Books and Articles on Transitioning from Foster Care

Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: Identifying Strategies and Best Practices
2007-2008 Presidential Initiative
National Association of Counties
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Available at: www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/Youth%20Aging%20Out%20of%20Foster%20Care.pdf

This presidential initiative addresses the issue of increases in the number of youth aging out of the foster care system. Data shows these youth are at a higher risk of homelessness, unemployment, illness, incarceration, welfare, dependency, and sexual and physical victimization than their peers. The issue brief highlights the federal framework to address youth aging out of foster care, strategies to address the needs of foster care youth, and ways to provide these young adults with a social safety net. Although foster care youth are susceptible to negative outcomes, this initiative provides resources to enhance their well-being by providing services for a healthy transition into adulthood.

Housing for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care
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The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development conducted a study on housing for youth aging out of foster care and the benefits of using the Family Unification Program (FUP). This study evaluates the range of housing settings available for youth, identifies opportunities to mitigate the risk of homelessness for transitioning youth, and suggests evaluating efforts related to housing for youth aging out of foster care. The findings of this study identify concrete strategies to aid the Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, by advancing health and housing stability for youth transitioning out of foster care.
This article addresses the issues facing youth transitioning out of foster care and the benefits of extending foster care services beyond age 18. Foster youth “aging out” of the system face a wide variety of challenges in meeting their needs for healthcare, education, employment, housing and emotional support. NCSL offers an Extending Foster Care Policy Toolkit that highlights the various components involved in extending foster care; including the brain science of older youth in foster care, the importance of engaging youth in the process, the data on staying in or leaving foster care at 18 and the potential implementation hurdles and examples of how states have overcome them. Under the implementation of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (FCA), states are allowed to extend foster care services to foster youth up until the age of 21. The states of Washington, Illinois and Texas have successfully continued foster care services and have seen the benefits of the FCA.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development conducted a study to report on the challenges and benefits of using the Family Unification Program (FUP) in our communities. The Family Unification Program (FUP) is the only federal program that provides vouchers for housing assistance for youth aging out of foster care and families. The report describes how communities are using FUP to support youth, research findings on public housing agencies (PHAs) administration of FUP, surveys of public child welfare agencies partnerships with PHAs that serve youth, and basic information on the program.
Success Beyond 18: A Better Path for Young People Transitioning from Foster Care to Adulthood
Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
503 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21202


Success Beyond 18 is a national campaign to provide a better path to success for young people transitioning from foster care to adulthood. Success Beyond 18 aims to change the status quo and give young people in foster care better opportunities to succeed in family, work, and life. This campaign was initiated due to the recognition that foster care can play a positive role in youth’s lives, and that foster care should provide youth with the same building blocks and positive experiences for success in life that their peers with intact families experience. These building blocks include: “the support of family, peers, and community; access to education, work and other community supports and services, opportunities to build resilience and assume adult roles, financial capability and assets, and direct involvement in making decisions that impact them—the hallmarks of the transition to independence and a productive and healthy adulthood.”

Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 26

Chapin Hall
University of Chicago
1313 East 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
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This evaluation conducted by Chapin Hall studies the John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the adequacy of current efforts to assist youth make a successful transition from foster care using sites in Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin. The success of the young people in the study are described in terms of self-sufficiency during early adulthood. Self-sufficiency was defined across a wide range of outcome measures including; postsecondary educational attainment, employment, housing stability, public assistance receipt, and criminal justice system involvement. Findings were that these former foster youth are faring poorly as a group.
Transitioning from Foster Care: An Experiential Activity Guidebook

Muskie School of Public Service
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Portland, Maine 04104-9300

Available at:
http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/Publications/ipsi/Transitioning_from_Foster_Care_Guidebook.06.pdf

This guidebook uses a three-stage Experiential Model – doing, reflecting, and applying-to teach adolescents fundamental skills prior to transitioning from foster care. Within the Experiential Model activities are incorporated around the William Bridges Transition Framework. The curriculum provides readers with a step-by-step experiential facilitation guide designed to engage participants in activities and reflective discussion while exploring the concept of transition. The first part of the guidebook provides general information about the role of the facilitator and the transition framework. The second part of the guidebook offers specific activities with step-by-step instructions for facilitation and debriefing strategies.

Trauma-Informed Practice with Young People in Foster Care
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This brief by the Jim Casey Youth Initiatives program addresses issues surrounding foster care youth and trauma. Many foster care youth have experienced psychological and physical abuse, neglect and dislocation in their lives. This issue brief highlights the importance of understanding youth’s responses to trauma, and defines trauma-informed care and the practices encompassing it. Trauma-informed practices involve understanding the impact of trauma on young people’s current functioning and recognizing the ways systems might add to young people’s trauma. This brief evaluates the extent foster youth have experienced trauma and their responses, how trauma-informed services benefit young people, and how child welfare services can become trauma-informed.
Alone Without a Home: A State by State Review of Laws Affecting Unaccompanied Youth

Available at: http://www.nlchp.org/Alone_Without_A_Home
Email: email@nlchp.org

Each year, an estimated 1.6 million unaccompanied children and youth (ages 12-17) experience homelessness. They leave home for a variety of reasons including; family conflict, parental neglect, parental mental health issues, or substance abuse. Whether “runaway” or “throwaway”, these unaccompanied homeless youth face many legal barriers that prevent them from reaching out to state agencies and service providers that could help them. Moreover, laws related to this population vary considerably from state to state which leads to misinterpretations by service providers and avoidance of services on the part of youth. This report reviews current laws that affect the lives of unaccompanied homeless youth in all 50 U.S. states and 6 territories. The report also provides recommendations for policy changes that could facilitate better support for these youth.

Helping Children Aging Out of Foster Care Prepare for Independence
Association of Small Foundations (2008), 6 Pages.

Exponent Philanthropy, formerly “Association of Small Foundations”
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Available at: http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-HelpingChildrenAgingOut-2008-Full.pdf
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This discussion guide provides suggestions on ways to invest and make improvements in the lives of youth aging out of care. This guide additionally offers effective strategies for preparing youth aging out of foster care, and where to locate additional information and resources. This discussion guide, one of a series on Investing in Strategies to Serve Vulnerable Children and Families, is designed to provide clear and concise information to ASF members and other small foundations on strategies for supporting nonprofits that serve vulnerable children and families and to share concrete ways that small foundations can invest in creating productive adulthoods for vulnerable children. This discussion guide series is funded by and draws on the experience, learning, and resources of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Annie E. Casey Foundation is the largest philanthropy in the U.S. dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable children and families. The foundation is driven by its mission to find the most effective solutions that narrow the gap between children growing up in areas of concentrated poverty and their peers. Their work reflects the core belief that children do well when their families are strong and families in supportive communities are able to raise healthy and productive children.
Charting a Better Future for Transitioning Foster Youth: Report from a National Summit on the Fostering Connections to Success Act
American Bar Association
321 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60654

Phone: (312) 988-5000
Available at: http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/center_on_children_and_the_law/youth_at_risk/transitioning_foster_youth_report.authcheckdam.pdf

The American Bar Association’s Commission on Youth at Risk held a National Summit on the enacted Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (FCA). This report highlights the issues addressed at the National Summit concerning foster youth aging out of the system and how the FCA was affecting young adults in the system. The report summarizes the recommendations of National Summits experts and offers suggestions to expansively implement the Fostering Connections Act. The National Summit focused on re-conventionalizing practices and approaches for youth in the following areas: permanency for older youth; courts and the legal process; housing and placement; education and employment; health and mental health; crossover youth; youth engagement and youth-focused systems; and state implementation of the Fostering Connections Act. These special topics were used to identify challenges for FCA, disproportionalities in people aging out of foster care, and the challenges for vulnerable youth populations (pregnant and parenting teens, LGBTQ youth, children with disabilities, and immigrant youth).

A Toolkit for Meeting the Educational Needs of Runaway and Homeless Youth
Author: Kayla Jackson (2011), 41 pages.

This toolkit was developed by staff at the National Network 4 Youth (NN4Y) for use by schools teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators, nurses, and other trusted allies in the school community. The toolkit raises awareness of the needs of runaway and homeless children (RHY) in schools and alerts school staff to the signs and characteristics of RHY and the many federal, state, and local resources available to assist schools. This educational toolkit includes information on: the role of educational agencies; federal support and initiatives; signs of youth homelessness; community resources available; and current collaborative efforts and programs.