

# **Youth Leaving Care – How Do They Fare?**

## **Briefing Paper**

**September 2005**

*This discussion paper was prepared for the Modernizing Income Security for Working Age Adults (MISWAA) Project in order to support and inform short- and long-term recommendations respecting challenges facing youth leaving care.*

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Youth in Care: How Do They Fare?**

Our review of recent international research examining outcomes for youth after they “age out” of the child welfare system paints a disturbing picture. The findings show that, compared to their peers, youth aging out of care are more likely to:

- leave school before completing their secondary education
- become a parent at a young age
- be dependent on social assistance
- be unemployed or underemployed
- be incarcerated/involved with the criminal justice system
- experience homelessness
- have mental health problems and
- be at higher risk for substance abuse problems

Youth in care face considerable challenges in making the transition from state care to independence and adulthood. They bear the scars of physical and emotional trauma, yet are expected to function independently, usually with little social or financial support, once they reach age 18. Canadian youth aging out of care have cited the following requirements as being crucial in ensuring better transitions to adulthood:

- need for ongoing supportive relationships
- peer support, independent living training
- increased access to financial support and
- support in gaining access to education, employment and training programs

International research has attributed better outcomes for youth aging out where they:

- complete high school
- access post-secondary opportunities and role models
- refrain from alcohol/drug use
- obtain life skills and independent living training and
- experience stable placements while in care

Canada does not have the capacity to track the outcomes of youth as they leave care, nor can our programs identify the types of interventions showing the most promise in helping them to achieve better outcomes. More needs to be done to address the needs of this small, but very vulnerable population.

The Modernizing Income Security for Working Age Adults (MISWAA) Task Force is assessing Canada’s income security system and developing proposals to improve the economic security of

low-income, working age adults. Former youth in care, with their poor outcomes and limited prospects for self-sufficiency as they progress through adulthood, are a small but important part of this population. The following recommendations have been developed to determine how we can best support these youth in maximizing their life opportunities.

By 2006, it is recommended that the Ontario government:

- Extend the maximum age at which youth can continue to receive the Extended Care and Maintenance (ECM) allowance from 21 to 24, to enable them to achieve higher educational attainment and work skills.
- Ensure that the ECM reinstatement provision is consistently applied across all Children's Aid Societies (CASs) in Ontario.
- Increase the maximum ECM allowance to reflect current living costs and incorporate an annual indexation provision. The allowance is currently set at \$663/month.
- Develop standards to prepare youth for leaving care, based on the existing requirement for independent living planning for youth over age 14, and incorporate these as a regulatory requirement.
- Extend the Crown Ward review to ECM clients with an exclusive focus on prescribed independent living standards.
- Ensure that a comprehensive range of health benefits is available to former youth in care.
- Implement financial options to enable youth to pursue higher education or training. Some options include tuition waivers, grants, or the conversion of OSAP loans to grants.
- Increase the maximum age for protective services from 16 to 18 years.

These changes should be implemented by 2007.

By 2007/2008, it is recommended that governments agree to:

- Develop a national longitudinal survey to monitor the outcomes of youth leaving care. Although this would be a long-term undertaking, it would provide a rich, fact-based resource to inform the development of appropriate services and programs; and
- Identify and implement effective transitional programs and supports by researching the types of interventions and models in place in existing organizations that result in the best outcomes for youth leaving care.

## Youth Leaving Care – How Do They Fare?

### ***Introduction***

The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief overview of research/studies examining outcomes for youth who “age out” of the child welfare system. This is not an in-depth review; rather, it is a scan based primarily on information found on the Internet (generally post-1995) and recently published child welfare journals. Nonetheless, the findings presented show a consistently disturbing pattern of poor outcomes for youth leaving care. The paper concludes with a series of short- and long-term recommendations for governments’ consideration which could help improve outcomes of youths as they transition from care to adulthood.

In Canada, provincial and territorial governments have jurisdictional responsibility to provide services to children who are deemed to be “in need of protection”. These are children who have been either abused (physically, sexually or emotionally) or neglected by their parents. Where it is determined that a child is in need of protection, the government assumes responsibility, either on a temporary or permanent basis, for the child; this is referred to as “taking a child into care”. A child becomes a “permanent ward” (“Crown Ward” in Ontario) of the state when the parents relinquish all parental rights and responsibilities to the provincial or territorial child welfare authority. Children in care are placed in foster homes, group homes or residential treatment centres.

All provinces and territories provide protective services to children. Seven jurisdictions - Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut - have provisions limiting their responsibility for providing protective intervention services to children under age 16.<sup>1</sup> The remaining jurisdictions provide these services to children up to age 18 (19 in British Columbia). In Ontario, a child aged 16 or 17 cannot receive protective services unless he was already in care on his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child in care at age 16 is eligible for services until he reaches age 18. So youth in Ontario “age out” of the system once they reach 18 years, with the exception of Crown Wards, who may receive Extended Care and Maintenance (ECM) support as non-wards between 18-21 years of age, provided they meet the ECM eligibility requirements.

In Ontario there were 19,105 children in care in March 2004, up from 18,126 in 2003. This represents an increase of 65% since March 1998.<sup>2</sup> Nationally, the number of children coming into care has been increasing over the past 15 years. It is estimated that as of March 2003, there were 85,000 children in care of provincial, territorial and First Nations agencies.<sup>3</sup> Of particular concern in the western provinces is the disproportionate number of First Nations

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<sup>1</sup> Provincial and territorial child welfare statutes.

<sup>2</sup> OACAS Journal, “Statistics” link (<http://www.oacas.org/resources/casstats.htm>)

<sup>3</sup> Estimated by author, based on data from Social Development Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

children and youth in care. These children and youth grapple with cultural differences and often face a broader range of problems than other children in care. While caseloads are rising, authorities across Canada are being challenged by decreasing program and service funding, increasingly complex problems and issues faced by children in care and their families, and overburdened child welfare workers.

### ***Extension of services***

All provinces and territories have provisions that enable them to extend services to youth who are in care past the maximum age (usually 18). Although the types of services available and the maximum duration of extended services vary between jurisdictions, there is generally a stipulation that the child be a permanent ward and be attending school in order to be eligible. A chart summarizing extension provisions as of 2000 is included in Annex A<sup>4</sup>.

### ***What youth who have left care say they need***

In a number of studies<sup>5</sup>, youth who have aged out of the child welfare system have spoken of their experiences and highlighted areas where they could have been better prepared for their transition from care. They speak of the frustration of being “cut off” from the system once they reach their 18<sup>th</sup> (or 19<sup>th</sup>) birthday to fend for themselves, with limited life skills, financial support and support networks. The transition from care is alluded to as a process that may take many years, not an event triggered by a youth’s 18<sup>th</sup> (or 19<sup>th</sup>) birthday. In most cases, the youth were not emotionally ready to live independently. Youth living with their families don’t typically achieve independence until their mid- to late-twenties, whereas youth in care are “expelled” from the system at age 18, whether they are ready or not.

In order to assure a more successful transition to adulthood, youth leaving care say they need:

- Increased access to, and availability of, financial support
- Ongoing supportive relationships – an ongoing connection with someone important in their lives. Youth want and need emotional and social support both during their transition from care and afterwards.
- Mentoring/peer support
- Individualized support and mechanisms for the transition and post-transition periods
- Support in gaining access to education, employment and training programs
- Independent living training
- Opportunities to develop decision-making and problem-solving skills

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<sup>4</sup> A review of online legislation indicated that these provisions still appear to be in effect as of the spring, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Raychaba (1988), Rutman et al (2001), Martin & Palmer (1997).

## ***What happens when youth in Canada age out of care?***

Youth leaving care face many more challenges than their peers. They do not have a family support network, they have limited or no financial resources, they are often lacking in life skills, they usually have not completed school, they often suffer from low self-esteem, and they bear emotional scars from the trauma of childhood neglect and/or abuse. Once on their own, they are at much greater risk of becoming homeless, engaging in substance abuse, becoming single parents, relying on social assistance, and coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

A review of Canadian literature reveals very little research on what happens to Canadian youth when they leave the child welfare system. Available data are generally based studies of small groups of individuals with current or former affiliation with child welfare. Some examples of Canadian statistics include:

- 90% of street kids in Calgary had been in foster care (Lindsey, 1994)
- 45% of homeless youth had been in care (Serge et al, 2002)
- 48% of “street youth” seeking post-transition services from Covenant House in Toronto were former children in care (Leslie and Hare, 2000)
- 80% of 16 and 17 year olds receiving child welfare services in Saskatchewan under a voluntary agreement will be on welfare sometime during their adult lives (Sask. Redesign, Phase II, address by Minister of Social Services to Association of Social Workers, December 2000)

One of the most widely-cited Canadian studies was conducted by Fay Martin in 1995. The sample included 29 former youth in care who had turned 18 in 1994 and had been in care of the Metropolitan Toronto CAS after age 16. She found that:

- 66% were still in high school and none had completed high school
- 17% had never worked and 41% had worked less than one week
- 38% received welfare
- 50% of the females were parents and 38% of all participants were parents
- 7% were in jail at the time of the interview (over one half had been in jail since leaving care)
- 90% had moved in the previous year
- Illicit activities (e.g., fencing, dealing drugs) were very lucrative financially for many

Martin noted (wryly) that the social service system provides these children with continuity: from child welfare to young offenders, to social assistance, to corrections and then to halfway houses.

Kathleen Kufeldt's study in the late 1990s looked at the outcomes of permanent wards in a Canadian province (unnamed). She examined three cohorts over time: those who left care in

1987, 1991 and 1995. Of 210 former wards contacted, 87 participated. They ranged in age from 23 to 31. The study found that:

- 46% were unemployed and 32% were employed full time. Those working tended to be in low-paid jobs, e.g., labourers, service sector workers.
- 77% earned less than \$20,000/year, but income increased with the older cohorts
- Two-thirds lived in rental accommodation
- 73% had completed high school since leaving care. The level of education increased with the older cohorts.
- Those who experienced multiple school changes while in care had lower educational achievement levels
- 60% were parents

Kufeldt stressed the importance of permanency planning, reducing the number of moves, inclusive foster care and focusing more attention on education for children while they are in care as ways to achieve better post-care outcomes. She noted that despite the relatively poor outcomes of these youth compared to the general population, many of the participants in her study showed resilience despite their difficult life experiences.

The issue of resilience in children and youth in care was examined by Susan Silva-Wayne in 1994. She looked at 19 “successful child welfare graduates” in Ontario, ranging in age from 16 to 26 years. These were defined as individuals who were working or in school or who were parents; who had a permanent address; who had one significant person in their lives; and who had a social network and a positive self-image. She found that although all participants said they had felt devalued because of their life circumstances and foster care status, their transitions were more successful because they:

- Had role models and path finders to help them reach their goals
- Were involved in group activities, clubs, etc.
- Had developed a positive self-image through supportive relationships
- Were exposed to opportunities
- Engaged in positive thinking strategies – were self-reliant and assertive.

Some youth, regardless of their past and ongoing challenges, are remarkably resilient and appear to have more positive outcomes as they progress through the child welfare system and move towards independence and adulthood.

### ***What does international research say about these youth?***

There are many international studies on the outcomes of youth who have left care. Although the approaches taken vary considerably, certain common characteristics of former youth in care emerge. These youth are:



- More likely to be undereducated - many have not completed high school
- More likely to be unemployed or underemployed
- When employed, more likely to have low earnings, with many living below the poverty line
- More likely to become a parent at a younger age
- More likely to be incarcerated/involved in the criminal justice system
- More likely to experience homelessness
- More likely to live in an unstable housing arrangement
- More likely to be dependent on social assistance
- More likely to have mental health issues
- More likely not to have medical insurance (USA)
- At higher risk for substance abuse

A detailed summary of the findings from various studies is presented in Annex B.

Mike Stein<sup>6</sup> recently studied the resilience of youth who have been in care in the United Kingdom. He points to the importance of stable placements, a positive sense of identity, a positive school experience, strong social networks, and preparation for independent living through opportunities for planning and problem solving as being associated with better outcomes for youth once they leave care.

In both the USA and the UK, much of the recent programming focus for youth leaving care has been on supported independent living programs.

The United Kingdom introduced the *Children (Leaving Care) Act* in 2000. This legislation, which amended the 1989 *Children Act*, extended the maximum age for government responsibility for children in care from 16 to 18 years, and it provided for greater mandatory supports for youth aged 18-21. The Act focuses on education, training, and financial needs. It also provides for personal advisors for youth up to age 21, needs assessments, and the development of Pathway Plans to assist in transitional planning. Further, educational support may be extended to age 24.

The USA passed the *Foster Care Independence Act* in 1999, replacing the *Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative* of 1986. The new legislation doubled the available federal funds for transitional assistance for children between the ages of 18-21 who are preparing to age out or who have aged out of the foster care system. The Act created the *John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program*, which emphasizes independent living services with a focus on education, employment and life skills training. The Act provides for room and board for foster children out of care but who are less than 21 years of age. It also encourages states to provide former youth in care aged 18-21 with Medicaid coverage.

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<sup>6</sup> Stein, Mike (2005).

One of the requirements of the Act is the establishment of a National Youth-in-Transition Database (NYTD) to assess the outcomes of youth (see Section 477(f)(i)). The US Department of Health and Human Services was directed to develop outcome measures to assess states' independent living programs. The measures are to focus on:

- Educational attainment
- Employment and labour force participation
- Avoidance of SA dependency, unwed child birth, homelessness, contact with the correctional system and incarceration

The development of the database has been deferred until late 2005, when federal guidelines on data collection are expected to be released.<sup>7</sup>

A 2004 brief by the US organization *Voices for America's Children*<sup>8</sup> points to the lack of in-depth research on children aging out of foster care, but highlights the following three promising studies.

(1) *Casey National Alumni Study* – examined alumni in foster care between 1966 and 1998 (sample size 1,609). Preliminary results based on foster care alumni identified the following areas as good predictors of successful outcomes:

- Completion of high school while in care
- Access to post-secondary opportunities
- Life skills and independent living training
- Not being homeless within one year of leaving care
- Participation in clubs while in care
- Minimal academic problems
- Minimal use of alcohol or drugs

(<http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/NationalAlumniStudy.htm>)

(2) *Multi-Site Evaluation of Foster Youth Programs* – a collaboration between the Children's Bureau of the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Urban Institute and its partners. This will evaluate programs funded by the *John Chafee Foster Care Independence Program* over a five-year period. Four programs are being evaluated: employment services program (California), intensive case management/mentoring program (Massachusetts), tutoring/ mentoring program (California) and life skills training program (California). Results are expected in late 2005.

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<sup>7</sup> National Alliance to End Homelessness, January 3, 2005 online news (<http://www.endhomelessness.org/pub/onlinenews/2005/0103.html>)

<sup>8</sup>Voices for American Children [http://www.voicesforamericaschildren.org/Content/ContentGroups/Policy/Child\\_Safety/Member\\_Mailing1/Supporting\\_Youth\\_Aging\\_Out\\_of\\_Foster\\_Care\\_What\\_Does\\_the\\_Research\\_Tell\\_Us\\_issue\\_brief\\_8-04\\_c.pdf](http://www.voicesforamericaschildren.org/Content/ContentGroups/Policy/Child_Safety/Member_Mailing1/Supporting_Youth_Aging_Out_of_Foster_Care_What_Does_the_Research_Tell_Us_issue_brief_8-04_c.pdf)

(3) *Midwest Evaluation of Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Conditions of Youth Preparing to Leave State Care* – this will examine 732 youth in Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin. There will be three waves between the ages of 17 and 21. The results of the first wave are available and focus on the demographic characteristics of the youth and the services/supports they are receiving.

([http://www.chapinhall.org/article\\_abstract\\_new.asp?ar=1355&L2=61&L3=131](http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract_new.asp?ar=1355&L2=61&L3=131))

(Note: the results of the second wave were released in May 2005. These are available at [http://www.chapinhall.org/article\\_abstract.aspx?ar=1355](http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355))

### **Research and initiatives underway in Canada**

At the February 2003 Canadian Symposium on Child and Family Services Outcomes<sup>9</sup>, it was noted that there had been limited progress on research on the effectiveness of interventions and the tracking of outcomes. The two research activities underway in Canada that focus on child welfare outcomes are the *Child Welfare Outcome Study* (Bell Canada Child Welfare Research Centre) and the Canadian version of *Looking After Children* (*CanLAC*).

The *Child Welfare Outcome Study*<sup>10</sup> focuses on measuring child welfare outcomes in four domains: child safety, child well-being, permanence, and family and community supports. The Child Welfare Outcome Indicator Matrix, which was developed in the late 1990's, identifies 10 indicators within these four domains. These are: recurrence of maltreatment, serious injury/death, school performance, child behaviour, placement rate, moves in care, time to achieving permanent placement, family moves, parenting capacity and ethno-cultural placement matching. The indicators are proxy measures, and are based on data available from jurisdictions' information systems which conform to the 10 variables in the matrix. The system was pilot-tested across Canada in 2001. A Working Group is currently looking at data collected in selected jurisdictions to analyze the ability to report on aggregate data nationally.

*CanLAC*<sup>11</sup> is the Canadian version of *Looking After Children* (*LAC*). *LAC*, which was developed and field-tested in Great Britain between 1987 and 1995, focuses on clinical outcomes for children in care in order to assess the child's needs and progress. It measures a child's development in seven key domains - health, education, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, emotional and behavioural development, self-care skills - by means of an annual questionnaire. Information is gathered through a series of Action and Assessment Records, which chart a child's progress while in care and measure his progress towards clearly identified goals. All jurisdictions in Canada (with the exception of Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan as of 2003) are using *CanLAC* in varying capacities. *CanLAC* data can also be compared with data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), thereby allowing for comparisons with the progress of other children. Within Ontario, 26

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.hmrp.net/CanadianOutcomesInstitute/projects/symposium/Symposium.htm>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cccw-cepb.ca/DocsEng/OutcomesIndicatorMatrix.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.cwlc.ca/projects/canlac\\_e.htm](http://www.cwlc.ca/projects/canlac_e.htm)

Children's Aid Societies are participating in a pilot using the model. It is anticipated that the model will be implemented province-wide by 2007.

Although useful within the child welfare system itself, neither of the above outcome tools is designed to be used to monitor outcomes for youth once they leave care.

The University of Victoria is mid-way through its *Promoting Positive Outcomes for Youth From Care Project*.<sup>12</sup> This three-year study aims "to better understand the processes, supports and resources that make a positive difference to youth and that help to lead to successful transitions from care". Researchers are following 37 youths for two and one-half years after they leave care. Interviews are held with participants at six- to nine-month intervals, and focus on their social and family relationships, their physical and mental health, and their involvement with the criminal justice system, their education and their employment. Participants may also seek peer support from the project team. The type of support needed is defined by the youth and may include assistance with grocery shopping, accessing government resources, housing etc. The project will be completed in 2006.

Alberta recently implemented its *Youth in Transition* initiative.<sup>13</sup> Youth transitioning from care are an important component of the initiative. The province is developing an exit survey for children in care. The first stage of the planned survey will focus on children who left the child welfare system over the past three years, looking at how well prepared they were, how they are currently faring, and what could have been done to improve their transition experience. The second stage will involve a pre-exit interview with youth.<sup>14</sup>

A number of initiatives provide opportunities for youth leaving care to pursue their education.

- In Ontario, the University of Toronto's *Transitional Year Programme*<sup>15</sup> assists many youth who have been in care. The program caters to those who do not meet the educational requirements to qualify for admission to university by offering a one-year program to assist them to develop the skills and attitudes needed to succeed in a university environment.
- Alberta's *Advancing Futures Bursary*<sup>16</sup> program is for former youth who were in care for a minimum of 18 months, and are between the age of 16 and 22 years. The bursary provides for tuition, books, school expenses and living expenses for youth who meet the entrance requirements. Recipients are encouraged to have a support team to provide encouragement and mentoring, and are they required to participate in the further development of the program.

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<sup>12</sup> Rutman (2005)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/whoweare/youth/pdf/Youth%20In%20Transition%20Framework.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Forster, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/typ/>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/whoweare/pdf/advancing\\_futures\\_final.pdf](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/whoweare/pdf/advancing_futures_final.pdf)

- The new *Canada Learning Bond*<sup>17</sup> (CLB) is designed to help low-income families with the cost of post-secondary education. Children eligible for the National Child Benefit are eligible; this includes children in care. The federal government will contribute \$500 for each child born on or after January 1, 2004, and \$100 each year until the child reaches 15 years of age. The CLB is paid into a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).

### ***Future directions***

Youth have consistently and clearly identified what types of services and resources they need to assist them in their transition from care. However, governments increasingly want evidence-based research and outcome measures to justify new program and policy directions. Researchers, meanwhile, emphasize that there are no data that point to which programs best serve youth transitioning from the child welfare system. Clearly, tools need to be developed and implemented to (a) generate data on youths' outcomes as they transition into adulthood and (b) identify what interventions result in more successful outcomes. Throughout these processes, it is essential that former youth in care be consulted to ensure their perspectives are taken into account in determining what constitutes "successful" outcomes.

### ***Recommendations***

The importance of appropriate service planning for children and youth while they are in care is well-recognized, but child welfare workers emphasize that much remains to be done in this area. Studies have shown the negative effects of numerous placement changes, school changes and non-supportive relationships on youths' eventual outcomes once they leave care. The *Looking After Children* project assesses a child's development while in care. Although a time-consuming tool, *CanLAC* allows workers to track a child's progress, while at the same time generating a rich data resource. This, plus *CanLAC*'s potential to be readily modified to follow youth once they leave care, could provide the evidence base needed to advocate for future program and policy changes.

In March 2005, the government of Ontario completed its review of the *Child and Family Services Act*.<sup>18</sup> The final report contained a number of recommendations dealing with youth transitioning from care. These include:

- Increase the types of services and support available
- Support the pursuit of post-secondary education
- Extended Care and Maintenance (ECM) should be available to age 24
- ECM should be available for 4 years after high school graduation
- ECM should include health, vision and dental care assistance

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/comm/hrsd/news/2004/041008.shtml>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.oacas.org/whatsnew/announcements/CFSARReviewReport2005ap1.pdf>

- CASs should be accountable for youth attaining appropriate educational milestones while in care
- Tuition waivers
- Full access to child welfare records

Youth receiving services at the Pape Adolescent Resource Centre (PARC) submitted a set of recommendations to the review committee. These are included in Annex C.

In February 2005, Bob Rae completed his final report on higher education in Ontario<sup>19</sup>. In it, he recommended the province introduce a grant for low-income students, up to a maximum of \$6,000 per year, towards the cost of tuition and ancillary costs.

The following section presents recommendations which could help improve the situation of youth in their transition from the child welfare system to independence. The short-term recommendations focus primarily on provisions and practice in Ontario. Some of these are consistent with submissions to the Ontario government as part of its review of the *Child and Family Services Act*. The long-term recommendations address potential research initiatives which could identify effective supports for youth leaving care.

#### **(a) Short-Term**

Recommendations for consideration that are outlined below are specific to Ontario. Government should commit to measure the outcomes of these – or any other – short-term investments that they undertake in order to assist in the development of “successful” outcome indicators.

- Extend the maximum age at which youth can continue to receive financial assistance under Extended Care and Maintenance (ECM) from age 21 to 24. (This recommendation was recently made by MISWAA to the province of Ontario.) The cost of this would be modest at roughly \$6 million per year. This assumes 1,000 youth (approximately one-third of the population) continue to receive the \$663 allowance that currently stops at age 21.
- Ensure that the ECM reinstatement provision is consistently applied across all CASs.
- Increase the maximum ECM allowance, which has not been increased in over a decade, to reflect current living costs and incorporate an annual indexation provision. Increasing the allowance to \$750/month for youth currently in receipt of ECM is estimated to cost approximately \$1.5 million annually.
- Develop standards to prepare youth for leaving care, based on the Ministry’s existing requirement for independent living planning for youth over age 14, and incorporate

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.raereview.on.ca/en/report/letter.asp?loc1=report&loc2=letter>

these new standards as a regulatory requirement. The cost to develop and implement these would be minimal.

- Extend the Crown Ward review to ECM clients with an exclusive focus on prescribed independent living standards. This would be a shorter, more limited review than the current Crown Ward review. The cost would be minimal, given the small ECM client base, the limited nature of the review and the Crown Ward reviewers would already be onsite reviewing Crown Ward files.
- Ensure a comprehensive range of health benefits is extended to former youth in care to age 24, unless they are available from another source.
- Explore financial options to enable youth in care to pursue higher education or training. This could include tuition waivers, scholarships, grants, or the conversion of Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) loans to grants for youth in care.
- Increase the maximum age for protective services from 16 to 18 years.

## **(b) Long-Term**

Undertake the research required to (a) monitor the outcomes of youth leaving care and (b) identify effective programs and supports to enable youth to transition successfully from the child welfare system.

- Agree to develop a national longitudinal (5 year) survey to monitor the outcomes of youth leaving care. There are privacy issues that would necessitate the work being done by a trusted third party. Possible approaches include:
  - Statistics Canada panel study
  - Independent university-based survey, building on *CanLAC* as a tool for post-care outcomes measurement.

If possible, the survey should be structured so that it can compare results with outcomes of youth who were not in care as they transition to adulthood (for example, with the *National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth* (NLSYC) and the *Youth in Transition Survey* (YITS)). The cost is estimated at \$2 million.

- Research organizations that are considered to be successful at ensuring good outcomes for youth leaving care. The objective of this work would be to identify which interventions and/or models result in the best outcomes for youth leaving care. Examples include:
  - Range of post-care services (e.g., those available from PARC (Pape Adolescent Resource Centre) in Toronto)
  - Matching youth leaving care with a support worker

- Extending outreach services to youth not willing to seek assistance
- Developing interventions that help youth become more resilient, e.g., coping skills, relationship building.
  
- Some areas to explore with the organizations include:
  - How the organizations work internally and with other service providers.
  - What supports do they provide to children and youth while in care, through the transition, and after they leave (e.g., do they take a child-centred approach? How do they teach soft and hard skills that youth will need in the environment they are likely to live in after leaving care? How do they deal with harder to serve youth? How do they stay in contact with youth who have left care?)
  - How do they track progress while in care and outcomes after leaving care? How do these compare to the *CanLAC* tool?
  - What evidence do they have to show that particular approaches or supports have a greater chance of producing successful outcomes?
  - Do they incorporate youths' perspectives on what constitute successful supports and outcomes?

The cost is estimated at \$50,000.

- Exploring the possibility of demonstration projects at Ontario's CASs or other child-serving agencies, using redirected funding to innovative, low-cost programming.



## ANNEX A

### *Age of Majority and Age of Child as Defined in Child Protection Legislation*

Province or Territory	Age of Majority	Age for Protection	Extension Provisions
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	19	under 16	wardship to age 19 (subsequent to Order of Temporary Wardship, Order of Permanent
			Wardship services to age 21 (under an agreement or following extension of wardship to age 19)
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	18	under 18	services to age 21 (subsequent to Permanent Guardianship Order)
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	19	under 16	wardship to age 21 (subsequent to Permanent Care Order)
<b>New Brunswick</b>	19	under 19 <sup>1</sup>	post Guardianship Service Agreements <sup>2</sup> may be signed under certain circumstances for those aged 19 to 23 (inclusive)
<b>Quebec</b>	18	under 18	foster care may be extended to age 21
<b>Ontario</b>	18	under 16 <sup>3</sup>	wardship to age 18 (subsequent to Society Wardship Order - temporary; Crown Wardship Order - permanent)
			services to age 21 (former Crown wards)
<b>Manitoba</b>	18	under 18	services to age 21 (subsequent to Permanent Guardianship Order or Voluntary Surrender of Guardianship)
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	18	under 16 <sup>3,4</sup>	wardship to age 18 (Permanent, Long-Term Orders)
			Temporary Orders to age 16
			Voluntary committals to age 16
			Voluntary agreements for 16-17 year-olds
<b>Alberta</b>	18	under 18	services to age 21 (subsequent to Permanent Committal Order, Long-Term Order to age 18)
			Care and Maintenance Agreement <sup>2</sup> services to age 20 (subsequent to Temporary or Permanent Guardianship Order, Support or Custody Agreements entered into with the child)
<b>British Columbia</b>	19	under 19	Post Majority Services Program <sup>2</sup>
			support and/or maintenance to age 21 for current and former permanent wards (Permanent Order)
<b>Yukon</b>	19	under 18	wardship to age 19 (Order for temporary Care and Custody, Order for Permanent Care and Custody)
<b>Northwest Territories &amp; Nunavut</b>	19	under 18	wardship to age 19 (subsequent to Permanent Guardianship Order)

<sup>1</sup> Regulations stipulate mandatory provision of child protection services applies only to a child under age 16 (under 19 for a disabled person). Mandatory reporting of a child in need of protection applies only to children under 16; reporting of cases involving children aged 16 to 19 must be done with the child's consent <sup>2</sup> Formal agreement signed by the youth and the department <sup>3</sup> Youth 16 and 17 years of age can either enter into an agreement for services until age 18. <sup>4</sup> In Saskatchewan, a 16 or 17-year-old may be apprehended in extraordinary circumstances

Source: *Child Welfare in Canada 2000*, Secretariat to the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information, HRDC. March 2002

## ANNEX B

### Selected Research Findings on Youth Who Have Left Care

	<i>Did not complete high school</i>	<i>Unemployed/ no job experience</i>	<i>Pregnant/ unwed parent</i>	<i>Homeless</i>	<i>On public assistance</i>	<i>Incarcerated</i>	<i>Emotional/ mental health problems</i>	<i>Drug abuse problem</i>	<i>Other</i>
<b>Canadian benchmarks for general population</b>	<b>15% (1995) (a)</b>	<b>13.8% (2003) (b)</b>	<b>6.4% (2000) (c)</b>	<b>Not Available (d)</b>	<b>5.5% (2003 – total population) (e)</b>	<b>1.8% (f)</b>	<b>18% (mental health issues or substance dependency) (g) See also (h)</b>	<b>8% in past 12 months (2002) (g)</b>	
Westat study (1)	66%	61%	17%				38%	17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 58% had 3+ placements</li> </ul>
Westat follow-up study (2) (2.5-4 years after leaving care)	50%	50%	60% (among females)	25% (for at least 1 night)	30%				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fewer than 20% were self-supporting</li> <li>▪ One third had moved 5+ times since discharge</li> <li>▪ Only 40% were employed for 1 year</li> </ul>
University of Wisconsin (3) (12-18 months after leaving care)	37%	39% unemployed when interviewed		12% (at least once since discharge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 40% of females</li> <li>▪ 23% of males</li> </ul>	18% (since discharge)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to medical care a problem for 44% due to lack of health insurance</li> <li>▪ Half received mental health services while in care but only 20% did after discharge</li> <li>▪ Job retention was problem</li> </ul>

	<i>Did not complete high school</i>	<i>Unemployed/ no job experience</i>	<i>Pregnant/ unwed parent</i>	<i>Homeless</i>	<i>On public assistance</i>	<i>Incarcerated</i>	<i>Emotional/ mental health problems</i>	<i>Drug abuse problem</i>	<i>Other</i>
Wisconsin study of UI and SA data (4) <i>(youth exiting care 1992-1998)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 21% unemployed</li> <li>▪ 24% sporadically employed (left 95-97)</li> </ul>			26% (3-5 years after leaving care)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth discharged from foster homes earned more than those discharged from institutions</li> <li>▪ Earnings much lower than full-time minimum wage earnings</li> <li>▪ Youth of colour less likely to be employed</li> <li>▪ Median earnings plus assistance was \$2,850</li> </ul>
Nevada KIDS COUNT (5) <i>(6 months after leaving care)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 50% on leaving care</li> <li>▪ 37% at time of interview</li> </ul>	37% at time of interview	38%	37%		41%			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 41% couldn't cover basic expenses</li> <li>▪ 60% earned under \$10,000 and 34% less than \$5,000 in 1999</li> <li>▪ 24% had dealt drugs</li> <li>▪ 11% engaged in prostitution</li> <li>▪ 41% in violent relationships</li> <li>▪ 55% had no health insurance</li> </ul>
California study (6)	37-55%	25-51%	40-60%	10-35%	32-47%	18-42%			
Univ. of Chicago study (7)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up to 30% unemployed</li> <li>▪ Up to 45% under-employed</li> </ul>							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All earnings below the 1997 poverty line.</li> <li>▪ Average earnings were \$6,000/yr. (\$US)</li> </ul>

	<i>Did not complete high school</i>	<i>Unemployed/ no job experience</i>	<i>Pregnant/ unwed parent</i>	<i>Homeless</i>	<i>On public assistance</i>	<i>Incarcerated</i>	<i>Emotional/ mental health problems</i>	<i>Drug abuse problem</i>	<i>Other</i>
Univ. of Illinois - Foster Youth in Transition (8) (Phase 2 ) (2-3 years post discharge at age 21)	30%	51%			43% of females				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One third were employed full time</li> <li>▪ Average annual income was \$4,100 (1994-95)</li> <li>▪ 90% of females earned &lt;\$10,000</li> <li>▪ only 10% of females had health/medical insurance</li> </ul>
Univ. of Illinois - Foster Youth in Transition (8) (Phase 3 ) (9-10 years post discharge at age 28)	8% at time of interview								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All had improved their situation</li> <li>▪ 27% of females earned &lt;\$10,000</li> <li>▪ 70% of females had health/medical insurance</li> <li>▪ males fared better, with only 8% earning &lt;\$10,000</li> </ul>
Casey Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study (9) (in care 1988-1998)	16%	20% (excludes full time students and homemakers)		22% since discharge	17% at time of interview and 48% over past 6 months		55% in previous 12 months		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 33% had incomes below poverty line</li> <li>▪ 33% had no health insurance</li> </ul>

	<i>Did not complete high school</i>	<i>Unemployed/ no job experience</i>	<i>Pregnant/unwed parent</i>	<i>Homeless</i>	<i>On public assistance</i>	<i>Incarcerated</i>	<i>Emotional/ mental health problems</i>	<i>Drug abuse problem</i>	<i>Other</i>
Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth (2005): WAVE TWO (10) <i>(Results based on those who had left care unless noted otherwise)</i>	36% had not completed high school or received GED	53% were unemployed at time of interview and 72% worked during last year. Of these, nearly 75% earned less than \$5,000 US	22.5% had children ( 32% of females and 13% of males)	14% had been homeless since discharge	39% received government assistance since first interview: 25% were currently in receipt of benefits (total sample)	33% arrested since first interview	33% (total sample)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ study looked at 19 year old foster youths, some still in care and some who had left care (53% of sample were no longer in care)</li> <li>▪ findings are compared to 19 year olds from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health</li> </ul>
Australian study (11) <i>(left care Feb. – Sept. 1996)</i>	<20% completed high school	64% unemployed or on supporting parents benefit	33% of women	50% since discharge					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 50% had committed criminal offence since discharge</li> </ul>
UK (12)	75% (no academic qualifications)	50%	17% on leaving care	30%		38% young prisoners			

**Sources:**

For Canadian benchmarks:

- (a) 1995 School Leavers Follow up Survey, youth aged 24 years. (<http://www11.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/hrsdcaarb/publications/bulletins/1998-000023/page07.shtml>)
- (b) Statistics Canada – youth aged 15-24 years. ([http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/82-221-XIE/2004002/tables/html/2242\\_02.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/82-221-XIE/2004002/tables/html/2242_02.htm))
- (c) Statistics Canada – lone parents aged 15-24 as % of all lone parents (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-575-XIE/89-575-XIE2001001.pdf>)
- (d) National Homelessness Secretariat – ([http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/homelessness/h02\\_e.asp](http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/homelessness/h02_e.asp))
- (e) National Council of Welfare, total welfare recipients as of March 2003 ([http://www.ncwcnbes.net/html/document/principales/numberwelfare\\_e.htm](http://www.ncwcnbes.net/html/document/principales/numberwelfare_e.htm)) and Statistics Canada population estimates for 2003 (<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/041221/d041221e.htm>)

- (f) Juristat, Catalogue 85-002, Vol. 22 #9 – Recidivism among convicted youth and young adults, 1999-2000. Youth aged 18-25 years. (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/preview/85-002-XIE/P0090285-002-XIE.pdf>) and Statistics Canada Census population data, by single years of age (2001) (<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/themes/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2001&PID=55437&APATH=3&GID=431515&METH=1&PTYPE=55430&THEME=37&FOCUS=0&AID=0&PLACENAME=0&PROVINCE=0&SEARCH=0&GC=0&GK=0&VID=0&FL=0&RL=0&FREE=0>)
- (g) Canadian Community Health Survey: Mental health and well-being, 2002 (<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/030903/d030903a.htm>)
- (h) Winnipeg Free Press article, September 13, 2003 (<http://www.cpa.ca/documents/WFP2.pdf>)

Casey Family Programs, Outcomes for Youth Exiting Foster Care, June 2001 (items 1-5 inclusive)

- (1) Westat study – focus on youth who emancipated from foster care between January 1987 and July 1988 (Cook, 1990). Total sample 800 youth.
- (2) Westat follow-up study of youth who emancipated from foster care between January 1987 and July 1988 2.5–4 years after leaving care (Cook 1992). Total sample 113 youth.
- (3) University of Wisconsin – study of youth 12-18 months after they emancipated from foster care in 1995 (Courtney & Piliavin, 1998).
- (4) Dworsky and Courtney, Wisconsin – unemployment insurance wage data and public assistance data of youth who exited foster care 1992-1998 (Dworsky and Courtney, 2000)
- (5) Nevada KIDS COUNT – study of 100 youth who emancipated from care 6 or more months ago, 2001, University of Nevada.
- (6) 1999 Little Hoover Commission Report, *Now in Our Hands: Caring for California's Abused & Neglected Children*. Data from brief at [http://www.emq.org/press/issue\\_fostercare.html](http://www.emq.org/press/issue_fostercare.html).
- (7) University of Chicago. *Employment Outcomes for Youth Aging of Foster Care, March 2002*. Children leaving care in the mid-1990s in California, Illinois and South Carolina. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/search/hsp/fostercare-agingout02/>
- (8) Foster Youth in Transition, University of Illinois, Phases 1 and 2, from *Uncertain Futures, Foster Youth in Transition to Adulthood*, Edmund V. Mech, CWLA Press, Washington, DC, 2003
- (9) *The Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study*, Casey Family Programs, 2005. Sample of 479 foster care alumni who were in care between 1988 and 1998. [http://www.casey.org/NR/rdonlyres/4E1E7C77-7624-4260-A253-892C5A6CB9E1/300/nw\\_alumni\\_study\\_full\\_apr2005.pdf](http://www.casey.org/NR/rdonlyres/4E1E7C77-7624-4260-A253-892C5A6CB9E1/300/nw_alumni_study_full_apr2005.pdf)
- (10) *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth*, Chapin Hall Centre for Children, May 2005. Wave two of longitudinal study of foster youth interviewed between March and December 2004. Sample for second wave was 602 youth, 282 of whom were still in care and 321 who had left care. [http://www.chapinhall.org/article\\_abstract.aspx?ar=1355](http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355).
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- (12) UK House of Commons Research Paper 00/63, June 2000, page 8 <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2000/rp00-063.pdf>

**ANNEX C**  
**PARC YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**ON REVIEW OF ONTARIO'S *CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT***

Director, CFSA Review  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hepburn Block  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1E9

February 23, 2005

Dear Sir or Madam:

Please accept this submission to the CFSA review initiative underway at the Ministry. These are recommendations developed by the 20 members of the Network Group at the Pape Adolescent Resource Centre. This group, comprised of youth in care and former youth in care, meets weekly to formulate strategies to improve the child welfare system for children and youth. We do this by providing consultation to interested service providers, facilitating workshops for youth in care, social workers, foster parents, child and youth workers and volunteers, and supporting members in our group.

The Pape Adolescent Resource Centre (PARC), home for the Network Group, is a non-profit, joint project of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, the Catholic Children's Aid Society and Jewish Family and Child Services. Our mandate is to assist youth who are presently or have been in the care of any of these agencies.

Thank-you for considering these recommendations. We understand the child welfare system in ways professionals can't and we speak from the heart about things that would improve the lives of 9,000 children and youth in CAS care in Ontario.

We welcome any feedback or further consultation you might require. We can be reached by contacting Pascaline Kabeya, Network Group member, at 416-462-1010.

Sincerely,

Network Group

## **Recommendations for Improving the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)**

### **Introduction**

These recommendations were formulated during February meetings of the Network Group at the Pape Adolescent Resource Centre (PARC). Approximately, 20 youth in care and former youth in care had input into creating this document. These recommendations reflect the opinions of these youth about how the child welfare system can be improved to better serve children and youth.

We have a total of 37 recommendations listed below. In general we support the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and believe the CFSA should ensure that these rights especially the right for children and youth to participate in decisions that affect them, the right to be heard and the right to achieve to their fullest potential. These rights should be reflected in the body of the CFSA and in the preamble of the Act.

The following details more specific recommendations for change supported by youth in care and former youth in care:

### **Services**

1. There needs to be a street outreach service that is part of CAS. Many youth on the street were in care.
2. more support is needed to help bridge the gap from life in a placement to life on our own
3. There needs to be a service like PARC everywhere in the province. This service would allow youth to make use of it and contribute to it with no cut off age
4. 16 and 17 year olds should get service from CAS
5. There should be Info. line/ warm line youth in care can call when rights are violated, a line for youth in and from care with mental health issues
6. there should be an Internal big brother, big sister program for youth in care making use of those former youth in care who would like to contribute
7. There should be a training program available for youth in care-teaching life skills to youth much younger than 15 years of age perhaps taught by older youth in care
8. a child's placement should be as stable as possible
9. Lower caseloads for social workers
10. ID clinic for youth in care
11. Youth In Care should have a Child and Youth Worker assigned to them in addition to their social worker
12. Training program for workers about what resources are available for youth both inside and outside the agency. e.g. some of us have been told about services that do not exist or have not been told about what does exist
13. ECM- health and dental care- should be required
14. ECM- eye glasses should be covered

### **Housing**

15. need a resource guide- including how to apply for subsidized housing
16. Every youth leaving care should be offered a subsidized housing unit upon leaving. This should be an obligation of the state.



## **Education**

17. Literary assessment- more work done to gauge how youth are doing in reading and writing. Make sure they can read. Many of us have experience with other youth in care who are on their own but cannot read.
18. Social worker training should include training from former youth in care about what the experience of life in care is like. Agencies should be mandated to develop and offer this training.
19. Financial support to YIC while in college/ university
20. Colleges and Universities could be required to set aside spaces for youth in care or former youth in care who qualify.
21. Tuition should be free for YIC- or former YIC- OSAP should be grants not loans for YIC and former YIC
22. Each CAS should have a Dep't that helps with education

## **Youth Participation**

23. mandatory option for youth to give feedback about placements to an independent body
24. Youth should have full access to their files (no blackouts)
25. Siblings should have rights that allow them to have contact and know where each other is
26. open adoption- youth should not have to sever all ties to family if you are adopted
27. Share results of psychological tests with youth
28. Every four years the Ministry should fund a Commission of YIC to travel the province to hear submissions about how the child welfare system is doing. Youth, staff and foster parents could make a submission but Executive Directors would be mandated to report/ be present

## **Social Responsibility**

29. if a youth in care commits suicide or dies there should be an automatic inquest and a proper burial
30. An independent body is needed to monitor workers
31. When a youth turns 21 years of age and is to receive their last ECM cheque, this cheque should be a full cheque. Presently the cheque will be in a prorated amount depending upon when the youth's birthday falls
32. every youth leaving care should have their citizenship before being discharged
33. Kinship care is a good idea- kin need to have support like a foster home
34. Outcomes for CAS e.g. every kid leaving care should graduate from high school or learn how to read and write- this is how a CAS should be measured.
35. Physical restraints should be an extreme last resort. If a restraint occurs there should be a report to the CAS worker. The youth should write a report as well. Any incident should be reported automatically by the youth and worker to the Advocacy Office.

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Deborah Rutman, April Barlow, Carol Hubberstey, Daniela Alusik, Erinn Brown. *Supporting Young People's Transition from Government Care, Research Project, Stage 1 Report*. University of Victoria and Victoria Youth in Care Network, February 2001.

<http://www.cecw-cepb.ca/DocsEng/YouthLeavingCSge1Report.pdf>

This report presents findings from a 27-month project examining ways to improve youth's preparedness for leaving care. Twenty youth participants recounted their stories of leaving care and identified their support needs; interviews were also conducted with a sample of 15 caregivers. The report is organized into 4 sections: experiences in care, experiences leaving care, elements of supportive practice for social workers, and elements of supportive proactive for foster parents.

Deborah Rutman, Susan Strega, Marilyn Callahan, Lena Dominelli. *Young Mothers In/From Care Project, Proceedings of the April 3, 2001 Forum on Policy and Practice*, B.C.

(<http://www.cecw-cepb.ca/DocsEng/YoungMothersCare.pdf>)

The Young Mothers Research Project is about young women who have children while in the care of the BC Ministry for Children and Families [MCF]. The research has focused on three areas: first, how young mothers in care experience their lives while in care, their transition out of care and MCF as 'parent' and 'grandparent'; second, how those who work with these young women (social workers and other service providers) perceive existing programs and policies and describe their practice experiences; and finally, what policies and practices are most essential to shaping these young women's lives and how they might be strengthened or changed.

Approximately 50 people participated in the Forum.

Cheryl Farris-Manning and Marietta Zandstra. *Children in Care in Canada*. Child Welfare League of Canada, 2003

<http://www.cecw-cepb.ca/DocsEng/ChildrenInCareMar2003Final.pdf>

This is an excellent overview of current child welfare issues and trends, with recommendations for future research. The research was commissioned by the National Children's Alliance of Canada, focusing on relevance and adherence to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Alberta's Youth in Transition Policy framework, October 2001

<http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/whoweare/youth/pdf/Youth%20In%20Transition%20Framework.pdf>

The Youth in Transition Policy Framework provides the direction and parameters for policy and program development for youth in transition, aged 13 to 24. The framework takes into consideration the diverse needs of youth in transition, as well as those of their parents, families, caregivers and communities.

Alan W. Leschied, Ph.D., Debbie Chiodo, M.A., Paul C. Whitehead, Ph.D., and Dermot Hurley, M.S.W. *The Association of Poverty with Child Welfare Service and Child and Family Clinical Outcomes*, University of Western Ontario, October 2003

<http://www.edu.uwo.ca/CAS/pdf/Child%20Poverty%20and%20Child%20Welfare%20Admissions%20Technical%20Report.pdf>

The influences of poverty, family status and violence in the lives of children and families seen at a large urban children's aid society are investigated. Comparative rates of social assistance dependency of child welfare families between 1995 and 2001 are reported.

Luba Serge, Margaret Eberle, Michael Goldberg, Susan Sullivan and Peter Dudding. *Pilot Study: The Child Welfare System and Homelessness among Canadian Youth*, December 2002

<http://www.cecw-cepb.ca/DocsEng/HomelessnessAndCW.pdf>

This pilot study aimed to contribute to a more thorough understanding of the relationship between youth who have been in the care of child welfare and youth homelessness in a Canadian context. This research project had two broad objectives: to identify the factors that lead to homelessness for some, while others, who may be in an equally vulnerable situation (i.e. in care) do not become homeless; and to assess the need for a broader study using the same or a modified research methodology. The study is based on interview with 36 homeless youth

Bruce Leslie and Francis Hare. *Improving The Outcomes For Youth In Transition From Care*, OACAS Journal, Volume 44, Number 3, October 2000, Ontario

<http://www.oacas.org/resources/OACASJournals/2000October/Outcomes.pdf>

This article provides information on outcome initiatives in Canada and reports the major findings from a joint study conducted by Toronto's CAS, Ryerson Polytechnic University and Covenant House in Toronto on youth in transition.

## USA

Mark E. Courtney Sherri Terao, Noel Bost. *Youth Transitions and Implications of Research for Policy*, Chapin Hall Centre for Children at the University of Chicago.

[http://www.cwlc.ca/conference/papers/Mark\\_Courtney.pdf](http://www.cwlc.ca/conference/papers/Mark_Courtney.pdf)

The purpose of the study is to gather information about services provided to selected foster youth in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin, to evaluate adult self-sufficiency outcomes achieved by the youth and to provide guidance to 3 states to comply with the provisions and overall purpose of John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. They plan to follow youth longitudinally across 3 waves. This presentation presents finding from the first wave and was given at the 2004 LAC conference on promoting resiliency in youth.

Robert M. Goerge, Principal Investigator Lucy Bilaver, Bong Joo Lee. *Employment Outcomes for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care* Final Report, University of Chicago Chapin Hall Center for Children, March 2002

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/search/hsp/fostercare-agingout02/>

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the employment outcomes of children exiting foster care near their eighteenth birthdays in California, Illinois, and South Carolina during the mid-1990s. This report addresses the following three primary research questions: What are the patterns of employment and the amount of earnings of youth aging out of foster care? How do these employment patterns compare with those of other youth of similar ages in low-income families? What are the sociodemographic characteristics and foster care service experiences that are related to the patterns of employment?

Mark E. Courtney, Irving P. Piliavin, Andrew Grogan-Kaylor, and Andre Nast. *"Foster Youth Transitions to Adulthood: A Longitudinal View of Youth Leaving Foster Care."* Children's Rights Resources website. (November/December 2001).

[http://www.childrensrights.org/Policy/policy\\_resources\\_youthcare\\_youthtransitions.htm](http://www.childrensrights.org/Policy/policy_resources_youthcare_youthtransitions.htm)

This research reports findings from a longitudinal study of 141 youth exiting foster care in Wisconsin in 1996-1996. It describes (1) the issues that youth confront as they approach the time at which they will leave foster care; and (2) their circumstances 12 to 18 months after they have been discharged from the foster care system.

Richard Wertheimer, Ph.D. Youth who “Age Out” of Foster Care: Troubled Lives, Troubling Prospects, Publication #2002-59, Child Trends Research Brief, Washington DC, December 2002  
<http://www.childtrends.org/Files/FosterCareRB.pdf>

EMQR Children and Family Services, Foster Care vs. Wraparound  
[http://www.emq.org/press/issue\\_fostercare.html](http://www.emq.org/press/issue_fostercare.html)

Website provides a summary of the findings of the 1999 Little Hoover Commission Report, Now in Our Hands: Caring For California’s Abused & Neglected Children. The report details the perils that face children in California who are neglected or abused, and shows the overall poor system outcomes for youth exiting the foster care system:

*Effective Approaches to Supporting Youth Aging Out of Foster Care, A Review of Research that is Currently Underway*. Voices for America’s Children Issue Brief, August 2004  
[http://www.voicesforamericaschildren.org/Content/ContentGroups/Policy/Child\\_Safety/Member\\_Mailing1/Supporting\\_Youth\\_Aging\\_Out\\_of\\_Foster\\_Care\\_What\\_Does\\_the\\_Research\\_Tell\\_Us\\_Issue\\_brief\\_8-04\\_c.pdf](http://www.voicesforamericaschildren.org/Content/ContentGroups/Policy/Child_Safety/Member_Mailing1/Supporting_Youth_Aging_Out_of_Foster_Care_What_Does_the_Research_Tell_Us_Issue_brief_8-04_c.pdf)

The little research that exists on outcomes for foster care alumni shows that these youth are ill prepared for the transition. Currently there is no established standard for programs aging out of foster care. Most programs that do exist have not been evaluated for quality. The brief examines three studies underway to examine independent living supports and services and the outcomes.

Casey Family Programs, ‘*Outcomes for Youth Exiting Foster Care*’ Washington, DC, June 2001 (no longer available online)

## United Kingdom

Jim Goddard (University of Bradford, UK). *Children Leaving Care in the United Kingdom: “Corporate Parenting” and Social Exclusion*. Journal of Societal & Social Policy, Vol. 2/3: 21-34 <http://www.rcssp.org/RCSSPleavingcare.pdf>

This article gives an overview of recent policies concerning children leaving care in the United Kingdom, with an emphasis on the Children (Leaving Care) Act, 2000

UK House of Commons Research Paper 00/63, *The Children Leaving Care Bill*, June 2000  
<http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2000/rp00-063.pdf>

The main purpose of the *Children (Leaving Care) Bill* is to extend the duties of local authorities to care leavers. This summary focuses on the main new provisions of the Bill.

## Australia

David Maunders, Max Liddell, Margaret Liddell and Sue Green. *Young people leaving care and protection: A report to the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme*

Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies [http://www.acys.utas.edu.au/nyars/N17\\_exec.htm](http://www.acys.utas.edu.au/nyars/N17_exec.htm)

The purpose of the research was to describe the experiences of 43 young people discharged from State care from February to September 1996 and to identify factors which assisted and impeded their transition to independent living.