

The Pennsylvania Model

A Guide to Independent Living

The Independent Living Project
of Pennsylvania's Child Welfare
Competency-Based Training and
Certification Program
University of Pittsburgh

Purpose

To provide the fundamental information necessary for an Independent Living Program Worker to perform the job tasks and responsibilities as required.

Training Agenda

- **Historical Overview**
- **Independent Living in Pennsylvania**
 - Philosophy and Goals
 - Continuum of Services
 - Service Models
- **IL Eligibility Requirements, Program Guidelines, Standards & Documentation**

Training Agenda

- Independent Living Jeopardy
- Role of the Independent Living Worker
- Youth Needs Assessment
- Diversity in the Assessment Process
- Case Management and IL Plan

Historical Overview

Learning Objective

- Describe the history of independent living services/programs through legislative initiatives.

Timeline of Independent Living Services

- **Early 1980's - Public Concern/Tragedy**
 - Former child-welfare youth are overly represented on welfare roles, in homeless shelters, psychiatric hospitals and in the penal system
 - Foster child, Willie Palmer, “discharged to nowhere” is found dead on a New York City street
 - National independent movement for services preparing adolescents for independent living

Timeline of Independent Living Services

- **1986-87 - National Foster Care Independent Living Program**
 - Title IV-E amended to establish the Foster Care Independent Living Program
 - Federal initiative to help facilitate the transition of older children from foster care to independent adult living
 - Eligible to Title IV-E youth only (age 16-18)

Timeline of Independent Living Services

- **1988-93**

- (1988) Under P.L. 100-647, Independent Living Program amended to include ALL youth age 16-18 (not just Title IV-E eligible youth)
- (1990) ILP amended to extend services to youth to age 21
- (1993) Congress permanently authorizes independent living funding through COBRA

Timeline of Independent Living Services

- 1999
 - Congress passes the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and signed into law by President Clinton as the **“John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program”** on December 14, 1999.

Independent Living In Pennsylvania

Learning Objectives

- Describe the goals of Pennsylvania's Independent Living Program.
- Identify the continuum of independent living services available to youth.
- Describe the diversity of county-based IL service models in PA.

Purpose of the Independent Living Program

To make every effort possible to reduce or eliminate the instances of homelessness, poverty, delinquent or criminal behavior, and non-marital childbirth and to increase employability, high school graduation rates, enrollment in post-secondary or vocational institutions and successful transition to adulthood.

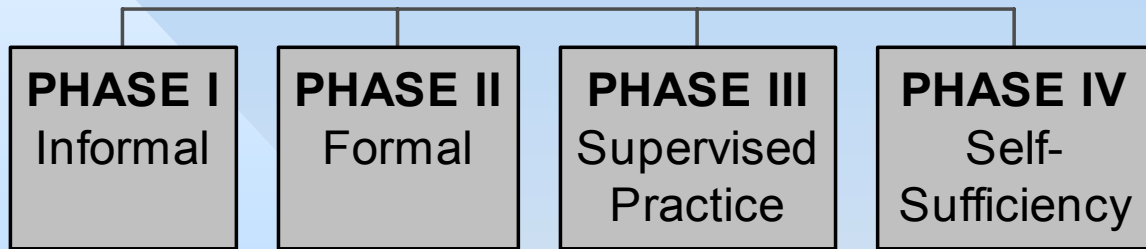
Program Goals...

- 1) Help youth make the transition to self-sufficiency...**
- 2) Provide services such as assistance in obtaining a high school diploma; career exploration, vocational training and job placement/retention, training in daily living skills and budgeting/financial management skills; substance abuse prevention; and preventive health activities;**
- 3) Help youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment;**

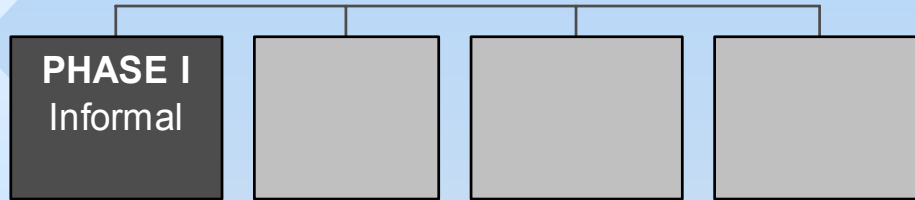
Program Goals, cont'

- 3) Help youth prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions;
- 4) Provide personal and emotional support through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults; and
- 5) Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients.

Basic Independent Living Service Continuum

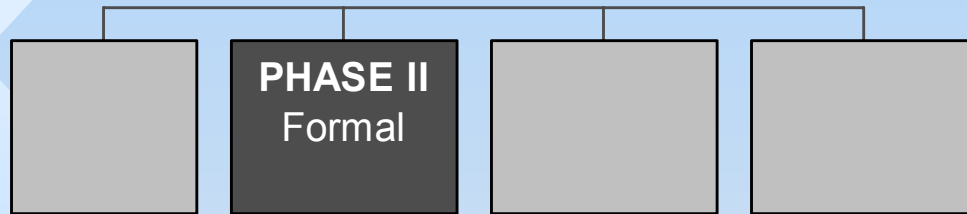


Basic Independent Living Service Continuum



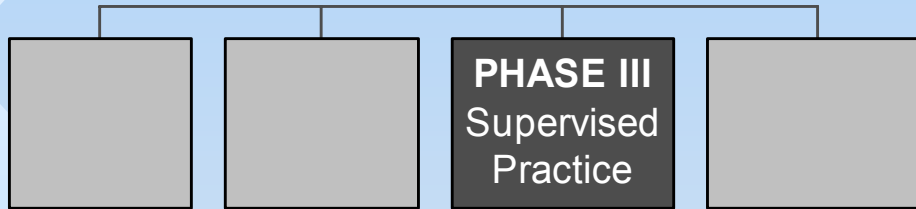
- Informal learning through observation
- Capitalizing on “teachable moments”
- Formal training to foster parents/caregivers

Basic Independent Living Service Continuum



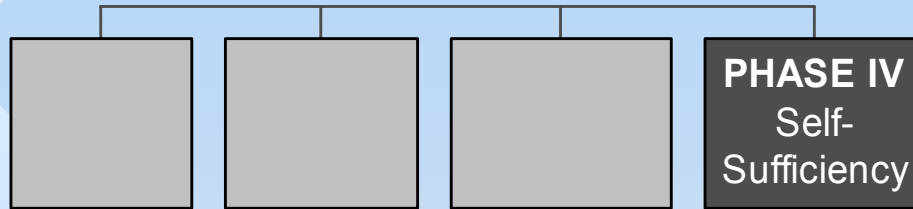
- Formal learning through instruction
- Learn by doing - experiential learning
- Educational groups

Basic Independent Living Service Continuum



- Supervised apartment living (limited availability)
- Real life simulation
- Learn by doing

Basic Independent Living Service Continuum



- Minimal or no adult supervision
- Aftercare services
- Dependent on natural community resources

Four Pennsylvania Independent Living Program Models

- County-Operated ILP
- Purchased IL Service (One provider)
- Purchased IL Service (Multiple providers)
- Shared Responsibility

Independent Living Program Requirements & Guidelines

Learning Objectives

- State the eligibility requirements for youth to receive IL services.
- Define the differences between regular and aftercare independent living.
- Define program standards and guidelines.
- Define documentation and case record requirements.

Youth Eligibility Requirements

- Up to age 21.
- Likely to remain in foster care until age 18 or aged out of foster care at age 18.
- For room and board, ages 18-21, if discharged from foster care at age 18.

PA Standard IL Components

- Intake Process to Identify ILP Participants
- Assessment Process to Identify Needs
- Written IL Service Plan

Assessment Focus

- Education needs
- Life skills needs
- Housing needs
- Employment needs
- Preventative service needs

TIP

Make use
of existing
needs
assessment
data.

Assessment Data

- **School Records**
 - Test scores, grades, etc.
- **Interviews**
 - Youth and professional staff
- **Standardized Instruments**
 - Administration, scoring and interpretation

Case Record Documentation

- Independent Living Plan
- Results of Needs Assessment
- Signed Copy of Stipend/Room and Board Policy and Receipts
- Copy of the Referral Sheet

Case Record Documentation

- Youth Report Forms
- Correspondence
- Youth Contact Information (telephone/address)
- Copy of Birth Certificate

County's Stipend/Room and Board Policy

- **Written Policy Statement**
 - Purpose of stipends/room and board payments
 - How stipends/payments are earned (conditions)
 - Eligibility criteria for stipends/payments (e.g., attendance, completion of goals, etc.)
 - Amounts that can be earned/paid

County's Stipend/Room and Board Policy

- **Written Policy Statement (continued)**
 - Payment procedures -- how youth accesses stipends/payments
 - Conditions that would result in stipend/payments not being made (including eligibility criteria)

County's Stipend/Room and Board Policy

- **Policy Explained to Youth / Sign-off**
 - Policy must be presented to youth prior to program entry.
 - Youth must sign-off on policy indicating the policy was explained.
 - Sign-off document, witnessed and signed by staff, must be maintained in the youth's case record.

County's Stipend/Room and Board Policy

- Receipts of Payment
 - Youth's signature indicating receipt of payment on agency letterhead.
 - Signed and witnessed by caseworker, program coordinator, or other agency official.
 - Maintain receipt in case record.

Specific Documentation for Room and Board Payments

- copy of the court order discharging the youth after the age of 18
- copy of the youth's birth certificate
- referrals made to other locally available housing/room and board resources
- updated needs assessment
- contract between the agency and the youth on agency letterhead

Youth Report Forms

- **Regular Independent Living**
 - Program Entry
 - Program Completion
 - 90 Days after Completion
 - Time of Discharge

Youth Report Forms

- **Aftercare Reports**
 - Entering Aftercare
 - Completing Aftercare
 - Aftercare Follow-up

IL JEOPARDY

	HISTORY	POLICY	PA-IL	POTPOURRI
\$100	In 1999, this Congressional Act was signed into law by President Clinton.	These represent a youth's eligibility to receive IL services.	A sum of money given to youth for participation or completion of activities.	Services for youth 18-21 years old who were in foster care at age 18.
\$200	During 1980-85, studies revealed youth discharged from care are over-represented in these areas.	This written description of services must be provided in the case record.	Self-supporting employment, enrollment in school or vocational training and a stable place of residence.	These are five domains that are examined in a youth's assessment.
\$300	This lawsuit was filed in NYS Supreme Court in 1988.	This policy must be explained to and signed-off by the youth prior to entry.	A local resource for technical assistance and information.	School reports, interviews and standardized instruments.
\$400	In 1999, the Foster Care Independence Act was signed into law and renamed.	These must be completed at entry, completion, 90 days after completion, and at discharge.	What these 4 phases: informal, formal, supervised practice, and self-sufficiency represent.	These provide a more detailed picture of independent living needs.
\$500	In 1986-87, the Federal Government enacted this initiative.	This must be prepared based on the results of a needs assessment.	These four items are a partial list of what is required in every case record.	This dollar amount is the current national ILP budget.

Role of the IL Worker

Learning Objective

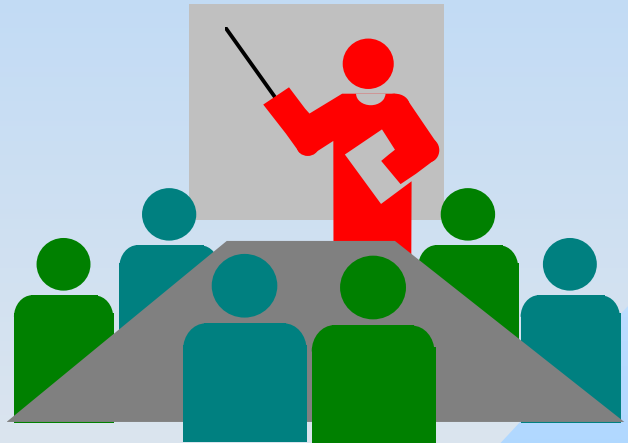
- State the various roles, tasks and responsibilities assigned to Independent Living Workers.

IL Worker: Key Roles

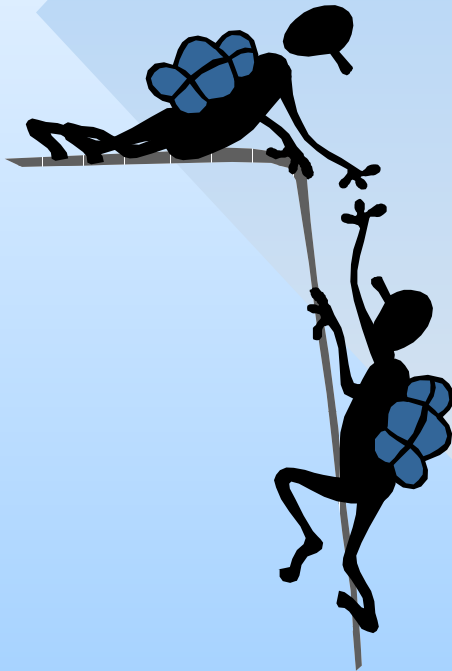
- Life Skills Trainer/Teacher/Role Model
- Supportive Services/Counselor
- Community Service Organizer/Advocator
- Needs Assessor/Advisor
- Case Manager & Record Keeper
- Team Facilitator/Coordinator

Life Skills Trainer/Teacher/Role Model

- Individual & Group Instruction in life skill areas.
- Monitor life skills training attendance & performance.
- Evaluate life skills groups and obtain youth feedback



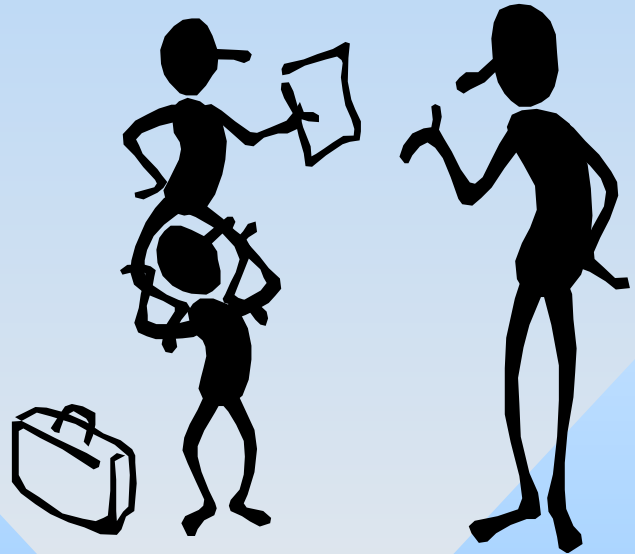
Supportive Services/Counselor



- Support and counsel youth in completion of all IL program areas
- Crisis intervention
- Support youth across all service systems
- Tutoring and academic & career advisement

Community Service Organizer/Advocator

- Community resource link for youth
- Establish community referral network
- Advocate for youth services



Needs Assessor/Advisor



- Evaluate and assess education, employment, housing and life skill needs
- Conduct ongoing formal/informal needs assessments

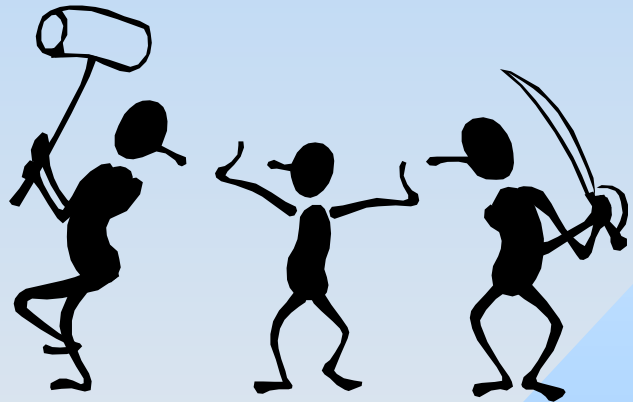
Case Manager & Record Keeper



- Develop and monitor the IL plan
- Implement policies and ensure program guidelines
- Complete and maintain case records

Team Facilitator/Coordinator

- Identify and organize IL team members
- Mediate differences and resolve conflicts
- Coordinate services
- Assign roles and responsibilities



Youth Needs Assessment

Learning Objectives

- Describe the importance of assessment in developing and implementing an independent living service plan.
- Identify the basic elements and skill components of an independent living assessment.
- State the importance of diversity and confidentiality throughout the assessment process.

Federal Mandate

Where appropriate, for a child age 16 or over, a written description of the programs and services will be developed which will help such child prepare for a transition from foster care to independent living.

Section 475(1) Social Security Act

Assessment

A process of information gathering and analysis for the purpose of making a decision.

Measures and Instruments

- Checklists
- Questionnaires
- Surveys
- Observations
- Rating Scales
- Inventories
- Standardized tests
- Pre/post tests
- Computer-based tools
- Supervised practice

Assessment Points to Remember

- Assessment is an ongoing process.
- Services must be adjusted to changing assessment information.
- Assessments should be balanced between informal and formal instruments, observations and various sources.
- Assessments must involve the youth.
- Individual Assessments drive individual plans.
- Ensure confidentiality.

Diversity and Bias in the Assessment Process

Learning Objective

- Recognize cultural factors relevant to assessment.
- Identify guidelines to help workers to be bias-free.
- Identify skills needed to develop bias-free assessments.

Cultural Factors Relevant to Assessment

- Cultural Norms
- Distinguishing between ethnic groups
- Degree of Acculturation
- Fluency with English
- Problem-definition
- Problem-solving methods
- Cultural resources
- Attitudes toward external help and private information

Guidelines to Help Caseworkers be Bias-Free

- Develop a strong sense of self and one's personal biases
- Develop an awareness of others and other world views
- Acquire knowledge of other cultures
- Understand the dynamics of personal differences and similarities

Cultural awareness occurs when people are aware of their cultural values and norms and avoid projecting them onto others.

Case Management and the Independent Living Plan

Learning Objectives

- Understand the central role of case manager in IL service planning.
- State the importance of establishing collaborative relationships and community partnerships.
- Identify potential gaps in a youth's independent living plan.

Community Resources

- Local educational and vocational programs
- Job Placement and training agencies
- Other public and private housing and social service agencies