COLLEGE COACH MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Educate Tomorrow College Coach replication manual. The purpose of this guide is to provide detailed direction for startup and daily operation of a College Coach program in your organization. This guide will provide you, the program administrator, step-by-step guidance in the most essential aspects of the College Coach program- selecting a College Coach, identification of students, goals and objectives, strategic planning, meetings/sessions and resources.

At 18, most youth age out of the foster care system and enter adulthood without positive and healthy relationships with adults, little to no resources to achieve their academic pursuits, poor life/social skills and no real sense of direction. Educate Tomorrow is the frontrunner in taking a holistic approach to providing mentorship and support services to youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

Educate Tomorrow couples mentorship with life skills, academics with employment readiness preparation, case management with social support. With this wrap-around approach, all Educate Tomorrow students have the opportunity to progress beyond life in the foster care system, and can realize their potential by becoming sound members of society.

APPROACH

We believe in individualized coaching over a long period of time focused on improving academics, economic stability, access to stable and affordable housing and physical/emotional well-being.

WHAT IS A COLLEGE COACH?

A College Coach is a trained professional whose sole function is to provide support services to students who have transitioned from the foster care system, including students placed in relative/non-relative homes, adopted students. The role of the College Coach is to assist eligible students in their transition into post-secondary institutions, from enrollment to completion. College Coaches liaise with Community Based Care organizations, social service agencies, district K-12 school board members and institutions of higher education to encourage access, enrollment support, and academic assistance for students.

College Coaching consists of ongoing one-on-one appointments, life skills workshops and group activities. Sessions typically range from 45 minutes to an hour, while workshops and group activities may last up to 2 hours. Students will meet with the assigned College Coach to discuss matters pertinent to educational success, including but not limited to the following:
- Academic Planning and workforce preparation
- Life skills development
- Goal Setting
- Financial literacy
- Community Resources

WHY COLLEGE COACHES?

Educate Tomorrow began in 2003 as a traditional mentoring program, with mentors facilitating more than 25,000 volunteer hours towards youths' pursuits of their college dreams. Providing information about academic paths for teenagers transitioning out of the foster care system can be a grueling process. Unlike most young teens, those who are raised in the foster care system often lack family support, making the transition to higher education a seemingly daunting task. Youth must contend with a foster care system that is complex and consists of private organizations, government agencies, and the public school system.

The supportive programming that Educate Tomorrow provides was designed to meet the unique needs of transitioning youth. Many teens will age out of the foster care system without a clear path to post-secondary institutions. Educate Tomorrow College Coaches make considerable efforts to fill this gap by working collectively with the youth, case management agencies to provide a streamlined path to enter college and eliminate obstacles that may impede the student's progress toward attaining a college degree. The role of the College Coach is to help former foster youth succeed in post-secondary institutions to directly impact and increase graduation rates.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

The College Coach should be prepared to work with students who have aged out of the dependency system, otherwise referred to as the foster care system. It is important for the College Coach to understand that this can include students who lived in traditional foster homes (with a foster parent, siblings, etc.), a foster care group home facility, a relative care home (with relatives), non-relative care, or even an adoptive home.

Students who age out of the foster care system may be entitled to certain benefits, such as a tuition exemption, monthly living stipend, state regulated benefits such as food assistance and health insurance.

Students who utilize a Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) tuition exemption can quickly be identified by student support services personnel members. These are typically employees who work in the financial aid office, admissions office, advisement office and the cashier's office. Academic advisors, counselors and even faculty members will likely refer students to your program, as well.

Once potential students are identified, it is critical for the College Coach to initiate contact. Many students are reluctant to self-identify or seek out services for assistance. Face-to-face contact is best. However, in instances when multiple students need to be contacted, blind-copy email blasts may also be effective.

Community outreach events offer a great opportunity to meet potential students in a discreet, non-threatening setting. Contacting your local community based care (CBC) agency or local school district to learn of outreach events that target foster and former foster youth will allow the College Coach to meet with students, identify current and future education goals and share information about campus-based programming.

Once the College Coach begins to build a caseload and meet with students, student referrals will begin to occur. As students begin to understand the role of the College Coach and establish trust, engaged students will refer their peers. Student involvement will begin to increase.

Student identification can also occur after students have been enrolled in an institution of higher education. Utilizing your campus research department will be crucial in identifying students, collecting enrollment information, retention trends, completion rates and other pertinent data. This information will assist in demonstrating achieved deliverables, program successes which can be directly tied to opportunities for funding.

COLLEGE COACH PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the College Coach program should coincide with those of the institution or organization where the College Coach is assigned. Synonymous objectives will help to ensure program success and improved overall outcomes for students as well as the organization.

The goals of the College Coach Program focuses on providing student support at the post-secondary level in three critical areas of student success:

1. Transition to post-secondary institutions
2. Retention
3. Completion

APPOINTMENT PREP

1. Gather student information
2. Determine the best time and place to meet
3. Help the student to identify needs (academic, social, employment)
4. Prepare solutions, resources to address student needs
5. Confirm the appoint 24 hours prior

INITIAL MEETING

1. Establish rapport, set student at ease
2. Explain the role of the College Coach
3. Complete necessary docs
4. Revisit needs in detail
5. Discuss solutions (to include proactive steps for the future)
6. Set goals and objectives
7. Discuss upcoming events and workshops
8. Schedule follow-up meeting

FOLLOW-UP MEETING

1. Revisit prior needs
2. Discuss proactive planning strategies
3. Discuss new needs
4. Discuss upcoming events and workshops
5. Establish meeting schedule

CONTACTING STUDENTS AND POTENTIAL STUDENTS

EMAIL

Email students using their assigned school email account whenever possible.

When exchanging emails with an individual student, you may discuss FERPA related information, to include grades, financial aid, courses, etc.

GROUP EMAIL

Send group email messages to students' assigned school email accounts whenever possible.

When exchanging emails with groups of students, you should **not** include any FERPA protected information, to include names of students when sending group email messages.

Group messages should be sent in blind copy format **only**, to ensure full discretion.

TELEPHONE MESSAGES

When leaving telephone messages, full discretion should be used.

Avoid using words that could disclose personal information.

Simply state your name, where you are calling from and ask the student to return your call.

TEXT MESSAGING

When sending text messages to students, you may discuss FERPA related information only after you are certain you are communicating directly with the student.

SOCIAL MEDIA

When reaching out to students on social media platforms, full discretion should be used. Avoid using words that could disclose personal information.

COMMON COACHING TOPICS/SCENARIOS

Anna, a high school senior, plans to attend college immediately after graduation. She didn't think she would pass all of her courses, so she hasn't taken any steps to apply to any colleges or universities. Her case manager calls you to assist Anna with the application and registration process.

How will you assist? _____

Albert was adopted at the age of 11. On his 18th birthday his adoptive parents encouraged him to move out of their home on his own. Albert is 20 years old now, and living with friends. He's never completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and needs the aid to pay for his books and school supplies.

How will you assist? _____

Cathy recently aged out of the group home she's lived in for the past year. She is finally reunited with her young daughter, and sees school as her way out of the "system." Cathy decides to go to school fulltime, but has not support system and she cannot afford childcare.

How will you assist? _____

Stanley lives in a transitional apartment for youth who aged out of foster care. Stanley shares that he's been eating chips and cookies for the past week. He will get his next paycheck in 5 days and until then, has no money for groceries. He used to receive food stamps, but lost the benefit when he failed to complete the recertification application.

How will you assist? _____

Yvonne is a former foster youth who is attending college for the first time. She qualifies for a tuition exemption, which pay for her tuition. Since she will receive the full Pell grant, Yvonne wants to plan ahead and learn how she should budget to avoid spending her refund foolishly.

How will you assist? _____

EARLY ALERT TRACKING VIA EXCEL SPREADSHEET

Tracking the frequency and duration of interactions with students will provide the College Coach with information that can be used to establish patterns that lead to success. Students who engage in school related activities typically demonstrate higher academic progress than their peers who do not. A tracking system can also help to quickly identify students who are not utilizing the resources provided by the College Coach. Once the College Coach identifies the students who do not actively engage, proactive steps can be taken to provide support and guidance.

Name	Student ID	Phone	Date	Total Time	Notes
Adrienne H.	1254876	555-1235	5/6/2015	45 min	Tutoring session
Robert J.	6589745	555-9854	7/19/2015	2 hours	Applied for jobs online
Theresa X.	2564877	555-4723	1/16/2015	15 min	Updated resume
Reginald C.	3658974	555-6573	3/02/2015	1.5 hours	Met with mentor
Lisa T.	5842136	555-2145	4/22/2015	1 hour	Tutoring session
Estella S.	1247894	555-7365	2/12/2015	30 min	Homework assistance
James T.	9852334	555-8214	11/06/2015	4 hours	Volunteered in office

MIAMI DADE COLLEGE OFFICES AND DEPARTMENTS

ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATION

The office of Admissions and Registration receives applications for admissions, residency declaration forms and is responsible to processing DCF tuition exemption forms for students.

FINANCIAL AID

The Financial Aid office at Miami Dade College assists students in pursuing and reaching their educational goals by providing access to various federal, state, institutional and private donor funding. In support of the College's mission and vision, the Financial Aid office is committed to providing quality service and reliable consumer information, by educating students, their families and the community about the Financial Aid process.

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT AND CAREER SERVICES

The Advisement & Career Services Department provides students with a quality, learning-centered experience that enables them to establish and fulfill their educational and career goals. By facilitating an effective decision making process regarding educational, transfer and career goals, advisors promote appropriate course selection and assist students with referrals to internal and external resources and support services. Academic and Career Advisors meet with students every semester to assist with selecting a major, course selection, transfer institution information and help match students' academic pursuits with career opportunities.

ACCESS SERVICES

By providing a variety of services that address a spectrum of disabilities, the ACCESS department works to ensure equal access and opportunity throughout the college experience. Note takers, assistive technologies, interpreters and more are available for all students who qualify.

SINGLE STOP

Miami Dade College (MDC) partnered with Single Stop USA, a non-profit organization, to provide MDC students with a one stop shop to get access to government and community benefits. Students are screened for multiple benefit eligibility, receive assistance in applying for those benefits, and receive follow-up assistance, if needed. All of Single Stop services are available at no cost to the student.

MIAMI DADE COLLEGE KEY CONTACTS

College President

Campus Presidents

Dean of Academic Affairs

Dean of Students

Department Chairpersons

Student Services Directors

Faculty

Staff

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Once you and your colleagues meet with students, you will be ready to complete this questionnaire. Your answers will help guide your future work with your students and provide insight that can be used to develop campus-wide policies and procedures related to them.

1. List at least five major student performance concerns that you have discovered among the population of students you identified by completing Task 2 of the Foster Student Contact follow-up activities?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____

2. List five measurable student performance goals that you have set as a result of your analysis of disaggregated student performance data on the target Student and the individual meetings that you and your colleagues have conducted with these Student?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____

3. What type of support do you need from the administration, your Campus, and the community to help you reach the student performance goals you have identified?
   a. District: _____
   b. Campus: _____
   c. Community: _____

4. List at least three major actions that you will take to help your campus reach the goals you listed above?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____

5. What procedures will you put into place at your Campus to increase awareness of the educational needs of dependent Student?

6. How will you make sure that the educational needs of the dependent Students on your Campus are met on an ongoing basis?

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
  - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
  - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
  - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
  - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
  - Accrediting organizations;
  - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
  - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
  - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

FERPA QUESTIONS FROM PARENTS

Can parents view a child's post-secondary education record?

FERPA generally prohibits the nonconsensual disclosure of information derived from education records, except in certain specified circumstances. One of these exceptions permits the nonconsensual disclosure of information derived from education records to that student's parent if the student is a dependent student. Further, neither the age of the student nor the parent's status as custodial parent is relevant to determining whether disclosure of information from the education records of eligible students to a parent without written consent is permissible under FERPA. If a student is claimed as a dependent by either parent for tax purposes, then either parent may have access under this provision.

Can stepparents, grandparents, and other caregivers be considered parents under FERPA?

In some cases, a stepparent may be considered a "parent" under FERPA if the stepparent is present on a day-to-day basis with the natural parent and child and the other parent is absent from that home. Conversely, a stepparent who is not present on a day-to-day basis in the home of the child does not have rights under FERPA with respect to the child's education records. A grandparent or other caregiver who is acting in the absence of the parent(s) may also be considered a "parent" under FERPA.

What is an Education Record?

Education records are records that are directly related to a student and that are maintained by an educational agency or institution or a party acting for or on behalf of the agency or institution. These records include but are not limited to grades, transcripts, class lists, student course schedules, health records (at the K-12 level), student financial information (at the postsecondary level), and student discipline files. The information may be recorded in any way, including, but not limited to, handwriting, print, computer media, videotape, audiotape, film, microfilm, microfiche, and e-mail.

May a postsecondary institution disclose financial aid records without written consent?

FERPA permits institutions to disclose, without consent, personally identifiable information from students' education records when the disclosure is in connection with a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid.   Disclosures under this exception to consent may be made if the information is necessary for such purposes as to: (a) determine eligibility for the aid; (b) determine the amount of the aid; (c) determine the conditions for the aid; or (d) enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.

FERPA QUESTIONS FROM CASE MANAGERS

What has changed in FERPA that affects children in foster care?

USA creates a new exception under FERPA that makes it easier for schools to release a child's education records to child welfare agencies without the prior written consent of the parents. (This does not mean that child welfare agencies should leave out parents. In fact, good practice dictates that child welfare agencies should make efforts to keep parents informed and involved at all times.)

USA eliminates the requirement that education agencies notify parents before education records are released pursuant to a court order to any individual, when the parent is a party to the case where that order was issued.

When and with whom can the child welfare agency share the education records?

While the new exception does facilitate information sharing with child welfare agencies, it still protects the confidentiality of students' records. Child welfare agencies can only disclose education records obtained through this exception to "an individual or entity engaged in addressing the student's education needs" who is authorized by the child welfare agency to receive the records, and consistent with other state confidentiality laws. Of course, the child welfare agency may also share the records with any individual who meets another FERPA exception.

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

The College Coach serves as the single point of contact for students, faculty, staff and administrators for all matters related to students and prospective students who have transitioned from the foster care system and students who were determined to be homeless/unaccompanied while in high school. The College Coach provides support and guidance to ensure students have the best opportunity to achieve their educational goals. The College Coach is responsible for the engagement and progression of students and plays a pivotal role in promoting student success to ensure they reach key benchmarks throughout their academic program.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assesses strengths and weaknesses in students' academic, career, and personal development by identifying factors that enhance or prevent academic progress, examines alternatives based on changing goals, academic progress or personal situation, guide students to establish realistic academic and career goals.
- Monitors academic and social progress of students by assessing current and potential needs or identifying problem areas including.
- Liaises with community partners to identify potential students
- Links students to appropriate benefits and services, both academic and non-academic
- Works collaboratively with relevant discipline and student services personnel to ensure seamless transition through degree completion
- Develops and delivers seminars, orientations, workshops, training, or other activities to address needs specific to underrepresented youth including housing, employment, workforce readiness, academic support, financial responsibility.
- Communicates with students systematically, frequently, and intentionally through multiple methods, including but not limited to face-to-face meetings, e-mail, telephone, text messages, and social media
- Provides information, analyzes data, generates written reports regarding caseload
- Collaborates with faculty and other college personnel to identify creative solutions to enhance the students' overall educational experience
- Completes all necessary professional development
- Performs other duties as assigned

SKILLS / REQUIREMENTS

- Master's degree in psychology, counseling, education or other related discipline
- All educational degrees must be from a regionally accredited institution
- Knowledge of dependency system, including but not limited to case management resources and benefits for students
- Ability to identify relevant community resources and external support services and connect students as appropriate

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION (continued)

- Ability to leverage technology to facilitate the management of student caseload and possess strong communication skills, both written and oral
- Ability to demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills in order to interact with diverse constituents and to provide high quality support and customer service to students
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with academic departments, faculty, staff, students, and the local community; ability to effectively present information one-on-one and in small groups
- Ability to work well in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural environment with students, faculty and staff

COLLEGE COACH RESOURCE GUIDE

Florida Department of Children and Families

Florida Dependency Case Flowchart

Local Community Based Care Lead Agency (CBC)

      Our Kids- Miami-Dade, Monroe Counties CBC

      Childnet- Broward County CBC

Local School Homeless Liaison

      Miami-Dade County Public Schools

ABC News
http://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/story?id=2005245

Foster Youth I 3
http://fyi3.com/fyi3/index.cfm

National Foster Parent Association
http://www.nfpainc.org/