

50 Ways to Help Prepare Youth for Independent Living

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1. Help them get a certified copy of their birth certificate.
2. Help them get a social security card (and a wallet to put it in.)
3. Enroll them in a school program in which they can succeed.
4. Help them get a picture identification card.
5. Find out if they are eligible for a Medicaid card.
6. Help them get copies of medical records.
7. Start a "lifebook" that contains important papers, pictures of family and other mementos.
8. Help them open up a bank account.
9. Teach them how to write and cash a check.
10. Line them up with a dentist that they can continue to use.
11. Line them up with a doctor they can use when they are on their own.
12. Help them put together a family scrapbook.
13. Help them renew contact with family members they may not presently know.
14. Help them develop at least one friendship.
15. Line them up with a good counselor.
16. Take them to join a local recreation center.
17. Teach them some new ways to have fun.
18. Connect them with a church group.
19. Help them find a better paying job.
20. Make sure they really understand birth control.
21. Show them the best place to shop for food, clothing and furniture
22. Help them learn how to look up resources in the phone book.
23. Help them work through an independent living skills workbook or online resources. (See www.caseylifeskills.org)
24. Teach them how to read a map.
25. Take them on a tour of the city.
26. Teach them how to use the bus system and read the bus schedules.
27. Buy them an alarm clock and teach them how to use it.
28. Show them how to use the library and get a library card.
29. Help them get a driver's license and price insurance.
30. Role-play contacts with police, bank tellers, doctors and others.
31. Role-play several different styles of job interviews.
32. Help them put together a resume and an application fact sheet.
33. Make a list of important phone numbers.
34. Teach them how to cook five good meals.
35. Teach them how to store food.
36. Teach them how to use coupons and comparison shop.
37. Teach them how to read a paycheck stub.
38. Teach them how to use an oven and microwave.
39. Teach them how to thoroughly clean a kitchen and bathroom.
40. Take them to a session of adult court; traffic and criminal.
41. Tell them how to get a lawyer and when to get one.

42. Help them understand a lease or rental agreement.
43. Teach them how to do their taxes.
44. Teach them how to write a letter and mail it.
45. Help them develop good phone communication skills.
46. Go over tenant and landlord rights.
47. Help them find a safe, inexpensive place to live.
48. Teach them how to budget their money.
49. Help them find and get along with a potential roommate.
50. Talk to them often about feelings about living independently.

*Lighthouse Youth Services is a national leader in working with children, providing residential care for children in foster homes, group homes, residential treatment centers, supervised apartments and other residential programs. Staff members write nationally published books and articles, frequently present at national conferences and consult with states and agencies nationwide.

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