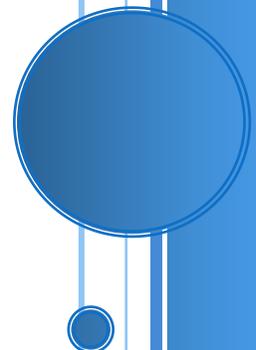


STAKEHOLDER GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICES IN THE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING

*Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)
Subcommittee Report to the Strengthening Families Act Committee*



Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)
Subcommittee

Report to the Strengthening Families Act Committee

2017

Goals

- Goal 1: Include more youth voice in determining and achieving permanency goals.
- Goal 2: Take a team approach to determining and achieving permanency goals.
- Goal 3: Promote best practices for implementation of APPLA provisions in the State and Federal Strengthening Families Act.

Strategies

- Strategy 1: Identify best practices for permanency staffing meeting.
- Strategy 2: Bring more youth voice and participation into the group.

For more information or to get involved, please visit childrens.nebraska.gov, or email necc.contact@nebraska.gov.

STAKEHOLDER GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICES IN THE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING

ANOTHER PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (APPLA) SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT TO THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES ACT COMMITTEE

Families, communities, and workforces flourish when young people experience well-being and reach their full potential. When youth have experienced abuse or neglect and enter the child welfare system, they often do not have access to supportive connections of a family and community to strengthen their resilience and well-being, and need support in transitioning to adulthood and weathering the challenges of growing up.

This is especially true when youth age out of the child welfare system to independent living, also referred to in the Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act as “Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement,” or “APPLA.” This permanency goal means that the youth will be self-sufficient, including caring for themselves independently and providing for themselves financially, through either employment or supportive services or public financial assistance, and that reunification, adoption, and legal guardianship were attempted, but efforts were unsuccessful or not in the youth’s best interest. The APPLA Subcommittee has worked diligently with community partners, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Children and Family Services (DHHS-CFS), and young people to identify best practices in the transition to adulthood to build a strong, supportive foundation for young people.

Permanency for Youth in the Child Welfare System

Permanency is essential for youth to have a strong foundation to build upon. Young people place importance on emotional permanency, which refers to the security and stability of relationships with the people in their lives. The existence of these relationships has a significant positive effect for youth in outcomes such as education, housing, and coping skills. While legal permanency, meaning that a youth is adopted, reunified with parents, or placed in a guardianship, should be a goal for each case, finding emotional permanency should be a discussion with each youth regardless of their permanency goal. Emotional permanency builds protective factors like supportive connections, helping youth reach their full potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEBRASKA STRENGTHENING FAMILIES ACT

The APPLA Subcommittee has identified best practices in the areas of supportive connections, intensive and ongoing efforts to find permanency for youth, and the transitional living plan and independent living skills. A matrix of this information can be reviewed at [Appendix A](#), and information on the statutes referenced can be reviewed in [Appendix B](#).

Supportive Connections

“The permanency plan shall include the identification of significant, supportive connections with identified adults willing to be consistently involved in the child’s life as the child transitions to adulthood.” [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-1312\(4\)](#)

When youth have supportive connections, they have better tools to meet the challenges of transitioning to adulthood. Nebraska recognizes this through the statutory requirement for the permanency plan to include the identification of significant, supportive connections with identified adults willing to be consistently involved in the child’s life as the child transitions to adulthood. It is not normal for youth to be without a support system or family contact. Many youth rely on their families for emotional support, such as career and personal advice, and concrete support, such as money and transportation. Youth exiting the child welfare system often lack these supports, and identifying these supportive connections is crucial for a successful transition to adulthood.

Best Practice Recommendations to Identify Significant Supportive Connections:

1. At Start of Case: At initial removal, family and kin should be engaged in the youth’s life, regardless of whether the family member can provide placement.
2. Throughout the Case: The identification of significant, supportive connections with identified adults is an ongoing activity throughout the life of the case, regardless of the permanency objective of the youth or child. This should be a consideration at every step of the case, and not only when a youth is aging out or considering independent living.
3. At Close of Case: Whether the youth ages out into independent living, is adopted, or enters a guardianship, it is essential to provide youth guidance in navigating their relationships with their biological family. While an adoption severs many of the youth’s legal ties to the biological family, these family members can provide lifelong support as well as important information and context about the youth’s history and family dynamics. Youth need access to a supportive person who can help navigate complex family dynamics.
4. Identifying Connections: The identification of significant and supportive connections should include considerations of the following:

- Does the youth have someone they can ask for a ride or transportation?
 - Does the youth have someone with which to celebrate their birthdays and holidays?
 - Does the youth have someone they can ask to accompany them to a medical appointment?
 - Does the youth have someone to ask for financial, career, education, and job advice?
 - Does the youth have someone to ask for help navigating complex family dynamics?
5. Training: The APPLA subcommittee reaffirms the training recommendations in the Training Subcommittee’s [2016 report](#).
 6. Paid Connections: It is always desirable that professionals establish a genuine connection with the youth they serve. However, a professional may be reassigned, take other employment, and the connection is severed without an acknowledgement. This can be difficult for a young person in out-of-home care as it can bring up painful memories or create feelings of guilt or rejection. It is essential that any agency or independent professional working with this population establish a process to respectfully say goodbye to the youth, explain their absence, and explain any opportunities or boundaries for continued communication.

Intensive and Ongoing Efforts

“The department shall document the intensive, ongoing, and, as of the date of the hearing, unsuccessful efforts made by the department to return the child home or secure a placement for the child with a fit and willing relative, a legal guardian, or an adoptive parent.” [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-1312\(4\)](#)

Permanency, both emotional and legal, helps build the foundation of well-being by providing stability and security. When independent living is the permanency goal, it means that reunification, adoption, and legal guardianship have been attempted and were not successful. It is a priority to ensure that youth are placed in the most family like environment possible if they cannot be placed with their own families. This legislation reflects that priority and requires that efforts be documented for review. Best practices include a staffing to identify the efforts that have been undertaken, and the barriers and challenges encountered when undertaking the efforts.

Best Practice Recommendations for an Effective Staffing :

1. **Youth Driven:** The Caseworker identifies a supportive individual to have a conversation with the youth about expectations and preparation for the staffing meeting. The caseworker may choose to have the conversation with the youth based on the relationship between the caseworker and youth, or choose a third-party that has a supportive and safe relationship with the youth. The caseworker or supportive individual can use this time to hear the youth’s concerns and wishes for the staffing meeting and can facilitate communicating this information to case professionals.

2. **Youth Informed:** Youth should be consulted on where and when the meeting will take place, who will be invited, and how the meeting will be structured. Revisiting past placements, caregivers, and attempts to find permanency may be triggering or upsetting to the youth, so care must be taken to be sensitive to the youth’s perspectives on past experiences.
3. **Youth Focused:** Foster youth are often viewed through the lens of their case status and involvement with the system. A plan to transition to adulthood must focus on the holistic identity of the youth. The youth’s goals, interests, and values should help guide the transition plan.
4. **Team Approach:** The attendees of the meeting will depend on the nature of the case. In addition to the caseworker, caseworker supervisor, Guardian ad Litem and Strengthening Families Act advisor/advocates, the following individuals should be considered: foster parents, biological family, service providers, therapists, teachers, coaches, religious or spiritual advisors, guidance counselors, and any other individual identified by the youth as a supportive connection. Youth may have adults involved with the case that they do not trust, and this should be considered when determining team members.
5. **Opportunity Focused:** The staffing should identify additional efforts that can be undertaken to find permanency for the youth. The statute makes it clear that independent living should be a permanency goal only when efforts towards other legal permanency have failed. Focus should remain on continuing efforts towards adoption, guardianship, and reunification.
6. **Ongoing Consideration:** Youth may not be ready after the first staffing meeting to make a decision about their permanency goal. After experiencing removal from the home and subsequent placement changes, youth may not feel secure enough to make a commitment to a family home. Case professionals must respect the difficulty of this important decision and communicate this to the youth. Based on youth feedback, the APPLA subcommittee recommends holding a meeting that will consider all permanency goals, having a meeting to review progress and additional efforts, and then a meeting to make a decision, each three months apart to allow for ongoing efforts.

Transitional Living Plan and Life Skills

When a child placed in foster care turns fourteen years of age or enters foster care and is at least fourteen years of age, a written independent living transition proposal shall be developed by the Department of Health and Human Services at the direction and involvement of the child to prepare for the transition from foster care to successful adulthood. Any revision or addition to such proposal shall also be made in consultation with the child. The transition proposal shall be personalized based on the child's needs and shall describe the services needed for the child to transition to a successful adulthood as provided in the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act. [Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-1311.03](#)

The independent living transition proposal (“transition proposal”) is essential to the success of youth in child welfare out-of-home placements. The plan should support the youth’s growth into adulthood and independent living. Most youth will eventually live independently,

whether they attain permanency such as reunification, adoption, or guardianship, or age out without reaching permanency. The plan will be different for all youth, and through case management, youth engagement, and regular review of the plan, it can be individualized to meet the youth's needs.

Life skills are essential for youth to reach their full potential as healthy adults. All youth need life skills, but when youth experience removal and placement changes, the process of attaining life skills and growing up is disrupted. Youth will experience different levels of independence and autonomy in each home, and different expectations for chores, leaving youth without opportunities to acquire life skills. All case professionals should recognize that life skills are essential for youth in out-of-home care, regardless of the permanency goal, and should be addressed in case management and planning.

Best Practices Recommendations for the Transition Proposal

1. Youth driven: The transition proposal must be youth driven and informed, and reflect the goals, values, and abilities of the youth.
2. Case Planning and Management: The transition proposal should be a priority for the entire team. Attainment of life skills and development of permanent connection should be woven through out case planning and management.
3. Independent Living Skills Assessment and Planning: The transition proposal must include planning for life skill attainment, and an assessment to determine gaps in skills.
4. Family Team Meeting: Every family team meeting should include the review and discussion of the transition proposal plan. Each family team meeting should include the identification of a life skills goal, regardless of the youth's permanency goal. The goals may be minor such as preparing a recipe, but will provide an opportunity for the youth to attain skills.
5. Life Skills as Normalcy: It is normal for family members to contribute to the household through tasks such as preparing meals and completing chores. Through the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard (RPPS), foster parents can use these normal expectations to help youth attain life skills and feel a sense of belonging and family warmth. If necessary, training can be designed to help foster parents facilitate these opportunities.
6. Tracking Mechanism: Life skill attainment should be tracked as youth move from placement to placement. This tracking can be achieved through a paper form but would ideally be through an app or other electronic/digital means. This will help foster parents identify gaps in independent living skills and support acquiring necessary skills.

APPLA Subcommittee Collaborative Efforts

Building healthy adults is a collaborative effort, and when a youth is involved in the child welfare system, they need extra effort to coordinate supports to wraparound the youth. The APPLA Subcommittee recognizes the importance of stakeholders working together to create innovative solutions to the challenges faced by this population. In addition to the

collaborative and inclusive efforts within the APPLA Subcommittee, the group has engaged in the below collaborative initiatives to support young adults.

Citizen Review Panel Feedback

The APPLA Subcommittee held a meeting with the Citizen Review Panel to get feedback from youth who were previously in out-of-home placements. This group was comprised of youth serving as strong advocates for the success and growth of youth in Nebraska. This group's input informs this report and feedback is woven throughout the document. The APPLA Subcommittee will continue to collaborate as much as possible to promote youth driven and informed policies.

Strengthening Families Act Advisor/Advocates

The APPLA Subcommittee and the Trafficking Subcommittee are collaborating to identify best practices for the role of the Strengthening Families Act Advocate/Advisor, pursuant to [Neb. Rev Stat. 43-1311.03\(2\)](#). The groups anticipate that the recommendations will be available in 2018.

Preventative Legal Services

Youth need preventative legal services to protect their futures. Just as preventative health care can stop a significant health issue from arising or becoming severe, preventative legal services can stop further legal system involvement. For instance, information on tenant rights could prevent an eviction or neglect allegations based on substandard housing. Information on appropriate interactions with law enforcement could prevent a youth from being ticketed for disorderly conduct or resisting arrest, saving the county money and promoting community safety while preventing the youth from entering the criminal justice system. The APPLA Subcommittee will work in collaboration with the Court Implementation Subcommittee to identify opportunities and processes to improve outcomes for youth through preventative legal counsel or services.

Next Steps For the APPLA Subcommittee

The group is dedicated to working to improve outcomes for youth who are transitioning from out-of-home care to living independently, and will continue to monitor the use of the APPLA and make collaborative recommendations for improvement. The group has identified two emerging issues that youth aging out of foster care are facing – access to first jobs, and support for pregnant and parenting youth.

Access to First Jobs

Connecting a youth to employment builds financial literacy, job and networking skills, and resumes to make future employment more accessible. Youth face significant challenges in connecting to employment, including through lack of transportation access and placement changes. The APPLA Subcommittee recognizes that access to employment is a serious issue

that impacts future outcomes for youth in foster care and plans to make recommendations to support foster youth employment in 2018.

Pregnant and Parenting Youth

Youth who are pregnant and parenting while in or exiting foster care face added challenges. Many of these youth do not have safe parents to support them as they navigate the early years of parenting, when babies are most vulnerable. The group will carefully consider the needs of the this population, hear input and feedback from youth in this population, and consult researchers specializing in pregnant and parenting foster youth in order to create recommendations in 2018 to support these youth and their babies.

The APPLA Subcommittee will continue working and these and other important issues impacting youth exiting foster care to independent living, and remains willing to serve as a resource to the Legislature, the Governor, and child serving agencies.

APPENDIX A

Matrix Summary of Strategies

The APPLA Subcommittee developed action strategies that support the objectives and goals identified at the beginning of this report:

Goals

1. Include more youth voice in determining and achieving goals,
2. Take a team approach to determining and achieving goals, and
3. Promote best practices for implementation of APPLA provisions in the State and Federal Strengthening Families Act.

In what follows, the recommendations presented in the APPLA final report are grouped according to larger, overarching systemic goals. A brief narrative introduces each goal, followed by a corresponding matrix. Recommendations are grouped under the objectives that, if accomplished, will meet the systemic goal.

For each objective, the APPLA subcommittee considered the following during its discussions regarding implementation strategies:

Legislation: Answers the question whether legislation is required to accomplish the objective.

APPLA Subcommittee Objectives: Identifies which, if any, APPLA Subcommittee goals the objective/recommendation supports. 1 = Include more youth voice in determining and achieving goals; 2= Take a team approach in determining and achieving goals; and 3= Promote best practices for implantation of APPLA provisions in the State and Federal Strengthening Families Act

Each of these areas is included on the following matrix of strategies

SUPPORTIVE CONNECTIONS

When youth have supportive connections, they have better tools to meet the challenges of transitioning to adulthood. State law recognizes this through the requirement for the permanency plan to include the identification of significant, supportive connections with identified adults willing to be consistently involved in the child’s life as the child transitions to adulthood. This element is crucial for youth success and normalcy. It is not normal for youth to be without a support system or family contact. Many youth rely on their families for emotional support, such as career and personal advice, and concrete support, such as money and transportation. Youth exiting the child welfare system often lack these supports, and identifying these supportive connections is crucial for a successful transition to adulthood.

SUPPORTIVE CONNECTIONS		
Strategy	Legislation	Goal
At initial removal, family and kin should be engaged in the youth’s life, regardless of whether the family member can provide placement.	No	2,3
The identification of significant, supportive connections with identified adults is an ongoing activity throughout the life of the case, regardless of the permanency objective of the youth or child.	No	2,3
Whether the youth ages out into independent living, is adopted, or enters a guardianship, it is essential to provide youth guidance in navigating their relationships with their biological family.	No	1, 2,3
The identification of significant and supportive connections should include considerations of the items on page 2 of the APPLA report.	No	1,2,3
The APPLA subcommittee reaffirms the training recommendations in the Training Subcommittee’s 2016 report .	No	3
It is essential that any agency or independent professional working with this population establish a process to respectfully say goodbye to the youth, explain their absence, and explain any opportunities or boundaries for continued communication.	No	2

INTENSIVE AND ONGOING EFFORTS

Permanency, both emotional and legal, helps build the foundation of well-being by providing stability and security. When independent living is the permanency goal, it means that reunification, adoption, and legal guardianship have been attempted and have failed. It is a priority to ensure that youth are placed in the most family like environment possible if they cannot be placed with their own families. This legislation reflects that priority and requires that efforts be documented for review. Best practices include a staffing to identify the efforts that have been undertaken, and the barriers and challenges encountered when undertaking the efforts.

INTENSIVE AND ONGOING EFFORTS		
Strategy	Legislation	Goal
The Caseworker identifies a supportive individual to have a conversation with the youth about expectations and preparation for the staffing meeting.	No	2
Youth should be consulted on where and when the meeting will take place, who will be invited, and how the meeting will be structured.	No	1, 2
The staffing should identify additional efforts that can be undertaken to find permanency for the youth.	No	2, 3
The attendees of the meeting will depend on the nature of the case. In addition to the caseworker, caseworker supervisor, Guardian ad Litem and SFA advisor/advocates, the following individuals should be considered: foster parents, biological family, service providers, therapists, teachers, coaches, religious or spiritual advisors, guidance counselors, and any other individual identified by the youth as a supportive connection. Youth may have adults involved with the case that they do not trust, and this should be considered when determining team members.	No	1, 2
The staffing should identify additional efforts that can be undertaken to find permanency for the youth. The statute makes it clear that independent living should be a permanency goal only when efforts towards other legal permanency have failed. Focus should remain on continuing efforts towards adoption, guardianship, and reunification.	No	2, 3
Based on youth feedback, the APPLA subcommittee recommends holding a meeting that will consider all permanency goals, having a meeting to review progress and additional efforts, and then a meeting to make a decision, each three months apart to allow for ongoing efforts.	No	1, 2, 3

TRANSITIONAL LIVING PLAN AND LIFE SKILLS

The independent living transition proposal (“transition proposal”) is essential to the success of youth in child welfare out of home placements. The plan will be different for all youth, and through case management, youth engagement, and regular review of the plan, it can be individualized to meet the youth’s needs. Life skills are essential for youth to reach their full potential as healthy adults. All youth need life skills, but when youth experience removal and placement changes, the process of attaining life skills and growing up is disrupted. All case professionals should recognize that life skills are essential for youth in out of home care, regardless of the permanency goal, and should be addressed in case management and planning.

TRANSITIONAL LIVING PLAN AND LIFE SKILLS		
Strategy	Legislation	Goal
The transition proposal must be youth driven and informed, and reflect the goals, values, and abilities of the youth.	No	1, 3
The transition proposal should be a priority for the entire team. Attainment of life skills and development of permanent connection should be woven through out case planning and management.	No	2, 3
The transition proposal must include planning for life skill attainment, and an assessment to determine gaps in skills.	No	3
Every family team meeting should include the review and discussion of the transition proposal plan. Each family team meeting should include the identification of a life skills goal, regardless of the youth’s permanency goal.	No	2,3
Through the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard (RPPS), foster parents can use these normal expectations to help youth attain life skills and feel a sense of belonging and family warmth. If necessary, training can be designed to help foster parents facilitate these opportunities.	No	2, 3
Life skill attainment should be tracked as youth move from placement to placement. This tracking can be achieved through a paper form but would ideally be through an app or other electronic/digital means.	No	2

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AND EMERGING ISSUES

Youth need preventative legal services to protect their futures. Just as preventative health care can stop a significant health issue from arising or becoming severe, preventative legal services can stop further legal system involvement. For instance, information on tenant rights could prevent an eviction or neglect allegations based on substandard housing. Information on appropriate interactions with law enforcement could prevent a youth from being ticketed for disorderly conduct or resisting arrest, saving the county money and promoting community safety while preventing the youth from entering the criminal justice system. Transition planning should include resources for preventative legal services and counsel.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AND EMERGING ISSUES		
Strategies	Legislation	Goal
The APPLA Subcommittee will continue to collaborate as much as possible to promote youth driven and informed policies.	No	1, 2, 3
The APPLA Subcommittee and the Trafficking Subcommittee are collaborating to identify best practices for the role of the Strengthening Families Act Advocate/Advisor, pursuant to Neb. Rev Stat. 43-1311.03(2). The group anticipates that the recommendations will be available in 2018.	Need for Legislation under Review	1, 2, 3
The APPLA Subcommittee will work in collaboration with the Court Implementation Subcommittee to identify opportunities and processes to improve outcomes for youth through preventative legal counsel or services.	Need for Legislation under Review	3
APPLA Subcommittee recognizes that access to employment is a serious issue that impacts future outcomes for youth in foster care and plans to make recommendations to support foster youth employment in 2018.	Need for Legislation Under Review	3
The group will carefully consider the needs of pregnant and parenting youth, hear input and feedback from youth, and consult researchers specializing in pregnant and parenting foster youth in order to create recommendations in 2018 to support these youth and their babies.	Need for Legislation Under Review	3

APPENDIX B

Relevant Sections of [LB746 \(2016\)](#)

Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-1312(4)	
Party Required to Act	Requirements when a youth is age sixteen or older and has another planned permanent living arrangement as the recommended or court approved permanency goal
DHHS	Include in the permanency plan the identification of significant, supportive connections with identified adults willing to be consistently involved in the child's life as the child transitions to adulthood.
DHHS	Document the intensive, ongoing, and, as of the date of the hearing, unsuccessful efforts made by the department to return the child home or secure a placement for the child with a fit and willing relative, a legal guardian, or an adoptive parent.
Court	Ask the child about the desired permanency outcome for the child.
Court	Make a determination explaining why, as of the date of the hearing, another planned permanent living arrangement is the best permanency plan for the child and the compelling reasons why it continued to not be in the best interested of the child to return home, be placed for adoption, be placed with a legal guardian, or be placed with a fit and willing relative.
Court	Made a determination that the department has complied with the above requirements before approving a permanency plan of another planned permanent living arrangement for a child sixteen years of age or older.

Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-285(2)	
Party Required to Act	Requirements when a youth is fourteen years of age or older and subject to the legal care and custody of the Department
DHHS	Include a written independent living transition proposal which meets the requirements of section 43-1311.03 and, for eligible children, the Young Adult Bridge to Independence Act.
Court	The juvenile court shall provide a copy of the plan to all interested parties before the hearing.
Court	The court may approve the plan, modify the plan, order that an alternative plan be developed, or implement another plan that is in the child's best interests.
Court	In its order the court shall include a finding regarding the appropriateness of the programs and services described in the proposal designed to help the child prepare for the transition from foster care to a successful adulthood.
Court	The court shall also ask the child, in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, if he or she participated in the development of his or her plan and make a finding regarding the child's participation in the development of his or her plan as provided in the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act.

<u>Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-285(3)</u>	
Party Required to Act	Independence Hearing – The last hearing before jurisdiction pursuant to Rev. Stat. 43-247(3)(a) is terminated for a child who is sixteen years of age or older.
DHHS	An independence coordinator as provided in section 43-4506 shall attend the hearing if reasonably practicable, but the department is not required to have legal counsel present.
Court	Independence hearing shall address the child’s future goals and plans and access to services and support for the transition from foster care to adulthood consistent with section 43-1311.03 and the Young Adult Bridge to Independence Act.
Court	At the independence hearing, the court shall advise the child about the bridge to independence program, including, if applicable, the right of young adults in the bridge to independence program to request a court- appointed, client-directed attorney under subsection (1) of section 43-4510 and the benefits and role of such attorney and to request additional permanency review hearings in the bridge to independence program under subsection (5) of section 43-4508 and how to request such a hearing.
Court	The court shall also advise the child, if applicable, of the rights he or she is giving up if he or she chooses not to participate in the bridge to independence program and the option to enter such program at any time between nineteen and twenty-one years of age if the child meets the eligibility requirements of section 43-4504.
Court	The department shall present information to the court regarding other community resources that may benefit the child, specifically information regarding state programs established pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 677.
Court	The court shall also make a finding as to whether the child has received the documents as required by subsection (9) of section 43-1311.03.
	The child shall not be required to attend the independence hearing, but efforts shall be made to encourage and enable the child's attendance if the child wishes to attend, including scheduling the hearing at a time that permits the child's attendance.

<u>Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-1311.03</u>	
Party Required to Act	Written Independence Living Transition Proposal
DHHS	When a child placed in foster care turns fourteen years of age or enters foster care and is at least fourteen sixteen years of age, a written independent living transition proposal shall be developed by the Department of Health and Human Services at the direction and involvement of the child to prepare for the transition from foster care to successful adulthood.
DHHS	Any revision or addition to such proposal shall also be made in consultation with the child.
DHHS	The transition proposal shall be personalized based on the child's needs and shall describe the services needed for the child to transition to a successful adulthood as provided in the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act.

[Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-1311.03](#)

Party Required to Act	Written Independence Living Transition Proposal
DHHS	The transition proposal shall include, but not be limited to, the following needs and the services needed for the child to transition to a successful adulthood as provided in the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act: (a) Education; (b) Employment services and other workforce support; (c) Health and health care coverage, including the child's potential eligibility for Medicaid coverage under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, 42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(10)(A)(i)(IX), as such act and section existed on January 1, 2013; (d) Behavioral health treatment and support needs and access to such treatment and support; (e d) Financial assistance, including education on credit card financing, banking, and other services; (f e) Housing; (g f) Relationship development and permanent connections; and (h g) Adult services, if the needs assessment indicates that the child is reasonably likely to need or be eligible for services or other support from the adult services system.
DHHS	The transition proposal shall be developed and frequently reviewed by the department in collaboration with the child's transition team. The transition team shall be comprised of the child, the child's caseworker, the child's guardian ad litem, individuals selected by the child, and individuals who have knowledge of services available to the child. As provided in the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act, one of the individuals selected by the child may be designated as the child's advisor and, as necessary, advocate for the child with respect to the application of the reasonable and prudent parent standard and for the child on normalcy activities. The department may reject an individual selected by the child to be a member of the team if the department has good cause to believe the individual would not act in the best interests of the child.
DHHS	The transition proposal shall be considered a working document and shall be, at the least, updated for and reviewed at every permanency or review hearing by the court.
DHHS	The transition proposal shall document what efforts were made to involve and engage the child in the development of the transition proposal and any revisions or additions to the transition proposal.
DHHS	The final transition proposal prior to the child's leaving foster care shall specifically identify how the need for housing will be addressed.
DHHS	If the child is interested in pursuing higher education, the transition proposal shall provide for the process in applying for any applicable state, federal, or private aid.
DHHS	The department shall provide without cost a copy of any consumer report as defined in 15 U.S.C. 1681a(d), as such section existed on January 1, 2016, pertaining to the child each year until the child is discharged from care and assistance, including when feasible, from the child's guardian ad litem, in interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in the report as provided in the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act.
Court	The court shall determine whether the transition proposal includes the services needed to assist the child to make the transition from foster care to a successful adulthood.
Court	As provided in the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act, the court shall ask the child, in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, about his or her involvement in the development of the transition proposal and any revisions or additions to such proposal.

[Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-1311.03](#)

Party Required to Act	Written Independence Living Transition Proposal
Court	As provided in the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act, the court shall make a finding as to the child's involvement in the development of the transition proposal and any revisions or additions to such proposal.
	A child adjudicated to be a juvenile described in subdivision (3)(a) of section 43-247 and who is in an out-of-home placement shall receive information regarding the Young Adult Bridge to Independence Act and the bridge to independence program available under the act.