



## Meeting Background:

The *Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board* is a statewide organization of young people (aged 14-24) who have experienced foster care. The *OHIO YAB* exists to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that impact youth who have or will experience out of home care.

*Alumni of Care Together Improving Outcomes Now Ohio* is dedicated to improving outcomes for current and former foster care youth. *ACTION Ohio* membership is primarily comprised of former foster youth, ages 18+, and is actively involved in state and national advocacy. Initiatives include Thanksgiving Together, Three Days on the Hill, and facilitating the statewide youth advisory board.

On Monday, August 16, 2021, representatives from the OHIO YAB and ACTION Ohio held a virtual focus group with Disability Rights Ohio. Personal experiences shared by individuals included substandard education in residential placements and not being diagnosed with dyslexia until high school.

**Below is a diagram that illustrates the key themes that arose.** Many thanks to Disability Rights Ohio for their willingness to explore solutions and give a voice to current and former foster youth.

### Keys to Success for Current/Former Foster Youth With Disabilities

#### Coordination of Care

- Child welfare needs to become disability competent and vice-versa
- These systems need to establish a better conduit of coordination with one another

#### Educational Support

- Timely identification (i.e. dyslexia, IEP)
- Addressing substandard education at some residential facilities and group homes

#### Lack of Family Privilege

- Be aware that, for those of us in foster care, the state is our "parent"
- Need for more supports for former fosters providing care for siblings

#### Quality Medical Care

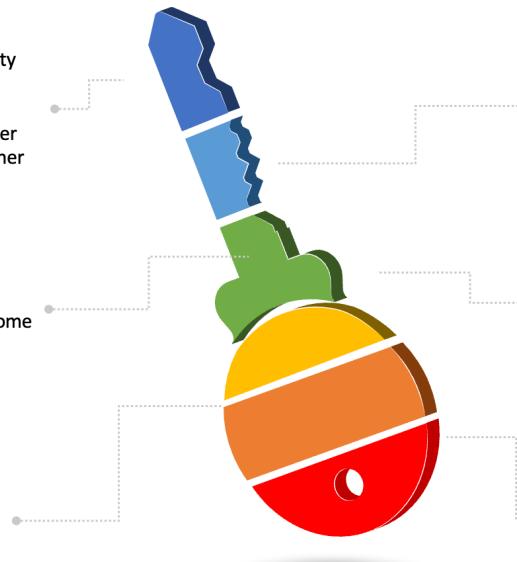
- Concerns regarding overmedication
- Barriers to accessing services (i.e. disability services, Social Security funds)

#### Young Adulthood

- Create a better bridge between child vs. adult mental health/disability systems
- Challenges related to records (i.e. 10 year retention period)

#### Addressing Stigma

- Having a disability does not indicate a lack of intelligence
- Underestimating an individual's need for support



## **Desired Outcome:**

To hold virtual meetings with (a.) Director Kim Hauck of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and (b.) Leslie Combs of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, in order to partner with them on intentional, proactive, and creative strategies.

<b>Opportunities for State Leadership:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are your suggestions for how child welfare could become more disability competent and vice-versa?</li><li>2. What methods do you suggest for these two systems to establish additional conduits of coordination with one another?</li><li>3. <b>Could a team be assembled at the statewide level to focus on coordination of care regarding foster youth with disabilities?</b></li><li>4. <b>Could one or more trainings be developed specifically to address this topic?</b> These could include cross-trainings that include disability service providers and child welfare staff.</li></ol>
<b>Opportunities for County Implementation:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are your suggestions for how county boards of developmental disabilities could be better informed when it comes to <b>resources to support current and former foster youth?</b></li><li>2. <b>Could county websites be encouraged to create a youth-specific section, including a mention of foster youth?</b> We noticed that, on some county websites, the term “foster care” isn’t mentioned. “Family supports” are mentioned often, but for youth without family support, this can be a painful reminder.</li></ol>

## **Please note that:**

- Our “ask” is specific to foster care youth (**not the broad term: “multi-systems” youth**), because our population has specific needs, and current/former foster youth are eligible for specific resources. We want to ensure that current and former foster youth, and their service providers, are aware of those resources.
- We are involved in conversations with the Ohio Department of Education as well. On May 2, 2022, we met with the foster care education coordinator.