**Guiding Questions for Youth**

*The following questions are useful when addressing the issue of permanency with youth. When preparing to have this conversation with a child/youth, pick and choose the questions from this list that best fit the situation.*

* “I want to make sure that when you leave foster care you’ll know you have someone to count on.”
* “Who are the teens you know or have heard about who have left foster care? How would you describe their situations? What do they say they need now?”
* “My guess is that you will wish you had someone you can really count on at some point later in your life. Can you think of some times that you might wish you had someone to be there for you?”
* “Who in your family was affectionate to you?”
* “Who in your family recognized you as special?”
* “Was/is there anyone in your family that makes you feel safe?”
* “Who cared for you when your parents could not? Who paid attention to you, looked out for you, cared about what happened to you?”
* “With whom have you shared holidays and/or special occasions?”
* “Who do you like? Feel good about? Enjoy being with? Admire? Look up to? Want to be like someday?”
* “Who believes in you? Stands by you? Compliments or praises you? Appreciates you?”
* “Who can you count on? Who would you call if you were in trouble? Wanted to share good news? Bad news?”
* “Who would listen when you call? Give advice?”
* “Who are the three people in your life with whom you have had the best relationship?”
* “Would it help to review where you have lived in the past? To help you recall important adults in your life?
* “Who, from the past or present, do you want to stay connected to? How? Why?”
* “Should he or she be part of your planning team?”
* “What are you feeling about this process? What memories, fears, anxieties is it stirring up?”
* “What do you want to accomplish in the next year? Five years?”
* “What will your Life Book look like ten years from now?”
* “Who do you see yourself still connected to?”
* “What does ‘family’ look like for you? How do you define ‘family’?”

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* “Who is in your family? How many?”
* “Where do they live? How far away or close?”
* “How often do you see them? When, where, and why?”
* “Do you live with them? Now, ever? When? Why? What role do the people around you play in helping you accomplish your goals now?”
* “What do/don’t you need/want from them? What do/don’t they need/want from you?”
* “How will you feel if you try to find such a relationship and make it work? How will your life be better, more fun, more hopeful, more satisfying, more secure?”
* “How will you feel if you don’t try to find such a relationship and you don’t try to make it work? Will your life be worse, less fun, less hopeful, less satisfying, less secure?”

*Adapted from Casey Family Services/The Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice, 2005. (Permission required.)*