



# Opening Doors

California Connected by 25 Initiative

*Building Partnerships & Improved Outcomes for Transitioning Foster Youth  
A California Family to Family Strategy*

January 2008 Update

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*For more information about CC25I, visit: <http://www.f2f.ca.gov/California25.htm>*



# Opening Doors

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## Reflections on the Wisdom of Mark Courtney, Lorraine Fox and Darla Henry

*A compilation of perspectives, with  
Special Credit to William Meenk, Exec Dir Safe Harbor Foster Family Agency*

In recent months F2F clusters convened and heard from Mark Courtney on Educational Challenges and Opportunities for Foster Children and Youth. In November CC25I teams came together at a convening focused on understanding grief and loss experienced by foster youth and to learn about practice strategies that are sensitive to and can support grief and loss work. Some of you may have been lucky enough to hear all of them. For the first time, I really began to put some disjointed truths together that I am optimistic will be part of the transformation of the way we approach foster care.

Mark Courtney's research and message brought educational needs and aspirations to life and conveyed how deeply they are tied to overall well-being outcomes. Lorraine Fox and Darla Henry brought new understandings about separation, loss, grief and attachment. Through analogies to our everyday life and relationships, and with humor, stories and activities, children's foster care experiences and behavior were conveyed through the loss and grief lens, and I became aware of how many adult reactions and statements to youth are insensitive to and largely ignore the intense separation, loss, and grief experienced by foster youth. I also became aware that we treat symptoms instead of the underlying maladies. What I mean is we treat ADHD, PTSD, depression, and a host of other things, as well as move youth into SED and/or residential care, instead of supporting foster youth with the grief that comes from the pain of loss.

How do we as a system repair this? This is a growing theme for me as I continue to read and study information sparked by the presentation by Lorraine Fox. When you start to incorporate the information presented by Darla Henry about helping children understand and validate their histories, you have a powerful tool to help children move through the grieving process and begin to heal. The existing trend seems to ignore the youth's history and acts as if the child should be grateful for being removed from an abusive home. We are working on compiling extensive information about Life Books to give children, parents and social workers the skills and equipment to give a child a record of their past and hope for the future. And because of Mark Courtney's research, as we move this grief and loss work forward we are also considering whether remediation of a youth's educational deficits is more appropriate than special education.

TA is a powerful tool in your systems change toolkit. Can these or other TA providers assist you in your work? Let your county's CC25I lead know!

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# CC25I Practice in the New Year: A K-12 Strategic Plan

No matter what your personal, community and /or professional roles, there are opportunities everyday to promote educational success for foster youth and increase access to college and career opportunities. Here's a simple strategic plan for making a difference in 2008:

1. **Encourage youth aspirations EVERYDAY!** It doesn't matter whether those aspirations are realistic or not - just having them makes a difference. So do everything you can to reinforce a youth's aspirations. Provide concrete information to youth and their caregivers on how education, vocational, and employment opportunities and experiences lead to achieving those aspirations.
2. **Build "A-G" focus into your work and contacts EVERYDAY!** The A-G sequence is a standard series of 15 math, science and language courses required for admission to UC and CSU schools. Bring A-G up in policy and practice forums, self-assessments, SIP's, strategic plans, and all contacts with youth, caregivers, their schools and communities - the more often the better! Our foster youth need this important foundation! Consider the "perfect A-G storm" and what it accomplished in LA:  
<http://www.unitedwayla.org/getinformed/rr/socialreports/Pages/TheA-GStory.aspx>

## Funding to Support Foster Youth Education Outcomes

### Foster Youth Services (FYS)

As of 7/1/06 Foster Youth Services (FYS) funding expanded so that foster youth in group homes, foster homes, foster family agencies and juvenile detention could be served. While responsibilities of the FYS programs are clearly defined in Ed Code 42921, no two Countywide FYS programs are identical. In several Connected by 25 counties, County Offices of Education are utilizing FYS funds to support Educational Liaison positions. These liaisons assist specific populations of students in foster care, including those on probation, with timely transfer of health and education records, supports and services to meet educational needs, linkage with AVID programs, assistance in completing high school, linkage with Foster Youth Success Initiative Liaisons at local Community Colleges, and other ILP, education and career opportunities. Orange County is using their FYS funds to leverage IVE funding. They are serving foster youth starting at age 10 to 19 years old. Through their FYS Juvenile Detention Grant Funding they are also serving all former dependents 10 to 19 years old who are now residing in Probation institutions. The Orange County model is impressive and should be considered for replication. According to FYS year-end reports for 2006-2007, Orange county FYS provided direct services to more than 66% (1,028 youth) of their eligible population, whereas other FYS programs with Educational Liaisons reported direct services to only 10-20% of their eligible populations. For information on FYS grants for California counties, see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r8/fys07result.asp> FYS year-end reports are public record and can be requested from Jackie Wong at CDE.

### Title 1 Neglected and Delinquent Funds

California Department of Education (CDE) administers Federal Title 1 Neglected and Delinquent funds, commonly known as "Title 1 N and D." These funds are available to provide supplemental educational services to students in licensed children's institutions who fall within two categories: (1) Youth who are under supervision of probation or in juvenile detention halls who fall under the delinquent "D" funding; and (2) some youth in foster care who fall under the Neglected "N" funding. County Offices of Education and School District Title 1 Coordinators can apply for, and receive these funds which are capped annually. Licensed Children's Institutions (LCI's) include Group Homes, Foster Family Agencies (FFA), and Juvenile Detention Facilities. These LCI's must complete a form commonly referred to as the "blue form" indicating the number of youth that meet the criteria "delinquency" or "neglected" mentioned above. Foster Youth living in non-FFA Foster Homes and Emergency Placement Shelters are not counted. Per pupil distributions are determined based upon the number of applicants for funding in any given fiscal year. Encouraging your local LCI's to participate in the Title 1 N and D program may allow for additional educational support services being provided for youth in their care. Please contact Jeff Breshears at 916-319-0946 or [JBreshears@cde.ca.gov](mailto:JBreshears@cde.ca.gov) for specific program details.



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# Caregivers as Transition Teachers & Partners

*Our CC25I Goal for ILP is that it be fully integrated with the child welfare & probation systems and provide a comprehensive continuum of accessible transition services in community locations where youth feel safe, connected to peers, supported by caregivers and significant connections, and encouraged to excel.*

Orange County has really taken to heart this vision and their CC25I work includes engaging caregivers as transition teachers and partners for the youth in their care. They have held 9 focus groups for foster care providers in community locations and received many great suggestions on how caregivers would like to be engaged. One particularly delightful brainstorm is to have ILP workers or Independent Living Coaches assigned to the caregiver, thereby amplifying the youth served and the communication/coordination in teaching and reinforcing transitional life skills.

## Trailblazing Integration & Permanency

By David Ruiz, Fresno County Probation Supervisor

Our Superior Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Honorable Denise Whitehead has supported our CC25I program and embraced its inclusion of Probation foster youth. Her insight has brought new guidance and vision into seeking permanency for probation youth. A pending probation adoption case is testament to this change. The case is a relative placement case where a probation youth was placed with an aunt. There was severe family dysfunction that was considered a direct cause of the minor's delinquency petition. The probation youth was "thriving at all levels" (emotionally, academically, and socially) in the aunt's home and was interested in being adopted by the aunt. The placement had been stable for over a year and adoption appeared to be in the best interest of the minor. One afternoon I received a phone call from Judge Whitehead asking me if we were "up for a challenge". Well needless to say when your Presiding Judge calls to ask you this you're either worried or excited. We were excited but a bit overwhelmed, especially with the issues of terminating parental rights. Collaboration with Fresno County DCFS became critical in this process, as their adoptions unit guided us through the WIC 366.26 report and recommendation portion of the process.

This change hasn't happened overnight as it has taken over two years to get buy in from everyone involved. This began with the task of Title IV-E compliance with the Administrative Office of the Courts/Judicial Council. Judge Whitehead was instrumental in changing the way we do business with Probation Foster Care placements at all levels from the Court orders to Probation reports. We have also brought specialized permanency training from the AOC along with Fresno County DCFS and Probation to County staff, judges, and attorneys. Secondly, Judge Whitehead challenged us to seek "guardianship" in probation placement cases where we had identified family members that wanted to care for the children beyond a 1-year period, but didn't want to seek adoption due to parents remaining involved in the youth's life. We are happy to report that we have successfully facilitated four guardianships through Juvenile Delinquency Court and Probation. Also, the implementation of Kin-Gap plus for probation guardianships has enhanced this opportunity for family members and mentors who need the financial support due to fixed incomes. Funding is no longer a barrier to guardianships!!!

Lastly and most importantly there has been a professional culture change in Probation Foster Care Placement at all levels from the Federal and State outcomes (AB 636) to local Court and departmental views on placement. While we stay focused on our primary task and goal of safety for the community, we also recognize that we need to change the way we do business with our Probation foster youth to avoid the outcomes of homelessness, recidivism, drug addiction, and incarceration. CC25I really brings home the importance of permanency and family for youth in our system. The workshops, trainings, forums, and interaction with our County Social Services have been crucial in this change and implementation of "best practice".



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# Emancipation Vs. College 101

By former foster youth, 19 years old

As a freshman in college and alumni of foster care, I've realized that emancipation and the transition into adulthood left out one extremely important aspect of adult life: college preparedness. From the age of 16-18, I.L.S.P taught me how to budget, write a check, and forewarned me of the trials and tribulations of the almighty credit card. This is not to say that those lessons were not needed because they have most certainly come in handy during my matriculation into college but there were other lessons that were just as important that could've been taught.

One lecture that I would've especially appreciated is on the inscrutable and incomprehensible organization that is known on college campuses as the financial aid office. I did not know of the limitless amounts of hours that would be necessary to overcome barriers and endure the tedium of financial aid processing. I had no clue that enrolling would be so hard and at one point, the thought of giving up entirely became more and more attractive. Fortunately, I had a mentor who was also a college student and she guided and encouraged me through the process before I could do anything irrational.

*Do you have a program or ideas that will promote stronger partnerships and cross training with financial aide offices? Please share your ideas on how to support transitioning foster youth in this process. Send to [ca.connectedby25@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ca.connectedby25@sbcglobal.net).*

## Fresno Board of Supervisors Turn up Volume on K-12 Education

*"It is overwhelming that one Board of Supervisors' meeting with school officials has added a lot of interest and enthusiasm for our work!"*

By Kaye Fredrickson, MSW, Ed Liaison Fresno County Children and Family Services

Fresno County Board of Supervisors met on October 30, 2007 with school district superintendents and school board presidents with a goal to promote school and county collaborative efforts for students serviced by Fresno County child welfare and probation departments. The Department of Children and Family Services took the lead in setting up the Board of Supervisors' meeting under the guidance of Director Catherine Huerta. Two-thirds of Fresno County's 34 school district's officials attended the meeting held at the Juvenile Justice Campus. Here are some highlights of the meeting:

- The collective responsibility to address the many child and family problems is too complex for any one entity to manage and issues must be identified and plans made to collectively move forward to address them;
- Many students intersect between the county and schools, yet often the agencies do not share background information. County and school officials at the meeting cited power struggles and fear of violating confidentiality laws for a lack of cooperation.
- Numerous county directors and school superintendents made dynamic presentations citing successful best-practices and evidenced-based programs for at-risk youth;
- County School Superintendent Larry Powell said data exchange and sharing would go a long way toward helping the students and eliminate duplicative school and county programs for children in foster care or in the juvenile justice system. "Today the barriers begin to fall," he said;
- Supervisor Susan B. Anderson's motion to endorse an information-sharing partnership between the county and schools (DCFS, Probation, Fresno County Office of Education and School Districts) passed unanimously;
- Concern was expressed regarding local group homes receiving letters of support from out-of-town jurisdictions. California Assemblyman Juan Arambula stated that he would look into this issue.

Plans to address these and other issues arising from the meeting will be handled through the Inter-agency Council for Children and Families, as well as the Department of Children and Family Services, the Probation Department, the Office of Education, and school districts. The meeting attendees plan on establishing a grid of all school and county services in an effort to stop duplicating and improve services.



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# ETO Matters

ETO Tune-up of Assessments C,D & E Completed!

## AFTERCARE ASSESSMENT ready for implementation with ILP/Aftercare Youth!

The revised Assessments C (At-Emancipation) and Combined D&E (Aftercare) have been pushed out to CC25I ETO sites. There's no better time than NOW to implement them with your ILP youth - both contain information needed for this year's ILP Annual Statistical & Annual Narrative Reports. Here are helpful implementation guidelines:

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1. For "random contact" aftercare youth, do D&E at point of contact. Some counties may also have county-specific protocols for updating Assessment D&E when there is subsequent contact with the youth during the Federal Fiscal year (ending September 30th).
2. For youth in THP+ and other on-going services, do D&E as close to the end of the Federal Fiscal Year as possible.
3. Always do D&E at the time youth exit on-going programs like ILP\Aftercare and THP+ as loss of contact with the youth may occur.
4. Counties and their THP+ programs should develop local protocols for conducting Assessment D for two consecutive years following a youth's exit from THP+, in order to have data for the THP+ section of ILP Annual Narrative Report.

More info coming soon on implementing Assessment D&E with a random sample of aftercare youth!

*[Note: Counties may develop protocols for their THP+ programs to use Assessment D&E with participants on a quarterly basis as well as at entry to and exit from THP+ in order to provide information for the non-mandatory quarterly report recommended by the THP+ Statewide Implementation Project.]*

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## ETO User's Tips

The "Groups" feature in ETO is a helpful way to group participants together. Some sites use Groups to group participants into caseloads, or to track groups of participants who go take a class or series of classes together. The following are helpful tips on when to use Groups, and when not to.

### DO

Use Groups to track similar types of participant efforts, such as participants who will follow a class or series of classes together, or participants on a particular staff member's caseload.

### DON'T

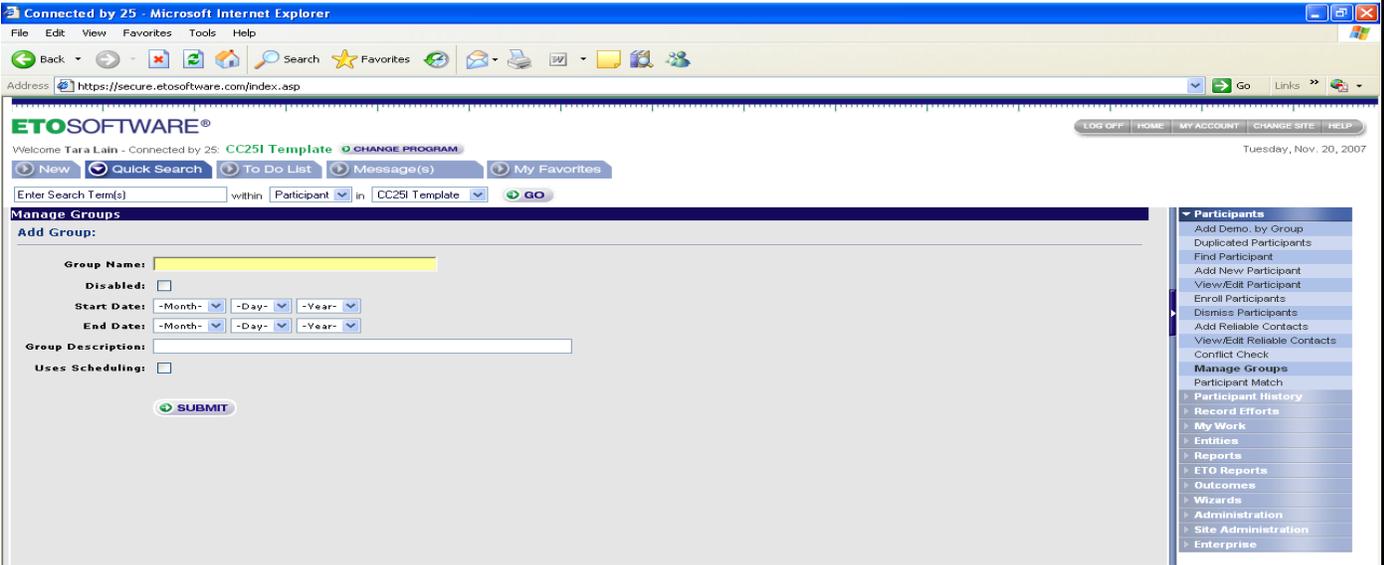
Use Groups to record efforts for a group of participants who attend a one-time class, workshop or orientation together. Use "Multiple Participant Efforts" instead.

The following is the "Working with Groups" section from the CC25I/ETO Manual for End-Users:



### A. To add a new group to manage youth in separate groups:

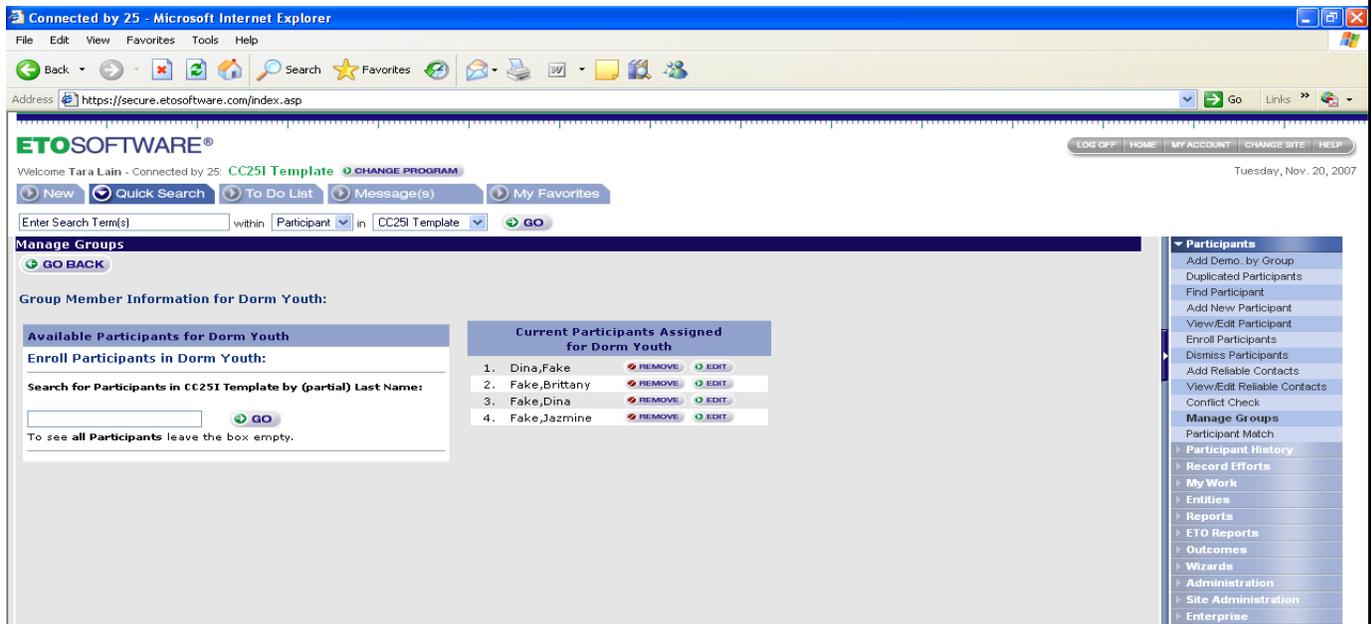
1. Click "My Favorites" tab on the top of the window, or "Participants" on the blue navigation bar on the right-hand side.
2. Click "Manage Groups."
3. At the bottom of the window, click "ADD."



4. In the refreshed window, type the name of the group in the yellow box.
5. For "Start Date," select any date and enter.
  - a. TIP: It is best to leave "End Date" blank, because if the End Date for the Group is any date prior to today's date, the Group will no longer appear in the "Manage Groups" list. However, if the group is no longer in existence, and there is no chance that you will want to edit or modify the group, you may fill in the End Date.
6. If you have a description of the group, type it in the box for "Group Description."
7. Click "SUBMIT."
8. When the main window refreshes, you can assign a youth to the group you have just created.
9. Use the "Search" box to find a youth you want to assign to the group.
10. When the search results are shown, each name bears an "ADD" button. Click "ADD" to assign one youth at a time to the group. The window will get refreshed, and the added name will appear on the right-hand side under the "Current Participants Assigned for (the name of the group)" column.

### B. To assign a youth to a group:

1. Click "My Favorites" tab on the top of the window.
2. When the window refreshes, click "Manage Groups."
3. The refreshed window shows all the groups. Locate the group you want to assign a youth. Click the corresponding "MEMBERS" button to the far right



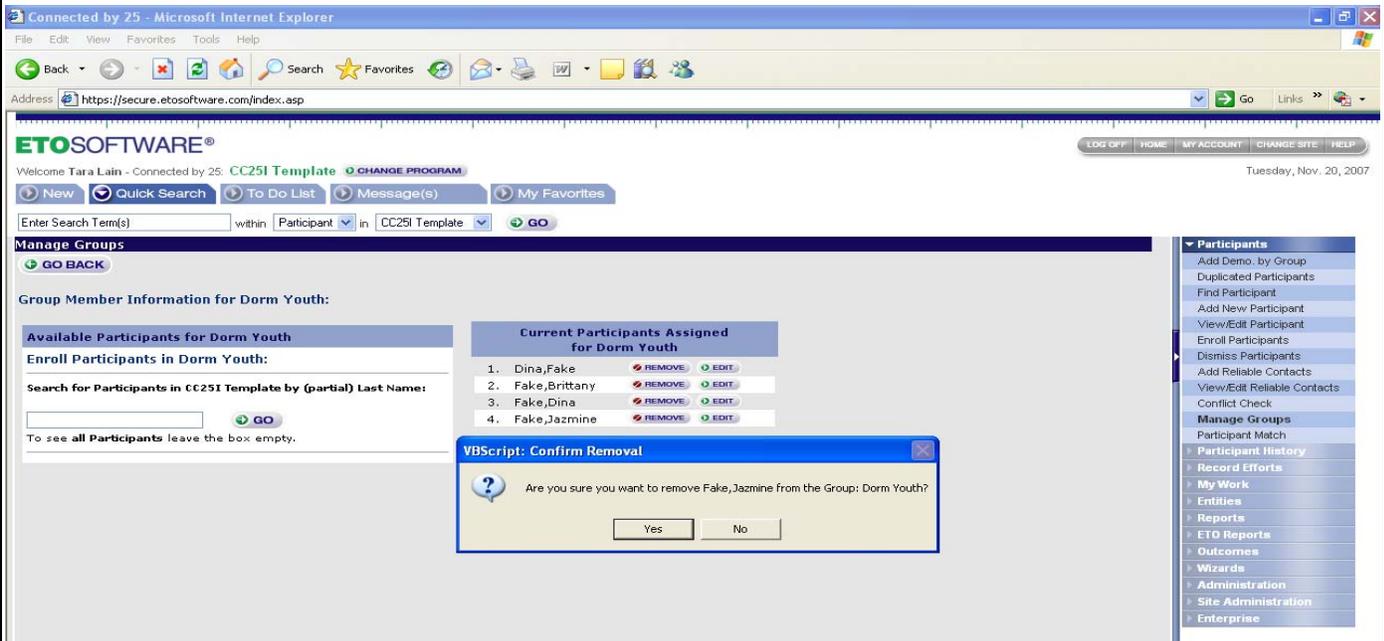
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4. Use the “Search” box to find a youth you want to assign to the group.
5. When the search results are shown, each name bears an “ADD” button. Click “ADD” to assign one youth at a time to the group. The window will be refreshed and the added name will appear on the right-hand side under the “Current Participants Assigned for (the name of the group)” column.

**C. To remove a youth from a group:**

1. Click “My Favorites” tab on the top of the window.
2. When the window refreshes, click “Manage Groups.”
3. The refreshed window shows all the groups. Locate the group you want to remove a youth from. Click the corresponding “MEMBERS” button to the far right.
4. Under the “Current Participants Assigned for (the name of the group)” column, locate the youth you want to remove and click “REMOVE.”
5. When a window pops up, click “Yes” to confirm.



6. On the next refreshed window, you can enter the date and reason for termination. Click “CONTINUE.”

**D. To remove a group from the list:**

1. Click “My Favorites” tab on the top of the window.
2. When the window refreshes, click “Manage Groups.”
3. The refreshed window shows all the groups. Locate the group you want to assign a youth. Under “Group Status” column, click the corresponding “DISABLE” button for the group.
4. When a window pops up, click “Yes” to confirm.

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To contact UCB on-line for ETO assistance or support, try out their new “ETO Support” e-mail address:

[ETOsupport@berkeley.edu](mailto:ETOsupport@berkeley.edu)

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