



Fostering Futures: Supporting Youth Transitions into Adulthood **Frequently Asked Questions**

What is the *Fostering Futures* curriculum?

Fostering Futures is a curriculum developed by the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association that focuses on improving outcomes for older and emancipating youth (14–21 years of age) served by CASA/GAL volunteers. It has been informed by the 2008 *Fostering Connections to Success Act* and is inspired by a model of youth advocacy and development called *possible selves*.

The curriculum was piloted by 16 state and local CASA programs in 2010 and 2011. *Fostering Futures* is made possible by a generous grant from the Walmart Foundation.

What is the format of *Fostering Futures*?

National CASA's *Fostering Futures* curriculum is a “blended” training program. That is, it features an online component and an in-person component. The online component takes between 2–4 hours and must be completed before the 7–8 hours of in-person class time.

What are the goals of the *Fostering Futures* curriculum?

The desired outcomes from the *Fostering Futures* curriculum are:

1. Older youth served by CASA/GAL volunteers trained with this curriculum will be more likely to set goals for their future and have clear ideas about how to achieve them.
2. These youth will be empowered with practical knowledge such as how to schedule a doctor's appointment, find housing and engage in healthy relationships with family and friends.
3. Older youth served by CASA/GAL volunteers trained with this curriculum will develop knowledge and skills to successfully transition to adulthood.
4. CASA/GAL volunteers will be aware of the needs that older youth typically have and the resources within the local community to assist these youth.
5. CASA/GAL volunteers who complete this curriculum will be better equipped to work alongside older youth in order to help them realize better outcomes than the unnerving statistics typical of youth who age out of the system.

Does the *Fostering Futures* curriculum take the place of the pre-service training for volunteers working with older youth?

Fostering Futures is a supplemental curriculum (not a stand-alone curriculum). It is designed to be used by CASA/GAL volunteers who have completed the National CASA Association Volunteer Pre-Service Training. *Fostering Futures* can be applied towards a volunteer's continuing education requirement.

Is completion of the *Fostering Futures* training required before a CASA/GAL volunteer can work with older youth?

Volunteers are not required to complete the *Fostering Futures* training before working with older youth. However, information and tools from the training will benefit the work that volunteers do with older youth, and even seasoned volunteers may come away from the training feeling more confident.

What should programs consider before deciding to offer the *Fostering Futures* curriculum?

There are a number of questions a program should ask before making the decision to implement *Fostering Futures*:

- Is your core curriculum training well established and running smoothly? An effective pre-service training is always the top training priority.
- Do you have the time to take on another training program? Offering an additional seven-hour training session, even just a couple times a year, is a big time commitment.
- Do you have the staff resources to take on another training program? Do you have someone on staff that can learn and skillfully facilitate a new training program?
- Do you have the funding to run the program? Although the curriculum is provided as a benefit of membership in the National CASA Association, there are still the usual costs associated with any training. Copies of *Fostering Futures* volunteer manuals will need to be printed for participants, and meeting space, AV equipment and refreshments will be needed for the all-day in-person training.

Will there be a *Fostering Futures* facilitator training?

There will be an online training of facilitators which will highlight specific parts of the *Fostering Futures* training. Please check the [National CASA Training Calendar](#) to learn of upcoming dates for these training sessions.

Is it mandatory for staff to participate in the *Fostering Futures* facilitator training before implementing the curriculum?

The facilitator training is not mandatory, but is recommended for those charged with facilitating the *Fostering Futures* volunteer training. Also, it is advisable that facilitators have previously

completed the National CASA Training of Facilitators for the core volunteer curriculum and are well grounded in principles of adult education and group facilitation.

Where can I access the *Fostering Futures* curriculum?

Fostering Futures materials including facilitator and volunteer manuals are available for member programs to download from the State and Local Programs section of CASAforChildren.org. Login is required.

What curriculum materials are available?

On the [Fostering Futures web page](#) (login necessary to access) you will find facilitator and volunteer manuals; media components and a PowerPoint presentation for use during the volunteer training; a promotional flyer and other resources.

Will the curriculum be regularly updated?

We expect to learn much during this initial period of using the curriculum, and will be making improvements and updates as needed. The goal is always to have well prepared volunteers advocating on behalf of children and youth.

For answers to additional questions, or to suggest improvements, please contact staff@casaforchildren.org.

Quotes from pilot participants

"I may have stumbled upon some of these conversations [about goal-setting and possible future selves] at some point without this training, but the training helped me be more than just his buddy. It gave me the clarity to keep myself focused when talking with him."
– Volunteer from San Antonio, TX

"[The] possible selves activity is something I not only use with my CASA child, but I've taken it home to work on it with myself and my own children. I've already been integrating these questions into every conversation with my youth—she now has short term goals, intermediate goals and long term goals; I had goals in the past, but the possible selves gave more definition to those conversations."
– Volunteer from Aurora, CO