



Academic Success Program

Webinar 1 Overview



FC2S's Academic Success Program is a volunteer coaching program designed to build confidence, motivation and responsible behavior in college and technical training students from foster care, helping them progress towards their academic and career goals by providing **support, encouragement and structure**



Support and Encouragement

is given through regular telephone calls, text messages, emails, Facebook posts and Skype calls.



- ▶ Foster youth find it hard to trust adults
- ▶ Face to face relationships are sometimes threatening
- ▶ A compassionate person emailing and /or calling may be the kind of relationship they can handle
- ▶ Distance does not mean 'Distant'



*ASP is **NOT** a face-to-face coaching program. If this is what you are looking for, you might want to try*

Big Brothers/Big Sisters

www.bbbs.org



Structure

The success of our program is centered on clear communication of academic strategies for success with our students



- ▶ Clear guidelines are important as our students typically have attended too many schools , missed too many fundamentals, and know too few college graduates as acquaintances.



Coaching Is Focused On Academic Progress. However....

Coaches and students will talk about many other things including personal, work and financial issues. At times you may feel you don't get to discuss academics much at all because the student has other more pressing stresses.



Academic Success Program

Mechanics of the Program in Brief



*Coaches are **NOT** therapists, counselors, psychologists, doctors or lawyers. If any issue is more than a compassionate, educated adult can help a younger person work through, it must immediately be brought to the attention of ASP staff.*



- ▶ Remember this is a voluntary coaching relationship which can not go beyond the boundaries of personal support for the purpose of improving academic performance.



- ▶ FC2S has contact information for national hotlines and federal and state services, and lists of suggested resources that you as coach or the students themselves can look up in their own communities.
- ▶ If the student is still in care, FC2S staff can speak with their social worker or direct them back to their agency for possible assistance.



Coaches:

- ▶ Watch two introductory training segments (the first of which is this one)
- ▶ Apply on line
- ▶ Interview with an ASP staff member
- ▶ Submit to a background check
- ▶ Watch two additional training sessions
- ▶ Are matched with up to 5 students **either before or shortly after the start of the semester.**



Coaches make a one year commitment to support their students

Coaches are expected to communicate with each of their students at least once a week, which may involve reaching out several times during the course of the week.



It is very important that coaches understand they are making a **COMMITMENT**

The commitment is on the part of the COACH to reach out to the STUDENT. Even if one of their students never responds, they must continue to reach out to that student until a decision is made jointly with FC2S and the student to stop communication.



- ▶ It can be very frustrating to send text message after text message into Never-Never-Land, but even if a student never responds they DO get the messages and are being taught that someone cares even if they are unable or unwilling to answer back.
- ▶ Don't stop, otherwise it reinforces another adult gave up on the student.



▶ FC2S staff is available through email and telephone, with 24 hour access. Staff can brainstorm, offer suggestions and resources, and support coaches as they support their students.



- ▶ Twice monthly, coaches complete an online report summarizing communication with their student(s). At the end of the school year they complete a more extensive evaluation.



- ▶ Coaches are strongly encouraged to participate in monthly scheduled support calls
 - ▶ These calls cover a variety of information geared to students' needs
 - ▶ And are a good opportunity for feedback



- ▶ At the end of every academic year, coaches and students are given the opportunity to “sign on” together for another year.

WE VALUE YOU!



Academic Success Program

**Why it is so important –
the students we serve.**



Every year, FC2S supports some 4500 young people from foster care. They come from every state and from every possible background. They attend community colleges, public and private universities, and technical training programs all across the country. They are as different as they could be, but they have three things in common.



~ 1 ~

They are older adolescents or young adults with all of the endearing and frustrating attributes of their peers. Coaching takes subtlety, creativity and patience!



~ 2 ~

At some point in their childhood, they were taken from their birth families and placed in foster care. No matter what the circumstances, this is a traumatic event.



~ 3 ~

They are all doing their best to succeed in school and independent life, often in very stressful situations.



Other things to keep in mind:

Money is a constant worry for many of them.

Additional big stressors for many of our students are housing, transportation, medical bills, childcare payments, and rent



Sometimes school is the last thing on their mind. Last semester one of our students who had been telling me school was “fine,” suddenly called me in a panic – “I’ve got two Fs and two Cs right now, and I don’t know how it happened.”



He'd been so worried about finding a job that he missed several classes to go to interviews.

He didn't think missing a few classes would matter, and boy was he proven wrong.



We talked about communicating with his professors and arranging interviews during non-class times, and in the end, well, he didn't make straight As but he did pass all of his classes. And, I think, he learned a good life lesson.



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**They need you, but
what is it, actually,
that they need?**



4/12/17 Text Message Conversation between Beth and Shanelle

- ▶ **Beth:** [9:56 a.m.] I am thinking of you Shanelle.
- ▶ **Shanelle:** [9:57 a.m.] Awww really?
- ▶ **Beth:** [9:58 a.m.] Of course. I want you to be HAPPY and doing well in school.
- ▶ **Shanelle:** [9:59 a.m.] That made my morning.
- ▶ **Beth:** [9:59 a.m.] <3
- ▶ **Shanelle:** [10:01 a.m.] U know u show me that u care more than the people i thought cared.

Sometimes, this is all it takes.



Compassion

Someone who cares
about them



A nonjudgmental attitude

Someone who likes them just for
who they are



**Someone to talk things
through with**

**Someone with a cool head and a
clear mind**



Occasional practical advice

Someone who's "been there-done that," or has the wisdom or experience to figure it out



Someone to help them stay on track

Someone who remembers when they have a big test or paper due, and who is proud of their accomplishments



Laughter

What is better than
someone to laugh
with?



Constancy
Constancy
Constancy

If it had to be boiled down to one
word, it would be this:

Constancy



If you are this someone

▶ Who will offer support and encouragement on a consistent basis – no matter what, please continue to the next training segment. Thank you!

