

Myths Associated with Older Foster Youth

Myth #1: Older foster youth are juvenile delinquents with behavioral issues.

A majority of youth in foster care were placed in the system because of parental neglect or abuse, not for their own behavior. The presence of a caring adult can have a positive impact on all areas of older foster youths' lives.

Myth #2: Older foster youth will struggle to integrate into their new family.

Family-based placements may be difficult for all parties to navigate. The key to a successful placement lies in receiving adequate training and ongoing support from social workers. Open communication between youth and family members is also critical for transition. ExtraordinaryFamilies supports our families throughout the integration process and beyond to ensure our youth have a lifelong home.

Myth #3: Older foster youth have experienced extensive trauma and are unable to live a productive life.

Older foster youth have the same needs as any young adult and if given a stable environment, they are able to enjoy the same success rates as their non-foster peers in regard to employment, salaries and with support can attend college, set and achieve goals and enjoy healthy relationships.

Older Foster Youth Are Regular Kids

They want the same things that most adolescents and teenagers desire:

- Healthy, loving and supportive relationships
- Laughter, fun, and happiness
- A sense of belonging and fulfillment
- To have their basic needs met so they may focus on career and/or educational achievement

How to Support Foster Youth

Become a Foster/Resource Parent – children and youth need stable loving homes that can provide shelter, encouragement and support.

Emergency/Respite Care Housing – current foster youth families sometimes need a weekend away and for whatever reason are unable to take their foster youth. Become certified to provide respite care for a foster youth.

Co-mentor an older youth aging out of the system – our co-mentor program provides a community of caring, supportive adults and foster peers for those young adults aging out of the foster care system without getting adopted.

Adoption – there are 20,000 foster children waiting in LA County to be adopted.

Donations – our programs are always in need of financial and in-kind contributions.

Become a corporate partner – invite our youth to shadow a variety of careers, become a speaker, sponsor a foster youth to intern and get hands-on job experience.

Volunteer to help with agency events – help plan and outreach for a variety of events.

Let us know how else you might want to contribute



Improving Outcomes for Older Foster Youth





Overview of Foster Care

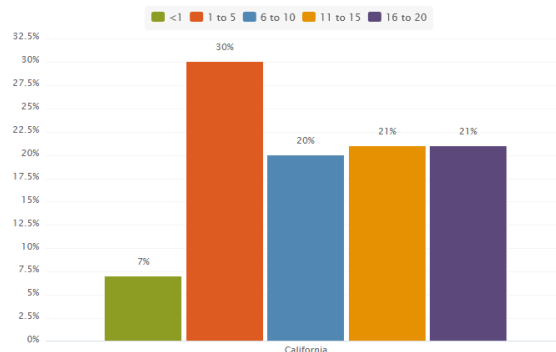
In Los Angeles County alone there are currently 34,881 children and youth in the foster care system. Over 600 young adults age out of the system each year without getting adopted or being reunited with birth families. Foster youth struggle with exiting the system due to: limited resources, lack of education, propensity for pregnancy, and lack of healthy adult relationships. Many youths become homeless, incarcerated, are unemployed, and struggle financially.

Changing Legislation

Under the Continuum of Care Reform Act (California Assembly Bill 403) group homes, also known as congregate care, will no longer be used for long-term placement. Youth living in group home care are more likely to enter the juvenile justice system and attain education at a lower rate. The state of California recognizes the importance of securing permanent homes for older foster youth. The new bill goes into effect January 1st, 2017 and was created to ensure that older youth's mental, physical, and emotional needs are met on a daily basis.

Foster Youth Statistics

A majority of foster youth in California are between the ages of 1 and 18. Infants are less likely to have long-term stays in care. Those who age-out without loving homes often still rely on transitional housing and resources. Support older youth to help them achieve their dreams.

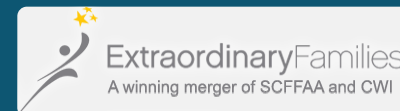


CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE BY AGE GROUP: 5 SELECTED (PERCENT) - 2013

National KIDS COUNT
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation



Photos provided by Heart Gallery of foster youth currently available for adoption.
www.heartgalleryla.org



Mission

Transform the daily lives of children and families in child welfare with innovative strategies and visionary policy reforms.

Vision

Every child and family in child welfare has the same opportunities, hopes and prospects that all children and families deserve.

Ways to Get Involved

Attend an orientation or give us a call to learn more about the many ways you can support foster youth.

Contact Us

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