



## **Teen Success Agreement**

*A youth-developed written agreement for older youth, caregivers, and social workers to provide older youth age-appropriate activities and opportunities*

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# Introduction to the Teen Success Agreement



The Teen Success Agreement is a **youth-developed** written agreement that outlines the age-appropriate activities, responsibilities and life skills for youth ages 13-21 in the child welfare system, and how the caregiver and agency will support those goals. The plan also outlines the house rules and rewards and consequences for different behaviors. The youth, caregiver and provider agency should meet **every six months** to discuss, complete and update this form.

## Completing the Teen Success Agreement will help:

- Ensure that youth in care have access to the same age-appropriate activities as youth not in care.
- Ensure that youth and caregivers understand the expectations of the household, as well as any rewards or consequences for meeting, or failing to meet, those expectations.
- Ensure that youth in care have the skills they need to be successful when they leave care.
- Encourage open communication between caregivers and youth.

## Guidance:

- Timing: The Teen Success Agreement does not need to be completed in a single meeting. However, the team should complete the activities, chores and household rules sections as soon as the youth arrives at a new placement in order to maintain continuity in the youth's life and to avoid misunderstandings.
- The Teen Success Agreement is designed to be individualized. Please make use of the blank spaces provided to address the unique needs of each youth.
- Most sections are organized by age, but, since every youth is different, the team should review all the goals to come up with a plan that makes sense for each youth.

For questions about the Teen Success Agreement please e-mail Brian Mertens ([bmertens@jlc.org](mailto:bmertens@jlc.org)) or Emily Keller ([ekeller@jlc.org](mailto:ekeller@jlc.org)). You may also call Juvenile Law Center at 215-625-0551.

# Teen Success Agreement



YOUTH INFORMATION:		
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date of Birth:</b>	<b>Age:</b>
<b>School:</b>	<b>Educational Decision Maker:</b>	<b>Grade:</b>
<b>Placement Address:</b>		
<b>Name, Relationship and Contact Information of Youth's Relatives and Supportive Adults:</b>		

CURRENT ACTIVITIES (Job, Sports, Clubs, Therapy, Sibling Visits, etc.):			
<i>Fill in each activity that the youth is currently participating in, including the location, schedule and plan for transportation to these activities.</i>			
Activity	Location	Schedule	Transportation Plan

## YOUTH'S GOALS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Check off each goal that the youth is expected to and agrees to meet. There do not need to be specific rewards and consequences for each goal. The reward for completing some of tasks may be a sense of accomplishment or mastery of a skill. Blank space is provided for any additional responsibilities and goals. **Please consult Appendix A for examples of rewards and Appendix B for examples of consequences.**

### FOR ALL YOUTH AGE 13 OR OLDER

I agree to:	My caregiver(s) will help me by:	If I complete this responsibility/goal, I will:	If I do not complete this responsibility/goal, I will:
<input type="radio"/> Complete my household chores (see Chore Chart, p. 8)			
<input type="radio"/> Complete my homework			
<input type="radio"/> Attend school every day and on-time			
<input type="radio"/> Attend court & participate in case planning meetings			
<input type="radio"/> Know how to contact my lawyer (Child Advocate)			

### ADDITIONAL GOALS/RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUTH AGE 14 OR OLDER

I agree to:	My caregiver(s) will help me by:	If I complete this responsibility/goal, I will:	If I do not complete this responsibility/goal, I will:
<input type="radio"/> Demonstrate good study habits/time management skills			
<input type="radio"/> Complete life skills assessment			

### ADDITIONAL GOALS/RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUTH AGE 15 OR OLDER

I agree to:	My caregiver(s) will help me by:	If I complete this responsibility/goal, I will:	If I do not complete this responsibility/goal, I will:
<input type="radio"/> Explore careers and job opportunities			
<input type="radio"/> Prepare for SAT or ACT testing			
<input type="radio"/> Make sure I am on track for high school graduation (review school records with educational team)			

**ADDITIONAL GOALS/RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUTH AGE 16 OR OLDER**

<b>I agree to:</b>	<b>My caregiver(s) will help me by:</b>	<b>If I complete this responsibility/goal, I will:</b>	<b>If I do not complete this responsibility/goal, I will:</b>
<input type="radio"/> Seek a part-time job or active involvement in school/community			
<input type="radio"/> Maintain a GPA (grade point average) of _____			

**ADDITIONAL GOALS/RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUTH AGE 17 OR OLDER**

<b>I agree to:</b>	<b>My caregiver(s) will help me by:</b>	<b>If I complete this responsibility/goal, I will:</b>	<b>If I do not complete this responsibility/goal, I will:</b>
<input type="radio"/> Have state ID, birth certificate and social security card (stored safely)			

**ADDITIONAL GOALS/RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUTH OF ANY AGE**

<b>I agree to:</b>	<b>My caregiver(s) will help me by:</b>	<b>If I complete this responsibility/goal, I will:</b>	<b>If I do not complete this responsibility/goal, I will:</b>
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			

## YOUTH'S AGE-APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

*This chart provides guidance on age-appropriate extra-curricular and social activities. The caregiver is also encouraged to think of ways to spend time together with the youth. Blank space is provided for additional activities. Please consult Appendix C for ways in which the caregiver can support the youth's activities.*

### FOR ALL YOUTH AGE 13 OR OLDER

I am allowed to:	My caregiver(s) will support me by:	Consequences if I do not comply with these expectations and limitations:
○ Participate in afterschool or extracurricular activities ____ times per week.		
○ Go to a friend's house after school with the supervision of a responsible adult		
○ Have friends over after school (with permission of caregiver)		
○ Travel ____ miles (or ____ blocks) from placement/foster home		
○ Talk on the phone ____ hours per day		
○ Use these modes of transportation to get to and from my activities: _____ _____ _____		
○ Be out until my curfew of ____ on weekdays and ____ on weekends		
○ Participate in school-sponsored activities, including field trips, dances, etc.		

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH AGE 14 OR OLDER

I am allowed to:	My caregiver(s) will support me by:	Consequences if I do not comply with these expectations and limitations:
○ Go out to public places with my friends (with supervision of a responsible adult)		

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH AGE 15 OR OLDER

I am allowed to:	My caregiver(s) will support me by:	Consequences if I do not comply with these expectations and limitations:
○ Spend time with friends afterschool and on weekends (____ hours per week) without the supervision of an adult		

**ADDITIONAL GOALS/RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUTH OF ANY AGE**

I am allowed to:	My caregiver(s) will support me by:	Consequences if I do not comply with these expectations and limitations:
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		

**CHORE CHART**

*This chart lists chores the youth is responsible for in the home and when/how often the chore should be completed. There are also sections to list rewards for completing the chore and consequences for failing to complete the chore. **Please consult Appendix A for examples of rewards and Appendix B for examples of consequences.***

I am expected to complete the following household chores:	How often this chore must be completed:	If I complete this chore, I will:	If I do not complete this chore, I will:
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			
<input type="radio"/>			



## HOUSEHOLD RULES/EXPECTATIONS

*This chart provides the youth and caregiver an opportunity to discuss any household rules and expectations that have not already been discussed. Often, when youth come into a new placement, they are not aware of the household expectations. Some of these expectations should change as the youth gets older. The youth should have an opportunity to raise any concerns with following the rules and expectations. **Please consult Appendix A for examples of rewards and Appendix B for examples of consequences.** Household expectations may involve:*

- Access to the kitchen/food
- Use of bathroom or common areas
- Privacy expectations
- Telephone use
- Mealtimes
- Visitors
- Mail
- Use of TV or other electronics
- Places, spaces or things that are "off-limits"

Household rule/expectation:	Consequences if I do not meet these expectations:	Rewards if I do meet these expectations:

## YOUTH'S LIFE SKILLS

*This chart includes key life skills that the caregiver should work with the youth develop. If the caregiver is unable to provide guidance on these life skills, he or she should consult with the caseworker to determine who can.*

**ALL YOUTH SHOULD TAKE A LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE THEIR AREAS OF NEED.** The skills below are not a full list of the skills a youth will need. Space is provided to fill in additional life skills that the youth wants or have been identified through the life skills assessment.

**Date of Most Recent Life Skills Assessment:** \_\_\_\_\_

### LIFE SKILLS FOR ALL YOUTH AGE 13 OR OLDER

I will develop the following life skills:	How these skills will be developed:
<input type="radio"/> How to maintain proper hygiene and grooming	
<input type="radio"/> How to maintain a clean room	
<input type="radio"/> How to do laundry	
<input type="radio"/> How to follow a simple recipe/Basic cooking skills	
<input type="radio"/> How to access reproductive health services	
<input type="radio"/> Know the names and numbers of all of my doctors	
<input type="radio"/> How to take medication properly	
<input type="radio"/> How to maintain a savings account	
<input type="radio"/> Know who to contact in an emergency	
<input type="radio"/> How to be safe in a fire	

### ADDITIONAL LIFE SKILLS FOR YOUTH AGE 14 OR OLDER

I will develop the following life skills:	How these skills will be developed:
<input type="radio"/> How to use different cleaning materials	
<input type="radio"/> How to use maps and public transportation	
<input type="radio"/> How to go grocery shopping with a budget	
<input type="radio"/> How to eat healthily	
<input type="radio"/> How to check-in at a hospital	
<input type="radio"/> How to make medical appointments	

**ADDITIONAL LIFE SKILLS FOR YOUTH AGE 15 OR OLDER**

<b>I will develop the following life skills:</b>	<b>How these skills will be developed:</b>
<input type="radio"/> How to complete a job application/apply for a job	
<input type="radio"/> How to write a resume	
<input type="radio"/> How to interview for a job	
<input type="radio"/> How to iron and coordinate clothes for different events	

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH AGE 16/17 OR OLDER**

<b>I will develop the following life skills:</b>	<b>How these skills will be developed:</b>
<input type="radio"/> How to budget money/pay bills	
<input type="radio"/> How to look for a place to live	
<input type="radio"/> How to apply for a loan, use checking account and use credit card	
<input type="radio"/> How to find scholarships for higher education	
<input type="radio"/> How to fill a prescription	

**ADDITIONAL GOALS/RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUTH OF ANY AGE**

<b>I will develop the following life skills:</b>	<b>How these skills will be developed:</b>
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	

## CAREGIVER EXPECTATIONS

*This chart lists a caregiver's responsibilities to the youth in his or her care. If the caregiver is unable to provide any of these responsibilities, he or she should contact the provider agency to identify other resources for these responsibilities.*

Caregiver expectation:	Support available to help caregiver(s) meet this expectation:	Youth's actions if caregiver(s) does not meet these expectations:
○ Treat the youth as if he or she were your own. He or she should be included in family outings, activities, meals and vacations.		
○ Include the youth in decision-making by asking for his or her thoughts and opinions.		
○ Make one-on-one time to get to know the youth.		
○ Maintain a positive tone in the house. The attitude of the caregiver influences the tone of the house.		
○ Follow through on promises made. This builds trust and respect.		
○ Show respect to the youth.		
○ Respect the youth's body, person, possessions, bed and personal space.		
○ Respect the youth's belongings that were brought into the home and those that were purchased or subsequently obtained for them.		
○ Respect the youth's religious and spiritual beliefs.		
○ Respect the youth's appropriate relationships with family.		
○ Work with the youth and agency in planning for permanency. Permanency planning may include: adoption, reunification with parent, placement with a relative/non-relative (kinship care) or another permanent plan.		
○ Ensure that the youth has supervision appropriate to his/her age and/or developmental level.		
○ Take immediate action if it is determined that the youth in your care is missing or has runaway.		

<input type="radio"/> Encourage the youth to take opportunities that develop interests and skills through participating in school and community activities, such as music, art, sports, special interest clubs and volunteering.		
<input type="radio"/> Assist and ensure the youth is given the opportunity to take part in court hearings and other meetings concerning him or her and his or her family.		
<input type="radio"/> Provide praise and encouragement and use age-appropriate consequences.		
<input type="radio"/> Do not discuss money with the youth without the provider agency present. Money allowance of \$_____ must be given to the youth. It cannot be used as a punishment or reward.		
<input type="radio"/> Work with the youth and provider agency to prepare for a successful transition into adulthood. Specifically, consult with Independent Living case worker on age-appropriate discipline and independent living skills in the home.		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		

## SIGNATURES

*I have participated in the development of this Agreement and I agree with the expectations, rewards and consequences set forth in the agreement. I will strive to meet these expectations, and I am committed to discussing any concerns about this agreement with the team.*

Name	Signature	Date
Youth		
Caregiver		
Caregiver		
Case Worker		
Other:		
Other:		
Other:		
Date of next Teen Success Agreement Meeting:		

## APPENDIX A: EXAMPLES OF REWARDS

### **As a reward, a youth may:**

- Use the computer or Internet (or get additional computer/Internet time)
- Watch television (or get additional television time)
- Select TV programs
- Have a television in his or her bedroom
- Redecorate his or her own room
- Play his or her own music on the stereo
- Receive additional telephone privileges
- Receive cellular minutes
- Receive additional free time
- Receive additional privacy or alone time
- Stay up past the normal bedtime
- Earn a later than normal curfew
- Get to sleep in late on the weekend
- Take time off from chores
- Set his or her own schedule for chores, homework, etc.
- Go on a special outing or do a special activity with the caregiver
- Request what to have for dinner
- Go out to eat
- Participate in activities with friends, such as shopping or going to the movies
- Visit a friend's house or have friends over
- Stay overnight with friends
- Have dating privileges
- Have a date during the week
- Get a chance to earn money
- Take dancing or music lessons

\*Adapted from USC Center for Work and Family Life "Parent's Toolkit for Teens"

## APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF CONSEQUENCES

**When a youth fails to meet the expectations of the Teen Success Agreement , a youth's consequences may**

**be:**

- Discussing the Teen Success Agreement as a team and talking about why the expectation is important
- Writing a letter explaining why the expectation is important and how he or she plans to follow it in the future
- Limited cell phone access
- Limited computer access
- Limited TV access
- Limited access to a vehicle
- Limited activities after school and during the weekend
- Additional chores
- Additional age-appropriate supervision or chaperone during activities
- Earlier curfew
- Other special privileges taken away (movies, video games, etc.)

NOTE: Visitation with family, including siblings and parents, cannot legally be used as a punishment or reward.



### **To support the youth's academic activities, the caregiver should:**

- Provide a quiet place for studying at home
- Be aware of youth's progress in school and make sure the youth is on track for graduation or completing their program
- Be aware of all homework assignments
- Provide Internet access when needed for school
- Ensure that youth has a safe and reliable way to travel to school and other academic activities (and arrive on-time)
- Help ensure the youth leaves the house on time for school each morning
- Ensure the youth has signed up for pre-college standardized tests and is preparing for them
- Talk to the youth about his or her post-secondary plans and make sure the youth has the tools to pursue those plans
- Ensure the youth has all necessary school supplies
- Help the youth with assignments as needed
- Talk to the youth's teacher or counselor about his or her progress in school\*

### **To support the youth's social and community activities, the caregiver should:**

- Encourage the youth to participate in school and community activities
- Encourage the youth to develop positive friendships
- Help the youth arrange transportation to school or community events
- Help the youth identify and connect with community resources and groups that match the youth's interests
- Encourage the youth to invite friends to the home when the caregiver is home
- Help the youth identify and apply for summer programs that might be of interest

### **To support the youth's development of life skills, the caregiver should:**

- Assist the youth in learning life skills in the home, such as doing laundry or cooking
- Find another supportive adult who could help the youth learn the skill
- Find after-school programs where the youth can develop specific skills
- Ensure the youth has access to the supplies or equipment necessary for learning the skill
- Ensure the youth has time built into his or her schedule to learn the skill
- Encourage the youth to develop his or her career interests

\*Only if caregiver is the youth's educational decision maker. If not, the caregiver should still be in contact with the educational decision maker.

### When something is wrong or you want something to change you should:

- **Know how to effectively get your message across.** To make your message effective, it is not just about what you say, but how you say it. As angry as you might be about your situation, you are more likely to succeed in getting your message across if you are calm and clear when you speak to your caseworker, supervisors and the judge. The calm presentation of your complaint or request will help show your maturity.
- **Call your caseworker.** Call your caseworker and his/her supervisors. Leave messages if they do not pick up the phone. You should keep a record of the calls you have made.
- **Call your lawyer.** The job of your lawyer/Child Advocate is to make sure you are safe and that your needs are being met.
- **Go up the chain of command.** If you make several attempts to call and leave messages for your caseworker and lawyer and no one calls you back, you should go up the chain of command to reach someone.
  - **Chain of Command at the child welfare agency:** Your social worker → Your social worker's supervisor → Administrator → County agency's head → Regional office of DPW → Office of Children, Youth and Families (state agency)
- **Write letters.** It is always important to make a record of your complaints or what you want to achieve. Writing letters to your caseworker and GAL shows you are serious and taking time to explain what is important to you. You can also write a letter to the judge and give it to him or her during a hearing. However, you should know that your social worker and parents will also have the right to see it.
- **Plan for your court review hearing and ATTEND it.** Court is one of the places you can go to make sure you are heard. You can come with a statement or outline to read to the judge if that makes it easier. You can call your lawyer to help you prepare. You should take the opportunity to let the judge know how you feel.
- **File a grievance/complaint.** You can file a grievance, which is a complaint, with the private provider, the county child welfare agency and the State Office of Children, Youth, and Families. **In Philadelphia**, youth in DHS care can file a grievance by calling the DHS Commissioner's Action Response Office at 215-683-6000 or 888-808-0066.