

THE ABC'S OF AB12*

California faces exciting new opportunities in moving forward to implement AB12 – the California Fostering Connections to Success Act. This landmark legislation provides continued services and supports for foster youth as they transition out of care. AB12 is intended to more fully prepare youth for the transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency rather than serve as an extension of traditional foster care.

As a community, we have a historic and special opportunity to work and partner with these young adults in ways that positively affect their future, their happiness and their success in life.

A Adulthood!

- Today's young adults are not the foster youth of yesterday. As young people grow into adulthood, they have new and different needs, including the need for other adults who will support them in taking charge of their lives and their futures. As a community, we have the chance to redefine our relationships with these young adults, balancing the need to protect and guide them with their rights and responsibilities as legally responsible adults.
- **Attention and support that is individual to each person.** Every young adult is unique; some may require intensive levels of support and assistance, while others may need more guidance and skill building to achieve their goals. Providing individualized attention ensures successful transitions. AB12 aims to be a safety net for the most vulnerable youth struggling with transitioning to adulthood.
- **Human development is not linear.** Challenges and experimentation are a normal part of development. Our goal is to work with young adults to help them rebound and recover from any setbacks, returning and regrouping if needed to find new ways of moving forward.

B Building Skills & Bolstering Independence

- Working with young adults on everyday aspects of life – relationships, problem solving, personal responsibility and skill building – helps give them the very best chance to thrive. These skills are vital to success and young adults may need active assistance to reinforce and support learning as they transition into adulthood. We may need to transform the ways in which we work, emphasizing supports rather than supervision, to ensure that everyone is truly working together to provide needed guidance and assistance through youth focused and youth centered programs.
- **It's about listening to young adults and hearing what's most important to them – and then helping them to act on that.** Every aspect of a young person's life matters, including how to achieve educational goals, find meaningful work experiences, and have permanent, loving relationships on which they can depend.
- **Programs and policies need to encompass the full spectrum of youth.** Our young adult population is diverse and requires programs and policies that meet their unique needs – one size doesn't fit all! Full and honest partnerships help young people get what they need to live, love, learn, work- and ultimately thrive.

C onnecting Young Adults to Caring Adults & Critical Resources

- **Everyone – no matter how old or young – needs a family to belong to and call his or her own.** Family and loved ones provide a foundation and help young adults to realize their potential.
- **We all need to work together.** AB12 requires us to work together in new and different ways – creating teams of individuals to work together to develop youth focused and youth centered programs that provide young adults with guidance and assistance. This requires social workers, caregivers, judges, lawyers, CASA volunteers and educators to support each other in the evolution of their roles.
- **All young adults need support and continued eligibility for all available services.** All young people, regardless of whether they live with relatives, foster families, in group care or on their own, need support. Practitioners have a special responsibility to help young adults maintain their eligibility for all needed and allowed services and supports.