



SUPPORTING NATIVE YOUTH INTO ADULTHOOD



These resources can help child welfare professionals support the health, well-being, and cultural connectivity of native youth while they journey into adulthood.

Tribal Leadership Series: Youth Engagement

(National Indian Child Welfare Association)

Highlighting the importance of youth engagement, this guide offers tips and tools specifically geared toward tribal leaders.

Native American Youth in Transition: The Path from Adolescence to Adulthood in Two Native American Communities

(National Indian Child Welfare Association)

Though conducted over 15 years ago, the community-based recommendations in this research report offer relevant insight.

Native Youth Today! Bridging the Gap (Prevention & Recovery)

This edition of the Prevention & Recovery quarterly newsletter focuses on the native youth perspective and offers examples of programs that focus on prevention and promote well-being.

Center for Native American Youth (Aspen Institute)

The CNAY works alongside native youth to help improve their health, safety, and well-being. In various places throughout their site voices of youth are featured as they describe their foster care experience and importance of maintaining cultural connections. See also their report, Drawing Strength from Our Cultures: State of Native Youth 2016.

YOUTH ROUNDTABLES

In 2020, the Children's Bureau held 12 roundtable discussions with youth from across the country who are, or were previously, in foster care. Common themes that arose during these discussions focused on mental health, overall well-being, and social isolation brought on by the current health crisis. Youth are experiencing increased feelings of loneliness, disconnection, and suicidal ideation. This was expressed more during the roundtable with tribal youth.

Additional challenges youth shared during the roundtables:

- Concerns about aging out of foster care during the pandemic without a place to go or a means to support themselves
- Job loss and/or difficulty finding meaningful employment
- Safe and secure housing
- Worries about schools and universities shifting into a virtual learning environment
- Access to healthcare
- Reduced access to reliable transportation
- Reunification and adoption finalization concerns

State child welfare leaders are encouraged to reach out to the local tribes and tribal consortia to better support the well-being of tribal youth.

[Learn about Building an Effective Tribal-State Child Welfare Partnership.](#)



Youth Engagement Team: Recommendations for Improving Permanency and Well-Being

(Administration for Children and Families)

Developed in 2020, the ACF Youth Engagement Team held three roundtable discussions focused on supporting: permanency with kin, relational permanency, and successful older youth adoption and compiled a summary of their recommendations.

Youth Transitioning from Foster Care: Background and Federal Programs (Congressional Research Service)

Prepared for members and Committees of Congress, this report provides background information on older youth in foster care and details two federal programs under Title IV-E: the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee program) and the Foster Care Maintenance Payments Program. [Learn more about the Chafee program.](#)

Listen Up! Youth Listening Session Toolkit (Office of Population Affairs)

Interested in conducting a youth listening session within your community? From goal setting and coordination to taking action, this toolkit offers tested strategies and tips on how to engage youth in meaningful ways.

Support for Youth Aging Out of Care (North

American Council on Adoptable Children)

Position statements and policy recommendations for adoption related child welfare issues.

Youth Engagement Blueprint Series (Center for States)

A six-part series encouraging child welfare agencies to build capacity and better engage current and former foster youth and integrate their voices at all organizational levels.

Support Services for Youth in Transition (Child Welfare Information Gateway)

A list of resources for supporting youth as they transition to adulthood.

Engaging and Involving Youth (Child Welfare Information Gateway)

A list of resources for child welfare professionals to learn about engaging youth in authentic and effective ways.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Tribal Youth Resource Center

has developed culturally specific training and technical assistance for tribes seeking to build capacity to develop, expand, improve, and maintain their juvenile justice systems.

Indian Health Service, the Federal Health Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives, has created a list of Youth Best Practices.

TRIBAL RESOURCES AND YOUTH COUNCILS TO EMPOWER YOUTH AND KEEP THEM CONNECTED TO THEIR COMMUNITIES AND CULTURE

Mvskoke Nation Youth Services Program at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation has a strategic plan and an active Youth Council to engage and empower Mvskoke youth by connecting them to culture, community, and resources.

Three Precious Miracles was founded to support Native American children by providing basic resources, streamlining systems, providing cultural and natural linkages to licensing agencies, and supporting foster and kinship families through systems navigation and involvement.



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