ABSTRACT

SERVICES THAT AFFECT THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

By

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The purpose of this study was to examine various services offered to former and current foster youth and the effect on their educational attainment. Secondary Data from the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) was used to look at these services. Chi-Square analysis was used to examine significant relationship between educational attainment and the variables collected. This study examined the following services: academic support; post-secondary education support; educational financial assistance; room and board financial assistance; other financial assistance; career preparation; employment programs or vocational training; independent living needs assessment; budget and financial management; housing and education and home management; supervised independent living; and mentoring. The study found all variables to be statistically significant when compared to educational attainment.

INDEPENDENT LIFE SERVICES THAT AFFECT THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The Children's Bureau (2012) reported that about 400,540 youth were in foster care at the end of federal fiscal year 2011. Although the numbers have fallen from the highs of 510,699 in 2005, hundreds of thousands of children continue to enter the foster care system (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). Emancipated youth from the foster system are at a disadvantage, many unable to secure stable employment, attain higher education, or find stable housing.

Postsecondary education has become both a defining predictor and indicator of success amongst former foster care youth. The U.S. Census (2013) reports that about 85.7% of Americans ages 25+ have a high school diploma and about 28.5% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Compared to the general public, only about 33% of foster youth went on to attend college (Jones, 2010). Although that may seem comparable, only about 4.4% of foster youth attained a 2 year degree and 2.5% completed a 4 year degree (Courtney et al., 2011). According to a study done by Merdinger, Hines, Lemon Osterling, & Wyatt (2005), about 32.4% of foster youth who were enrolled in a 4 year university did not know how to get services and 31% stated they did not know where to get services.

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Many emancipated youth are stressed about their housing. According to Courtney, et al., (2011), about 30.4% of emancipated youth reported having only been at their current residence for less than a year. The percentage drops to 13% for those who have lived at their current placement for more than 4 years. In the same study, 27.9% experienced not having enough to pay for rent, 31.4% not having enough to pay for utilities, and 38% were afraid of running out of food. Many former foster youth reported having difficulty finding medical providers that accepted Medicaid and then were treated as second class patients because of their medical coverage (Yen, Powell Hammond, & Kushel 2009).

To address the problems, the John Chafee Foster Care Independence Program was put into place to assist former foster youth achieve self-sufficiency through programs that help with education, employment, financial management, and housing. However, former and current foster youth continue to struggle as they make the transition into adulthood. The services themselves may not be accessed by all foster youth, thus the government may have to find more effective ways to reach them.

The purpose of this study is to examine the association between services received and educational attainment of former and current foster youth. This study examined the difference between those who received and those who did not receive academic services and independent living services and their educational attainment.

Research Questions

1. Is there relationship between former and current foster youth receiving educational support (academic support and postsecondary education Support) and educational attainment?

2. Is there relationship between former and current foster youth receiving financial assistance (financial aid for education; room and board financial aid; and other financial aid) and educational attainment?

3. Is there relationship between former and current foster youth receiving employment support (career preparation and employment programs) and their educational attainment?

4. Is there relationship between former and current foster youth receiving independent living support (independent living needs assessment; supervised independent living, budget & financial management; housing education & home management; and mentoring) and their educational attainment?

Definition of Terms

Foster child: is described as a child that is in legal custody of the state or county because the child's parents/guardians is unable to provide a safe home due to abuse, neglect, or inability to care for the child (Indiana Department of Child Services, n. d.).

Educational level: is the highest educational level completed by the youth. Postsecondary education or training refers to any other post-secondary education other than college. College refers to completing at least one semester of college (National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

Academic support: services created to help a youth complete high school or obtain a General Equivalency Degree (GED). Some of the services include: Academic counseling; preparation for GED that includes assistance in applying for or studying for GED exam; homework assistance; tutoring; learning study skills; literacy training; and help accessing resources (National Youth in Transition Database, 2013). *Postsecondary education support*: are services designed to help a youth enter or complete a postsecondary education that includes the following: Test preparation classes, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT); information about financial aid; assisting with college or loan applications; counseling about college or university; or tutoring while in college (National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

Career preparation: services that help youth find, apply, and retain employment. Career preparation can include career assessment and exploration, resume writing, interviewing skills, completing applications, obtaining work permits, and corporate cultures (National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

Employment programs or vocational training: employment programs are classes or on-site training that help youth build skills for specific trade, vocation, or career through apprenticeship, internship, or summer employment programs. Vocational training provides youth with training such as cosmetology, auto mechanics, nursing, computer science, building trades, and other sectors (National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

Budget and financial management: trainings that include opening a checking and savings account; budgeting; balancing a checkbook; getting information on credit, loans, and taxes; and filling out tax forms (National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

Mentoring: matching youth with a screened and trained adult for one-on-one relationship. The youth and the mentor will meet on a regular basis. This service only includes mentors that are facilitated, provided, and paid for by the state agency (National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

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Supervised independent living: the youth is living independently under a supervised arrangement that is provided by the state agency. The youth is not supervised 24 hours a day and is often given increased responsibilities, such as paying bills, assuming leases, and working with the landlord, while under the supervision of an adult (The National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

Room and board financial assistance: room and board that is paid for or by state agency that includes rent deposits, utilities, and other household start-up expenses (The National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

Educational financial assistance: education or training that is paid for or provided by the state including: allowance to purchase textbooks, uniforms, computers, and other educational supplies; tuition assistance; scholarships; education preparation; and payment for GED and other education related tests (The National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

Independent living needs assessment: procedure that identifies a youth's skills, social and emotional capabilities, strengths, and needs to match the youth with the appropriate independent living services. Services may also include addressing the youth's knowledge of basic living skills, decision making skills, task completion, goal setting, job readiness, and transitional living needs (National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

Housing education – includes assistance in finding and maintaining housing, filling out a rental application and acquiring a lease, understanding tenant's responsibilities and rights, and handling landlord complaints. Home management includes instruction in laundry, housekeeping, food preparation, meal planning, grocery shopping and basic maintenance, and living with others (The National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

Other financial assistance – includes financial assistance provided by the state to help the youth live independently (The National Youth in Transition Database, 2013).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Foster Youth

According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2013) there were around 400,540 youth in foster care at the end of fiscal year 2011. The percentage of males and females were equally represented, with 52% and 48% respectively. Black youth, however, are overrepresented in the foster care system, representing 27% of all foster youth while only representing 15% of the general U.S. children population. White children however, represent 76% of the general U.S. children population and 41% of foster children (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013; U.S Census, 2009). During the fiscal year of 2011, 47% of foster youth lived in nonrelative foster homes, 27% in kinship care, 9% in institutions, and 6% in group homes. The outcomes of the same year were 52% of youth reunited with their family, 20% were adopted, and 11% were emancipated (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013). Foster youth are also more likely have mental health challenges. According to Kerker and Dore (2006), about 80% of foster youth have significant mental health problems. One study found foster youth ages 17-18 are 2 to 4 times more likely to experience lifetime and/or past year mental health disorders compared to the general population of the same age (Havlicek, Garcia, & Smith, 2013). Around 61% of these older youth meet diagnostic criteria for serious mental health conditions (Vorhies, Davis, Frounfelker, & Kaiser, 2012). Because of the

trauma foster youth faced, many of them develop Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). According to a study, being female increased the risk of being diagnosed with PTSD in the past year. Race however, did significantly contribute to the risk of being diagnosed with PTSD (Jackson, O'Brien, & Pecora, 2011). The study argues that race may not play a significant role in PTSD because foster youth of all different ethnicities experience similar difficulties. Females, however, are significantly more likely to be sexually abused in the general public than their male counterparts (Finkelhor, Ormond, Turner, & Hamby, 2005). Other forms of maltreatment, such as neglect, physical abuse, and psychological abuse are at similar rates with both male and female children (Finkelhor et al., 2005).

Outcomes of Foster Youth

Education, specifically a college degree is one of the most valued predictors of success. Higher education has been associated with significant benefits, including higher income and enhanced quality of life (Salazar, 2013). In the top 100 metropolitan areas, 43% of job openings require at least a bachelor's degree while only 32% of adults 25 and over have a 4 year degree (Rothwell, 2012). Compared to the general public, only 10. 8% of former foster youth ages 25 and over have completed college (Pecora et al., 2006). The unemployment rate of workers with a high school diploma or less is 9.9% while the unemployment rate of workers with a bachelor's degree is 3.9% (Rothwell, 2010). Furthermore, individuals with at least a bachelor's degree earned 61% more than those with only a high school diploma (Planty et al., 2007). For former foster youth who received their bachelor's degree, their individual income compared similarly to the

general public (Salazar, 2013). A college education may counterbalance the disadvantages they have faced in the past.

The Midwest Evaluation of Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 26 study done by Courtney et al., (2011) tracked the outcomes of former foster youth in the states of Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin. The data were collected between October 2010 and May 2011 when most of the participants were 26 years old. At the time of the data collection, 48.4% of former foster youth said that they lived in their own place, which included those who lived with a spouse or partner. Many of the participants have experienced homelessness, with 31% reporting they were homeless or couch surfed since the last interview. Of those that faced homelessness since the past interview, 22% of them reported that they were homeless 2-7 nights; 25.3% reported homeless 8-30 nights; 20.9% reported homeless 31-90 nights; and 19.8% reported homeless more than 90 nights.

The Midwest Evaluation found that very few of former foster youth completed secondary education. Out of the study, 19% of the participants did not have a high school diploma. There was higher percentage of males without a high school diploma 23.2% than females at 17.3%. Around 31% of participants had only a high school diploma and 9.4% received their GED. About 32% of the participants had at least one year of college, but only 4.4% had a 2 year college degree and 2.5% had a 4 year college degree. More percentages of females had at least one year of college at 34.5%, 2 year college degree at 5.5%, and 4 year college degree at 3.6%, compared to 28.1% of males who had at least one year of college, 3% of males who had a two year degree, and 1.1% of males who received a 4 year college. Around 17% of the participants were enrolled in school during

the time of data collection, with 55.9% enrollees in full time and 44.1% in part time. Many former foster youth relied on scholarships or grants, with 73.8% of currently enrolled students receiving grants and scholarships and 67.6% of formerly enrolled participants reported receiving them.

Around 35.4% of participants of the study had ever dropped out of secondary education. Of those that had ever dropped out, 23.2% dropped out of vocational and/or technical, 71.6% dropped out of 2 year colleges, 24.2% dropped out of 4 year colleges, and 3.3% dropped out of graduate school. The participants cited various reasons for dropping out with 14.2% said pregnancy, 37% cited child care responsibilities, 61.1% reported needed to work, 41.1% said they could not afford tuition and fees, and 25.6% said classes were too difficult. Of participants not enrolled in school, 49% of them reported having barriers to continuing their education. Some of these reported barriers were, 59% reported unable to pay for school 42.9% said they had to work full time, and 33.5% had to care for their children. However 59% of participants have thought a lot about going back to school and 78.7% felt that they needed more education to meet career goals.

Of all the participants of the study, 46.8% reported that they were currently unemployed. Of the 45.8% that reported that they were employed, 8.1% worked less than 20 hours a week, 24.2% worked 20-34 hours a week, 51.6% worked 35-40 hours a week, and 16.1% worked more than 40 hours a week. Of the participants who worked only part time, 20.5% reported that they cannot find full time work. Of all the participants, 38% made \$5,000 or less, 16.4% made \$5,001 to \$10,000, 25% made 10,001 to \$25,000, 17.2% made \$25,000 to \$50,000 and 2.5% made more than \$50,000.

The mean annual income of the participants was \$13,989 and the median was \$8,950. About 47% of participants reported having a checking or savings account.

Many of the former foster youth from the study reported economic hardships. Of the different hardships, 27.9% reported not having enough to pay rent, 31.4% reported not having enough to pay utility, 13.4% have had their gas or electricity shut off, 28.5% experienced having their phone disconnected, and 10.3% have been evicted. Former foster youth also had a difficult time having enough money to pay for food with 25.8% reporting that they had to put off paying a bill to buy food; 23.1% received food from food pantry; 20.7% saying they got food or borrowed money from friends or family; and 6.4% received food from soup kitchen. Around 38% of former foster youth reported being worried about running out of food, 34.1% ran out of food and could not afford for more, 21.5% could not afford to eat a balanced meal, and 14.6% said they did not when they were hungry because they could not afford it.

Many former foster youth also were affected by mental health problems, specifically depression and PTSD. Around 24% of former foster youth reported to have felt sad, depressed, or empty for most of the day for two weeks or longer. Of those who felt depressed, 36.2% told their doctor, 19.1% told other professional, and 26% took medication. About 21% reported losing interest in hobbies, work, or other things they usually enjoyed for two weeks or longer. Of those who reported losing interest in daily activities, 31.7% told their doctors, 16.3% told other professionals, and 26% took medication. Around 6% of former foster youth thought about committing suicide. A higher percentage of women at 7% thought about committing suicide compared to the men at 4.9%. Of those who thought about committing suicide, 48.6% had a plan.

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Women again were more likely to have a plan to commit suicide at 54.5%, compared to men at 38.5%. Around 37% of those who thought about committing suicide made an attempt, with 40.9% of females and 30.8% males. Many foster youth have also experienced different traumas. Around 27% of former foster vouth witnessed someone being badly injured or killed, 18.7% were raped, and 28.5% were sexually molested. Males were more likely to witness someone getting seriously injured or killed at 38.8% compared to 17% of females. More females reported being raped at 28.6% and sexually molested at 42.6% compared to males with 6.5% raped and 10.7% sexually molested. Of those who witnessed those traumas, 75.2% reported feeling terrified when the event happened and 80.1% felt helpless when the event occurred. Many of the foster youth who experienced trauma also exhibited symptoms of PTSD with 45% of them replaying the event; 20.8% has bad dreams or nightmares; 15.9% felt like it was happening again; 40.6% got upset when reminded of the incident; 26.9% sweated, heart beat fast, or trembled when reminded of the incident. Of those with the mentioned symptoms, 53% had trouble sleeping, 57.5% had difficulty concentrating, and 50% avoided places, people, or activities that reminded them of the incident. The percentage of former foster youth in the study that utilized mental health services was low. Only 11.9% received psychological or emotional counseling; 4.2% received substance use treatment; 14.5% received medical treatment for emotional program; and 5% was hospitalized for mental health reasons.

Foster Youth in Schools

Foster youth, compared to the general youth population, have a significant educational disadvantage. Youth in foster care are less likely to earn high school

diplomas or GEDs, less likely to go to college, and less likely to secure regular employment compared to non-foster youth (McFarlane, 2013). Foster youth, compared to the general public, have fewer consistent parental advocates or representative in the creation and implementation of an education plan for graduation (Vacca, 2007). Youth in foster care are more likely to get their GED (39%) than high school diploma (56%) compared to the general public with 82% receiving a diploma and 5% receiving a GED (Finkelstein, Wamsley, & Miranda, 2002). Due to the continuous placements, 67.6% of foster youth reported to have attended three or more elementary schools and 33.1% have attended five or more elementary schools (Pecora et al., 2006). Similarly, high school foster youth have difficulty finding meaningful relationships, having little attachment to the school they are graduating from and few close friends in their class (Christian, 2003). Foster youth also have a tougher time succeeding in school. In one study, 36.2% of foster youths reported to have repeated a grade in school, while another study found that 58% of foster youth failed a class in the last year (McMillen, Auslander, Elze, White, & Thompson, 2003; Pecora et al., 2006). Part of the problem is because many schools lack the knowledge and understanding about the educational needs and skill level of foster children, thus failing to properly monitor their progress (Zetlin, Weinberg, & Shea, 2006). However, foster youth showed resilience against their struggles. About 86.1% of foster youth have received either a high school diploma or GED (Jones, 2010). Some predictors of high school completion includes older age into the child welfare system; fewer foster placements; having employment experience while in foster care; and receiving independent living training while in care (Pecora et al., 2006). Although faced with hardships, 70%-80% of foster youth had aspirations to continue their education in

college and 19% planned to continue after their postsecondary degree (McMillen et al., 2003; Jones, 2010). After high school, 34% of youth went directly to college, 13% to a 4 year college and 21% to community college (Jones, 2010). Although the number of those who went to college was encouraging at 49.3%, the numbers for foster youth who completed college was down to only 9% (Pecora et al., 2006). It was found that foster youth who attended community college were more likely to remain in school than those who attended a 4 year university.

Barriers Foster Youth Face in College

Over half of students who leave their university do so in their first year of college (Tinto, 1996). Students who did not complete their college education gave reasons that included academic difficulty, adjustment issues, lack of commitment, uncertain goals, financial difficulty, lack of involvement, and poor fit at the institutions (Tinto, 2011). Foster youth face difficulties with their academics long before entering college, with 80% of high school youth in foster care scoring in the same range as the lowest third of the general population (Flynn, Ghazal, Legault, Vandermeulen, & Petrick, 2004). Foster youth's chances of completing a degree is low as high school GPA is related to the probability of a student graduating from a university (Oseguera & Byung Shik, 2009). In college, foster youth face a more difficult challenge as many of them are independent and have no one to rely on. They will have to do well in college as grades are a significant factor for freshmen retention. The bottom 30% of college students are less likely to return than those in the middle 40%, who are less likely to return than the top 30% (Braunstein, Lesser, & Pescatrice, 2008).

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Many youth leaving foster care also leave behind their financial supports and become at risk of becoming homeless (Margolin, 2008). Some former foster youth expressed concerns about where they are going to live as well as how they could support themselves (Tilbury, Creed, Buys, & Crawford, 2011). This is a serious concern as more than 4 out of 10 foster youth who exit care do so with less than \$250 in cash (Krinsky & Liebmann, 2011). Students who stressed about their financial stability have less persistence to stay in college than those who have no financial stress (Oseguera & Byung Shik, (2009). The government attempted to address the financial needs of former foster youth by implementing The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, providing assistance that includes obtaining high school diploma, post-secondary education, housing, and training in budgeting. Unfortunately, many foster youth expressed that they were not informed about any aftercare money (Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007).

Ensuring Success for Foster Youth

To ensure that former foster youth are successful adults, interventions and services must be set in place at the beginning to guide them through their transition into adulthood. Foster parents, social workers, and teachers need to convey stay in school messages to students in danger of dropping out and examine the individual needs of each foster youth and make the appropriate career and educational plans (Vacca, 2007). Schools have generally neglected their students in foster care because of their often short tenure at the school. Instead, schools need to have ownership of their foster children (Zetlin et al., 2006). Positive teacher–student relationships play an essential role in the youth's motivation to succeed in secondary education (Maulana, Opdenakker, Stroet, Bosker, 2013). Similarly, students in universities that reported more support from faculty were more likely to intend to persist at their college (Tinto, 1996). Getting informed about services and receiving motivation played a significant role in foster youth decision to go to college. Some experiences that were most important to foster youth's decision to go to college included information about financial aid (44.9%), advisement about college (43.1%), and college preparation classes (31.5%) (Merdinger et al., 2005). Foster youth need adult connections to help them receive services (McFarlane, 2013). Many foster youth stated that the major obstacles in receiving needed services at their college were lack of time (59.7%), not knowing how to receive the services (32.4%), and not knowing where to receive the services (31.0%; Merdinger et al., 2005).

According to the Data Brief #1 presented by the National Youth in Transition Database (National Youth in Transition Database 2012), 98,561 foster youth obtained at least one independent living service during the 2011 federal fiscal year. About 47% of those who received services were aged 14-17, 49% were aged 18-21, 2% were aged 22-26, and 2% were other ages. About 70% of foster youth obtained at least one of the following independent life skills support service: independent living needs assessment, supervised independent living budget and financial management, and housing education and home management. About 53% of youth received at least one of the educational support services (academic support and/or post-secondary educational support). About 45% received career preparation or employment training services. A total of 17,021 of 17 year olds completed the survey administered. Of those who completed the survey, 93% indicated that they were in some type of educational program while 8% reported that they have already earned a high school diploma or GED.

Academic Services

To ensure that foster youth are able to transition successfully into adulthood, many advocates have stressed the importance of having academic services available. Of the foster youth who went to college, 53.8% reported that they were not well prepared to go to college (Jones, 2010). According to a study done by Tyre (2012), academic services improved the reading skills of foster youth in middle school. The two variables measured were oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension. At the beginning of the study, 39% of the foster youth performed below the 25th percentile in oral reading fluency according to their grade level. At the end of the school year, 30% of those students improved to the 25th percentile or higher. Twenty-four percent performed between the 25th and 49th percentile at the beginning of the school year for oral reading fluency. At the end of the school year, 28% of those students improved to the 50th percentile or higher. Similarly, 37% of foster youth scored below the 25th percentile for reading comprehension at the beginning of the academic year. At the end of the year, 27% of these students improved to the 25th percentile or higher. Forty percent of foster student performed between the 25th and 49th percentile for reading comprehension at the start of the school year. Twenty-one percent of those students improved to the 50th percentile or higher by the end of the academic year (Tyre, 2012). This research is encouraging especially because 33% of foster youth between the ages of 16.5 - 17.5 had a reading level below a 6th grader, 31% at the level between 6th and 8th grade, 18% between 9th and 11th, and 18% at a 12th grade level or higher (Shin, 2003). The research proves that academic services are beneficial and reliable in assisting foster youth students to succeed in school. It is important for foster youth to have stable mentors in their lives, such as

current college students to foster aspiration for obtaining a higher education. It has been proven that aspiration for higher education correlated positively to reading skills (Shin 2003; Tyre 2012). Completion of high school is a significant factor of foster youth going to college. Foster youth who received a diploma instead of a GED are 1.7 times more likely to complete an associate's degree and 3.9 times more likely to complete a bachelor's degree (Choice et al., 2001).

Another study done by Flynn et al., (2012) showed the effectiveness of academic services for foster youth. In this study, foster children ages 6-13 in grades 2-7 were split into experimental and control group. The experimental group received direct instruction tutoring from their foster parents. Each child in the experimental group received 3 hours of tutoring for 30 weeks. Two hours were direct instruction of in reading, 30 minutes reading aloud, and 30 minutes in self-paced instruction in math. During pretest, no significance was found between the academic assessment of the control group and experimental group. During the post test, the study found no significant differences between the two groups on word recognition. However, the rest of the measurements showed significant improvements in the experimental group. Sentence comprehension (gain meaning from words and understanding ideas from sentence) had significant differences between the two groups with the experimental group improving by 14.8%. Reading composite (combination of sentence comprehension and word recognition) showed statistically significant differences between the two groups with the experimental group improving by 10.4%. Math computation (basic computation through counting, identifying numbers, solving simple oral problems, and calculating written math problems) showed statistically significant differences between the two groups with the

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experimental group improving by 17.7%. Mckinstery and Topping's (2003) study found that reading tutors were beneficial for 12 year olds. During the pretest, the reading age of the students was at 13 years and 2 months. During the posttest, the reading age was 14 years. The 12 year old students were able to increase their reading age by 10 months in 4 months of time. Students who receive preparatory courses for SATs make an average improvement of 23.5 in verbal and 32.7 in math, a total of 56.2 point improvement (Montgomery & Lilly, 2012).

A study done by Fike and Fike (2008) analyzed the predictors of retention amongst first time in college (FTIC) students at a Texas community college. The positive predictors, ordered from strongest to weakest were, passing a developmental reading course, taking internet courses, participating in the Student Support Services Program (a federally funded program for special-needs students), not taking a developmental reading course, passing a developmental mathematics course, and receiving financial aid. It is important that foster youth continue to receive academic services, especially because 80% of foster youth score in the same range as the lowest third of those in the general public (Flynn et al., 2004). A study by Kolenovic, Linderman, and Karp (2013) analyzed the effectiveness of City University of New York's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). The goal of the program was to improve graduation rates by providing comprehensive support services to select majors. The ASAP students were required to participate in a 2 to 3 day workshop that included ice breakers, team-building activities, and orientation to build rapport and comfort for the students. The ASAP students take 3-5 classes with other ASAP students. Students are encouraged to form their own study groups, attend ASAP tutoring together,

and develop social networks. Furthermore, ASAP students are required to meet with a dedicated counselor twice a month. The study found that significant improvements among ASAP students compared to the control group. After the 1 year, the retention rate of ASAP students was 80% compared to 65.5% of the control group. After three semesters, they average ASAP student accrued 39.3 credits compared to 36.5 credits of the control group. The average GPA of ASAP students after three semesters were 2.68 compared with 2.62 of the control group. Around 30% of ASAP students graduated after 2 years compared with 12.1% of the control group. At three years, 54.6% of ASAP students graduated compared with 26.5% of the control group.

Chen and DesJardins (2010) found that ethnic minorities' retention rates are correlated with the amount of Pell Grant they receive. The same study also found Pell Grants and merit aid to positively affect low income students' retention rates in college.

Independent Living Services

For many foster youth, their 18th birthday truly marks the day that they are independent, no longer the ward of the government. To help foster youth transition into adulthood, services such as transitional housing have been put into place to help them transition into their new role. According to a study, foster youth who move into transitional housing have more stability; less likely to be unemployed; used less substances; and had less criminal justice contact compared with those who transitioned into other living arrangements (Jones, 2011). The same studied tracked that 51.9% of foster youth decided to move into transitional housing at discharge, 33.9% were still in transitional housing at 6 months, 16.2% at 12 months, 2% at 24 months. The percentage for those who rented their own apartment/home were 2.8% at discharge, 24.5% at 6 months, 27.5% at 12 months, 52% at 24 months, 60% at 36 months. Within the study, 48.5% were African American and over 2/3 chose to move into transitional housing (Jones 2011). Among those in an Independent Living Program from 2005–2007, the major themes of services they requested were more vouchers for clothing; assistance in getting their driver's license and having an access to a car; and receiving hands-on budgeting and financial management from their foster parents rather than in a classroom setting (Mares, 2010). This is extremely important, especially because foster youth are underprepared, resulting in 77% of them moving at least once within the first year of being discharged, while 40% moved more (Jones, 2011).

A study done by Lemon, Hines, and Merdinger (2005) analyzed the benefits of foster youth who were enrolled into Independent Living Programs (ILP) and how it helps them transition into adulthood. The study sent surveys to college students who were former foster youth. Amongst those who replied, 55.6% of ILP foster youth stated that they received information about financial aid compared to 43.4% of the general foster youth population. Furthermore, 78.2% of ILP members were taught how to open a bank compared to 64% of the general foster youth population; 75% of ILP members were taught how to find a job compared to only 61.8% of non-ILP foster youth; 74.7 of ILP members were taught how to budget money compared to only 54.1% of the general foster youth population; 67.9% of ILP foster youth; 63.3% of ILP foster youth were taught how to balance a checkbook compared to 53.2% of non-ILP foster youth; 63.3% of ILP foster youth; 31.2 of ILP foster youth were taught how to obtain health insurance compared to 23.9% of non-ILP foster youth; 44.9% of ILP foster youth were taught how to obtain health insulth care compared to

38.9% of non-ILP foster youth; 78.5% of ILP foster youth were taught how to set and achieve goals compared with 62.2% of non-ILP foster youth; 65.4% of ILP foster youth were taught how to find opportunities for training and education compared to 50.5% of non ILP foster youth; and 58.8% of ILP foster youth learned to find ways to pay for college compared to 51.8% of non ILP foster youth. It appears that foster youth who received independent living services were more prepared to transition into adulthood than the foster youth who did not receive any services. According to Choice et al., (2001), foster youth who received independent living training just once was 1.9 times more likely to complete high school than not receiving any training at all. The same study found that having intermittent independent living training and extensive independent training gave foster youth 1.8 times and 2.8 times the likeliness to graduate from high school.

According to a qualitative study by Hernandez & Naccarato (2010), housing is one of the major obstacles keeping foster youth from being successful in college. The study gathered information from college programs that provide scholarship and supportive services to former foster youth. The study found that although there are funding to help foster youth with housing, many program coordinators thought that there are very few affordable housing available and on-campus housing are impacted with long waiting lists. Advocates for foster youth need to build relationship with universities to attempt to secure housing for foster youth, especially because living on campus increases the persistence by 4.5% to stay in college (Oseguera & Byung Shik, 2009). The same study also reported that foster youth do not know how to budget their finances. Many program coordinators stated that grants and other financial aid should cover their living expenses, yet many foster youth have to find work because they do not budget.

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Furthermore, some foster youth stay longer in college. When their grants and financial aid are exhausted, many do not know how to continue to pay for their education and housing.

Adults in life

Many foster youth lack positive role models and post-care support, including accommodation, money and social support (Tilbury et al., 2011). One way to have supporting adults in foster youth's lives is mentors. Mentors can play a role in providing both academic and emotional support to foster youth (Hernandez & Naccarato, 2010). According to Kaplan, Skolnik, and Turnbull (2009), mentoring programs provide foster youth with long-term relationships with mentors who function as guidance counselors, role models and friends. The goals of mentors for foster youth include improving independent living skills, social skills, and academic functioning; increase positive connections to the community; facilitating connections to social services; and reducing juvenile crime and substance abuse (Kaplan, 2009). Foster youth who feel like they have social support in their first year of college are more likely to return for their sophomore year (Tinto, 1996). Duration of relationship with mentors plays a significant role in the lives of youth in foster care. Foster youth who had relationships with mentors for over a year experienced significant improvements in feelings of self-worth, perceived social acceptance, perceived academic competence, and placed value on education (Spencer, Collins, Ward, & Smashnaya, 2010). A successful mentorship can also help foster youth to be able to express their feelings and emotions, developing a healthy self-esteem (Kaplan, 2009). However, mentorship of a foster youth may be detrimental to their personal growth if relationship is ended prematurely (Spencer et al., 2010).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Design of Study

This study employs quantitative methodology to analyze secondary data obtained from the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). The NYTD dataset contains information from October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011 on the different services received by former and current foster youth. This study is descriptive in nature while analyzing the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Sampling

No questionnaires or surveys were distributed by the researcher in this study due to the use of secondary data. The study utilized non-probability, purposive sampling procedure by selecting subjects. The data gathered by the NYTD allowed the states to create their own system of tracking independent living services received by the youth.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher extracted information from the database that consisted of current and former foster youth who were at least 19 years of age at the time of data collection.

Data Collection/Retrieval

The survey (Appendix A) is comprised of 15 variables that address the research questions. The variables are related to the population of former or current foster youth.

The services received data are divided into four groups: education support, financial aid, employment support, and independent living support. The education

support focused on services that help youth meet academic goals. The financial aid group included any financial support that is provided by the state. The employment support group included services that directly assisted youth with their career related goals. The independent living service group consisted of services that assist youth to be self-sufficient. (See Appendix A: Data Retrieval Form).

Data Analysis

The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 to analyze the data. Frequencies and percentages were run for all the variables presented. The researcher used Chi-Square to test research questions stated in Chapter 1.

Relevance to CYF/CALSWEC Concentration

Foster youth face a great disadvantage compared to youth living in the care of a permanent loving family. Foster youth are placed in the care of the government because their families were unable to provide a safe environment for them due to abuse and neglect. To address the needs of the youth, the Children's Bureau has worked to protect and provide for foster youth to assist them to transition into successful adulthood. This study examined the relationship between foster youth and the services they receive to help them with successful transition into adulthood.

Relevance to Social Work and Multicultural Social Work Practice

The foster youth population is diverse in both age and ethnicity. It is important for social workers to be culturally aware and understand the developmental stages of children. By understanding the youth they serve, social workers will be able to provide services effectively. With the provision of support systems, foster youth may be given the best chance of becoming successful adults.

Limitations of the Study Methodology

The limitations come from the use of secondary data. Although the size of the data is substantial, the researcher is unable to administer any additional surveys to the participants. The researcher is limited to the variables that the original administers established.

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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 illustrates the frequencies and percentages for the demographics of current and former foster youth. The study consisted of 33,294 participants who were at least 19 years of age at the time of data collection. The majority (53.6%; n = 17,834) of the subjects were females and 15,460 (46.4%) were males. Most of the participants identified themselves as White (51.1%), 42.8% were Black or African American, 17.9% were Hispanic or Latino, and 2.5% were American Indian or Alaskan Native. A majority (43.3%) of the participants had less than a high school education, 36.2% had a high school diploma, 14.4% had at least one semester of college completed, and 6% had post-secondary education or training.

Table 2 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of current and former foster youth's participation in educational and independent living support services. One-third (35.6%) of study subjects received academic support, 34.8% received education financial assistance, 33.4% received career preparation, 26.3% received postsecondary educational support, and 20.9% received employment programs or vocational training. In addition, 35.2% of study subjects participated in budget and financial management services, 33.2% participated in independent living needs assessment, 32.8% participated in housing education and home management training, 30% received other financial

Characteristics	f	%
Gender		
Male	15,460	46.4
Female	17,834	53.6
Race		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	823	2.5
Asian	474	1.4
Black or African American	14,245	42.8
Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander	113	.3
White	17,026	51.1
Unknown	1,039	3.1
Declined	1,016	3.1
Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity	5,976	17.9
Educational Attainment		
Less Than High School	14,426	43.3
High School	12,068	36 2
Post-Secondary Education or Training	1,996	6.0
At Least One Semester of College Completed	4,804	14.4

TABLE 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample (N=33294)

assistance, 26.2% received room and board financial assistance, 18.9% participated in supervised independent living, and 14.6% received mentoring.

Analysis of Academic Support in Educational Attainment

A Chi-Square analysis was utilized to find an association between receiving

academic support services and educational attainment (Table 3). The study found

statistically significant relationship between receiving academic support and education

attainment $\chi^2(3) = 210.864$, p < .001. Of participants that received academic support

services, 37.9% also completed at most a high school diploma.

Characteristics	f	%
Education Support Services		
Academic Support	11,849	35.6
Postsecondary Education Support	8,745	26.3
Financial Aid		
Educational Financial Assistance	11,577	34.8
Other Financial Assistance	9,993	30 0
Room and Board Financial Assistance	8,717	26.2
Employment Support		
Career Preparation	11,109	20.9
Employment Programs or Vocational Training	6,942	33.4
Independent Living Support Services		
Independent Living Needs Assessment	11,704	35.2
Budget and Financial Management	11,065	33.2
Housing Education and Home Management	10,928	32.8
Supervised Independent Living	6,292	1 8.9
Mentoring	4,857	14.6

TABLE 2. Educational and Independent Living Support Services (N= 33294)

Analysis of Post-Secondary Education Support in Educational Attainment

The study found significant relationship between receiving post-secondary education support and educational attainment $\chi^2(3)=539.99$, p<.001 (Table3). Of participants that received post-secondary education support, 44.9% received at most a high school diploma, 7.2% received some sort of post-secondary education, and 15% also completed at least one semester of college.

			<u>Edı</u>	ucation	Attain	ment					
Educational Support	Less T High S		High S	School	Po Secor Educa of Train	ndary ation r	At L Or Semes Coll Comp	ne ster of lege			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	χ ²	df	p
Academic Sup	port										
No	9,023	42.1	7,579	35.3	1,311	6.1	3,532	16.5	210.864	3	.001
Yes	5,403	45.6	4,489	37.9	685	5.8	1,272	10.7			
Postsecondary											
Education Supp	oort										
No	11,576	47.2	8,144	33.2	1,368	5.6	3,461	14.1	593.99	3	.001
Yes	2,850	32.6	3,984	44.9	628	7.2	1,343	15.4			

TABLE 3. Educational Support v. Educational Attainment (N=33,294)

Analysis of Education Financial Assistance in Educational Attainment

The study found a significant relationship between financial assistance for education and educational attainment $\chi^2(3)=2020.1$, p <.001 (Table 4). Of the participants who received financial assistance for education, 9.1% received postsecondary education or training and 24.1% completed at least one semester of college.

Analysis of Room and Board Financial Assistance in Educational Attainment

The study presents a statistically significant relationship between receiving room and board financial assistance and educational attainment $\chi^2(3)=136.52$, p <.001(Table4). Of the participants that received room and board financial assistance, 41% received at most a high school degree and 14.6% completed at least one semester of college.

Analysis of Other Financial Assistance in Educational Attainment

The study presents a statistically significant relationship between receiving other financial assistance and educational attainment $\chi^2(3)=223.99$, p <.001 (Table 4). Among the participants that received other financial assistance, 38.9% received at most a high school diploma and 8.3% received post-secondary education or training.

			Edu	ucation	Attain	nent					
Financial Aid	Less T High S		High	School	Po Secor Educa OTrain	idary ation r	O	ster of lege			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	χ ²	df	p
Education											
Financial Aid											
No	10,792	49.7	7,967	36.7	943	4.3	2,015	9.3	2020.1	3	.001
Yes	3,634	31.4	4,101	35.4	1,053	9.1	2,789	24.1			
Room & Board											
Financial Aid											
No	11,070	45.0	8,497	34.6	1,480	6.0	3,530	14.4	136.52	3	.001
Yes	3,356	38.5	3,571	41.0	516	5.9	1,274	14.6			
Other											
Financial Aid											
No	10,361	44.4	8,182	35.1	1,170	5.0	3,588	15.4	223.99	3	.001
Yes	4,065	40.7	3,886	38.9	826	8.3	1,216	12.2			

TABLE 4. Financial Aid v. Educational Attainment (N=33,294)

Analysis of Career Preparation in Educational Attainment

The study found statistically significant relationship between career preparation and educational attainment $\chi^2(3)=322.82$, p <.001 (Table 5). Of participants that received career preparation, 41.9% of them received at most a high school diploma and 6.8% received post-secondary education.

Analysis of Employment Programs in Educational Attainment

The study found a significant relationship between employment programs and educational attainment $\chi^2(3)=211.5$, p<.001 (Table 5). Of the participants that received services from employment programs, 42.3% received at most a high school diploma and 7.5% received post-secondary education or training.

Analysis of Independent Living Needs Assessment in Educational Attainment

The study found a significant relationship between independent living needs assessment and educational attainment $\chi^2(3)=90.428$, p <.001 (Table 6). Of participants that received independent living needs assessment, 39.1% received at most a high school diploma.

Analysis of Supervised Independent Living in Educational Attainment

The study presents a significant relationship between receiving supervised independent living and education level $\chi^2(3)$ = 698.45, *p*<.001 (Table 6). Of the participants that received supervised independent living, 45.5% received at most a high school diploma, 9.5% received post-secondary education or training, and 15.6% completed at least one semester of college.

Analysis of Budget and Financial Management in Educational Attainment

The study presents a significant relationship between having received budget and financial management services and educational attainment $\chi^2(3)=336.45$, p<.001 (Table 6). Of those who received budget and financial management services, 41.7% received at most a high school diploma and 7.2% received post-secondary education or training.

			Edu	ucation	Attain	ment					
Employment Support	Less T High S		High S	School	Po Secon Educa or Train	ndary ation r	0	ster of lege			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	χ²	df	p
Career Preparation No Yes	9,978 4,448	45.0 40.0	7,410 4,658	33.4 41.9	1,244 752	5.6 6.8	3,553 1,251	16.0 11.3	322.82	3	.001
Employment Programs No Yes	11,722 2,704	44.5 39	9,131 2,937	34.7 42.3	1,4 8 5 511	5.6 7.4	4,014 790	15.2 11.4	211.5	3	.001

TABLE 5. Employment Support v. Educational Attainment (33,294)

Analysis of Housing Education and Home Management in Educational Attainment

The study presents a significant relationship between receiving Housing Education and Home Management services and Educational Attainment $\chi^2(3)=539.99$, p<.001 (Table 6). Amongst the participants who received housing education and home management training, 41.8% received at most a high school diploma and 7.0% received post-secondary education or training.

Analysis of Mentoring in Educational Attainment

The study presents a significant relationship between receiving mentoring services and educational attainment $\chi^2(3)=53.235$, p <.001 (Table 6). Of the participants that received mentoring, 40.8% had received at most a high school diploma and 6.1% had received postsecondary education or training.

			Edu	ucatior	n Attair	iment	t				
Independent Living Support	Less High S		High School		Post Secondary Education or Training		At Least One Semester of College Completed				
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	χ^2	df	р
Independent Living Needs Assessment											
No Yes	9,673 4,753	43.4 42.9	7,737 4,331	34.8 39.1	1,412 5 8 4	6.4 5.3	3,407 1,397	15.3 12.6	90.428	3	.001
Supervised Independent Living											
No Yes	12,576 1,850	46.6 29.4	9,208 2,860	34.1 45.5	1,396 600	5.2 9.5	3,822 982	14.2 15.6	698.45	3	.001
Budget & Finan Management	ncial										
No Yes	10,014 4,412	46.5 37.8	7,190 4,878	33.3 41.7	1,152 844	5.3 7.2	3,234 1,570	15.0 13.4	336.45	3	.001
Housing Education Home Manager											
No Yes	10,087 4,340	45.1 39.6	7,502 4,566	33.5 41.8	1,231 765	5.5 7.0	3,547 1,257	15.9 11.5	310.56	3	.001
Mentoring No Yes	12,4 8 3 1,943	43.9 40.0	10,088 1,980	35.5 40.8	1,700 296	6.0 6.1	4,166 638	14.6 13.1	53.235	3	.001

 TABLE 6.
 Independent Living Support v. Educational Attainment (33,294)

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Summary Findings

This study analyzed the educational attainment between former and current foster youth that received education support, financial assistance, employment support, and independent support services. The study found statistically significant relationship in former and current foster youth that received academic support; post-secondary education support; career preparation; employment programs; independent living needs assessment; budget and financial management; housing education and home management; mentoring; supervised independent living; room and board financial assistance; or other financial assistance when compared to those who had at most a high school diploma. Although the mentioned services played a significant role in helping foster youth earn a high school diploma, a great majority of youth did so without utilizing them.

The study also found statistically significant relationship in former and current foster youth that received post-secondary education support; career preparation; employment programs; financial aid; budget and financial management; housing education and home management; mentoring; supervised independent living; or other financial assistance when compared to those who received post-secondary education or training. Within foster youth who received some post-secondary education or training, the education financial aid was the only variable where more youth received aid than not. The majority of foster youth who received some post-secondary education or training did not receive the other services.

Lastly, the study found statistically significant relationship in former and current foster youth that received post-secondary education support; financial aid; supervised independent living; or room and board financial assistance when compared to those who received services in completing at least one semester of college. Within foster youth who completed at least one semester of college, education financial aid was the only variable where more youth received aid than not. The majority of youth who completed at least one semester of college did not receive the other services.

Comparison with Prior Research

In previous studies, academic services such as tutoring and literacy training has helped middle school youth raise their level of math and English proficiency (Flynn et al., 2012; McKinstery & Topping, 2003; Tyre, 2012). Somers, Owens, & Pillawsky (2009) found higher GPA scores amongst 9th graders who received tutoring services. In comparison to the current study, the data found statistically significant relationship between receiving academic support and educational attainment. Although there are limited recent studies on the relationship between academic support and high school graduation rates, all studies show that academic support improves student academic performance. Academic support in this current study is described as services that help youth complete high school or obtain a GED which may explain why it is not an important factor with helping former or current foster youth complete secondary education or one semester of college. The current study found statistically significant relationship between post-secondary education support and education level. Similarly, the literature shows that post-secondary support contributes to student preparation for college as well as resilience in completing college (Kolenovic et al., 2012).

The current study revealed statistically significant relationship between career preparation and education level as well as employment programs and education level. Although research is lacking comparing educational attainment and career exploration, literature suggests that most foster youth aspired to get good jobs, yet they are unclear about the steps to take to reach their employment goals (Tilbury et al., 2011).

The current study found statistically significant relationship between education financial assistance and educational attainment. Similarly, previous studies revealed that foster youth cited tuition cost as a reason to discontinue their education (Courtney et al., 2011; Oseguera & Byung Shik, 2009; Tinto, 2011). Not surprisingly, foster youth have cited financial aid playing significant role in their decision to go to college (Merdinger et al., 2005). The current study found financial aid to be less useful in helping foster youth graduate from high school. However, this may be due to many foster youth attending public school and does not have the same costs that post-secondary training or college demands. A previous study found a statistically significant relationship between lowincome students staying in college and receiving Pell Grant and merit aid. That same study also found that ethnic minorities' drop-out rates are lowered as the amount of Pell Grant increases (Chen & DesJardins, 2010).

The current study found significant relationship between former and current foster youth receiving independent living needs assessment and educational attainment. The study also found statistically significant relationship between former and current foster youth who are in supervised independent living and educational attainment. Previous studies have shown that foster youth who received independent living needs assessment and services were more likely to learn independent living skills, know how to access services, and succeed in their education (Lemon, Hines, and Merdinger, 2005; Choice et al., 2001). A previous study also found that foster youth who lived in supervised independent housing had more stability compared to foster youth who lived in other arrangements (Jones, 2011). Housing stability may contribute to education success. The current study found statistically significant relationship between former and current foster youth who received room and board financial assistance and educational attainment. According to past studies, foster youth self-disclosed having trouble paying for rent and utilities which at times lead to eviction and homelessness (Courtney et al., 2011). Foster youth who received on campus housing increased their persistence to stay in college (Oseguera & Byung Shik, 2009).

The current study found significant relationship between budgeting and financial management and educational attainment as well as housing education and home management and educational attainment. Although there are limited studies comparing education level with financial and home management, the literature found that teaching foster youth about budgeting and financial management as well as housing education and housing management helped them in becoming more independent (Mares, 2009; Oseguera & Byung Shik, 2009; Courtney et al., 2011).

The current study found statistically significant relationship between receiving mentoring and educational attainment. Previous studies have found that mentors helped foster youth place value in their education (Tinto, 1996; Hernandez & Naccarato, 2010; Spencer et al., 2010).

Implications to Social Work Practice and Policy

Although it is encouraging to see foster youth getting the assistance they need to transition into successful adults, it is important for social workers to inform and encourage foster youth to access these independent living programs. The fact that only about half of the foster youth received educational support services and career implies that there are still improvements to be made in connecting youth with services. According to foster youth, many of them do not know about the assistance they can receive and they need their social workers to be more proactive in connecting them with services (Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007).

In the current study, the data found significant relationship receiving educational support, financial aid, employment support, and independent living support services when compared with education attainment. However, besides the education financial aid variable, there was a greater amount of foster youth who did not receive services and yet graduated from high school; received post-secondary education or training; or completed at least one semester of college. The data found that not enough foster youth are utilizing the different services they are entitled to. Financial aid for education was the only variable being used more among students who completed at least one semester of college or received post-secondary education or training. The general understanding of our society is that higher education is important for higher standard of living which may lead social workers to educate foster youth about financial aid. Social workers should look at research to understand the importance of other services. Although not obvious, research has found other services such as employment programs, independent living needs assessment, and mentoring to beneficial for foster youth's education attainment. By

understanding empirical data, social workers may be more likely to communicate all services to foster youth.

States need to take advantage of the Foster Care Independence Act. For example, in 2014 the state of California extended the age of youth in foster care to 21 through Assembly Bill 12 (California Department of Social Services, 2011). According to the bill, the youth must have an educational or employment plan to qualify for assistance. Krinsky and Liebmann (2011) have found foster youth who live in states that allow youth to stay in foster care past the age of 18 are more likely to graduate from high school. Since the Foster Care Independence Act is federal money, states can only gain from helping their foster youth to become successful adults.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should continue to research the percentages of foster youth who receive independent living services and track their progress as adults. More research should be done on services given to foster youth before they reach their teens. A lot of services focus on foster youth transitioning to adulthood, but many youth's struggles start when they are much younger. The Children's Bureau (2012) reports the mean age of a youth in foster care is 9 years old and 71% of foster youth are aged 13 or younger. Research on young children in foster care can help child welfare programs identify important services to offer them to help them transition into their teens.

The literature on foster youth found that many faced mental health issues. Unfortunately, the secondary data that the researched obtained lacked a variable for mental health services. Data collection in the future by the states should include the variable mental health services so that future researchers may be able to explore the relationship between education attainment and mental health services received.

APPENDIX

DATA RETRIEVAL FORM

Appendix A: Data Retrieval Form

- 1. What is your date of birth?
- 2. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
- 3. What is your Ethnicity?
 - a. American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - b. Asian
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - e. White
 - f. Unknown
 - g. Declined
 - h. Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity
- 4. What is your highest completed education level?

Postsecondary education or training refers to any post-secondary education or training, other than an education pursued at a college or university.

College refers to completing at least a semester of study at a college or university.

- a. Less than 6^{th} grade
- b. 6th grade
 c. 7th grade
 d. 8th grade
 e. 9th grade

- f. 10^{th} grade g. 11^{th} grade
- h. 12^{th} grade
- i. Postsecondary education or training
- j. College
- k. Blank
- 5. Have you ever received an Independent Living Needs Assessment in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 6. Have you ever received any academic support that helped you to complete high school or obtain a General Equivalency Degree (GED) in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 7. Have you ever received any post-secondary educational support that helped you enter or complete a post-secondary education in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 8. Have you ever received any career preparation services in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 9. Have you ever attended any employment programs or received any vocational training in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 10. Have you ever received any budget and financial management assistance in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 11. Have you received any mentoring services in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 12. Are you living in a supervised independent living setting in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 13. Have you received any room and board financial assistance in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 14. Have you received any educational financial assistance in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 15. Have you received any other financial assistance in the past year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

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