

14 & 15 Year Olds
WESTMORELAND COUNTY CHILDRENS BUREAU LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM FOR
YOUNGER YOUTH
DESCRIPTION

Mission:

The Westmoreland County Life Skills Program for Younger Youth (WCCB LSPYY) engages youth who are 14 or 15 years old and in agency care and custody, in a coordinated effort to improve their successes and permanent connections, as they prepare to become responsible and productive citizens.

Purpose:

The WCCB LSPYY program's purpose is to assist eligible 14 and 15 year olds in identifying their needs, developing various skills, tools, resources, and personal enrichment to help the younger youth prepare to become productive successful adults and for future independence.

Eligibility:

The WCCB LSPYY serves youth ages 14 or 15 who meet the following criteria:

- Be in out-of-home placement (with WCCB) on or after age 14 up until 16th birthday (at which time the youth would transfer to the Independent Living Program); AND
- Have been adjudicated dependent; or
- Have been dually adjudicated dependent AND delinquent; or
- Have been adjudicated delinquent with SHARED CASE-MANAGEMENT responsibility between the WCCB and Juvenile Probation.

Youth must be in agency custody to work with WCCB LSPYY program. Youth who are discharged from agency custody after age 14, but prior to their 16th birthday are not eligible for WCCB LSPYY during time they are not in agency custody, and will not be eligible for WCCB IL unless they meet WCCB IL eligibility in the future. There is no aftercare program offered to youth who are discharged prior to their 16th birthday. The LSPYY program is voluntary and requires youth willingness to participate and work toward goals. If the younger youth is not willing to participate, the LSPYY staff will be available to assist with case planning for a successful transition to adulthood, as long as the agency caseworker invites the SW to CPP meetings.

Referral Procedure:

The caseworker that is assigned to a younger youth, who meets the eligibility criteria, shall refer the youth by completing the LSPYY referral form, and submitting it to the IL/LSPYY Coordinator, along with any documents requested on the form.

Once a referral is received and the case is assigned, Social Workers will have three months to submit an approved IL Plan to the Caseworker. It will be up to the Caseworker to monitor the youth's progress on those goals. Social Workers will check in with the youth individually every 6 months to update the IL plans. Group sessions and social activities will be offered as often as is feasible due to the limited staff availability.

All documentation for LSPYY services will be input into the CAPS system once the service has been completed so it can be filed in the youth's case record. LSPYY Social Workers will **NOT** submit court summaries to the caseworkers. If a youth is not interested in participation, the IL Social Worker will request this in writing from the youth.

Services Available to Youth:

The LSPYY Services team can assist eligible youth in the following areas:

- Needs Assessment
- Goal Development
- Exploration of Permanent Connections
- Life Skills/Risk Prevention Training
- Career Exploration
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Information about gathering Transition Documents
- Information about Community Resources
- Self-Advocacy and Time Management
- Information on and Planning for a Successful Transition to Adulthood

Most LSPYY services will be offered to the youth in a group setting instead of individually due to limited availability of staff.

Life Skills Training:

Life Skills Classes are voluntary and offered to all LSPYY eligible youth. The classes will be offered a few times a year and are on a first come first served basis for sign ups, due to the limited availability of the LSPYY staff. Information is offered through presentations, lessons, worksheets, activities, guest speakers, and community involvement depending on the topic.

Youth Residing Outside Of Westmoreland County:

While a youth is in the custody of the Westmoreland County Children's Bureau it is WCCB's responsibility to offer LSPYY services to the youth. If it is more convenient for the youth to attend a closer county's life skills group sessions and the other county is in agreement with that, WCCB LSPYY can still provide stipend payments (if available) in a way that makes sense according to how the other county runs their Groups.

Stipends:

As an incentive for the younger youth to participate in the program, stipends can be offered for attendance at LSPYY groups. This is dependent upon availability of funds, IL/LSPYY Coordinator approval, and as long as expectations, including behavior expectations, are met. WCCB reserves the right to refuse payment for any reason.

**Westmoreland County Children's Bureau
Independent Living Program Expectations for Conduct**

I understand that during my participation in the WCCB IL Program:

1. I will be respectful to Independent Living Social Workers (as well as other agency workers), other IL participants, and the public.
2. I will follow the rules set forth for group and/or other community activities and will act appropriately for the setting at which an activity is occurring.
3. I will not engage in sexual activity during an IL function or activity.
4. I will not use profanity or derogatory language when participating in IL functions, activities, or one-on-one instruction.
5. There is zero tolerance for fighting or physical aggression or violence. You will be asked to leave and may be discharged from the program all-together.
6. I will not demand things from my IL Social Worker, but can ask for assistance respectfully.
7. I will help myself, using the support of my IL Social Worker.
8. I will be held accountable for my actions during IL activities and I am aware that my caseworker and placement facility as well as other appropriate people will be notified of my behavior.
9. I am participating in a voluntary program and if my conduct does not meet the above expectations, I may be discharged from the IL program at the discretion of the IL Coordinator.

Signature

Date

Life Skills Program for Younger Youth Acknowledgement Page

My signature below indicates that the Westmoreland County Children’s Bureau Independent Living program has been explained to me and a copy of the packet has been provided to me. In addition, I understand that I am eligible for Independent Living services from my 16th birthday through my 21st birthday. I also understand that any financial assistance is only awarded when funds are available and I have met the requirements for that funding. I am also acknowledging that I have been made aware of my right to remain in agency custody after the age of 18 if I meet criteria and that re-entry has been explained to me.

Youth Signature **Date**

Youth Name (please print)

IL Worker **Date**

Ongoing Caseworker **Date**

Resource Parent (if present) **Date**

Other **Date**

Refusal of Life Skills for Younger Youth Services

I, _____, have been informed of my right to participate and receive Independent Living Program Services. I am not interested in participating in these services at this time. I understand that I may participate in the future, up until I turn age 21, by contacting the Westmoreland County Children’s Bureau Independent Living Program and requesting services. The program can be reached at (724) 830-3301.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the availability of IL services.

Youth Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date