



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**CHICAGO**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION**

DEFINING PROBLEMS. SHAPING SOLUTIONS.

# Updates from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CaYOUTH): Outcomes through Age 19

Mark Courtney  
School of Social Service Administration and  
Chapin Hall

# CaYOUTH Study Funders and Partners

- **Support** the research
- **Provide** guidance and feedback
- **Host** CaYOUTH Study section with results on **website (co-invest.org—Resources)**
- **Promote** via presentations and media outreach

**California Child Welfare Co-Investment  
Partnership**

**California Department of Social Services**

**County Welfare Directors Association of  
California**

**The Judicial Council of California**

**Casey Family Programs**

**Conrad N. Hilton Foundation\***

**Stuart Foundation\***

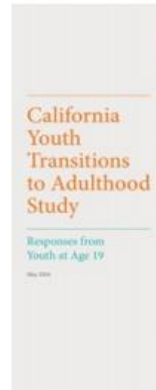
**Walter S. Johnson Foundation\***

**Zellerbach Family Foundation\***

*\*CaYOUTH funders. Annie E. Casey and William T Grant Foundations are funders, not in Co-investment Partnership.*



## Fostering Futures: A Forum on the CalYOUTH Study Findings



**ChapinHall**  
California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership

The CalYOUTH study provides the most comprehensive data to date of young people transitioning to adulthood from foster care in California. This first-of-its-kind, multi-year study is a valuable resource for policymakers, program developers, advocates, and practitioners interested in further improving the results of transition-age youth in care.

**CalYOUTH is a five-year (2012-16) ongoing study designed to provide the highest quality data from care on youth outcomes. The study aims to answer the following questions:**

1. How is housing from care (post-age 18) related to employment, living arrangements, and education?
2. How does housing affect the lives of young people leaving the transition to adulthood in the context of ongoing foster care?
3. How are living arrangements and other services related to employment, living arrangements, and education for young people leaving foster care (including the relationship between employment and youth education)?

In the interim three questions, the study is collecting and analyzing data from transition-age youth and caretakers within publicly funded foster care and residential treatment programs. The study is completed on the same youth ages 17-18 years. The CalYOUTH Model Youth Survey reports the responses age 18.



**Fostering Futures: A Forum on the CalYOUTH Study Findings** 9:30 AM-4:00 PM. Tuesday May 10th, Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, CA. This event included presentations and panels with Dr. Mark Courtney and his colleagues from Chapin Hall to facilitate a dialogue with stakeholders from Southern California on the policy and practice changes needed to improve the trajectories of youth in care. [Click here for event Agenda and Panelist Bios.](#)

### CalYOUTH study Brief with Key Findings from the Second Wave of Youth Surveys at age 19

Chapin Hall and the California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership (2016)

## Fostering Futures Panels and Panel Videos

### Fostering Futures Study Overview



Fostering Futures: CalYOUTH introduction an...

MARK COURTNEY  
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# Overview of the CalYOUTH Study

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

CalYOUTH Study includes:

- Longitudinal study of young people in CA foster care making the transition to adulthood (n = 727; 95% interviewed at 17; 84% followed-up at 19)
- Periodic surveys of caseworkers serving young people in CA foster care
- Analysis of government program administrative data

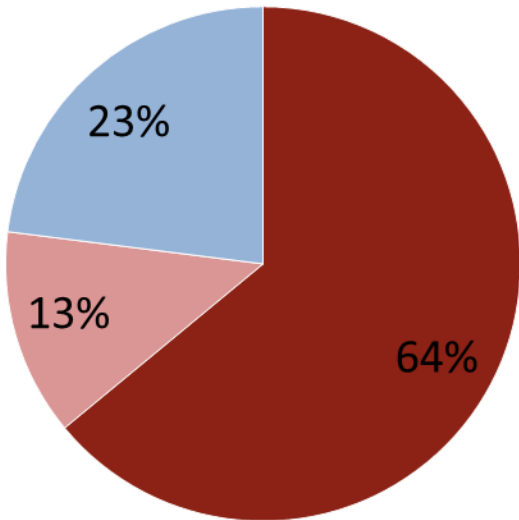
# Evaluation Questions

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- **What influence, if any, does the extension of foster care past age 18 have on youths' well-being during their transition to adulthood from foster care (e.g., legal and relational permanency, education, employment, housing stability, family formation, economic well-being, social support, physical and mental health, psychological well-being, and crime)?**
- **In the context of California's policy of extended foster care, what factors influence the kinds of transition supports foster youths receive during the transition to adulthood?**
- How do the distinct types of living arrangements and other services youth have access to as a result of extended care mediate the relationship between extending care and youth outcomes?

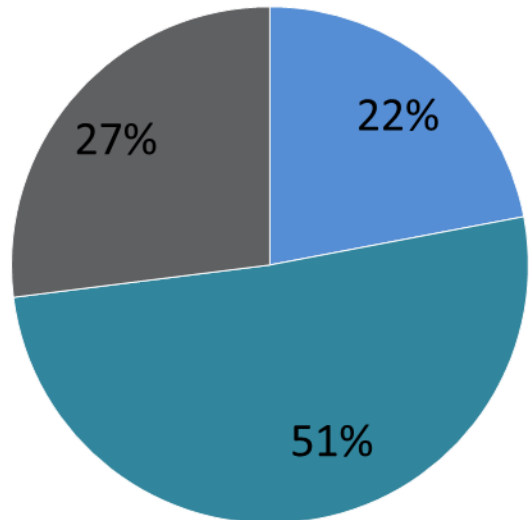
# Foster Care Status at Age 19

Care Status at Wave 2  
(*n*=611)



- In care (never left since Wave 1)
- In care (exited and reentered after Wave 1)
- Not in care

Age at Discharge  
(*n*=134)



- 17 or younger
- 18
- 19

# Research Question #1

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- What are the correlates of the length of youths' stays in out-of-home care after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday?
  - Youth characteristics can be indicative of the inclination of youth to remain in care and the system's capacity to provide appropriate care
    - Demographic characteristics
    - Maltreatment history and experiences in care
    - Psychosocial functioning
  - Change in policy and between-county differences in context and policy implementation could influence the likelihood that youth will remain in care

# Data and Analysis

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## Two approaches to the question:

- Analysis of months in care after 18<sup>th</sup> birthday based on data from baseline CalYOUTH survey at age 17 (n = 711) linked to Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) data on timing of youths' exits from care through 19.5 years of age
- Analysis of months in care after 18<sup>th</sup> birthday based on data from CWS/CMS for youth in care on or after 16.75 years old who (1) turned 18 between 1/1/2008 and 12/31/2013, and (2) turned 21 before 3/31/2016 (n = 38,458)



# Data and Analysis: Youth Survey

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**Analytic models:** OLS regression (shown); Tobit regression; sensitivity analyses

**Outcome:** Months in care after 18<sup>th</sup> birthday

**Individual-Level Predictors:**

**Demographics:** Gender, race/ethnicity, sexual minority, born in US, age at entry to care (controls for age at baseline and at follow-up)

**Maltreatment & Care Experiences:** neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, other maltreatment, # episodes in care, main placement type, # of placements; satisfaction with care, reentry to care after 18

**Functioning:** general health, mental health disorder, substance use disorder, pregnant before baseline, parent, delinquency, ever incarcerated, special education, repeated a grade, WRAT reading score, ever worked for pay, social support (# of individuals)

**System-Level Predictor:** % in care in county at age 19.5

# Data and Analysis: CWS/CMS Data

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**Analytic models:** OLS regression (shown); Tobit regression; sensitivity analyses

**Outcome:** Months in care after 18<sup>th</sup> birthday

**Individual-Level Predictors:**

**Demographics:** Gender, race/ethnicity, age at entry to care

**Maltreatment & Care Experiences:** neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, other maltreatment, main placement type, # of placements

**Functioning:** any disability, ever on probation before age 18

**System-Level Predictors:** placing county, year turned 18 (2008-2013; pre- or post-policy change)

# Predictors of Months in Care Past 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday: Youth Survey Data (n = 711)

Variable (only statistically significant shown)	<i>b</i> (months)	
<u>Primary Placement Type</u> (group home; ref.)		
Nonrelative foster home	3.31	*
Kinship foster home	3.31	**
Treatment foster care (FFA)	2.79	*
Other placement	4.45	*
<u>Number of placements</u> (5 or less; ref.)		
6-10	4.00	***
11 or more	5.40	***
<u>Satisfaction with care</u> (strongly disagree/disagree; ref.)		
Agree to strongly agree	2.16	*
<u>Proportion of youth still in care in county at age 19.5</u> (measured in 10% increments)	14.12	**

\*  $p < .05$   
 \*\*  $p < .01$   
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$

# Predictors of Months in Care Past 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday: Administrative Data (n = 38,458)

Variable	<i>b</i> (months)	
<u>Gender: Male</u> (Female: ref.)	.55	***
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u> (White non-Hispanic; ref.)		
Black	.86	***
Hispanic	.54	***
Asian/Pacific Islander	.92	**
Native American	.14	
<u>Primary Placement Type</u> (group home; ref.)		
Nonrelative foster home	1.85	***
Kinship foster home	1.34	***
Treatment foster care (FFA)	1.90	***
Other placement	.97	***
<u>Number of placements</u> (1 placement; ref.)		
2-5	2.11	***
6-10	4.52	***
11 or more	5.04	***
Placing County (LA ref., 57 county indicators not shown)	-4.12 to 6.7	***

\*  $p < .05$   
 \*\*  $p < .01$   
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$

# Predictors of Months in Care Past 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday: Administrative Data (n = 38,458)

Variable	<i>b</i> (months)	
<u>Age at Entry to Care</u> (< 10 years; ref.)		
10-13	-.45	*
14-15	-.28	
16-18	-.40	*
<u>Substantiated Maltreatment Prior to Care</u>		
Physical Abuse	-.37	*
Severe Neglect	-.26	*
Emotional/Other Maltreatment	-.23	*
<u>Any Recorded Disability</u>	1.67	***
<u>Ever on Probation Prior to 18</u>	-3.21	***
<u>Year Turned 18</u> (2008; ref.)		
2009	-.09	
2010	.11	
2011	5.81	***
2012	12.17	***
2013	12.80	***

\*  $p < .05$   
 \*\*  $p < .01$   
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$

# Summary

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- Youth characteristics are associated with length of stay after the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, but some more strongly than others
  - Larger effects (months): Primary placement type; number of placements; disability; probation history; satisfaction with care
  - Smaller effects (less than a month): gender; race; age at entry to care; maltreatment history
  - There is no clear pattern of “positive” or “negative” selection into extended care (e.g., group care history decreases length of stay, but placement mobility and disability increase length of stay)
- System-level factors play a large role in length of stay
  - Implementation of extended care policy has increased average length of stay for youth approaching the age of majority in care by over one year
  - There is considerable between-county variation in length of stay

# Implications

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- States can implement extended care policies that significantly increase the likelihood that youth will choose to remain in care well after age 18
- Given prior research on the potential benefits of remaining in care past 18, child welfare administrators and practitioners should consider whether the current service delivery array and/or practices may discourage harder-to-serve youth (e.g., those exiting group care and those with a probation history) from remaining in care
- Similarly, administrators and practitioners should seek to better understand the contributors to between-county variation in transition-age foster youths' length of stay in care

# Limitations & Future Research

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- Arguably still early in the implementation of the policy
- Youth survey data lack statistical power to identify smaller impacts on length of stay
- Administrative data do not provide much depth of understanding of youth functioning and no data on youths' motivations
- *Future research should further examine contributors to between-county variation in length of stay*



# Research Question #2

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- What is the relationship between how long youth remained in care past their 18th birthday and selected outcomes measured at the time of our second interview (i.e., when the young people were an average of 19.5 years old)?
  - Key predictor of interest: Months in care after the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
  - Analytic models: OLS regression (Tobit regression sensitivity analyses); logistic regression; ordinal logistic regression; Poisson regression
  - Controlled for individual characteristics of youth (very similar to those used in study of predictors of length of stay after the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday) and urbanicity of the placing county

# Selected Outcomes at Age 19

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- Education (HS/GED/Other secondary credential; college enrollment (National Student Clearinghouse data))
- Employment (currently employed; earnings in past year)
- Assets
- Economic Hardship (# of hardships in past year)
- Food Insecurity (USDA measure)
- Homeless or Couch Surfing Since Age 17
- Receipt of CalFresh and Amount Received in past year
- General Health (poor/fair; good; very good, excellent)
- Mental Health Disorder
- Substance Use Disorder
- Social Support (number of nominated supports)
- Pregnant Since Age 17
- Parent Since Age 17
- Justice System Involvement (arrest; conviction) Since Age 17
- Victimization in Past Year (physically assaulted; weapon pulled/used on)

# Impact of Time in Care on Outcomes

Outcome	Outcome Measure	n	Model Type	Outcome Unit	Change in outcome from an additional year in care	
					Beta	p-value
<b>Secondary education</b>	Completed diploma, GED, or other credential <sup>a</sup>	545	Logistic	Odds Ratio	2.25	<.001
<b>Postsecondary education</b>	Enrolled in college	611	Logistic	Odds Ratio	2.81	<.001
<b>Assets</b>	Assets in any account	578	Logistic	Odds Ratio	2.55	<.001
	Total assets across all accounts among youth with assets	342	OLS	Dollars	818	.078
<b>Economic Hardship</b>	Number of hardships in past year (0-6)	605	Poisson	Relative Risk Ratio	.69	<.001
<b>Homelessness</b>	Homeless or couch-surfed since wave 1	611	Logistic	Odds Ratio	.42	<.001
<b>Receipt of Need-Based Public Aid</b>	Received CalFRESH benefits in the past year	602	Logistic	Odds Ratio	.53	.004
	Amount received	110	OLS	Dollars	-.880	.003
<b>Criminal Justice System Involvement</b>	Convicted of a crime since wave 1	576	Logistic	Odds Ratio	.48	.016

# Study Limitations

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- Attrition between ages 17 and 19 might be associated with characteristics of youth in ways that bias our study findings
- Our measures of pre-existing differences between youth who stay in care and those who leave may not have captured youth characteristics that are associated with both the length of time youth remain in care and their later outcomes
- For some of our outcomes it is not possible to determine the temporal relationship between time in care and the event of interest
- Our measures do not cover all outcomes of potential interest.
- Outcomes were assessed when the youth were 19.5 years old but young people can now remain in care in California until their 21st birthday

# Summary and Implications

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- Youth who remained in care were much more likely than those who left to obtain a secondary credential and to continue on to college
  - Their continuing pursuit of education does not appear to negatively influence their participation in the labor market
- Remaining in care significantly decreased the likelihood of economic hardship, homelessness, and reliance on need-based public aid while it increased youths' access to financial assets
- Remaining in care was associated with an impressive reduction in the likelihood that youth would be convicted of a crime
- No evidence that remaining in care increases the risk of poor outcomes for youth transitioning to adulthood from the foster care system
- However, remaining in care was not associated with several important outcomes
  
- *Findings to date support the benefits of allowing youth to remain in care past 18*
- *Future research should examine longer-term outcomes and the mechanisms through which extended care influences outcomes*