

TURNING DREAMS INTO DEGREES

A training to support foster youth into
postsecondary education



Skill Building Activity

The below student vignette highlights common challenges that foster youth experience as they try to prepare for college. Read through the short description and then work with your group to strategize ways to respond to this particular student.

Student Vignette – Part 1

Kimberly is 16 years old and has almost completed the 10th grade. Kimberly entered the foster care system at the age of 11 and is a ward of the court living with a resource family. She has been to three high schools in the past two years. Given this, she is already behind in credits. She attends classes daily and gets along well with her teachers, but does not have any friendships with her peers. She has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for a learning disability and also suffers from an anxiety disorder. She has a 1.80 GPA. When you ask her what her career goals are, she says that she wants to work with animals, however, when you ask her if she wants to go to college and pursue a higher education she says, “I hate school, I don’t want to go to college, I just want to work with animals.”

Discussion Questions

- Which college pathway might be a good fit for Kimberly?
 - What strategies could be used to help encourage and motivate Kimberly into postsecondary education?
 - What resources can be leveraged to help Kimberly graduate from high school and attend postsecondary education?
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Student Vignette – Part 2

It is now the Spring semester of Kimberly’s senior year. After implementing various strategies, you successfully motivated Kimberly to pursue an associate’s degree at her local community college, however, Kimberly expresses many fears and concerns about attending college. These fears have been increasing her anxiety making it difficult to focus in class and complete assignments. In addition, she will be the first in her family to attend college and is an undocumented student originally from El Salvador.

Discussion Questions

- What steps should Kimberly take to apply to community college, including financial aid?
- Which benefits and programs is she eligible for at the community college?
- What steps can you take to help connect Kimberly to various college resources to help ensure a smooth transition into college?