

HIGH SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY CONTEXT FOR YOUTH IN CLOSE TO HOME PLACEMENT

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OVERVIEW - EDUCATION IN CLOSE TO HOME

This section provides more context on educational programs available to youth placed into Close to Home residences plus information to consider as you support youth transitioning to community schools after they leave Close to Home placement.

Please collaborate with your colleagues, including the Education & Career Specialist on your Fair Futures team and any Educational Specialist from your organizations (some are staffed at Close to Home programs) as you learn how to support youth in navigating these complicated settings.

Please also refer to [Advocate for Children's Guide for Court Involved Students](#).

One of the core principles of the Close to Home program is educational continuity and achievement.

Educational achievement is a strong protective factor against further justice system involvement, so services support youth's educational engagement and progress while in placement, as well as a successful transition back to community schools. Many young people entering Close to Home have experience with disengagement from school, a history of special education or learning needs, and experience with school discipline processes.

The right to a free, public education does not end with arrest. Young people in Close to Home, both of compulsory and of non-compulsory school age, must attend school or an educational or vocational program while in placement.

CLOSE TO HOME (CTH) FAMILY TEAM CONFERENCES AND EDUCATION

Close to Home **Family Team Conferences (FTC)** are important opportunities to bring together family members, young people, extended family, case planners, parent advocates, and support figures, to develop plans to support well-being, and achieve successful transition to the community.

A young person's Close to Home placement is structured around six Family Team Conferences, each with specific planning goals. Providers and ACS begin to plan for the youth's release to the community as soon as he or she is placed in Close to Home. The provider agencies outline treatment goals for the youth, identify service needs and address barriers to release. They also work with youth and families to make sure all the necessary services are in place in the community before the youth is released from placement, including an Education Plan.

Coaches should not only participate in Family Team Conferences but they should help their young people prepare for their participation. Though FTCs are youth-centered, they can feel overwhelming for a young person, often attended by many adults and many stakeholders. Coaches will want to work with their young people to take advantage of these collaborative planning meetings.

By helping a young person develop their self-advocacy skills, Coaches can empower youth to center their voice in their future-oriented planning. Coaches can work with youth to identify their academic goals, strengths and needs, and to communicate these during the FTCs. Coaches should familiarize themselves with the goals of each FTC to help guide their work with the young person in the lead-up to each FTC.

6 FAMILY TEAM CONFERENCES:

#1. THE TRANSITION TEAM CONFERENCE

When a young person is placed with Close to Home and prior to moving into their assigned group home, ACS, the assigned Close to Home provider agency, the young person, and their family, convene for their first Family Team Conference, the **Transition Team Conference**.

During this FTC, ACS reviews the details of the young person's placement, including the length of their placement, the young person's assigned agency, and any court ordered services. ACS also provides an overview of the young person's academic history and the educational service available to the young person while in Residential Placement. The ACS DYFJ Intake Team is responsible for gathering academic records from NYC DOE, interviewing the young person and their family about their academic history and goals, and sharing this information with the CTH provider agency.

Coaches should review academic records and academic history including transcript, report card, GED subject area tests, Individualized Education Program, attendance history, school discipline history, etc.

TIP: *If a young person was in Secure Detention or in Non-Secure Detention prior to their placement, they may have engaged in facility-based extracurricular activities such as career exploration or career readiness programming, post-secondary programming, or tutoring. Coaches should check in with youth around their out-of-school time engagement to gauge their interest in continuing in similar activities while in Close to Home.*

#2. INITIAL TEAM CONFERENCE

The **Initial Team Conference** is usually held 30-60 days into a young person's Residential Placement. By this point, youth should have participated in an intake meeting with residential placement school (ex. Passages Academy).

Coaches should work with the young person (and parent) and the education "Dream Team" to ensure the young person understands their academic track, credit count, and (if appropriate) their special education services. They should also begin discussing if the young person wants to return to their community school. Though youth in Close to Home usually do not return to school in the community until their release into aftercare, the Initial Team Conference is the perfect opportunity to begin developing a young person's Education Plan. Coaches should collaborate with education stakeholders to determine what planning must be completed prior to the young person's release to the community to ensure school success while in residential placement and on transition (i.e. new IEP evaluation, school applications)? For example, does this young person need to be connected to tutoring services while in residential placement? By establishing academic goals for residential placement, Coaches and youth can set themselves up for a more successful reentry into community school.

#3. COMPREHENSIVE TEAM CONFERENCE

Depending on a young person's disposition, the **Comprehensive Team Conference** is held between 90 - 180 days into residential placement.

This is a critical juncture for education planning and for Coaches and their young people! ACS and the CTH provider agency will share a tentative release date with the young person and their family. With this date in mind, Coaches should work with the young person and the Dream Team to develop their Education Plan for their return to the community. The Education Plan should factor in timelines around school applications, how the timing of transition could impact educational continuity, and what information should be communicated to the receiving school.

Coaches should encourage youth to attend a best-fit high school or academic program. For older youth or over-age and undercredited youth, this could mean applying to a Transfer School, enrolling in a program through the Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs). If a young person's special education needs change while in Residential Placement, the young person will need support in enrolling in an appropriate school setting.

#4. RELEASE TEAM CONFERENCE

The **Release Team Conference** is held 30-45 days prior to a young person's return to the community.

The Aftercare Service Plan should be finalized during this conference. Coaches should attend this FTC to build communication and collaboration with the CTH Aftercare team.

The Education Plan should also be finalized, with an enrollment plan of action in place, including a set Welcome Meeting with the receiving school and any support services needed to help with academic success. If a young person must transition partway through the academic term, ensure all available academic records, including report card and progress reports are shared with the receiving school.

#5. COMMUNITY TEAM CONFERENCE

The young person and their stakeholders, including the Aftercare team, reconvene 45-60 days after release to the community for the **Community Team Conference**.

Coaches can use this opportunity to check-in around attendance, interests in out-of-school activities, resource needs, such as tutoring, and to address any barriers to academic success. Coaches should assess how the young person is adjusting to their school environment. How have they been received by their peers? How have they been received by their administrators and teachers? Though Coaches work with youth consistently throughout Aftercare, the Community Team Conference can be a great opportunity for Coaches to celebrate a young person's academic successes with all their CTH stakeholders.

#6. GRADUATION TEAM CONFERENCE

The **Graduation Team Conference** marks the end of a young person's placement with Close to Home.

Usually held thirty days before their "expiration date", the Graduation Team Conference reviews achievements, challenges, and determines if any ongoing services or referrals are needed. Coaches should collaborate with the young person and their family to plan for their partnership after Close to Home.

KEY CLOSE TO HOME EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS

There are many key stakeholders who support young people in Close to Home and it is critical that Coaches maintain clear and ongoing communication with them. Coaches should collaborate with Close to Home staff, DOE staff, and legal advocates, working closely as a team to help young people identify, plan for, and achieve their academic goals.

Some of these stakeholders include:

- Close to Home Provider Education and/or Vocational Specialist
- Close to Home Provider Case Planner
- Close to Home Provider Aftercare Team
- Passages Academy (or other partner school) Guidance Counselor
- Passages Academy Social Worker
- ACS DYFJ Education Coordinator
- ACS DYFJ Field Operations and School Liaisons
- Legal Advocate

Please refer to [Section 12 of the Fair Futures Manual: Effective Youth Engage & The First 90 Days of Coaching](#) for more guidance on introducing yourself to the key players, building rapport as a team, collaborating to establish clarity around a young person's goals, and sharing of information.

PASSAGES ACADEMY, NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 79

Passages Academy is a New York City Department of Education (DOE) program operated by District 79. Passages Academy serves the majority of students who are detained—both in secure and non-secure facilities— and operates in collaboration with the New York City Administration of Children Services (ACS), Division of Youth and Family Justice (DYFJ) to provide educational services to New York City students entrusted to their care and custody.

Youth placed with Close to Home provider agencies that operate Non-Secure Placement residences attend school at Bronx Hope or Belmont Academy, depending on their geographic location. Passages Academy North services provider houses in the Bronx and parts of Queens and Passages Academy South services the majority of Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island.

Youth placed with Close to Home provider agencies that operate **Limited-Secure Placement** residences attend school co-located in their provider house. *These Passages Academy satellite locations are noted in the chart below.*

LOCATIONS:

PASSAGES ACADEMY NORTH		PASSAGES ACADEMY SOUTH	
For more information contact: Passages Academy North Parent Coordinator 718-294-4832.		For more information contact: Passages Academy South Parent Coordinator 718-647-1800	
BRONX	WESTCHESTER	BROOKLYN	STATEN ISLAND
Horizon Juvenile Center 560 Brook Avenue Bronx, NY 10452 (718) 401-3055 Bronx Hope 108 West 174th Street Bronx NY 10453 (718) 294-4273 Rising Ground - Ryer <i>Limited Secure Placement</i> 2250 Ryer Avenue Bronx, NY 10457 (718)-584-1782	Children's Village <i>Limited Secure Placement</i> 1 Echo Hills Drive Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522	Crossroads Juvenile Center 17 Bristol Street Brooklyn, NY 11212 (718) 240-3822 Belmont 619 Belmont Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11207 (718) 647-1800 Rising Ground - Carroll <i>Limited Secure Placement</i> 1125 Carroll Street Brooklyn, NY 11225	Children's Village 1133 Forest Hill Road Staten Island, NY 10314

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

INSTRUCTION:

NYC Department of Education educators provide Passages Academy students with grade-level appropriate instruction based on their academic goals and needs. Students attend classes organized by their Close to Home provider house. Passages Academy educators and support staff work with individual youth in this shared learning environment to ensure students receive appropriate instruction and meet their academic goals.

Middle School:

Middle school students at Passages Academy take middle school courses and take city-wide tests for promotion to the next grade (including promotion to high school).

High School:

Because Passages Academy is a NYC Department of Education school, any high school credits earned by a Passages Academy student will appear on their DOE transcript.

GED:

Passages Academy is a designated testing location and may administer the GED exam. Passages Academy counselors, interested students, and CTH providers, collaborate to determine a student's eligibility. Per NYSED, adjudicated youth or youth under the direction of the court may be eligible for the GED at 17 years of age.

See the NYSED High School Equivalency (HSE) Office's [HSE Age Eligibility Chart](#) (GED Eligibility Guidance for Juvenile Justice Impacted Youth).

Shared Instruction:

Passages Academy offers high school students the opportunity to enroll in additional courses through a partnership with [District 79's Young Adult Borough Centers \(YABC\)](#). Should students require language courses or advanced courses not offered by Passages Academy educators, Passages Academy may enroll Passages students in asynchronous online YABC courses.

Summer School:

Passages Academy offers summer school courses for eligible youth including youth who are Promotion in Doubt (PID), for youth who receive 12-month services, and for youth who would like to earn additional high school credit.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR, CREDITS AND STANDARDIZED EXAMS:

Passages Academy, like many schools in the community, is on a semester grading system. High school students at Passages Academy earn credits based on completion of school work during a semester and credits are awarded at the end of each semester. If a student leaves Passages Academy prior to the end of the term, the student should be placed in their same classes at their receiving school.

Passages Academy administers standardized exams in accordance with the NYC Department of Education including middle school promotion exams, New York State Regents exams, the PSAT and the SAT.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Passages Academy Guidance Counselors and Social Workers provide ongoing guidance counseling, IEP/SEP-mandated counseling services, and school transition support to youth. They are critical members of the community of adults working to support education planning and transition.

Passages Academy Guidance Counselors are responsible for conducting intake meetings, reviewing academic records, programming youth for classes, supporting youth in selecting an appropriate academic path, and completing the high school selection process. School-based Social Workers deliver mandated special education services including individual and group counseling, develop Special Education Plans (see below), and conduct IEP meetings in partnership with the Passages Academy School Psychologist.

Passages Academy counselors also work with young people to develop transition plans to support their return to a school or educational or vocational program in the community. Students and counselors meet regularly to update the transition plan. Passages Academy Social workers continue to provide assistance post-release, including navigating issues of school discipline or requesting a school transfer. Coaches should work closely and collaboratively with Passages Academy staff

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students with disabilities make up over 60% of the student population of Passages Academy. While attending Passages Academy, students with disabilities have the right to special education services that are similar to what is provided by their Individual Education Program (IEP) while in the community. This temporary plan is called a **Special Education Plan**.

Special Education Plan (SEP):

A SEP is similar to an IEP and outlines special education services a young person will receive while placed with Close to Home and attending Passages Academy. Passages Academy staff will use the IEP to plan for services students will receive while attending Passages and will notify the parent and the CTH provider agency of a meeting to discuss these services. This meeting must take place within 30 days of a student's admission to Passages.

Requesting new evaluations, triennials, annuals:

CTH provider staff may work with parents / guardians to request new evaluations should they suspect a young person of having a disability. Passages Academy staff is responsible for completing triennial and annuals in accordance with the cadence of a student's IEP services and needs.

12-Month Programs:

Students who are recommended for a 12-month program through their IEP are entitled to summer programming and counseling services through Passages Academy.

ADDITIONAL ACS PARTNER SCHOOLS FOR YOUTH:

NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S P256Q - ST. JOHN'S RESIDENCE FOR BOYS & GREENBURGH ELEVEN, UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT - CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

Youth placed with Children's Village (Non-Secure Placement) and St. John's Residence for Boys do not attend Passages Academy. Children's Village and St. John's Residence for Boys have schools co-located on their campuses which service both child welfare and justice-involved youth.

GREENBURGH ELEVEN, UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT - CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

Co-located on the Children's Village campus in Dobbs Ferry, [Greenburgh Eleven UFSD](#) provides a comprehensive educational program in accordance with the Regulations of the New York State Education Department. As a Union Free School District, Greenburgh Eleven is *not* a NYC Department of Education School. Instruction is based on New York State Standards and on students' Individual Education Plans (IEP). The school year is extended to include a thirty-day summer program for all students.

INSTRUCTION

Greenburgh Eleven is a day and residential all male public school with a student-teacher ratio of 8:1:1. Each class has a special education teacher and teacher associate.

Non-NYC Department of Education School:

Greenburgh Eleven is a Special Act Public School District, distinct from the NYC Department of Education.

Students may be referred to Greenburgh Eleven by a local [Committee on Special Education \(CSE\)](#).

At intake, Greenburgh Eleven conducts a review of student academic records (NYC DOE transcript and NYC DOE IEP) to place youth in academically appropriate classes.

Support and Programming:

Greenburgh Eleven provides onsite tutoring services, C-Tech Workforce Technology Training Programs, and offers programming and hours towards the New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) credential.

PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

The Pupil Personnel Services Department at Greenburgh Eleven oversees services for students with disabilities including counseling, speech, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, and coordination with the Committee on Special Education (CSE).

Note: Students attending Greenburgh Eleven through their placement with Children's Village NSP may not have an indication for a Non-Public School Day Program or Non-Public School Residential Program on their IEP.

TRANSITION FROM GREENBURGH ELEVEN

Greenburgh Eleven is a non-NYC Department of Education school. Students' Greenburgh Eleven transcript and/or report card and IEP must be shared with the receiving NYC Department of Education School when a young person returns to their best-fit school. Similarly, Greenburgh Eleven develops IEPs that indicate services to be provided while a young person attends Greenburgh Eleven. This IEP may be more restrictive than previous settings indicated on a young person's NYC Department of Education IEP. Students returning to the community from Children's Village NSP should return to the least restrictive and appropriate school setting. Coaches should coordinate closely with Greenburgh Eleven and with the local CSE to ensure this process is as seamless as possible when a young person returns to their NYC school.

NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S PS256Q AT ST. JOHN'S RESIDENCE FOR BOYS - ST. JOHN'S

PS256Q at St. John's Residence for Boys (75Q256) is a **NYC Department of Education District 75** co-located middle and high school program consisting of 4 classes from 7th through the 12th grade. The academic program follows both the alternate assessment and standardized assessment curricula that are aligned to Next Generation Learning Standards. PS256Q also works collaboratively with the St. John's organization who offers our students counseling, physical and mental health support.

INSTRUCTION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

District 75 is a specialized school district in the NYC Department of Education that provides highly specialized instructional support for students with significant challenges, such as Autism Spectrum Disorders, significant cognitive delays, emotional disturbances, sensory impairments, and multiple disabilities.

Middle School:

Middle school students take middle school courses and take city-wide tests for promotion to the next grade (including promotion to high school).

High School:

As a NYC Department of Education school, any high school credits earned by a PS256Q student will appear on their DOE transcript.

District 75:

Students attending PS25Q at St. John's through their Close to Home placement may not have an IEP or may have an IEP but do not have "Specialized School District" (District 75) indicated on their IEP.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL OR VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Close to Home providers may work with ACS and youth and their families so that youth in residential placement may attend school prior to transitioning to aftercare.

Youth may attend school or a vocational program in the community based on a variety of factors including overall readiness and specific academic or vocational needs (ex. A student may need specialized courses or is interested in attending a program like **Coop Tech**).

If a young person is eligible for an early return to school in the community, Coaches should work closely with the young person to ensure they're attending a best-fit school, to identify any possible barriers or needs, and to develop a support plan once that young person enrolls.

SCHOOL TRANSITION AND CLOSE TO HOME

Planning for a young person's school transition while in Close to Home begins the moment a young person is placed with Close to Home. Providers, ACS, youth and families should evaluate a young person's educational needs at the Transition Team Conference. In reviewing academic records and identifying academic goals and critical benchmarks at the outset, young people may begin making progress towards successful transition from the beginning of their residential placement.

Transition to a community school usually aligns with a young person's transition into Aftercare. Aftercare begins once a youth has completed their residential placement and he/she transitions back to the community to receive intensive aftercare support and supervision for an average of four to six months. The services are offered by the same agency to support the continuity of care but may include different stakeholders.

COACH'S ROLE: CONNECTING YOUNG PERSON TO A BEST-FIT EDUCATIONAL SETTING

Coaches should connect with a young person's aftercare team prior to their release, further supporting their continuity of care.

Coaches, in partnership with the young person and the Aftercare team, should work together to ensure the young person is connected to a best-fit educational setting. This may not be their previous community-based school! A best-fit setting should provide the appropriate supports and programming to ensure a young person's success. Some schools that provide more focused support and alternative learning environments include alternative high schools, like transfer schools and GED programs.

Check out the Advocates for Children's (AFC) resource [Know Your Options: Alternatives for Middle & High School Students](#) and [reach out to Fair Futures for technical assistance](#) and key tips.

EDUCATION PLAN

Start early! Develop a game plan!

What courses does a student need to complete before they return to the community? Does a student want to enroll in GED? Does a student need to work on their high school promotion? Does a student need a new special education evaluation that could have school placement implications? Does a student want to return to their community school? The sooner Coaches and youth work together to develop an education plan, the more successful transition will be.

TIMING OF TRANSITION

Coaches and education stakeholders should collaborate to establish a thoughtful timeline for school transition. Can transition align with the academic calendar? Consider when students will earn credit for their classes or when students will sit for a New York State Regents exam. If transition cannot align with the school calendar, Coaches should work with the placement school (i.e. Passages Academy, Greenburgh Eleven, or District 75) and the receiving school to ensure that progress reports and attendance records are shared.

ENROLLMENT PROCESSES

If a student attends Passages Academy while in placement, Passages will discharge them through NYC Department of Education's ATS processes, placing them back on the roster of their home school. This process typically takes 24-48 hours.

If a student wishes to attend a different school or a best-fit school, they may be advised to coordinate with a Family Welcome Center or complete an application for alternative high schools (i.e. Transfer Schools).

If a student attends Greenburgh Eleven UFSD, Coaches and students will need to coordinate with the Committee for Special Education or a Family Welcome Center to re-enroll in a NYC Department of Education school. Coaches should request a copy of the student's Greenburgh Eleven transcript to share with the receiving school.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students and families may request new special education evaluations while in residential placement. If special education recommendations change while a young person is in residential placement, youth, families, and education stakeholders should work together to ensure this process is completed by the time a young person returns to the community. Coaches should pay special attention to changes in recommendations impacting school enrollment.

CONSIDERATIONS

GED Enrollment While in Residential Placement:

If a young person decides to pursue the GED while in residential placement, they will need a community-based program on release. Consider programs like Pathways to Graduation, Future Now, and Advance and Earn, that offer specialized GED instruction and employment opportunities.

Outstanding School Discipline Issues:

Keep in mind that any open school discipline proceedings may still be pending on a young person's return to their community school. Coaches should discuss any school discipline issues in advance of returning to their receiving school.

Safety Considerations:

When identifying a best-fit school, Coaches should work with the young person to ensure they may safely attend that school, including commuting to and from the identified school.

Coaches should work with a young person's legal advocate to ensure that their community school is aligned with and/or not in conflict with the legal stipulations of their case (ex. Orders of Protection).