

10 THINGS TO GET YOU READY FOR your new life

FOSTERING ADVOCATES ARIZONA
Youth. Speak. Change.

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YOU'RE REALLY, REALLY EXCITED and maybe a little nervous about leaving foster care, right? Here's a list to get you thinking about options for what's next in life. Start working on your transition plan any time after you turn 16 and before your 18th birthday. So, if you stay in foster care until your 21st birthday, you're ready with a plan.



02 BUILD A BUDGET.
Create a monthly budget that includes your expenses – housing, food, transportation, school, car insurance and, of course, some fun! Knowing your monthly living expenses will guide your housing and transportation decisions. Check your credit before you leave foster care and set up checking and savings accounts at a bank or credit union. [Opportunity Passport™](#) has tons of good information.



04 FIND HOUSING.
Finally, you get to decide what kind of [living environment](#) you want: [transitional housing](#), a place with roomies, a family member's home, your own apartment or a group home may be some options you're thinking about. Think safe and affordable as you consider your choices.

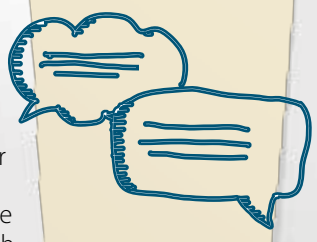


06 CHOOSE HEALTH COVERAGE.
Make a list of all of your medical needs – dental, mental health, prescriptions and vision – then check out the options for [health insurance](#) to find which best fits your needs. Check out the [healthcare navigator](#).

GOAL!!!

08

FORM FRIENDSHIPS.
Who's in your social network? Do you have adult allies that you can turn to for advice? As you transition to your new life, seek positive friendships with people who share your values. Stay in touch with other alums by getting involved with [Fostering Advocates Arizona](#), and check out other foster care alumni [resources](#).



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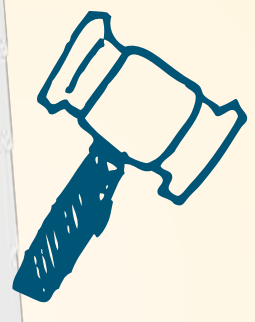
SET BOUNDARIES.
Thinking about re-connecting with your biological family? Take time to think through your expectations and to consider how you can safely reach out. Remember to continue counseling and keep in touch with peers you respect as a way to maintain good [mental health](#).

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SEEK HAPPINESS.
So, it sounds obvious, but it's worth putting out there as you move into this next – kind of intimidating, very exciting and truly awesome – stage of life.

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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.
Federal law requires that young adults transitioning out of foster care have a personal transition plan 90 days before they exit. Don't feel ready to leave foster care? You can extend it beyond 18 by working with your Department of Child Safety (DCS) Child Safety Specialist on a Volunteer Foster Care Agreement. No worries. There's no judge or court after you turn 18. It's your decision. If you decide to exit foster care at 18, you can come back through the [Transitional Independent Living Program](#).



03

PLAN FOR SCHOOL OR WORK.
Are you headed to a four-year [college or university](#)? Interested in a vocational or two-year program at a [community college](#)? Jumping into the [workplace](#)? Talk to a school counselor or your DCS Child Safety Specialist to help you create a plan – and find funding – at least six months before you leave foster care.

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GET FROM HERE TO THERE.
Once you know where you're living – and if you're headed into the workforce or to school – think about your transportation needs and what you can afford. Most important, you need safe and [reliable transportation](#).



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COLLECT DOCUMENTS.
Gather important documents before you leave foster care. Getting them after you exit can be tough. Get originals—not copies. Here's what you need: original copies of your Social Security Card and your birth certificate as well as a [driver's license](#) or [state-issued ID](#).

