



**INDIANA INDEPENDENT LIVING
SURVEY OF FOSTER YOUTHS**

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December 2003

**Social Science Research Center
College of Sciences and Humanities
Ball State University
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INDIANA INDEPENDENT LIVING SURVEY OF FOSTER YOUTHS

***Abstract:** A telephone survey was conducted with foster youths throughout the state of Indiana. A total of 247 youths 14-18 years of age participated, with placement settings including foster homes, group homes and child caring institutions. Young people participating in the survey were asked a variety of questions, including those regarding employment, housing, post-emancipation plans, health care, basic skills training, and support services. Responses were analyzed for the sample as a whole as well as by type of placement setting and demographic characteristics of respondents. Study methods, limitations, results, discussion and recommendations are summarized in this report.*

Introduction

Ball State University's Social Science Research Center (SSRC) is working with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (IFSSA), Division of Family and Children, to develop policies, plans, and programs to enhance independent living (IL) services for foster youths in the state of Indiana. The SSRC, with input from Indiana's statewide Independent Living Steering Committee, determined that a telephone survey of current foster youths 14-18 years of age was one way of beginning to impact policies and help inform future programming efforts with input from those youths in foster care. Giving voice to many of Indiana's young people impacted by the foster care system also fulfilled a strong recommendation of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (FCIA) and the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program encouraged states to actively engage young people in decision making and provide an opportunity for young people to directly impact policy decision making at the state level. In addition, the survey provided a baseline and set a standard for future evaluations and assessments. It is anticipated that, in October of 2005, states will be required to begin to formally address federally mandated outcome measures for those young people in foster care receiving Chafee funded IL services. Collecting and analyzing data now will assist Indiana in future planning efforts in preparation for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). The survey discussed in this report also assists with understanding the unique needs of Indiana's foster youths approaching emancipation, those young people aging out and those younger teens who are likely to remain in foster care through their 18th birthday. Determination of skills the young people have acquired and by whom they were taught, along with what skills are lacking, will support the direction of enhancing the services offered to transitioning young people in Indiana. In the survey, young people were asked questions pertaining to current living situation, employment, health care, housing, obstacles upon leaving care, support services, basic skills training, post-emancipation plans, and essential connections/documents.

Every year in the United States, approximately 20,000 young people “age out” or emancipate from foster care. These young people face the many challenges that transitioning to adulthood offers. The national statistics of homelessness, drug use, high risk behaviors and unemployment are sobering.

Information from other states underscores the need to strengthen independent living services for transitioning young people. For example, the *Foster Youth Transitions to Adulthood* study, a project that explored the experiences of young people in Wisconsin after they had been discharged from out-of-home care, found that at 12 to 18 months after exiting care, “12 percent of the young people had been homeless (i.e., living on the street or in a shelter); 32 percent relied on some form of public assistance for at least a portion of their incomes; 27 percent of the males and 10 percent of the females had been incarcerated at least once during this period; and 25 percent of males and 15 percent of females reported serious physical victimization, including being “beat up” and other significant violent acts” (Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, Nesmith, 1998).

According to a study that looked at experiences of aging out of the adolescent public mental health service system in Massachusetts¹, over one-half of the cohort said that they wanted help with the following (Consumer Quality Initiatives, Inc., 2002):

- mental health issues
- finding an enjoyable job
- independent living skills
- finding a home
- finishing school
- issues with friends
- balancing a budget
- issues with family

Similar areas were explored with Indiana foster youths during the survey discussed in this report.

The magnitude of the difficulties faced by transitioning young people are reflected by a higher rate of arrest and incarceration, an increased likelihood of early parenting and instability in relationships, lower high school graduation rates and generally lower school performance, an increased likelihood of health and mental health problems, a greater likelihood of experiencing homelessness, a higher rate of substance abuse, and a higher rate of unemployment (Casey Family Programs, 2000). The Foster Care Independence Act ensures that the court can directly impact the readiness of a child to become self-reliant by holding the child welfare system accountable to not only providing permanency services, but also independent living services as part of its case plan for all teens in this age group (Carroll, 2002).

¹ Adolescent public mental health services referred to those services funded or offered by the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services and MassHealth managed care system and its adolescent services vendor network (Consumer Quality Initiatives, Inc., 2002).

The intention of the SSRC study was to gain a better understanding of the needs of Indiana's foster youths about to leave or age-out of the foster care system. Results will provide insight into what services currently exist and what services need to be developed to better help young people prepare for emancipation from the foster care system. Furthermore, in a paper entitled *Debunking the Year 18 Myth: Righting the Way for America's Foster Youth*, Daniel Brannen notes that human beings reach full biological and psychological development between the ages of 23 and 25, and that most Americans do not live on their own financially until after the age of 24 (Brannen, 2002). Grasping the fact that most foster youths would not be emotionally and developmentally mature enough for living independently at age 18 is central to understanding the challenges that face this unique group of young people.

Study Methodology

Overview

Social Science Research Center (SSRC) professional staff, with the assistance of a social work graduate student intern, developed the telephone survey instrument used in this study. All staff participating in the survey process completed the Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The course included key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participation protection in research, use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants, and description of guidelines for the protection of special populations (National Institutes of Health, 2002). The Institutional Review Board at Ball State University approved the survey protocol in the spring of 2002.

A letter was mailed to every Indiana County Director of the Division of Family and Children (DFC), explaining the rationale and purpose of the survey, requesting verification of each youth's information pertaining to placement and contact information, and asking for consent to interview the young people. Each letter contained a list of young people from the individual county: names were obtained from the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS). Consents were then to be returned to the Social Science Research Center for inclusion or exclusion from the telephone survey.

Sample Design, Selection and Consent

Telephone interviews were conducted in late 2002 with current Chafee-eligible Indiana youths who were 14-18 years of age and placed in foster care settings.² The sample was drawn from the names of foster youths provided to the SSRC from the Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS) database, which took into account statewide representation.

² Based on IFSSA Chafee Independent Living service standards, foster care was defined as "24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. The young person's placement could be in a family foster home, group home, child caring institution, kinship care home, pre-adoptive home, emergency shelter, ILP or other state sanctioned voluntary placement. Pursuant to the definition of foster care, facilities that are outside the scope of foster care include, but are not limited to: detention facilities; psychiatric hospitals; forestry camps; or facilities that are primarily for the detention of children who are adjudicated delinquent."

ICWIS is a computer network that links all child welfare services, including the Indiana Client Eligibility System (ICES), the Indiana Support Enforcement Tracking System (ISETS), courts, police and law enforcement agencies. ICWIS identifies which child welfare services families need, improving accountability at the state and local level. The director of each county office of the Division of Family and Children approved and gave consent (or lack of consent) or obtained parental consent where applicable for the participation of their county's eligible young people. In addition, verbal consent was obtained from each young person prior to conducting the telephone interview. SSRC received consent to contact a total of 463 eligible young people. The SSRC made attempts to contact every young person for whom consent was received. A total of 247 telephone interviews were completed with identified young people (53.3% of those for whom consents were received). Therefore, each County DFC Director, with parental input where appropriate, essentially determined inclusion of young people on the call list or exclusion of young people. Only 18 young people who were successfully contacted actually refused to participate in the survey. Seven young people who were contacted were unable to complete the survey due to physical disability/impairment (e.g., hearing impairment, cerebral palsy); and six individuals were not permitted by their foster parents/guardians to participate in the telephone survey. The remaining individuals were unable to be contacted for a variety of other reasons.

Questionnaire Construction

The survey instrument was designed so that it could be completed in roughly a fifteen-minute telephone interview (see Appendix A), with responses entered directly onto the computer, using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing system. All completed survey data was locked in the SSRC office.

During instrument development, other similar surveys conducted recently were researched and reviewed. These studies included the *These Are My Experiences (TAME)* study of foster children's transitions into adulthood (McLeod, 2001) and the *Foster Youth Transitions to Adulthood: Outcomes 12 to 18 Months After Leaving Out-of-Home Care* study, which explored the experiences and adjustments of young people after they had been discharged from out-of-home care in Wisconsin (Courtney et al., 1998).

While no items were taken directly from either of these previous studies, the review assisted SSRC staff in the design of the survey instrument used in this study. The SSRC instrument consisted mostly of fixed-choice (closed-ended) items. However, there were some open-ended questions that allowed the respondents the freedom to express their own experiences and feelings or the interviewers to follow up responses and probe for further information.

Survey Administration

The SSRC screened and hired Ball State graduate students recruited as interviewers through the university's Career Center. The interviewers were trained and closely monitored by SSRC staff; and they followed a scripted introductory statement and interview schedule during survey administration. See Appendix A for a copy of the instrument. Participation in the telephone survey was voluntary and confidential. Respondents were told that they could skip any questions they did not want to answer or stop the survey at any time.

For those placed in child caring institutions, the SSRC often received requests for the signed consents to participate. In such cases, copies were faxed to the appropriate personnel at the agency by SSRC professional staff. As an incentive to participate in the telephone interview, respondents were entered into a random drawing to have a chance at winning one of five \$100.00 gift certificates to a discount department store. Also, every young person responding to the survey was mailed a backpack as a thank you for participating, even if they did not complete the entire survey. Participants' responses were entered into a computer-aided telephone interviewing software program. To ensure confidentiality, completed surveys were coded so they were only represented by an identification number.

Data Analysis

Respondents were given the battery of questions included on the survey instrument, and their answers were recorded using interviewing software. Upon the survey's completion, data for the 247 participants was then imported into SPSS, a statistical software package for data analysis. SSRC professional staff coded open-ended responses after the interviewing was completed. Again, all identifying information was kept separate from participant responses in order to ensure confidentiality.

Limitations

There were several issues and limitations related to the survey of foster youths. It would be important to try to address these issues in future surveys. The most prevalent limitation was the ability to contact young people who were placed in child caring institutions. For their records, several agencies requested that copies of consents to interview be faxed to them. Tracking down the young people once agreements were reached, however, was often challenging given the restrictiveness of a residential environment. Also, in spite of attempts to define parameters for the sample before the sample was drawn, it was discovered that data obtained from ICWIS did include young people who were not Chafee eligible and, therefore, should not be included in the survey. Eligibility status was reviewed for all potential respondents. Given the ever-changing nature of youths' discharge plans, subsequent changes in foster care status, and movement between placements, ICWIS data that was initially pulled for the sample rapidly became dated material. Further, not all counties participated in the study by providing consent information. This was not unexpected, but it did mean that some young people were excluded from the survey. Fifty-four counties (59% of all Indiana counties) provided consent information (one of these counties indicated that their ward would probably be unable to participate due to disability). (See Appendix B for a list of Indiana counties from which consent information was received, as well as a table showing the number and percentage of survey respondents by county.) Finally, as is the case with any telephone survey, there was no control of the respondent's interview environment. Therefore, it is unknown to what extent, if any, answers may have been influenced by factors in the home or facility, e.g., the presence of others in the room while the respondent was being interviewed, time pressures put on the young person to answer quickly.

Results

This section describes information obtained in the telephone survey of Indiana foster care youths. The survey collected much information regarding the characteristics, experiences and needs of young people and offered these individuals the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding needs and resources.

Following an examination of the general characteristics of the sample, data gathered from the respondents will be presented. Results will be given for the group as a whole; and significant differences³ found between subgroups of the sample (e.g., males vs. females, by type of placement setting⁴) will also be noted where applicable.

General Characteristics of the Sample

Basic characteristics of the young people surveyed are displayed in Table 1. Altogether, a total of 247 young people in foster care from more than 40 of the 92 counties in Indiana participated. See Appendix B for the number and percentage of respondents by county. Respondents ranged in age from 14 to 18 years, with the average age of respondents being 15.6 years. The gender characteristics of the sample consisted of 42.9% males (or 105 youths) and 57.1% female respondents or (140 youths).⁵

The greatest percentage of the sample was in a “traditional” foster family setting, where young people are placed with a non-family member, which constituted 57.7% (or 142 youths) of the total sample. Another 17.1% (42 individuals) were in foster home settings with a relative. Of the remaining respondents, 16.7% resided in child caring institutions, and 8.5% were in group home placements. Most of the young people interviewed were in a metropolitan area/city (72.4%); 27.6% resided in a placement in a rural area in Indiana.

While 47.9% (115) of the respondents were White/Caucasian, 39.6% (95) were African-American, 5.8% multi-racial, 2.9% Native American/Alaskan, 2.9% Hispanic, and .4% Asian/Pacific Islander.

³ The chi-square statistical test and univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to examine possible differences between subgroups. Unless otherwise specified, the significance level (p) was set at $\leq .05$, a standard benchmark for statistical significance. If a relationship between comparison groups exists at the .05 level, there is a 5% chance that the relationship occurred by chance factors alone. Or conversely, there is a 95% probability that a systematic difference exists between the variables studied. When a statistically significant relationship is noted, it does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship; rather, it implies that there is a real difference in the percentage responses between comparison groups in the case of the chi-square test statistic or variance between means in the case of the ANOVA. Please see Appendix C for tables showing inferential statistics.

⁴ Placement settings included foster homes (foster home care with relative or with someone other than a relative), group homes, and residential child caring facilities.

⁵ This contrasts slightly with national gender statistics. National gender characteristics of those in foster care are 52% male or (291,340 youth) and 48% female (or 264,660 youth) (National Center for Resource Family Support, n.d.).

Table 1
 Characteristics of the Sample*

Demographic	Frequency of Responses/Number of Respondents	Percent (or Mean) of Respondents
Sex of Respondent		
Male	105	42.9%
Female	140	57.1%
TOTAL	245	100.0%
Age of Respondent		
Age 14	53	21.5%
Age 15	76	30.8%
Age 16	50	20.2%
Age 17	52	21.1%
Age 18	16	6.5%
TOTAL	247	100.0%
Mean Age of Respondents		
Participants Average Age	247	(15.6)
Living Situation of Respondents		
Foster Care With Relative	42	17.1%
Foster Care With Someone Other Than a Relative	142	57.7%
Group Home	21	8.5%
Child Caring Institution	41	16.7%
TOTAL	246	100.0%
Residential Setting of Respondents		
Metropolitan Area/City	176	72.4%
Rural Area	67	27.6%
Don't Know/No Response	4	1.6%
TOTAL	247	100.0%
Racial/Ethnic Identification		
African-American	95	39.6%
Native American/Alaskan	7	2.9%
Native	7	2.9%
Hispanic	7	2.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	0.4%
White/Caucasian	115	47.9%
Multi-Racial	14	5.8%
Other	1	0.4%
TOTAL	240	99.9%
Work Status of Respondents		
Currently Working	63	25.6%
Not Currently Working	183	74.4%
TOTAL	246	100.0%

Table 1 (Continued)

Demographic	Frequency of Responses/Number of Respondents	Percent (or Mean) of Respondents
Education Status of Respondents		
Currently In School	232	94.7%
Working On Obtaining a GED	10	4.1%
High School Graduate	1	0.4%
GED	1	0.4%
None Of The Above	1	0.4%
<i>TOTAL</i>	245	100.0%
Mean Grade of Respondents	232	(10.01)
Average For Out-Of-Home Care		
Average Age Respondents Entered Foster Care	235	(10.09 Years of Age)
Average Years Spent in Foster Care	237	(5.84 Years)
Average Number of Foster Care Placements	237	(4.48 Placements)
Average Number of Family Case Managers Since Placement Into Foster Care System	231	(2.81 Case Managers)

* Not all respondents answered all questions, so totals do not always equal 247, the total number of survey respondents.

The vast majority of respondents (94.7% or 232 youths) was currently in school. All but one of the remainder were either working on obtaining a GED, had obtained a GED, or were high school graduates. Coinciding with the average age of respondents, the average grade last completed by the majority of respondents was the 10th grade (232 youths). Roughly one-fourth of all respondents had jobs of some sort. More will be said on this later in the report.

The average age at which young people reportedly entered foster care placement was 10.39 years of age. Based on respondents' self-reports, the average length of time they had spent in foster care was 5.84 years. The average number of foster care placements was 4.59, with respondents reportedly averaging 2.81 family case managers since placement into the foster care system.

It should be noted that there was a strong effect of race on the number of placements reported ($p = .02$). When responses were analyzed by race, the sample was broken down into "White/Caucasian", "African-American", and "Other"⁶. Respondents who were anything other than Caucasian/White or African-American reported, on average, over two more placements than Caucasians and nearly three more than African-Americans. There was no difference between males and females in terms of the reported number of placements, nor was there a statistically significant difference between sex of respondent and the average number of family case managers reported for time spent in out-of-home care.

When examining the relationship between residential setting (i.e., foster care home, group home, or child caring institution)⁷ and the number of placements, no statistically significant effect was found in regards to housing situation and number of placements the young people had experienced in their time in out-of-home care. Young people currently residing in foster care homes averaged just over four placements (4.29), while those residing in group homes averaged 4.71 placements during their time in out-of-home care, and those in child caring institutions averaged 5.9 placements. No statistically significant difference was found between young people in group homes/child caring institutions and young people in foster homes in terms of length of time in out-of-home care or in average age. Those in foster homes averaged 5.99 years in care, those in group homes averaged 3.7 years, and those in child caring institutions averaged 6.4 years. The average age of those in foster homes was 15.53 years, 15.91 for those in group homes, and 15.78 for those in child caring institutions.

As shown in Table 2, the vast majority of young people in foster care surveyed did not have children (94.3%); 5.7% (or 14 young people) did. Thirteen of the young people with children resided in foster homes and one was in a child caring institution. Most (85.7%) of those with children had one child, and most (85.7%) had the child(ren) living with them (Table 2).

⁶ Those in the "Other" category were combined for two reasons. First, there were few respondents who were not African-American or White/Caucasian. Second, following analyses conducted with all races separate, it was found that the other racial categories were very similar in their responses.

⁷ The survey obtained responses from 184 youth in foster homes, 21 in group homes, and 41 in child caring institutions. Altogether, non-foster home respondents came from 10 different group homes and 21 different child caring institutions, in that one or more youth was interviewed from that setting.

Table 2
Respondents with Children

Respondent's Children	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Does Respondent Have Children		
No	231	94.3%
Yes	14	5.7%
TOTAL	245	100.0%
Respondent's Number of Children		
One Child	12	85.7%
Two Children	2	14.3%
TOTAL	14	100.0%
Residential Setting of Children		
Live with Respondent	12	85.7%
Live with Other Parent	1	7.2%
Living in Foster Care	1	7.2%
TOTAL	14	100.0%

Employment

As reported earlier, 25.6% (or 63 youths) reported that they were working full-time or part-time at the time of the survey (late Fall 2002), while 74.4% (or 183 youths) were not. See Table 3. Responses did not vary significantly by type of foster care placement. Of those respondents who were 14 or 15 years old, all were currently in school and 11.7% were also employed. Of those 16 or older, 88.1% were in school and 37.5% of these were also working. Of those 16 and older who were not in school at the time of the survey, 64.3% had jobs. The 14-15 year olds who were working averaged 14.93 work hours per week. Those 16-18 who were working and in school averaged 18.26 work hours per week, and those who were working but not in school averaged 27.33 work hours weekly.

While well over half (61.4% or 151 youths) reported that they had not been employed during the previous summer, 38.6% (or 95) had worked in the summer.

The majority of young people employed either at the time of the survey or the previous summer worked in either food services or retail or clerical work. Only 11.9% of all young people surveyed had utilized employment services, such as WorkOne, within the past six months (88% had not). (See Table 4.)

Table 3
Employment and Type of Employment

Employment/Job Category	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Respondent Employed Over the Summer		
No	151	61.4%
Yes	95	38.6%
TOTAL	246	100.0%
Type of Summer Employment		
Food Service	34	35.8%
Retail/Clerical	24	25.3%
Seasonal/Outdoor	13	13.7%
Human Services	8	8.4%
Babysitting	5	5.3%
School-Affiliated Employment	4	4.2%
Janitorial/Maintenance	3	3.2%
Other (Not Previously Specified)	4	4.2%
TOTAL	95	100.0%
Respondent's Current Employment Situation		
No	183	74.5%
Yes	63	25.5%
TOTAL	246	100.0%
Type of Current Employment		
Food Service	26	41.3%
Retail/Clerical	18	28.6%
Human Services	5	7.9%
School-Affiliated Employment	4	6.3%
Babysitting	3	4.8%
Janitorial/Maintenance	3	4.8%
Seasonal/Outdoor	2	3.2%
Other (Not Previously Specified)	2	3.2%
TOTAL	63	100.0%

Table 4
Use of Employment Services in the Last Six Months

IL Service	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Used Employment Services in the Last Six Months	29	11.9%
Who Informed Youth About Employment Services**		
IL Program Staff	6	20.7%
Foster Parent/Guardian	5	17.2%
Friends	4	13.8%
Boy/Girlfriend	0	0.0%
Relatives	2	6.9%
Therapist	2	6.9%
Parents	2	6.9%
Teachers at School	2	6.9%
DFC Case Manager	2	6.9%
After-School Program Staff	1	3.4%
School Counselor	1	3.4%
Phone Book	1	3.4%
Religious Leader	0	0.0%
Other	3	10.3%
No One	0	0.0%

** The percentages for this variable add up to over 100.0% due to the nature of the question, where the respondent was allowed to check all that applied; thus, all percentages are reflections of the frequency of the responses in relation to the total number of youths that reported using employment services.

Knowledge Concerning Health Insurance

Young people surveyed were asked if they knew how their health care was paid for: 72.2% said that they did know and 27.8% said that they did not know (Table 5). Of those who did know, 78.5% stated that their health care was paid for through Medicaid, followed by 13.6% stating Hoosier Healthwise, a Medicaid program. Responses did not vary significantly by respondent characteristics, including type of placement setting.

Table 5
Knowledge Concerning Health Care

Knowledge Concerning Health Insurance	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Does Respondent Know How Health Care is Paid For		
Yes	177	72.2%
No	68	27.8%
TOTAL	245	100.0%
Respondents Reported Mode of Healthcare Insurance		
Medicaid	139	78.5%
Hoosier Healthwise	24	13.6%
Guardian Provides Insurance Through Employment	4	2.3%
Guardian Self-Pays for Youth's Health Care Needs	4	2.3%
No Health Care Expenses	1	0.6%
Don't Know	5	2.8%
TOTAL	177	100.0%

Housing After Emancipation

Three in ten of the nation's homeless adults are former foster children; and homeless parents who have a history of foster care are almost twice as likely to have their own children placed in foster care as homeless people who were never in foster care (Casey Family Programs, 2001). Given the information available now on transitioning young people and homelessness, it becomes crucial to obtain youths' input on their own struggles with housing.

In this survey, we asked young people in foster care the following question: "Are you aware of housing options that will be available to you when you age out of care?" It is notable that 44.3% of all respondents (or 108 youths) stated that they were not aware of housing options available upon emancipation (see Table 6). Overall, when asked who informed them of various housing options, the majority said either their DFC case manager (37.5%) or their independent living program staff (25.7%).

Furthermore, over half (52.5% or 128) of the young people stated that they did not know where they were going to live when wardship ended (Table 7). Sixteen percent indicated that they would live by themselves, followed by with their biological parent(s) (7.8%) or with another relative (7.4%). Further analysis indicated a larger proportion of young people in group homes or child caring institutions than in foster homes said that they would go to live

with their biological parents after emancipation ($p = .018$). There were no statistically significant differences in the responses by age or other respondent demographics.

The majority of the young people surveyed who were in foster home placements (this question was asked only of young people in foster homes) said that they would like to stay with their foster parents after emancipation or aging out (see Table 8). In fact, almost three-fourths of those in foster home placements (74% or 135 of 184 respondents) indicated that they would like to stay with their foster parents, at least for a while, if that were possible. Among those who specified a preferred length of time, the average length of time they wanted to stay with their foster parents after emancipation was 2.06 years. The largest proportion of those foster home respondents that indicated they would not want to stay with their foster parents for some additional time said that they just wanted their own independence (47.4%).

Table 6
Awareness of Housing Options After Emancipation

IL Service	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Is Youth Aware of Possible Housing Options Available		
Yes	136	55.7%
No	108	44.3%
TOTAL	244	100.0%
Who Informed Youth About Various Housing Options**		
DFC Case Manager	51	37.5%
IL Program Staff	35	25.7%
Foster Parent/Guardian	12	8.8%
Relatives	10	7.4%
Therapist	8	5.9%
Parents	6	4.4%
Friends	5	3.7%
Phone Book	4	2.9%
School Counselor	3	2.2%
Teachers at School	2	1.5%
After-School Program Staff	2	1.5%
Religious Leader	1	0.7%
Boy/Girlfriend	0	0.0%
Other	7	5.1%
No One	5	3.7%

** The percentages for this variable add up to over 100.0% due to the nature of the question, where the respondent was allowed to check all that applied; thus, all percentages are reflections of the frequency of the responses in relation to the total number of youths that reported being aware of housing options.

Table 7
Where Youths Plan to Live After Emancipation

Residential Plans	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Does Youth Know Who s/he Plans to Live With After Emancipation		
No	128	52.5%
Yes	116	47.5%
TOTAL	244	100.0%
Where Does Youth Plan to Live After Emancipation		
Don't Know	128	52.5%
Self	39	16.0%
Biological Parent	19	7.8%
Other Relative	18	7.4%
Foster Parents/Family	16	6.6%
College	11	4.5%
Friends	5	2.0%
Boy/Girlfriend	3	1.2%
Spouse/Partner	2	.8%
Armed Forces	2	.8%
Other	1	.4%
TOTAL	244	100.0%

Table 8
Percentage of Foster Home Respondents Who Would Stay With Their Foster Parents After Emancipation or Aging Out of Care and Length of Time They Would Like to Stay *

Length of Stay After Emancipation	Frequency of Responses/Number of Respondents	Percent (or Mean) of Respondents
Respondent Who Would Stay with Foster Parents After Emancipation or Aging Out, if Possible*	135	74%
Average Amount of Time (In Years) Youth Would Stay With Foster Parents After Emancipation	126	(2.06 Years)
Reasons For Not Staying With Foster Parents**		
Wants Own Independence	18	47.4%
Wants to Distance Him/Herself from Foster Parents or Foster Care System	8	21.1%
Wants to Live with Family	6	15.8%
College Plans	5	13.2%
Adoption Concerns	1	2.6%
TOTAL	38	100.0%

* This question was asked only of those 184 respondents who were in foster homes.

** Based on 38 respondents from foster homes who said they would not stay with their foster parents, if possible, and who gave a reason.

Driver's License Issue

Learning to drive and getting a driver's license is a rite of passage for most young people. There are many obstacles for young people in foster care, however, that make this achievement difficult. The survey asked those young people who were 16 years of age or older whether or not they had a driver's license and, if not, why not. Over four-fifths (88.1%) of those 16 years of age or older did not have a license. See Table 9.

Responses did vary by placement setting. No one in a group home or child caring institution said they had a driver's license, while 17.5% of those residing in foster homes said that they did ($p = .023$).

By far, the predominate reasons given for not having a license were that they were not able to receive consent or there was no caregiver to sign for them to get a license, or they were not allowed to get a license where they were living. These are hurdles for young people in the foster care system.

How Prepared Young people Felt to Live Independently

While just over one-fourth of all respondents (27.5% or 66 young people) felt "very prepared" to live independently upon leaving placement, a majority of respondents (61.7% or 148 young people) thought that they were "somewhat prepared" to live independently (see Table 10). In this question of self-reported preparedness, one out of ten (10.4%) respondents said that they were "not prepared at all". No statistically significant differences were found when responses to this question were analyzed by type of placement setting, i.e., foster home, group home or child caring institution. A statistically significant difference was found, however, when perceived preparedness was analyzed by the demographic variable respondent age. Not surprisingly, a higher percentage of those 14-15 years of age (14.6%) said they were not at all prepared, while 6.0% of those 16-18 years said they were not at all prepared ($p = .024$).

Table 9
Possession of a Driver's License and Reasons for Not Having a License

Driver's License Information (Respondents 16 and Older)	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Does Respondent Have a Driver's License		
No	104	88.1%
Yes	14	11.9%
TOTAL	118	100.0%
Reasons For Not Having a Driver's License*		
Foster Parents Won't Sign/In Foster Care and Needs to Be 18	21	23.1%
Not Allowed to Have it where Placed/Living Currently	20	19.2%
Not Studied for Test/Not Been to Driving School	13	12.5%
Just Haven't Gotten Around to It	7	6.7%
Need Someone to Show Me How to Drive/Mom Won't Teach Me, Need Someone to Take Me for Permit, Foster Parent Doesn't Know What to Do	7	6.7%
Court Not Given Permission, State/County Won't Let Me	5	4.8%
Thought They Were Not Old Enough	4	3.8%
No Insurance to Cover Driving/No One to Sign Insurance	4	3.8%
Just Got Permit	4	3.8%
Need Permit	4	3.8%
Will be Getting Soon, in the Process of Getting	3	2.9%
Just Not Ready	2	1.9%
Social Worker Couldn't Get My Birth Certificate/ Need Birth Certificate	2	1.9%
Need to go to Social Security to Get Name Changed	2	1.9%
Don't Want It	1	1.0%
Didn't Go Get My Permit or Anything	1	1.0%
Still Learning How to Drive	1	1.0%
Because My Grades Went Down Last Year	1	1.0%
Don't Know	1	1.0%
License Suspended Until Turned 18	1	1.0%
Failed the Permit Test	1	1.0%
No Chance to Get it, In and Out of Placement Too Much	1	1.0%

*Some respondents' answers fell into more than one category.

Table 10
Youths' Perceived Preparedness to Live Independently Upon Emancipation

Youth's Self Report of Preparedness to Live Independently Upon Emancipation	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Very Prepared	66	27.5%
Somewhat Prepared	148	61.7%
Not Prepared At All	25	10.4%
Don't Know/No Response	1	0.4%
<i>TOTAL</i>	240*	100.0%

*Seven respondents had terminated the interview before this question was asked.

Perceived Obstacles After Emancipation

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked, "What is the biggest obstacle you think you will face when you leave out-of-home care?" Results are summarized in Table 11. Responses did not vary significantly by respondent characteristics, including type of placement setting. The most frequently cited obstacles were having money (17.7% of respondents) and being alone (also 17.7%). Having a place to live (9.5%) and finding a job (9.5%) were also frequently identified obstacles. Other obstacles reported by ten or more respondents related to concerns about college, getting along with family members and family related issues, staying out of trouble, and social/behavioral issues.

Table 11
Perceived Obstacles After Out-of-Home Care

Biggest Obstacle Reported by Youth	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Being Alone	43	17.7%
Having Money	43	17.7%
Having a Place to Live	23	9.5%
Finding a Job	23	9.5%
College	17	7.0%
Family Centered Dynamics/Issues	13	5.3%
Staying Out of Trouble	12	4.9%
Social/Behavioral Issues	10	4.1%
Finishing School	9	3.7%
IL Skill Implementation	5	2.1%
Having a Car	3	1.2%
Nothing	3	1.2%
Having a Driver's License	2	0.8%
Having Car Insurance	2	0.8%
Other (Not Previously Specified)	2	0.8%
Don't Know/No Response	33	13.6%
<i>TOTAL</i>	243	99.9%*

*Please note: these percentages do not add up to exactly 100.0% due to rounding.

Self-Reports Regarding Various Independent Living Skills

It is important for foster care youths to become adept at completing independent living skills associated with daily living. Life skills, such as obtaining and maintaining employment, driving and maintaining a car, and securing housing, are essential to transitioning to adulthood. “They are at a disadvantage, however, because usually due to familial circumstances and multiple placements they have not had the normal continuum of informal skill-learning experiences” (Loman & Siegle, p.7, 2000).

A series of questions was used in the SSRC survey to compile information on youths’ ability to complete certain tasks and who had taught them. For example, they were asked whether or not they:

- knew how to find a place to live once they left foster care
- knew how to obtain a driver’s license
- knew how to obtain a copy of a birth certificate
- knew how to obtain a copy of a Social Security Card
- knew how to obtain income tax forms
- knew how to open a checking account
- understood the responsibilities that accompany renting a house or apartment
- knew how to obtain community services, such as food stamps, WIC or Medicaid,
- knew how to properly file their income tax forms (either by filing themselves, or seeking the appropriate help to do so)
- knew how to prevent sexually transmitted infections [diseases]
- understood the benefits that accompany employment
- understood educational options after High School
- knew how to how to apply for financial aid [for secondary education]

In another question, the young people were asked how good they thought they were at doing each of the following:

- shopping for groceries
- cooking meals
- cleaning house
- washing clothes
- using a computer
- developing a monthly budget
- following a monthly budget
- finding medical attention when needed
- communicating with friends
- communicating with family members
- communicating at work with employers or supervisors
- communicating at work with co-workers
- searching for a job
- managing anger

- developing a resume
- interviewing for a job

A 4-point scale was used on each skill item, with youths reporting if they were very good at that skill (coded as 4), just ok at it (3), not very good at it (2), or they had never been taught it (1). In response to certain items, some said they didn't know or chose not to respond, in which case these responses were not included in the analyses. Results are shown in Tables 12 through 15.

The vast majority of respondents said that they understood how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and that they were aware of post-high school educational options (94.6% and 93.4% of all respondents, respectively). More than 87% said they understood the different types of benefits that come with getting a job, and over seventy percent knew how to get a driver's license (79.3%) and felt they were familiar with the responsibilities that come with renting a house or apartment (72.2%). Skill areas with the lowest proportions of respondents reporting knowledge were: how to obtain income tax forms (25.7% said they knew how to do that), how to properly file income taxes (41.9%), procedures for applying for financial aid (42.9%), understanding a rental lease (45.2%), and applying for or obtaining community services, such as food stamps, WIC, or Medicaid (46.9%). While responses did not vary significantly on most items when analyzed by demographics, the following statistically significant differences were found when data were analyzed by the variable type of placement setting, i.e., between young people residing in foster care homes, group homes, and child caring institutions:

- obtaining a copy of their Social Security card: A significantly greater proportion of young people in child caring institutions (48.8%) than those in foster homes (33.1%) or group homes (19%) reported not knowing how to obtain a copy of their Social Security card ($p = .048$).
- opening a checking account: A majority of young people in group homes (61.9%) and child caring institutions (51.2%) were not aware of the procedures involved in opening a checking account. Conversely, most (65.2%) young people in foster homes were aware of these procedures ($p = .016$).

Table 12
Youths' Reported Knowledge of Selected Independent Living Skills*

Independent Living Skill	Frequency Respondents Reporting Knowledge Concerning IL Skill	Percent of Respondents
Prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections	228	94.6%
Awareness of Educational Options Post-High School	225	93.4%
Types of Employment Benefits	211	87.6%
Obtain a Driver's License	191	79.3%
Responsibilities That Come With Buying/Renting a Home/Apartment	174	72.2%
Obtain a Copy of a Birth Certificate	161	66.8%
Find Housing After Emancipation	160	66.4%
Obtain a Copy of a Social Security Card	158	65.6%
Open a Checking Account	144	59.8%
Obtain Community Services (e.g., WIC, Medicaid)	113	46.9%
Understand What a Rental Lease is	109	45.2%
Procedures for Applying for Financial Aid	103	42.9%**
How to File Income Tax Forms	101	41.9%
Obtain Income Tax Forms	62	25.7%

* Based on 241 respondents who answered this series of questions.

**Based on 240 respondents who answered this particular item.

Table 13
Who They Said Taught Them the Majority of the Above Independent Living Skills*

Possible Source of IL Skill Teaching	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Foster Parent/Guardian	99	41.3%
Parents	45	18.8%
Relatives	40	16.7%
Independent Living Program Staff	38	15.8%
Teachers at School	37	15.4%
Youth Self-Taught Skills	28	11.7%
Family Case Manager	18	7.5%
Friends	14	5.8%
Therapist	13	5.4%
School Counselor	12	5.0%
Some Other Person (Not Previously Specified)	9	3.8%
Staff of After-School Program	3	1.3%
Religious Leader	0	0.0%
Boy/Girlfriend	0	0.0%
Don't Know/No Response	2	0.8%

* Based on 240 respondents who answered this question.

Table 14
Youths' Proficiency in Independent Living Tasks
(Based on Self-Reports)

Independent Living Skill	Mean Proficiency Rating	Number of Respondents
Communicating with Friends	3.72	243
Cleaning House	3.70	243
Doing Laundry	3.70	243
Communicating with Family Members	3.57	243
Shopping for Groceries	3.56	241
Ability to Use a Computer	3.35	243
Finding Medical Attention [When Needed]	3.29	240
Managing Anger	3.29	243
Cooking Meals	3.28	243
Communicating at Work with Management Personnel	3.16	191
Communicating at Work with Co-Workers	3.15	190
Searching for a Job	3.05	218
Interviewing for a Job	3.00	216
Developing a Resume	2.64	224
Developing a Monthly Budget	2.52	237
Following a Monthly Budget	2.49	231

Table 15
Who They Said Taught Them the Majority of the Above Independent Living Skills*

Possible Source of IL Skill Teaching	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Foster Parent/Guardian	102	42.0%
Parents	46	18.9%
Relatives	46	18.9%
Independent Living Program Staff	35	14.4%
Youth Self-Taught Skills	31	12.8%
Teachers at School	26	10.7%
Friends	17	7.0%
Family Case Manager	16	6.6%
Therapist	9	3.7%
School Counselor	7	2.9%
Some Other Person (Not Previously Specified)	6	2.5%
Staff of After-School Program	5	2.1%
Don't Know/No Response	2	0.8%
Religious Leader	1	0.4%
Boy/Girlfriend	0	0.0%

* Based on 243 respondents who answered this question.

Skills shown in Table 14 with the highest mean proficiency ratings (based on self-reports and using a scale of 1-4, with 4 indicating that the youth felt s/he was very good at it) were: communicating with friends (mean = 3.72), cleaning house (mean = 3.70), doing laundry (mean = 3.70), communicating with family members (mean = 3.57), and shopping for groceries (mean = 3.56). On the other hand, skills with the lowest mean proficiency ratings included searching for a job (mean = 3.05), interviewing for a job (mean = 3.00), developing a resume (mean = 2.64), developing a monthly budget (mean = 2.52), and following a monthly budget (mean = 2.49). When the sixteen different skills shown in Table 14 were analyzed by comparison groups, the following differences were found:

- As a group, females (mean proficiency rating = 3.62) tended to report that they were more proficient at shopping for groceries than did males (mean = 3.47) ($p = .052$).
- Young people living in child caring institutions and group homes reported that they were better at washing clothes than did foster home youths ($p = .029$). Those in child caring institutions had a mean proficiency rating of 3.88, and those group homes had a mean of 3.86, compared to a mean of 3.63 for those in foster homes.
- Young people living in group homes and foster homes reported being better at developing a budget than did young people in child caring institutions ($p = .029$). However, it should be noted that *all* groups reported a pretty low level of proficiency: the mean for group home youths was 2.62, while the mean for foster home youths was 2.59, and the mean for young people in child caring institutions was 2.13. (The young people did not really differ in terms of their reported ability to follow a monthly budget; all subgroups thought they were not very good at it. On following a budget, young people in group homes reported a mean proficiency rating of 2.71, while those in foster care homes had a mean of 2.5, and those in child caring institutions had a mean of 2.36.)
- Young people in foster homes (mean = 2.75) reported more proficiency than those in group homes (mean = 2.48) or child caring institutions (mean = 2.28) at being able to develop a resume ($p = .05$).

When asked by whom they had been taught the majority of the skills investigated (and respondents could name more than one source), the predominant responses were, in relative order: foster parent or guardian, parents, relatives, independent living program staff, teachers at school, or that they had taught themselves. See Tables 13 and 15.

Sources of Emotional Support

Those surveyed were given a list of people to whom one might turn for emotional support, e.g., foster parent/guardian, family case manager, biological parent(s), teacher. For each item, respondents were asked whether or not that was someone they thought they could go to for emotional support. Results are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16
Sources of Emotional Support

Source of Emotional Support	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents*
Foster Parent/Guardian	203	83.2%
Friends	186	76.2%
Other Relatives	168	68.9%
Family Case Manager	155	63.5%
Boy/Girlfriend	139	57.0%
Religious Leader*	138	56.8%
School Counselor	134	54.9%
Teachers at School	126	51.6%
IL Program Staff*	117	48.1%
Biological Parents	106	43.4%
After-School Program Staff	86	35.2%
Therapist	15	6.1%
Some Other Person*	5	2.1%

*Percentages are based on 244 respondents except where marked by an asterisk. When marked by an asterisk, percentages are based on 243 respondents.

Over eighty percent (83.2%) of all young people surveyed felt that they could turn to their foster parent/guardian. Over three-fourths (76.2%) felt they could go to a friend, two-thirds (68.9%) felt they could go to a relative (other than a biological parent), 63.5% felt they could go to a family case manager, and over half thought they could go to a boyfriend or girlfriend (57%), religious leader (56.8%), school counselor (54.9%), or school teacher (51.6%). Over a third thought they could turn to independent living program staff, their biological parent(s), or after-school program staff. All respondents indicated that they could turn to at least one person listed (i.e., no respondent said “no” to all people/categories on the list).

Further analysis revealed the following difference between the responses of young people that lived in group homes, child caring institutions, and foster homes with respect to their reporting of a foster parent or guardian as a source of emotional support:

- A significantly greater proportion of young people in foster homes (87.3%) than in group homes (76.2%) or child caring institutions (70%) felt that they could go to a foster parent or guardian for emotional support, $p = .018$. Of course, those in group homes or child caring institutions may not have had foster parents or, if they had, it could have been some time ago.

No other statistically significant differences were found when responses were analyzed by respondent characteristics.

Youths' Involvement in Case/Treatment Plans

Young people were asked for information regarding the level of their participation in their case plans and/or treatment plans with their case manager. Almost two-thirds (66.1%) of the young people said that their case manager asked for their ideas and also used them (see Table 17). One in five (22.2%) said that their case manager developed their plan without asking for their ideas or input. The remaining young people reported that their case manager either asked for their ideas but they did not share them (6.1%), or that their case manager asked for their ideas but then did not use them (5.7%). Responses regarding involvement in case/treatment plans did not vary significantly by respondent characteristics, including type of placement setting.

Indiana Family and Social Service Administration's Quality Assurance Review (QAR), as a result of its Program Improvement Plan, asks case reviewers to ascertain whether or not young people were involved with the planning process and also if the assessed independent living needs were addressed in the case plan. Given the recent revision of the case plan format as well as the QAR, it is hoped that youth involvement in the case plan will further improve (Indiana Family and Social Service Administration, Division of Family and Children, June 2003).

Table 17
Youths' Involvement in Case/Treatment Plans

Youth's Reported Level of Involvement in Case/Treatment Plan	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Case Manager Asks for Youth's Ideas and Uses Them	152	66.1%
Case Manager Develops Plan Without Asking for Youth's Ideas	51	22.2%
Case Manager Asks for Youth's Ideas But Youth Doesn't Share Them	14	6.1%
Case Manager Asks for Youth's Ideas But Then Doesn't Utilize Them	13	5.7%
TOTAL	230	100.1%*

*Please note: These percentages do not add up to exactly 100.0% due to rounding.

Service Needs Identified by Foster Care Youths

A list of services was read to the young people. For each service identified, they were asked whether or not they thought they currently needed that service. Services and responses are shown in Table 18.

Table 18
Services Needs Identified by Foster Care Youths*

Services Youth Report Needing	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Post-High School Education	202	83.1%
Tuition Assistance	178	73.3%
Medicaid	130	53.5%
Paying for Housing	114	46.9%
Help Making a Budget	102	42.0%
Finding Housing	100	41.2%
Transportation Assistance	99	40.7%
Employment Counseling	73	30.0%
GED Classes	51	21.0%
Food Stamps	47	19.3%
Mental Health Counseling	37	15.2%
Child Care	33	13.6%
Addictions Counseling	10	4.1%

*Based on 243 respondents who answered this question.

As shown, eight out of ten young people (83.1% or 202) said that they needed help with education after high school, such as college or vocational training. Almost three-fourths (73.3%) felt that they needed tuition assistance for higher education. The majority (53.5%) said that they currently needed Medicaid (although many probably already had it). Over forty percent said they needed the following services: help paying for housing (46.9%), help making a budget (42.0%), help finding housing (41.2%), and transportation assistance (40.7%). Employment counseling was identified as a need by 30% of all young people surveyed; and just over a fifth of the respondents (21%) said that they needed GED classes.

Several statistically significant differences were found when responses regarding service needs were analyzed by type of placement setting (foster home, group home, or child caring institution):

- 72.5% of those in child caring institutions said that they needed help finding housing, compared to 47.6% of those in group homes and 34.1% of those in foster homes ($p = .000$)

- 38.1% of those in group homes and 33.3% of those in child caring institutions said they needed Food Stamps, compared to 14.3% of those in foster homes ($p = .002$)
- 84.6% of the young people in child caring institutions said that help in paying for housing was needed, compared to 55% of those in group homes and 39% of those in foster homes ($p = .000$)
- Over seventy percent of those in child caring institutions (72.5%) and group homes (71.4%) said they needed Medicaid, compared to 49.1% of those in foster homes ($p = .008$).
- Help in making a budget was identified as a need by 71.8% of those in child caring institutions, compared to 52.4% of those in group homes and 35.4% of those in foster homes ($p = .000$).
- Employment counseling was identified as needed by 50% of young people in child caring institutions, compared to 33.3% of young people in group homes and 25.8% of those in foster homes ($p = .011$).
- 43.6% of all respondents from child caring institutions said they needed GED classes, compared to 17.5% of the respondents from foster homes and 14.3% of those from group homes ($p = .001$)
- 60.5% of young people from child caring institutions said that they needed transportation assistance, compared to 55% of those in group homes and 36.6% of those in foster homes ($p = .012$)

Youths' Preferred Means to Receive Information on Services and Programs

Finally, young people were asked the following question: "Once you leave foster care, how would you like to get information about services and programs that are available for you?" Responses included by mail, telephone, e-mail, newspaper, newsletter, through their case manager, foster parent, a family member or their friends, through a church, or by some other means. Respondents were free to name more than one method. Results are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19
Youths' Preferred Source of Information Regarding Services/Programs*

Source of Information	Frequency of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Mail	197	82.1%
Phone Call	151	62.9%
Foster Parent/Guardian	148	61.7%
Family Member	146	60.8%
Family Case Manager	145	60.4%
Church	124	51.7%
Friends	120	50.0%
Newsletter	114	47.5%
Newspaper	99	41.3%
E-Mail	95	39.6%
Other (Not Previously Specified)	14	5.8%
Don't Know/No Response	2	0.8%

*Based on 240 respondents who answered this question.

Receiving information by mail was clearly the preferred method (82.1% of all respondents), followed by telephone calls (62.9% of respondents), foster parent or guardian (61.7%), family member (60.8%), and family case manager (60.4%). The least preferred method was by e-mail. Of course, most of those currently in foster care may not have a computer and/or easy access to e-mail; and they would not necessarily see that as an option in their immediate future. It was, in fact, interesting that e-mail was given as a response 95 times (39.6% of all respondents).

- When responses were analyzed by respondent characteristics, the only statistically significant finding was that a larger proportion of respondents in foster home settings (67.8%) than in group homes (47.6%) or child caring institutions (43.9%) said that they would like to receive information from a foster parent or guardian ($p = .007$). This is not so surprising, for reasons described earlier: those in group homes or child caring institutions may not have had foster parents or, if they had, it could have been some time ago.

Discussion

The SSRC's *Indiana Independent Living Survey of Foster Youths* yielded very valuable information and shed light on the many challenges that face emancipating foster youths. Many efforts can be made to assist that transition as well as strengthen independent living programming efforts for youths prior to their "aging out" of foster care. The responses of the 247 young people in foster care who participated in this survey should help inform policy and program development to enhance independent living services.

Perceived Obstacles

Of those Indiana young people surveyed, when asked, "What is the biggest obstacle you think you will face when you leave out-of-home care?", the top four responses were being alone, having money, having a place to live, and finding a job. Noting the top four perceived obstacles is relevant in that it provides insight into youths' concerns and fears. These findings give credence to the need to enroll young people in Workforce Investment Act programs, to strengthen Indiana's housing options for young adults and probably most importantly, to begin to address the youths' fears of being alone upon emancipating from the foster care system. These findings are also supported by results from the *Destination Future 2000* survey completed by 145 foster care youths (average age 17) from 20 states and Puerto Rico attending the Destination Future conference held by the National Resource Center for Youth Services. Results from that survey showed that a large proportion of young people had concerns about emotional issues related to transitioning. Thirty-two percent of the youths who responded to the *Destination Future* survey indicated that their biggest concern was dealing with emotional issues related to transition and specific areas of concern were noted as being alone, trusting people, falling behind and getting off track (Kessler and Johnson, 2003).

Ball State University's SSRC held a series of focus groups with 31 Indiana young people 14-21 in out of home placement during the summer of 2002. Youths who participated in the focus groups reported that money and transportation were needs that they thought they would have upon aging out of care. Focus group participants also expressed concerns over not being able to make "enough" money in a short period of time, (referring to the time left before aging out of the system). (Miller, Brown, Rich, Lee, Trumbull, 2002).

Recommendations:

- **Prepare young people for being alone by encouraging and supporting youths' participation in community, civic or faith-based activities to further develop and build their support network, taking into consideration work and school schedules.**
- **Develop a mentoring program to connect young people with mentors once they age out of care to enable connections with adults to receive guidance and mentoring.**
- **Build into independent living programming how to cope with being alone and how to develop interests for healthy and constructive leisure activities.**

- **Teach young people how to live with a roommate, principles of negotiation, shared responsibilities, communication skills, and how to share living space.**
- **Further develop the Chafee Trust Fund initiative or develop a matched savings account referred to as an Individual Development Account (IDA).**
- **Strengthen local partnerships with Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth programs, specifically the WorkOne offices. WorkOne offices are where young people can access a multitude of workforce development activities and information. Each WorkOne Center has an Information Resource Center, where individuals can get information on resume writing, interviewing tips, labor market information, financial aid, and post-secondary educational institutions.**
- **Develop a continuum of housing options for youths aging out of care, including partnerships with apartment communities for scattered site apartment living.**
- **Further explore the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative's Opportunity Passport program. The Opportunity Passport is a tool designed to organize resources to create opportunities – financial, educational, vocational, health care, entrepreneurial and recreational opportunities – for alumni of the foster care system and youth still in care. This national effort has been explored with the United Way of Central Indiana.**
- **Discourage youths from emancipating prior to reaching the age of 18 unless they have permanency goals of adoption or guardianship. Emancipation prior to the age of 18 keeps them from being able to access Chafee room and board funds.**
- **Have a day for young people to speak to elected officials and legislators in Indiana, so they have a forum to address some of the obstacles to independent living and self-sufficiency.**
- **Involve young people in foster parent training to help foster parents better understand the needs of transitioning youth.**

Employment and Economic Well Being

As young adults transition to adulthood upon aging out of foster care, there is extensive belief that they are at risk of poor financial and social outcomes (Goerge, Bilaver and Lee, 2002). During the mid 1990's, the Chapin Hall Center for Children, located at the University of Chicago, researched employment outcomes of youth leaving foster care as they approached reaching the age of 18 in the following states: California, Illinois, and South Carolina. The study, *Employment Outcomes for Youth Aging out of Foster Care*, had important findings. The research showed that youth aging out of foster care are underemployed, have mean earnings below the poverty level and that patterns of unemployment vary by state. The study also found that youth aging out of foster care progress more slowly in the labor market than other youth (Goerge et al.). Youth participating in Indiana focus groups during the summer of 2002 noted that balancing school and work responsibilities was seen as a roadblock that interfered with their independent living goals (Miller et al., 2002).

Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), eligible young people enrolled in programming can receive a wide array of services that can support them in achieving both academic and employment success. WIA services include: occupational skill training, tutoring, mentoring opportunities, workforce participation, incentives for recognition and achievement, and leadership opportunities. WIA links traditional youth employment and training services with the core principles of youth development by requiring ten youth program elements.⁸

In the SSRC's Indiana foster care survey, when various independent living skills were investigated, it was found that skills with the lowest mean self-reported proficiency ratings included searching for a job, interviewing for a job, developing a resume, and developing and following a budget. Only 11.9% of all young people surveyed had utilized employment services, such as WorkOne, within the past 6 months. Although there has been a steady increase of foster youth and former foster youth accessing WIA services, it still is a service that is underutilized based on survey findings and the number of young people statewide that are eligible to access WIA youth services. WIA youth services are available for both in-school and out-of-school young people aged 14 to 21; and low income young people ages 18 to 21 may be eligible for dual enrollment in both the adult and youth WIA programs (National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability, 2003).

Welfare-to-Work (WtW) programs are intended to prepare those with poor education, minimal skills and modest job experience with the resources and support they need to locate and maintain good jobs. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (2002), eligible persons may be served by WtW if they "were in foster care under the responsibility of the State before 18 years of age and is between the ages of 18-24 at the time of applying for the WtW program. Eligible individuals include those who were recipients of foster care maintenance payments as defined in section 475(4) under part E of the Social Security Act."

The *Welfare-To-Work Plan for Indiana* (Department of Workforce Development, 1999) outlines services offered through WtW programs with the goal to increase self-sufficiency. WtW services include an assessment, occupational/career planning, job search workshops, job development and placement, post-employment services, mentoring and job coaching and basic education and vocational training. Additional services may be available depending on community needs, which are assessed by local service providers.

According to data obtained from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Evaluation Unit, the WtW program served 16 foster youths in program year 2000 and at least 112 foster youths were served by WIA in this period. Data is collected on foster youth in the WtW program and is reported as an optional data item for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs. The foster youth data is based on those foster youth on whose behalf state

⁸ The ten program elements are: (1) tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies, (2) alternative secondary school services, (3) summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning, (4) paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing, (5) occupational skill training, as appropriate, (6) leadership development activities, (7) supportive services, (8) adult mentoring during program participation, (9) 12-month follow-up after program completion, and (10) guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate (National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability, 2003).

or local government payments are made. While the WtW data is considered accurate, the WIA data should be considered as the minimum number served by WIA, since local areas can choose not to report this data item. During program year 2002 (July 2002-June 2003), there were at least 275 foster youth participating in WIA programs and another 158 participants (at least) who were former foster care youth.

Efficient and valuable youth employment programs assist young adults with increasing their ability to deal with the responsibilities of transitioning to adulthood, which includes making a livable wage for themselves (Clymer, Edwards, Ponce and Wyckoff, 2002). Although the largest proportion (20.7%) of youths surveyed in the SSRC's Indiana foster care survey who said they had used employment services had learned about these services from their independent living program staff, continuing to access services offered by WIA is central to strengthening independent living programs.

Recommendations:

- **Strengthen the connections between Chafee independent living providers and local Workforce Development One-Stop systems, which would allow for youth participation in such activities as leadership development activities, paid and unpaid work experiences and occupational skill training.**
- **Train DWD staff on the Chafee eligibility category which aligns with WIA eligibility.**
- **Work with DWD to encourage mandated reporting in WIA programs of young people who are or were in a foster care placement. Accurate and mandated reporting of this item would greatly inform program development and greater awareness of the population base. Most importantly, eliminating this as an optional reporting item would allow for an increase in Outcome Measurement data in relation to foster youth participating in WIA services, which would greatly benefit both Chafee programming as well as DWD.**
- **Although every young person surveyed, by virtue of being in foster care, was eligible to participate in the WIA youth program, only 11.9% of the young people stated that they had utilized employment services. Even though there is a demonstrated increase in the number of foster care youth being served between program years 2000 and 2002, continued efforts need to be made to further increase enrollment in WIA programs.**
- **Focus elements of foster parent training on how to best support youths with employment efforts, specifically on developing pre-employment skills and learning how to maintain a job.**

Participation in the Case Plan, Living Situation at Emancipation, and Mentoring

Over half (66.1%) of the young people surveyed in the SSRC's *Indiana Independent Living Survey of Foster Youths* stated that their case manager asked for their input and utilized that information in the development of their case/treatment plan. Over one-fifth (22.2%), however, stated that their case manager developed the case/treatment plan without input from them. Participation in the case plan, which in essence is the youth's permanency plan, is

essential in assisting the youth with his/her transition to adulthood. This was highlighted by the finding that over half (52.5%) of all those surveyed said that they did not know where they were going to live when wardship ended. Responses did not vary significantly by age, i.e., this was true for both the younger and older youths surveyed.

In King County, Washington, 40% of surveyed foster youth reported they were either concerned or very concerned about emancipating from foster care at 18 and consequently leaving the system (Armstrong and Koschinsky, 2001). Not knowing where you are going to live upon emancipating from foster care can only be described as alarming. Several systemic changes can occur to increase the youth's knowledge about transitional planning.

In support of youth involvement in planning their transition services, similar findings were reported by a nationwide public opinion telephone survey of 1,121 persons funded by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative hired Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates (LSPA) to conduct a study exploring public knowledge of and perceptions about the challenges facing young people leaving foster care. The study found that the public has clear-cut ideas about the characteristics transitional programs should have:

- they teach young people about managing and saving money (98% say this is important)
 - they help young people move toward independence and self-sufficiency (98%)
 - they involve young people in planning for and making decisions about their own futures (98%)
 - they facilitate connections with individuals (97%) and institutions (96%) in their communities
- (Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates, 2003)

Effective discharge planning needs to occur virtually from the day of intake into an independent living program. Upon admission and subsequent assessment, planning should be focused on transitioning towards independence, including addressing such important issues as, "Where am I going to live?" Similar recommendations were made recently based on a focus group with ten youths (five females and five males) between the ages of 13 and 17 who were either placed in foster care or in adoptive homes in the state of West Virginia. Recommendations from the focus group included involving young people, as well as families in identifying their strengths and needs in developing their service plans (West Virginia Community Voices, 2002). An additional common theme found with the focus group in West Virginia was youth identifying that having the opportunity to stay connected to their own families and communities is important.

Focus groups held by the SSRC with Indiana young people in out of home care during the summer of 2002 yielded further enlightening information regarding what services they thought were needed when they aged out of care. Young people made the following statements during those focused discussions:

"I don't know where to go for help when I get out of placement. A mentor, some sort of role model would help."

“Nobody has even asked me what I want to be, about my plans, and my 18th birthday is coming up.”

“It’s scary being on your own.”

“We have a right to know what’s going on in our life.”

Focus group participants also noted that they thought mentoring services were important, especially once they leave care. One youth stated: “Not just somebody checking up. Somebody real, somebody sincere, that you can talk with.” Again, the common denominator with both survey and focus group participants was “having a place to live.” One Indiana focus group participant put it very succinctly when asked, “How can foster parents, caregivers, residential providers or others best prepare you for self sufficiency?” The response was “help make connections, act as an extension cord” (Miller et al., 2002).

Recommendations

- **First and foremost, young people need to become an active partner in the case planning process, a process that would bring to the table not only the active child welfare professionals and family members in their lives but the young person as well as other adults that play an active role.**
- **With regard to case closing decisions, judges can play an active role in determining if a youth remains in need of child welfare services. “Judges should be knowledgeable of the transition plan and able to apply criteria such as ‘evidence of a safe and stable living arrangement’ to discharge decisions” (Carroll, 2002).**
- **Encourage youth’s participation in the discharge interview, which is given by the family case manager upon termination of wardship, to allow another opportunity for youth participation with regard to independent living programming.**
- **Explore models such as family group conferencing that occur in some counties within the state; study the outcomes of this process and interview the young people about their experiences with the process.**
- **Connect Chafee-eligible youth (14-21) with a mentor to provide a connection with a supportive adult role model that can offer guidance and an essential connection for the youth during foster care and after wardship ends.**
- **Begin a statewide effort to establish mentoring programs with contracted independent living providers and also explore peer-mentoring programs.**
- **Provide opportunities for former foster youths to serve as mentors for those still in care to assist with transitional living experiences.**
- **Offer youths pre-paid telephone cards to connect with mentors in the event they are separated by a long distance, especially for youths in rural areas.**
- **Help those working with young people in foster care understand the concept of concurrent planning, in which independent living activities are provided concurrently with adoption and other permanency activities.**

Housing Options

Indiana communities have long waiting lists for Section 8 housing for qualifying individuals and families,⁹ and the state has a shortage of short-term and crisis housing for youths and young adults.

In July of 2001, Casey Family Programs hired Business Government Community Connections (BGCC) to conduct a series of interviews and survey foster youths, unattached youths and young adults in Marion County, Indianapolis. BGCC conducted interviews with 24 service providers and surveyed 35 young people (Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc. & Casey Family Programs, 2002). Eighty percent of all the respondents to the Casey/BGCC survey identified affordable housing as a need; 28% identified affordable housing as the most important need.

Housing options for transitioning young people may not be abundant, but nonetheless, there are options available. Housing options for Indiana foster care youths include accessing the Family Unification Program (FUP), Chafee room and board funds, scattered site apartment settings offered by independent living service providers, and host homes fundable through Chafee. FUP and host homes are described below. Chafee room and board funds are available for young people who age out of foster care on or after their eighteenth birthday, up to the age of 21. Room and board expenses for eligible Indiana youths include rent payments, deposits (i.e., apartment or house rental deposits, utility deposits), utilities, dormitory housing (including food if part of the structure of dormitory expenses). Indiana currently has set a lifetime cap of \$3,000 in federal Chafee funds (plus \$750 in matching funds) for room and board assistance to be provided as needed and established in the youth's independent living case plan. All young people who access this service are required to participate in an independent living plan that includes a full time schedule of work or school.

It is notable that 44.3% of the young people surveyed in the SSRC's *Indiana Independent Living Survey of Foster Youths* reported that they were not aware of housing options available upon emancipation. Respondents who thought that they were aware of possible housing options indicated that family case managers (37.5%) and independent living program staff (25.7%) were their key sources of information regarding housing options. As noted in the previous section, the majority of young people, regardless of age, did not know where they would live after emancipation. To ascertain whether or not there was support to explore further development of Indiana's host home policy, respondents were asked if they would like to stay with their foster parents after emancipation or aging out, if that were possible. If they indicated that they would like to stay with their foster parents, respondents were asked how long they wanted to stay. Almost three-fourths (74% of those surveyed) stated that they would stay with their foster parents, if possible. On average, they wanted to stay 2.06 years. "Host homes provide an option in which a young adult rents a room in a family or single adult's home, sharing basic facilities and agreeing to base rules, while largely being responsible for his/her own life" (Kroner, p. 39, 1999).

⁹ In reviewing Indiana Housing Authorities across the state (approximately 60) in November of 2003, the SSRC found that the average waiting list for Section 8 was one year and four months.

Regarding the need for additional transitional housing options and the ability for transitioning young people to affordable housing, one avenue is beginning to be explored with the Indiana Housing Finance Authority. Through efforts undertaken by SSRC staff, members of the Independent Living Steering Committee and allied agency representatives, the Consolidated Plan Coordinating Committee agreed in 2003 to include young people (particularly those discharged from the foster care system) as a special needs population for Consolidated Planning. The Coordinating Committee will conduct research to understand and address this population's housing and community development needs. According to written correspondence by the Indiana Housing Finance Authority, this research to address the housing needs of young people transitioning from the foster care system will occur with the FY 2004 Consolidated Plan Update.

Another option for housing is the Family Unification Program (FUP), a HUD Housing Choice Voucher Program, in which local housing authorities partner with local child welfare agencies to apply for certificates from HUD. FUP was originally designed to provide rental subsidies to families with children who have been placed, or are at risk of placement, in foster care, primarily because the family lacks adequate housing. Congress passed legislation making foster youths who are leaving care eligible for housing assistance under the Family Unification Program. Specifically, young people ages 18-21 who have left foster care at age 16 or older are eligible for the housing vouchers. Certifying eligibility and referrals for the FUP program rests with the local Office of Family and Children (CWLA, n.d.). Given that there are two populations competing for the same voucher, families at risk of having their children removed are often at the top of the priority list, therefore, vouchers usually are not available for those young people aging out of foster care. As of 2002, the following areas of Indiana had FUP vouchers. Table 20 comes directly from Holewinski and Torrico (2002).

Table 20
Areas with FUP Vouchers

FUP Sites	1997	1998	1999a	1999b	2000	2001
Indiana DHS	100					
Indiana FSS			100			
Bloomington			50			
Fort Wayne			25		100	
Indianapolis	100					
Kokomo				25		
New Albany					50	

Shown in the table above are the locations and years of FUP voucher issuances. For example, Indiana DHS was issued 100 vouchers in 1997. It is the authors' understanding that that agency still had 100 vouchers at the time of this report, and had not received any new vouchers since 1997. During 1999, HUD issued vouchers on two different occasions (1999a and 1999b).

Another noted difference with the FUP vouchers pertaining to youth aging out of foster care is that they are time limited. Youth are only able to have the voucher for 18 months, and

during that time they are also provided with aftercare services through the referring agency (local office of the Division of Family and Children). In summary, the youth component to the Family Unification Program is designed to link together a continuum of housing and services for youth aging out of the foster care system (Holewinski & Torrico, 2002). Continued work with local housing authorities should be pursued to better educate those on the needs of transitioning and homeless youth.

Finally, along with planning youths' housing options, education for young people regarding how to be a tenant and lease holder is central to stabilizing housing and to avoid eviction, which could haunt them for several years by affecting their credit reports. The SSRC's Indiana foster care survey discovered that the majority (72.2%) of young people thought they knew the responsibilities that come with renting a home or apartment, but that over one-fourth (27.8%) did not. Most (54.8%) reported that they did not understand what a rental lease was. Further, mean proficiency ratings, based on youths' self-reports, revealed that the foster care youths gave themselves relatively low marks for knowing how to *develop* a monthly budget and knowing how to *follow* a monthly budget.

Indiana youths who participated in SSRC focus groups during the summer of 2002 expressed interest in better housing options when they left care. They felt they would need furnished housing and possibly roommates to share the bills. They proposed the idea of housing just for this (transitioning youth) population, perhaps "even like secure housing provided for seniors".

Recommendations:

- **"In 2002, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Indiana was \$568.00 per month, or 68.9% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the federal minimum wage" (CWLA, 2003). Given the cost of housing, it is important that 'budgeting' becomes an essential part of independent living programming and services.**
- **Participate and cooperate fully with the Consolidated Plan Coordinating Committee as they begin research for the FY 2004 update.**
- **Continue statewide representation at the annual Consolidated Plan meetings.**
- **Educate local housing authorities and local offices of the Division of Family and Children about foster youths being an eligible recipient of a FUP voucher.**
- **Encourage those communities that have FUP vouchers to designate a certain number for those young people aging out of foster care.**
- **Support and encourage state agencies and local housing authorities to apply to HUD for FUP vouchers.**
- **Encourage service providers to apply for federal funds to operate Transitional Living Programs.**
- **Increase the number of service providers that provide Chafee room and board services, especially in the rural areas of the state.**
- **Survey service providers regarding programming obstacles they face when helping a youth transition into housing arrangements.**

Education

Frequent placement changes often result in different school settings for those in foster care; and the transfer of paperwork and other necessary steps may take anywhere from two weeks to one month to complete. Academic performance may suffer as acclimating to a new school forces a youth to adjust to new teachers, peers, and curricula.

Change is difficult at best, and the trail of paperwork that needs to follow a youth from placement to placement is not always smooth and continuous. Changes in schools make it increasingly challenging for the youth to receive timely assessments, uninterrupted educational services, and most importantly, accurate and complete school histories (Hann, 2003). Further, research suggests (e.g., Hann, 2003) that it may take children up to six months to recover academically from changing schools.

Coordinating educational services for young people in foster care is one of the most important practices for an independent living program. These young people are more likely than others to have dropped out of school, less likely to have received a high school diploma or a GED and less likely to participate in post-secondary education (Sheehy, Oldham and Zanghi, 2000). Furthermore, that study of approximately 100 independent living and transitional programs suggested the following for programs that are aimed at helping young people:

- access necessary educational resources (e.g. educational advocate)
- increase literacy
- select career field or sectors of interest
- begin an educational/vocational program, and/or
- complete an educational/vocational program

In the SSRC's *Indiana Independent Living Survey of Foster Youths*, in addition to housing related concerns, fears of being alone, and desire for financial independence, a vast majority of young people (83.1%) reported that they would need assistance with education after high school, such as college or vocational training. Almost three-fourths said that they needed help with tuition assistance for higher education (73.3%). "Foster youth are usually eligible for aid from a variety of public and private sources, but they need help getting them" (Emerson and Lovitt, p. 6, 2003). These findings support such initiatives as the new federal Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV), recently authorized through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001, which added a sixth provision to the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

The ETV program provides eligible youth with up to \$5,000 a year for financial assistance for post-secondary and vocational training programs, not to exceed the cost of attendance. Eligible youths are those who meet the state's Chafee program target population and those adopted after attaining age 16 from foster care. Those youths participating in the ETV program on their 21st birthday may continue until they turn 23 years old, as long as they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program and are making satisfactory

progress toward completion. ETV funds can be used for tuition, tutoring, transportation, books, supplies, uniforms, tools, computer, printer, calculators, childcare and housing. Funding is currently available through September 30, 2004, with continuation after that subject to reauthorization.

When asked about their knowledge of selected independent living skills, the majority (57.1%) of the young people responding to the *Indiana Independent Living Survey of Foster Youths* reported that they did not know how to apply for financial aid. Responses did not vary significantly between young people in foster home settings and those in group homes or child caring institutions, or by other respondent characteristics including age.

Indiana offers one of the nation's top rated state financial assistance programs, through the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI). SSACI accomplishes its mission with grant and scholarship programs for full-time and part-time college students, early intervention programs for Twenty-first Century Scholars, research to better understand the needs of Indiana students and families, and technology to make the delivery of awards as simple as possible for students and colleges (SSACI, 2003). The survey discussed in this report yields information that would be of great benefit to SSACI in terms of collaborating outreach efforts. It is imperative that foster care youths are given every opportunity available to them to achieve academically. Often times the first step in this process is to become familiar with the financial aid process.

Recommendations:

- **Encourage eligible young people to participate in the Education and Training Voucher Program by enhancing outreach efforts and increasing referrals from local offices of the Division of Family Children and service providers.**
- **Strengthen collaborations with other scholarship programs in Indiana, such as the Nina Pulliam Scholarship foundation, Twenty-first Century Scholars, and the Upward Bound program.**
- **Develop recruitment efforts and support programs at colleges/universities to assist foster youths in obtaining post-secondary education/training.**
- **Strengthen relationships with high school guidance counselors, financial aid offices and independent living program coordinators to help young people learn how to access funds for college and vocational training programs and to access support services.**
- **Encourage and support young people attending annual events such as College Goal Sunday, which will help young people complete financial aid forms.**
- **Support young people in completion of their high school diplomas or pursuing GEDs by offering supportive services such as tutoring, mentoring, and career development opportunities.**

Medicaid

With the passing of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, Congress permitted states to extend Medicaid to all young people who are in care on their 18th birthday until they reach age 21. At the time of this report, thirteen states have been able to pass some type of version of the Chafee Medicaid option. Eight states, Arizona, California, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Texas, Mississippi, Wyoming, and South Carolina, have enacted a specific Medicaid option for former foster youths. These states are in addition to the few states, such as Kansas and Louisiana, which have extended Medicaid to former foster youths participating in independent living programs, Alaska and North Dakota, which have extended Medicaid to all young people under age 21 who met income guidelines, and Nebraska which has extended Medicaid to former wards pursuing post-secondary education. Although each state's law varies slightly, most have made any young person in care on his or her 18th birthday eligible for Medicaid until he or she reaches age 21. Oklahoma's law, however, is slightly more restrictive, requiring that the youth be in care on his or her 18th birthday and have been in foster care nine of 24 months after his or her 16th birthday. Texas specifies that Medicaid is available to independent former foster youth who do not have other health insurance and whose income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (Eilertson, 2002).

To date, Indiana has not passed an option to create a Medicaid program for those young people aging out of the foster care system. Although they typically are covered by Medicaid while they are in the State's care, young people who leave care in their teen years often are unprepared to navigate the health care system and pay for the medical/health care services or insurance coverage they need. In 2002, the Indiana young people who participated in the SSRC's independent living focus groups reported that learning how to access medical care, pay for medical care, and obtain medication were critical issues related to aging out of foster care. A youth shockingly stated that "current health insurance is terminated at age 19, continued eligibility is based on pregnancy, [I] didn't want to become pregnant just to continue health coverage." Others stated that they would need coverage for more non-emergency things, e.g., braces, glasses, better prescription coverage (Miller et al., 2002).

In response to the dire straits young people may find themselves in medically upon exiting foster care, serious consideration needs to be given to extending the Medicaid option to former foster care wards. Although a majority of the young people participating in the *Indiana Independent Living Survey of Foster Youths* said that they knew how their health care was paid for (92% said Medicaid or Hoosier Healthwise), most will be left without this coverage upon exiting the foster care system. Chafee allows states to create a Medicaid option for those foster care youths aging out at 18, up to the age of 21. According to the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, a recent and highly technical change was made so that states can expand Medicaid to former foster youths through a broader option that extends eligibility to a larger group of 19- and 20-year-olds. "Although states could elect to cover older youths aged 19 and 20, a state could not set income eligibility limits for these individuals higher than 133 1/3 percent of the most generous welfare payment the state paid prior to enactment of the welfare law. Regulations issued in May 2001, provide states a way to bypass this very low-income limit for 19- and 20 year old youths. States are given flexibility under the regulations in how they count income for young people,

which effectively permits states to raise the income eligibility level to any level they elect” (Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and Uninsured, 2003).

Recommendations:

- **Reconvene the Indiana Independent Living Initiative Steering Committee’s Medicaid Subcommittee to explore with the Office of Medicaid options that may be available in order to provide Medicaid to those young people aging out of foster care.**
- **Prior to creation of a Medicaid option, transition plans should begin to address the potential of lack of medical coverage upon emancipation and plan accordingly.**
- **Explore possible partnerships with private insurance companies in an effort to provide medical coverage to aging-out young people at an affordable cost.**
- **Educate young people on the importance of maintaining good health care, avoiding high risk behaviors, maintaining prescription medication, and stress the importance of health care coverage when job seeking.**
- **Encourage and/or assist Indiana’s Youth Advisory Boards to take an active role and have a voice in expressing the need for medical coverage to Indiana lawmakers and advocates.**

Proficiency with Independent Living Tasks

In response to assisting with achieving independence, obtaining a driver’s license is crucial to employment, education and autonomy. Almost nine out of every ten (88.1%) Indiana young people surveyed who were 16 years of age and older reported that they did not have a driver’s license. The reasons most often given were that they were not able to receive consent (23.1%) or that they were not able to have a driver’s license where they were currently placed (19.2%). How can we expect young people to be self-sufficient, if they are not given the appropriate means to do so? Learning how to drive and obtaining a license and insurance are paramount to stable employment and encourage self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, there are numerous roadblocks for foster youths in obtaining a driver’s license and insurance.

Some of the obstacles include the cost of driver’s education courses, which can cost upwards of \$300.00, the cost of insurance and, most importantly, the ability to obtain consent. During the past ten years, driver’s education classes have been dropped by most high schools due to budgetary constraints. Young people who participate in a driver’s education course can save on insurance premiums, a cost that can be quite burdensome for many foster youths. Safety and education are the overriding factors in allowing youth to participate in formal driver’s training. Enabling young people to obtain their driver’s licenses in a timely fashion would ultimately result in an increased chance of obtaining and maintaining employment opportunities, especially for those in rural areas.

Concerning State policy:

Indiana statutes do not permit COFC [County Offices of the Division of Family and Children] employees to sign an authorization for a ward to take driver's training or obtain a driver's license....However, the child's legal parent or legal guardian may wish to sign such authorization and assume liability. If this is not feasible, the Central Office of the Division of Family and Children (DFC) supports, in principle, the willingness of foster parents to authorize a ward to take driver education and obtain a driver's license....Enabling a foster child to accomplish this goal at the time in a child's life when it is most important as a rite of passage promotes the development of a family environment. However, the foster family needs to understand that it is the family that must assume full responsibility both for authorizing the child to receive driver education and for providing full insurance coverage for the child. (Child Welfare Policy Manual, 404.52/Driver's Training).

Not all foster parents or guardians are in a financial position to (or desire to) assume such responsibility/liability for wards, therefore, creating a dilemma for those young people who want to obtain a driver's license and are not able to do so, at no fault of their own.

SSRC-led focus groups with Indiana young people in out of home care in 2002 further underscored these issues. When asked to identify some of the major roadblocks that interfered with independent living goals, young people noted that having a driver's license and no car was a roadblock, because they wanted to depend on themselves. Others reported just the inability to obtain a driver's license was a major barrier (Miller et al., 2002).

Based on self-reported proficiency levels, other independent living tasks that Indiana foster care youths reported needing help with included following and developing a monthly budget, developing a resume, and searching and interviewing for a job. Most of these skills fall within the employment arena, which was discussed previously. Further, a majority of the youths reported that they did not understand the following: how to obtain and file income tax forms (74.3% and 58.1% did not know, respectively), how to apply for financial aid (57.1%), how to understand a rental lease (54.8%), and how to apply for or obtain community services, such as food stamps, WIC or Medicaid (53.1%). It is important to note that by far the largest proportion of respondents (over forty percent) said their foster parent/guardian was the person(s) who taught them the majority of independent living skills to date. This is consistent with information found by an Independent Living Advisory Committee in Wisconsin, where they found "The most common source of independent living skills training reported by foster youths is a foster parent" (Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services Division of Children and Family Services, 2000). It is encouraging to note that such a large percentage of young people reported that they had learned independent living skills from their foster parent(s) or guardians.

The SSRC *Independent Living Survey of Foster Youths* yielded significant and interesting results with regard to independent living skills and placement settings. For example, a

significantly greater proportion of young people residing in child caring institutions than those in foster homes or group homes reported not knowing how to obtain a copy of their Social Security card. While most of those in foster homes said they were aware of procedures to open a checking account, the majority in group homes and child caring institutions were not. Strengthening independent living programming efforts regarding the instruction of hard skills such as obtaining essential documents and financial management would assist with increasing the youths' skill sets in those areas. Conversely, youth living in child caring institutions and group homes gave themselves higher proficiency ratings in washing clothes than did those in foster homes. This shows that there is a relationship between placement setting and learning certain independent living skills; and it becomes the challenge and task of placing agencies to be creative in teaching those skill sets.

Not surprisingly, as previously stated in the report, no one surveyed in group homes or child caring institutions said that they had a driver's license. Due to the restrictiveness of these settings, participation in driver's education may not always be appropriate. The question then becomes how does a young person placed in a more restrictive environment than a foster home learn basic driver education skills, participate in a formal driver's education curriculum and training program, and eventually obtain a driver's license? The issue of "consent" is a large obstacle, but how would a young person become prepared to be more autonomous, more independent, when s/he is unable to participate in age-appropriate life skills training? Young people who do not participate in driver's training will lack these skills upon discharge; therefore employment opportunities will become more difficult. Balancing the needs of the young person, who may require the benefits of a restrictive setting, presents unique challenges when looking at certain aspects of independent living.

Overall, respondents from the three different placement settings reported a low level of proficiency with regard to developing a budget; and the young people did not really differ in terms of their reported ability to follow a monthly budget: all subgroups thought they were not very good at it. Young people in foster homes reported more proficiency than those placed in group homes or child caring institutions at being able to develop a resume. There were significant differences between the responses of young people placed in child caring institutions and those in group homes or foster homes with regard to service needs. For example, those placed in child caring institutions were more likely than others to say that they needed help finding and paying for housing, Medicaid coverage, making a budget, employment counseling, transportation assistance, and GED classes. There could be many reasons for this. It is also important to note that a greater proportion of those placed in child caring institutions or group homes than in foster homes said they would go to live with their biological parents after emancipation. Their permanency goals may be different from those who are placed in foster care and likely to remain there until their 18th birthday. Therefore, their goals in the case plan as well as the agency's treatment plan may focus more on soft skill development than hard skills.

Recommendations:

- **Research other states' efforts in passing legislation to allow foster youths the ability to obtain affordable insurance and obtain a driver's license (e.g. Kansas).**
- **Make available Chafee funds to assist with paying for driver's education training for those foster parents who are willing to give consent.**
- **Enhance foster parent training through IFSSA and IFCAA (Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association) to further assist foster parents in learning how to teach independent living skills to foster youths residing in their home.**
- **Through collaborative efforts with organizations such as IARCCA (An Association of Children & Family Services), provide on-going staff training for group homes and child caring institutions to further enhance independent living skills programming.**

Informing Young People of Services Available after Emancipation

One of the issues that faces child welfare professionals and independent living service providers, at the state and local level, is how to locate and disseminate information to young people once they leave the foster care system. This challenge is reflected in the publication *Title IV-E Independent Living Programs: A Decade in Review*, where it was noted that there is difficulty tracking young people to collect outcome data following discharge (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, 1999). With the 1999 Chafee legislation, many more options became available to young people who are aging out or have already left the foster care system than previously. Furthermore, there has been other legislation that can positively impact this population, such as that establishing the Education and Training Voucher Program.

Given the challenge of outreach and informing young people of programs for which they might be eligible, Indiana young people surveyed were asked "Once you leave foster care, how would you like to get information about services and programs that are available for you?" The top responses were by mail (82.1%), telephone (62.9%), foster parent/guardian (61.7%), a family member (60.8%), and family case manager (60.4%).

The responses further underscore the importance of training foster parents, various child welfare professionals and agencies working with young people on current programs and when new programs and opportunities become available. Given the high rate of transient behavior post discharge, reaching young people by mail and telephone will most likely be very difficult. Until permanency plans for transitioning young people are strengthened in terms of stable and consistent housing, and establishing essential connections with adults, locating young people by mail or telephone will pose a challenge. Once a youth leaves foster care and is subsequently discharged from an independent living program, child caring institution and/or group home, it is often the place of discharge that they reach out to for support and help later. This is especially relevant in light of surveyed respondents reporting that they had had an average of 2.81 family case managers since placement into the foster care system. Oftentimes it is the service provider that remains the constant in their lives, at

least for the short term. A Wisconsin study suggested that the child welfare system should better utilize foster parents, other caregivers and social workers as essential resources and primary trainers for all children and young people in out-of-home care (Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services Division of Children and Family Services, 2000). As indicated in the *Indiana Independent Living Survey of Foster Youths*, young people report that both family case managers and foster parents are highly influential in terms of emotional support and learning life skills.

In 2002, youths participating in SSRC-led focus groups stated that they needed to learn how to identify and access available services. These young people in out of home care identified a number of methods by which child welfare professionals could notify them of available services after they had emancipated from the system, including through family members, relatives, previous caseworkers, public service announcements, newspapers, radio, foster parent trainings, conferences, mailings, and having information readily available at Housing Authorities, WorkOne sites, and other agencies (Miller et al., 2002).

Recommendations:

- **Develop a tracking system to track young people once they emancipate from the foster care system at 18 or older.**
- **Make information on youths' self-identified list of contact people who will always know their whereabouts easily accessible electronically for purposes of expediting getting information to young people after they emancipate. Although young people are currently asked upon discharge to list three people that will always know their whereabouts, this information is not now easily accessible electronically.**
- **Create a statewide website that foster youth can access to find out about what services are available to them.**
- **Continue printing and distributing "Resource Cards" to young people upon discharge, with important telephone numbers and agencies to contact if they need help in certain areas.**
- **Continually update training for new OFC family case managers on available resources and provide ongoing training for seasoned family case managers.**
- **Develop a training component or curriculum for foster parents that would highlight events and opportunities that have been created within the past year for foster youth and make this available on an ongoing basis.**
- **Engage Youth Advisory Board members and other foster youths in developing a Foster Care/Independent Living Handbook, created by and for foster youth, regarding their rights and responsibilities.**
- **Train high school guidance counselors regarding the Education and Training Voucher Program as well as on other resources that are available for young people leaving the foster care system.**
- **Establish a toll-free telephone number for young people in foster care, whereby they can access information on resources that are available to them, and develop an awareness/outreach campaign to publicize the number.**

- **Work with representatives of the Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association to create a link on their website to that of the Indiana Independent Living Initiative (www.bsu.edu/ssrc/il).**
- **Create community handbooks or directories of services that would benefit young people aging out of care by serving as resource guides.**
- **Update the Foster Parent Handbook’s Independent Living section.**

The Stuart Foundation noted in a report that the concept of permanency is as equally important as teaching youth independent living skills. Furthermore, the report also illustrated that “permanency is a state of mind, not a placement, permanency is having a feeling that you are connected, that there is someone in the middle of the night who will answer your call.” The Stuart Foundation, building on the work of the 1999 Think Tank at the National Resource Center for Youth Services (NRCYS), further concluded that having safety nets and lifelines is essential in assisting youth with a smoother transition to self-sufficiency (Stuart Foundation, 2002). The concept of emotional support was further outlined in a set of core principles developed by a collaborative effort between NRCYS and the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. Four core principles were identified that are fundamental in order for adolescent transitional living programs to be successful. The principles are youth development, collaboration, cultural competence, and permanent connection (Sheehy, Oldham, Zanghi, Ansell, Correia, Copeland, 2000). Building upon these core principles can only strengthen independent living programming efforts and subsequently enhance service delivery to transitioning youth.

In summary, there are many more tools available today to assist service providers in strengthening services for the young people they serve. There are countless websites and resources available, many of which are accessible at no cost. Many of these resources offer guidance, principles and foundations to build and/or strengthen independent living services. For example, Casey Family Programs developed a list of guiding principles to better enhance and reinforce transition services for young people.

1. Youth’s Vision for Success
 2. Self Determination
 3. Preparation for Transitions Begins Early
 4. Flexibility and Adaptability to Local Communities
 5. Strength, Resiliency and Positive Youth Development Focus
 6. Interdependency
 7. Cultural, Familial, and Community Values
 8. Evaluations with Measurable Outcomes is Essential
 9. Working Together to Integrate Systems
 10. Recognition and Acknowledgement of Birth Family and Significant Relationships
 11. Skills Development and Competency
- (Casey Family Programs, 2001)

Incorporating these guiding principles would further strengthen efforts to address findings highlighted in the *Indiana Independent Living Survey of Foster Youths*, such as those related to employment, education, housing, participation in case planning process, and overall

transitional services. Also, in an attempt to better prepare for implementation of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), which closely correlates with above mentioned guiding principles, Indiana has chosen to begin an Outcome Measures Report (OMR). The Outcome Measures Project is not only an attempt to prepare for NYTD but to begin asking service providers to report on measurable outcomes and begin a longitudinal assessment of service delivery, programmatic strengths and challenges, and improvement or lack thereof in youths' independent living skill sets. Current NYTD plans are for data on youths' characteristics and services data to be extracted from the case record and reported every six months for young people in care who are age 14 and over. Services data also will be reported every six months for young people who are out of care and receiving services. Outcome data will be collected (1) at discharge for all in care age 16 and over, through a discharge interview, and (2) on a sample of young people out of care at ages 19 and 21 (NILA News, 2002).

Results found from the SSRC's survey of Indiana young people in foster care closely parallel research results found in a study of young people exiting foster care in the state of Idaho. The research results from the Idaho study indicated that independent living services and supports are needed to empower, support, and launch young people into truly living "independently" without continued social service supports (Christenson, n.d.). Evidence from the study supported the need for program change and recognition of the social work community to empower young people through these programming efforts. Furthermore, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) prioritizes the positive development of youth and young adults in our country, with a special emphasis on those involved in the child welfare system. The Youth Service Department developed principles to guide CWLA's work in promoting positive development:

- Young people must have the opportunities for full participation in decisions that affect their lives and supports that facilitate meaningful involvement. The participation is a cornerstone of healthy, positive development.
- All young people have inherent strengths and potential, regardless of their situations.
- CWLA's focus is on promoting a youth's development, rather than identifying and fixing his or her problems and challenges (CWLA, Fact Sheet, 2003).

Most importantly, we need to begin to maximize the use of Chafee dollars by channeling the funds into areas of program development that have been identified by the young people. Part of the challenge of maximizing the funds is having an accurate count of how many Indiana young people are receiving independent living services, especially in child caring institutions in which independent living services are offered through a per diem and, therefore, are not counted as receiving "Chafee" independent living services.

In conclusion, until livable wages, affordable housing, affordable health care, educational support (including secondary as well as post-secondary education and training), and mentoring are addressed as systemic issues for transitioning young people, earlier foster care statistics on these youths will continue to be replicated. Results from the SSRC's survey of 247 foster care youths augment results found by the SSRC when it held a series of focus

groups with 31 Indiana young people in foster care during the summer of 2002 (Miller et al., 2002). During the focus groups, young people identified needed services such as medical coverage, transitional housing, and skill building, including “people” skills to help build and maintain relationships. They also identified major roadblocks that had interfered with independent living goals, such as transportation, low wages, lack of money, lack of encouragement, empowerment or support, fear and insecurity, and lack of input into their transition plans. The survey discussed in this report provided an opportunity to delve further into these preliminary focus group findings with a statewide survey sample of young people 14-18 years of age in the foster care system. The authors sincerely hope that survey results and recommendations will assist the efforts of those working to improve independent living services on behalf of young people who are or have been in foster care.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**2002 INDIANA INDEPENDENT LIVING INITIATIVE SURVEY
OF FOSTER YOUTH**

Introduction:

Hello, my name is [YOUR NAME]. I'm calling from the Social Science Research Center at Ball State University. We have been asked by the Division of Family and Children to contact youth in order to gain their input on the services they need. May I speak with [YOUTH'S NAME]?

- YES
- NO

IF YES, GO TO **MAIN INTRODUCITON**
IF NO, GO TO **REFUSAL**

Refusal:

We really need the input concerning your experience with out-of-home care. The information that you provide will help us in finding better ways to help youth in out-of-home care.

TRY TO GET THE RESPONDENT TO INTERVIEW NOW BY USING THE "POSSIBLE ANSWERS TO REASONS FOR REFUSAL" SHEET, OR AGREE TO A CALL-BACK.

Main Introduction:

Hello, my name is [YOUR FULL NAME]. I'm calling from the Social Science Research Center at Ball State University. We have been asked by the division of family and children to contact youth in order to gain their input on the services they need. If you choose to complete this interview, you will receive, by mail, an L.L. Bean Backpack. You will also be entered into a drawing for 1 of 5 \$100.00 gift certificates to Wal-Mart. The purpose of this survey is to help us understand how to best prepare young people to gain the skills they need to live on their own. Your participation in this telephone survey will assist a statewide effort to develop programs that will help older teens who are about to leave the foster care system. I want to assure you that your answers will be kept confidential. Your answers to any of the questions are completely voluntary. Do you wish to participate?

- YES
- NO

IF YES, PROCEED TO **QUESTION INTRO**
IF NO, GO BACK TO **REFUSAL**

Question Intro:

Please respond to each of the questions the best that you can. We are just interested in your experiences and opinions; please remember that there are no right or wrong answers as you respond to each item.

PROCEED ON WITH 'AGE'

Age:

How old were you on your last birthday?

RECORD 999 IN THE BLANK IF THE RESPONDENT WISHES NOT TO ANSWER.

IF THE RESPONDENT IS 14 OR 15 YEARS OF AGE, GO TO **RESIDENT**.

IF THE RESPONDENT IS 16 OR OLDER, GO TO **LICENSE**.

IF THE RESPONDENT IS UNDER THE AGE OF 14, GO TO **TERM**

→ **Term:**

For this survey, we have to interview youth 14 years of age or older. I apologize for this inconvenience, and thank you for your time.

HANG UP THE PHONE

→ **License:**

Do you have a driver's license?

YES

NO

IF YES, GO TO **RESIDENT**

IF NO, GO TO **YNODRVE**

→ **Ynodrive:**

Why do you not have your driver's license?

IF NO RESPONSE, ENTER 999 IN THE ABOVE BLANK.

→ **Resident:**

Do you currently live:

In town (IN THE CITY OR A SUBURBAN AREA), or

In a rural area (OUT IN THE COUNTRY)

NO RESPONSE

Livsit:

What is your current living situation? Are you in:

Foster care with a relative

Foster care with someone other than a relative

Group home

Residential treatment facility

Or something else (Explain: _____)

NO RESPONSE

IF IN FOSTER CARE, GO TO **STAY**

IF IN ANY OTHER CARE, GO TO **SUMWORK**

→ **Stay:**

Would you stay with your foster parents after emancipation or aging out if it were possible?

- YES
- NO

IF YES, GO TO **YSTAY**

IF NO, GO TO **YNOSTAY**

→ **Ystay:**

How much longer after emancipation or aging out would you want to stay with your foster parents?

RECORD THE RESPONDENT'S ANSWER IN THE SPACE PROVIDED, WHERE THE FORMAT IS [NUMBER OF YEARS . NUMBER OF MONTHS] AND

- .1 = 1 MONTH
- .2 = 2 MONTHS
- .3 = 3 MONTHS
- .4 = 4 MONTHS
- .5 = 5 MONTHS
- .6 = 6 MONTHS
- .7 = 7 MONTHS
- .8 = 8 MONTHS
- .9 = 9 MONTHS
- .10 = 10 MONTHS
- .11 = 11 MONTHS

→ **Ynostay:**

If you feel comfortable in doing so, would you share the reason(s) why you would not stay with your foster parents?

→ **Sumwork:**

Did you have a job this past summer?

- YES
- NO

IF YES, GO TO **WHATJOB**

IF NO, GO TO **WRKSTAT**

→ **Whatjob:**

What was your job? **PROBE AS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO GET JOB DESCRIPTION AND/OR TITLE**

Wrkstat:

Are you currently working?

YES

NO

IF YES, GO TO **TITLE**

IF NO, GO TO **HLTHCARE**

Title:

What is your job? **PROBE AS NECESSARY TO GET JOB DESCRIPTION AND/OR TITLE. IF SAME AS SUMMER JOB, ENTER 888.**

Wrkhour:

How many hours per week do you work?

Hlthcare:

Do you know how your healthcare is paid for?

YES

NO

IF YES, GO TO **INSTYPE**

IF NO, GO TO **EDSTAT**

Instype:

How is it paid for?

INSURANCE IS PAID FOR BY YOUTH'S EMPLOYER

MEDICAID

HOOSIER HEALTHWISE

GUARDIAN HAS INSURANCE THROUGH A JOB

GUARDIAN PAYS FOR ANY MEDICAL NEEDS THE YOUTH HAS

THE YOUTH PERSONALLY PAYS FOR IT

NO HEALTH CARE EXPENSES

DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Edstat:

Which of the following best describes your educational setting?

Currently in school

Working on obtaining a GED

High school graduate

GED

None of the above

IF "HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE" OR "GED", GO TO **KID**

IF "CURRENTLY IN SCHOOL", GO TO **GRADE**

→ **Grade:**

What grade are you currently in?

→ **Lastgrad:**

What was the last grade in school you completed?

→ **Kid:**

Do you have any children?

YES

NO

IF YES, GO TO **KIDINTRO**

IF NO, GO TO **HOWOLD**

→ **Kidintro:**

For the following questions, we will be asking about your children.

Kidno:

How many children do you have?

Kidlive:

Do all of your children live with you?

YES

NO

IF YES, GO TO **HOWOLD**

IF NO, GO TO **NOKID**

→ **Nokid:**

How many of your children do not live with you?

Kidres:

Where do these children live?

LIVING WITH THEIR OTHER PARENT

LIVING WITH THEIR GRADPARENTS

LIVING WITH OTHER RELATIVES

LIVING IN FOSTER CARE

OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN) _____

→ **Howold:**

How old were you when you first entered out-of-home care? These include foster homes, group homes, or residential treatment facilities.

Howlong:

How long have you been in out-of-home care?

Placmnt:

How many different out-of-home placements have you had in your lifetime?

Cmnum:

How many different family case managers (from the Division of Family and Children), have you had during your time in out-of-home care?

Empsvcs:

How many times in the past six months did you use employment services such as WorkOne?

IF "NONE" OR "0", GO TO **DIFHOUS**

Hrdempl:

How did you find out about employment services available to you?

- FOSTER PARENT/GUARDIAN
- DFC CASE MANAGER
- COUNSELOR/THERAPIST
- PARENTS
- OTHER RELATIVES
- FRIENDS
- BOY/GIRLFRIEND
- TEACHERS AT SCHOOL
- SCHOOL COUNSELOR
- STAFF OF AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
- INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM STAFF
- RELIGIOUS LEADER
- THE PHONE BOOK (YELLOW PAGES)
- NO ONE
- OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN) _____

→ **Difhous:**

Are you aware of housing options that are available to you when you age out of care?

- YES
- NO

IF "NO", GO TO **LIVWHER**

Hssvfin:

How did you find out about housing options available to you?

- FOSTER PARENT/GUARDIAN
- DFC CASE MANAGER
- COUNSELOR/THERAPIST
- PARENTS
- OTHER RELATIVES
- FRIENDS
- BOY/GIRLFRIEND
- TEACHERS AT SCHOOL
- SCHOOL COUNSELOR
- STAFF OF AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
- INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM STAFF
- RELIGIOUS LEADER
- THE PHONE BOOK (YELLOW PAGES)
- NO ONE
- OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN) _____

Livwher:

Do you know where you are going to live when your wardship ends?

- YES
 - NO
- IF "NO", GO TO ADINTRO

Livwher2:

Who do you plan to live with?

- BIOLOGICAL PARENT
- BOY/GIRLFRIEND
- SPOUSE/PARTNER
- OTHER RELATIVE
- SELF
- OTHER _____

Adintro:

I am going to read a list of people to you. Please tell me which of the following that you feel you can go to for emotional support.

Fpgard:

A foster parent/guardian

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Casemn:

Your family case manager

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Prent:

Your biological parents

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Relativ:

Another relative

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Frnds:

Your friends

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Boygirl:

Your boy/girlfriend

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Teach:

Your teachers at school

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Guidens:

Your school counselor

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Aftscl:

How about the staff of an After School Program

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

ILstaff:

An independent living program staff

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Rellead:

A religious leader

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

None:

No one

- YES
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Lstoth:

Is there someone else that you feel you can go to that I haven't mentioned?

- YES (PLEASE EXPLAIN) _____
- NO
- NOT APPLICABLE

Obstacl:

What is the biggest obstacle you think you will face when you leave out-of-home care?

- HAVING A CAR
- HAVING A DRIVER'S LICENSE
- HAVING CAR INSURANCE
- HAVING A PLACE TO LIVE
- FINDING A JOB
- FINISHING SCHOOL
- HAVING HEALTH INSURANCE
- BEING ALONE
- HAVING MONEY
- OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN) _____
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Svcintro:

Now I am going to read you a list of services. Please tell me whether or not you currently need each service.

Fndhous:

Do you need help finding housing?

- YES
 NO
 DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Houspay:

Do you need help in paying for housing?

- YES
 NO
 DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Foodstmp:

Do you need food stamps?

- YES
 NO
 DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Medicad:

Medicaid

- YES
 NO
 DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Budget:

Help making a budget

- YES
 NO
 DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Budget2:

Help following a budget

- YES
 NO
 DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Emplcoun:

Employment counseling

- YES
 NO
 DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

GEDClas:

GED classes

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Psthsed:

Education after high school, such as college or vocational training

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Tuition:

Tuition assistance for higher education

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Chcar2:

Childcare

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Mhcouns:

Mental health counseling

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Addict:

Addictions counseling

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Trnspor:

Transportation assistance

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Skilint:

Please tell me how good you are at doing each of the following things:

Shop:

Shopping for groceries, would you say you are:

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Cook:

Cooking meals

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Clnhou:

Cleaning house

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Wash:

Washing clothes

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Usecpu:

Using a computer

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Devbud:

Developing a monthly budget

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Folbud:

Following a monthly budget

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Medatt:

Finding medical attention when needed

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Frncom:

Communicating with friends

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Famcom:

Communicating with family members

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Wrkcom:

Communicating at work with employers or supervisors

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Wrkcom2:

Communicating at work with co-workers

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Mngangr:

Managing anger

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Jobsrch:

Searching for a job

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Devres:

Developing a resume

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Jobint:

Interviewing for a job

- VERY GOOD AT IT
- JUST OK AT IT
- NOT VERY GOOD AT IT
- NEVER BEEN TAUGHT THIS
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Tauht:

Who would you say has taught you the majority of these skills? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

- FOSTER PARENT/GUARDIAN
- DFC CASE MANAGER
- COUNSELOR/THERAPIST
- PARENTS
- OTHER RELATIVES
- FRIENDS
- BOY/GIRLFRIEND
- TEACHERS AT SCHOOL
- SCHOOL COUNSELOR
- STAFF OF AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
- INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM STAFF
- RELIGIOUS LEADER
- THE PHONE BOOK (YELLOW PAGES)
- NO ONE
- OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN) _____

Infointr:

OK, we have a few more questions.

Fndplc:

Do you know how to find a place to live once you are out of foster care?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Drivlic:

Do you know how to get a driver's license?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Berthcert:

And do you know how to obtain a copy of your birth certificate?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Sscard:

Are you familiar with how to get a copy of your social security card?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Taxform:

Do you know how to obtain income tax forms?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Chkacc:

Are you familiar with how to open a checking account?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Rntleas:

Do you understand what a rental lease is?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Rntresp:

Are you familiar with the responsibilities of renting a house or apartment?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Commsvc:

Are you familiar with how you would apply for, or obtain, community services such as food stamps, WIC, or Medicaid?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Flouttx:

And do you understand how to properly file your income taxes (either by filling the forms out yourself, or getting someone to help you)?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Brthctrl:

Do you understand how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, such as Herpes or AIDS?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Jobnft:

Do you understand the different types of benefits that come with getting a job?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Edopp:

Are you aware of educational options after high school?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Finaid:

Do you know how to apply for financial aid for school?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Tauht2:

Who would you say has taught you the majority of these skills? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

- FOSTER PARENT/GUARDIAN
- DFC CASE MANAGER
- COUNSELOR/THERAPIST
- PARENTS
- OTHER RELATIVES
- FRIENDS
- BOY/GIRLFRIEND
- TEACHERS AT SCHOOL
- SCHOOL COUNSELOR
- STAFF OF AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
- INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM STAFF
- RELIGIOUS LEADER
- THE PHONE BOOK (YELLOW PAGES)
- NO ONE
- OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN) _____

Prepar:

How prepared do you feel you are to live independently once you have left placement?

- VERY PREPARED
- SOMEWHAT PREPARED
- NOT PREPARED AT ALL
- DON'T KNOW/NO RESPONSE

Helpfp:

What things do you think your foster parent(s) or caregiver(s) need to know more about to help you live independently?

Txplan:

Which of the following best describes your participation in you case plan and/or treatment plan with your case manager?

- Your case manager asks for your ideas, and also uses them
- Your case manager asks for your ideas, but then doesn't use them
- Your case manager asks for your ideas, but you do not share them
- Your case manager develops your plan without asking for your ideas
- NO RESPONSE

Getinfo:

Once you leave foster care, how would you like to get information about services and programs that are available for you? READ LIST SLOWLY; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

- MAIL
- PHONE CALL
- E-MAIL
- NEWSPAPER
- NEWSLETTER
- CASE MANAGER
- FOSTER PARENT
- FAMILY MEMBER
- FRIENDS
- CHURCH
- SOME OTHER WAY (please explain) _____
- NO RESPONSE

Race:

What race or ethnic group do you consider yourself?

(IF NECESSARY, "ARE YOU...")

- BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN (NOT HISPANIC)
- NATIVE AMERICAN/ALASKAN NATIVE
- HISPANIC
- ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER
- WHITE/CAUCASIAN (NON-HISPANIC)
- MULTIRACIAL
- OTHER
- NO RESPONSE

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME.

The participant is then asked to provide address. At this point the survey is completed.

APPENDIX B
COUNTIES FROM WHICH CONSENTS WERE RECEIVED
AND NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY COUNTY

COUNTIES FROM WHICH CONSENTS WERE RECEIVED

Allen	Wabash
Bartholomew	Warren
Benton	Washington
Blackford	Wayne
Boone	Wells
Cass	White
Clark	
Clinton	
Dearborn	
Decatur	
Dekalb	
Dubois	
Elkhart	
Fayette	
Floyd	
Gibson	
Greene	
Hendricks	
Howard	
Huntington	
Jay	
Jefferson	
Kosciusko	
Lagrange	
Lake	
Laporte	
Madison	
Marion	
Marshall	
Martin	
Miami	
Monroe	
Morgan	
Noble	
Owen	
Pike	
Porter	
Posey	
Pulaski	
Putnam	
Randolph	
Ripley	
St. Joseph	
Scott	
Spencer	
Sullivan	
Tippecanoe	
Vanderburgh	

Number of Respondents Interviewed By County of Wardship

County	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Allen	13	5.26%
Bartholomew	1	.40%
Blackford	4	1.62%
Cass	2	.81%
Clark	4	1.62%
Dearborn	5	2.02%
Decatur	2	.81%
Dubois	1	.40%
Elkhart	10	4.05%
Fayette	1	.40%
Gibson	1	.40%
Greene	3	1.21%
Hendricks	2	.81%
Huntington	1	.40%
Jay	1	.40%
Jefferson	4	1.62%
Kosciusko	6	2.43%
Lagrange	1	.40%
Lake	78	31.58%
Laporte	5	2.02%
Madison	10	4.05%
Marion	36	14.57%
Marshall	1	.40%
Miami	1	.40%
Monroe	3	1.21%
Morgan	1	.40%
Noble	1	.40%
Pike	1	.40%
Porter	3	1.21%
Randolph	2	.81%
Ripley	1	.40%
St. Joseph	7	2.83%
Sullivan	1	.40%
Tippecanoe	4	1.62%
Unknown	6	2.43%
Vanderburgh	11	4.45%
Wabash	4	1.62%
Washington	1	.40%
Wayne	2	.81%
Wells	3	1.21%
White	3	1.21%
Total	247	100.00%

APPENDIX C
TABLES OF INFERENCE STATISTICS

Interaction	Fisher's F Ratio	Significance	Means
Number of Placements x Race of Respondent	F (2,234) = 3.979	.020	White = 4.54 Black = 4.10 Other = 6.55
Reported Ability to Shop for Groceries x Sex of Respondent	F (1,240) = 4.679	.032	Male = 1.54 Female = 1.37
Reported Ability to Wash Clothes x Residential Setting	F (2,242) = 3.595	.029	Foster Care Home = 3.63 Group Home = 3.86 Child Caring Inst. = 3.88
Reported Ability to Develop a Budget x Residential Setting	F (2,236) = 3.587	.029	Foster Care Home = 2.59 Group Home = 2.62 Child Caring Inst. = 2.13
Reported Ability to Develop a Resume x Residential Setting	F (2,223) = 2.993	.052	Foster Care Home = 2.75 Group Home = 2.48 Child Caring Inst. = 2.28

Relationship	Pearson's Chi Square Coefficient	Significance
Reported Youth Residential Plans (Live With Biological Parent(s) or Not) and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 116) = 7.984^*$	.018
Number of Youth Reporting Having a Driver's License in the Various Residential Settings	$\chi^2 (2, N = 118) = 7.545^*$	.023
Reported Preparedness to Live Independently and Age of Respondent	$\chi^2 (2, N = 239) = 7.481$	.024
Reported Knowledge of Procedure to Obtain a Social Security Card and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 240) = 6.056$	.048
Reported Ability to Open a Checking Account and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 240) = 8.330$	.016
Reported Source of Emotional Support (Foster Parent/Guardian) and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 242) = 7.984$	.018
Reported Need For Assistance in Finding Housing and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 240) = 20.193$	.000
Reported Need for Food Stamps and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 235) = 12.375^*$	.002
Reported Need for Assistance in Paying for Housing and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 236) = 27.110$	.000
Reported Need for Medicaid and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 234) = 9.649$	.008
Reported Need for Assistance in Making a Budget and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 238) = 18.162$	.000
Reported Need for Employment Counseling and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 239) = 9.069$	.011
Reported Need for GED Classes and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 237) = 13.581^*$	.001
Reported Need for Transportation Assistance and Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 233) = 8.855$	.012
Source of Information (Foster Parent/Guardian) by Residential Setting	$\chi^2 (2, N = 239) = 10.059$	.007

* Indicates that a Cell N had an expected count of less than 5 respondents; these instances incorporated a Yates Statistical Correction for obtaining a Pearson Chi Square.