

What you can do

- **Create a youth run prevention plan:** Develop a plan with the youth, caregiver, and anyone else working with the youth (i.e. mental health counselor, school counselor, IL provider, etc.). It should identify what interventions are needed to help break the behavior cycle that leads to running, when applicable. The run prevention plan should help support the youth and could include regular check-ins by the youth with caregivers throughout the day. The check-in gives the youth the opportunity to process what he or she is feeling that would cause him or her to run.
- **Provide targeted interventions to help reduce the reasons for youth running:** Some causes of running and interventions could be:
 - ➔ If the youth runs to see friends, work with the caregiver to increase activities and time they have with their friends or look to see if any of the friend's family the youth is running to can be a suitable placement.
 - ➔ If a youth runs to see his or her biological family, assess safety issues and, if possible, place with the family or increase family visits. A youth (with help from attorney) may choose to pursue reinstatement of parental rights.
 - ➔ If the youth runs to take drugs, complete the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN-SS) form and/or refer him or her for a substance abuse assessment, and treatment if recommended.
 - ➔ If the youth is struggling at school, look for increased educational supports.
 - ➔ Ensure youth's Independent Living Skills Plan is in line with the needs and wishes of the youth and an ILS Provider is involved in the case.
 - ➔ Review current placement and youth's lack of engagement. Work with the youth and caregiver to alleviate issues and if not possible, look at other more suitable placement options.
- **Let youth have a voice and choice:** It's important that a youth feels a sense of empowerment. Allow youth to express their opinions and whenever, possible make decisions regarding his or her life. Be flexible and increase responsibilities when appropriate. Help devise solutions to identified barriers.
- **Provide sense of purpose and movement:** Incorporate the youth's stated goals in his or her case plan. Provide support and the help needed to achieve their goals.
- **Openness regarding case information:** Share all appropriate information to help build trust and a sense of control.
- **Transition planning with specific goals for youth:** Help youth plan beyond dependency.
- **Safety Plan:** Youth may not feel safe so develop a safety plan with the youth. Provide the youth with numbers to call to find local places to stay and access to food such as shelters, Crisis Residential Centers, Hope Programs (see Resource Information For Youth Who Are at Risk To Run) if he or she runs.
- **Work with caregivers to:**
 - ➔ **Provide a sense of normalcy:** Foster youth should be treated the same as biological children. An example is including foster youth in family vacations and gatherings.
 - ➔ **Support a sense of belonging and safety:** Include foster youth in all family activities. Have clear house rules that apply to all children in the home. Promote an environment of caring and support.
 - ➔ **Provide meaningful activities and opportunities:** Helping a youth gain skills needed for the future shows that the caregivers are invested in their life and what they want to achieve.
 - ➔ **Set clear limits:** Teens need guidance; however, they can be involved in setting rules and consequences. Consequences should be consistent and related to the behavior.