



PROPOSAL

USD 500 WASHINGTON HIGH YOUTH TRANSITION & LIFE SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

2025/2026 school year

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PROJECT INTRODUCTION



Independence, Inc., as a Federally Funded Center for Independent Living (CIL) - est. 1978 - and with funding in part from the Federal Department of Education Pathways to Partnership grant #H421E230030, has developed a high school transition and life skills training program to present to students in USD 500 Special Education classrooms, adaptable to general education including elementary and middle school classrooms. This project is a collaborative amongst Independence, Inc. staff including the Kansas Youth Transition Network Program Manager, Kansas City Area Core Services Manager and Kansas City Area Independent Living Specialist, with direct support from the Executive Director.

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK



Our **Youth Transition and Independent Living Skills Training Program** was developed with high school-age youth with disabilities at its core. We recognize gaps in services and access to programs that adequately train and prepare youth for life after high-school, and are working to help fill those gaps through classroom, individual and peer group training.

Through partnerships, research, professional knowledge, trainings, meetings with Washington High staff and a classroom observation, our USD 500 Youth Transition and Life Skills Training Program has been customized to fit the needs of Washington Highschool Special Education classes.

Our program focuses on the three main components of executive function: working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control and these core functions are fused into the training in areas of interpersonal relationship-building and social skills, decision making and self-advocacy, money and time management, public transportation and local services awareness, goal-setting, problem-solving, adaptability, self-awareness and identifying strengths, skills and needs, employment readiness skills, and more.

PURPOSE & GOALS



What is the primary goal in transition training? Setting Students Up for Success!

The purpose of our program is to help students achieve their highest level of executive function skill-building through self-determination, self-advocacy, independence, interdependence, productivity, integration, and inclusion in all facets of community life including:

- Personal care/health/wellbeing
- Education/technical training
- Employment/Volunteering
- Socialization/relationship-building
- Family systems
- Transportation/travel
- Peer Support/Peer Groups
- Recreation opportunities/hobbies

TRAINING OUTLINE

There are 3 Core Components (Modules), presented in various interactive formats (highlighted topics are suggested for an 8-week/8-session training)

1. Life Skills

- **Daily routine/healthy habits**
- **Self-care**
- conflict resolution/emotional regulation/stress management
- **Interpersonal relationship-building**
- Communication/body language/facial expression
- Decision-making/confidence-building/self-advocacy
- overcoming obstacles

2. Independent Living Skills

- Cooking/cleaning
- Organizing
- **Money/time-management**
- **Public Transportation**
- Public safety
- Notetaking/charting
- Setting schedules/reminders

3. Transition/Vocational Skills

- **Goal setting/identifying, adaptability, post-secondary education goals**
- Exploring employment opportunities
- **Pre-employment job-readiness** (career interest survey, soft-skill development, the power of eye contact)
- Preparing for an interview/the interview process
- Communicating with potential employers
- Rights and responsibilities of employer
- Rights and responsibilities of employee

TRAINING OUTLINE CONTINUED

Proposed 8-week (once a week) sessions - "Setting Myself Up for Success!"

Session 1: overview/get to know the students, icebreaker, strengths/needs survey

Session 2: Life Skills part 1 – Setting Myself up for Success: daily routines (format options: activity/customizable charts)

Session 3: Life Skills part 2 – Setting Myself up for Success: Relationship-building/Socialization (format options: videos, handouts, printouts, activity)

Session 4: IL Skills part 1- Setting Myself up for Success: Money Management (format: activity - game-style using laminated cards -cash/gift cards/debit cards and props)

Session 5: IL Skills part 2 – Setting Myself up for Success: Public Transportation (format: information/handouts/Power Point, Q&A)

Session 6: Transition/Vocation Skills part 1 – Setting Myself up for Success: Goal setting/adaptability/time management/critical thinking/how to set career goals (format: activity - hypothetical goal - giving your dog a bath. Work through all aspects of setting, adhering to, overcoming obstacles to and adapting to adjustments in the goal including time-management, associated costs, any help needed, etc.)

Session 7: Vocation Skills part 2 – Setting Myself up for Success: General pre-employment job readiness prep; resume building, how to find references, (format options: activity, online photo quiz, laminated cards, sequential order, power point)

Session 8: wrap-up, re-cap, questions etc. Setting myself up for success: weaving it all together

Optional Session 9:

- Introduction to the WORK/STEPS program for ages 16+
- TANF modified worksheet, True/false, maybe do at beginning and end and compare the two

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Casey Life Skills: Resources to Inspire

Casey Life Skills is a collaborative tool for young people and their supportive adults to create a learning plan for skill development. It has been created in partnership with foster care alumni, resource parents, educators, and service providers to ensure the content is in line with the realities that youth are experiencing currently. It provides resources in various formats that can be used to work in groups, or one-on-one. We recognize that skill development is an ongoing process that involves goal setting, skill learning, reflection on successes and challenges, and retrying until the goals are achieved.

Creating a Post-Secondary Vision Board

A vision board is a collage of images, words, or objects that can represent a person's goals, dreams, or intentions. Students may create a vision board to explore and identify their goals after graduation. Throughout high school, students can update or edit their vision board as their aspirations change. Students can also use vision boards at annual

Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to share their post-school goals with teachers, service providers, and family members. Ideally, students will have the opportunity to share their vision board at the beginning of each IEP meeting to foster a person-driven meeting that focuses on transition skills.

- Can start with a template or create from scratch
- Can be detailed or more general
- Can change over time



Custom-designed training exercises and activities

- Goal-setting
- Time Management
- Self-Regulation
- Adaptability/Flexibility
- Resource Management
- Responsibility
- Understanding the difference between obstacle and road block

Example:

Exercise: Create a goal (small goal/task for the day, i.e. giving the dog a bath):

- list what you will need to achieve that goal (products, materials, items) Does dog need to be leashed?
- Decide when you will do it (consider weather, enough daylight (morning, noon, night?) your schedule, etc.
- When is best for the dog? Make sure they don't have to potty; are they more relaxed after eating? Do they need a snack first? Do they need to go on a walk first to expend some energy...
- What could go wrong/be an obstacle to your goal:
 - Dog doesn't cooperate
 - Bad weather (do you have an alternative? Can you bathe the dog inside? Can you reschedule?)
 - Is the dog fenced? Could he run off? (safeguard for this – use a leash, do you have a deck you block off? Move inside?), did you allow enough time?
- Describe the action steps (i.e. gather materials/products; hook up the hose, get a basin, leash the dog etc.)
- Self-regulate your words and actions (how will you respond if the dogs barks, runs off, you run out of soap, you didn't bring out a towel, it starts raining etc.)
- Stay Flexible (look back at possible obstacles and create a backup plan for each); adaptability

Vocation-readiness scale

Youth with disabilities who are self-determined are more likely to experience success after high school. Self-determination assessment can inform how to help students develop their self-determination skills through quality instruction.

- TAGG framework

Development of the TAGG

TAGG versions include 34 items across 8 constructs identified from transition education research associated with post high school employment and further education of former students with mild to moderate disabilities. Developed following the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999) endorsed by the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education.

TAGG Constructs

- Strengths and Limits
- Disability Awareness
- Persistence
- Interacting with Others
- Goal Setting and Attainment
- Employment
- Student Involvement in IEP
- Support Community

Languages

- Now: English, English audio, and ASL video clips provided by PEPNET2.
- Coming soon: Spanish and Spanish audio, Mandarin, and Bulgarian.

Format

- TAGG is an online transition assessment with an option to print a paper version. Results must be entered into the online version for scoring.

Availability

- Multiple Versions and Reading Level
- Three versions: TAGG-P (Professional), TAGG-S (Student), and TAGG-F (Family). Reading grade levels for the TAGG versions are TAGG-S 4.8, TAGG-F 5.7, and TAGG-P 10.4. Completing two or more versions allows the IEP team to note differences in student behavior in school as well as the home or other settings. Additionally, including the student version as part of the transition assessment promotes the student voice and increases student engagement in the transition planning process.

Validity Evidence

- Content. Items based on research that identified nonacademic student behaviors.
- Structure. Factor structure established, then verified across three years of independent samples.
- Stability. Test-retest found strong correlations of .80, .70, and .70 for the TAGG-P, F, and S, respectively.
- Internal Consistency. Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the three versions ranged from .89 to .95.
- Agreement Across Versions. Medium correlations across the three versions.
- Bias. No overall difference by Social-Economic factors. The TAGG-P does not differ by gender, but the TAGG-F and S have differences with a few constructs by gender. No relation between TAGG scores, GPA, and percent of time in general education classes. TAGG scores do vary by additional education.

Identifying personal strengths and job skills/interests

- Casey LifeSkills assessments for ages 14-21 (next page)
- [Photo Career Quiz](#)
- Transition Resources: [Interactive Inventories](#)
- TANF: [Tackling the Tough Skills](#)

Week 1

Tackling The Tough Skills

Name

1. Attitude

Learning Points

- Attitude affects everything else in life.
- Even the most negative self-attitudes can be conquered by recognizing and capitalizing on inner strengths.
- Change is inevitable and difficult, but possible.
- Reactions to stress vary as much as skills used to cope with the stressors.

What does attitude mean to you?

Something to think about: The following activities are meant to help you "think" and possibly "rethink" the way you see life.

Activity 1:

Directions: Read each sentence and fill in the blanks, only positive thoughts are allowed!

1. I am happiest when I

2. I know how to

3. Everyone thinks I am excellent at

4. I always smile when

5. I try to help people by

6. I am a

worker.

7. I am a

friend.

8. I believe

9. I refuse to let anyone

10. I know I can

Life Skills Short Assessment: Independent Living Readiness - Strengths and Needs

Name _____

Classroom/Teacher _____

Date _____

Content derived from The Casey Life Skills (CLS) questionnaire: www.casey.org/casey-life-skills/

Are the following statements like me?		Yes	Mostly yes	Somewhat	Mostly no	No
1	I know how to access information on the internet safely.					
2	I understand why it is important to read and understand the food labels to see calories, serving size, fat, sugar, and salt for healthy eating.					
3	I know how to use a washer, dryer, and detergent to clean my clothes.					
4	I know how to positively manage my mental health when I am having a difficult day.					
5	I know where to find reliable information about safe sex and pregnancy.	<p>Remove</p> <p>possibility: asking a health professional to come in and present - separate training</p>				
6	I know how to be respectful of people with different beliefs, opinions, and cultures.					
7	I know how to identify if my relationships show signs of any emotional, physical, and mental abuse.	<p>Edit: I know how to identify if my relationships are safe and healthy</p>				
8	I understand how to use online banking to keep track of my money.					
9	I plan for bills and other expenses that I must pay for regularly (e.g., car and/or health insurance, cell phone, eating out, rent, video games).	<p>Edit: I understand how to manage my money</p> <p>could students open a bank account? small amount - parental permission get a gift card? practice in community?</p>				
10	I know how to safely use public transportation (or rideshare services such as Uber/Lyft) to get to where I need to go.					

Note: We can set up Peer Groups and do some of this (money management real life activities) in small groups of students who have permission

Are the following statements like me?		Yes	Mostly yes	Somewhat	Mostly no	No
11	I know who to ask to get documents I need for work (e.g., social security card, birth certificate, state ID, or work permit).					
12	I know how to use a planner, calendar, or phone to plan and keep track of important dates and assignments.					
13	I know how to use reliable online platforms to find information about job training opportunities.					
14	I know where to find advice about how to choose an education program.					
15	I know how to share my views on news and politics responsibly.	I Know how to share my personal, social and political views and opinions respectfully and responsibly				
16	I know how to research information to improve my own understanding of a topic.					
17	I know my permanency goal (e.g., adoption, guardianship, independence, and return to home).	Remove				
18	I understand I am eligible for extended foster care in my state after I am 18 years old.	Remove				
19	I believe I have a support system that will help me succeed.					
20	Most days, I feel proud of the way I am leading my life.					

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