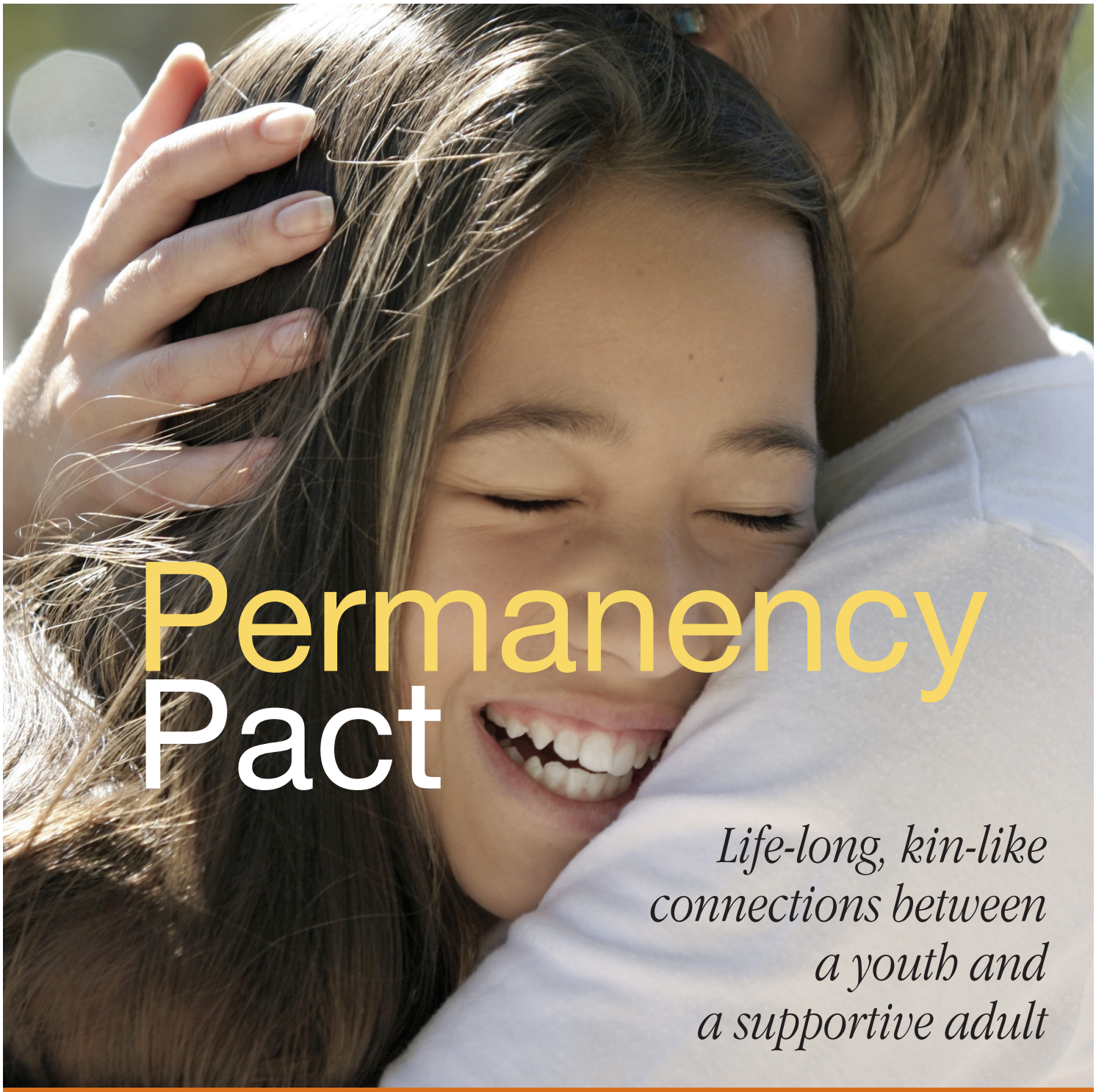


Permanency Pact

Life-long, kin-like connections between a youth and a supportive adult

A free tool to support permanency for youth in foster care

get educated advocate speak up belong involved + informed

FosterClub

The national network for young people in foster care | www.fosterclub.org

What's a Permanency Pact? A pledge by a supportive adult to provide specific supports to a young person in foster care with a goal of establishing a lifelong, kin-like relationship.

Permanency Pact

Youth transitioning from foster care are often unsure about who they can count on for ongoing support. Many of their significant relationships with adults have been based on professional connections which will terminate once the transition from care is completed. It is critical to the youth's success to identify those adults who will continue to provide various supports through and beyond the transition from care. Clarifying exactly what the various supports will include can help to avoid gaps in the youth's safety net and misunderstandings between the youth and the supportive adult.

A Permanency Pact provides:

- structure and a safety net for the youth
- a defined and verbalized commitment by both parties to a long term supportive relationship
- clarity regarding the expectations of the relationship

A Permanency Pact creates a formalized, facilitated process to connect youth in foster care with a supportive adult. The process of bringing the supportive adult together with youth and developing a pledge or "Permanency Pact" has proven successful in clarifying the relationship and identifying mutual expectations. A committed, caring adult may provide a lifeline for a youth, particularly those who are preparing to transition out of foster care to life on their own.



Shawn from Michigan, FosterClub All-Star

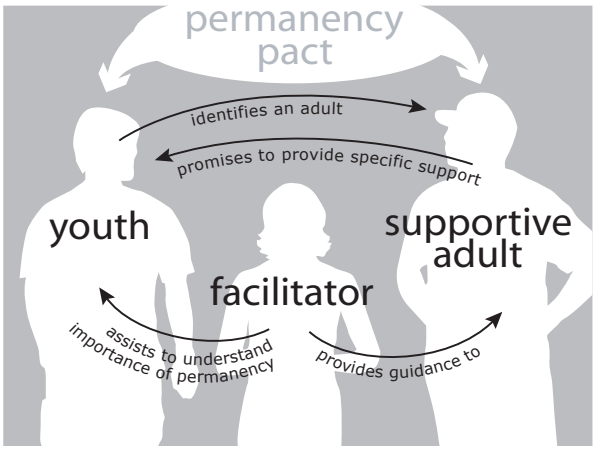
"As I get older I am seeing the importance of family, community and peer support. Ever since I became engaged and active in my community my circle of support has expanded. My life has become so much more enriched now that I have accepted that I have a lot of people that care about me, I genuinely believe that family: peers, bio, foster, adoptive, in-laws are the most valuable thing a person can have in their life."

Participants in a Permanency Pact

In addition to the two primary parties in a Permanency Pact (the youth and the supportive adult), it is recommended that a Facilitator assist in developing the Pact.

The *Facilitator* may be a Case Worker, Independent Living Provider or other adult who:

- is knowledgeable in facilitating Permanency Pacts*
- is familiar with the youth, and
- can provide insight into the general needs of the youth transitioning from care



The *Supportive Adult* is an adult who:

- has been identified by the youth
- has a relationship with the youth
- is willing to commit to a life-long relationship with the youth
- is a positive role-model and
- is able to provide the youth with specific support on an on-going basis

*A Permanency Pact Toolkit will be available Summer, 2007 at www.fosterclub.org

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Developing a Permanency Pact

The first step is to engage the youth to identify the supports they want or need as they prepare for the transition out of foster care, and beyond to adulthood. The following list of 45 Suggested Supports can help with this process. Together with the youth, the Facilitator can then begin to develop a list of adults who may be able to provide some of those supports. This list may include current relationships or adults with whom the youth has had a previous connection to which they wish to reestablish.

The Facilitator then:

- obtains necessary releases of information
- makes initial contact with the indentified adult(s)
- updates them regarding the youth's current situation
- gauges their level of interest
- assists the adult in identifying possible supports they will provide, and
- schedules and facilitates the Permanency Pact meeting

Working with the Supportive Adult, the Facilitator can use the following list of 45 Suggested Supports to draft a list of supports that the adult wishes to offer the youth. The list is then presented to the youth who will acknowledge the offer and accept those supports that they feel would be most beneficial. Additional supports may be suggested by either the youth or the supportive adult.

The final list may then be hand written using the attached list or entered into the Pact template, available in Microsoft Word, Wordperfect, and PDF formats (available in the Permanency Pact toolkit, order through www.fosterclub.org starting Summer 2007). The youth and Supportive Adult sign the Pact and the Facilitator provides a witness signature. Copies of the Permanency Pact are provided to the youth, the Supportive Adult and maintained in the case record as part of the youth's Transition Plan. It is recommended that a certificate be prepared which documents the Pact between the adult and youth (certificate templates available in the Permanency Pact toolkit). All other members of the youth's Transition Team, including foster parents, CASA, judge, etc. should also receive copies of the Permanency Pact.

Taking a step toward trusting a relationship is often a very great accomplishment for a youth with a background where relationships are broken, promises are often not kept, and disappointment in caretakers prevails. The gift that a Supportive Adult contributes by way of a life-long commitment to the relationship is heroic. The impact of the forged relationship may be profound to all parties. To symbolize the importance of the commitment, it is recommended that a Permanency Pact be held in conjunction with some sort of ceremony or celebration. The Supportive Adult may want to give the youth a token keepsake gift (a piece of jewelry, photo frame, watch, engraved item, a special note, photo album, etc.), a celebration meal can be be enjoyed.

A Certificate has been provided in this packet which may be used to affirm the Permanency Pact made between a youth and supportive adult.

FosterClub member Caliguy94037, age 18, from California

"I consider permanency to be a life long connection with an adult and consider it very important. In my experiences, I have just met adults that seem to stay in my life and that connection with them helps me to succeed in life."



Schylar From Montana, Fosterclub All-Star

"I have been through a lot in my life, and sometimes felt as if I were the only one alive in the world even when I was surrounded by lots of people. I am not always sure why I felt this way, maybe because I was a foster kid or maybe because I had always been told I was meant for nothing. But after a life of trials, I found someone that can almost make me forget a lot of the hurt and bad relationships. He is my 6th grade music teacher, my mentor, my savior through 11 placements, and now… my dad. I am 23, and am soon to be adopted your never too old to be adopted."

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45 Suggested Supports...

...that a Supportive Adult might offer to a youth transitioning from care

☐ **A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**
Spending the holidays without a family and with nowhere to go is a significant issue cited by young people who have transitioned out of foster care. Extending an invitation to holiday celebrations, or birthdays can help a youth fend off the depression that usually sets in around these important times of year.

☐ **A PLACE TO DO LAUNDRY**
Many adults can look back at the times they returned home as a youth with bags loaded with dirty clothes to wash. The offer to use laundry facilities can be a great way to keep a regular connection with a youth and provide them with a way to maintain pride in their appearance, regardless of an unstable housing situation.

☐ **EMERGENCY PLACE TO STAY**
Statistics show 25% of young persons will spend at least one night homeless within the first 2-4 years of leaving foster care. The offer of an emergency couch to sleep on or a guest bedroom to stay in can reduce anxiety and keep young people safe during hardships. Supportive adults may want to specify limits in time or expectations (help with housework, etc.) as a condition of this offer.

☐ **FOOD/OCCASIONAL MEALS**
A friendly, family-style meal every thursday evening or an invitation to Sunday brunch or a monthly lunch can provide a youth with a healthy alternative to the fast-food that often composes a youth's diet. It also provides a chance to connect and to role-model family life. An open invite to "raid the pantry" can be very comforting to young students or those on a limited budget and will help to ensure that the youth's health isn't jeopardized when funds are low.

☐ **CARE PACKAGES AT COLLEGE**
Students regularly receive boxes of homemade cookies, a phone card or photos from their parents when away at college. A regular package to a foster youth who has transitioned from care reminds them of connections "back home", and allows them to fit in with their peers.

☐ **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**
An employer or person in a position to hire, can help by providing special consideration when hiring for a new position. A phone call to the youth inviting them to apply, help with a written application, coaching for a job interview are all ways to help. Supportive adults can offer a youth the chance to help with yard work, housecleaning, babysitting, etc. in order to earn extra money and to establish a work reference.

☐ **JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE**
Finding a job can be a daunting task for anyone. Advice, help filling out applications or creating a resumé, rehearsal of interview questions, transportation to interviews, preparation of appropriate clothing, discussion of workplace behavior, and just plain cheering on can help a youth successfully land a job.

☐ **CAREER COUNSELING**
An adult working in the youth's field of interest can offer advice which could launch a youth's career. Youth particularly benefit from connections and introductions which lead to apprenticeships, job shadows, or other real-world experience. Supportive adults can help the transitioning youth make these contacts.

☐ **HOUSING HUNT**
Securing a first apartment is a rite of passage to adulthood. But without guidance, finding housing can turn into an overwhelming experience. Youth leaving care often lack references or a co-signer which a supportive adult may be able to offer. Former foster youth may have opportunities for financial assistance, but may need help locating it or applying for it. Also, supportive adults can utilize apartment hunting as an opportunity to discuss other daily living challenges, like roommates, utilities, selecting a neighborhood, transportation to job and needed services, etc.

☐ **RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**
Extending an invitation to a youth to go bike riding, go bowling, shoot some hoops or to simply take a walk can promote health, relieve anxiety, and provide a comfortable way to connect. Recreational activities like cooking, woodworking, painting or playing guitar can provide an outlet for youth and help to develop skills. Other activities include going to a movie, playing cards or chess or Monopoly, taking photographs, going shopping or taking a short trip.

☐ **MENTOR**
Mentors have proven to be an effective influence on youth. Whether a formal or informal mentor to a youth in care, the supportive adult can be a role-model, coach and a friend.

☐ **TRANSPORTATION**
Youth often need help with transportation and may have no one to turn to. A supportive adult can be a transportation resource, specifying the limits of the offer, i.e. for school, to find employment, for medical appointments, to visit relatives, etc. Youth can often use help to figure out how to use public transportation.

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☐ **EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

According to statistics, only 50% of foster youth will graduate from high school. These shocking statistics show that many youth in care struggle through school against terrible odds including multiple moves, learning disabilities, lack of parental support and missed time in class. A supportive adult can help by becoming a tutor, an educational advocate, or by simply providing advice when needed. Youth planning to attend college can use help with college applications, finding financial aid, and visits to perspective college campuses.

☐ **RELATIONSHIP/MARRIGE/PARENTING COUNSELING**

Youth coming out of foster care often lack the skill to cultivate and maintain lasting personal relationships. In many cases, role-modeled relationships for the youth have included biological parents with dysfunctional relationships and paid caretakers from group homes or facilities. Supportive adults can provide frank discussions about relationships, marriage, the role of a spouse and how to be a good parent when the time comes.

☐ **ASSISTANCE WITH MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS/ CHAPERONE**

It can be scary attending a medical appointment all alone. A supportive adult can accompany a youth to a medical appointment or rehearse what questions to ask, interpret a doctor's instructions, or provide advice about obtaining a second opinion.

☐ **STORAGE**

Sometimes the life of a youth can be transient, moving from location to location before getting settled. The supportive adult can provide a safe place to store valuables and help ensure that the youth doesn't lose track of valuables, including photo albums, family keepsakes, and records.

☐ **MOTIVATION**

Everyone does better with a personal cheering section. The supportive adult may be the only one to offer encouraging words to a youth.

☐ **SOMEONE TO TALK TO/DISCUSS PROBLEMS**

When a youth transitions out of care, there are often moments of insecurity, loneliness and anxiety. The supportive adult can provide a listening ear for a youth to vent, offer advice and wisdom, or be a sounding board for ideas. It may be wise to establish "calling hours" to avoid late night or early morning calls, if that is a concern.

☐ **A PHONE TO USE**

Sometimes a phone is simply not an affordable luxury for a youth starting out on their own. A supportive adult could provide use of their phone as a message phone for the youth's prospective employers or landlords. Use of the phone can be helpful to keep in touch with caseworkers, siblings, parents, former foster parents, or to access resources in the community.

☐ **A COMPUTER TO USE**

Access to a computer is a valuable tool for a youth for school work, employment or housing search, or contact with siblings or other relatives. A supportive adult can provide this access from a computer at work or at home, and may want to establish limits in time, websites visited, or downloads that are acceptable.

☐ **CLOTHING**

A youth may need assistance and/or advise in purchasing or preparing clothing for events like a job interview, weddings or special occasions, or graduation. Sometimes special opportunities need special gear, like a school ski trip, a costume party, etc. A supportive adult can assist with laundry, ironing, mending, shopping for new clothes, or occasionally purchasing a new item. Improving a youth's personal appearance can boost self confidence.

☐ **SPIRITUAL SUPPORT**

Youth often develop the same spiritual beliefs as their parents. Youth coming from care may have lacked this spiritual guidance. A supportive adult can invite a youth to join them as they search for their own spiritual path. The adult can offer to explore religion with the youth and invite them to participate in church or other spiritual activities.

☐ **LEGAL TROUBLES**

A youth emerging from care who gets into legal trouble usually cannot afford legal advice. When youth have a tangle with the law, they often land in deeper trouble because of their lack of experience and resources in navigating the legal system. A supportive adult can assist by connecting youth to needed legal services. The supporter may also wish to provide preventative advice to the youth who may be headed for legal entanglement.



JJ from Michigan,
FosterClub All-Star

"Permanency is a feeling that is different for everyone, it is not bound by time nor can it be measured. It has to be discovered and often times it has to be tested, and rejected more than once before permanency can be established. Permanency is so hard to understand because it is a conceptual idea of an emotion and is received on both ends very differently for every person. There is no straight "by the book" definition of permanency because the emotions I feel cannot be felt by anyone else, and that's the great thing about it."

☐ **CULTURAL EXPERIENCE**

Supportive adults who share a cultural background with a youth may wish to engage them in cultural activities. Even if the cultural backgrounds are diffferent, the youth can be motivated to participate in cultural events. Support can be given to examine cultural traditions and beliefs and encouragement given to take pride in their cultural identity.

☐ **APARTMENT MOVE-IN**

Moving is so much easier with the support of friends, from packing, to manpower, a truck to move, to help setting up the new apartment. The supportive adult can also invite the youth to scout through their garage or storage area for extra furniture or household items that might be useful.

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☐ **COOKING LESSONS/ASSISTANCE**
Many times youth coming out of care have not had the opportunity to practice cooking on their own. Meal preparation is often a natural way to engage in meaningful conversation and build a relationship. The supportive adult may decide to take a youth grocery shopping, or help stock the youth's first kitchen with a starter supply of utensils, spices, cleaning supplies and food.

☐ **REGULAR CHECK-IN (DAILY, WEEKLY OR MONTHLY)**
Simply knowing that someone will be aware that you are missing, hurt or in trouble is important. A supportive adult can instigate regular check-in's with a youth transitioning out of care, easing feelings of anxiety and building confidence that someone is concerned about their safety.

☐ **BILLS AND MONEY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE**
Sorting through bills and balancing a checkbook can be a particularly daunting task for a youth with a learning disability, deficient math skills or experience. Understanding how to maintain and obtain credit, deciphering loan applications, and budgeting are some of the items where a supportive adult can lend help.

☐ **DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION HELP**
A high percentage of youth in care have parents who had drug or alcohol dependency problems. Working with young people transitioning out of care to avoid these dangerous pitfalls and offering support if a problem should develop could help break a familial cycle of addiction.



Sharde from Indiana, FosterClub All-Star

"Permanancy is important because if you spend your entire life moving around it doesn't give you a chance to get close to anyone, and you don't learn how to build those essential relationships you will need later in life. Moving around also influences you to run away from your problems."

☐ **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**
Some youth in care suffer from mental health challenges. Depression, attention-deficit disorder, eating disorders, and other illness may afflict the youth. It is suggested that the supportive adult educate themself about any mental health disorders that are at issue.

☐ **CO-SIGNER**
Many times youth need co-signers to acquire housing, car loans, or bank accounts (particularly when the youth is under 18 years old). Consider the financial liability if the youth were to miss payments or not fulfill the financial agreement. It is suggested that an adult who acts as a co-signer closely supervise the arrangement until the youth has established a consistent pattern of responsibility.

☐ **HELP WITH READING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, AND COMPLEX MAIL**
Many youth in care have learning disabilities which may make complicated reading assignments all the more difficult. The supportive adult can make arrangements for a youth to collect materials for review on a weekly basis or to give a call on an as-needed basis.

☐ **MECHANICAL AND/OR BUILDING PROJECTS**
Youth may need help keeping an automobile in good repair. Teaching a youth about the care of their car can help them build self-confidence and skills that can last a lifetime. Helping a youth fix up their apartment or a rented home, or asking for their assistance in projects around your home, can teach new skills which may be put to use throughout life.

☐ **HOUSEKEEPING**
Some youth, particularly those who have lived in a residential facility or restrictive environment, may not have had real-life experience in keeping a home clean. The supportive adult can discuss cleaning supplies to use for particular household chores, how to avoid disease, and organization of clutter once a youth has transitioned to their own home.

☐ **HOME DECORATING**
Helping a youth decorate their home can be a fun and rewarding way to contribute to the youth's sense of pride and self esteem.

☐ **VOTING**
Youth in our society often form their first political impressions based on their parents' political beliefs. Youth in care often do not receive this role modeling. A supportive adult may wish to discuss current local, state and national issues, help a youth register to vote or take a youth to the polling location to vote.

☐ **VOLUNTEERISM**
Volunteering to help others or for a worthy cause is an excellent way to build self-esteem. Supporters can offer to engage a youth in their own good work or embark on a new volunteer effort together.

☐ **FINDING COMMUNITY RESOURCES**
Navigating through the maze of government agencies and myriad of social service programs is difficult at best even for a resourceful adult. The supportive adult can help the youth make a list of useful resources in the community and offer to visit them together.

☐ **SAFETY AND PERSONAL SECURITY**
The youth transitioning from care needs to take charge of their own personal safety. The supportive adult can encourage them to take a self-defense class, get CPR certified, get current on health and safety issues. The adult can take a tour of the youth's apartment and make suggestions regarding home safety, can help develop an evacuation plan, and make plans with the youth on what to do in an emergency situation. The supportive adult can offer to be called when something goes wrong, and offer to be listed as "person to contact in an emergency" on business forms.

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☐ **BABYSITTING**

If the youth is a parent, babysitting services can be the relief that is needed to keep a young family intact. In addition to providing a time-out, the offer to watch a child while the young parent gets other chores around the house accomplished (laundry, cleaning, etc.), provides an excellent opportunity to role-model good parenting skills.

☐ **EMERGENCY CASH**

Most of us have experienced a cash shortage at one time or another as a youth. Youth coming from care usually lack this important "safety net". The supportive adult may wish to discuss up front their comfort level in supplying financial assistance. They would discuss what constitutes an emergency (not enough to cover rent? a medical emergency? cash for a date? gas money?).

☐ **REFERENCE**

Many applications, including those for college, housing and jobs, require a list of references be provided by the applicant. If the supportive adult is able to give a positive reference for a youth, they should make sure a youth has their current contact information so that the supporter can be included on their list of references.

☐ **ADVOCACY**

Sometimes youth have a difficult time speaking up for themselves in court, at school, with government systems, etc. Supportive adults can help a youth organize their thoughts, speak on their behalf, or assist in writing letters.

☐ **INCLUSION IN SOCIAL CIRCLE/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

Often youth in care have difficulty forming new friendships and relationships when they leave care. A supportive adult can extend regular invitations to the youth to attend social and community gatherings as an opportunity to form new friendships and make connections with people. Good opportunities to make new friends include family weddings, hiking trips, garden clubs, community service projects and volunteer opportunities, dances, sporting events, debate groups, community college classes, etc.

☐ **ADOPTION**

Even for many older youth, including those over the age of 18, adoption remains a dream. An adult who is able to offer this ultimate permanent connection for a youth may make an initial offer to adopt through a Permanency Pact. Often youth may have fears about adoption, interpreting adoption to mean loss of contact with bio parents or siblings (this should be taken into consideration when discussing this option). Youth who once declined to be adopted often change their minds, so an adult may want to renew the offer from time to time.

About FosterClub



FosterClub is the national network for young people in foster care.

Every 2 minutes, a child's life changes as they enter the foster care system. There are more than 513,000 young people living in foster care across the country, and FosterClub *is their club* — a place to turn for advice, information, and hope. Our peer support network gives kids in foster care **a new spin on life**.

At FosterClub's **web sites**, kids are asking questions and getting answers: www.fosterclub.com is for young people and www.fyi3.com is designed for youth transitioning from care. FosterClub's gateway for adults who support young people in foster care is www.fosterclub.org. Our **publications** supply youth with tools for success and also provide inspiration and perspective from their peers who have successfully emerged from foster care. FosterClub's **training and events** are held across the country and feature a dynamic group of young foster care alumni called the FosterClub All-Stars. **Outreach tools** designed to improve communication with young people in care and engage them in achieving their own personal success.

The members of FosterClub are resilient young people determined to build a better future for themselves and for other kids coming up through the system behind them. Their success depends on the generosity of concerned individuals and collaborations with partner organizations. If you would like to learn more about FosterClub or how you can support young people in foster care, visit www.fosterclub.org or call 503-717-1552. FosterClub is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. EIN 93-1287234.

FosterClub

The pinwheel is an enduring symbol of the happy, carefree childhood all kids deserve. For more than 513,000 youth living in the U.S. foster care system, childhood has been interrupted by abuse, neglect or abandonment. FosterClub's peer support network gives kids in foster care a new spin on life by providing information, resources, encouragement and hope.

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FosterClub

Permanency Pact

In an effort to substantiate and sustain
an on-going connection between a youth and a supportive adult,

_____

SUPPORTIVE ADULT

pledges to provide specific support to, and has been accepted as a
provider of such support by,

_____

YOUTH

confirmed this _____ day of _____ , _____

DAY MONTH YEAR

as witnessed by _____

FACILITATOR



FosterClub's Permanency Pact documents a life-long, kin-like commitment to a relationship between a youth and a supportive adult.

the national network for young people in foster care | www.fosterclub.org

- ☐ A Home For The Holidays
- ☐ A Place To Do Laundry
- ☐ Emergency Place To Stay
- ☐ Food/Occasional Meals
- ☐ Care Packages At College
- ☐ Employment Opportunity
- ☐ Job Search Assistance
- ☐ Career Counseling
- ☐ Housing Hunt
- ☐ Recreational Activities
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Educational Assistance
- ☐ Relationship/Marriage/Parenting
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Assistance With Medical Appts
- ☐ Storage
- ☐ Motivation
- ☐ Someone To Talk To/Discuss Problems
- ☐ A Phone To Use
- ☐ A Computer To Use
- ☐ Clothing
- ☐ Spiritual Support
- ☐ Legal Troubles
- ☐ Cultural Experience
- ☐ Apartment Move-in
- ☐ Cooking Lessons/Assistance
- ☐ Regular Check-in
- ☐ Bills & Money Management Assistance
- ☐ Drug And Alcohol Addiction Help
- ☐ Mental Health Support
- ☐ Co-Signer
- ☐ Help Reading Forms, Complex Docs
- ☐ Mechanical /Building Projects
- ☐ Housekeeping
- ☐ Home Decorating
- ☐ Voting
- ☐ Volunteerism
- ☐ Finding Community Resources
- ☐ Safety And Personal Security
- ☐ Babysitting
- ☐ Emergency Cash
- ☐ Social Circle/Community Activities
- ☐ Advocacy
- ☐ Reference
- ☐ Adoption
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

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