





Designing Foster Care to Age 20 in Michigan

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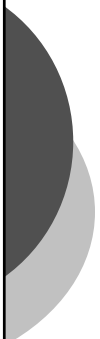
Findings from Wave 4 of the Midwest Study by Chapin Hall

- Research followed youth since age 17/18 now 23/24.
- Almost all had maintained family ties despite aging out of foster care.
- 79% reported strong ties
- 81% contact with family 1x a week.
- Over ½ reported a good social network.




Findings from Wave 4 of the Midwest Study by Chapin Hall

- Over ½ felt lucky to have been in foster care and satisfied with the child welfare system.
- ¾ felt foster parents helped them.
- ⅔ agreed their social worker was helpful.




Findings from Wave 4 of the Midwest Study by Chapin Hall

- Only 6% had a degree from a 2 or 4 year college.
- Half were unemployed.
- Nearly 40% had been homeless since leaving foster care.
- Median income was \$8,000.
- Young women had higher criminal justice involvement than the young men in the peer comparison group.



Benefits of Extending Foster Care and Permanency Subsidies

- Benefits of Extending Foster Care (*Chapin Hall's Midwest Study; Extending Foster Care to 21: Weighing the Costs to Government Against the Benefits to Youth – www.chapinhall.org*)
 - Increased college attendance
 - Increased earnings
 - Decreased unintended pregnancies
 - Decrease use of public assistance
 - Decreased homelessness
 - Decreased incarceration
- Benefits of Extending Permanency Subsidies
 - Increases incentives for older youth to achieve permanency



Findings from Wave 4 of the Midwest Study by Chapin Hall

- Simply extending care to age 20 or 21 will not be the answer.
- Must ensure life skills are obtained and interpersonal connections needed to become productive adults are in place.



Transition to Adulthood


- Factors associated with successful transition to adulthood by age 25:
 - Family
 - Education and Training
 - Opportunities to experience and ultimately select employment and career path.
 - Social and civic engagement in the community
 - Health Care
 - A web of supportive relationships



Designing Foster Care Beyond 18

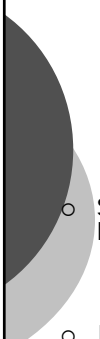
Design program and policy options for extending care beyond 18 with consideration of:

- The requirements of federal law.
- What will best achieve desired results for young people.
- How to build on supports and services already in place for young people in and aging out of care.
- How to structure supports and services that are appealing and appropriate for young adults.
- How to ensure permanency remains at the forefront of case management.



Guiding Principles to Support Implementation

- Emphasis on permanency – extend IV-E eligibility across foster care, guardianship, and adoption programs.
- Youth must be engaged participants and key decision makers – must see the benefits of remaining in care.
- Collaborative approaches to promote health, mental health, education, housing and workforce readiness.
- Developmentally appropriate services.
- Evidenced-based and outcome monitoring.



Requirements of Fostering Connections

- States have the option to extend eligibility across three Title IV-E programs (beginning October 2010).
 - Adoption assistance – for those young people adopted at age 16+.
 - Guardianship assistance – for those in guardianship at age 16+.
 - Foster care maintenance.
- In order to be eligible for services at age 18+ young people must be:
 - Completing secondary education or in a program leading to an equivalent credential.
 - Enrolled in an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education.
 - Participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers, to employment.
 - Employed for at least 80 hours per month, or
 - Have a medical condition that renders youth incapable of engaging in any of these activities.
- Placement options for young people 18+ can include: foster homes, child care institutions, “supervised settings in which the individual is living independently.”



Eligibility: Key Questions

- How long must a youth be in care prior to age 18 to be eligible for services beyond age 18?
- Will additional supports and services, such as closed case services, remain in place?
- Will youth be eligible to re-enter care? Under what parameters?
- Are youth in the juvenile justice system eligible for services?



Case Management: Key Questions

- What will case management requirements be for young people 18+?
- What case management model makes sense?
- Who will deliver case management services?
 - Public agencies?
 - Private agencies?
- What is the caseload size for youth 18+? How will blended caseloads be handled?



Placement Options: Key Questions

- What placement options will be available to youth 18+?
 - Foster homes
 - Group homes
 - Child care institutions
 - Supervised independent living settings
- What should supervised independent living settings look like?
 - What level of supervision?
 - What type of housing arrangement?
 - College dorms?



Judicial Oversight: Key Questions

- How should judicial oversight be structured?
 - Permanency review hearings?
 - Foster Care Review Boards?
 - Administrative review?
- What legal representation is needed for youth and families 18 +?
- Through what process can a young person leave and return to care?
 - What judicial mechanism is required?




Additional Considerations

- What additional supports and services will be available to older youth?
 - Education Supports
 - Employment Supports
 - Health and Mental Health Services
 - Independent Living Skills
 - Transportation



KEY TO SUCCESS

- Establish permanent connections for young adults at any age. Develop a network of supportive caring people who will be there when needed.
- **EVERYONE NEEDS A FAMILY –THEY DEFINE FAMILY!!**



Technical Assistance from the National Resource Center on Youth Services

- A request has been approved by HHS for TA from the NRC on Youth Services.
- Discussion and planning began in April.
- A team of public and private agencies, youth, courts and child advocates will begin meeting in early June to develop the foster care program for youth 18 and older.

Reconnect – It's Up To Me

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Why?

- **75% of youth aging out of the foster care system seek out or live with birth parents or relatives**
- **The sibling relationship is the most important relationship for youth who have experienced abuse and / or neglect**
- **Youth aging out of foster care without support are more likely to have issues with homelessness, substance abuse, criminality, lack of education**
- **There is a direct relationship between how many foster care workers a youth has – a youth's chances for achieving permanency drops dramatically each time there is a change in foster care workers**

What is Reconnect?

- **Five Year Federal Demonstration Grant with the Dept. of Health and Human Services; ending September 29, 2010**
- **Goal: Provide Permanency for Youth and reduce the number of youth aging out of foster care without a support system**
- **Serve youth listed on the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) statewide**
- **Serve youth mainly between the ages of 13 – 19**

Reconnect Youth

	Chronic Neglect	Emotional Abuse	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Traumatic Loss
Chronic Neglect	0	63	53	49	49
Emotional Abuse	63	0	57	56	49
Physical Abuse	53	57	0	48	38
Sexual Abuse	49	56	48	0	39
Traumatic Loss	49	49	38	39	0

45 youth with three or more categories of abuse and/or neglect

Where Reconnect Youth Live

Placement	Number to Date	Percentage to Date
Adoptive Home	5	2.78%
Foster Care	68	37.78%
Homeless	1	0.56%
Independent Living	3	1.67%
Relative	2	1.11%
Residential	87	48.33%
Temp Foster Care	1	0.56%
Other	4	2.22%
Not Specified	9	5.00%
Total	180	100.00%

Reconnect / Permanency Workers

- They remember that there is a family out there to love each youth; no youth is “unadoptable”
- They pay attention to their own biases – they remember that not everyone lives by the same value system
- They do not pre-judge a youth or a family
- They do their own searches- even if told, “there’s no one”
- They know how to talk about “family” with youth
- They talk about “open adoption contracts” with prospective family, birth family and youth

How Does Reconnect Work?

- **Case Management Component & Family Finding**
- **Therapeutic Component – Trauma Focused (individual and group)**
- **Mentoring Component**



Case Management

- **Case manager assigned to youth**
- **Meet with youth to talk about a plan for permanence – youth empowered**
- **Provide testing for project**
- **Explore youth's past and present social network – mining files, search techniques**
- **Adoption is ultimate goal-explore youth's feelings about having a family; not just adoption**

What does a Case Manager do to Seek Permanency?

- There were 3,263 contacts reported by program staff for all youth served under the categories of Placement Recruitment & Placement Retention
- That equals an average of 57 contacts per youth to achieve a successful placement

Therapy

- Individual therapy for youth to address complex trauma and feelings regarding adoption
- Family therapy-can include birth family, foster family, adoptive family, mentor, etc...
- Teen Group therapy-address trauma, barriers to adoption, making healthy choices, etc...
- Teach the youth how to form healthy relationships that will be supportive to them in their future
- Mediated Family Conferencing – open adoption

PTSD Indicators

- **Target:** 75% of youth who participate in treatment will show a reduction in PTSD indicators
- **Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children (TSCC)** measurement tool. This instrument is being administered to youth at intake, annually, and/or at program termination.
- **Of the 54 valid pairs of pre-test/post-test raw scores on the PTS scale of the TSCC, 38 (70.37%) showed a decrease**

Openness to Permanency Tool

- **The ‘Openness to Permanency’ measurement tool is administered to youth at intake, annually, and/or at program termination.**
- **Initial comparative analysis between pre and post-test results indicates a mean increase in openness to permanency of 6.36 points per valid sets of pre/post-test**
- **Has been used to encourage the assignment of adoption workers**

Mentoring

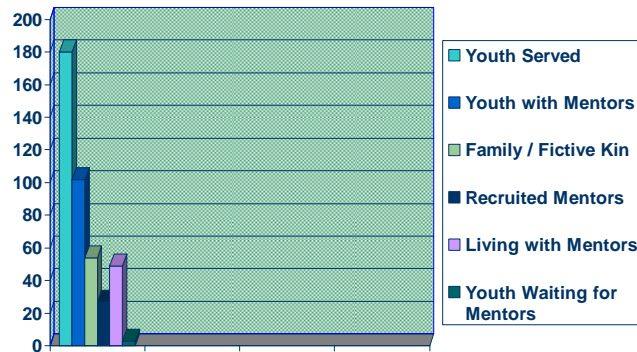
- **Match youth with a mentor - preferably from the birth family**
- **A mentor is a support and can also be the liaison between foster family and birth family**
- **Provides lifelong support to the youth as they transition to adulthood**
- **Youth specific**



How Does Reconnect Support Mentoring?

- **Project staff conducted 1,476 individual mentor recruitment activities for 102 youth in the program.**
- **Project staff provided 2,038 Mentor support activities for 78 youth in the program.**

Mentoring Outcomes



Reconnect's Permanency Outcomes through 3/31/2010

Successfully Closed

Adoption 11
 •Family (5)
 •Fictive / Foster (5)
 •Recruited (1)
Family Placement 19
Fictive Kin Placement 4
Foster Care Placement 1
Reunification 8
Subtotal Closed = 43

Successfully Closed

With Family Mentor 9
With Fictive Kin Mentor 7
With Recruited Mentor 3
APPLA w/ Family Mentor 2
APPLA w/ Fictive Kin Mentor 1

****Subtotal Closed = 22**

**64 cases open with 3 youth unmatched & needing a mentor