

SECTION 23K

K. TRANSITIONING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO HOUSING

The Coach's role is to help ensure that young people transition smoothly into housing. Ideally, the Coach helps the young person set up their apartment. This can be an important bonding experience.

MOVING INTO A FIRST APARTMENT IS A BIG TRANSITION, AND THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS COACHES CAN DO TO LESSEN THE STRESS INVOLVED FOR THE YOUNG PERSON:

Help them move in and furnish their apartment

- Work with the Housing Specialist and Case Planner to ensure all grants are applied for as fast as possible. It will be much harder if the youth must live in their apartment for weeks without the basic necessities.
- Involve the young person in picking out decor items for the apartment (e.g., ask them to think about what color they want for their bedding and bathroom, shop online or in person together to select the items).
See [Appendix I14_FairFutures_Home Goods Checklist](#) for a list of items that young people will need for their apartment.
- Assist the young person in actually setting up the home; open boxes together and put away items, help set up the bedding and bathroom, etc. It will be a better experience for the young person if they have help with the set up and clean up. Many young people do not know how to put together furniture, and guidance can be great independent living skills instruction in the real environment.

Make a budget and explain how rent works

- Explain housing rules so they know what to expect:
 - Their rent will go up as income increases;
 - Relay to youth that they can expect 50% of their income, or one full paycheck, to be their rent calculation. Help youth plan for rent increases by discussing this when they receive a raise/higher paying job.
 - If they lose a job, they must immediately apply for public assistance and get HRA to pay the rent so they do not accrue arrears while seeking employment;
 - In some situations youth may have their cash assistance turned off, but not fully understand this because they are still receiving food stamps. Youth should check their rent statement monthly to ensure HRA paid the rent.
- Work out a budget with the young person outlining their income and each expense item. It is important to know how much money they can allocate to food/entertainment after paying their rent and necessary bills.
If the young person is working and not eligible for full HRA, they may still be entitled to food stamps.

Seeing their budget broken down will help the Coach determine if this should be explored further.

See [Appendix I16_Independent Living Budget Tool](#).

Provide social/emotional support

- Talk to young person a lot in the first weeks and months of the transition. Despite the fact that many young people cannot wait to leave foster care, it is often scarier than they predicted! Many young people are used to having multiple other people in the home, noise, and voices at night; it can be disconcerting to be alone in an apartment for the first time.
- Understand how hard this transition is and that youth may regress or push away temporarily.
It is more important than ever to remain consistent in their lives!



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