CalYOUTH in the Loop:
Survey Findings to Improve Policy and Programs for Extended Foster Care

Blueprint for Success Conference

October 27, 2015
Today’s Session

Highlights from the CalYOUTH Study
With focus on findings related to Education

Presented by:
Nate Okoych
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Preliminary Results from CalYOUTH in the Loop Project
With focus on findings related to Education

Presented by:
Laurie Kappe
i.e. communications
Noah Nash
CalYOUTH in the Loop Youth Analyst
EDD Candidate, Mills College

Group Discussion
Background

• Evaluation of the impact of California Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB 12) on outcomes for foster youth

• Public/private funders

• Study includes:
  • Collection of data from transition-age foster youth
  • Collection of data from child welfare workers
  • Analysis of administrative program data
  • Qualitative research on living arrangements
Data Sharing Today

• Selected findings of the CalYOUTH Child Welfare Worker Survey
• Selected findings of the CalYOUTH Baseline Youth Survey
• Early findings of the relationship between extended care and college access
CalYOUTH
Child Welfare Worker Survey
Child Welfare Worker Survey

- Perceptions of service delivery context:
  - County level availability/need for services
  - Coordination of services with other systems
  - Attitudes of caseworker, county court personnel and youth toward extended care
Most Caseworkers Completed Survey

- Online survey platform (Qualtrics)
- Sample size:
  - 50 counties participated
  - 262 caseworkers received survey
  - 235 eligible caseworkers completed survey
  - 89.7% response rate
Eligibility Criteria for Worker Survey

• Have one young person on caseload who turned 18 during previous 6-month period

• If eligible, was asked to:
  
  “...think of the youth who most recently turned 18 while on your caseload”
  
  (and if only one person turned 18 on caseload)
  
  “...think of that youth.”
Availability of Education Services and Training

Secondary Education
- None: 30%
- Few: 6%
- Some: 25%
- A wide range: 39%

Postsecondary Education
- None: [VALUE]
- Few: 8%
- Some: 21%
- A wide range: 42%

Legend:
- None
- Few
- Some
- A wide range
Caseworkers’ Satisfaction with Collaboration with Professional In Education Systems

Secondary Education
- 3% Completely Dissatisfied
- 13% Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied
- 31% Satisfied
- 51% Completely Satisfied

Postsecondary Education
- 2% Completely Dissatisfied
- 17% Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied
- 28% Satisfied
- 50% Completely Satisfied

1 = Completely Dissatisfied  2 = Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied  3 = Satisfied  4 = Completely Satisfied
Educational Attainment at Age 18

- About two-fifths of the young people caseworkers spoke about had completed high school or obtained a GED.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth Educational Characteristics</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Education (Yes)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS/GED/Certificate of completion (Yes)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment of youth with HS/GED/Certificate program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-year college</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year college</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other arrangement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enrolled</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS/GED/Certificate (No)</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment of youth without HS/GED/Certificate program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS/GED/Certificate program</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enrolled</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Unweighted numbers and weighted percentages.
Youths’ Needs for Educational Services

Youth Educational Preparedness and Need for Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Preparedness (N=234)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared or very prepared</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services Needed (1=no need/5=high need)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To complete HS/GED/Certificate (4 or 5)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To complete post-secondary education (4 or 5)</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Unweighted numbers and weighted percentages.

- 59% of caseworkers believed youth were highly motivated to remain in care in order to receive help achieving their educational goals
- 40% of caseworkers believed their youth were prepared or very prepared to reach their educational goals
CalYOUTH
Baseline Youth Survey
Broad Range of Topics

- Foster care placement
- Service utilization & preparation
- Knowledge of extended care
- Education and employment
- Health and development
- Social support
- Delinquency
- Pregnancy and children
Eligibility Criteria for Youth Study

- Eligible youth between $16^{3/4}$ and $17^{3/4}$ years of age
- In care at least 6 months
- Sample
  - Drawn from CDSS administrative data records
  - Stratified by county based on number of eligible youth in each county
95% of Youth Responded to Survey

- Survey period for in-person interviews: 4/15/13 – 10/11/13
- 51 counties included in final sample*
- Fielded cases $N = 763$
- Completed interviews $N = 727$
- Response rate: $727 / 763 = 95.3\%$
- Most youth 17 years old at interview

* 7 counties had zero youth who met inclusion criteria
Youth Generally Felt Prepared to Achieve Educational Goals

Over 3/5 of caseworkers reported youth had a “moderate” or “high” need for services to complete high school or pursue higher education.
# Educational Attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest grade completed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th or below</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th grade</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th grade</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th grade</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First year of College</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Currently enrolled in school</strong></td>
<td>653</td>
<td>89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of school</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED classes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-year community college</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year college</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ever placed in special education classroom</strong></td>
<td>257</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repeated or been held back a grade</strong></td>
<td>248</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8th grade or less reading level</strong></td>
<td>376</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More Than Half of Youth Had 4+ School Changes

Number of School Changes because Family Moved or Changed Foster Care Placements

- None: 15.7%
- 1 to 3: 11.1%
- 4 to 6: 28.4%
- 7 to 10: 26.6%
- 11 or more: 18.2%
Youth Had High Educational Aspirations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Want a college degree or more education</th>
<th>83.1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expect to obtain a college degree or higher</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain “a lot” or “some” encouragement for their education from...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Staff</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Care System</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who provided the most help preparing you for your education goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster parent(s)/Group home staff/ILP staff</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological parents/Siblings/Relatives</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASA/Wraparound/Other SS Worker</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School staff/School program</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myself</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most Youth Want to Stay in Care After 18 for Educational and Housing Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Want to stay in foster care after age 18 (yes) (n=727)</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 3 most cited reasons for WANTING to stay in care after age 18:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants help achieving educational goals</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to continue receiving housing and other material support</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is happy in current foster care placement</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Administrative Data Analyses
Early Findings on College Access for Older Youth

- Based on CWS/CMS sample and NSC data
  - Included sample of youth who turned 19.5 years of age before DATE
  - Pre-EFC group (n=12,366)
  - EFC group (n=1,963)
- Enrolled in a postsecondary education institution by age 19.5?
Most Youth Enrolled in 2 Year Colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of postsecondary institution</th>
<th>Less than 2yr</th>
<th>2yr college</th>
<th>4yr college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EFC (n=3087)</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-EFC (n=5831)</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note of Caution When Interpreting Educational Outcomes

1. Findings are early
   • Early in implementation of EFC
   • Youth are young (19.5yrs) and more may enter college at later age...this may be where we see larger effect
   • Another important question is whether EFC affects college persistence, not just college access

2. Limitations of NSC data
   • Not possible to distinguish youth who are taking college courses vs. taking noncredit remedial classes
     • Some youth may even be completing high school credential
   • Not every college appears in NSC data

STAY TUNED for future postsecondary ed. analyses from CalYOUTH
CalYOUTH in the Loop

Preliminary results of Project to create a feedback loop with foster youth
CalYOUTH in the Loop

Who:
• Chapin Hall and i.e. communications with guidance from Youth Analysts

What:
• Create a feedback loop between young people in foster care and those working with them

How:
• Share selected findings of the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH) and incorporate youth feedback/input

Why?
• Incorporate input to create policies and practices that best meet their needs
• Increase engagement with young people
• Identify best methods of communication for continuous feedback
Our Surveys

CalYOUTH Study

- 90 minutes
- In person
- Detailed questionnaire
- Range of topics

CalYOUTH in the Loop

- 10 minutes
- Online survey
- 35 questions
- Feedback on CalYOUTH study findings
Survey Development

Youth Analyst Committee
Advised on:
- Communications methods
- Language
- Survey length
- Approaching sensitive topics

Youth-Serving Organizations
Advised on:
- Communications methods
- Language
Two Goals

- Find best ways to connect with young people:
  - In person
  - Social media
  - Text or email

Engage young people with issues that will affect their futures.
- Housing
- Education
- Employment
- Pregnancy
- Family Relations
- Substance Use/Abuse
- Help from Professionals
Connection Methods

**Peer-to-Peer**
Youth Analyst Committee peer outreach

**In person**
Distribution at local and statewide gatherings of foster youth

**Online**
- Newsletters
- E-blasts
- Social media
- Listservs
Preliminary Survey Results

- 180 surveys to date
- Sources:
  - Friends
  - Higher education staff
  - Lawyers
  - Youth-Serving Organization
  - Facebook/Twitter
  - Email
  - Social Workers
  - Newsletters
Caution

• Not a random sample
  - Not representative of the entire foster care population

• Not a stratified sample

• Based on self-reporting
“A little about you”

What is your sex?

How many foster homes have you lived in?

How old are you?

Are you employed?

What county in California do you live in?

Are you in school?
Respondents Mostly Female, Racially Diverse

GENDER

- 76% Female
- 23% Male
- 1% Other

RACE

- 24% White
- 21% African American
- 9% Asian or Pacific Islander
- 23% Mixed Race
- 21% Other
Respondents Mostly from Urban Areas, Ages 18-21

County Distribution

Orange: 21%
Los Angeles: 12%
San Francisco: 8%
Sonoma: 7%
Alameda: 5%
San Joaquin: 4%
Sacramento: 4%
Other: 39%
Total: 29 counties represented

Age Distribution

16: 6%
17: 7%
18: 12%
19: 12%
20: 16%
21: 16%
22: 7%
23: 12%
24: 12%
Education

“Many of the foster youth that we spoke to wanted to earn a college degree or higher. These youth also expected that they would. However, when we spoke to child welfare workers who worked with youth moving into adulthood, they had concerns. They said the youth they worked with needed more preparation to continue their education.”
What gets in the way of foster youth earning a college degree?

1. Not enough money (60%)
2. Lack of knowledge about foster youth rights at college (59%)
3. Lack of confidence (51%)
4. Poor money management skills (50%)
5. Friends/family not supportive (50%)
What do you think foster care and higher ed professionals could to to help?

- Scholarships/grants (79%)
- Mentoring (70%)
- Help with college transition (69%)
- Help finding housing (69%)
- Tutoring (68%)
“According to county child welfare workers who work with transition age foster youth, many youth are unemployed even though they are looking for work. Workers also thought youth had a high need for help to find and keep a job.”
What accounts for the large amount of transition age foster youth who are unemployed?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Transportation challenges (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unmet emotional, mental, or physical health needs (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Too difficult to work at the same time as attending school (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Don’t know how to look for work (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Not trained/ready for work (50%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Being in the system is hard; there was no preparation for adulthood. For young adults in the AB12 program, the cutoff age came too quick and there is no help after. All of a sudden all our money stops and we have no savings, nothing.”
What kind of support could help foster youth who are searching for work?
Mental Health

“Some foster youth moving into adulthood have good mental health. However, many of the youth we spoke to had been diagnosed with depression or anxiety. About one quarter of the youth had attempted suicide in the past.”
What do you think most impacts youths’ mental health?

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Low self-esteem (91%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unhealthy relationships with family/caregivers (82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Insufficient support system (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Stress from experiences before the foster care system (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stress from experiences in the foster care system (71%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What additional services could benefit foster youths’ mental health?

“Mental health issues are very real, and I feel that we can find other ways to help youth heal from the trauma they have experienced while in and out of foster care.”

- Support Groups (71%)
- Social groups to connect with other foster youth (71%)
- Creative outlets (70%)
Help from Professionals

The majority of foster youth we interviewed said their foster parents, social workers, counselors and group home staff were helpful, while many youth disagreed with this statement.
What Extra Help Could Foster Care Professionals Have Given?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Help Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Emotional support (79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Encouragement to continue education (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Financial assistance (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>More frequent check-ins (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Legal help (39%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Most youth don’t know how to deal with the real world. A lot of them just need more support to help them grow and learn the good things that have been taught to them.”

“A mentor is much needed, most likely a responsible adult that will not sugarcoat anything. It’s tough out there.”
What’s Next

• Continue testing outreach methods
• Share initial findings with policymakers and program administrators
• Collect data on feedback loop: most effective methods, times, etc.
• Connect back with youth
Group Discussion

• What findings stand out/are particularly informative?

• What policy or practice changes should we consider based on this information? Any other next steps?

• How can youth help inform the development of these policies and programs?
Thank You!

CalYOUTH Study
Mark Courtney (PI)
markc@uchicago.edu

Nathanael Okpych
nateockey@uchicago.edu

CalYOUTH in the Loop
Laurie Kappe
lkappe@iecomm.org

Genevieve Sublette
gsublette@iecomm.org

Noah Nash
cnash@mills.edu

http://www.chapinhall.org/research/report/findings-california-youth-transitions-adulthood-study-calyouth

www.calyouthintheloop.org