



# FosterClub

## *45 Suggested Supports that a Supportive Adult might offer to a young person transitioning from foster care.*

- 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 and including a young person in holiday celebrations or birthdays can help fend off the depression that usually sets in around these important times of year.
- PLACE TO DO LAUNDRY** Many adults can look back at the times they returned home as a young person 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 young person 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 young person with a healthy alternative to the fast-food that often composes a young person'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 young person's health isn't jeopardized when funds are low.
- CARE PACKAGES** Students and young adults just starting on their own regularly receive boxes of homemade cookies, housewarming or occasional gifts, and surprise packages from their parents. A regular package or even bringing occasional simple household supplies to a young person who has transitioned from care reminds them of connections "back home", and allows them to fit in with their peers.
- EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES** 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 young person inviting them to apply, help with a written application, coaching for a job interview are all ways to help. Supportive adults can offer a young person 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 young person successfully land a job.
- CAREER GUIDANCE** An adult working in the young person's field of interest can offer advice which could launch a young person's career. Young people particularly benefit from connections and introductions which lead to apprenticeships, internships, job shadows, or other real-world experience. Supportive adults can help the transitioning young person make these contacts.

- HOUSING SEARCH ASSISTANCE** Securing a first apartment is a rite of passage to adulthood. But without guidance, finding housing can turn into an overwhelming experience. young person 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 young person 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 young people and help to develop skills. Other activities could include going to a movie, playing cards or chess or Monopoly, taking photographs, going shopping, or taking a short trip. Whatever your activities are or could be, ask the young person what they might enjoy doing with or learning from you.
- MENTOR AND ELDER CONNECTIONS** Mentors have proven to be an effective influence on young people. Whether a formal or informal mentor to a young person in care, the supportive adult can be a role-model, coach, and a friend. Elders in a young person's community can help them stay connected to important aspects of community or identity including language use or learning.
- TRANSPORTATION** Young people 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. Young people can often use help to figure out how to use public transportation.
- EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE** Young people with foster care experience graduate from high school at much lower rates than those who do not. Many young people 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. Young people planning to attend college or training programs can use help with applications, finding financial aid, and visits to prospective campuses.
- RELATIONSHIP/MARRIAGE/PARENTING ADVICE** Young people coming out of foster care often lack the skill to cultivate and maintain lasting personal relationships or feel secure even when relationships naturally shift. In many cases, role-modeled relationships for the young person 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 ACCESSING HEALTH CARE** It can be scary attending a medical appointment all alone. A supportive adult can accompany a young person to a medical appointment or rehearse what questions to ask, interpret a doctor's instructions, or provide advice about obtaining a second opinion. They can also help a young person navigate complex insurance systems.
- STORAGE** Sometimes the life of a young person 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 young person 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 young person.

- SOMEONE TO TALK TO/DISCUSS PROBLEMS** When a young person transitions out of care, there are often moments of insecurity, loneliness and anxiety. The supportive adult can provide a listening ear for a young person 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.
- ASSIST WITH MOBILE PHONE OR WIRELESS PLAN** Sometimes a phone is simply not affordable for a young person starting out on their own. A supportive adult could assist with buying a phone or adding a young person to a current family plan. Access to a phone can be helpful to keep in touch with caseworkers, siblings, parents, former foster parents, employers or to access resources in the community.
- PROVIDE A LAPTOP** Access to a computer is a valuable tool for a young person for school work, employment or housing search, or contact with siblings or other relatives. A supportive adult can provide or pay for a laptop or assist a young person in finding a low cost or low interest option.
- PROVIDE CLOTHING** A young person may need assistance and/or advice 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 young person’s personal appearance can boost self confidence.
- SPIRITUAL SUPPORT** young people often develop the same spiritual beliefs as their parents. Young people coming from care may have lacked this spiritual guidance or connection to important rituals and ceremonies. A supportive adult can help identify where a young person can access support or invite a young person to join them as they search for their own spiritual path. The adult can offer to explore religion with the young person and invite them to participate in church or other spiritual activities.
- HELP WITH LEGAL TROUBLES** A young person emerging from care who gets into legal trouble usually cannot afford legal advice. When young people 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 young people to needed legal services. The supporter may also wish to provide preventative advice to the young person who may be headed for legal entanglement.
- CULTURAL EXPERIENCE** Supportive adults who share a cultural background with a young person may wish to engage them in cultural activities. Even if the cultural backgrounds are different, the young person 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 helping setting up the new apartment. The supportive adult can also invite the young person to scout through their garage or storage area for extra furniture or household items that might be useful.
- COOKING LESSONS/ASSISTANCE** Many times young people 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 young person grocery shopping, or help stock their 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 young person 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 managing banking needs is a daunting task for a young person 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 young people 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.
- MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT** Some young people in care suffer from mental health challenges. Depression, attention-deficit disorder, eating disorders, and other illness may afflict the young person. It is suggested that the supportive adult educate themselves about any mental health disorders that are at issue.
- CO-SIGNER** Many times young people need co-signers to acquire housing, car loans, or bank accounts (particularly when the young person is under 18 years old). Consider the financial liability if the young person were to miss payments or not fulfill the financial agreement. It is suggested that an adult who acts as a co-signer closely supervises the arrangement until the young person has established a consistent pattern of responsibility.
- HELP WITH READING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, AND COMPLEX MAIL** Many young people in care have learning disabilities which may make complicated reading assignments all the more difficult. The supportive adult can make arrangements for a young person to collect materials for review on a weekly basis or to give a call on an as needed basis.
- SUPPORT FOR MECHANICAL AND/OR BUILDING PROJECTS** Young people may need help keeping an automobile in good repair. Teaching a young person about the care of their car can help them build self-confidence and skills that can last a lifetime. Helping a young person fix up their apartment or 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 young people, 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 young person has transitioned to their own home.
- HOME DECORATING** Helping a young person decorate their home can be a fun and rewarding way to contribute to the young person's sense of pride and self esteem.
- VOTING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT** Young people in our society often form their first political impressions based on their parents' political beliefs. Young people in care often do not receive this role modeling. A supportive adult may wish to discuss current local, state and national issues, help a young person register to vote or take a young person 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 young person 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 young person make a list of useful resources in the community and offer to visit them together.

- SAFETY AND PERSONAL SECURITY The young person 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 young person's apartment and make suggestions regarding home safety, can help develop an evacuation plan, and make plans with the young person 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 forms.
- CHILD CARE If the young person is a parent, child care 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 young person. Young people 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 to be provided by the applicant. If the supportive adult is able to give a positive reference for a young person, they should make sure to share their contact information and keep it current with the young person.
- ADVOCACY Sometimes young people have a difficult time speaking up for themselves in court, at school, with government systems, etc. Supportive adults can help a young person organize their thoughts, speak on their behalf, or assist in writing letters.
- INCLUSION IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES Often young people in care have difficulty forming new friendships and relationships when they leave care. A supportive adult can extend regular invitations to the young person 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 young person may make an initial offer to adopt through a Permanency Pact. Often young people 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). Young people who once declined to be adopted often change their minds, so an adult may want to renew the offer from time to time.

*Updated in December 2025*

*These 45 Suggested Supports are an updated version of what can be found in FosterClub's [The Permanency Pact](#), a pledge by an adult to provide specific supports to a young person in or transitioning out of foster care with a goal of establishing a lifelong, kin-like relationship. Find this free tool at: [store.fosterclub.com/permanency-pact-free-download](https://store.fosterclub.com/permanency-pact-free-download).*