



Connected After Care:

The Role of Youth Characteristics, Child Welfare Policy and Programs in Postsecondary Education and Employment among Youth with Foster Care Histories

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Background & Research Questions

Background and Gaps

- ▶ Policies in place to improve educational and employment outcomes for foster youth, however, little research has assessed policy role in outcomes
- ▶ Increased knowledge about youth who leave care, but little is known about the relationships between youth characteristics and connectedness to education and employment
- ▶ Lack of understanding about the disparities among foster youth in connectedness



Research Questions

- ▶ Do state-level policies (EFC, ETV, Tuition Waiver, FCIA) increase the odds of youth connectedness?
- ▶ At youth-level, do services and resources from policies (e.g., education and employment training, financial assistance, yrs. EFC) increase the odds of connectedness?
- ▶ Are there disparities by youth characteristics present in connectedness?

Methods

Data & Sample

- National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)-2014 Cohort
- Youth who completed age-17 & age-21 interviews ($n=7,797$)
- NYTD data matched with AFCARS & publicly available data

Predictors

Youth Level

- Demographics
- Years in EFC
- Employment-Related Services
- Postsecondary Education Services
- Educational Financial Support

State-Level

- Extended Foster Care
- College Tuition Waiver
- % of FCIA Funds Used
- % of ETV Funds Used

Analysis


- Multi-Level Modeling: Youth (L1) nested w/in state (L2)
- Binary logistic
Outcome=connected vs. not
- Multinomial Logistic
Outcome=employed, enrolled, employed & enrolled, neither
- Multiple imputation to address missing data

Limitations

- Connectedness at 1 time point, unmeasured confounding, self-report errors, youth who skipped age-21 interview may not be random


Youth-Level

State-Level



Race: Black (vs. White)
Gender: Female (vs. Male)
Currently Employed or Enrolled
Diploma/GED at age 17
Postsecondary Ed Services
Educational Aid
Years in Extended Care
Experiencing Homelessness

Tuition Waiver
Available to All
Youth
(vs. No Waiver)

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- Placements/Year in Care
 - Age Entered FC
 - Total Years in FC
 - Number of FC Episodes
 - Removal Reason: Youth Behavior
 - Incarceration
 - Disability
 - Referred for Substance Abuse T/x
 - Giving Birth/Fathering a Child
 - Career Preparation Services

Policy Implications

- ▶ Tuition waivers available to ALL youth with foster care histories may be an important promoter of postsecondary education and employment
- ▶ No other state-level policy effects found – more about youth receiving services/supports available through policies
 - ▶ Extended foster care
 - ▶ Chafee-funded postsecondary education services & education aid
- ▶ Simply having state policies in place may not be sufficient in promoting PSE and employment – underscores importance of improving accessibility, participation, and completion of programs such as EFC, IL services, ETV
- ▶ Connect youth in care early, intentionally, and consistently to education and employment services and programs that provide opportunity to explore options, receive training, and connect to education and employment networks