



Youth Services Framework



**Bureau of Youth Services
Department of Children and Families**

VISION

YOUTH THRIVE

Youth Driven Accountable

PRINCIPLES

RIGHT SERVICE
AT THE RIGHT TIME

Accessible

Relationship Based

Evidence-Informed

Trauma-Informed

Culturally Responsible

OUTCOMES

EDUCATION

Every youth has a high school diploma or is on track to receive a high school diploma and has the support to pursue and complete post-secondary education, training, and employment.

EMPLOYMENT

All youth have had at least one paid job opportunity before they turn 18 years old.

Through training and employment opportunities, all youth have obtained the skills needed for employment that pays a living wage with benefits and a career path.

HOUSING

All youth are in safe, stable and affordable housing and have access to a range of housing options.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

CONNECTIONS

Youth are connected to supportive adults and to their community.

WELL-BEING

Youth have the opportunity and support for their well-being in its many forms, including social and emotional, mental, intellectual, and physical.



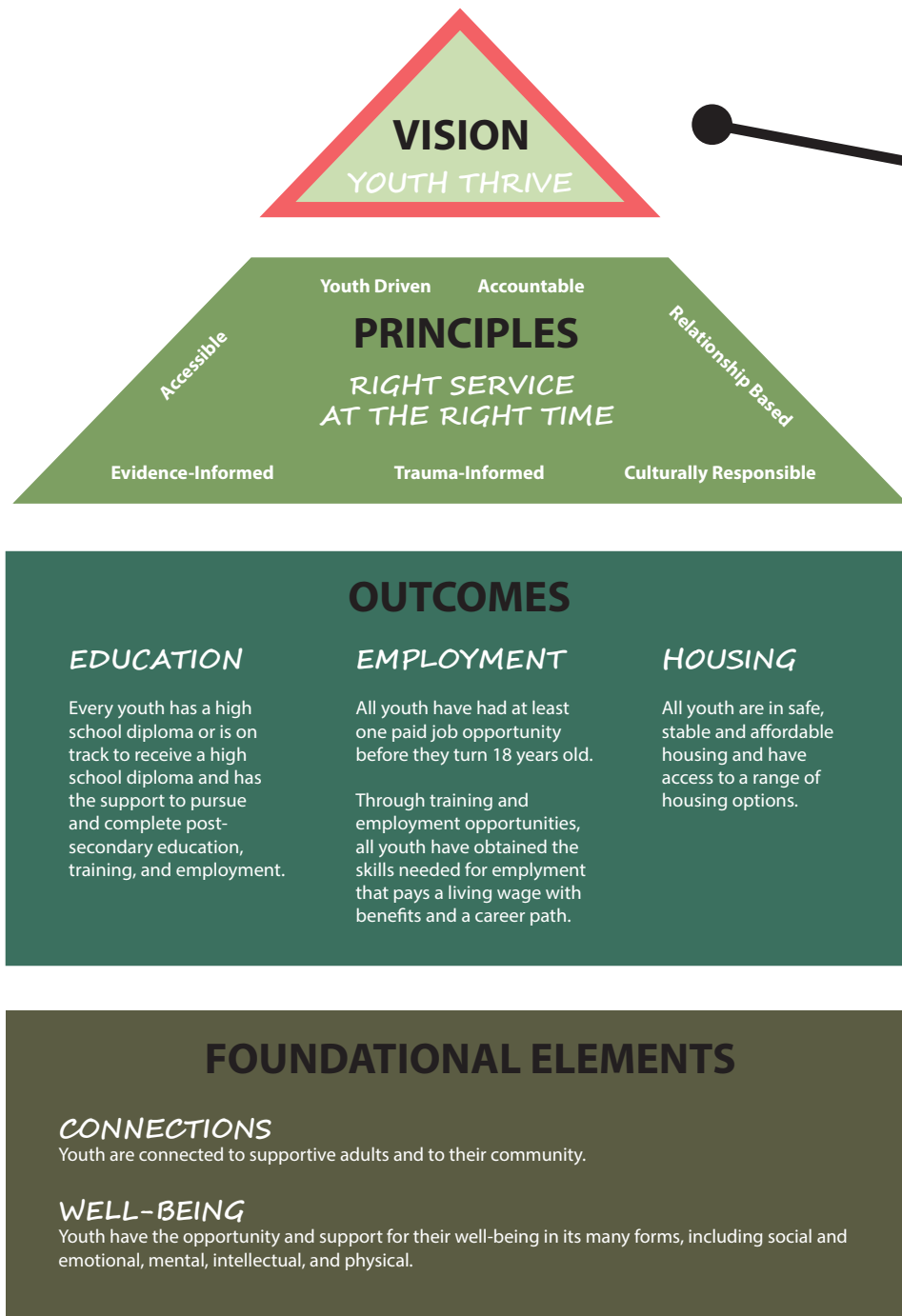
The Framework

The Framework establishes a unifying vision, principles, foundational elements, and outcomes to guide the work of the Bureau of Youth Services (BYS) and its partners.

Guided by the overarching vision and embodying the principles, BYB and its partners can work together to provide all youth the foundational elements they need to achieve positive outcomes.

Under this framework, no matter which system “door” a youth enters, a coordinated and comprehensive response is available to provide the support needed to fulfill the youth-driven vision that ***“all youth have the tools to thrive in adulthood.”***





Discussions with current and former foster youth led to the articulation of the BYS youth-driven vision: ***“all youth have the tools to thrive in adulthood.”***

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Vision

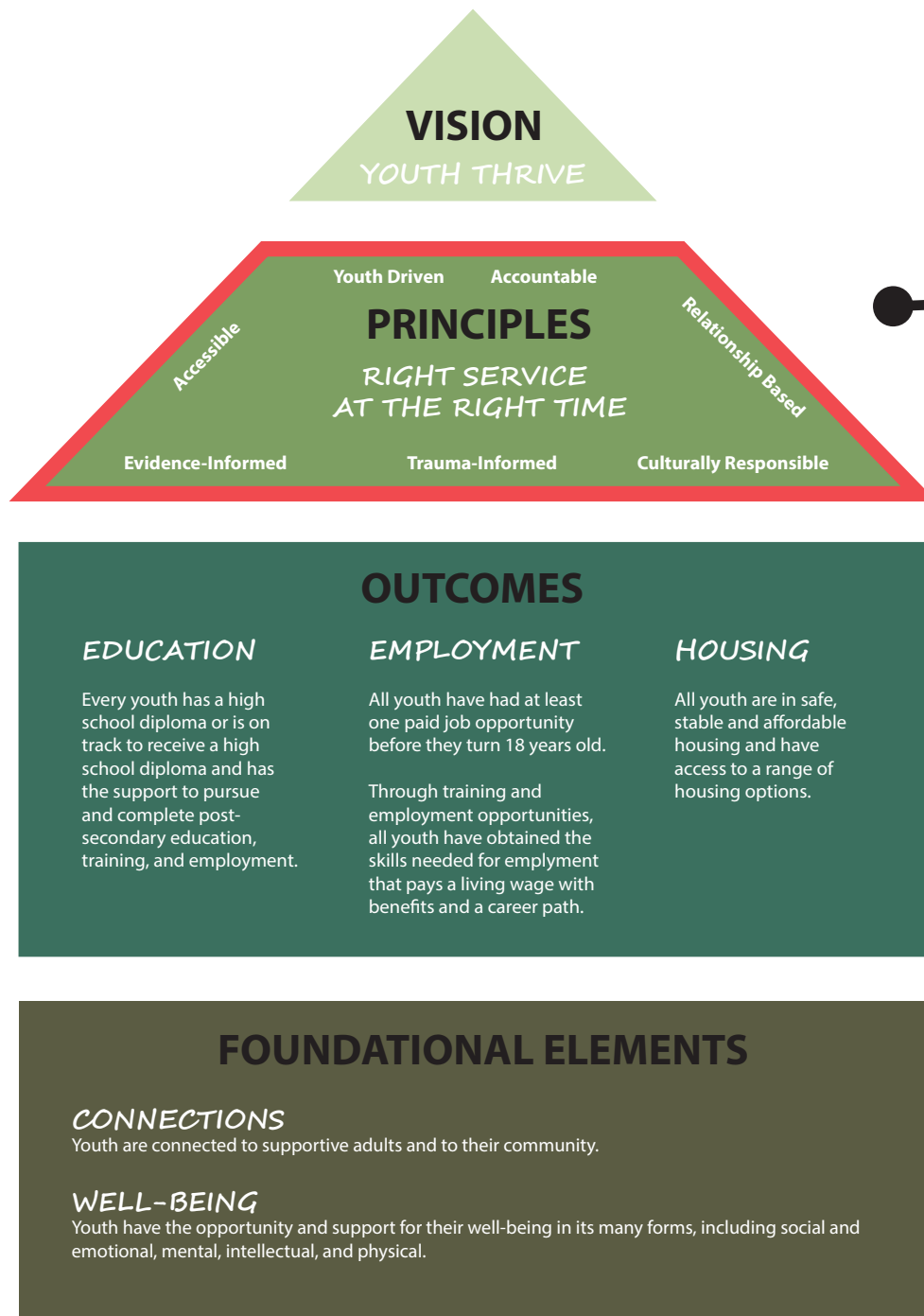
Each element of this vision can be explained further:

“All youth” – All youth in, at-risk-of, and formerly in the child welfare or youth justice systems, as well as homeless youth, runaway youth, and youth who have fallen through the cracks of the service system. The general focus is on youth ages 12-21, but this range is not fixed.

“Tools” – The knowledge and skills that young people need in order to become healthy and productive adults. This is viewed in the context of positive youth development, focusing on self-advocacy, gaining competencies, and building on strengths.

“Thrive” – Youth are served in a way that builds on strengths, creates self-efficacy, and moves them toward the goals that they have chosen for themselves. This includes celebrating the unique interests and talents of each individual, and encouraging connections to caring adults. The opportunity to thrive includes meaningful work and is accessible in the context of safe relationships, community, and home environments.

“In adulthood” – Research in brain development suggests that the transition to adult-level cognitive, emotional, and behavior functions occurs over time, is influenced by trauma, and varies for each individual. Services are provided within this context and with the understanding that there is no bright line between childhood and adulthood.



The core principle is to provide *“the right service at the right time.”* The approach to serving youth includes careful assessment of individual youth strengths and needs in order to effectively target services, and is driven by the most pressing needs of the youth first.

“The Right Service at the Right Time.”

Principles

The following principles serve the core principle of providing **“the right service at the right time”**:

“Youth-Driven” – Youth define their own success and services are provided with recognition of their strengths and how to help them achieve their goals. Youth are the drivers of change and are empowered to make decisions with the understanding that they are the experts on their needs.

“Relationship-Based” – Engagement with youth is essential to achieving positive outcomes. Services are provided in the context of respectful, trusting, and empowering relationships, and in a way that reaches and engages all youth, including those who are hardest to serve. Engagement of family and/or other individuals who support youths’ positive development must also be part of the approach to serving youth.

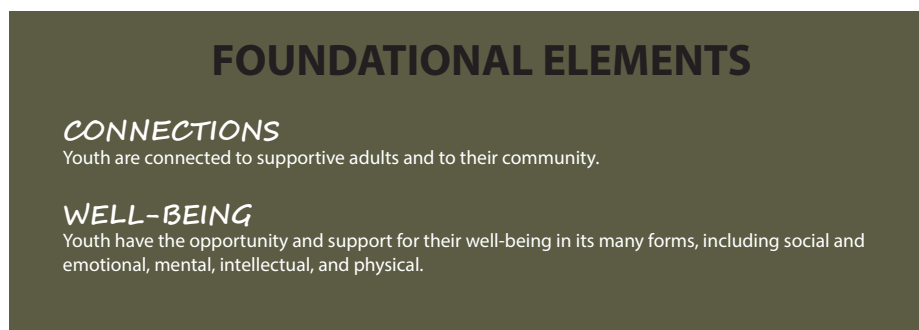
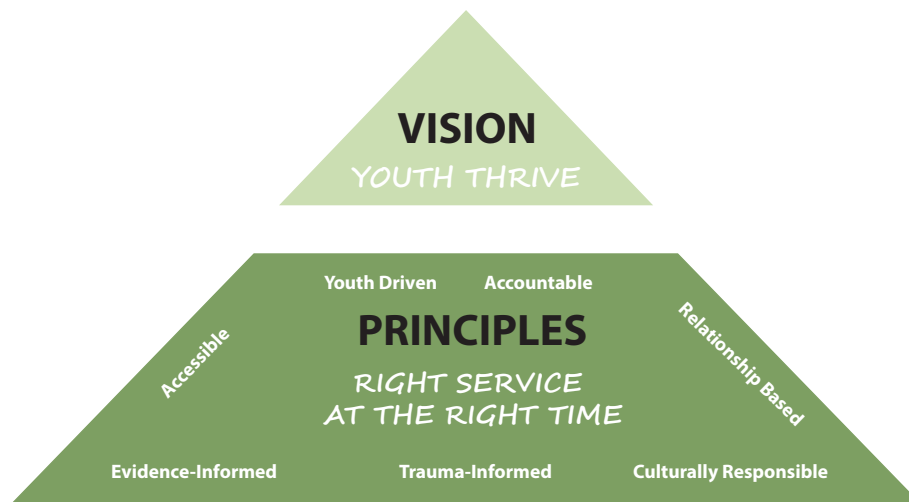
“Accountable” – Services are provided with the understanding that part of growing up is making mistakes and accepting the consequences. Youth are given the opportunity to repair harm and rebuild relationships when their mistakes affect others. Those providing services hold themselves accountable for youth engagement and outcomes.

“Accessible” – Services are easily accessible with minimum requirements for entry, and are prioritized to youth with the greatest needs. Services are provided with a range of treatment and support that is individualized, flexible, and portable.

“Evidence-Informed” – Approaches and methods used to provide services are based in research that suggests they are effective in achieving the desired outcomes.

“Trauma-Informed” – Services are provided with respect for the complex trauma histories of youth and understanding of the impact of trauma. Services support youth to heal, build resilience, and avoid re-traumatization.

“Culturally Responsible” – Youth are served with fairness and equity and within the context of their identity, family, community, tribe, history, culture, and traditions.



Education

Every youth has a high school diploma or is on track to receive a high school diploma and has the support to pursue and complete postsecondary education, training and employment.

Youth have access to educational opportunities that support high school graduation and align with their interests and abilities. School stability is a high priority, and youth are supported to explore, pursue, and complete a broad range of employment and/or post-secondary options.

Employment

All youth have had at least one paid job opportunity before they turn 18 years old.

Through training and employment opportunities, all youth have obtained the skills needed for employment that pays a living wage with benefits and a career path.

Youth have early exposure to a range of career options, information about educational requirements for achieving career goals, and opportunities to gain work experience in areas matching their interests and abilities.

Development of employment goals is a youth-driven, adult-supported process in which youth create and cultivate their own unique and information-based visions for employment success.



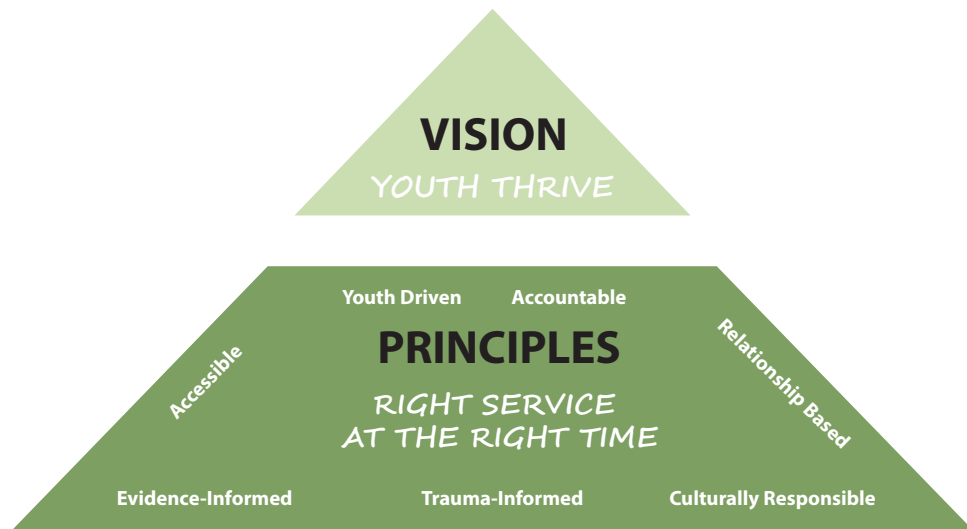
Outcomes

Housing

All youth are in safe, stable and affordable housing and have access to a range of housing options.

Safe, stable, and affordable housing provides the necessary base for positive outcomes in the other areas of education and employment, in addition to meeting the basic need for shelter.

Youth have access to a range of housing options to respond appropriately to their broad range of needs as they transition to independence. All youth have access to permanent housing without preconditions, and with individualized and client-driven supports.



Connections and **well-being** provide the foundation for a young person’s development.

Increased investments in connections and well-being for youth will lay the foundation for youth to thrive, and will result in more positive education, employment, and housing outcomes.

Connections

Youth are connected to supportive adults and to their community.

Connections to Supportive Adults: Connections to caring and reliable adults lead to secure attachments and positive social bonds. Youth need supportive adult connections that are long-lasting and exist independently of formal systems. These supportive adults may be family (as defined by the youth) or other individuals who support youths' positive development.

Community Connections: Meaningful involvement with community, school, or society helps youth develop positive relationships and affiliations within their community and a sense of belonging and importance. This supports their growth into healthy and responsible adult citizens and the well-being of society as a whole.

Foundational Elements

Well-Being

Youth have the opportunity and support for their well-being in its many forms, including social and emotional, mental, intellectual, and physical.

Social and Emotional Development

Youth have the opportunity and support to cultivate a strong and resilient self-identity and nurturing relationships and to feel hopeful about life and the future.

Mental Wellness

Youth have the opportunity and support to maximize their mental health and wellness in ways that are non-stigmatizing, healthy, and allow them to thrive in adulthood.

Intellectual Potential

Youth have the opportunity and support to maximize their intellectual ability and functioning.

Physical Health

Youth have the opportunity and support to maximize physical health, strength, and functioning.

Research

Many valuable resources have informed the development of this Framework. Below is a short list of key resources.

Barbara H. Langford and Sue Badeau, *Connected by 25: A Plan for Investing in the Social, Emotional, and Physical Well-Being of Older Youth in Foster Care*, Youth Transition Funders Group (2013).

Jeffrey A. Butts, Gordon Bazemore and Aundra Saa Meroe, *Positive Youth Justice: Framing Justice Interventions Using the Concepts of Positive Youth Development*, Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2010).

Mark E. Courtney, Amy Dworsky, Jennifer Hook, Adam Brown, Colleen Cary, Kara Love, Vanessa Vorhies, JoAnn S. Lee, Melissa Raap, Gretchen Ruth Cusick, Thomas Keller, Judy Havlicek, Alfred Perez, Sherri Terao, and Noel Bost, *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth*, Chapin Hall (2011).

Stephen Gaetz, *A Safe and Decent Place to Live: Towards a Housing First Framework for Youth*, Canadian Homelessness Research Network (2014).