



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CROWN FAMILY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

Advancing a More Just and Humane Society

Examining Prevalence and Predictors of Economic Hardships for Transition-age Foster Youth

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Background

- Many transition-age youth involved in foster care in the U.S. **face major barriers transitioning to adulthood** ^{1,2}
- **Economic insecurity is one clear barrier** faced by young adults exiting foster care ^{3,4,5}
- Transition-age foster youth **more likely to experience various poverty-related outcomes** such as homelessness, food insecurity, and underemployment ^{6,7}
- **Little is known** about the experiences of specific economic hardships or predictors of these experiences

Present Analysis

Research Questions

1. What is the prevalence of older youth in foster care's experiences of economic hardships?
2. What risk and protective factors are associated with older youth in foster care's economic hardship experiences?

Present Analysis

Data Sources

- CalYOUTH longitudinal youth survey
 - Study evaluating the impact of California Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB 12) (PI: Mark Courtney)
 - Data collected in 4 waves at ages 17, 19, 21, and 23
- CalYOUTH Caseworker survey
 - n=235 caseworkers, RR=90%
- California child welfare administrative data
 - CA Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS)
- Other publicly available information
 - e.g., unemployment rate

Analytic Sample

- **675** youths who participated in at least two waves of CalYOUTH interviews and granted permission to access their CWS/CMS administrative data

Methods: Variables

Dependent Variables

- ***Number of economic hardships*** experienced by youth (range: 0-6)
 1. Not enough money for clothing or shoes
 2. Could not pay rent or mortgage
 3. Experience of eviction or loss of house
 4. Could not pay a utility bill
 5. Cell phone or telephone service shut off
 6. Gas or electricity shut off
- ***Experience of any economic hardship*** (yes/no)

Independent Variables

- Youth demographic characteristics (e.g., age, race)
- Youth's risk and protective factors (e.g., health, education)
- Youth's foster care history (e.g., ever in group care, months in EFC)
- County context (e.g., unemployment rate, market rent)

Methods: Analysis

- We conduct descriptive analysis to assess prevalence of economic hardships
- We run separate models for each outcome variable
 1. Linear probability regression for the “***any economic hardship***” outcome variable
 2. Poisson regression “***number of economic hardships***” outcome variable
- To minimize biases from reduced observations, we imputed missing values of predictor variables 30 times using the multiple imputation by chained equations (MICE) method⁸

Descriptive Statistics: Economic Hardships

	Age 19 (N = 601)	Age 21 (N = 605)	Sig.
	Weighted Mean (SD) / %	Weighted Mean (SD) / %	
At least one economic hardship experience in the past 12 months, %	51.7	48.5	
Not enough money for clothes or shoes, %	35.6	35.2	
Not enough money for rent or mortgage, %	18.0	23.9	*
Evicted or loss home, %	3.7	8.9	**
Not enough money for utilities, %	18.8	19.6	
Cell phone or telephone service shut off, %	33.9	27.6	*
Gas or electricity shut off, %	7.0	7.5	
Number of economic hardship experienced in the past 12 months, Mean (SD)	1.2 (1.5)	1.2 (1.7)	

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Abbreviated Results: Any Economic Hardship

	Age 19	Age 21
	Coefficient	Coefficient
Youth demographic characteristics		
Gender (Male)	0.04	-0.07
Race/Ethnicity (ref. White)		
Black	-0.07	-0.07
Multiracial/ethnic	0.02	0.20*
Hispanic	-0.09	-0.12
Other	-0.31**	-0.07
Not 100% heterosexual	0.17**	0.11
Use English as main language	0.12	-0.03
Youth's risk and protective factors		
Have a health insurance	-0.01	-0.12
Health condition limits daily activities	0.14	0.01
Mental health or substance use disorder	0.07	0.18**
Living with their own child	-0.09	0.10
Earning in the past 12 months (\$000)	0.00	-0.00
Youth's foster care history		
Number of placement change per year in care	0.00	-0.03
Ever placed in relative foster homes	-0.01	0.02
Ever placed in group care	0.06	0.14*
Years Spent in EFC (between 18-19 & 20-21, respectively)	-0.22**	-0.03
F	2.88***	3.21***

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Abbreviated Results: Number of Hardships

	Age 19	Age 21
	IRR	IRR
Youth demographic characteristics		
Gender (Male)	0.99	0.71*
Race/Ethnicity (ref. White)		
Black	0.86	0.85
Multiracial/ethnic	1.25	1.35
Hispanic	0.86	0.77
Other	0.44*	1.02
Not 100% heterosexual	1.43**	1.20
Use English as main language	1.51	0.90
Youth's risk and protective factors		
Have a health insurance	1.10	0.72
Health condition limits daily activities	1.55*	0.99
Mental health or substance use disorder	1.29*	1.42**
Living with their own child	1.30	1.09
Earning in the past 12 months (\$000)	1.01	0.98*
Youth's foster care history		
Number of placement change per year in care	1.05	0.89
Ever placed in relative foster homes	0.80	1.10
Ever placed in group care	1.19	1.62**
Years Spent in EFC (between 18-19 & 20-21, respectively)	0.61**	0.92
F	3.61***	3.17***

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Limitations

- We cannot control for experience of poverty as minors or in the family home before foster care
- Our data only capture hardships during the past 12 months before each interview
- Our findings may not generalize beyond older youth in foster care in California
- We rely on self-reported data to measure economic hardships

Discussion

- **Economic hardship is quite prevalent**, with about half of youth experiencing at least one economic hardship
- Youth characteristics:
 - Female experience greater number of hardships than males
 - Sexual minority youths more likely to experience hardship, and experience more hardships
 - Young people with behavioral health concerns at greater risk for hardship
 - Some foster care characteristics increased risk (e.g., congregate care) while others decreased risk (e.g., EFC)
- Significant variation by age
- No associations between county context variables
- Limited association between earnings and economic hardships

Implications for Practice & Policy

Practice

- Need for **targeted investments and services for marginalized subpopulations** of youth
 - This includes LGBTQIA+ young people, females, and youth with mental health and substance use disorders
- Clear points for **prevention in frequently reported hardships**, including clothes, phone service, and utilities
- Need for age/phase-specific services and **relevant supports across the phases of transition to adulthood**

Policy

- Further **support for Extended Foster Care** needed
- **Guaranteed basic income** experiments in CA, which can help address economic hardships

Thank you!!!

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Citations

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Supplemental Information

- Several non-significant variables in the two regression models are not displayed in the tables presented. These variables include:
 1. size of tangible support network,
 2. enrolled in college in the past 24 months,
 3. age of first foster care entry,
 4. count of screened-in report maltreatments,
 5. unemployment rate among 16-24,
 6. fair market rent for a 2-bedroom unit,
 7. percentage of republican voters,
 8. caseworker perception on training and service availability,
 9. caseworker satisfaction on the collaboration with other service systems,
 10. percentage of caseworkers specialized for working with older youth

Do Independent Living Services Protect Youth Aging Out Foster Care From Adverse Outcomes? An Evaluation Using National Data

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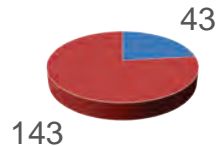


Introduction

- When youth in foster care transition out of the child welfare system without enough support, they often **face harsh consequences** such as low education and employment attainments (Day et al., 2011; Okpych & Courtney, 2014), homelessness (Curry & Abrams, 2015; Dworsky et al., 2013), involvement with the justice system (Courtney et al., 2011), mental health (Schelbe, 2018), and substance use problems (Braciszewski & Stout, 2012).

Introduction (Cont.)

- **The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (FCIA) was passed in 1999 and created the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). FCIA was amended in 2002 to include the Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV).**
 - Increases funding for independent living activities (\$70m-> \$140m)
 - Offers increased assistance, including room and board, for young people ages 18 to 21 who are leaving foster care. A state may use up to 30 percent of its Chafee Independence Program allotment for room and board for eligible children and can decide how to define room and board.
 - Allows states to provide Medicaid coverage to young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who were in foster care on their 18th birthday



■ Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV) ■ Other Services

- **The Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008**
 - **Major Provision Related to Youth Aging Out of Foster Care:**
 - Permitted States to extend title IV-E assistance to otherwise eligible youth remaining in foster care after reaching age 18 and to youth who at age 16 or older exited foster care to either a kinship guardianship or adoption, provided that they have not yet reached ages 19, 20, or 21, as the State may elect, and are in school, employed, engaged in another activity designed to remove barriers to employment, or incapable of doing so due to a documented medical condition (effective October 1, 2010).

Introduction (Cont.)

Studies using RCT at different sites reported mixed findings on ILS:

- Kern County, CA: no significant differences (Courtney, 2011)
- LA County, CA: no significant impact of tutoring services on educational outcomes; no significant impact of a life skills training in key outcomes (Administration for children and families, 2008)
- 3 counties in OR: mentoring services to youth in foster care (specifically the My Life Model) was effective in preventing criminal justice involvement in young adulthood (Blakeslee & Keller, 2018)

Studies using NYTD data reported mixed findings on ILS:

- Kim et al. (2019) found only education related ILS received at age 17 is positively associated with post-secondary education and employment at age 21.
- Watt and Kim (2019) reported that the number of ILS received between ages 19-21 is unexpectedly associated with less favorable education and employment outcomes and greater risk of homelessness and incarceration at ages 19–21.
- Lee and Ballew (2018) reported that youth receiving post-secondary education support and education financial services were more likely to work or attend school and less likely to be homeless or incarcerated at age 19, but unexpectedly, youth receiving special education and career services were less likely to work or attend school at age 19.
- Prince et al. (2019) reported no statistically significant association between the counts of wellbeing and financial services received at age 17 and adverse outcomes at age 19.

Introduction (Cont.)

- Studies on the impacts of ILS have been limited, but the effectiveness of ILS has significant policy implications. To bridge the gaps in empirical research, using national data, **this study** examined whether the continuity of ILS experiences at ages 17-19 protects youth aging out foster care from homelessness and incarceration at ages 19-21.

Methods

- **Data and sample:** We used data from the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). This study used data from the 2014 cohort. We linked NYTD and AFCARS data using the shared ID. We identified our study sample by merging NYTD service data, NYTD outcome data, and AFCARS. Our final sample included **4,853** youth with no missing data on variables from AFCARS and the third wave of NYTD outcome data.

Age 17 in
2014

Age 19 in
2016

Age 21 in
2018

Methods

- **Measure:**
 - Dependent variables: homelessness and incarceration (binary variables)
 - ILS variables: remaining in foster care, three types of tangible ILS, and three types of life skills training, and mentoring services.
 - We used two steps of computation to measure continuity of ILS at ages 17-19. Firstly, we computed the percentage of service records indicating service receipts. Secondly, we computed the average percentage of service receipts within each type of ILS.
 - Covariates: biological sex, ethnicity/race, non-emotional disability, emotional disturbance, the number of placements
- **Analytic strategies:** logistic regression

ILS types

Tangible ILS services

Academic support	Academic support for high school and GED completion
	Post-secondary support for applying for or studying at college
Employment support	Career preparation services (e.g identifying potential employers and completing job applications)
	Employment programs and vocational training (e.g. apprenticeship and auto mechanic skills training)
Financial assistance	Room and board financial assistance
	Education financial assistance
	Other financial assistance

Life skills training

Budget and financial management	Training on budgeting, balancing a checkbook, and developing consumer awareness and smart shopping skills
	Training on opening and using a checking and savings account, accessing information about credit, loans, and taxes, and filling out tax forms.
Housing education and home management	Locating and maintaining housing
	Managing housework, such as grocery shopping, food preparation, laundry, and housekeeping
Health education and risk prevention	Healthy lifestyles (e.g., fitness and exercise)
	Medical and dental care benefits,
	sex education, and substance abuse prevention and intervention

Sample Demographics and Placement Experience

	N	%
Demographics from AFCARS		
Race		
White	1897	39.1
Black	1351	27.8
Hispanic	1180	24.3
Other	425	8.8
Female	2779	57.3
Non-emotional Disability	458	9.4
Emotional Disturbance	1923	39.6
	Mean	SD
Placement experiences from AFCARS		
Number of placements	5.56	5.86

Adverse Outcomes, Covariates, and Services

	N	%
Dependent Variables		
NYTD Outcomes at Wave 3		
Homelessness	1429	29.4
Incarceration	902	18.6
	Mean	SD
Independent Variables on NYTD Services in 2014-2016		
Academic support service	38%	28%
Employment support service	29%	28%
Financial assistance service	22%	21%
Budget and financial management	34%	36%
Housing education and home management	35%	36%
Health education and risk prevention	39%	36%
Mentoring	20%	31%
Staying in foster care	86%	22%

Logistic Regression

	Homelessness			Incarceration		
	β	SE	OR	β	SE	OR
Remaining in foster care	-0.62***	0.15	0.54	-0.54**	0.17	0.58
Academic support service	-0.41**	0.15	0.67	0.10	0.18	1.11
Employment support service	-0.13	0.17	0.88	-0.33	0.20	0.72
Financial assistance service	-0.72***	0.17	0.49	-1.51***	0.22	0.22
Budget and financial management	-0.09	0.13	0.92	0.00	0.15	1.00
Housing education and home management	0.37**	0.12	1.45	0.17	0.14	1.18
Health education and risk prevention	0.27*	0.12	1.30	0.18	0.14	1.19
Mentoring	0.22	0.12	1.24	0.05	0.14	1.05
Race (Reference: White)						
Black	-0.08	0.08	0.93	0.06	0.10	1.06
Hispanic	-0.16	0.09	0.85	0.02	0.10	1.02
Other race	0.13	0.12	1.14	0.20	0.14	1.22
Female	-0.03	0.07	0.97	-0.95***	0.08	0.39
Non-emotional disability	-0.31**	0.12	0.73	-0.20	0.14	0.81
Emotional disturbance	0.19**	0.07	1.20	0.13	0.08	1.14
Number of placements	0.05***	0.01	1.05	0.04***	0.01	1.04
Constant	-0.50***	0.15	0.60	-0.63***	0.18	0.53

Discussion

- Remaining in foster care at ages 17–19 is associated with lower odds of homelessness and incarceration at ages 19–21.
- Continuously receiving financial assistance at ages 17–19 is associated with lower odds of homelessness and incarceration at ages 19–21.
- Continuously receiving academic support services at ages 17–19 is associated with lower odds of homelessness at ages 19–21.
- Did not show statistically significant effects of employment support service, training on budget and financial management, and mentoring.
- Unexpected finding that housing education and home management, and health education and risk prevention are associated with greater odds of homelessness at ages 19–21.

Practice Implications

- Provide financial assistance: room and board financial assistance, education financial assistance, and other financial assistance.
- Provide academic support service: Child welfare agencies should also motivate youth aging out of foster care to complete high school and educate them about the financial feasibility of pursuing higher education (e.g. scholarships and financial aids).

Thank You!

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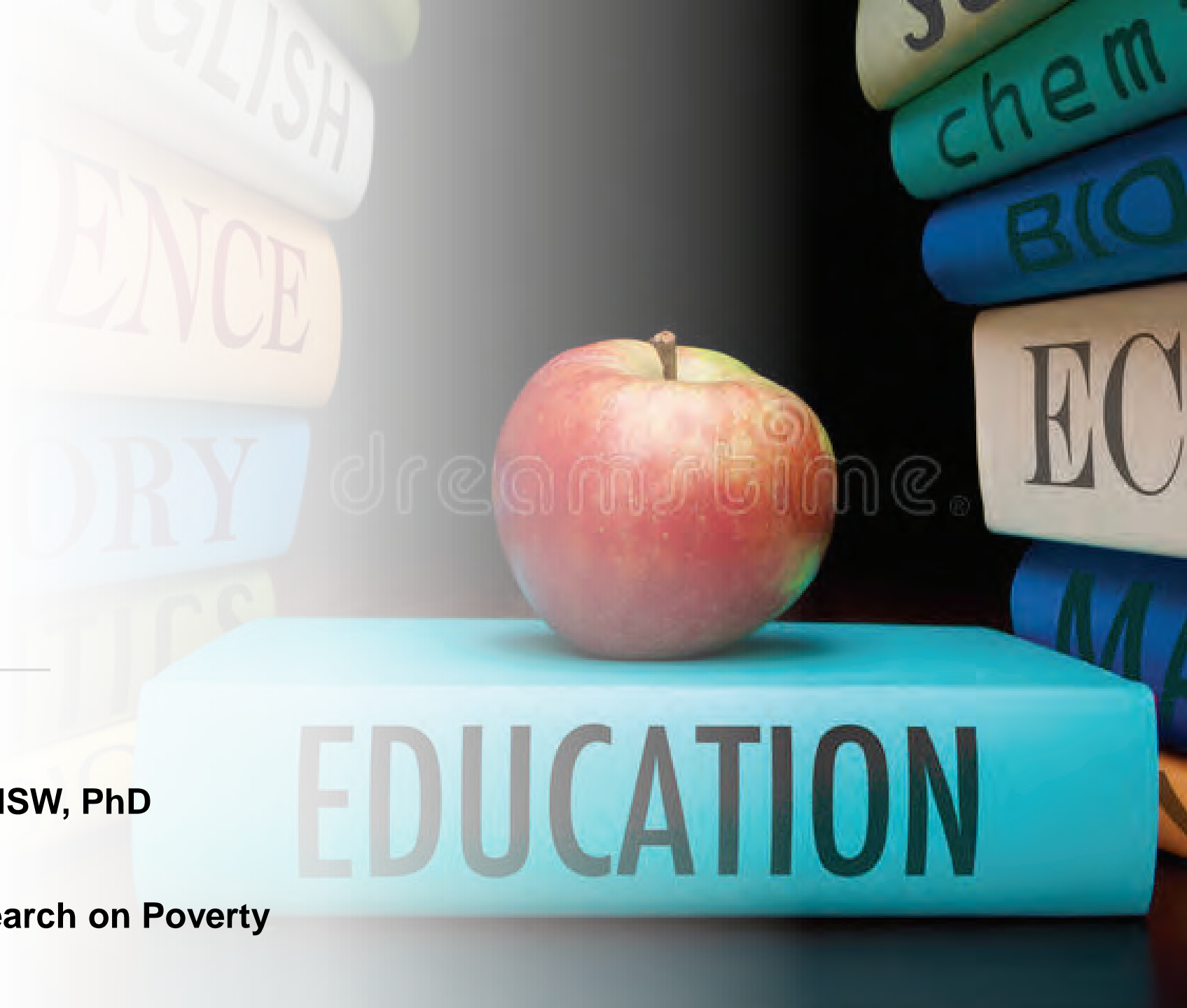
Supporting youth exiting foster care: What works & what is still needed



Angelique Day, MSW, PhD

May 3, 2023

Institute for Research on Poverty



What Do We Know About the Foster Care Educational Achievement Gap?

- Nationally, 58% of foster youth complete high school vs. 84% of non-foster youth (NCES, 2016)
- Recent statewide study in IN, show FY high school graduation rates were reduced from 64% in 2019 to 55% in 2020 (Fostering Success 2020)
- Foster youth are disproportionately students of color
- 70% of foster youth aspire to college, only 32-45% ever enroll (vs. 67% general population), and only 3-11% ever graduate (Courtney, Dworsky, Lee, & Rapp, 2010; Legal Center for Foster care & Education, 2019).
- After 6 years of college:
 - 72% of foster youth have no degree/certificate
 - 57% low-income students have no degree/certificate
 - 49% of general population have no degree/certificate (GAO, 2016)



What are the Long-Term Implications of Higher Education?

- For 25-34 year olds who work full time, year round, higher educational attainment is associated with higher median earnings (35 hours/wk, 50 wks/yr)
- In 2020, median earnings for young adults were:
 - \$59,600 for those with a bachelor's degree
 - \$44,100 for those with an associate's degree
 - \$36,600 for those with a high school credential
 - \$29,800 for those without a high school credential

Current Federal/State Policies that Impact college-going behavior of students with lived experience in foster care

- College Cost Reduction Act of 2007
 - Claim independent status on FAFSA if student was in foster care on or after age 13
- Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee Foster Care Independence Program) 1999
 - Amended in 2001 to include the Education Training Voucher program (ETV)
 - Have to use before one's 21st birthday and eligibility remains til age 23 if satisfactory academic progress is being achieved toward completion of degree requirements
- Fostering Connections to Success & Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008
- State Tuition Waivers (22 states) (Hernandez, et al., 2017)
- Federal Pell Grant Program (\$6345/academic yr if FT in 2020)
 - Max 12 semesters/6 years
 - Stopping out does not count against this timetable

(CSSP, 2009)

Stopping Out & College Graduation

- Research Question: Is there a difference in time to graduation for FCA compared with other first-gen, low-income students (controlling for stop outs, GPA, transfer status, gender & Race)
- Design: Longitudinal study using linked higher education (enrollment & financial aid) admin data collected over a 10-year period, obtained Summer 2009
- This study was conducted prior to the state's adoption of foster care extension, and thus none of the FCA were wards of the court after age 18.
- Predates the implementation of the school's campus support program
- Not a tuition waiver state

Hypotheses:

- H1: FCA graduate at a slower pace
- H2: FCA more likely to stop out on their college journey

➤ Group 1: "Ward of the court" on FAFSA

- N= 438 undergraduates

➤ Group 2: Non-Foster, low-income (TRIO)

- (N=365 students stratified random sample pulled from a total of 6,202 TRIO eligible population)
- TRIO eligibility includes first generation, low-income students whose family's taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount

Intervention: Data Analysis

Independent variables

- Group status (ward of the court (FCA) or nonfoster TRIO student status))
- Stop out status (One or more stop out episodes, or a leave of absence for at least 1 semester)
- Gender, race, transfer status, GPA

Dependent variables

- Graduation (terminal event)/continued enrollment at end of observation period



Descriptive Findings

Row percentages shown; cumulative GPA mean = 2.72, (*SD* = 0.86).

^aOther includes students who identified themselves as American Indian, Latino, and/or Asian American.

^bStatistically significant difference in graduation rate between former court wards and nonwards ($p < .05$).

^cStatistically significant difference in graduation rate between white students and African American students ($p < .05$).

^dStatistically significant difference in graduation rate between students of another race and African American students ($p < .05$).

Transfer status by foster care status ($X^2(1)=156, p<.01$)

Table 1. Student Enrollment Status at the End of Observation Period (N=803)

Variable Name	N	Graduated		Dropped Out		Currently Enrolled	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Ward-of-the-court status ^b							
Low-income, 1st generation	365	271	74.2	68	18.6	26	7.1
Former court ward	438	176	40.2	140	32.0	122	27.9
Gender							
Male	314	165	52.5	86	27.4	63	20.1
Female	489	282	57.7	122	24.9	85	17.4
Race ^{c, d}							
White	361	231	64.0	74	20.5	56	15.5
African American	315	140	44.4	106	33.7	69	21.9
Other ^a	127	76	59.8	28	22.0	23	18.1
Enrollment status							
First time in college	378	281	74.3	72	19.0	25	6.6
Transfer	425	166	39.1	136	32.0	123	28.9
Stop-out status							
Stopped out at least once	289	57	19.7	203	70.2	29	10.0
Never stopped out	514	390	75.8	5	1.0	119	23.2
Total	803	447	55.6	208	25.9	148	18.4

Descriptive Findings

^aOther includes students who identified themselves as American Indian, Latino and/or Asian American.

^bChi-square test statistically significant ($p < .001$).

^cStatistically significant difference in stop-out rate between white students and African American students ($p < .001$).

^dStatistically significant difference in stop-out rate between students of another race and African American students ($p < .001$).

Experienced a stop out episode and then reenrolled and graduated by foster care status ($X^2(7)=622$, $p<.001$)

Table 2. Student Stop out Status at the end of Observation Period (N=803)

Variable Name	N	Stopped Out at Least Once		Never Stopped Out	
		n	%	n	%
Ward-of-the-court status^b					
Low-income, 1st generation	365	99	27.1	266	72.9
Former court ward	438	190	43.4	248	56.6
Gender					
Male	314	122	38.9	192	61.1
Female	489	167	34.2	322	65.8
Race^{c, d}					
White	361	99	27.4	262	72.6
African American	315	147	46.7	168	53.3
Other ^a	127	43	33.9	84	66.1
Enrollment status^b					
First time in college	378	108	28.6	270	71.4
Transfer	425	181	42.6	244	57.4
Graduation status: All^b					
Graduated	447	57	12.8	390	87.2
Dropped out	208	203	97.6	5	2.4
Currently enrolled	148	29	19.6	119	80.4
Graduation status: Former court ward^b					
Graduated	176	27	15.3	149	84.7
Dropped out	140	140	100.0	0	0.0
Currently enrolled	122	23	18.9	99	81.1
Subtotal graduated + currently enrolled	298	50	16.8	248	83.2
Graduation status: Low-income, 1st generation^b					
Graduated	271	30	11.1	241	88.9
Dropped out	68	63	92.6	5	7.4
Currently enrolled	26	6	23.1	20	76.9
Subtotal graduated + currently enrolled	297	36	12.1	261	87.9
Total	803	289	36.0	514	64.0

Discussion of Findings

What did we find?

- FCA time to graduation is slower (13.5 semesters) as compared to 11 semesters nonfoster, 1st gen, low-income students indicates that many FCAs are losing access to pell grants before they can graduate (12 semester lifetime limit)
- FCA are more likely to stop out, and experience a stop out episode sooner in their college journey than their nonfoster, 1st gen, low-income peers
- FCA are more likely to reenroll and graduate after experiencing a stop out episode than their peers



Discussion of Findings

Why do we think we are observing this effect?

- Systemic reasons: inadequate collaboration across child welfare and higher education systems
- Enrollment in lower performing high schools
- More likely to need to enroll in remedial courses
- Less exposure to pre-college programs to explore strengths and talents
- Greater likelihood to change major as part of exploration of self
- Stopping out to address environmental factors outside academics (need to work to access basic needs)

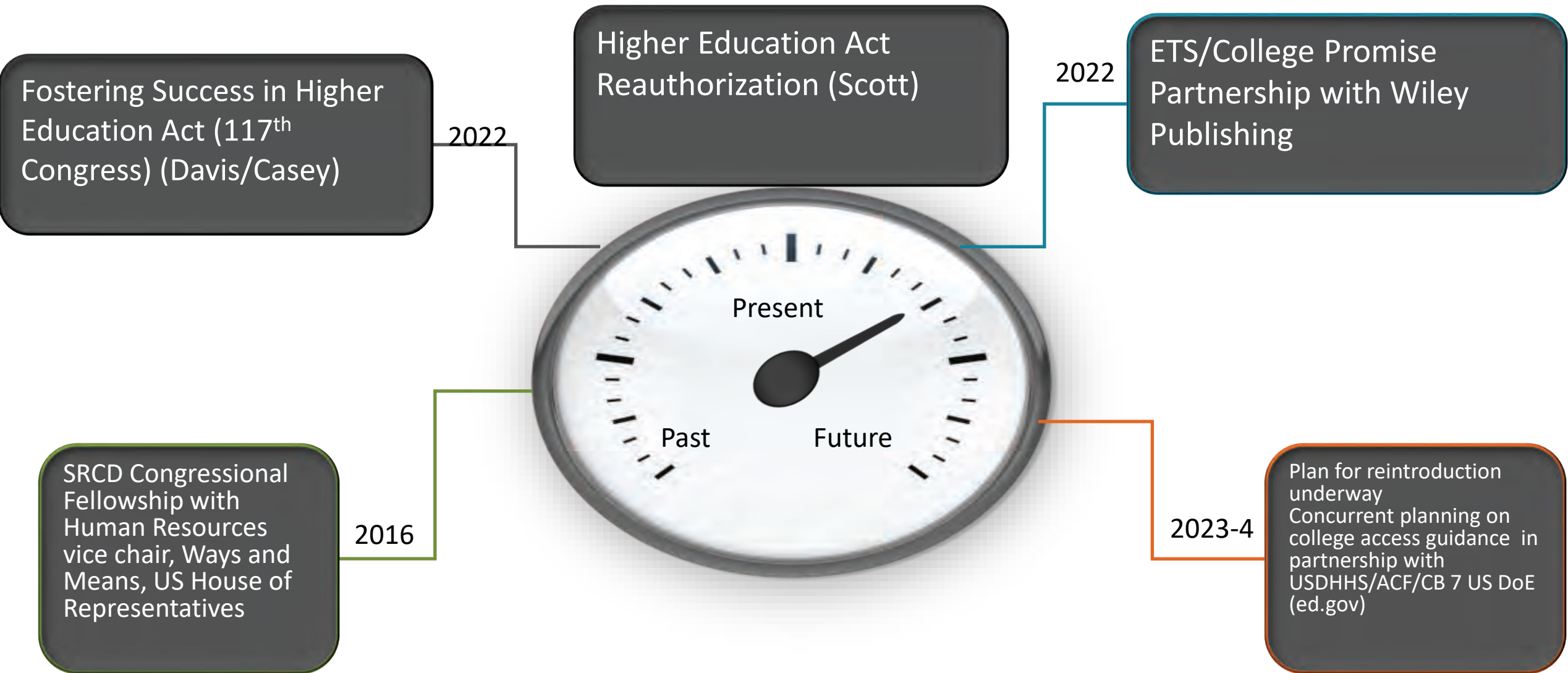


Implications for Policy & Practice

- Extend Pell Grant lifetime limit eligibility from 12 to 14 semesters
- Financial aid assistance (ETV) & support for tuition fee waivers until age 26
- Access to housing during school year and vacations
- Permit youth to remain in care after age 18 or re-enter care with court emphasis on post-secondary support
- Access to targeted & coordinated campus-based support services (academic, financial, physical, mental health, social and emotional).
- Post-secondary support for students with disabilities and those in need of remediation
- Work collaboratively across child welfare, higher education and courts to ensure achievement of these goals



National Policy Reform Resulting From My Research & Advocacy Efforts



THANK YOU!

Email:

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Websites: <https://depts.washington.edu/fostered/> (tuition waivers/ETV contacts by state);

www.NRC-fahe.org/ (communication hub for campus support programs and researchers interested in foster care access to higher education)

Day, A., Smith, R., & Tajima, E., (2021). Stopping out and its impact on college graduation among a sample of foster care youth: A multiple spell survival analysis. *Journal of the Society for Social Work Research*, 12 (1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/712892>

Jackson, M.S., Day, A., Ford, L., Salizan, A., & Lester, C. (2022). Chapter 5: College Promise for youth in or aged out of foster care. In Millet, C.M. (Ed). *Expanding Promise: Depicting the ecosystems of support and financial sustainability for five college promise populations*. (Research Report No. RR 22-17, pp. 34-44). ETS. Wiley Online Library. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ets2.12350>





Foster Care: How we can and should do more for maltreated children

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Do we set youth up for success?

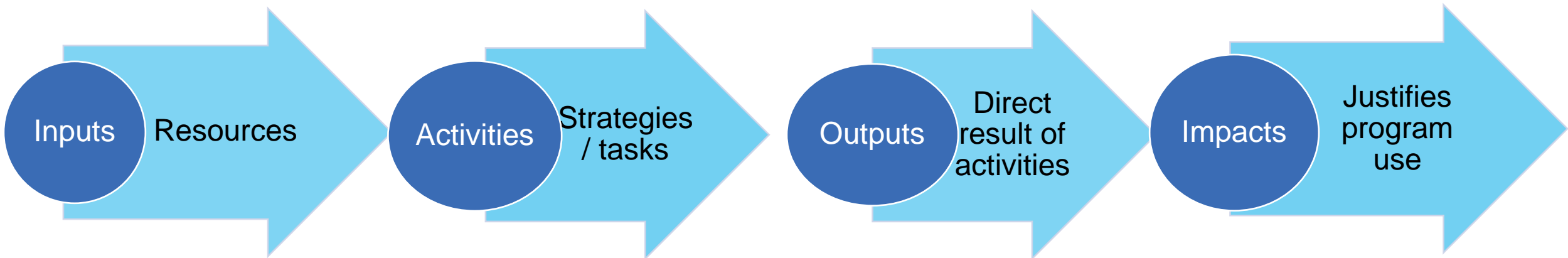
Three points to think about:

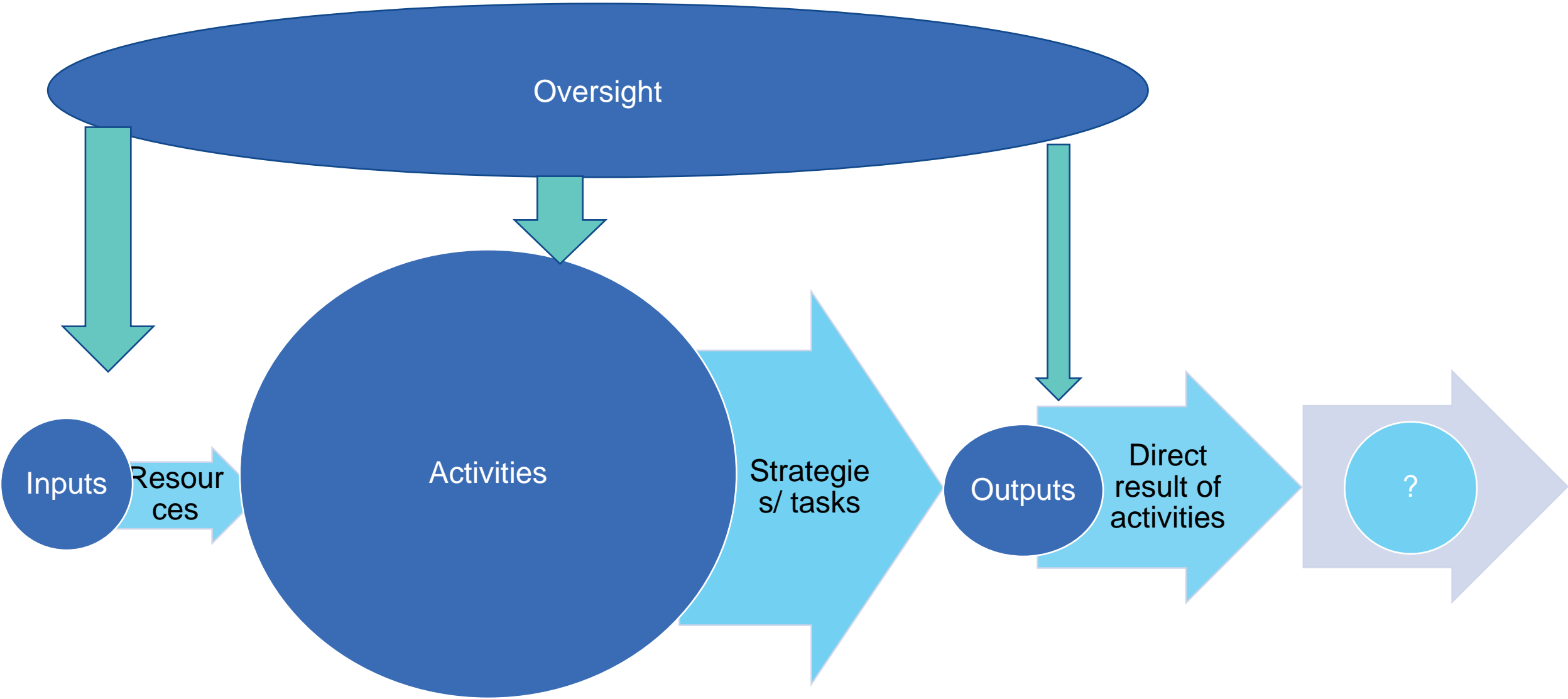
1. Experiences *before* foster care
2. **What happens *during* foster care**
3. How, to whom, and with what supports do youth *leave* foster care

How do our priorities in those time periods align with desired outcomes?



Evaluating the effectiveness of foster care for older youth: How do we know if it “works”?





Stuck in a spiral

- A crumbling foundation (inputs)
- Keep adding activities/strategies, rules, etc. to meet outcome goals
- Keep adding oversight because the foundation is too weak to execute all the activities/comply with all the rules
- Increased burden on foundation



Without a stable foundation...

During foster care, how many youth:



Changed caseworkers?



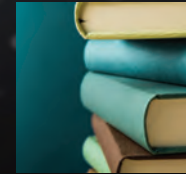
Changed judges or GALs?



Changed foster parents?



Changed doctors or therapists?



Changed schools (and friends)?

Why it matters for older youth

- Unpredictability and lack of agency inhibits **future-oriented thinking/planning**
- Deprived of opportunity to build/maintain **long-term personal connections**
- Lack of positive experience **seeking and receiving help from formal systems/professionals**

Environment is not conducive to learning skills needed for conventional pathways to success



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After foster care, is current programming enough? For whom?

- Set up to compensate for core tangible resources that youth might receive from parents: tuition support, health insurance, a place to stay.
- Is that the only or most important thing that families provide?
- How far will these resources go without relational support? (Delaying negative outcomes versus building positive outcomes)



Components of a stable foundation

- Foster/kin/group care providers
- Caseworkers & agency leadership
- Formal service providers (therapists, doctors, etc.)
- Community support

Do current policies and practices build and retain capacity in the system or strip it away?

Placement shortages: it's not the kids, it's the system

- **What is the evidence for a scarcity problem versus an agency process problem?**
 - Loss rate from interest → outreach → orientation → licensure → placement
 - License closure reasons, placement disruption reasons
- **Are we set up to recruit/retain the best families for kids, or simply the ones who will tolerate system chaos, dysfunction, and neglect?**
 - Low standards but laborious process
 - Attention goes to the fires not to the wires
 - Temporary placements → permanent connections?



Caseworker shortages: it's a hard job, but is that why they leave?

- Why do people pursue helping professions?
- Intrinsic rewards/motivations
 - Achievement (effort → outcome)
 - Autonomy (application of skills, independence, creative problem solving)
 - Affiliation (culture of support, friendship, teamwork)
- Are these present for caseworkers? How much effort goes into tasks that are not directly tied to outcomes?





Community Support: Untapped Resources?

During and After Foster Care...

Are there ways to leverage community support outside of formal system roles?

What opportunities are provided to build lasting social support, especially for youth without involved/supportive kin networks?



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