



This tips sheet provides an overview of how and why to use the Integrated Supports Star - Transition from Foster Care.

Overview of the Integrated Supports Star Principle

All of us access a variety of supports to achieve our envisioned good life. Historically, planning for the life of a child experiencing foster care has focused mainly on the government-funded or specialized services available and often left out the many assets and resources that could be leveraged to meet a person’s needs. The Integrated Supports Star encourages accessing five main areas of supports:

- **Public or privately funded based on eligibility**
- **Community places and services that are available to anyone**
- **Relationships with family, friends, and others**
- **Day-to-day and adaptive technology**
- **The assets and strengths of the individual and family**

This principle serves as a reminder that everyone accesses a variety of supports to meet their day-to-day needs, support the achievement of long-term or short-term goals, solve problems, or enhance their quality of life.

Who Should Use it and Why?

The Integrated Support Star can be used by anyone (individuals, families, or professionals) for resource mapping, problem-solving for a specific need, or planning next steps. It can be used to explore current needs, identify gaps, or plan how to access supports for the future. The Integrated Supports Star can be used by anyone to guide their thinking. This specific star is designed to help you with planning for transition from foster care. Each section is divided into “now” to list supports you currently have, and “future” to consider needed supports moving forward.

Important Things to Remember about the Integrated Supports Star

- The Integrated Supports Star helps organize and generate ideas. This can be done using the actual tool or just remembering the five points of the star during planning and problem-solving.
- The Star can be used for making day-to-day decisions or for planning for the future. It can also help as a guide for beginning conversations about new ideas or hard to talk about topics. It can help you as you think about supports you need for a successful transition from foster care.
- There is no wrong way to get started or wrong place to put your ideas. It is designed to expand ideas and to explore how to leverage and connect the different types of support.
- Completing the Star simply for the sake of completing the tool should never be the goal. The tool is designed to help you have interactive conversations and visually organize thoughts and ideas.
- Be mindful that any conversation about someone’s life or future is very personal. It is important to keep in mind the diversity of your own experiences, situations, and reactions when planning.





Suggested Steps for How to Use the Integrated Supports Star

Decide the Purpose

The Integrated Supports Star can be used to explore many different situations. Decide if you are mapping resources or using it to work on a specific goal or situation and then use the center part of the Star to write that purpose. If you are problem-solving, put the specific problem or goal. If you are mapping current or future supports, write your name or the date. If you are using it to plan supports for transitioning from foster care, you can write that in the middle.

Explore Each Part of the Star

During this step, you are exploring more about your your life and your plans for the future and what supports you have, are currently using, or could use that might help to achieve your goal or solve a problem. You can use it to think about the supports you have or might need to have a successful transition from foster care. The Star sections are divided so you can list the supports and resources you have now as well as additional supports you want or need moving forward. Use the Star on the front of the Tips Sheet to guide you through each of the 5 sections of the star. You might not think of everything on your first try. It can be helpful to put it down and come back later to add more supports or resources as you think of them.

On-going Use of the Star

The Integrated Supports Star is designed to be used over and over again. It can be repeated for each situation or problem that needs to be addressed. The completed Stars can be used at meetings to add new goals or delete things that have been accomplished. It is designed to become a problem-solving, planning, or progress tracking process, not a tool to be completed and put into a file. You might find that the more you use the Integrated Supports Star, you no longer need the tool in front of you, as it just becomes the way you think and process when planning and solutions-finding.

John's Integrated Supports Star

Example: John is a 17-year-old who lives with a foster family. He has been living with this foster family for 2 years and he has a younger brother who is living with a different foster family 2-hours away. As he transitions from foster care, John wants to make sure he stays in contact with his brother and can visit him more often. John also has a biological aunt who lives nearby and has stayed in touch with him over the years. John doesn't know yet if he wants to stay in contact with his current foster family or not. John uses the star to explore resources he can leverage to have a successful transition and to have a closer relationship with his younger brother.

