

SECTION 18A & 18B

A. BACKGROUND

Young people in foster care are incredibly resilient. However, some young people in foster care can struggle academically due to a variety of factors, including school/home instability (moving from home to home and/or switching schools, which can cause gaps in learning and credit obtainment) and experiencing trauma (which could impede executive functioning associated with academic success).

For a young person who may have academic gaps, a learning disability, and/or be several grade levels behind, obtaining a high school degree/GED can be very challenging.

However, when young people receive the supports and guidance they need, the sky is the limit. Resilience can translate into grit and determination.

No matter the academic challenges or gifts a young person has, the **Coach's role is to ensure that young person is enrolled in a best-fit school/program, persists in that setting, and has the supports and resources they need to reach their full educational potential.**

B. COACH'S ROLE IN HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE ACHIEVE THEIR ACADEMIC GOALS

The aim is to help all young people graduate high school and eventually navigate onto a living wage career path. In today's economy, with some exceptions, a living wage career requires a college degree and/or vocational credentials.

Without a high school degree, there is little-to-no chance that a young person will be able to be economically self-sufficient. These young people will be at very high risk of further system involvement. **Therefore, it is the role of a Coach to ensure that all young people get their high school degree or GED, no matter how long that takes!** From there, Coaches help young people navigate onto a best-fit post-secondary pathway and persist in that setting.

Should a young person not be ready to enroll, Coaches can help them connect to career development experiences and/or academic remediation supports to help build their resumes, skills, and post-secondary preparedness.

Should a young person not persist in any particular school/program, the Coach helps them to reflect on the experience, explore other opportunities, and re-engage in a better-fit setting.

Very few young people will transition right from high school onto a living-wage job without any post-secondary credentials. Having some sort of post-secondary degree/ credentials will ultimately help the young person advance, earn more, and/or have more mobility and overall economic stability.

Therefore, Coaches also expose all young people to post-secondary options as early as possible, including college and accredited vocational programs, to help them start to plan and prepare. See [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21](#).

WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ENROLL IN THE FAIR FUTURES COACHING PROGRAM, THEY WILL COME IN WITH VARYING LEVELS OF ACADEMIC SKILLS AND CREDENTIALS. COACHES MEET YOUTH WHERE THEY ARE AND HELP THEM ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, WHETHER THEY ARE DISCONNECTED OR A STAR STUDENT.

A COACH'S ROLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITHOUT A DEGREE, BASED ON WHERE THEY ARE, INCLUDES:

FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN HIGH SCHOOL:

Coaches help young people persist with the overall goal of helping with grade promotion.¹ They do so by providing emotional support, visiting the school, connecting them to needed services/resources, checking in at critical junctures, and helping them to navigate challenges, as needed.

FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A GED PROGRAM:

Coaches help them persist with the overall goal of helping them obtain their GED. They do so by visiting the program, providing emotional support, connecting them to needed services/resources, checking-in at critical junctures, and helping them to navigate challenges, as needed. [See Fair Futures Program Manual Section 18D.](#)

FOR DISCONNECTED YOUTH WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE/GED:

The Coach helps reconnect them to an appropriate academic setting. Even if a young person is initially not interested in getting a high school degree/GED, the Coach's role is help them understand why they need their degree. While a young person should always be driving his/her own goals and a Coach should be supportive of whatever pathway they choose, a high school degree is a necessity for their success. It is the Coach's responsibility to find ways to help them realize this in a way that is motivating and supportive. **Telling a young person that a degree is important usually doesn't work – they know that!** There are other effective, innovative approaches to use. [See Fair Futures Program Manual Section 20.](#)

OVERALL, FROM AN EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE, COACHES:



- **Ensure young people are enrolled in a best-fit school, college, or program** (and connect them to one if they are not)
- **Help young people persist in that academic setting**
- **Build relationships** with the primary people at the young person's school/program, and work with the young person's family/adult figures to support them
- **Plan and prepare** for the next step on their journey

[Click here to return to Section 18 Table of Contents.](#)

¹ Students with intellectual disabilities who are alternately assessed will have a modified persistence goal. See Goals & Steps framework.