
AB 12: California's Fostering Connections to Success Act

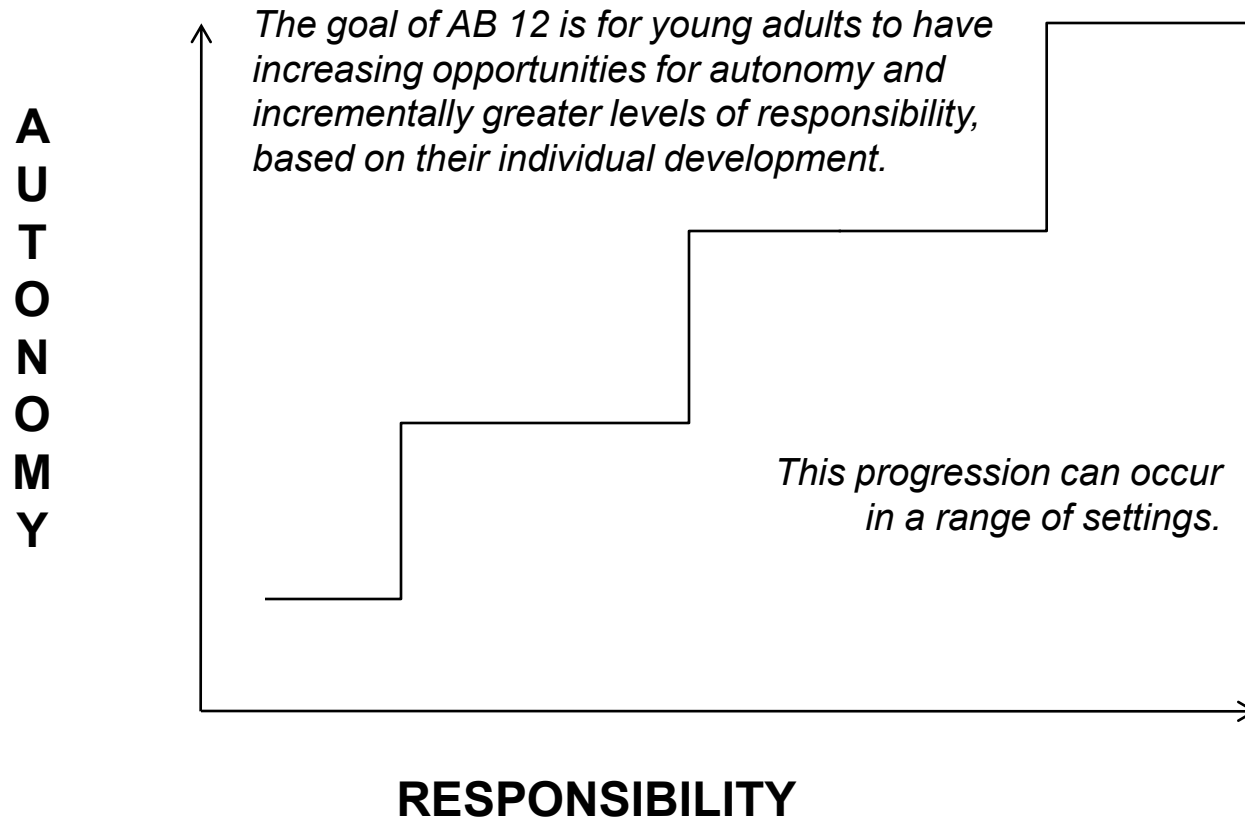


California's Foster Care System

- There are over 60,000 children and youth in foster care in California
- Annually, around 5,000 young people “age out” of California’s foster care system
- With this legislation, 1 in 5 youth who “age out” nationally will receive the support of the foster care system to age 21



AB 12 Framework



AB 12 Core Values



Voices of Young Adults:

- The voices of young adults truly matter. It's about listening to and really hearing what's important to them - and then helping them to act on that. Every aspect of these young lives counts, including educational goals, meaningful work experiences, and permanent, loving and dependable adult relationships.

Assistance & Partnering:

- Young people often need active assistance - and real partnerships - to reinforce and support learning as they transition into adulthood. This is an opportunity to support young adults in taking charge of their lives and futures - working with them on relationships, problem solving, personal responsibility and skill building to ensure they will thrive. We may need to transform the ways in which we work to better ensure that everyone is truly working together to provide needed guidance and assistance through youth focused and youth centered programs.

Love & Belonging:

- Everyone needs someone. We all need someone who loves us unconditionally - and on whom we can depend. Family and loved ones provide a foundation and help enable young adults to realize their potential. Our job is to ensure that every young adult has a family or caring and committed relationship with adults who can support and guide them in their lives.

Unique Needs:

- Every young adult is unique. Some may require intensive levels of support and assistance, while others may need more guidance and skill building to achieve their goals. Providing individualized attention helps to ensure successful transitions.

Eligibility is Maintained:

- Young adults should have access to every available service. Our community is committed to supporting programs and policies that cover all eligible young adults - and helping them to secure all needed, allowed and available services and supports.

Development is Supported:

- Challenges, pitfalls and experimentation are part of the process of becoming an adult. The ways in which we relate to these young adults must balance the need to protect and guide them with their agency and responsibilities as legal adults. Young people need to explore their own abilities - and to know they can find help and support if they falter.



To learn more visit www.cdc.ca.gov or www.connectionsconnections.org

- Voice of Young Adults
- Assistance and Partnering
- Love and Belonging
- Unique Needs
- Eligibility is Maintained
- Development is Supported

Stakeholder Groups

Child welfare workers/eligibility workers & ALJs

Judicial officers (dependency lawyers and judges)

Providers (THP-Plus programs, FFAs, Group Homes)

Foster parents

Relative caregivers

Education stakeholders (K-12 & Post-Secondary)

Juvenile probation system

Legal service organizations

Youth!!

Stakeholder Input Process

- Legislation requires CDSS to include stakeholders in regulatory process
- CDSS created “Focus Area Teams” consisting of state and county representatives and co-sponsor organizations to inform regulations and implementation process
- Co-sponsor organizations raised private funds to support stakeholder work



Stakeholder Input Process

- Each stakeholder group assigned to a co-sponsor for collection of input
- Youth advisory councils established
- 4 public stakeholder meetings
- Input from each group compiled into reports and recommendations
- Presented to Focus Area Teams and CDSS for incorporation into regulatory process



Challenges and Opportunities in Implementation

- Short timeline: extension begins January 1, 2012
- Culture change
- Eligibility standards versus practice standards
- Concerted effort among large and diverse group of stakeholders who are committed to implementation
- Making cultural changes evident and persuading young people to take advantage of AB 12



Unique Aspects of AB 12 – Reflects Program for Young Adults

- Case planning – “collaborative effort” with the nonminor assuming “increasing levels of responsibility and independence”
- Mutual Agreement (for those continuing at age 18)
- Changes in dependency proceedings
 - Parents are not noticed and are not parties to the hearing
 - Attorney acts “on behalf of” young adult, rather than in “the best interest”

Unique Aspects of AB 12 – Eligibility Rules

- 6 month certification of Extended Foster Care Participation
 - Prospective form
 - Intended to make responsibilities of social worker vs eligibility worker clear, avoid duplication
- Definitions for how youth meet the Participation Conditions

Unique Aspects of AB 12 –Changes in Placements

- New Placement Options
 - Supervised Independent Living Placement
 - Payment can go directly to youth
 - Site Approval Form to ensure basic health and safety
 - Readiness Checklist to assist youth and SW
 - THP-Plus Foster Care
- New Rules/Expectations for Existing Placements
 - Shared Living Agreement
 - New licensing/approval standards

Unique Aspects of AB 12 –Re-Entry Provisions

- Goals for re-entry
 - ❑ Allow youth to opt-out of extended foster care at any time before they turn 21
 - ❑ No limit on number of exits and re-entries
 - ❑ No obligations on the youth to meet with social worker, attend hearings, or do anything else related to extended foster care during an opt-out period
- Accomplished through **Voluntary Re-Entry Agreement**

For More Information

California Fostering Connections website
includes stakeholder reports and
implementation details:

www.cafosteringconnections.org

