

Child Development and Successful Youth Transitions Committee of the California Child Welfare Council

Housing and Homeless Foster Youth Work Group

Purpose

The purpose of this specific proposal is to request the development of a model protocol for a multi-system response to serve the needs of youth who are missing, homeless, or have run away from foster care. The Child Development and Successful Youth Transitions Committee (CDSYT) and Permanency workgroup members believe that a broad-based collaboration and coordination effort by child welfare, juvenile justice, probation, law enforcement, shelters, school liaisons, health and mental health, [others], is necessary to support youth who are missing, homeless or who have run away. Further the CDSYT and Permanency workgroup members believe a model protocol would make clear the agency and individual roles related to implementing SB 794ⁱ, The Runaway and Youth Homelessness and Preventing Trafficking Act of 2016ⁱⁱ, and the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014ⁱⁱⁱ. The CDSYT and Permanency committees are requesting the development and approval of a model protocol for dissemination to counties and agencies.

Background

A workgroup within the CDYST Committee of the California Child Welfare Council (CWC) has been studying the issue of youth who run away from foster care. The initial idea for this came from the Administration for Children, Youth & Families (ACF) Memo dated November 4, 2014, titled "Serving Youth Who Run Away from Foster Care"^{iv}. The "Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008"^v cites the term "homeless", used with respect to a youth, as an individual who is less than 21 years of age, or in the case of a youth seeking shelter in a center, less than 18 years of age, or is less than a higher maximum age if the State where the center is located has an applicable State or local law (including a regulation) that permits such higher maximum age in compliance with licensure requirements for child and youth serving facilities not less than 16 years of age and either less than 22 years of age; or not less than 22 years of age, as of the expiration of the maximum period of stay permitted under section 5714-2(a)(2), if such individual commences such stay before reaching 22 years of age; for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative; and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement.

The term "runaway", used with respect to a youth, means an individual who is less than 18 years of age and who absents himself or herself from home or a place of legal residence without the permission of a parent or legal guardian.

The term “street youth” means an individual who is a runaway youth; or indefinitely or intermittently a homeless youth; and spends a significant amount of time on the street or in other areas that increase the risk to such youth for sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, prostitution, or drug abuse. The ACF memo notes the unique challenges facing foster youth ages 12-17 and that coordination is critical at the local, community, and state level. The memo noted the signing of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Public Law 113-183), which authorize federal child welfare programs to develop policies related to supporting youth who have run away from foster care. Such a policy and the implementation is also of importance to runaway and homeless youth providers, dependency attorneys, resource families, adoptive homes, and other caregivers as well. The Act had many provisions designed to increase the oversight by child welfare of youth in foster care vulnerable to sexual trafficking and exploitation. The memo notes the requirements of child welfare agencies with respect to youth who runaway and/or are at-risk of becoming a sex trafficking victim.

The memo also notes the critical issue of youth and young adult homelessness, the challenges and issues they face living on the street, and the importance of services and programs provided by runaway and homeless youth (RHY) providers. It also discusses that the majority of youth who run away from foster care are between the ages of 12-17, with many of these foster youth entering the system after age 12. These youths often face the same challenges that homeless youth do with respect to substance abuse and mental health issues. The memo ended with the recommendation, “We encourage child welfare agencies and RHY providers to meet, inventory and recognize their various strengths in serving youth who run away from foster care, and develop coordinated approaches for effective services to youth persons who have run away from foster care placements.”

There are some states that are further along in implementing the recommendations laid out by ACF. Oregon’s legislature, for example, has appointed “a cross-system advisory group to coordinate statewide policy and planning for addressing the needs of runaway and homeless youth. The Oregon Homeless Youth Advisory Committee represents leaders from state and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations in communities across the state.” In 2016, the Committee released, *Oregon’s Runaway and Homeless Youth: An Overview and Strategic Framework*^{vi}. The publication recommends state and local policy and system changes as well as identifies resources to assist in these changes.

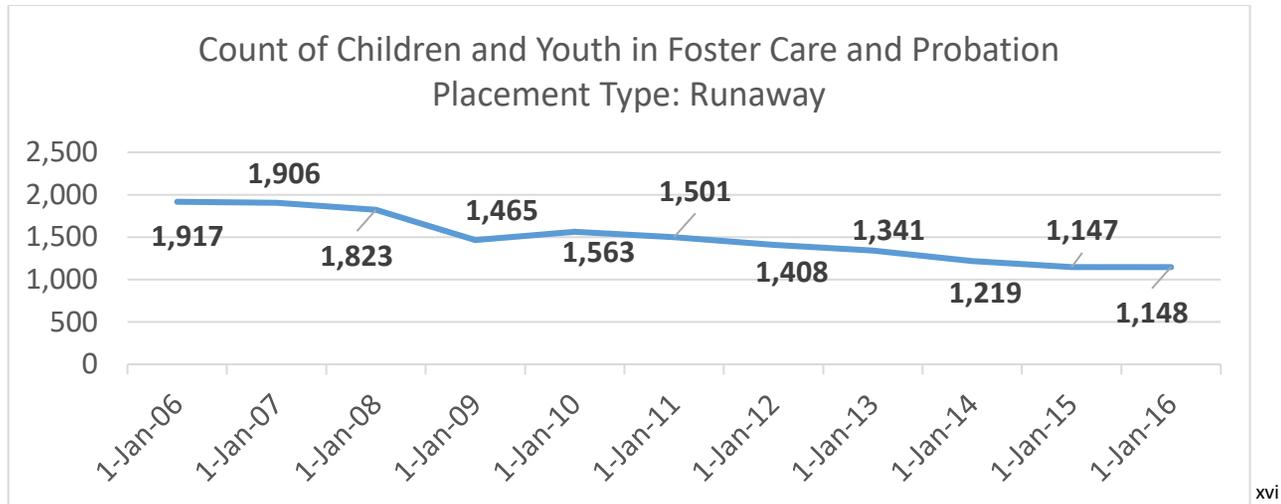
An initial investigation by this work group has shown that California county protocols for youth who run away from foster care vary. Existing county protocols have been gathered, however, a summary of each and the similarities, differences and gaps still needs to be performed. In addition, the CA Department of Social Services established a work group to implement SB 794, which has been working on guidance as it relates to the new federal requirements of P.L. 113-183 that are set forth in the background section of the ACF memo. This workgroup, however, has not focused on the parts of the memo that relate to the recommendations around RHY shelters (e.g. recommendation of MOUs and contracts between child welfare and RHY programs; what to do if foster youth shows up at RHY program specifically). The group has however released the following All County Letters, ACL 16-15^{vii}, ACL 16-20^{viii}, ACL 16-82^{ix}

and ACL 16-85x and has prepared a new All County Information Notice (ACIN I-13-17)^{xi} which details best practices regarding the creation of a run prevention plan, understanding and responding to reasons the child left care, what to do when a child refuses to return, handling personal property, and other practices. These guidance letters begin to support the implementation of the federal acts, but a model multi-system protocol would help to ensure that youth who encounter systems other than child welfare and probation are connected and supported with the right resources and services. In addition to the guidance letters, a review of state regulations, particularly, Title 22 regulations and those named as part of AB 346^{xii}, or any changes in the Manual of Policies and Procedures is needed.

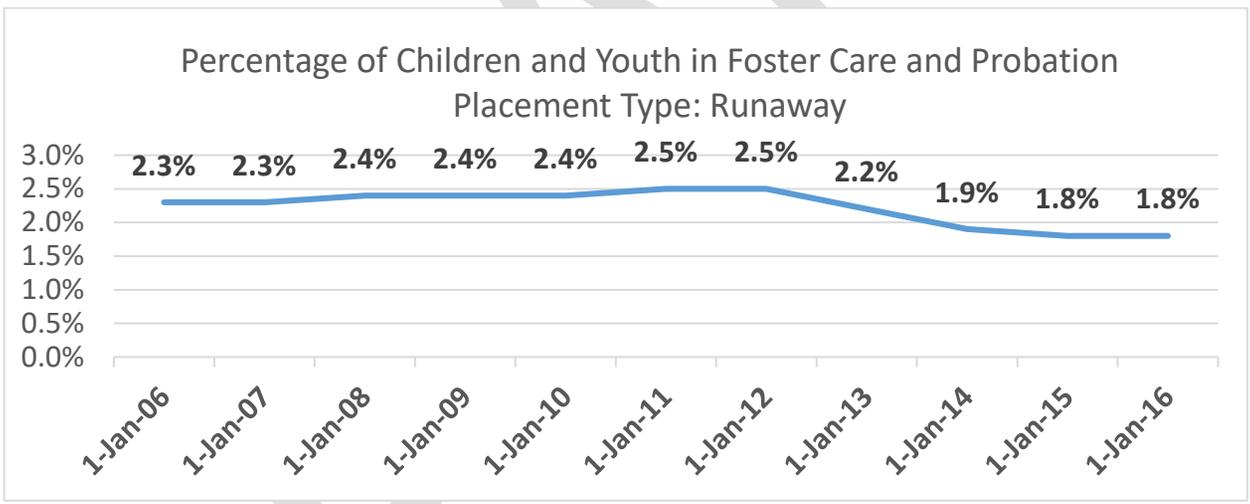
Problem Description

There have been numerous reviews of literature regarding youth who run away, including *Youth Who Run Away from Care* (Courtney, 2005)^{xiii} and *Homelessness and the Transition from Foster Care to Adulthood*^{xiv}. Researchers have identified a number of individual, family of origin, placement and systems factors that create greater risk for running away or homelessness. From the literature, it is known that while running away occurs in approximately 1 in 8 youth, it is particularly more common for youth experiencing abuse and neglect or who have been disconnected from siblings and family members and have no coordinated visitations. Factors typically associated with risk of running away include 1) placement factors: placement type such as group home, warmth of care environment, 2) individual factors: gender, sexual orientation, age, 3) family of origin factors: high family conflict, level of family involvement, one or more siblings in foster care and 4) system factors: lack of visitation while in care, permanency plan changes, frequent placement changes, repeated foster care entries, among others. Running away puts youth at risk of victimization, exploitation, substance abuse, offending and exposure to criminal activity. Running away also disconnects youth from many social and medical services that would help protect them from further victimization.

California has limited reporting and data on the true number of youth who have run away, but some information is available on the CWS/CMS system. The number of children and youth who are identified as runaway at a given point in time, January from 2006-2016, has been between 2,000 and 1,150 children and youth^{xv}. Most youth who are identified as runaway are ages 11-17.



xvi



For more statistics please refer to table at the end of this document.

After reviewing the data and literature regarding runaway and homeless youth, a model multi-systems protocol would more comprehensively support youth who are most at risk of running and becoming homeless no matter what system reaches them first. The model protocol would also expand upon the best practices that prevent a youth from running in the future.

As noted above, protocols for preventing and addressing the issues for youth who are missing, homeless, or who have run away from foster care, why they do so, how they are brought back into care and methods for addressing why they run away vary by county. In addition, some counties work closely with runaway and homeless youth providers in this area but many others do not, or there are not direct services for RHY in their counties.

This workgroup provides a unique opportunity to address the broad issue of youth who run away from foster care and look at all the various inter-related issues such as why they run away, how to meet their needs, preventing further abuse and neglect, and what can be done to prevent other youth from running away. In addition, runaway and homeless youth providers often end up serving these youths and a more coordinated response between RHY providers and the child welfare system can benefit all. Finally, while the SB 794 work group has done some of the work in this area, their work has remained within the department. The California Child Welfare Council, with its mission as a collaborative, interagency approach, provides a unique opportunity to bring all the various relevant agencies, departments and others across the board to develop a broad-based strategy to address this issue. The development of a model protocol on a collaborative, inter-agency/department approach is key to the success of this workgroup. Recommendations that take into account individual, family, placement and system factors and that are gender and age appropriate is necessary.

Current Practices

The State has given guidance to the counties regarding what is required in relation to the state and federal laws. As noted earlier, this guidance is only to the child welfare and probation systems. Further guidance is needed to connect the work to other systems who serve youth who are missing, have run away or who are homeless. The CDSYT and Permanency committees have the existing protocols for Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, and Tulare. There is considerable variation in these protocols, a model protocol would help to emphasize what works well about each of these county systems and would incorporate more systems into the protocol.

A Monterey County Department of Social and Employment Services (MCDSSES), Family and Children's Services, program directive on runaway protocol and best practice response was implemented on February 22, 2011^{xvii}. The directive was implemented to ensure best practice toward preventing youth runaway and the ability to respond and support foster youth while on the run. When a youth is at risk for running away, has a history of running away, or is on runaway status, the MCDSSES agrees to specific policies and procedures in collaboration with other interested parties (i.e. birth parents, caregivers, CASA, etc.). The directive outlines procedures for prevention, youth on runaway, and youth who have returned from runaway status.

As of June 2017, each county has a different practice which may or may not include other agencies, providers, or caregivers and supportive connections. While the state guidance sets a minimum standard for child welfare workers, there is no guidance related to the roles of other adults in the youth's life. There are informal practices that happen worker to worker, unit to unit, county to county and clarity related to roles and responsibilities is needed for the health and safety of young people who have run away, are homeless, or missing.

Recommendations

The suggestions below are the process recommendations for the initial phase of the work.

1. A broad-based collaborative group of participants from the Child Welfare Council and its subcommittees, in partnership with youths with lived experience, will draft an inter-agency approach to this issue. In addition to participation by a few youths in the group, the collaborative will seek input through focus groups or individual interviews with youth who have had experience in this area and are willing to share their story and offer suggestions to improve outcomes. If there are others you believe should be included please let us know.

Desired Participants to support the subcommittee

Government:

Child Welfare – CDSS, CWDA
Probation
Law Enforcement
Behavioral Health – CBHDA, DHCS
Health Care
Education – CDE
Ombudsman's Office

NGO's

RHY Providers (Larkin Street, West Coast Children's Clinic, San Diego Center for Children, Front Street, Stay Well, California Coalition for Youth, Bill Wilson Center)
Mental Health Providers
Foster Family Agencies

STRTPs

Legal Advocacy – CLC, YLC, NCYL, CYC, CCY, CASA, Bay Area Legal Aid etc.

Community Colleges

Quality Parenting Initiative Caregivers

Polaris Project

Family Resource Centers- CBOs

2. The subcommittees will use the Partial Credits Model Policy as an example of the type of protocol we want to develop, it was suggested that a case study be added – a real life example of why it matters to have the protocol.
3. The CDSYT and the Permanency Committee will meet to share the proposal, discuss the overall issue and how it ties into their work and areas of focus. Members of that committee have now joined our committee to address the issue on a collaborative basis.
4. The CDSYT and Permanency committees will review the existing protocols for Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, and Tulare. Specifically, identify what counties and providers are doing and identify areas of strength and gaps related to promising practice.
5. Review Runaway and Homeless Youth and the Law: Model State Statutes.^{xviii}
6. Review Oregon’s Overview and Strategic Framework.
7. Review existing regulations and policies across systems related to runaway and homeless youth. Review of these materials will consider the impact the regulations and policies may have on youth. Example considerations include:
 - a. Do the polices create unnecessary harm or increase safety?
 - b. Do the policies punish youth or lead to understanding of why the youth ran away?
 - c. Do the policies allow for the youth to be wrapped in support and a warm environment or further isolate or disenfranchise the youth?
 - d. Are the policies culturally and developmentally appropriate for our youth in care?
 - e. What is the role and extent of law enforcement involvement?
 - f. What are the specific roles of the caregiver, caseworker, agency, and others in reporting, locating, and supporting a foster youth who is missing from care? What training is needed? Are there existing trainings?
 - g. When and how are youth engaged? How is contact made and engagement happening when a youth is on the run?
 - h. Are Child and Family Teams engaged? At what point?
 - i. How would the protocol differ for minors and non-minor dependents?

At a minimum the proposal will include:

1. Protocols for gathering data on youth who run away from foster care. The data should include: Age, gender, placement prior to running away, number of previous placements, reasons why the youth ran away (if known), length of time as a runaway (if known), documented attempts to contact the child, and county-specific data. Washington State has advanced data tracking for runaway and homeless youth that could serve as a good example for California to replicate. Preventative and responsive practices will be culturally appropriate for each youth.^{xix}
2. Mental health services for runaway youth should be included as part of any service array contained in the model protocol to be developed as indicated in the ACL from the Department of Health Care Services. Review the available services such as crisis intervention supports, drop centers, youth advocates/peer groups and make recommendations for any needed supports and services.
3. Incentives. For example, Fresno County child welfare workers have found it is more effective and efficient to find a runaway youth than it is to constantly report to the court that the youth is missing and measures being taken to find him or her. Another benefit is the message to foster youth that the child welfare agency cares, offering opportunities to collaborate with the community to find the youth and offer a safe placement.
4. Engagement and inclusion of youth is made central. These protocols are developed not just for counties but to make sure youth needs and voices are heard.
5. The protocol should be connected to the permanency work that is under development as part of CDSS Continuum of Care Reform, CDSS Engagement-Oriented Practice, county permanency contracts and family finding initiatives.
6. Protocols for providing supports and services to youth when they are missing or have run away from care and for providing supports to caregivers during that time.
7. Protocols will use a harm reduction framework and coordinated responses from various individuals and agencies.
8. The proposal will name any common barriers to provision of services and supports and suggestions for how to remove those barriers.
9. The proposal will include protocols to address/support youth that cross multiple county jurisdictions, (county of jurisdiction, county of residence, and county where youth is located while AWOL).

Literature Review

The excerpt from a literature review^{xx} below is meant to assist the Child Welfare Council in providing a rationale for policy level changes that will build earlier intervention and longer ranging supportive services to emancipating foster youth in the hopes of mitigating and even preventing them from resorting to homelessness. These interventions and supports should be uniform across agencies and providers who serve emancipated foster youth. These interventions and supports should be designed to serve emancipated foster youth in homes and communities that offer connection and growth.

Problem Statement

Many adolescents experience a slow transformation to adulthood in their lives. With parental and familial support, they are gradually able to transition from dependents to independent individuals who provide for themselves and live on their own. Young adults rely on their parents and family members for a variety of supports including financial, emotional, educational and housing supports among others throughout this transition. Recent trends in human developmental theory define an elongation of this transition between adolescence and adulthood called “emerging adulthood” (Curry & Abrams, 2015, p. 145; Gomez, Ryan, Norton, Jones & Galan-Cisneros, 2015, p. 507). Many young adults are reliant on their parents’ support well into their 20’s. Curry & Abrams (2015) cite US Census statistics stating that over 50% of 18-24 year olds still live with their parents in 2007 (p. 145). When youth are released from the foster care system on their eighteenth or twenty-first birthday, they are regarded by the government as full legal adults responsible for their own needs. The government no longer views them as dependents and thus, service systems are no longer accessible. This clashes with societal trends towards emerging adulthood, placing emancipated foster youth on a precipice leaning towards greater vulnerability and precarious outcomes such as homelessness (Osgood, Foster & Courtney, 2010, p. 212). The child welfare and foster care systems have yet to catch up to societal and developmental theory trends in the level of support provided to emancipating foster youth. Thus, foster youth have continuing needs for supportive services throughout their transition into adulthood that extends beyond the legal age limit of foster care (Osgood et al., 2010, p. 213).

Worthy of note is the distinction between emancipating foster youth and former foster youth. Emancipated foster youth are youth who leave the foster care system without a permanent placement while the term “former foster youth” is used more generally to encompass the general population of youth over age 18 with a history of involvement in the foster care system. Research focused on the sub-group of emancipated foster youth is thinner than research on the broader category of former foster youth as these youth are more vulnerable and less accessible for participation in research studies (Curry & Abrams, 2014, p. 143).

Additionally, the term “homelessness” is defined in a variety of manners. Many government entities rely on the definition from the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which only considers people homeless who are physically sleeping on the streets or in or shelters (Zlotnick, 2009, p. 319). Other agencies, organizations and entities take a much broader stance and

include people living and sleeping in places not meant for human habitation such as cars or abandoned buildings, people temporarily staying with friends and acquaintances (couch-surfing) and people cohabitating and overcrowding in apartments and homes. Essentially, this broader definition takes into account the many people who do not have a permanent place of their own to call home. The element of housing permanency is a key component of every child welfare case plan. The more inclusive definition will be the one used in this study as it takes permanency into consideration.

The connection between emancipating foster youth and homelessness is statistically well established and is considered common knowledge amongst state policymakers. Zlotnick (2009) stated that national estimated percentages of homeless youth with a history of placement(s) in the foster care system have remained around 20% for the past few decades (p. 320). Zlotnick (2009) fleshes this out further with regards to emancipated foster youth consolidating data from a range of studies to estimate that between 15-22% of emancipated foster youth are homeless during the first twelve months after their emancipation (p. 320). That percentage jumps to approximately 53% at the eighteen month mark (Zlotnick, 2009, p. 320) posing an astoundingly strong correlation between emancipated foster youth and experiences of homelessness.

A New Wave of Research

Several studies in the past decade have attempted to flesh out the intricate dance between many emancipating foster youth and homelessness. Dworsky and Courtney's study (2009) is dually considered a ground-breaking study as it is the first longitudinal study portraying the connection between emancipating foster youth and the incidence of their experiences with homelessness as well as being the first to begin to identify underlying causes of the connection. Their study, commonly known as "The Midwest Study", analyzed interviews conducted over time of 732 foster youth from Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois (Dworsky & Courtney, 2009, p. 29). The study looked at whether certain well established characteristics of emancipating foster youth who experience homelessness during their transition to adulthood are a cause of homelessness or a result of experiences of homelessness. Additionally, they examined emancipating foster youth's social networks and correlations with non-foster youth who also experience homelessness (Dworsky & Courtney, 2009, p. 27-28). Their analysis revealed a significant trend in the protective value of strong relationships with family, peers and other social support systems. According to their study, emancipating foster youth who feel close to at least one adult family member have more than 50% less chance of experiencing homelessness (Dworsky & Courtney, 2009, p. 47). They also highlighted the fact that youth who run away from foster care placements are both more likely to run away again and to become homeless after emancipation (Dworsky, Napolitano & Courtney, 2013, p. S320). The child welfare implications for these startling results are earlier interventions and emphasis on stronger support systems (Dworsky et al., 2013, p. S322). Their longitudinal study is widely regarded as the seminal study expanding the literature around emancipating foster youth and their experiences of homelessness.

Independence v. Interdependence

Following the lead of Dworsky & Courtney, several other studies began examining the manner in which child welfare systems and society at large evaluate outcomes for emancipating foster youth. Researchers began looking at concepts of self-sufficiency and self-reliance and how those goals are communicated and internalized by youth aging out of the system. The growing societal trend of emerging adulthood theory moves away from promoting independence and self-reliance and towards a focus on interconnections and interdependence (Gomez et al., 2015, p. 509). Child welfare policy and the structures in place preparing youth for their transition to emancipation are still highly focused on self-reliance, which can be extremely alienating for youth as they often internalize the misguided value of self-sufficiency and do not reach out for help when they need it (Munson, Stanhope, Small et al, 2017, p. 431). Munson et al., (2017) once again echo Dworsky & Courtney's recommendation for in-depth programming focused on interdependence, support systems and earlier intervention (p. 435).

Protective Factors and Risk Factors

Research in the last several decades has empirically established a variety of protective and risk factors for youth transitioning into adulthood who experience homelessness. In particular, researchers have identified foster youth and emancipating foster youth as a particularly vulnerable sub-group of homeless youth (Osgood et al., 2010, p. 214). Research has firmly established connections between foster youth and the protective factors of educational attainment, gainful employment, connection to family, development of independent living skills and higher rates of physical and mental health (Bender, Yang, Ferguson & Thompson, 2015, p. 222; Osgood et al., 2010, p. 218; Berzin, Rhodes & Curtis, 2011, p. 2120). Potent well-established risk factors include the inverse of many of the protective factors as well as childhood maltreatment, low socioeconomic status, patterns of instability and substance use (Bender et al., 2015, p. 222; Osgood et al., 2010, p. 218; Berzin et al., 2011, p. 2120). The body of research firmly connects these factors to outcomes of homelessness amongst independent and emancipating foster youth. More contemporary research has attempted to drill down into the causes and occurrences of various protective and risk factors in order to help determine causation rather than merely incidence.

Protective factors

Contemporary research indicates the impact of evaluating youth resiliency and a deeper investigation of sources of social capital as highly influential protective factors between emancipating foster youth and outcomes of homelessness. Shpiegel (2016) attempted to measure resiliency amongst emancipating foster youth as a means of identifying resiliency as an integral protective factor (p. 9). Resiliency is defined as a pattern of positive adaptation some youth develop in response to consistent situations of vulnerability and risk (Shpiegel, 2016, p. 7). This study utilized secondary data from prior longitudinal study conducted by the Missouri Children's Division and found a lack of correlation between the other well-established protective and risk factors and a youth's developed levels of resiliency, suggesting the development of resiliency is more of a subjective process rather than one deeply influenced by environment (Shpiegel, 2016, p. 19).

Additionally, Bender et al., (2015) reported that their study surprisingly found few significant differences between homeless youth and their homeless peers who have a history of foster care placements (p. 229). They also qualitatively evaluated resiliency as a protective factor and corroborated the development of resiliency as a complex dynamic process of responses and adaptations to risks (Bender et al., 2015, p. 223).

Both studies express criticism towards child welfare policies and procedures that encourage and push emancipating foster youth towards self-reliance and self-sufficiency stating that this actually serves to further alienate them in the process of attaining adulthood (Bender et al., 2015; Shpiegel, 2015). Elevating self-reliance and self-sufficiency pushes youth to isolate themselves and often cuts them off from viable sources of vital support because they perceive independence as a solitary endeavor. Rather, both studies suggest an emphasis on earlier intervention and prolonged intervention as a means of bolstering youth resilience and encouraging them to access vital support systems (Bender et al., 2015; Shpiegel, 2015).

Barman-Adhikari, Bowen, Bender, Brown & Rice (2016) investigated the protective factor of social capital amongst homeless youth and identified a significant strength correlation to home and peer-based social support. Their study examined self-reports from 1046 homeless youth between the ages of 13 and 24 (Barman-Adhikari et al., 2016, p. 691). Their findings found that youth with a wider range of support from different areas of their lives were more likely to experience brief periods of homelessness. In particular, these youth counted support from peers they knew before they entered care or were homeless, family members, foster family members, and other staff. The youth literally sleeping on the streets tended to be homeless for longer periods and tended to have connections to other homeless youth and professional staff at emergency service agencies (Barman-Adhikari et al., 2016, p. 705). While those connections were described as important, they tended to have less depth than home-based connections and did not contribute as significantly to a youth's social capital (Barman-Adhikari et al., 2016, p. 705). Their study provides a rationale for strengthening in-home support connections and services for foster youth before they emancipate.

Risk Factors

Most notably, current research pointed towards the risk factors of multiple life transitions, persistent family discord and learned helplessness as potent factors impacting outcomes of homelessness amongst emancipating foster youth. Tyler & Schmitz (2013) qualitatively studied the connections between youth homelessness and multiple life transitions as well as difficult family histories. Their study suggests that children and youth who experience a series of life transitions as well as a range of negative and traumatic experiences in their family life will be more likely to experience homelessness as young and emerging adults (Tyler & Schmitz, 2013, p. 1719). While not exclusively examining foster youth or emancipating foster youth, their research did highlight the fact that these youth often have pasts rife with negative family experiences such as child maltreatment, physical abuse and violence or substance use/abuse. As a result of the poor family conditions, these youth often left home by choice or were removed and placed into foster care, creating a life trajectory riddled with transitions (Tyler & Schmitz, 2013, p. 1725). Their study posits that these unfavorable

family conditions and multiple transitions produce youth who are predisposed to instability and experiences of homelessness (Tyler & Schmitz, 2013, p. 1726).

Gomez et al., (2015) qualitatively examined instances of learned helplessness amongst emancipating foster youth and described this quality as a substantial risk factor for a range of unfavorable outcomes, including homelessness (p. 507). Their study suggests that emancipating foster youth who exhibit learned helplessness also experienced a repeated pattern of consequences that were unconnected to their individual behaviors (Gomez et al., 2015, p. 513). For example, youth who experience long periods of abuse or undergo multiple involuntary placement changes, may develop a conditioned sense of helplessness taught by negative experiences that were not consequences of their own actions. Their study placed the burden for this connection on the child welfare system not adequately preparing youth for independent living and suggests utilization of more empowerment focused tools allowing emancipating foster youth to transition out of care more successfully overall (Gomez et al., 2015, p. 513).

Transitional Housing Programs

Collins and Curtis (2016) support the importance of needing more transitional housing programs for foster youth experiencing homelessness at the statewide level. For instance, they reported 36% of former foster youth being homeless in Nevada, 28% in Maryland, and 37% in Massachusetts (Collins & Curtis, 2016, p. 391). Overall, there is not enough transitional housing available for homeless youth, which in turn leads to housing instability. Collins and Curtis (2016) also noted, “the more former foster youth are cycling in and out of housing arrangements may put them at increased risk for poor physical and mental health outcomes” (p. 392). Therefore, the lack of transitional housing programs not only affects foster youth physically, but also mentally. (would like to note that the whole “transition” being connected to age and not significant life decisions or the young adult’s choice has the same impact of creating an unnatural cycle of movement established by the transitional programs design itself – see above study calling for prolonged approach to supports),

In addition to the lack of transitional housing programs being a commonly cited concern among the literature, the rate of acceptance into one of these programs, when there is space, can take months. For homeless foster youth who are looking for immediate emergency placements, having to wait months is unacceptable. Brown & Wilderson (2010), propose the need for a better understanding of the referral process, especially for youth aging out of the foster care system, so that their needs can be assessed proactively (p. 1).

California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP)
 University of California at Berkeley
Children in Foster Care
Agency Type=All Types
April 1, 2017
California

| Age Group | Runaway | Other | Missing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| | n | n | n |
| Under 1 | . | 48 | . |
| '1-2 | . | 45 | . |
| '3-5 | . | 70 | 1 |
| '6-10 | 1 | 93 | 1 |
| '11-15 | 267 | 245 | . |
| 16-17 | 660 | 336 | . |
| 18-21 | 206 | 619 | . |
| Missing | . | . | . |
| Total | 1,134 | 1,456 | 2 |

Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Eyre, M., Chambers, J., Min, S., Randhawa, P., Sandoval, A., Yee, H., Tran, M., Benton, C., White, J., & Cotto, H. (2018). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved 2/15/2018, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

CALIFORNIA RUNAWAY FROM FOSTER CARE SUMMARY SHEET: 2014 – 2016 / Point-in-Time*

| April 1, 2016 | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>All Foster Care (8+days) 65,551</p> <p>Runway 1,272</p> <p>Age 10 and under: <u>2</u></p> <p>Age 11 – 15: <u>260</u></p> <p>Age 16 – 17: <u>717</u></p> <p>Age 18 – 21: <u>293</u></p> <p>Percentage Runaway 1.9%</p> | <p>Child Welfare Foster Care 61,828</p> <p>Runway 759</p> <p>Age 10 and under: <u>2</u></p> <p>Age 11 – 15: <u>196</u></p> <p>Age 16 – 17: <u>465</u></p> <p>Age 18 – 21: <u>96</u></p> <p>Percentage Runaway 1.2%</p> | <p>Probation Foster Care 3,716</p> <p>Runway 513</p> <p>Age 10 and under: <u>0</u></p> <p>Age 11 – 15: <u>64</u></p> <p>Age 16 – 17: <u>252</u></p> <p>Age 18 – 21: <u>197</u></p> <p>Percentage Runaway 13.8%</p> |
| April 1, 2015 | | |
| <p>All Foster Care (8+days) 66,980</p> <p>Runway 1,199</p> <p>Age 10 and under: <u>2</u></p> <p>Age 11 – 15: <u>267</u></p> <p>Age 16 – 17: <u>657</u></p> <p>Age 18 – 21: <u>273</u></p> <p>Percentage Runaway 1.8%</p> | <p>Child Welfare Foster Care 62,481</p> <p>Runway 776</p> <p>Age 10 and under: <u>2</u></p> <p>Age 11 – 15: <u>207</u></p> <p>Age 16 – 17: <u>477</u></p> <p>Age 18 – 21: <u>90</u></p> <p>Percentage Runaway 1.2%</p> | <p>Probation Foster Care 4,490</p> <p>Runway 423</p> <p>Age 10 and under: <u>0</u></p> <p>Age 11 – 15: <u>60</u></p> <p>Age 16 – 17: <u>180</u></p> <p>Age 18 – 21: <u>183</u></p> <p>Percentage Runaway 9.4%</p> |
| April 1, 2014 | | |
| <p>All Foster Care (8+days) 66,357</p> <p>Runway 1,272</p> <p>Age 10 and under: <u>1</u></p> <p>Age 11 – 15: <u>216</u></p> <p>Age 16 – 17: <u>653</u></p> <p>Age 18 – 21: <u>402</u></p> <p>Percentage Runaway 1.9%</p> | <p>Child Welfare Foster Care 61,524</p> <p>Runway 709</p> <p>Age 10 and under: <u>1</u></p> <p>Age 11 – 15: <u>154</u></p> <p>Age 16 – 17: <u>449</u></p> <p>Age 18 – 21: <u>105</u></p> <p>Percentage Runaway 1.6%</p> | <p>Probation Foster Care 4,819</p> <p>Runway 563</p> <p>Age 10 and under: <u>0</u></p> <p>Age 11 – 15: <u>62</u></p> <p>Age 16 – 17: <u>204</u></p> <p>Age 18 – 21: <u>297</u></p> <p>Percentage Runaway 11.7%</p> |

*California Child Welfare Indicators Project: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/

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- ⁱ http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB794
- ⁱⁱ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/262>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/4980>
- ^{iv} https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/info_memo_rhy_foster_care_20141104.pdf
- ^v <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ378/pdf/PLAW-110publ378.pdf>
- ^{vi} http://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/OSHC/docs/HSC-2017/2%20-%20Apr%2C%20May%2C%20Jun/Runaway-Homeless-Youth-Overview_Strategic-Framework.pdf
- ^{vii} <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/lettersnotices/EntRes/getinfo/acl/2016/16-15.pdf>
- ^{viii} <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/eligibility/Documents/ACWDL2016/ACWDL16-20.pdf>
- ^{ix} <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/lettersnotices/EntRes/getinfo/acl/2016/16-82.pdf>
- ^x <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/lettersnotices/EntRes/getinfo/acl/2016/16-85.pdf>
- ^{xi} http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACIN/2017/I-13_17.pdf
- ^{xii} http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB346
- ^{xiii} Courtney, Mark E., et al. "Youth who run away from out-of-home care." *Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago* (2005).
- ^{xiv} Dworsky, Amy, and Mark E. Courtney. "Homelessness and the transition from foster care to adulthood." *Child Welfare* 88.4 (2009).
- ^{xv} Data Source: CWS/CMS 2016 Quarter 3 Extract. Program version: 1.35 Database version: 6AF3A012
- ^{xvi} Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Rezvani, G., Eyre, M., Sandoval, A., Yee, H., Xiong, B., Benton, C., White, J., & Cotto, H. (2017). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved 5/10/2017, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>
- ^{xvii} Runaway Protocol and Best Practices Response [Letter to Family and Children Services Staff]. (2011, February 22). Monterey, CA.
- ^{xviii} Horton-Newell, A., Meyer, K., & Trupin, C. (2009). Runaway and homeless youth and the law: model state statutes. Washington, D.C.: American Bar Association, Commission on Homelessness and Poverty.
- ^{xix} http://www.childrensrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/TGNC-Policy-Report_2017_final-web.pdf
- ^{xx} Hassell, Angela (2017) Literature Review