#) offers between \$5,000 and \$10,000 in college and tuition fee assistance to children who have "aged out" of the foster care system. However, the price of books, housing, transportation, and other higher-education-related costs are not covered. Recipients can be between the ages of 18 and 24 and may come from anywhere in the United States as long as their high school GPA has been 3.0 or higher.
- If you're a high school senior in foster care, you can apply in the autumn for yearly the [Horatio Alger Scholarship](#). This program awards between \$2,500 and \$10,000 per student; monies can be used to pursue a bachelor's degree at any accredited American college or university.
- The [Orphan Foundation of America \(OFA\) Scholarship](#) annually gives amounts between \$500 and \$5000 to current or former foster youths who are planning on furthering their education via academic or vocational training. Any unmarried U.S. foster children with a cumulative high school GPA of at least 2.0 and who are under the age of 25 may apply.
- The [National Scholarship Fund](#) for foster children awards between \$1,500 and \$10,000 to foster youth, former foster youth under 25, and orphans to be used in any state for training after high school.
- Georgia: "Celebration of Excellence" will award scholarships to twenty five current and former Georgia foster kids as they enter college or graduate school. The Celebration of Excellence will also honor those children in foster care who are graduating from high school, GED program, vocational school or college.
- Last year \$72,000 in scholarships were awarded to several deserving students. With additional support from corporate, non-profit and individual sponsors that award has increased to over \$92,000 this year's event. Each scholarship recipient will receive either a \$4000 scholarship for college or \$3000 for graduate school.
- [The Chic Fil La](#) - offers a scholarship for children to purchase a car.

Recommendations from Georgia Budget and Policy Institute on “Georgia’s Independent Living Program”

- Georgia should extend Medicaid coverage to age 21 for all foster youth (in DFCS custody on their 18th birthday) with an automatic enrollment at age 18. This mission was accomplished in the Georgia 2008 session but will not go into effect until July 1, 2009. Children currently in care are not eligible.
- 2. Georgia should increase the percentage of ILP eligible youth served and require each region to serve a minimum percentage of ILP eligible youth. 80% statewide participation would cost Georgia about an additional \$3.3 million. 100% statewide participation would cost Georgia about an additional \$5.1 million.
- 3. Georgia should encourage and assist all ILP eligible youth in obtaining a high school diploma/GED and enrolling in post-secondary education and training programs. ILP programs that reimburse secondary education and enrichment expenses and post-secondary tuition and room & board should be revamped and sufficiently funded to assure that all ILP eligible youth are successfully served.

Cont.....

- 4. Georgia should strengthen efforts to help foster youth age 16 and older secure and maintain paid employment. (Workforce in some areas are helping with this task)
- 5. As ILP pursues program redesign, Georgia should conduct a fundamental review by county and service of ILP youth participation, ILP expenditures, and data and outcome tracking to ensure that every ILP eligible youth in Georgia participates in ILP in accordance with his/her Written Transitional Living Plan. Within this review, the relationship and structure between Regional ILP Coordinators and Case Managers should also be examined.
- 6. Georgia needs a more robust ILP database that tracks every Georgia youth eligible for and participating in ILP by county.

Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
By Clare S. Richie

Questions and Concerns

- How can you get the child to participate in a WTLP they have not seen ?
- How can you get the child to discuss the plan with a caseworker they do not know ?
- Can you get a child to buy into a WTLP that they have not participated in creating ?
- Who's going to keep up with the child and the plan if the placement changes to another county ?
- What if the ILP coordinator does not follow up with the child ?
- What if the child is located in a county that doesn't have a good ILP program and wants to be moved to a county with a good ILP program ?
- Who will advocate for the child once they turn 18 ?
- Is this a plan for independence or do I have to independently work this plan ?

More Accomplishments:

- Won a Gold Medal at 2000 Olympics as member of the "Dream Team."
- NBA Defensive Player of the Year Back-to-Back
- NBA Rookie of the Month, All-Rookie First Team
- 7 Time NBA All-Star
- Member of the 2006 NBA Champion Miami Heat Team.
- Was named one of *People's* "50 Most Beautiful People"

Know Your Legal Rights

Alonzo "Zo" Mourning

"I think certain parts of it were headaches and certain parts were very joyful. No part of life is always going to be milk & cookies."



Who is she ?

- Born in Puerto Rico to a schizophrenic, alcoholic mother.
- Hoping the demons wouldn't follow her, Mom moved to Vermont when Charlotte was an infant.
- By age 3, she started going back & forth b/w her mother's neglectful home and 4 other foster homes.
- Finally, she settled into a steady home, living with a foster family for 11 years.
- But, when she became eligible for adoption, they refused to adopt her.
- She was transferred to a group home for children in crisis.

"As a child , I had nothing. We lived in cheap hotels and trailer parks. One of my earliest memories is eating mac & cheese out of a Wendy's cup. That was a good memory, because we were eating."

- Charlotte entered the Miss Vermont Teen USA and went on to win Miss Teen USA in 1993 wearing a \$37 gown.
- Traveling across America, she became an ambassador for foster children.
- At 17, Charlotte drafted a letter to her case worker stating her desire to be adopted, and it worked!
- Charlotte went to the University of California on a scholarship.
- She has been in lots of music videos, TV shows & movies.
- She wrote a book called, "Lost in the System."
- Most importantly, she is still a national advocate for youth in foster care.

Know Your Legal Rights

Charlotte Ayanna

"Sometimes I thought I was dreaming. All these social workers and doctors and lawyers sitting out there in the audience, their faces lifted in my direction, waiting for me to give them advice! I actually testified before legislators!"



Who is she ?

Victoria's story:

- She was given away by her mother 14 days after birth.
- She shuffled around to different foster homes, eventually settling in with a woman she now considers her 'mother.'
- She had raised 10 of her own children, and as a senior citizen was raising three more foster children and running a 60 acre farm.
- When she was 8, without any formal lessons, she received a Ford Foundation scholarship to attend the Cambridge School of Ballet which lead to more scholarships to pay for training at some of the top ballet schools in the U.S.

Where might you have seen Victoria?

How about...

- One Life to Live
- The Young & The Restless
- As The World Turns
- The Cosby Show
- Diagnosis Murder with Dick Van Dyke
- The Distinguished Gentleman with Eddie Murphy
- Dumb & Dumber with Jim Carrey
- In *Seventeen* magazine as a model
- In *Mademoiselle* magazine as a model

But...

She also founded her own non-profit, *Rowell's Foster Children's Positive Plan* to give back to the community that supported her.

Victoria Rowell

"Foster children are good kids. With guidance and instruction, they will be prepared to become self-sufficient, successful adults."



Who is he ?

George's Story:

- Born into turbulent times near the end of the Civil War.
- He was kidnapped by *Confederate Nightraiders* and it's believed he was sent away to Arkansas.
- George never knew his parents & was never formally adopted.
- He was raised by Moses Carver who was the person responsible for saving him from the *Nightraiders*.
- George went on to attend Iowa State University to receive a bachelor's and master's degree in Bacterial Botany & Agriculture.
- George later joined the faculty at Iowa State, the first black member of the faculty.
- George invented peanut butter, and discovered over 300 uses for peanuts.

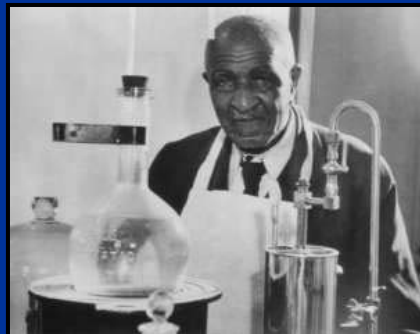
Curious George...

- During WWI, George found a way to replace textile dyes formerly imported from Europe.
- Invented a process to produce over 500 shades of dye from soybeans.
- Received the Roosevelt Medal for restoring southern agriculture.
- Served as Director of Agriculture for the *Tuskegee Normal & Industrial Institute for Negroes*.

Know Your Legal Rights

George Washington Carver

"No individual has a right to come into the world and go out of it without leaving behind him a distinct and legitimate reason for having pass through it."



FIND IT

BELIEVE IN IT

ACHIEVE IT

RESOURCES

- Georgia Budget & Policy Institute “Georgia Independent Living Program” by Clare S. Richie

www.gbpi.org/pubs/specialreport/20060612.pdf

Social Services Manual – Section 1012.2-1012.12

www.childwelfare.net

Official Code of Georgia
20-3-660 (Education Assistance)