



2009 NDTAC National Conference

Session Notes

Session Title	Supporting Youth in Transition to Adulthood: Lessons Learned from Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice (White paper supported by Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University and Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative)
Presenter	David Altschuler
Date and Time	Tuesday, June 23, 10:45 a.m.–12 noon

Summary

This session focused on the content of a white paper entitled “Supporting Youth in Transition to Adulthood: Lessons Learned from Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice,” originally presented at an invitation-only symposium held in April 2009. Below are summary notes for this session.

The white paper discusses obstacles to and solutions for a successful transition into adulthood. To become law-abiding, tax-paying citizens, youth must be prepared with the necessary skills and tools. “Connected by 25” is a “term of art” or philosophy that posits that by age 25, youth should have this preparation. The Connected by 25 yardstick includes the convergence of full brain development; completion of college and other postsecondary education; and connection to employment, further education, child-rearing, and other pursuits that are in large measure established by age 25.

For children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, however, the already difficult transition into adulthood is hampered by the lack of direct interaction between the different systems they may be involved with. To help these youth transition into adulthood successfully, different systems must be able to communicate and collaborate together, and agencies must think more broadly about the youth’s transition. Each system must be flexible enough to encourage cooperation among the direct service providers of different systems. In terms of Title I, Part D, this entails thinking beyond the U.S. Department of Education’s guidelines and expectations—how are the other systems that youth come into contact with affecting those youth’s transitions?

“[Supporting Youth in Transition to Adulthood: Lessons Learned from Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice](#)” presents seven recommendations to improve system-involved youth’s transition into adulthood. (See a summary list of these recommendations in the [PowerPoint presentation](#)).

Q&A / Comments

Q1: Tell me more about Connected by 25. How was the age of 25 decided to be the right age? Why is it not 18?

David Altschuler: Collectively, many people have recognized that there are a variety of skills to be learned and developed before adulthood, and there are many challenges to this process. Even children who aren’t involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems often have problems “growing up.” A consensus was reached by those researching adolescent brain development and practitioners in the fields of education, child welfare, and juvenile justice to coin the term “Connected by 25”; the current thought is people are ready to start a job and settle down in their mid-20s.

Q2: Were any direct service providers involved in writing the white paper?

David Altschuler: Not directly. The people who were involved in the creation of the white paper work with direct service providers and have their “feet” in research, policy, and the practitioner community. A panel of experts, which included practitioners, advised the authors of the paper.

Q3: How has the white paper been received?

David Altschuler: At the symposium where the white paper was presented, the attendees were mainly from neglect and child welfare fields, not juvenile justice fields. From the reaction of panelists and discussions, the participants were very receptive and positive. One suggestion was to have more systems represented in the paper that affect the lives of youth. People also suggested the creation of a National Youth Movement.

For any further questions pertaining to the session or the topics discussed, please contact NDTAC at NDTAC@air.org.

Relevant Resources

[Supporting Youth in Transition to Adulthood: Lessons Learned from Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice](#) (white paper)

[Center for Juvenile Justice Reform](#)

[Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative](#)

NDTAC's **[Transition, Re-entry & Aftercare](#)** library page

NDTAC's **[Transition Toolkit 2.0: Meeting the Educational Needs of Youth Exposed to the Juvenile Justice System](#)**