An Evaluation of a Community Life Skills Program for Adolescents in Foster Care

By

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Briana Lynch

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Chairperson: Vincent Francisco, Ph. D.

_____

Florence DiGennaro Reed, Ph. D.

_____

Jan Sheldon, Ph. D.

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The thesis committee for Briana Lynch certifies that this is the
approved version of the following thesis:

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_____

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Abstract

Research indicates that adolescents who spent time in the foster care system are ill-prepared for independent living at the age of 18 and often experience negative outcomes due to this. The ability to live independently, after spending time in the foster care system, is partly dependent on one's capacity to acquire and engage in adequate performance of various life skills. Some of these skills include budgeting, locating appropriate housing, and selecting higher education options, and should all be taught while still in foster care. The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a life skills course provided by a community organization, StopGap Inc., by assessing skill acquisition of adolescents on various life skills. The participants included adolescents in the Kansas foster care system who are between the ages of 13 and 17. A pilot study was conducted using a natural comparison and control group design. Data were collected by direct observation, with pre-and post-assessment comparisons used to determine skill acquisition. The results revealed an increased acquisition of life skill across all participants, but no conclusion can be drawn from this data. Study one was conducted using a multiple baseline probe design across participants and skills to show better control of the intervention effects. This study extends the literature by assessing the use of behavioral approaches to improving performance of life skills among adolescents within the child welfare system.

Keywords: behavior analysis, foster care, adolescents, life skills, skill acquisition

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Introduction

Overview of Foster Care

  United States. The Children's Bureau oversees six program areas to promote safe and stable families; Foster Care, Adoption, Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Welfare Services, Guardianship, and Tribes. According to the Children's Bureau, on September 30, 2016, there were an estimated 437,465 children and youth residing in foster care. When a child protection agency deems the home of a biological parent unfit for a child to live, local placement agencies place the child in the foster care system and search for the "next best" home. When a child is removed from their home, the four most common out of home placements are Foster Homes (45%), Kinship homes (32%), Institutions (7%), and Group Homes (5%) (Children's Bureau, AFCARS Report, 2016). Typically, younger children ages 0-9 are placed in a relative's home or foster homes that aim to mimic family-like settings and account for 80% of all foster care adoptions (Children's Bureau, AFCARS Report, 2016). For adolescents who enter the system, typically 13-17 years of age, options are more limited. Generally, but not always, foster homes will not take in an adolescent, thus, if relative placements are not available, these older youth are placed in group homes.

  In 2016, adolescents accounted for 25% (108,943) of all children in foster care (Children's Bureau, AFCARS Report, 2016). Many of these adolescents do not return home to their biological families and are emancipated from the system at age 18. Approximately 20,000 adolescents are emancipated each year and transition from state custody to living on their own (Children's Bureau, AFCARS Reports, 2011-2016). Although the 20,000 individuals emancipated annually only account for 8% of all annual discharges from the system, the Children's Bureau found that 77.5% of children who enter the system at 13 or older are emancipated from the system (Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data, 2015).

  Kansas. According to the Children's Bureau, on September 30, 2016, there were an estimated 7,302 children and youth residing in Kansas foster care placements. Adolescents accounted for 28.6% (or 1,924) of the total number of children and youth in Kansas foster care (Kansas DCF Children in Out of

Home Placement by Age Grouping, FY2016). In Kansas, 86.2% of adolescents who come into care at 13 years of age or older are emancipated from the system, which is 5.9% higher than the national average (80.3%) ranking Kansas at 33 out of 52 states, which includes District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, (lower is better) for this measure (Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data, 2016).

Federal and State Policies and Available Resources

       Federal Law. Adolescents who are placed in out-of-home care often have limited resources and family support to aid in the transition to adulthood thus, a variety of services are available through federal law to assist in this transition. Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, which authorizes foster care programs, was amended in 1986 to include an Independent Living Program (ILP) for youth in foster care up to the age of 18 to aid in the transition from foster care to self-sustainability. In 1999, the program was extended as the Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program (CFCIP) to increase funding resources and extend Medicaid coverage to young adults who aged out of the foster care system until the age of 21 (Foster Care Independence Act of 1999). In 2008, Title IV-E was amended again to extend the age of all Independent Living services eligibility from 18 to 21 (Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, 2008). Currently, CFCIP services are available to youth, up to the age of 21, who are currently in foster care or have previously been in foster care. Participation in CFCIP services are voluntary and youth are "personally responsible for living up to their part of the program" (Child Welfare Policy Manual, 2018).

       Independent Living Program (ILP). One of the main services through the CFCIP is the Education and Training Voucher (ETV). This allows states to provide youth up to $5,000 per year for higher education. Depending on the state, other monetary independent living services are provided. Other services provided through the state of Kansas are the Medical Card Extension Program, Independent Living Tuition Waver, Vehicle Repair and Maintenance, Startup Costs, and Chafee IL Subsidy (Kansas PPS Policy and Procedure Manual, 2017). All of these services are eligible to young adults ages 16- 21 who either; (a) aged out of the foster care system, (b) are current foster youth who are likely to remain in state custody until the age of 18, or (c) former foster youth who were in the system after their 15th

birthday but have left foster care for adoption or kinship guardianship before they turned 18. According to the Kansas PPS Policy and Procedure Manual (2017), independent living staff should be teaching necessary skills, such as daily living skills and managing financial resources, when opportunities arise. Unfortunately, there is no information on how independent living staff teach these skills, if these services are occurring, or if youth acquire the skills taught to them.

     Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment. One method commonly used to assess preparedness of youth and areas for improvement before exiting the foster care system is the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) (Kansas DCF Policy and Procedures Manual, 2017; New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual, 2011; Utah's Division of Child and Family Services Practice Guidelines, 2018; Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Practices and Procedures Guide, 2018). This is a self-report assessment that measures preparedness of skills on a Likert scale. The seven categories included are daily living, self-care, relationship and communication, housing and money management, work and study life, career and education planning, and looking forward. Each category includes various statements of specific skills – responses capture how prepared they each youth feels about each skill. However, there are no data available on the number of youth in Kansas who have completed an ACLSA or evidence to suggest the tool is used to guide intervention or training. Additionally, according to the National Youth in Transition Database in 2011, only 40% of the youth aged 17 who completed the survey reported having an independent living needs assessment done while in care, which could include the ACLSA or other assessment methods. Although Kansas, and many other states, have statements in their policy and procedures manuals that youth 14 and older will complete an Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (or other assessment methods depending on the state), these assessments and life skills training may or may not be occurring (Child Welfare Policy Manual, 2018).

     Independent Living Services Gap. Courtney, Lee, and Perez (2011) found a lack of life skills services being provided to youth in transition. They interviewed 732 youth across multiple states about the services they have received from 17-21 years of age; which is the age range for eligibility of independent living services provided through federal law. They conducted three waves of in person

interviews asking about services received for assistance with education, employment, financial literacy, housing, and health. A decreasing trend was observed for age and the services provided. At wave 1 (ages 17-18), services being utilized was at 29.7%; at wave 2 (age 19), services being utilized was at 18.7%; and at wave 3 (age 21), services being utilized was at 12.2%.

Reilly (2003) also interviewed youth (N = 100) who have transitioned out of foster care in Nevada about independent living services received while in care and through their transition. It was reported that many youth did receive various services, such as job seeking and educational planning, but few reported receiving concrete assistance on life skills, and 53% reported that they did not feel prepared to live on their own. Reilly found a correlation between a higher number of services received while in care and fewer interactions with the criminal justice system as well as a better sense of preparedness to live independently. Thus, he concluded that the number of services received before leaving care and areas of training before leaving care are two of five factors that influences experiences after care. The three other important factors are level of education, number of foster care placements, and extent of individuals social support network.

Inequitable Gap in Outcomes of Youth who Transition out of Foster Care

It has been well documented, in both research studies and through government data collection systems (Department for Children and Families, and National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)), that youth who transition out of foster care experience many poor life outcomes while navigating through life on their own. Youth who were formally in foster care disproportionately experience homelessness (Dworsky & Courtney, 2009; Reilly, 2003), unemployment (George, Bilaver, Lee, Needell, Brookhart, & Jackson, 2002; NYTD, 2013; NYTD, 2015), the lack of a high school diploma (NYTD, 2013; NYTD, 2015), poorer retention and graduation within higher education (Day, Dworsky, Fogarty, & Damashek, 2011; NYTD, 2013; NYTD, 2015), alcohol and drug dependency (White, O'Brien, White, Pecora, & Phillips, 2007), and incarceration (NYTD, 2013; NYTD, 2015) compared to the general population. When compared with youth who shared similar experiences (e.g., poverty, teen parenthood, low educational attainment, etc.), youth who had been in foster care still show disproportionate outcomes

relating to housing – specifically, homelessness, poorer neighborhood quality, and more reliance on public housing assistance (Berzin, Rhodes, & Curtis, 2011).

   National Youth in Transition Database. Starting in 2011, the Children's Bureau created a data collection system, the NYTD, to collect information on youth who were emancipated from the system and track outcomes after care at ages 17, 19, and 21. Each data collection wave has a different number of participants due to various reasons, such as incarceration, inability to locate youth, youth declines to participate, incapacitation, or deceased. Table 1 displays six outcome measures from individuals who took the survey in 2013 and 2015 after exiting the foster care system and general population outcome measures for comparison. These data show youth experience disproportionate outcomes in their adult life after leaving foster care compared to the general United States adult population (See Table 1). Although both employment rates (labeled as financial self-sufficiency in Table 1) and graduation/GED rates increased over time, there is a large gap between those who transitioned out of the foster care system and the general population. One important finding is the percentage of individuals reporting being homeless after leaving foster care: 19% of adolescents reported being homeless in 2013 and 26% reported being homeless in 2015. Collectively, 43% of the individuals who completed all three waves of the survey (5,685) reported being homeless at least once by the age of 21. Three high-risk behaviors measured through the NYTD were incarceration, substance abuse, and motherhood/fatherhood. Prior to exiting the foster care system, 37% of youth who completed the survey at 17 had experienced incarceration, 28% had reported receiving a substance abuse referral or counseling, and 7% reported having children. The rate of homelessness for the U.S. adult population is 1.7 of 1,000; the rate of homelessness for adolescents with experience in foster care is 260 of 1,000 (NYTD, 2015; United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016). The rate of incarceration for the U.S. adult population is nine of 1,000; the rate of incarceration for adolescents with experience in foster care is 200 out of 1,000 (NYTD, 2015; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016). General population statistics for substance abuse and children are not available, thus comparisons cannot be made on these measures.

Table 1

National Youth in Transition Database Outcome and Comparison measures

	Age 19 (2013) N = 7,845	Age 21 (2015) N = 6,985	General Population of adults (18+) in U.S. (2016)
Academic Success (% with high school diploma or GED)	55%	67%	84%
Financial Self-Sufficiency	35% (Full or Part time)	52% (Full or Part time)	94-96%
Homelessness	19% (Previous 2 years)	26% (Previous 2 years)	0.001%
Incarceration	24% (Previous 2 years)	20% (Previous 2 years)	0.008%
Substance Abuse referral or counseling	15% (Previous 2 years)	10% (Previous 2 years)	Not available
Children	12% (Previous 2 years)	25% (Previous 2 years)	Not available

Note. Prevalence comparison of six measures for adolescents who exited the foster care system and the United States adult population.

In addition to information gathered from government databases, research studies have also found similar disproportionate outcomes and experiences associated with time spent in foster care as an adolescent. A study by Dworsky & Courtney (2009) showed low rates of academic success and employment and high rates of homelessness among adolescents who were emancipated from the system at age 18, which is similar to other reported findings for these measures. They interviewed 321 individuals from Iowa and Wisconsin who transitioned out of the foster care system within the past two years. Of the total number of individuals in the study, 42 (13.8%) of them had experienced homelessness after discharge from the foster care system. Of the 42 individuals, 22% of them had been homeless three or more times. This study also looked at education outcomes and employment opportunities. Of those interviewed, 184 (57.3%) had a high school diploma and 20 (6.2%) had a GED. It was reported that only 47% of youth who were interviewed were currently employed, with 23% not having worked in the past year at all.

Reilly (2003) assessed outcomes of youth in Nevada who had transitioned out of the system in the past 3 years. Face-to-face interviews and surveys were used to gather information from 100 participants aged 18 through 25 on six measures: 1) Demographic information, Living Arrangements, Education, and Employment, 2) Health and Substance Use, 3) Support Systems, 4) Foster Care Experiences and Legal Issues, 5)Positive Values and Thriving Indicators, and 6) Personal Adjustment. Outcomes for educational attainment showed 31% had completed high school before leaving care at 18; 63% were employed; 17% had an annual income greater than 15,000; and 36% indicated they were homeless (19% reported living on the streets and 18% reported staying in a homeless shelter). Reports on health outcomes showed 55% did not have health insurance, and there had been 70 pregnancies for the 100 participants since leaving care. Reports on legal issues were incredibly high, with 41% having reported time spent in jail. Similar employment and educational attainment outcomes were reported for youth in Michigan who were emancipated from the system (Michigan Foster Care Alumni Study Technical Report, 2012) and similar homelessness, incarceration, and employment outcomes were reported for youth in Texas who were emancipated from the system (Texas Foster Care Alumni Study Technical Report, 2012).

Studies have also shown that children in the child welfare system display higher behavioral and emotional problems and lower involvement in school activities than children who have not experienced the child welfare system (Kortenkamp & Ehrle, 2002). Kortenkamp and Ehrle (2002) found that youth ages 12-17 who were involved with the child welfare system (i.e., foster care or other branches of child welfare) were suspended or expelled from school in the past year at a rate 2.5 times higher than children in biological parental care (32% compared to 13%). They also compared the percentage of children who have received mental health services within the past year. Results showed that 25% of children aged 3-17 involved with the child welfare system were receiving mental health services compared to 6% of children aged 3-17 in parent care; a rate 4 times greater.

Kansas Gap. In the state of Kansas, only 45% of youth who were emancipated from the system during the 2015-2016 school year graduated with a high school diploma compared to 85% of all youth in Kansas.

Figure 1. National and State High School Graduation Rate Trends

Figure 1. Displays high school graduation rate trends at the national and state level and compares to high school graduation rate among adolescents in Kansas foster care.

In 2016, 795 young adults aged 17 to 23 received at least one independent living service through the state of Kansas (Kansas Department for Children and Families Independent Living Program Annual Report, 2016). It is estimated that 4,989 young adults ages 17 to 23 were eligible for these services in 2016 (Kansas Department for Children and Families Removals, Exits, and Out of Home 2011-2016 Reports; Kansas Department for Children and Families Length of Stay and Reason for Ending Out of Home Placement 2011-2016 Reports; Children's Bureau AFCARS Report, 2016). Thus, only 16% of those eligible in Kansas are being provided and/or are utilizing the services available to them. Independent Living Services are beneficial to have in place, but most of the services available in Kansas are monetary rather than concrete, and do not have the reach needed to address the large gap in behavioral outcomes evident in the literature discussed previously.

Life Skills Repertoire

An individual's behavioral repertoire is an accumulation of their genetic make-up, learning history, and experiences. Life skills, such as budgeting, understanding a lease, and establishing credit, are learned behaviors that require teaching, whether it is through practicing the behavior themselves, or

through communication and/or observation of others. These basic life skills are necessary to access opportunities in the community and thrive within society. The 1979 socio-ecological model by Bronfenbrenner provides a framework for understanding how context influences behavior. Youth in the foster care system, specifically those who reside in group home placements, lack access to family resources as well as stable home and school environments, which is where many life skills are learned. Thus, opportunities to learn life skills through sectors in the organizational and community levels is imperative for this population.

Community Solution. Few adolescents in foster care are receiving assessments and intervention that will benefit their skill repertoire, but there is evidence that demonstrates community-based life skills programs have successful outcomes while also providing resources and support while navigating the transition out of foster care (Rashid, 2004). Rashid (2004) evaluated a community based transitional living program for homeless young adults, of which 23 were formerly in the foster care system and met the eligibility criteria for the study. The supervised practice living program provided housing and life skills training to youth for up to 18 months. This study looked at permanent product as a means of assessment. The most important finding compared hourly wages at exit for youth who participated in an optional employment training, offered at the home, to youth who did not participate in the training. The 13 youth who participated had an average hourly wage of $9.61 at exit compared to an average hourly wage of $7.42 for the 10 youth who did not participate. Results show that direct training affected wage outcomes, which can influence attaining appropriate housing and financial self-sufficiency after exit from the program. These findings also support the notion that training programs provide access to space, resources, and support to learn and practice of life skills.

Mallon (1998) also evaluated a life skills program with 46 males who had aged out of the foster care system in New York City. Assessments were conducted using self-report and interview data, which were gathered at three points in time: intake, exit, and follow up (Range: 1 month – 8 years). The intervention included weekly life skills classes and weekly counseling with a social worker and life skills

coordinator. Although only exit and follow up data were presented, results indicate that most youth demonstrated self-sustainability at discharge and were able to maintain outcomes.

Although research has found an association between transitional life skills services and increased wages and more successful reported outcomes, to date, little empirical research has been conducted to examine causal relationships between life skills training, skill acquisition, and outcomes after care. It is important to understand if individuals who attend life skills classes are demonstrating the ability to perform the skills taught to them and if participation in life skills courses leads to better outcomes.

Behavior Analysis and Child Welfare

Research within child welfare using behavioral methodology is limited. Only eleven studies have been identified in this area that include (a) direct observation or permanent product of a target behavior and (b) behavioral design methodology to examine functional relations. The most common topic being caregiver training (Crosland, Cigales, & Dunlap, 2008; Crosland, Dunlap, & Sager, 2008; DeGarmo et al 2009; Franks, Mata, & Wofford, 2013; Kessler & Greene, 1999; Nese, Anderson, Ruppert, &Fisher, 2011; VanCamp, Vollmer, Goh, Whitehouse, Reyes, Montgomery, & Borrero, 2008). Van Camp et al., (2008) utilized task analyses (TA) to assess the effect of a behavioral parent-training program on skill acquisition of foster parents and caregivers. Both individual and group data were presented and analyzed in this study. Multiple baseline across skills; A large-scale analysis of pre-course and post-course assessments. Lectures, modeling, role-plays, and feedback were used to teach each of the nine skills. The results showed increases in parenting skills across consecutive classes and across individual participants when the intervention was introduced. Participants were also offered the opportunity to practice skills in the home with their children and a behavior analyst. Results showed that skills generalized across settings. A similar study, conducted in Alabama, examined the effects of a behavioral parent training on placement outcomes with their biological parents (Franks, Mata, Wofford, Briggs, LeBlanc, Carr, Lazarte, 2013). Results showed that biological parents who participated in the behavioral parent-training program had better placement outcomes for their children (i.e. reunification and remaining at home) compared to the control group. Parents were also successful in increasing steps correct on a performance

checklist across the five skills assessed. Two additional child welfare topics behavior analysts have examined include: analyzing running away behavior in adolescents (Clark, Crosland, Geller & 2008; Witherup, Vollmer & 2008) and the use of computerized stimulus preference assessments with kids in foster care (Whitehouse, Vollmer, & Colber, 2014). The expansion of behavior analytic processes, designs and methodology to child welfare programs and practices can positively influence services and outcomes as it has with other topics (e.g. education, organizational behavior management, etc.). Of the limited number of behavioral studies conducted within child welfare, there are zero that use direct observation to evaluate life skills programs of adolescents, either while they are still in foster care or after exiting the system.

Behavioral Skills Training. Behavioral Skills Training (BST) is an evidence-based approach generally used to train human service staff on various behaviors. There is ample evidence to show that BST has been effective at increasing skill ability across a wide variety of behaviors and settings (Howard and DiGennaro Reed, 2014; Thomas et al 2016; Dickson & Vargo, 2017). Although the diversity of people, settings, and behaviors BST has been applied to is large, there has been no application of utilizing BST to increase life skills in adolescents in the foster care system. As described by Parsons (2015), BST has six steps: 1) Describe the target skill, 2) Provide a succinct, written description of the skill, 3) Demonstrate the target skill, 4) Require trainee practice of the target skill, 5) Provide feedback during practice and 6) repeat steps 4 and 5 to mastery.

Conclusion

Not only do the youth in the foster care system face hardships (abuse, neglect, trauma, etc.) prior to entry into the system, evidence shows many youth face homelessness, lack of employment, lack of housing, and general lack of resources and support after foster care (Dworsky & Courtney, 2009; Rashid, 2004; Reilly, 2003). The literature provides a surplus evidence on inequitable life outcomes among youth who transition out of foster care, as well as evidence showing the state-funding life skills programs are not reaching nearly enough youth in care or after care. Although the literature provides correlational data that life skills training, at both state and community levels, is beneficial for youth while in the foster care

system (Rashid, 2004 & Reilly, 2003), there is a lack of data showing youth actually acquire these necessary life skills through the program and what components makes life skills programs effective. Thus, there is opportunity for community-based intervention and evaluation. Taking a preventative approach by not allowing youth placed in group homes to fall through the cracks, gathering behavioral data on the effectiveness of life skills programs, and determining if youth are acquiring the skills being taught to them are the necessary next steps.

      The present studies. The current studies were designed to extend previous research on skills training and assessment in the child welfare system with guardians to adolescents currently in state custody within the foster care system. StopGap Inc. is a non-profit organization that focuses on prevention of negative outcomes by providing opportunities for at-risk youth to learn and practice life skills with the resources and support available while in care. In order to prepare youth for living independently, the course utilizes behavioral skills training as the basis of teaching. This method provides background and specific instructions for each skill, modeling of appropriate behaviors for completing each skill, and provides opportunities to practice and receive feedback. The pilot study assesses skill acquisition of adolescents in the foster care system on various preferred life skills while in the classroom and assesses generalization of those skills to a natural setting within the community. Study one refined the methodology to measure skill acquisition among adolescents in the foster care system on various preferred life skills and conducted pre and post course probe assessments at StopGap Inc. This study will be the first to directly observe skill acquisition of life skills demonstrated by adolescents in the foster care system.

General Methods

Context

      This study was implemented within StopGap Inc., a non-profit organization that emerged in 2008 to provide life skills courses to help prepare youth in the foster care system with the transition from dependence to independence. The 8-week course teaches a variety of life skills including, but not limited to, budgeting, career goals, cooking health meals, establishing and maintaining good credit, reading a

lease, healthy relationships and professional interview attire. Because StopGap Inc. is planning to create a new service, which is a transitional living facility that will provide housing and a life skills program for adolescents aging out of foster care, StopGap Inc. is interested in understanding the effectiveness of their current curriculum and teaching style. This program evaluation will provide details on effective components and elements and will inform possible changes to the curriculum for refining prior to expanding the StopGap Inc. services.

Table 2 reviews the program components, elements, and modes of delivery for the StopGap Inc. life skills course. The program components are strategies for behavior change that were implemented through the life skills course. The program elements describe the intervention tactics the StopGap Inc. life skills course used to bring about behavior change. The mode of delivery is who provided the program elements to the participants.

Table 2

StopGap Inc. Intervention Components, Elements, and Modes of Delivery

Program Components *(Behavior Change Strategies)*	Program Elements	Mode of Delivery
Providing Information & Enhancing Skills	• Powerpoint presentations • Activities in class • StopGap Inc. curriculum • Behavioral Skills training • Community-based organization guest speakers • StopGap Inc. 'In the Community' aspect	• StopGap Inc. Staff • Community Volunteers
Enhancing Support & Resources	• StopGap Inc. Educational Outreach program • Partnerships with community organizations	• StopGap Inc. Staff • Community Volunteers • The Children's Shelter • Douglas County CASA
Monitoring & Feedback	• Technical Assistance • Process Evaluation • Component Analysis	• Community Volunteers

Study Design and Research Questions

In order to understand if the StopGap Inc. course provided effective training to increase skill acquisition, changes in behavior from pre- to post- were assessed in two studies. A comparison group design was conducted in the pilot study. A multiple baseline probe design across participants and skills and a pre-course and post-course assessment for additional youth were conducted in Study 1. The aims of this research were to identify what conditions led to skill improvement outcomes, what improvement could be made to the StopGap Inc. program, and to identify relevant program components and elements of the StopGap Inc. course that were most successful in improving outcomes among participants. Two research questions were examined throughout this study:

1. Did skill acquisition increase from baseline?

2. What components of the teaching method were effective in increasing skill acquisition?

Preference Assessment

In order to identify which skills the youth preferred to focus on for assessment, a comprehensive list of 14 observable skills taught at StopGap Inc. were presented to each youth on a Skill Preference Sheet (Appendix A). For step 1, the participants rated each skill on a Likert scale; "1 meaning they are not comfortable performing this skill", "2 meaning they are somewhat comfortable performing this skill", and "3 meaning they are very comfortable performing this skill". This self-report measure was used to determine skill deficits. Step 2 asked if the youth was interested in working on a certain skill. This step was to determine preference of skills. The final step required each participant to prioritize his or her top 3 skills they were interested in working on that he or she either "did not feel comfortable" or "felt somewhat comfortable performing". The skill preferences varied for each participant, although some did overlap.

IRB Approval

The Institutional Review Board at the University of Kansas approved this study on September 30th, 2017. The full document can be found in Appendix B.

Pilot Study

Participants & Recruitment

This study recruited female youth ages 13-18 who are currently in the Kansas foster care system, and are either residing in Douglas County or their case is based out of Douglas County. Information was sent out to foster care agencies (e.g., The Children's Shelter, Kaw Valley Center) and community groups (e.g., Douglas County CASA) that work with individuals in foster care to recruit participants for this study. Recruitment of participants started in September and continued throughout the duration of the StopGap Inc. course, which ended December 5th, 2017. Youth in foster care move frequently; thus, an ongoing recruitment process was chosen in order to provide the opportunity to participate to as many youth as possible. Six participants engaged in some aspects of the study, but only 3 participants completed all three necessary phases. Two participants moved out of the county, and a third participant no longer wanted to continue, thus these participants were removed from the study. Only data for the participants who completed all three phases are presented in this study.

All participant information reflects data collected at the start of the study. Myra is a 14-year-old female who has been in foster care for 1 year, has experienced three short term placements, has been to three different schools, and has resided in a foster home and a relative placement. Ava is a 13-year-old female who has been in foster care for 10 months, has experienced six short term placements and countless temporary overnight stays at various locations, has been to three different schools, and has resided in institutions and group homes. April is a 14-year-old female who has been in foster care for 1 year and 3 months, has experienced six short-term placements and countless temporary overnight stays at various locations, has been to three different schools, and has resided in foster homes and group homes.

Intervention

Setting. Participants attended the StopGap Inc. Course as the intervention component. All topics were covered throughout the 8-week course. Attendance varied by day and by participant. Courses were held in a classroom at a local church on Tuesday and Thursday from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Assessments

were conducted in the StopGap Inc. classroom and in various community locations (e.g., library, coffee shop, etc.). Details on community assessments are described in subsequent sections.

Format. Throughout the course, 21 observable and measureable skills were taught, along with other various skills incorporated into activities and lectures that were not observable and measureable for this study. Descriptions of the skills measured in this study are located in the individualized skill prioritization section. Classes were led by the executive director of StopGap Inc. but also included a variety of guest speakers and assistance from volunteers. The course format included a combination of PowerPoint lecture slides, modeling, activities, and opportunities to practice skills and receive feedback.

Assessment Procedures

Preferred Skills. The three participants each choose their three most preferred skills to work on for this study. Seven different skills were chosen, with two skills overlapping across participants: budgeting, job applications, cooking healthy meals, career goals, grocery preparation, higher education options, and scholarships and financial aid. The first skill, *budgeting*, consisted of the participants completing a worksheet on income, savings, and expenses. The second skill, *job applications,* consisted of the participant completing each section of a sample job application. The third skill, *cooking health meals,* consisted of the participant prepping the ingredients, and cooking each correctly. The fourth skill, *career goals,* consisted of the participants writing down three possible career options, two steps needed to reach their goal, and one possible barrier that may affect them reaching that goal. The fifth skill, *grocery preparation,* consisted of the participant writing down meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner for the week along with a grocery list of all ingredients needed for the week based on their meal schedule. The sixth skill, *higher education options,* consisted of the participant searching for two possible colleges, universities, or trade schools they may be interested in, and two possible majors or specialty areas that interest them at those schools. Lastly, the seventh skill, *financial aid and scholarships,* consisted of the participant searching for two scholarships at their chosen higher education options that they were eligible for.

Pre and Post Assessments. A meeting was scheduled with individual participants to directly observe the youth performing their prioritized skills. These meetings took place at various community locations (e.g., public library, coffee shops) and materials varied depending on the skill being performed by the youth. The pre-course assessment dates and times varied for each participant, but were completed prior to the individual's chosen skills being taught in class. Immediately before starting the assessment, basic instructions on what will be occurring during the meeting were read to each participant. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions at this time to clarify their role in the assessment. During the assessments, the primary researcher read the skill outcome to the participant and directly observed the participant performing the skill. The participant was asked to complete as much of the skill as possible and was told that the primary researcher was available to answer questions when needed. One skill was recorded as 'Mastered' during the pre-assessment, resulting in participant 1 only having two skills for future assessments. An identical assessment procedure was conducted after completion of the skills in the StopGap Inc. course. As in the pre-assessment, community locations, dates, and times varied for each participant.

StopGap Inc. Assessment. Each participant was directly observed during the StopGap Inc. course when practicing her prioritized skills. Opportunities to ask questions and receive feedback on their skill were provided throughout the assessments. Dates that data were collected varied for each participant depending on what skill was being taught during class on a specific day.

Measurement

Performance of each skill was scored based on two measures: the verbal behavior and non-verbal behavior of the participant, and was categorized as one of three capacity levels: 'Mastered', 'In Progress', or 'Learning Opportunity' (See Appendix C). The behavioral definition created for 'Mastered' is: Excelled in performance of the skill which was characterized by asking 1 or 2 questions and completed all necessary information independently. The behavioral definition for 'In Progress' is: performed aspects of the skill but needed assistance which was characterized by asking 3-5 questions and completing half of the information independently. The behavioral definition for 'Learning Opportunity' is: not able to

perform skill, which was characterized by asking six or more questions and completed less than half of the information needed independently. Each skill was directly observed and based on the participant's verbal and non-verbal behavior during performance of each skill, one of the three capacity levels was scored on a corresponding data sheet. Observers also recorded details of the questions and steps in performance as supplementary information. Questions asked by the participants were answered during observation sessions. Occasionally, the observers prompted steps if the participant was off task. The number of prompts were not recorded during this study.

   Interobserver Agreement (IOA). IOA was calculated for the two community assessments as well as the StopGap Inc. assessment, which was observed during class. For each youth and skill, a second research assistant independently scored 66% of the pre-assessments, 66% of the in-class StopGap Inc. assessments, and 44% of the post-assessments. Total count IOA was calculated for each of the three phases by dividing the total number of agreements by the total number of agreements plus disagreements and multiplying the results by 100. Agreement was scored if both observers scored the same skill level (learning opportunity, in progress, mastered) on the assessment. IOA for the pre-assessment was 100%, IOA for the in-class StopGap Inc. assessment was 100%, and IOA for the post-assessment was 50%.

<div align="center">

Results

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   Table 3 displays the skill level recorded at each of the three phases for participants and their corresponding skills. Although Myra 'Mastered' budgeting during baseline, data were collected throughout the duration of the study. The StopGap Inc. capacity for two skills shows "Not Applicable" (N/A). Ava was absent on the day Grocery Preparation was taught; April was not offered the opportunity to practice or receive feedback for Financial Aid and Scholarships during the corresponding StopGap Inc. class. Each skill has a corresponding number, which is used to display results in Figure 2.

Table 3

Pilot Study Skill Preferences and Capacity Outcomes

Participant	Skill	Corresponding Skill #	Baseline Capacity	StopGap Inc. Capacity	Post Assessment Capacity
Myra	Budgeting	1	M	M	M
	Job Applications	2	LO	IP	IP
	Cooking Healthy Meals	3	LO	IP	IP
Ava	Grocery Preparation	4	IP	N/A	M
	Budgeting	5	LO	LO	IP
	Career Goals	6	LO	IP	LO
April	Financial Aid & Scholarships	7	LO	N/A	LO
	Higher Education Options	8	LO	IP	IP
	Career Goals	9	IP	IP	IP

Note. Skill level recorded for each participant and skill at all three phases. "LO" refers to Learning Opportunity, "IP" refers to In Progress, "M" refers to Mastered, and "N/A" refers to Not Applicable.

Figure 2 displays skill acquisition results for Myra, Ava, and April. The data reflect changes in skill level from pre-assessment to post-assessment. Results varied across participant and across skills. An increase in skill level occurred for four of the seven skills in which the corresponding participant received the intervention. An increase in level also occurred for skill four, but the corresponding participant did not receive the intervention due to an absence from class. Skill seven, financial aid and scholarship, shows there was no level change from pre to post.

Figure 2. Individual Pre-course and Post-course Outcomes for Pilot Study

Figure 2. Compares the change in capacity level from pre-course assessments to post-course assessments across skills.

Figures 2 and 3 display the change in capacity level at the individual level (Figure 2) and the group level (Figure 3) for pre-course and post-course assessments. Corresponding skill numbers are displayed in Table 3. The mean skill capacity for the pre-course assessments is 1.3 (range = 1-3), whereas the mean skill capacity for the post assessments increased to 1.8 (range= 1-3). Although seven of the nine skills did not reach the mastered capacity at level three, the data show the StopGap Inc. course was successful in increasing skill capacity at the group level.

Figure 3. Group Pre-course and Post-course Outcome Distribution and Means for Pilot Study

Figure 3. Shows the distribution and mean of skill capacity at the pre-course and post-course assessments.

Discussion

The present data do not reveal any clear trend; capacity increased for some skills with the intervention, capacity increased without receiving an interv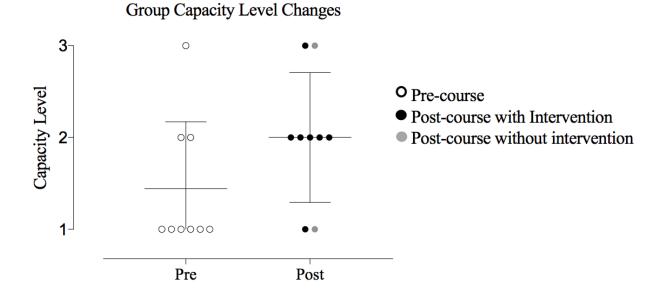ention for one skill, and capacity did not increase for two skills that received the intervention. Results of Myra (Skills 1, 2, and 3) seem relatively consistent – the two preferred skills that were not mastered at baseline did increase one capacity level at the post-assessment. Results for Ava (skills 4, 5, and 6) show the most inconsistency in the data. Skill 3 increased in capacity from baseline, but the participant did not receive an intervention on this skill. This could be due to a variety of reasons such as, allowing questions during the assessments creating unintentional teaching moments, a difference in motivating operations (MO) during the two assessments or contextual factors when the assessments were conducted. The difference in difficulty and length of the life skills also could have influenced the variability in acquisition. One could argue career goals, and financial aid and scholarships (Skills 5, 6, and 8) are more difficult and lengthy than grocery preparation (Skill 4). A different argument could be made for financial aid and scholarship (Skill 6) which is the lack

of an opportunity to practice and receive feedback on the skill. The StopGap Inc. course follows a loose version of Behavioral Skills Training, which includes description, modeling, practice, and feedback for each skill. For skills with the inability to model and practice, such as establishing and maintaining credit, only description is provided. Due to a lack of time in class, financial aid and scholarship was described and partially modeled, but there was no opportunity to practice or receive feedback.

Based on the method used to collect and analyze the present data, it is hard to interpret acquisition of skills, which teaching methods were most effective in increasing skill acquisition, and the overall effectiveness of the StopGap Inc. life skills course. Results indicate there were increases in skill capacity from pre to post, but there is not enough information to conclude the intervention led to the increase in skill acquisition. Although the current study failed to answer either research question, six important findings provide aid in the creation of the first Study and lend insights on conducting research with adolescents in the foster care system. First, conducting a preference assessment with youth was beneficial for two reasons: (1) it provides youth a voice in the assessment process and (2) it provides information on skills youth are more interested in learning which allows for tailoring of the course based on learning history and preference. Second, conducting the pre and post assessments in community locations allowed the participants to be engaged in the community, which is not always accessible to them due to living in a group home and moving placements often, and practice skills in different environments. This aspect of the study is also a limitation because distractions occurred in the natural environment, which could have influenced engagement and responding. Third, allowing the youth to ask questions during the assessments and receive feedback is a major limitation of the study. Observers could have unintentionally taught aspects of the skill during assessment procedures, creating a confounding variable. Because questions were allowed during all phases of the study, we do not have accurate assessments of skills. Allowing questions did provided valuable qualitative information on which aspects of the skills were most difficult – which can be used as feedback for the course structure. Fourth, no validity measures were incorporated during the assessments; data were collected based on the completion of skills rather than accuracy. Fifth, the use of categories allowed for subjectivity in data collection and did not provide detail on what steps

the youth is able to complete independently and accurately. Sixth, having the opportunity to conduct a pilot study increased understanding of the course structure, frequency of youth participation in class, and feasibility of the general procedure.

To address the limitations discussed above, two major methodological changes were made prior to study one, which are: (1) The use of a multiple probe design across participants and (2) the use of task analyses to collect and analyze the data. These changes allow for tighter experimental control via systematic manipulations and analysis based on objective and valid data. Study 1 also eliminated the ability to ask questions during all assessments, and requested youth choose their top five skills in order to ensure three skills are assessed across all phases for all youth.

Study

Participants & Recruitment

This study recruited male youth ages 13-17 who are currently in the Kansas foster care system and are either residing in Douglas County or his case is based out of Douglas County. Information was sent to The Children's Shelter, which is a state funded group home agency, and Kaw Valley Center, which is a state-funded placement agency that work with individuals in foster care, to recruit participants for this study. Recruitment of participants began February 1st, 2018 and continued through the first week of the StopGap Inc. course, which ended February 16th, 2018. Six participants were recruited with consent and assent forms. One individual moved placements during the course of the study; thus, his data are incomplete and will not be presented.

All participant information reflects data collected at the end of the study. Khalil is a 17-year-old male who has been in foster care for 5 years, has experienced four placements, has been to four different schools, and has resided in foster homes and group homes. Carter is a 16-year-old male who has been in foster care for 2 years, has experienced three placements, has been to four different schools, and has resided in a family placement and group homes. Jacob is a 16-year-old male who has been in foster care for 7 months, has experienced four long-term placements and two overnight placements, has been to five

different schools, and has resided in a group home. Tyson is a 16-year old male who has been in foster care for 2 months, has experienced one placement, two different schools, and has resided in a group home. Bennett is a 16-year old male who has been in foster care for 1 year, has experienced one placement, has been to three different schools, and has resided in a group home.

Setting

The StopGap Inc. training course took place a classroom at a local church on Tuesday and Thursday from 6 to 7:30 p.m. A table and chairs were located in the center of the room. A projector was set up on the table to display PowerPoint slides and other course materials on the wall. All assessments were conducted in the StopGap Inc. office, which was located next to the StopGap Inc. classroom. A desk and chair were located on the north side of the room but were not in this study. A table and four chairs were located on the south side of the room, which is where the participant and observers sat during assessments. A laptop was located on the table for assessments that required using the internet, such as locating housing.

Response Measurement

The primary observer directly observed each skill and recorded behavior via a task analysis (Appendix D). Each participant was to complete each step in acquisition of the behavior chain for the target response. For each step on the task analysis, a response was recorded as one of the following: a (+) if the participant responds correctly and independently (without prompts); a (-) if the participant does not engage in the target response or the response is incorrect; or an (N/A) if the target response is not needed (Franks et al, 2013). Due to the skills varying in difficulty, no time requirement was set for engagement in the next step on the task analysis or completion of the task. Dividing the total number of steps accurately completed (+) by the total number of steps applicable for each skill produced the percentage of steps correctly implemented. Data gathered for the pre-assessment, post-assessment, and probes used this measurement system.

Interobserver Agreement (IOA). During 44% of the pre-course probe assessments and 40% of the post-course probe assessments, a second observer simultaneously but independently observed and

scored the task analysis. Interobserver agreement was calculated by comparing the primary and secondary observers' scores for each individual step of each skill; creating an average percentage agreement for each skill. An agreement was scored if both observers recorded the exact same mark (+, -, N/A) for each step on the task analysis. The average percentage agreement was calculated by dividing the total number of agreements by the total number of steps and multiplying by 100. The average percentage agreement was 98.75% across the pre-course probe assessments (range = 90% - 100%) and 91% across the post-course probe assessments (range = 80% - 100%).

   Procedural Fidelity. Throughout the course duration, procedural fidelity was collected for each skill assessed. Most skills included four components (i.e., Description, Modeling, Practice, and Feedback) but, depending on the skill, only one component was possible to implement. For example, only a description of what human trafficking is, what the risks are, and how individuals get recruited into trafficking can be provided. Modeling, role play, and feedback are not available for this skill. Thus, results will display the number of steps implemented correctly out of the number of total steps possible to implement. Each step was scored as either: correct (+), incorrect or incomplete (-), omission (O), or not applicable (N/A).

Procedures

   Preferred Skills. Seven different skills were chosen as preferred: budgeting, career goals, grocery preparation, locating housing, human trafficking awareness, establishing and maintaining credit, and roommate agreements. *Budgeting* was defined as writing a list of monthly expenses (i.e., savings, rent, groceries, utilities, transportation, entertainment, and personal spending), an estimated dollar amount for each expense, and calculating the estimated amount spent, given a budget of $1000. *Career Goals* was defined as writing three careers the individual was interested in, two steps to be taken to attain each career following the SMART method (Doran, 1981), and one possible barrier to attaining these careers. The SMART method requires each step to be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. *Grocery Preparation* was defined as writing appropriate meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for Sunday through Saturday and a list of foods to buy at the grocery store for all identified meals. An example of an

appropriate breakfast meal is a muffin and/or fruit. A non-example of an appropriate breakfast food is mac and cheese. *Locating Housing* was defined as using the internet to locate two housing options that is filtered based on the needs of the individual. This includes number of bathrooms, location, price, and home type (i.e. apartment, or house; rent, or buy). *Human trafficking awareness* was defined as responding correctly to three questions. *Establishing and Maintaining Credit* was defined as responding correctly to four questions. *Roommate Agreements* was defined as participating in a role play scenario to verbally negotiate house rules and bill responsibilities with their roommate. To enhance understanding of each task and how the terminal behavior is reached, slightly different directions were read to the participant prior to each skill assessment (See Appendix E).

       Probe Assessments. A probe is "a change in conditions at some arbitrary point in an experiment made to evaluate or test for the conditions currently in control" (Verhave, 1966). All assessments were directly observed independently. Immediately prior to the start of an observation, basic directions on what will be occurring during the observation trial were read to each participant. For example, the following was read to youth who choose budgeting: "You have a monthly income of $1000. Please write out a list of typical monthly expenses and how much money you will have left at the end of the month. A pen and paper will be provided to you. Please let me know when you are done". A comprehensive list of skill directions are located in the appendices (Appendix E). We allowed participants the opportunity to ask questions at this time to clarify their role in the assessment. If participants asked about how to complete the skill, observers responded with "I am sorry, but I cannot tell you how to complete the skill at this time. Please complete what you know and that will be great". The phrasing of this statement varied slightly based on the observer, but the general concept across observers was consistent. Because skills varied in length and difficulty, observations were not timed. There were no reinforcers provided for completing the probe assessments.

       Pre-course Probe Assessments. To ensure completion of at least one pre-course probe assessment for each skill prior to training, the first pre-course probe assessments were conducted throughout the entire duration of the second day of the StopGap Inc. course. As the adolescents were

watching a movie in the classroom, participants were pulled out one-by-one to complete their first pre-course probe assessments. During this probe assessment, three to five preferred skills were directly observed for each youth. Starting with the top prioritized skill, probes were conducted in a decreasing hierarchical scale until 2-3 skills with less than 80% accuracy were identified. Thus, any skill that meet our mastery criterion of 80% accuracy (Najdowski, Chilingaryan, Bergstorm, Granpeesheh, Balasanyan, Aguilar, and Tarbox, 2009) or above during the first probe was considered mastered and data were no longer collected on that skill. Table 6 displays the preferred skills for each youth in which an assessment was completed along with skills that were excluded from subsequent probe assessments. All other pre-course probe assessments were conducted either immediately prior to or immediately after class throughout the first four weeks of the course.

StopGap Inc. Intervention. Participants attended the Stopgap Inc. course as the intervention component. All topics were covered throughout the 5-week course. Originally, the course was 8 weeks long but due to snow days and schedule conflicts with The Children's Shelter, the course was shortened to 5 weeks. Attendance varied by day and by participant. Class attendance was voluntary and therefore may be considered as a social validity measure of the procedure. Throughout the course, 12 observable and measurable skills were taught, along with other various topics and skills incorporated into activities and lectures that were not observable and measurable for this study. Classes were led by the executive director of StopGap Inc., but also included a variety of guest speakers and assistance from volunteers. The course format included a combination of lecture slides, modeling, role-play activities, and opportunities to practice skills and receive feedback. Feedback varied by topic and by the individual providing the feedback.

Table 4.

Intervention materials and agent of change

Skill	Intervention Materials	Agent of Change
Budgeting	• Two PowerPoint slides o One video • Worksheet (Appendix F) • Calculators • Faux money	• One exemplar – StopGap Inc. Executive Director
Establishing & Maintaining Credit	• Four PowerPoint slides o One video	• One exemplar – StopGap Inc. Executive Director
Locating Housing	• Three PowerPoint slides • Computers	• One exemplar – StopGap Inc. volunteer
Grocery Preparation	• Three PowerPoint slides • Worksheet (Appendix G)	• One exemplar – StopGap Inc. volunteer
Human Trafficking Awareness	• Fifteen PowerPoint slides	• One exemplar – Community guest lecturer
Roommate Agreements	• One PowerPoint slide • Worksheet (Appendix H)	• One exemplar – StopGap Inc. Executive Director
Career Goals	• Two PowerPoint slides • Notebook paper	• One exemplar – StopGap Inc. Executive Director

Additional costs for each StopGap Inc. class included paper, stickers, snacks (e.g., veggie tray, chips, etc), and volunteer time.

Post-course Probe Assessments. Most post-course probe assessments were conducted either immediately prior to or immediately after class throughout the last three weeks of the StopGap Inc. course. The last probe assessment was conducted throughout the entire duration of the last day of the StopGap Inc. course to ensure completion of at least one post-course probe for each skill after training. Similar to the first pre-course probe assessments, as the adolescents were watching a movie in the classroom, participants were pulled out one-by-one to complete their last post-course probe assessments.

Feedback Condition. Because many of the skills assessed did not increase percentage of steps correct on the task analyses above the set mastery criterion following the StopGap Inc. training, a feedback condition was added to the procedures. The feedback condition consisted of: (1) the primary reseacher reviewing all previous assessments one at a time with the youth, (2) the primary researching providing praise for correctly implemented steps on each assessment (3) the primary researcher providing corrective feedback on what could be added for each assessment. Immediately following feedback, the youth completed a probe assessment until mastery was met. The feedback condition was only implemented for Carter, Tyson, and Jacob due to scheduling, and only for skills that did not meet the mastery criterion on the post-course probes following training.

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Results

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Procedural Fidelity

Table 5

Procedural Fidelity Results for Study

Components	Skills						
	Budgeting	Establishing & Maintaining Credit	Locating Housing	Grocery Preparation	Human Trafficking Awareness	Roommate Agreements	Career Goals
Description	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Modeling	+	N/A	+	-	N/A	0	-
Practice	+	N/A	+	+	N/A	+	+
Group Feedback	+	N/A	+	+	N/A	+	+
Total number of steps correctly implemented	4/4	1/1	4/4	3/4	1/1	3/4	3/4
Percent of steps correctly implemented	100%	100%	100%	75%	100%	75%	75%

Note. Displays how each intervention component was implemented by skill. Correct implementation of a component is marked with a (+). Incorrect or incomplete implementation of a component is marked with

a (-). Omission of a component is marked with a (0). Component which could not be implemented for a skill are marked with an (N/A).

Table 5. shows how each intervention component was implemented across skills. There are two skills in which only a description could be implemented: (1) establishing and maintaining credit and (2) human trafficking awareness. Establishing and maintaining credit requires building and monitoring a credit score over a long period, thus only a description could be provided in a 1.5-hour class. Human trafficking awareness is preventative knowledge and cannot be practiced; thus, only a description could be provided.
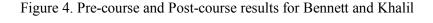
Table 6

Study Skill Preferences and Exclusion Criteria

Participant	Skill	Corresponding Skill #	Excluded Skills	Exclusion Rationale
Khalil	Locating Housing	1		
	Grocery Preparation	2		
	Budgeting	3		
Bennett	Roommate Agreements	4		
	Grocery Preparation	5		
	Establishing & Maintaining Credit	-	X	Assessment conducted after establishing and maintaining credit was taught in class
	Human Trafficking Awareness	6		
Carter	Self-Defense	-	X	Class canceled after assessment completed
	Budgeting	7		
	Human Trafficking Awareness	8		
Jacob	Budgeting	9		
	Higher Education Options	-	X	Mastered
	Locating Housing	10		
	Establishing and Maintaining Credit	-	X	Mastered
	Self- Defense	-	X	Class canceled after assessment completed

Tyson	Establishing & Maintaining Credit	11		
	Appropriate Interview Attire	-	X	Mastered
	Budgeting	12		
	Career Goals	13	X	

Note. Presents each of the youth's preferred skill in which a probe assessment was conducted. Skills could have been excluded from subsequent probe assessments due various reasons.

Table 6 displays the preferred skills of each participant in a hierarchical order in which a pre-assessment was conducted. Also presented are rationales for skills that were excluded from further probe assessments. For two participants, Khalil and Carter, their top three preferred skills were below 80% during their pre-assessment (first probe assessment), thus no other skills were assessed. Due to a last-minute cancellation of the self-defense class, this skill was excluded for Carter and Jacob. One participant, Bennett, was absent from the first data collection session thus his pre-assessments were conducted during the third data collection session. One of his preferred skills, establishing and maintaining credit, had already been taught in class, thus this skill was excluded for Bennett only. Both Jacob and Tyson mastered one or more preferred skills during the pre-assessments, thus higher education, and establishing and maintaining credit were excluded for Jacob and professional interview attire was excluded for Tyson. Preferred skills that were included in assessments throughout the duration of the study are labeled with a corresponding skill number. These corresponding skill numbers are used in subsequent Figures 4, 5 and 6. Data are presented in a group format first; individual data for three participants follow in a multiple baseline probe design.
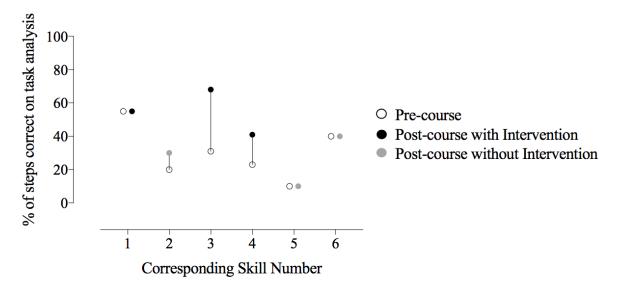
Figure 4. Pre-course and Post-course results for Bennett and Khalil

Figure 4. Percentage of steps correct on a task analysis during pre-course and post-course probe assessments for Khalil and Bennett's preferred skills.

Because Khalil and Bennett were only available one of two classes per week, only pre and post data were collected for each of their preferred skills. Corresponding skill numbers (as labeled in Table 5) are located on the x-axis. For skills that received an intervention, post-course scores (M = 54%, range = 41%-68%) are higher than pre-course scores (M = 36%, range = 23%-55%). For skills that did not receive an intervention, which was due to Khalil and Bennett being absent from class, post-course scores (M = 26%, range = 10%-40%) are relatively equal to pre-course scores (M = 23%, range = 10%-40%).
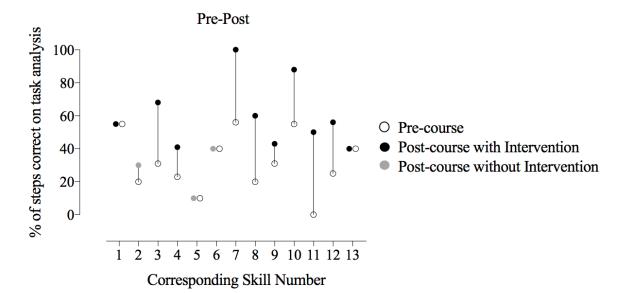
Figure 5. Pre-course and Post-course Results for all Study Participants

Figure 5. Percentage of steps correct on a task analysis during pre-course and post-course probe assessments for all five participants.

Results for all participants and skills are presented in Figures 5 and 6 – with corresponding skill number locating in Table 6. The data in Figure 5 are presented as the percentage of steps correct at the pre-course and post-course probe assessments for each skill prior to the feedback condition. For skills that received an intervention, post-course scores (M = 60.1%, range = 40%-100%) are higher than pre-course scores (M = 33.6%, range = 0%-56%). For skills that did not receive an intervention, post-course scores (M = 26%, range = 10%-40%) are relatively equal to pre-course scores (M = 23%, range = 10%-40%). Although eight of ten skills that received an intervention did increase the percentage of correct steps on the task analyses relative to baseline, only Skill 7 and Skill 10 increased above the set mastery criterion of 80%. The data in Figure 6 show the percentage of steps correct at the pre-course and post-course probe assessments for each skill after the feedback condition was implemented. Feedback was only provided for Carter, Tyson, and Jacob and only for skills that did not meet the mastery criterion after class (Corresponding skill numbers 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13). Providing feedback increased the mean post-course score for corresponding skill numbers 7-13 from 62.4% (range = 40%-100%) to 96.8% (range = 88%-

100%). These results suggest that individual feedback after skills have been taught in class is a key component to this intervention.

Figure 6. Pre-course and Post-course plus feedback condition results
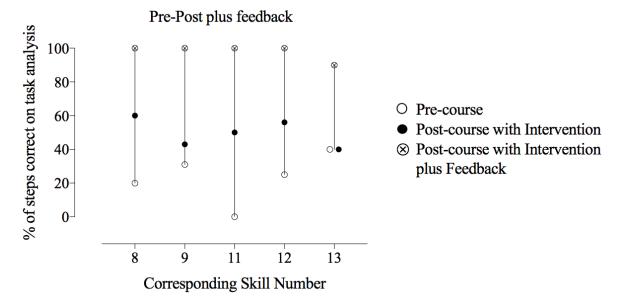

Figure 6. Percentage of steps correct on a task analysis during pre-course and post-course plus feedback probe assessments for five skills.

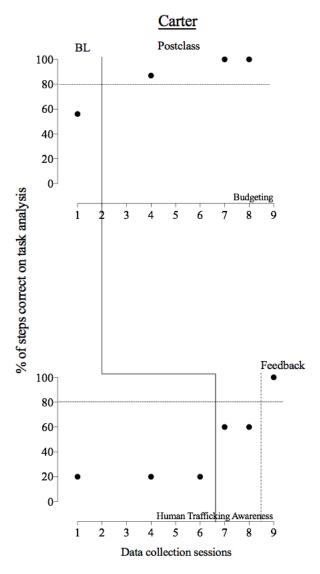Figure 7. Multiple Baseline Probe Results for Carter

Figure 7. Percent of steps correct on a task analysis for Carter across probe assessments for two skills.

The results for Carter are displayed in Figure 7. The data are presented as the percent of steps correct on the task analysis (TA) for each skill. Across both skills, baseline levels were low (56% for budgeting; 20% for human trafficking awareness). After the skills training in class, the percentage of steps correct on the TA increased to 87% for budgeting and 60% for human trafficking, but only budgeting surpassed the set mastery criterion at 80%. Because human trafficking awareness did not meet

the mastery criterion after intervention, a feedback condition was introduced for this skill. Carter increased the percentage of steps correct on the TA to 100% following feedback.

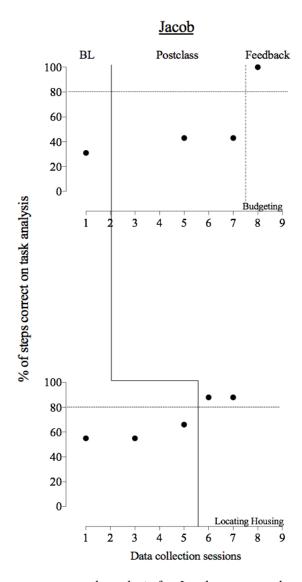Figure 8. Multiple Baseline Probe Results for Jacob

Figure 8. Percent of steps correct on a task analysis for Jacob across probe assessments for two skills.

Similar results were found for Jacob, which are shown in Figure 8. Baseline levels were low for both budgeting and locating housing (31% for budgeting; a mean of 58% for locating housing with a range of 55%-66%). After the skills training, capacity for locating housing increased above the mastery criterion and was stable across two data collection sessions. A large increase was not observed in correct

steps for budgeting following the skills training (31% to 43%), thus a feedback condition was

implemented for budgeting. Similar to Carter, correct steps increased above mastery following the

feedback condition to 100%.

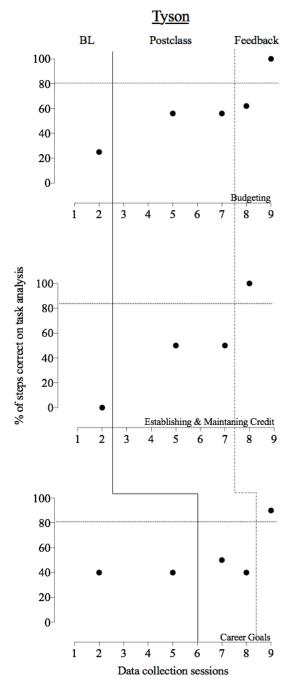Figure 9. Multiple Baseline Probe Results for Tyson

Figure 9. Percent of steps correct on a task analysis for Tyson across probe assessments for three skills.

Similar patterns of responding were found for Tyson as displayed in Figure 9. Baseline levels across all three skills were low (25 % for budgeting; 0% for establishing & maintaining credit; and 40% for career goals). Although capacity for budgeting and establishing and maintaining credit increased after skills training (56% for budgeting; 50% for establishing and maintaining credit), the feedback condition was implemented with Tyson for all three skills. After direct feedback, capacity for establishing and maintaining credit and career goals increased above the mastery criterion (100% for establishing & maintaining credit; 90% for career goals). The feedback increased Tyson's capacity for budgeting slightly, but a second feedback condition was needed in order to increase correct steps above the 80% to the mastery criterion to 100%.

Discussion

Several scientific studies and data collection systems at both the federal and state levels have documented the negative life experiences youth who have transitioned out of the foster care system encounter (Day, Dworsky, Fogarty, & Damashek, 2011; Department for Children and Families; Dworsky & Courtney, 2009; George, Bilaver, Lee, Needell, Brookhart, & Jackson, 2002; National Youth in Transition Database; Reilly, 2003; White, O'Brien, White, Pecora, & Phillips, 2007). Safeguards, such as Title IV-E federal law, state independent living services, and community organizations targeting life skills, have been established as a means to overcome these disproportionate outcomes. Although these programs and policies are beneficial to have in place, most are not accessible until the ages of 17-18 and there is little evidence to show they change behavior or alter outcomes. Many studies have found correlations between participating in life skills services and positive outcomes among youth who were emancipated from the system (Mallon, 1998; Reilly, 2003) but only via self-report data years later. Thus, it is unknown if youth actually acquire these necessary life skills through the program and what components make life skills programs effective. One study collected permanent product data to evaluate a community-based life skills course and found it was effective in increasing employment wages (Rashid, 2004). However, to this investigator's knowledge, no study has used direct observation and task analyses

as evaluation tools for life skills courses for youth in foster care. With 84.2% of Kansas adolescents who come into care at 13 years of age or older being emancipated from the system (Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data, 2015), advocacy for youth in foster care and evidence-based prevention strategies are warranted. In this study, behavioral processes were used to evaluate a community-based life skills course aimed at youth in foster care. The main evaluation purpose was to determine if youth were acquiring the skills taught as a result of the intervention, to determine which course components were necessary, and to provide feedback to the community organization in order to better services.

Khalil and Bennett

The results in Figure 4 show inconsistent responding for two of Khalil's skills relative to the study hypothesis. First, Skill number 1 did receive an intervention, but the percentage of correct steps did not increase from baseline. Two factors that could have influenced responding on this skill are: (1) satiation of engaging in skills thus creating an establishing operation to end the session and (2) response effort. Skill number 1 was the last of three to be assessed during Khalil's post assessment session. Although duration of individual skills was not collected, anecdotally, Skill numbers 2 and 3 took approximately 1.5 hours to complete. Thus, when it was time to complete skill 1 it required more effort than the previous two skills due to the length of engagement in the overall assessment. Responding could also be due to an establishing operation to end the session, or a combination of both an increased response effort and satiation of working on skills. Second, Skill number 2 did increase percentage of correct steps from baseline slightly but did not receive the intervention. Unknown factors outside of the study context could have influenced responding for this skill. Also, Skill number 4 only increased slightly from the pre-course to post-course assessment. This could be due to the lack of modeling for this skill during the StopGap Inc. course but other factors outside of the experiment should be considered here.

Carter

The results in Figure 7 show the intervention was effective in increasing Carter's skill capacity of budgeting and human trafficking awareness. Due to the course schedule, only one pre-course budgeting probe was able to be conducted. Post-course budgeting probes were relatively stable and surpassed the set

mastery criterion. Although the first budgeting post-course probe was at 86% and the following two probes were at 100%, "rent" and "rent amount" were the two steps on the task analysis not completed on the first post-course probe. Both "rent" and "rent amount" were marked as completed and correct on the pre-course probe and subsequent post-course probes, thus it is possible Carter could have received 100% on his first post-course probe with problem solving skills for accurate recall. Pre-course probes for human trafficking awareness show a steady state at 20%. After the intervention, human trafficking post-course probes increased to 60% and again show a steady state. The same step was marked completed and correct for all three of the pre-course probes. Similarly, the same three steps were marked completed and correct for both post-course probes. Only a description of this skill was provided in class, which could be a factor as to why skill capacity only increased to 60% during post-course probes. The feedback condition implemented for human trafficking awareness increased skill capacity to 100%. This suggests that individual feedback is needed to increase acquisition above the 80% mastery criterion. The observed steady states via visual analysis and the large increases in percentage of steps correct on the task analysis for both budgeting and human trafficking only after implementation of the intervention demonstrate the strength of the StopGap Inc. course.

Jacob

The results in Figure 8 show moderate increases in percentage of steps correct on the task analysis across Jacob's preferred skills. As stated previously, only one pre-course probe for budgeting was conducted due to the course schedule. Post-course budgeting probes show an increase in steps correct on the task analysis, but only slightly. This finding was unexpected because all four components of the intervention for budgeting were implemented with 100% procedural fidelity, thus percentage of steps correct on the task analysis should have been higher for post-course probes. Although all components were implemented correctly, this was a group class; thus, other factors could have influenced the learning process. For locating housing, the pre-course probes show a slight increasing trend. This could suggest learning occurred during the first two probes, but other unknown factors could have also influenced responding here. The post-course probes increased after the intervention and show steady responding –

which was expected given all four intervention components were implemented with 100% procedural fidelity.

Tyson

Results in Figure 9 also demonstrate the strength of the intervention and the feedback condition. As stated previously, budgeting and establishing and maintaining credit were the first skills taught, thus only one pre-course probe was conducted. Relatively large increases in percentage of steps correct on the task analysis were observed for budgeting and establishing and maintaining credit after the intervention was implemented. Although capacity for budgeting increased after the intervention, two feedback sessions were needed to increase capacity above the set mastery criterion. Skill difficulty could be one factor as to why two feedback sessions were needed, but other factors such as, motivating operations, lack of a functional reinforcer for completing the skill accurately, or other variables, should also be considered. One interesting finding related to establishing and maintaining credit is only a description was provided during the class, but a 50% increase was observed from pre-course to post-course probes. We saw a similar pattern for Carter's human trafficking awareness probe assessments. This suggests description alone is effective in increasing skill capacity for these skills, but repeated exposure via feedback condition is needed to increase skill capacity above 80% steps correct on the task analysis. For career goals, a steady trend was observed for the pre-course assessments. Although the first post-course probe increased slightly, the increase in percentage of steps correct on the task analysis did not maintain over time which is demonstrated by the percentage of steps correct on the career goals task analysis decreasing back to baseline during the second post-course probe. There are two possible explanations for the trends observed for career goals. First, the career goals procedural fidelity was only 75% – modeling of this skill was incomplete. Second, the task analysis required the SMART method to be used when creating steps to achieve each career goal. If the participant did not have problem solving skills to accurate recall the SMART method, an increase in percentage of steps correct on the task analysis would most likely not be observed – which is evident with this data. Once feedback was provided and the SMART method was reviewed, percentage of steps correct on the task analysis increased to 90%. It is possible both the

incomplete modeling and inaccurate recall of the SMART method contributed to the lack of increase of percentage of steps correct on the task analysis for career goals.

Feedback Condition and Overall Results

The results of Figure 5 display that the StopGap Inc. course as an intervention was successful in increasing acquisition of skills across these three participants, which is demonstrated by an increase in steps correct on the task analyses from baseline to post-course probe assessments for 80% (8 of 10) of skills that received an intervention. Skill acquisition increased dramatically when the intervention was implemented compared to when the intervention was not – a slight increase in acquisition for one skill and no increase in acquisition for two skills. Figure 6 displays the influence of the individual feedback condition on skills that had not met mastery following the intervention (Corresponding Skill Numbers 8, 9, 11, 12, 13). Not only did participants increase their percentage of steps correct above mastery for all five skills following individual feedback, four of five increased to 100%. This feedback condition differs from the feedback provided in class in two ways. First, all task analysis steps were reviewed – which allowed the participant to observe the exact steps that were implemented correctly or incorrectly. The feedback provided during class was not ongoing, thus participants did not receive feedback on each individual step. Second, the primary observer delivered all feedback and used the same procedure throughout the entire condition. The feedback provided in class was not controlled for, thus, the magnitude, frequency, and latency of the feedback delivered could have differed by participant and by skill. These results provide evidence that individual feedback in addition to learning these life skills in a group setting is necessary to meet the set mastery criterion.

Strengths

There are seven strengths of this research. First, using a multiple baseline probe design demonstrated experimental control without requiring the youth to repeat skills too often, potentially creating an aversive context. Second, implementing a feedback condition for skills that had not met the mastery criterion after the intervention proved extremely efficient. Third, having the youth choose their preferred skills for assessment allowed youth to have a voice in the process, which created an

empowering learning environment. Fourth, this study was conducted in a community context where the StopGap Inc. program was already occurring, thus showing external validity. Fifth, this study extends behavioral processes and practices to a new population, to new skills, and new contexts. Conducting this study in the community also displays utility of behavior analytic design and methodology in the evaluation of community level programs within the social-ecological model. The community-level of the socio-ecological model has a wide reach and impacts not only the individuals in this study, but future youth who participate in the StopGap Inc. life skills course. Sixth, results showed that the StopGap Inc. intervention has generality across skills and across participants. All five participants acquired at least one skill following the StopGap Inc. intervention, and acquisition occurred across all skills that received an intervention. Lastly, the experimenter provided technical assistance to the executive director of StopGap Inc. prior to the intervention. This included updating the materials to be more beneficial for today's world. For example, instead of locating housing options in the newspaper, laptops were used to search the internet to find appropriate housing options. This could increase generality across settings when youth engage in these life skills on their own.

Limitations

Research conducted in community settings has to mesh with what is already occurring in context, thus creating several limitations of the current evaluation. First, we were unable to conduct more than one pre-course probe assessment to get stability for two of the observed skills: (1) budgeting, (2) establishing and maintaining credit. This was due to the course schedule and timing of skills being taught in class. Although stability was not demonstrated via three pre-course data points, strong effects were seen across skills with multiple participants, which demonstrate the strength of the intervention. A second limitation is self-defense being removed from the class schedule, which limited Carter and Jacob's multiple baseline probe assessment to two skills rather than three skills. A third limitation is the task analyses may not reflect what occurs in the natural environment. The task analyses were created based on what was already occurring in the StopGap Inc. class for evaluation purposes. Although the task analyses may not represent exactly what occurs in the natural environment, exposure to these life skills is a prevention strategy that

increases general knowledge of these topics. Lastly, a fourth limitation is only one probe assessment above 80% was required to meet mastery whereas Najdowski, et al (2009) required two to three assessments above 80% to meet the mastery criterion.

Future Directions

With a limited data set on the acquisition of life skills among youth in foster care, there are many areas for future research. First, maintenance data should be collected in future studies to determine if similar responding occurs six months later. Second, although the life skills StopGap Inc. offers are relevant and important for independence, expanding acquisition to social skills (e.g., negotiation, conflict resolution, etc.) could be beneficial. Third, replicating this study or similar studies with other life skills programs and other groups of youth would increase the external validity of this behavioral evaluation method. Fourth, because the average graduation rate for youth in foster care is substantially lower than county, state, and national levels, retrospective analyses on the relation between participation in life skills courses and high school graduation should be conducted. Lastly, extending behavioral methodology and procedures to community research in general will advance the field of behavioral science and provide knowledge and support to community organizations like StopGap Inc..

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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This study was the first to evaluate a life skills program for adolescents in foster care using direct observation. The results demonstrate improved outcomes of life skills as a function of the StopGap Inc. course, but the individual feedback condition following the StopGap Inc. course was necessary for most skills to increase their percentage of steps correct on the TA above the set mastery criterion. A combination of this group-based concrete life skills training course that followed a BST format and individual follow-up feedback would be beneficial for adolescents in foster care. The group format provides general overview and exposure to various life skills while still in care, which could be beneficial from a prevention standpoint. When adolescents are preparing to exit the foster care system, via emancipation or an alternative placement, follow up on an individual level may require less time and guidance because the adolescents would have a prior learning history with these life skills.

This finding is important for the broader foster care system at large – it can inform how life skills are taught to the 20,000 adolescents who are emancipated from foster care each year. More specifically, findings can inform how the federal and state ILP can partner with community organizations. Both the ILP and community organizations such as StopGap Inc. have their relative strengths and weaknesses. The ILP provides monetary services and general guidance to adolescents as they transition to independence after spending time in the foster care system, but the ILP does not provide concrete life skills training, opportunities to practice skills, or consistent feedback. On the other hand, community organizations often do not have monetary services to assist youth in actually acquiring housing or enrolling in higher education after participating in a life skills course. These programs can work together to fill the current gap by empowering adolescents with preventative training on life skills, referring adolescents to state funded services after rapport has been established, and following up with ILP monetary assistance and resources to act on their prior training. This partnership could increase the number of adolescents participating in life skills training during care, utilizing ILP services after care, and could potentially decrease negative outcomes and experiences these adolescents are disproportionately facing. Most importantly, these anticipated outcomes can be achieved with services and programs already in place, which will save time, and funding, while also creating a better social support system at the community and organizational levels.

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Appendix A

Skill Preference Data Sheet

Stop Gap Inc. Transitional Living Skills

To determine which skills we will focus on, please complete the following data sheet.

- For the first question, "How comfortable are you performing this skill?",
  - Circle "very" if you have learned this skill and are very comfortable performing it
  - Circle "somewhat" if you can perform certain steps of the skill, but have questions about it and/or need partial assistance
  - Circle "Not" if you do not know how to perform the skill
- For the second question, "Do you want to work on this skill"
  - Circle "yes" or "no", depending on whether you are interested in spending extra time on the skill during the StopGap course
- For the skills marked "yes" in column 3, rank the top 5 skills you would like to focus on during the StopGap sessions

Skills	How comfortable are you performing this skill?			Do you want to work on this skill?		Rank/ Prioritization
	Very ----------Somewhat----------Not					
Budgeting	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Establish and Maintain good credit	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Grocery Preparation	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Understanding Food	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Job Applications	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Appropriate Interview Attire	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Locating Housing	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Roommate Agreements	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Tenant/Landlord Lease Responsibilities & Agreements	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Higher Education Options	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Career Goals	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Human Trafficking Awareness	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Making appointments	3	2	1	Yes	No	
Self-Defense Techniques	3	2	1	Yes	No	

Appendix B

IRB Approval

KU THE UNIVERSITY OF
KANSAS
Research

APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL

August 30, 2017

Briana Lynch
b254l911@ku.edu

Dear Briana Lynch:

On 8/30/2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Generalization of transitional living skills from classroom to community settings
Investigator:	Briana Lynch
IRB ID:	STUDY00141315
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Behavioral Skill Assessment Checklist.docx, • CASALetterOfSupportSigned.pdf, • Generalization of Transitional Living Skills.pdf, • StopGap Skills Offered.docx, • StopGapLetterOfSupportSigned.pdf, • TheShelterLetterOfSupportSigned.pdf, • Updated Assent Form , • Updated Consent Form

The IRB approved the study from 8/30/2017 to 8/29/2018.

1. Before 8/29/2018 submit a Continuing Review request and required attachments to request continuing approval or closure.
2. Any significant change to the protocol requires a modification approval prior to altering the project.
3. Notify HRPP about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at https://rgs.drupal.ku.edu/human_subjects_compliance_training.
4. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported immediately.
5. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 8/29/2018 approval of this protocol expires on that date.

Please note university data security and handling requirements for your project:
https://documents.ku.edu/policies/IT/DataClassificationandHandlingProceduresGuide.htm

You must use the final, watermarked version of the consent form, available under the "Documents" tab in eCompliance.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Isley, MS, CIP
Interim IRB Administrator, KU Lawrence Campus

Appendix C

Pilot Study Behavioral Skill Assessment Checklist

Participant Number: _____

Behavioral Skill Assessment Checklist

Domain: _____

Behavioral Definitions:

- Mastered: Exceled in performance of the skill with only clarification questions
  - Verbal Behavior: Asked 1 or 2 clarification questions
  - Non-Verbal Behavior: Completed all necessary information
- In Progress: Performed parts of skill and needed some assistance
  - Verbal Behavior: Asked 3-5 questions while performing skill
  - Non-Verbal Behavior: Completed about half of information needed
- Learning Opportunity: Not able to perform skill, and/or had many questions about what to do
  - Verbal Behavior: Asked 6-10 questions while performing skill
  - Non-Verbal Behavior: Did not complete, or completed less than half of information needed

Date	Time (Start &End)	Location	Capacity of skill performed			Comments/Notes/Number of Questions	Observer Initials
			Learning Opportunity	In Progress	Mastered		
						Questions: Comments:	
						Questions: Comments:	
						Questions: Comments:	

Appendix D

Task Analyses

Participant Number _____   Location _____

Observer Initials _____

KEY:
+ Completed
- Not Completed
N/A Not Applicable

Roommate Agreement Steps ROLE PLAY	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe
Date						
1. Write in rent per month for each roommate						
2. Write in security deposit amount for each roommate						
3. Parties verbally negotiated to decide who's name will be on the utility bill						
4. Parties verbally negotiated to decide how much each roommate will pay for utilities						
5. Parties verbally negotiated to decide who's name will be on the cable bill						
6. Parties verbally negotiated to decide how much each roommate will pay for cable						
7. Parties verbally negotiated to decide who's name will be on the internet bill						
8. Parties verbally negotiated to decide how much each roommate will pay for internet						

9. Both parties verbally negotiated to decide if subletting is either:
   a) Not allowed
   b) Allowed
   c) Allowed only with permission of all roommates						

10. Parties verbally negotiated to decide if when guests are allowed over						
11. Parties verbally negotiated to decide if there will be quiet hours and what the hours would be						

12. Parties verbally negotiated to decide if pets are allowed						
13. Parties verbally negotiate who will be responsible for the pets						
14. Parties verbally negotiated to decide is smoking is allowed inside the apartment or not						
15. Parties verbally negotiated to decide who is in charge of at least 2 household duties						
16. Parties verbally negotiated to decide any other terms, if applicable						
17. Sign and date the roommate agreement						

Notes:

Participant Number _____   Date _____   Location _____

Observer Initials _____

KEY:
+ Completed
- Not Completed
N/A Not Applicable

Establishing & Maintaining good Credit Steps Role Play	Pre- Probe	Pre-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe
Date				
1. Responded to question 1 accurately				
2. Responded to question 2 accurately				
3. Responded to question 3 accurately				
4. Responded to question 4 accurately				
Total # of steps completed				

Questions:

Notes:

Participant Number _____   Location _____

Observer Initials _____

KEY:
+ Completed
- Not Completed
N/A Not Applicable

Locating Housing Steps	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe
Date						
1. Enter in housing website (Zillow, Apartment Guide, etc)						
2. Search for housing rental website & enter site						
3. Filter "rent" (rather than buy)						
4. Enter city, state and/or zip code						
5. Filter price range						
6. Filter number of rooms						
7. Filter "Home/Housing Type" to preference (apartment, studio, house, etc.)						
8. Filter # of bathrooms						
9. Filter "other feature" preferences (dishwasher, laundry, etc.)						
10. If there are no available rental listing with chosen filters, edit filters until rentals show up						
11. Writes down two addresses						
Total # of steps completed						

Notes:

Participant Number _____   Date _____   Location _____

Observer Initials _____

KEY:
+ Completed
- Not Completed
N/A Not Applicable

Grocery Preparation Steps	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe
Date						
1. Write breakfast meals for Monday-Sunday						
2. Breakfast meals include generally appropriate breakfast foods (e.g. egg, donut, yogurt, etc.)						
3. Two meals are repeated throughout the week (Ex: Two days include fruit AND two days include pancakes)						
4. Write lunch meals for Monday- Sunday						
5. Lunch meals include generally appropriate lunch foods (e.g. sandwich, salad, etc.)						
6. Two lunch meals are repeated throughout the week (Leftovers)						
7. Write dinner meals for Monday- Sunday						
8. Dinner meals include generally appropriate dinner foods (e.g. pasta, burger, quesadilla, etc.)						
9. Two dinner meals are repeated throughout the week (Leftovers)						
10. Write complete list of all main ingredients needed for all meals in "Grocery List" section (excludes spices, oils, etc.)						

Questions:

Notes:

Participant Number _____   Observer Initials _____

KEY:
+ Completed
- Not Completed
N/A Not Applicable

Budgeting Steps	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe
Date						
1. List includes savings						
2. Writes in 10% of monthly income for savings						
3. List includes rent						
4. Writes in an estimated amount for rent (248-600)						
5. List includes groceries						
6. Write in estimated amount for groceries & household supplies (must be between $110-$367)						
7. List include utilities						
8. Write in estimated amount for utilities (lighting, gas, electric) (must be between $27-$300)						
9. List includes a mode of transportation						
10. Write in estimated amount for mode(s) of transportation (must be between $0-$80)						
11. List includes at least one entertainment wants: a. internet b. cable c. dining out d. cell phone						
12. Writes in estimated amounts for entertainments wants						
13. List includes at least one personal spending wants						

a. clothes/shoes b. hair cut/grooming c. hygiene products						
14. Write in estimated amounts for personal spending "wants"						
15. Calculate total monthly spending						
16. Calculate amount left over after monthly spending						
Total # of steps completed						

Questions:

Notes:

Participant Number _____   Date _____   Location _____

Observer Initials _____

KEY:
+ Completed
- Not Completed
N/A Not Applicable

Career Goals Steps	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe
Date						
1. Writes out career number 1						
2. Step 1 for career 1 is specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and timely						
3. Step 2 for career 1 is specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and timely						
4. Writes out career number 2						
5. Step 1 for career 2 is specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and timely						
6. Step 2 for career 2 is specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and timely						
7. Writes out career number 3						
8. Step 1 for career 3 is specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and timely						
9. Step 2 for career 3 is specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and timely						
10. Writes out one barrier for attaining career goals						
Total # of steps completed						

Notes:

Participant Number _____   Date _____   Location _____

Observer Initials _____

KEY:
+ Completed
- Not Completed
N/A Not Applicable

Human Trafficking Steps	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Pre-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe	Post-Probe
Date						
1. Labels human trafficking "type" 1						
2. Labels human trafficking "type 2"						
3. Labels risk factor 1						
4. Labels risk factor 2						
5. Responds to question 3 accurately						
Total # of steps completed						

Questions:

Notes:

Appendix E

Skill Directions

Roommate Agreement Role Play Scenario

You and your roommate just moved into a two-bedroom apartment in Lawrence, KS. Rent for each month totals to $1,020. You both signed a yearlong lease. Please converse with your new roommate to determine house rules and bill responsibilities. A pen and paper will be provided to you to write down your agreements. Let me know when you are done.

Establishing & Maintaining Credit Role Play Scenario

I am going to ask you four questions about credit. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability.

1. What is a credit score?
   a. A number that "determines" the likelihood that you will pay your bills on time
2. What does good credit look like in numbers?
   a. The higher the score, the better the credit
3. Why does having a good credit score matter?
   a. When applying for loans on a car, applications for housing, and opening a credit/debit card they look at your score and determine if they will give you money or not
4. What is one factor that impacts you credit score?
   a. Payment history
   b. Length of credit history
   c. Amounts owed (that has not been paid yet)
   d. How often you use your credit card
   e. Number of credit lines

Locating Housing

Using the laptop provided, locate two apartments and/or houses that fit your specific needs. Write down the addresses of the rental listings on the paper provided. Let me know when you are done.

Note: do not use apartmentlist.com

Note: If participant does not filter "other features", or "home type" → ask close ended question with two options. If it matches behavior, they get an N/A; if it does not they get a -

   Ex: Do you want in unit laundry or out of unit laundry?

      Response: In unit → they get –

      Response: Don't care → they get N/A

Grocery Preparation

Please plan what your meals will look like for the entire week and what food you will need to get at the store (not including oil, spices, etc.). A pen and paper will be provided for you to write it out. Let me know when you are done.

Budgeting

You have a monthly income of $1000. Please write out a list of typical monthly expenses, and then how much money you will have left at the end of the month. A pen and paper will be provided for you to write it out. Let me know when you are done.

Career Goals

Write out 3 careers you would be interested in, 2 steps for each on how you are going to attain or get to that career, and 1 possible barrier to getting there. Steps should follow the SMART method.

Human Trafficking

I am going to ask you 3 questions about human trafficking. Please answer what you know about the material.

1. What are two different types of human trafficking
   a. Sex, labor
2. What are two risk factors associated with human trafficking
   a. Homelessness, applying for a job with limited information about the opportunity and it sounds too good to be true, substance abuse, poverty, childhood sexual abuse, isolation, emotional distress, family dysfunction, mental illness, lack of social support
3. How do predators recruit children and youth into trafficking
   a. Slowly groom them to gain trust, then forced into sexual exploitation and/or labor through psychological manipulation, drugs, and/or violence

Appendix F

Budgeting Intervention Worksheet

BUDGET WORKSHEET

I	F	D
MONTHLY NET INCOME	**MONTHLY FIXED EXPENSES**	**DISCRETIONARY SPENDING**
$1000.00 mo.	RENT $ SAVINGS $ **"ALWAYS PAY YOURSELF FIRST" (10%)**	**ENTERTAINMENT- WANT** ➢ Cable/internet $_____ ➢ Computer $_____ ➢ Movies/concerts$_____ ➢ Cellphone $_____ ➢ Dinning out $_____

Other income:	**FOOD**
	GROCERIES/ HOUSEHOLD
	 SUPPLIES $
	    ➢ DISH SOAP
	    ➢ PAPER TOWELS
	    ➢ TOILET PAPER
	    ➢ HYGIENE PRODUCTS
		PERSONAL SPENDING-NEED
		CLOTHING/SHOES $_____
		LAUNDRY $_____
		PERSONAL GROOMING $_____
		Barber shop/Beauty shop
		Manicures/Pedicures

	UTILITIES LIGHTS/Gas/Water $	
	TRANSPORTATION BUS PASS $ GAS (CAR) $ CAR/INSURANCE $ CAR REPAIRS $	

($<u>1000</u>)   -   ($<u>850</u>)   =   ($<u>150</u>)

Appendix G

Grocery Preparation Worksheet

Domestic8d

Weekly Meal Planner

Dates:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner

Saturday	Sunday	Recipe Resource	Grocery List
Breakfast	Breakfast		
Lunch	Lunch		
Dinner	Dinner		

Appendix H

Roommate Agreement Intervention Worksheet

Roommate Agreement

This agreement is made by and among the roommates named herein who have signed a lease for a shared dwelling unit that makes the roommates jointly and severally liable for all terms of the contract.

Execution of this roommate agreement does not alter the joint and several liability of the tenants under the rental contract with the landlord. However, it may be used if a dispute among the roommates arises.

Address of Rental Unit _____

Term of Lease _____ to _____

Name	Rent per Month	Security Deposit	Bedroom to be Occupied
	$	$	
	$	$	
	$	$	
	$	$	
	$	$	
	$	$	

If roommates will switch bedrooms or pay different amounts of rent at any point, those changes should be noted above. Any roommate who does not pay any or all of the amount of rent listed above shall be liable to the landlord or to any roommates who pay any amount due for the defaulting roommate.

Security Deposit
A security deposit has been paid by each roommate in the amount listed above. The roommates will divide the refund of the security deposit according to the amount each tenant originally paid as listed in this agreement. When a specific roommate is clearly responsible for fees and damages to the premises—including late fees, repairs and cleaning costs—that roommate will pay full fees and damages. The roommates agree to share equally in the cost of all other fees and damages charged.

Utility Bills
The utility bill will be in _____'s name.

The bill will be divided (strike one) evenly/as follows (for example, because one roommate has an air conditioner or a personal refrigerator):

_____

Utility late charges will be paid by _____

Phone Bills
The phone bill will be in _____'s name.

The local phone bill will be divided (strike one) evenly/as follows:

_____

The long distance bill will be divided (strike one) evenly/according to who made the calls.

Phone late charges will be paid by _____

over

Cable

The apartment *(strike one)* will/will not have cable.

If there will be cable, the bill will be in _____'s name.

If there will be cable, the bill will be divided *(strike one)* evenly/as follows:

_____

Cable late charges will be paid by _____

High Speed Internet Access

The apartment *(strike one)* will/will not have high speed internet.

If there will be high speed internet, the bill will be in _____'s name.

If there will be high speed internet, the bill will be divided *(strike one)* evenly/as follows:

_____

Internet late charges will be paid by _____

Subletting

Subletting is *(strike two)* not allowed/allowed/allowed only with permission of all roommates.
(Sublet agreements are available at the Tenant Resource Center.)

Guests. *(Strike any part not applicable.)*

Each roommate is responsible for the behavior of his or her guests. Guests shall not unreasonably disturb other roommates. Guests must stay in the bedroom of the roommate who invited them, unless all other roommates agree that the guest may stay in a shared area. No guest may stay for more than seven consecutive days without the permission of all other roommates. New roommates may move in only with the written permission of all other roommates and the landlord.

Quiet Hours

All roommates agree to observe quiet hours for sleep, study and other purposes on the days and times listed here. *(If none, write "None.")* _____

Pets

The following pets are permitted: _____

The person responsible for the pets will be _____

Smoking

Smoking in the apartment will be *(strike one)* allowed/not allowed.

Household Duties. Household duties (take out trash, clean bathroom, etc.) will be divided as follows:

_____

_____

Other Terms _____

_____

Signatures	Date	Signatures	Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Appendix I

Consent Form

Title

Behavioral Life Skills Training for youth in Foster Care: Evaluations of Skill Acquisition and Generalization to Community settings

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Applied Behavioral Science at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to allow the youth who is in your guardianship to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and restrict the youth who is in your guardianship from participating in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to allow the youth who is in your guardianship to participate, you are free to withdraw his/her participation at any time. If you do decide for the youth who is in your guardianship to participate or withdraw from this study, it will not affect his/her relationship with StopGap Inc, the services it may provide to him/her, or his/her relationship with the University of Kansas.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to determine if youth's who participate in the StopGap transitional living course increase their ability to perform the skill and can generalize skills from classroom to natural community settings. It is anticipated that youth's capacity of the skills being taught will increase with participation since they will have multiple opportunities to practice their preferred life skills.

PROCEDURES

In collaboration with The Shelter Inc, Douglas County CASA, and StopGap Inc.; the primary researcher will improve the transitional living class's curriculum to include modeling, role play, and feedback. This will allow the skills taught in class to be similar to performing the skills outside of the class. On the first day of the Stopgap course, the youth will be asked to choose which transitional living skills they would like to learn off of a list of skills taught in the StopGap classes. Once the skills are chosen, I will directly observe the youth performing the chosen skills also on the first day of the StopGap course. I will have a task analysis data sheet with me to mark off each step correctly performed for each skill. This data will be collected before learning the life skills in class in order to compare the results with data taken after the youth learned the skills. Then, the youth will participate in the 8-week StopGap course where the life skills will be taught. On the last day of the StopGap course, I will directly observe the youth performing the chosen skills. I will again have a task analysis data sheet with me to mark off each step correctly performed for each skill. Finally, I will set up a time to meet with the youth in the community to directly observe the youth performing each skill in the natural community setting. I will complete the task analysis data sheet for each skill performed. The estimated time commitment for each observation activity will vary between 1 and 3 hours. Data sheets will be held confidentially in a locked filing cabinet located in the office of the primary researcher on the University of Kansas campus and will only be used for the purpose of this study. It is anticipated that the duration of the study will be 9 weeks long. In addition to the observations, I would like to ask your youth 5 questions about their history in the foster care system. During the informal interview, only the following questions will be asked: "How long have you been in foster care?", "What types of placements have you been in?", "How many placements have you been in?", "How many schools have you been to?", "How old are you?". No other questions will be asked. The estimated time commitment for the interview is 5 to 10 minutes.

RISKS

There are no anticipated risks to participants who choose to participate in this study.

BENEFITS

It is anticipated that participants will benefit from this study both directly and indirectly. It is anticipated that providing the opportunity for youth to practice each skill in natural settings will increase the youth's capacity and retention of the skills to be used at a later date. Additionally, this study may provide another direct benefit in that it will help better prepare the youth for independence after emancipation from foster care. An indirect benefit is understanding if transitional living classes are helpful for youth in foster care to learn skills needed to living independently after emancipation.

PAYMENT TO PARTICIPANTS

Participants will not receive any form of payment for participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

The name of the youth who is in your guardianship will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about him/her or with the research findings from this study. Identifiable information of the youth will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission. Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your non-identifiable information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form, you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information for purposes of this study at any time in the future.

REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form, and you may refuse to do so without affecting the right of the youth who is in your guardianship to any services he/she is receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas, StopGap Inc., or The Shelter Inc., or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas, StopGap Inc., or The Shelter Inc.. If you refuse to sign, the youth who is in your guardianship cannot participate in this study.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You may withdraw your consent for the youth who is in your guardianship to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected about the youth who is in your guardianship, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: Briana Lynch, Department of Applied Behavioral Science, University of Kansas, 1000 Sunnyside Ave Rm. 4082, Lawrence, Kansas 66045.

If you cancel permission to use the information of the youth who is in your guardianship, the researchers will stop collecting additional information about him/her. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about the rights of my youth as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429, write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email irb@ku.edu.

I agree to allow my youth take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature, I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

_____   _____

Type/Print Parent/Guardian Name   Date

_____

Guardian's Signature

Researcher Contact Information

Briana Lynch
Primary Researcher
Department of Applied Behavioral Science
1000 Sunnyside Ave. Rm. 4082
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045
630-484-0836

Vincent Francisco, Ph.D.
Faculty Supervisor
Department of Applied Behavioral Science
1000 Sunnyside Ave. Rm. 4058
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045
785-864-0738

Appendix J

Assent Form

My name is Briana Lynch. I am interested in learning about the effects of the Stopgap course on your acquisition of life skills and if skills learned in the transitional living classes can be completed out in a natural community setting. Your understanding of the skills taught to you are very important and I am in interested in helping you become more successful in the community. If you would like, you can be in my study. You will not have to change any part of your daily routine. During the study, we would like to observe you performing skills learned in the StopGap transitional living classes. There will be two to three observation times scheduled; one conducted during the first StopGap class, one conducted during the last StopGap class, and an optional observation conducted after the completion of the StopGap course. The estimated time commitment for each observation activity will vary between 1 and 3 hours. These observations will be kept private and will only be used for the purpose of our study.

In addition to the observations, I would like to ask you 5 questions about your history in the foster care system; "How long have you been in foster care?", "What types of placements have you been in?", "How many placements have you been in?", "How many schools have you been to?", "How old are you?". No other questions will be asked.

We do not anticipate that there are any risks to your participation in our study. We believe that this study will help you in that you learn new skills and be provided hands on opportunities to practice these new skills in the community.

If you choose to participate in our study, this will not impact your court case or participation in StopGap services in any way. Additionally, if you do not want to participate, nothing negative will happen; you will not receive any punishment.

When I tell other people about my research, I will not use your name, so no one can tell whom I am talking about.

If you do not want to be in the study, no one will be mad at you. If you want to be in the study now and change your mind later, that's OK. You can stop at any time.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have now or when we are talking together. Do you want to take part in this project?

X_____   X_____
Type/Print Participant's Name   Date

X_____   X_____
Participant's Signature   Date