



**North American Association of Christians in Social Work**  
*A Vital Christian Presence in Social Work*

PO Box 121  
Botsford, CT 06404  
[www.nacsw.org](http://www.nacsw.org)  
888.426.4712

**PREPARING AT-RISK FOSTER ADOLESCENTS FOR INDEPENDENT  
LIVING: PREPARING TO AGE OUT OF THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM**

**By: Kenneth M. Larimore**

**Presented at:  
NACSW Convention 2012  
October, 2012  
St. Louis, MO**

PREPARING AT-RISK FOSTER ADOLESCENTS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING:

PREPARING TO AGE OUT OF THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

by

Kenneth M. Larimore

For over 20 years, a series of federal laws has provided funding for programs that support adolescents in their transition from foster care to emancipation (Collins, 2001; Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2006; Tweddle, 2007); however, young people making this transition continue to have poor prospects for successful adult living (Berzin, 2008; Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007). The most recent legislation is the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. The mandate of the act requires independent living programs to provide life skills training and education for emancipating foster adolescents with the expectation that they will be self-sufficient upon reaching adulthood (Krebs & Pitcoff, 2004, 2006). Research concerning the self-sufficiency of adolescents emancipated from foster care shows that many of these independent living programs are not working (Berzin, 2008; Courtney et al., 2001).

#### Background of the Study

Historically, foster adolescents have not had the needed support to meet self-sufficiency outcomes and are therefore ill-prepared to make the transition from foster care to independency and self-sufficiency (Courtney et al., 2001; Freundlich, Avery, & Padgett, 2007; Keller, Cusick, & Courtney, 2007; Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007). Foster adolescents may spend months, sometimes years, in a structured foster care system that often denies them the opportunity to make their own decisions and practice the skills necessary for adulthood. As a result, emancipated adolescents have trouble successfully living and working independently. Research by Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor and Nesmith (2001), has shown a high degree of homelessness among adults who were former foster adolescents. Thirty-nine percent of homeless subjects used in the study of Piliavin et al. reported a history of placement in foster care. Other researchers indicated rates of homelessness in the range of 12-35% among adults formerly in foster care (Pecora et al., 2003; Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007). There are two

primary explanations for why adolescents who were in foster care are vulnerable to homelessness. Both are particularly important for adolescents who have just been discharged from care. First, adolescents coming out of foster care are poorly prepared for independent living (Berzin, 2008; Keller, Cusick, & Courtney, 2007; Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007). Many leave their placement with no job prospects and/or no high school diploma (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2006). Second, the negative experiences foster adolescents experienced from their birth families may leave them more prone to psychosocial problems and impede their ability to secure and maintain stable housing (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2006). Educational achievement eludes many of these adolescents as shown by graduation rates from high school as low as 33% (Reilly, 2003). It is interesting to note that adolescents, formerly in foster care, have considerably more involvement with the law than non-foster adolescents. Research (Buehler, Orme, Post, & Patterson, 2000; Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2006;) found that since leaving foster care, 25% of former foster adolescents have been involved in criminal activities, and they are also more prone to substance abuse and mental health problems. Since 2000, there have been gaps in the literature of foster care outcomes.

### Statement of the Problem

Typically when children are removed from their home by the child welfare authorities, by law, they become wards of their prospective state under the guise of *parens patriae* (Anderson, 2001). Although many of these young people return home within one year of their stay in the system, a significant number of them, after remaining in the system over time, spend a large portion of their middle to late childhood years continually mired down in the foster care system (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006). Unfortunately, a growing body of knowledge now shows that many children in the foster care system are deciding to emancipate

themselves. In various studies (Charles & Nelson, 2000; Child Welfare League of America, 2003; National Foster Care Awareness Project, 2000; Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007), it was estimated that approximately 20,000 to 25,000 youths per year leave the foster care system. The result is that many are leaving the system unprepared to live independently. In longitudinal study by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, Courtney et al. (2005) examined outcomes for current and former foster youth from Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa, showed that outcomes in multiple domains were worse for foster youth than the general population. They found that 62% of the American teens who were enrolled in school at 19 were in a 4 year college, compared with only 18% of foster youth. They found that 37% of youth who had exited foster care by age 19 were neither employed nor in school. Fully 90% of 19-year-old foster youth earned less than \$10,000 per year, compared with only 79% of the overall population of American 19-year-olds. Foster youth experienced higher rates of hospitalization due to drug use or emotional problems than the general population of 19 year olds. Foster adolescents were more than twice as likely to become a parent by the age of 19 as the general population of 19 year olds (Shirk & Stangler, 2004). Thus the problem that the author of this study will determine if the staffs of five private nonprofit foster care agencies located in the state of Ohio were effective in developing advance strategies for adolescents in their charge to live independently as emancipated individuals.

#### Introduction to the Literature Review

Emancipation is the point at which an adolescent, who has turned 18 in an out-of-home placement, is no longer under the care of the child welfare system and is turning or has turned 18. When young adults in foster care are emancipated the state no longer has responsibility for their welfare. These young adults are the most vulnerable in our society as they have suffered

extreme abuse and/or neglect (Henderson & Jackson, 2004; (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2006).

Once emancipated, these adolescents are forced into independence unprepared and unsupported while their similar age peer group continue to receive parental support.

Shirk and Strangler (2004) has found that most Americans do not expect their children to complete the transition to adulthood until the age of 26. According to Shirk and Strangler (2004), this transition period generally involves a long transition period during which young people may leave and return home again on three or more occasions. It has been estimated that each year more than 20,000 American adolescents will exit the foster care system with the expectation that they will be able to live self-sufficiently (Child Welfare League of America, 2003; Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2006). As a result, many young adults leave care with little social, emotional or financial support from their families as compared to their peers in the general population and they typically make the transition to independence earlier (Leathers & Testa, 2006; Courtney et al., 2001; Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007). Stein (2006; 2008) identified five measures of readiness to living independently for young adults formerly in foster care: employment, education, living arrangements, supportive networks, and cost to the community. Courtney et al. (2001) included other measures, such as health care and safety, legal involvement, and preparedness for life in the community.

Researchers from the early 1980s (Euster, Ward, Varner, & Euster, 1984; Festinger, 1983; Jones & Moses, 1984; Mauzerall, 1983; Zimmerman & Williams, 1982) strongly suggested that child welfare workers and policy makers needed to examine and respond to the fact that many young people exiting out-of-home care were not sufficiently prepared for living independently. In outcome studies in the 1990s, researchers continued to paint a disturbing picture. Between 10% and 40% of young adults formerly in foster care were unemployed and many had trouble

keeping steady employment (Cook, 1991; Courtney & Piliavin, 1998). Graduation rates from high school for these young people were as low as 34% (Barth, 1990). Several researchers reported homelessness to be a problem (Barth, 1990; Courtney & Piliavin, 1998). In a more recent study, Mason et al. (2003) looked at 222 young people from four foster care agencies six months after they left care. The researchers found 9% of all the young adults, whose average age was 19, had been homeless at least once. Based on 100 young people leaving foster care in Nevada, Reilly (2003) reported that 36% indicated there were times when they had not had a place to live.

Most of these researchers examined the rates of prior out-of-home placements among people who were recently homeless at the time of the study; few researchers examined the rates of homelessness among people with histories of child welfare involvement. A number of researchers indicated the rate of homelessness was in the range of 12% to 35% among this group (Courtney et al., 2001; Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, & Nesmith, 2001; Pecora et al., 2003; Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007; Benedict et al., 2006).

Within the literature, researchers are in agreement that there are two primary explanations for why adolescents in out-of-home care are vulnerable to becoming homeless at some point in their adult lives. Both of these are particularly important for young adults leaving care. First, young adults who exited foster care were poorly prepared for independent living (Berzin, 2008; Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007). Mendes and Moslehuddin (2006) found that the officials in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, have failed to provide the precare, transitional, and postcare supports and services needed to guarantee improved outcomes for young adults leaving care. A majority of these young people left their placements without a job or a high school diploma (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2006; Reilly, 2003). Second, the

experiences borne by this group, both before and during foster care placements, may have left them more prone to psychosocial problems that impede their ability to secure and maintain stable housing. Members of this group are also more prone to substance abuse and mental health problems (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2006; Buehler et al., 2000).

McMillen and Tucker (1999) conducted a study of older adolescents who exited the child welfare system and transitioned into independent living. The researchers examined the status of young adults at the time of their exit from the child welfare system in order to examine the system's effectiveness in preparing them for life after placement. They discovered what type of adolescent stays in out-of-home care until they are young adults. McMillen and Tucker offered a backdoor look into who is best served by permanency planning efforts.

There are two reasons that McMillen and Tucker (1999) continued the study of young people who were 16 to 18 years of age and exiting from out-of-home care. First, in previous studies, researchers did not adequately assess key exit status variables, such as where the young adults were living and the reasons for exit. Second, the kinds of adolescents in out-of-home care and the system itself keep changing. McMillen and Tucker studied young adults who were discharged from the care and custody of the Missouri Division of Family Services. Case records were reviewed and randomly sampled. There were 477 young people who met the initial criteria for the study: (a) alternative care case closed between October 1, 1992 and September 30, 1993, (b) alternative care case opened six months or longer at time of case closing, and (c) age 17 or older at the time of case closing. These 477 adolescents constituted 8.8% of the 5,442 young people who left alternative care in Missouri during this time frame (McMillen & Tucker). From the 477 case records, 300 were randomly selected after fitting the criteria of the targeted population, 252 were placed in the final sample. The sample included case records of 167



females (66.3%) and 85 males (33.7%); 194 were White (77%), 55 were Black (21.8%), and 3 were of mixed race (1.2%). The final sample of 252 young adults was from 71 different counties. There were 72 young people (28.6%) considered to be from urban areas, and who were identified as having a case manager in Jackson County (Kansas City), St. Louis city, or St. Louis County (McMillen & Tucker).

The state database system contained data relative to age, race, entrance and discharge dates, and placement episode information, including placement type and length of stay. Pertinent information was abstracted from case records by the first author ( $n=193$ , 76.6%), second author ( $n=30$ , 11.9%), and an additional state employee ( $n=29$ , 11.5%) trained in the abstraction methods (McMillen & Tucker, 1999). Information abstracted included (a) family problems at time of placement, (b) educational status at discharge, employment status at discharge, (c) involvement in independent living skills classes, (d) reasons for release from custody, and (e) whether the young adult had become a parent (McMillen & Tucker). To account for a deficiency in other studies, McMillen and Tucker assessed educational progress in addition to high school completion. Case reviewers rated educational status for each young person at the time of exit from 0 (*much worse than expected*) to 4 (*better than expected*). Because the authors were unable to use independent raters to compare and reconcile ratings, each of the 5 points on the scale was grounded with explicit descriptors to increase reliability (McMillen & Tucker).

Case records also revealed information on several possible problem areas that the young adults may or may not have had at the time of discharge. Criminal involvement was defined as any indication in the case record that the young person had been arrested for a felony or was involved with a gang. If caseworkers noted a continual pattern of alcohol or drug use in the case

record, the young adult was considered to have substance abuse problems (McMillen & Tucker, 1999).

Given these rough indicators, the most significant limitation in the methods used concerns measurement. Because case records and computer database information were used for all the data collection, no information on the reliability and validity of the measures used was available. McMillen and Tucker (1999) found the method did compare favorably with other studies in the substantive area in which administrative data or case records alone were used.

McMillen and Tucker (1999) showed that adolescents who stayed in care past the age of 17 tended to enter care as early teenagers, stay for several years, and have many placements. Few adolescents entered care early and had a stable placement history. Only five adolescents (2%) entered out-of-home care before age 10 and had fewer than three placements. Another 52 (20.6%) entered care before age 10 and had three or more placements. The majority of adolescents comprised of 161 (63.9%) entered care after age 10 and had three or more placements. The mean age at discharge was 18.42. The young adult's status at the time of discharge had shown that 74 young adults (29.4%) had never held a job prior to leaving care. No employment information was available on 20 young adults (8%). Thus, 160 (63.4%) were known to have some employment experience prior to leaving out-of-home care (McMillen & Tucker).

#### Review of Critical Literature

The literature critical to the study was organized into three themes: (a) legislation, (b) outcomes of young adults after leaving foster care, and (c) evaluations of independent living programs. In the literature, researchers provided a wealth of information leading to an overall understanding of the nature and effectiveness of independent living services, practices and

research. Within the literature, researchers have presented both strengths and limitations that this researcher will attempt to explicate throughout this review.

### *Legislation*

Preparing adolescents in out-of-home care for successful independent living has not been a primary goal of the child welfare system. Mallon (1998) stated that although the goal of the developers of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 was to restructure the out-of-home care system in order to prevent unnecessary placement of children in care and to move children in a timely manner towards permanence, the act failed to address the need for independent living skills for adolescents living in out-of-home care.

Festinger (Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007) brought awareness to the issue of preparing young people for independent living. Festinger examined the outcomes of 277 adolescents who left foster care in the New York metropolitan area. The Festinger found that these adolescents had poor outcomes as young adults; one third had not completed high school and 21% were receiving public assistance.

In response to Festinger (Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007) who documented the poor outcomes of former foster adolescents, the Independent Living Initiative was enacted in 1985 to help young people in foster care to learn skills necessary to prepare them for life after aging out of foster care. With this legislation, lawmakers amended the Title IV-E of the Social Security Act and provided federal funds to states so that professionals might teach young adults, ages 16 to 18, about daily living skills and how to become self-sufficient (Collins, 2001; Leathers & Testa, 2006). The main goal of the proponents of the independent living program was to prepare foster adolescents to function in society without depending on public assistance (Geenen et al., 2007). State officials were given a tremendous amount of flexibility on

how to use the funds. However, adolescents in lockup facilities, including juvenile offenders and those in mental institutions were not eligible to participate in independent living programs (Collins, 2001). The legislation was important because with it lawmakers responded to a problem and provided resources for the development of programs. However, due to the multiple challenges faced by child welfare agencies, the needs of adolescents in foster care received little attention, the resources provided were small, and the development of programs was limited (Collins). Consequently, the overall impact of the independent living program services on young adults was minor (Collins).

In 1999, members of Congress reviewed the plight of emancipated young people and saw that there was still not enough being done to resolve this problem. As a result, they passed the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 to provide increased funding for independent living program services. For example, with the passage of the act, lawmakers increased the funding for independent living program services, extended services to the age of 21, allowed young adults to use up to 30% of the money for room and board, and allowed for a more broad range of services (Lemon, Hines, & Merdinger, 2005). Another advancement of the act was the ability to extend Medicaid health insurance for former foster care youth up to age 21 (Collins, 2001).

The Foster Care Independence Act also established the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program has five purposes as follows:

1. Identify adolescents who are expected to be in foster care to age 18 and help them make a transition to self-sufficiency;
2. Help these adolescents to receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment;
3. Help them prepare for and enter post-secondary training and education institutions;
4. Provide personal and emotional support for young adults aging out of foster care; and
5. Provide a range of services and support for former foster care recipients between ages

18 and 21 to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that the program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for adulthood (Collins, 2004).

Recent legislation focused on higher education of foster care adolescents. With this legislation, the Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program, lawmakers provided resources to state officials so that they could provide vouchers for post-secondary education to young adults who are either aging out of foster care or are adopted from public foster care after age 16 (Collins, 2004).

Scannapieco, Schagrin, and Scannapieco (1995) found that the independent living program has a positive impact on the ability of young people to be self-sufficient at the time of emancipation. They compared 90 young adults who were eligible to attend an independent living program from 1988 to 1993. A total of 44 young adults participated in the program while 46 did not. Those who participated in the independent living program were more likely to finish high school and be employed at the time of discharge from the child welfare system. In this study, 87% of the young people who did not complete the independent living program also did not graduate from high school. Researchers found no significant differences by age, ethnicity, and gender of the adolescents who participated and those who did not participate (Scannapieco et al.).

Lindsey and Ahmed (1999) also compared the outcomes of young adults who had participated in the independent living program services and the outcomes of young adults who had not. The data was collected using questionnaires from former foster care adolescents who had emancipated between July, 1992 and July, 1995 and used interviews with 46 current independent living program participants and 13 staff of the program. Of the emancipated young adults, 44 participated in independent living program services and 32 had not. Lindsey and

Ahmed compared the young people in areas of employment, economic well-being, education, and housing and found that those who did not complete an independent living program did not do well, especially in the areas of employment and education. One surprising finding was that those with independent living program experience were not doing better financially, as they were more likely to use public assistance than nonparticipants. The independent living program staff believed that this was due to the program staff teaching young adults how to access available resources when they needed to. In all four areas, researchers found that young people with higher education levels and employment had greater housing stability and were more financially secure, whether or not they had participated in the independent living program. These findings by Lindsey and Ahmed (1999) indicated that independent living program participation does not provide an adequate preparation for living independently. The adolescents may need the experience of actually putting into practice the skills that they have learned from the program (Barth, 1990).

#### *Outcomes of Youth after leaving Foster Care*

In the Independent Living Initiative of 1985, lawmakers provided a framework for states to develop services to help young adults in foster care develop independent living skills (Collins, 2001; Reilly, 2003). Despite the fact that the initiative was implemented for more than 15 years, the outcomes of adolescents who transition out of foster care generally have been poor (Berzin, 2008; Courtney et al., 2001; Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007 ). Findings showed that large segments of young adults are not adequately prepared educationally, vocationally, financially, and emotionally to live on their own. Likewise, once young adults leave care their adult developmental outcomes are just as poor (Buhler et al., 2000; Courtney et al., 2001; Courtney & Dworsky, 2006; Keller, Cusick, & Courtney, 2007). In a national evaluation of

independent living programs, Cook (1994) interviewed 810 young adults, ages 18 to 24, two and four years after discharge. The first wave of the study included case record reviews of 1,644 young adults; out of those, 810 were located for face-to-face interviews. On average, Berzin (2008) indicated only about half of the young adults had completed either high school or their GED, about the same number of young adults were employed, nearly 40% were receiving some sort of public assistance, and as many as 60% of females were reported as pregnant or parenting.

Courtney et al. (2001) reported similar findings in the second wave of their longitudinal study. Courtney et al. examined a sample of adolescents at two points in time, just prior to leaving care ( $N=149$ ) and 12 to 18 months post care ( $N=113$ ). Courtney included some additional findings such as incarceration rates and victimization rates. Courtney et al. found that, 12 to 18 months after leaving foster care as many as 27% of males and 10% of females had been incarcerated. In addition, the researchers found 37% of young adults 12 to 18 months after discharge, experienced one or more of the following issues: rape, sexual assault, or homelessness (Courtney et al.).

Both Cook (1994) and Courtney et al. (2001) presented valuable information. In her study, Cook presented the first national evaluation of independent living programs. It was one of the first attempts to track young adults over a period of time in order to gather longitudinal information related to their outcomes. In addition, it was one of the first and only studies to use a large sample size, utilizing a multistage, stratified design with probability sampling at each of the three stages of selection (Cook). With the larger sample size, Cook gives strength to the study, primarily because the sample allowed for multivariate analysis of the data. The majorities of outcome studies use cross-sectional designs, have small sample size, and conduct only bivariate descriptive analyses (Kerman, et al, 2002). A final strength of the Cook study involves her

attempt to compare the outcomes of her sample to those of the general population. Cook pointed out that young adults who have been in foster care most closely resemble the 18 to 24 year olds living below the poverty level than they do the general population of 18 to 24 year olds.

In their study, Courtney et al. (2001) exhibited many of the same strengths as Cook (1994). They employed a longitudinal design, offering important information about intermediate and adult developmental outcomes of the sample over time (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Courtney et al. also attempted to use standardized measures when examining the outcomes related to education, employment, and social support.

While the two studies provide valuable information, both studies indicated limitations. In the Courtney et al. (2001) study, researchers used a small sample size. Because of the smaller sample size, Courtney et al. (2001) were unable to conduct multivariate analyses and only provided descriptive statistics about the population. Cook (1994) and Courtney et al. experienced a primary limitation of sample attrition which is common in longitudinal designs. In the Cook study, from wave one to wave two the attrition rate was approximately 49%. The attrition rate of the Courtney et al. study at wave two, while less than the Cook study was around 24% (Courtney et al.). For both studies with such high attrition rates, it is difficult to know how representative the final sample actually is which is a consideration that leaves questions as to what the outcomes may have looked like if nearly 50% had not dropped out of the study.

The researchers' failure to examine a single program model (e.g., skill building classes vs. community based activities) was a final limitation of both studies, making it difficult to connect program characteristics to outcomes (Kerman et al., 2002). Without the ability to make the link between programs and outcomes, it is impossible to know what aspects of programming



contribute to or hamper positive outcomes, and therefore what to change to improve the program design, services, and delivery.

Reilly (2003) examined the post-discharge functioning of foster care adolescents. Areas assessed were demographic information, including (a) living arrangements, education, and employment; (b) health and substance abuse; (c) support systems; (d) foster care experiences and legal issues; (e) positive values and thriving indicators; and (f) personal adjustment. The researcher conducted interviews with 100 young adults who had been out of foster care for at least 6 months.

In regard to demographic characteristics, most of the respondents in Reilly's (2003) study were females (55%), white (46%), and never married (84%). Further, the ages of the respondents ranged from 18 to 25 years of age with the average age being 20.2 years. Ages at the time that respondents entered foster care ranged from 6 months to 17 years; the average age was 9.3 years. Additionally, 50% of the respondents resided in apartments and 31% had not finished high school (Reilly).

In regard to living arrangements in the study, Reilly (2003) reported the following: (a) 29% lived with spouse, partner, or boyfriend, or girlfriend; (b) 24% lived with friends; (c) 11% lived alone; (d) 7% lived with their birthparents; (e) 8% lived with other relatives; (f) 7% lived with siblings; (g) 7% were incarcerated in a state prison; (h) 3% lived with former foster parents; (i) 2% were in the military; and (j) 2% were homeless. Further, from the time respondents had left foster care, occasionally 36% did not have a place to live (19% had lived on the streets and 18% had lived in a homeless shelter). In regard to the stability of the young people's living arrangements, 35% had moved five or more times since leaving foster care (Reilly). A study by

Courtney et al. (2001) found 12 to 18 months after discharge from the foster care system, 31% of former foster youth were without stable housing.

With regard to health care, Reilly (2003) found 30% had a serious health problem since leaving foster care, 32% needed health care and could not obtain it, and 55% had no health insurance. Only 54% of the foster care adolescents reported their health as good or excellent. In regards to children, 38% had children and more than 70 pregnancies had occurred (Reilly).

In regard to legal issues, Reilly (2003) determined that 45% of the young adults had trouble with the law. Additionally, 41% had spent time in jail, 26% had formal charges filed against them, and 7% were incarcerated at the time of the study.

In regard to preparation for independent living in Reilly (2003) found a majority had some exposure to independent living services during their time in foster care. The services reported were: (a) job seeking (73%), (b) housekeeping (72%), (c) educational planning (71%), (d) money management (67%), (e) interpersonal skills (66%), (f) food management (65%), (g) community resources (61%), (h) transportation (61%), (i) job maintenance (59%), (j) housing (51%), (k) parenting skills (47%), and (l) legal skills (37%). However, 53% reported that they were not satisfied with the services they received. Also, 31% did not have a place to live after discharge and 50% did not have at least \$250 when they emancipated from foster care. Additionally, most adolescents reported that they had infrequent contact with their caseworkers (Reilly).

In regard to support systems, Reilly (2003) found that young people in foster care reported close or very close relationships with siblings (64%) and former foster parents (54%) and most reported that they could rely on family (52%) or friends (58%) when they encountered problems. Reilly found respondents reported contact with the following: (a) siblings (74%), (b)

relatives (63%), (c) former foster parents (54%), (d) grandparents (45%), (e) their birthmothers (37%), (f) group home staff (35%), (g) their birthfathers (30%), and (h) previous caseworkers (29%).

In regard to the relationship between overall adjustment and indicators or difficulties and successes, Reilly (2003) found the following for positive experiences: (a) Respondents receiving more areas of training before leaving foster care were significantly more satisfied with services they received in preparation for being on their own; (b) they were significantly more satisfied with the quality of care that they received; (c) and they were significantly more satisfied with their current living arrangements.

Further, respondents receiving more services in preparation for being on their own were significantly satisfied with their current living arrangements and had significantly less trouble with the law (Reilly, 2003). Respondents with large social support networks had significantly more overall satisfaction with their lives and respondents employed while in foster care were significantly more likely to have regular employment after leaving foster care. For negative experiences, the following results were found: (a) Participants with more foster care placements were significantly more likely to have encountered violence in their dating relationships; (b) participants had significantly more trouble with the law, and (c) they were significantly more likely to have spent time in jail or had significantly higher rates of pregnancy (Reilly). Reilly found participants were significantly more likely to have been homeless at some time after leaving foster care.

In summary, young adults who exit foster care face serious problems in successfully transitioning to live on their own (Reilly, 2003). However, the data from the study has shown

that the likelihood of adolescents having successful outcomes increases when they receive training and services.

### *Evaluations of Independent Living Programs*

There have been limited comprehensive evaluations of existing independent living program services conducted in recent years. Of the studies conducted, methodological problems have limited the ability of the studies to determine the impact of independent living programs (Collins, 2001). Most evaluations of independent living programs had small samples, had no comparison group, and used few standardized measures. Further problems included variations of programs among different states and counties (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1999). However, studies showed that at least some assistance is helpful to some former foster adolescents (Collins, 2001). The following is a review of several key studies that evaluated the outcomes of independent living programs.

Researchers for the Westat project gathered case record data of 1,644 young adults who had left care between January 1987 and July 1988 (Cook, 1991). In the second phase, the researcher interviewed with 810 of these adolescents, ages 18 to 24, to determine their outcomes after leaving foster care (Cook, 1994). In the study, researchers measured eight outcomes: (a) maintaining a job for at least a year, (b) education status, (c) accessing health care, (d) costs to the community, (e) avoiding young parenthood, (f) satisfaction with life, (g) social networks, and (h) a composite measure of self-sufficiency.

The outcomes of former foster adolescents were compared to adolescents in the general population and those living below the poverty level. According to the Cook (1994), former foster adolescents had people who could provide help, advice, and closeness. Cook also found better outcomes among young adults who were trained in multiple skill areas. An example would be

young people who received independent living skills training in five core areas (i.e., budgeting, obtaining credit, consumer skills, education, and employment), were likely to have positive outcomes in the areas of accessing health care, satisfaction with life, and overall self-sufficiency. The findings showed that, for best results, services needed to be targeted toward the outcomes they were intended to improve and they needed to be provided in combination (Cook).

McMillen, Rideout, Fisher, and Tucker (1997) examined the views of former foster adolescents about the independent living services they received while in foster care. The researchers held focus groups and asked former foster adolescents to describe the services that were most beneficial in their transition to independent living. The sample included 25 young adults, 24 who were females who had participated in independent living skills classes while living in out-of-home care. The various aspects of the independent living skill classes that the young adults found helpful were (a) the classes and activities, due to the fact they reduced the stigma and isolation of being in out-of-home care; (b) financial instruction; (c) skill classes, such as finding an apartment, birth control usage, cooking, changing tires, building relationships, and finding community resources; and (d) stipends for independent living. The various aspects of the independent living skill classes that the young adults found least helpful were: (a) independent living specialists were seen as very helpful while caseworkers were not seen as helpful, and (b) foster care was seen as intrusive and the transition from foster care to living on their own was difficult.

Mallon (1998) evaluated the outcomes of independent living programs in New York. The sample included all young adults ( $N=46$ ) who had been discharged from a New York City independent living program to independent living between December 1987 and December 1994. All respondents were male and 96% were people of color. Data were gathered at three points of

time: (a) case opening, (b) case closing, and (c) follow-up. Data sources included case records and semi-structured interviews with 43 of the 46 former clients. Results indicated that 75% had completed high school or had obtained a GED at the time of discharge. Further, 72% of the participants had full-time employment at discharge. However, of those not employed at discharge ( $n=10$ ), eight did not have a high school diploma or a GED. Additionally, 65% had savings accounts at discharge. However, at follow-up, only 39% had savings accounts. When asked what respondents most wished they had learned more about before leaving care, 90% reported having difficulty with budgeting. Most young adults (46%) shared an apartment. However, a large percentage (21%) lived with their families. In regards to life skills preparation, young adults improved in all 14 life skills categories (i.e., personal appearance, health care, educational planning, housekeeping skills, money management, food management, job seeking skills, job maintenance skills, transportation, housing skills, knowledge of community resources, emergency/safety skills, legal issues, and interpersonal skills). The majority of young people (96%) reported having at least one person in their lives with whom they had a strong, close relationship. Of the participants, 67% reported that they had regular contact with staff members from the program and the young people reported that the staff members were most helpful since their discharge.

### Conclusion

Research related to the population of young adults within the foster care system and their readiness to live self-sufficient lives following emancipation is still relatively new and underdeveloped. The researchers in the 80s and 90s strongly suggested that child welfare workers and policymakers needed to address the fact that young people exiting out-of-home care were not adequately prepared to live independently. The researchers also revealed that foster

adolescents, when they are emancipated, face serious problems, such as homelessness, poverty, involvement in the criminal justice system, health problems, pregnancy, and unstable employment. The Independent Living Initiative was passed in 1985 to address the needs of foster care young adults and in 1999, the Foster Care Independence Act was passed which increased funding for independent living programs services, extending services to the age of 21, and allowing for a more broad range of services.

Researchers evaluating the impact of independent living programs on the outcomes of young adults found the adolescents who participated in independent living programs were significantly more likely to: (a) have graduated from high school, (b) have a history of employment, (c) be living on their own, (d) be self-supportive, and (e) be employed at discharge.

The studies presented in the critical review of literature provided some of the most comprehensive information to date related to outcomes and related to the young adults' readiness for emancipation. The literature has limitations which include a body of research that is primarily descriptive in nature that focuses on the outcomes of young people once they have emancipated from foster care (Kerman et al., 2002). With such a predominant focus on outcomes, there is a gap in the literature regarding the readiness of foster care youth for self-sufficiency. To obtain these outcomes, the use of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment tool (Casey Family Programs, 2003) would provide agencies officials with numerical scores that would give caseworkers an indication of readiness of the young adults for emancipation as well as an indication of which programs are best preparing the adolescents to leave out-of-home care to live on their own.

#### Recommendations for Further Research or Intervention

To ensure that adolescents aging out of the foster care system successfully

transition into adulthood, it is imperative that agencies:

1. ensure that adolescents are actively and meaningfully engaged in completing an independent living program;
2. ensure that adolescents are engaged in developing an effective discharge plan with their caseworker. Young adults benefit from a single, coherent planning process that “brings it all together” for them in a clear and meaningful way. By effectively engaging with young people and becoming partners in the planning process, staff can enable adolescents to identify their own talents and needs based on a comprehensive self-assessment. Staff can provide instruction in goal setting and identifying methods to help adolescents achieve their goals;
3. be informed about the range of resources that exist to promote best practice in the field of transitional living, independent living, and self-sufficiency services.  
Adolescents receive better quality services when providers work in a collaborative manner. Collaboration among organizations can also help to improve the knowledge base of staff and maximize available resources;
4. have a written discharge policy to ensure that adolescents have access to life skills instruction, a support network, healthcare services and coverage, education and employment, and safe, stable, and affordable housing upon discharge. Ensure that ample time is allotted for discharge planning so that young adults are adequately prepared to transition out of foster care;
5. allow young people to receive foster care and Chafee services up to age 21 regardless of discharge age;



6. maintain adolescents with special needs in the foster care system until they are linked with adult services;
7. identify a continuum of state and local resources available;
8. fully utilize Chafee in combination with other resources to maximize housing assistance available to youth;
9. form collaborations to create cross-system dialogue between child welfare agencies and other community based agencies invested in young people;
10. develop partnerships with housing authorities to meet the housing needs of young people exiting the system; and
11. develop housing programs that include landlord recruitment, transitional housing, and rental subsidies.

## REFERENCES

- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM IV-TR.*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Anderson, (2001). 92 Ohio St.3d 63, 131.
- Barth, R. (1990). On their own: The experiences of youth after foster care. *Child and Adolescent Social Work, 7*(5), 419-440.
- Barth, R. (2000). Outcomes after child welfare services: Implications for the design of performance measures. *Children and Youth Services Review, 22*(9), 763-787.
- Bell, C. (2001). Cultivating resiliency in youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 29*(5), 375-381).
- Belsky, J. (1988). The “effects” of infant day care reconsidered. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 3*(3), 235-271.
- Benard, B. (1993). Fostering resiliency in kids. *Educational Leadership, 51*, 44-49.
- Benedict, M., Zuravin, S., & Stalling, R. (1996). Adult functioning of children who lived in kin verses nonrelative foster homes. *Child Welfare-New York, 75*(5), 529-549.
- Benson, P., Leffert, N., & Roehikepartain, E. (1999). *A fragile foundation: The state of developmental assets among American youth.* Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.
- Berzin, S. (2008). Difficulties in the transition to adulthood: Using propensity scoring to understand what makes foster youth vulnerable. *Social Services Review, 6*(6), 171-196.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss (Vol.2) Separation: Anxiety and Anger.* International psycho-analytical library, No. 95. London: Hogarth Press.
- Brendtro, L., Brokenleg, M., & Van Bockern, S. (2002). *Reclaiming youth at risk: Our hope for the future* (Rev. ed.). Bloomington, IN: National Educational Services.
- Broad, B. (2005). *Improving the health and well-being of young people leaving care.* Lyme Regis, England: Russell House.
- Buehler, C., Orme, J. Post, J., & Patterson, D. (2000). The long-term correlates of family foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 22*(8), 595-625.
- Calabro, A. (2008). *Runaway and homeless youth management information system,* (Fact sheet). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families.

- Carta, J., Atwater, J., Greenwood, C., McConnell, S., McEvoy, M., & Williams, R. (2001). Effects of cumulative prenatal substance exposure and environmental risks on children's developmental trajectories. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 30*(3), 327-337.
- Casey Family Programs. (2003). *Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) and Life Skills Guidebook Manual*. Seattle, WA: Author.
- Charles, K., & Nelson, J. (2000). *Permanency planning: Creating lifelong connections*. Norman: University of Oklahoma National Resource Center for Youth Development.
- Chaskins, R. (2008). Resilience, community, and resilient communities: Conditioning contexts and collective action. *Child Care in Practice, 14*(1), 65-74.
- Child Welfare League of America. (2003). *National data analysis system*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Child Wise (2004). *Speaking for themselves: Voices of young people involved in commercial sexual activity*. Melbourne, Australia: Author.
- College Cost Reduction & Access Act (2007). P.L. 100-84, September 27. Washington, DC: United States Printing Office.
- Collins, M. (2001). Transition to adulthood for vulnerable youths: A review of research and implications for policy. *Social Service Review, 75*(2), 271-291.
- Collins, M. (2004). Enhancing services to youths leaving foster care: Analysis of recent legislation and its potential impact. *Children and Youth Services Review, 26*(11), 1051-1065.
- Community Affairs References Committee, (2005). *Protecting vulnerable children: A national challenge*. Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra.
- Cook, R. (1991). *A national evaluation of Title IV-E foster care independent living programs for youth. Phase 2 final report*. Rockville, MD: Westat.
- Cook, R. (1994). Are we helping foster youth prepare for their future? *Children and Youth Services Review, 16*(3/4), 213-229.
- Courtney, M. (2000). Research needed to improve the prospects for children in out-of-home placement. *Children and Youth Services Review, 22* (9), 743-761.
- Courtney, M., & Barth, R. (1996). Pathways of older adolescents out of foster care: Implications for independent living services. *Social Work, 41*(1), 75-83.
- Courtney, M., & Dworsky, A. (2006). Early outcomes for young adults transitioning from out-of-home care in the USA. *Child and Family Social Work, 11*, 209-219.

- Courtney, M., & Piliavin, I. (1998). Foster youth transition to adulthood: Outcomes 12 to 18 months after leaving out of home care. In T. Reilly (ed.), *Transition from care: Status and outcomes of youth who age out of foster care*. *Child Welfare*, 82(6).
- Courtney, M., & Piliavin, I. (1995). *The Wisconsin study of youth aging out of out-of-home care: A portrait of children about to leave care*. Madison, WI: School of Social Work, University of Wisconsin-Madison.727-746.
- Courtney, M., Piliavin, I., Grogan-Kaylor, G., & Nesmith, A. (2001). Foster youth transitions to adulthood: A longitudinal view of youth leaving care. *Child Welfare*, 80(6), 685-717.
- Courtney, M. (2005). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 19*. Chicago: University of Chicago, Chaplin Hall Center for Children.
- Courtney, M., & Hughes-Huering, D. (2003). *The transition to adulthood for youth 'aging out' of the foster care system*. Chicago: Chaplin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.
- Cowan, E. (2000). Psychological wellness: Some hopes for the future. In D. Ciccheeti, J. Rappaport, I. Sandler, & R. Weissberg (Eds.). *The promotion of wellness in children and adolescents* (pp. 477-503). Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America Press.
- Dahrendorf, R. (1979). *Life changes: Approaches to social and political theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Daniel Memorial Inc. Institute for Independent Living. (1994). *Daniel memorial independent living skills system*. Jacksonville, FL: Daniel Memorial Institute, Inc.
- Deci, E., & Ryan, E. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.
- Department of Health (2001). *Children (leaving care) Act 2000: Regulations and guidance*. London: Department of Health.
- Dryfoos, J. (1994). *Full-service schools: A revolution in health and social services for children, youth and families*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Duckworth, A., Steen, T., & Seligman, M. (2005). Positive psychology in clinical practice. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 1, 629-651.
- Dworsky, A. (2005). *Economic self-sufficiency of Wisconsin's former foster youth*. Chicago: University of Chicago, Chaplin Hall..
- English, A., Stinnett, A., Dunn-Georgiou, E. 2006). Health care or adolescents and young adults leaving foster care: Policy options for improving access. *Center for Adolescent Health and the Law*, (2), 5.

- Euster, S., Ward, V., Varner, J., & Euster, G. (1984). Life skills groups for adolescent foster children. *Child Welfare*, 63(1), 27-36.
- Fernandes, A.(2008). Youth transitioning from foster care: Background, federal programs, and issues for congress. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Services, May.
- Festinger, T. (1983). *No one ever asked us--a postscript to foster care*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fraser, M., Kirby, L., & Smokowski, P. (2004). Risk and resilience in childhood. In M. Fraser (Ed.), *Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 13-66). Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Freundlich, M., Avery, R., & Padgett, D. (2007). Preparation of youth in congregate care for independent living. *Child and Family Social Work*, 12, 64-72.
- Geenen, S., Powers, L., Hogansen, J., & Pittman, J. (2007). Youth with disabilities in foster care: Developing self-determination within a context of struggle and empowerment. *Exceptionality*, 15(1), 17-30.
- George, R., Bilaver, B., Joo Lee, B., Needell, B., Brookhart, A., & Jackson, W. (2002). *Employment outcomes for youth aging out of foster care*. Chicago: University of Chicago, Chaplin Hall Center for Children.
- Germain, C., & Gitterman, A. (1980). *The life model of social work practice*. New York: Columbia University.
- Goodman, N., Kam, B., Quinby, R., Banta-Green, C., Downs, C. Roark, C., et al., (2001). It's my life: A framework for youth transitioning from foster care to successful adulthood. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs.
- Hahn, H., Neurath, O., & Carnap, R. (1929). Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung. In Erkenntnis orientated: a Centennial volume for Rudolf Carnap & Hans Reichenback (1991). Kluwer Academic Publishers. .
- Henderson, A., & Jackson, M. (2004). Restorative health: Lessening the impact of previous abuse and violence in the lives of vulnerable girls. *Health Care for Women International*, 25(9), 794-812.
- Institute for Educational Leadership (2007). Foster care youth employment demonstration project: Summary report of year two site visit, (May). Retrieved April 15, 2009 from [http://www.iel.org/pubs/caseyssitereport\\_year2.pdf](http://www.iel.org/pubs/caseyssitereport_year2.pdf).
- John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (1999). *John Chafee Foster Care Independence Program*, P.L. 106-169.

- Jones, M., & Moses, B. (1984). *West Virginia's former foster children: Their experience in care and their lives as young adults*. New York: Child Welfare League of America.
- Kaplan, S., Skolnik, L., & Turnbull, A. (2009). Enhancing the empowerment of youth in foster care: Supportive services. *Child Welfare*, 88(1), 133-161.
- Keller, T., Cusick, G., & Courtney, M. (2007). Approaching the transition to adulthood: Distinctive profiles of adolescents aging out of the child welfare system. *Social Service Review*, 9, 453-484.
- Kerman, B., Wildfire, J., & Barth, R. (2002). Outcomes for young adults who experienced foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 24(5), 319-344.
- Krebs, B., & Pitcoff, P. (2004). Reversing the failure of the foster care system. *Harvard Women's Law Journal*, 27, 357-366.
- Krebs, B., & Pitcoff, P. (2006). *Beyond the foster care system: The future for teens*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Laursen, E. & Birmingham, S. (2003). Caring relationships as a protective factor for at-risk youth: An ethnographic study. *Families in Society*, 84(2), 240-246.
- Leathers, S., & Testa, M. (2006). Foster youth emancipating from care: Caseworkers' reports on needs and services. *Child Welfare League of America* (3), May/June, 463-498
- Lemon, K., Hines, A., & Merdinger, J. (2005). From foster care to young adulthood: The role of independent living programs in supporting successful transitions. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 21(3), 251-270.
- Lerner, R. (2004). *Liberty: Thriving and civic engagement among America's youth*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lindsey, E. & Ahmed, F. (1999). The North Carolina independent living program: A comparison of outcomes for participants and non-participants. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 21(5), 389-412.
- Luthar, S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development*, 71(3), 543-562.
- MacDonald, G., & Valdivieso, R. (2000). Measuring deficits and assets: How we track youth development, now and how we should track it. *Youth Development: Issues, Challenges and Directions*. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development, Public/Private Lectures. Retrieved from [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/74\\_sup/ydv\\_5.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/74_sup/ydv_5.pdf)
- Mallon, G. (1998). After care then where? Outcomes of an independent living program. *Child Welfare*, 77(1), 61-79.

- Maluccio, A., Krieger, R., & Pine, B. (1990). *Preparing adolescents for life after foster care: The central role of foster parents*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.
- Mason, M., Castrianno, L., Kessler, C., Holmstrand, L., Huefner, J., & Payne, V. et al. (2003). A comparison of foster care outcomes across four child welfare agencies. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 7(2), 55-72.
- Masten, A. (2004). *Promoting resilience in development, a framework for action*. Ottawa, Canada. Paper presented to Promoting Resilient Development in Children Receiving Care.
- Masten, A. (2001). Ordinary Magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 227-238.
- Mauzerall, H. (1983). Emancipation from foster care: The independent living project. *Child Welfare*, 62(1), 46-53.
- McDonald, T., Allen, R., Westerfelt, A., & Piliavin, I. (1996). *Assessing the long-term effects of foster care: A research synopsis*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.
- McMillen, C., & Tucker, J. (1999). The status of older adolescents at exit from out of home care. *Child Welfare*, 78(3), 339-360.
- McMillen, C., Rideout, G., Fisher, R., & Tucker, J. (1997). Independent living services: The views of former foster youth. *Families in Society*, 78, 471-479.
- Mech, E. (1994). Foster youths in transition: Research perspectives on preparation for independent living. *Child Welfare*, 73(5), 603-623.
- Mendes, P. & Moslehuddin, B. (2006). From dependence to interdependence: Towards better outcomes for young people leaving state care. *Child Abuse Review: Journal of the British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect*, 15(2), 110- 126.
- Mertens, D. (2005). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Moos, R., & Moos, B. (1998). *Life stressors and social resources inventory – youth forum: A professional manual* Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.
- National Alliance to End Homelessness (2006). *Federal funding for youth housing programs*, presented at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Audio Conference, March 9, 2007.
- National Coalition for the Homeless (1998). *Why are people homeless?* Washington, DC: National Coalition for the Homeless.

- National Foster Care Awareness Project (2000). *Frequently asked questions about the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the John H. Chaffee Foster Care Independence Program*. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Program.
- Newman, T. (2004). *What works in building resilience?* Barkingside, England: Barnardos.
- Newman, T. & Blackburn, S. (2002). *Transitions in the lives of children and young people: Resilience factors: Interchange 78*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Scottish Executive.
- Nollan, K. & Downs, C. (1995). *Preparing youth for long-term success: Proceedings from the Casey Family program national independent living forum*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.
- Nollan, K., Wolf, M., Ansell, D., Burns, J., Barr, L., Copeland W., et al. (2000). Ready or not: Assessing youth's preparedness for independent living. *Child Welfare, 79*, 159-176.
- Osterling, K. & Hines, A. (2006). Mentoring adolescent foster youth: Promoting resilience during developmental transitions. *Child and Family Social Work, 11*, 242-253.
- Oswald, D., Cohen, R., Best, A., & Lyons, J. (2001). *The role of child strengths in the determination of level of care for children with emotional and behavioral disorders*. Unpublished manuscript. Richmond, VA: Virginia Commonwealth University.
- Owen, L. (2000). *Pathways to interdependence and independence: The leaving care initiative*. Melbourne, Australia: La Trobe University.
- Parker, J., & Endler, N. (1992). Coping with coping assessment: A critical review, *European Journal of Personality, 6*, 321-344.
- Patel, S. & Roherty, M. (2007). *Medicaid access for youth aging out of foster care*, Washington, DC: American Public Human Services Association.
- PCSAO (2007-2008). *Factbook*. State of Ohio Profile. Retrieved on April 25, 2008 from [http://pcsao.org/facebook2007\\_2008.htm](http://pcsao.org/facebook2007_2008.htm).
- Pecora, P., Williams, J., Kessler, R., Downs, A., O'Brian, K., Hiripi, E., et al. (2003). *Assessing the effects of foster care: Early results from the Casey National Alumni study, Foster Care Alumni Studies Report*. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs.
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Piliavin, I., Sosin, M., Westerfelt, A., & Matsueda, R. L. (1993). The duration of homeless careers: An exploratory study. In J. M. Park, S. Metraux, G. Brodbar, & D. P. Culhane, Public shelter admission among young adults with child welfare histories by type of service and type of exit. *Social Service Review, 284-303*.



- Poetner, J., McDonald, T., & Murray, C. (2000). Child welfare outcomes revisited. *Children and Youth Services Review* 22(9), 789-810.
- Reamer, F. (1992). The impaired social worker. *Social Work*, 37(2), 165-170.
- Reid, J., & Ross, J. (2005). First voice: The circle of courage and independent living. *Reclaiming Children and Youth: The Journal of Strength-Based Interventions*, 14(3), 164-168.
- Reilly, T. (2003). Transition from care: Status and outcomes of youth who age out of foster care. *Child Welfare*, 82(6), 727-746.
- Reynolds, C., & Kamphaus, R. (1992). *BASC: Behavioral assessment system for children: Manual*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Services.
- Rhodes, J., & Lowe, S. (2008). Youth mentoring and resilience: Implications for practice. *Child Care in Practice*, 14(1), 9-17.
- Rogers, C. (1961). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Roman, N., & Wolf, P. (1997). The relationship between foster care and homelessness. *Public Welfare*, Winter, 4-9.
- Royse, D., Thyer, B., Padgett, D., & Logan, T. (2001). *Program evaluation: An introduction*. Toronto, Canada: Brooks/Cole.
- Rutter, M. (2000). Resilience reconsidered: Conceptual considerations, empirical findings, and policy implications. In J. Shonkoff, & S. Meisels (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood interventions* (2nd ed., 651-682). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Scannapieco, M., Connell-Carrick, K., & Painter, K. (2007). In their own words: Challenges facing youth aging out of foster care, *Journal of Child Adolescent Social Work*, 24, (9), 423-435.
- Scannapieco, M., Schagrin, J., & Scannapieco, T. (1995). Independent living programs: Do they make a difference? *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 12(5), 381-389.
- Schmitz, M. (2005). Effects of childhood foster care and adoption on adulthood childbearing, *Children and Youth Services Review*, 27(1), 85-98.
- Shaver, P., & Rubinstein, C. (1980). Childhood attachment experience and adult loneliness. In L. Wheeler (Ed.), *Review of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Shirk, M. & Strangler, G. (2004). *On their own. What happens to kids when they age out of the foster care system?* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sinclair, I., Baker, C., Wilson, K., & Gibbs, I. (2005). *Foster children, where they go and how they get on*. London, England: Jessica Kingsley.

- Stroufe, L., & Rutter, M. (1984). The domain of developmental psychopathology. *Child Development, 55*(1), 17-29.
- Stroufe, L. (1988). The role of infant-caregiver attachment in development. In J. Belsky & T. Nezworski (Eds.), *Clinical implications of attachment* (103-143). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Stein, M. (2002). Young people leaving care: A research prospective. In A. Wheal (Ed.), *The RHP companion to leaving care*. Lyme Regis, Dorset, England: Russell House Publishing.
- Stein, M. (2004). *What works for young people leaving care?* Ilford, England: Barnardo's.
- Stein, M. (2006). Research review: Young people leaving care. *Child and Family Social Work, 11*, 273-279.
- Stein, M. (2008). Resilience and young people leaving care. *Child Care in Practice, 14*(1), 35-44.
- Stein, M., & Wade, J. (2000). *Helping care leavers: Problems and strategic responses*. London, England: Department of Health.
- Surko, M., Pasti, L., Whitlock, J., & Benson, D. (2006). Selecting statewide youth development outcome indicators. *Journal of Public Health Management & Practice Supplement*, November, 72-78.
- Tatara, T. (1992). Characteristics of children in substitute and adoptive care: A statistical summary of the VCIS national child welfare database. *VCIS Research Notes, 3*(5), 1-4.
- Twiddle, A. (2007). Youth leaving care: How do they fare? *New Directions for Youth Development, 113*, Spring, 15-30.
- U'Ren, J., & Bonnice, J. (2002). *"Nowhere to go": Young people leaving care and housing project*. Bendigo, Vic.: St. Luke's Youth Services.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2001). New reports show dropout rates remain stable over last decade. In M. Scannapieco, K. Connell-Carrick, & K. Painter (2007). *Journal of Child Adolescent Social Work, 24*, (9), 423-435.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2003). *AFCARS: National adoption and foster care statistics*. Washington, DC. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2005). *AFCARS: National adoption and foster care statistics*. Washington, DC. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006). *AFCARS: National adoption and foster care statistics*. Washington, DC. U.S. Government Printing Office.

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2008). *AFCARS: National adoption and foster care statistics*. Washington, DC. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- .S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2011). *AFCARS: National adoption and foster care statistics*. Washington, DC. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. General Accounting Office. (1999). Foster care: Effectiveness of independent living services unknown. In J. Park, S. Metraux, G. Brodbar, & D. Culhane, Public shelter admission among young adults with child welfare histories by type of services and type of exit. *Social Service Review*, 284-303.
- Vaillant, G. (1977). *Adaptation to life*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
- Weissberg, R., Kumpfer, K., & Seligman, M. (2003). Prevention that works for children and youth: An introduction. *American Psychology*, 58(6/7), 425-432.
- Werner, E., & Smith, R. (1992). *Overcoming the odds: High risk children from birth to adulthood*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Wulczyn, F., & George, R. (1992). Foster care in New York and Illinois: The challenge of rapid change. *Social Services Review*, 66, 278-294.