

Setting the Stage

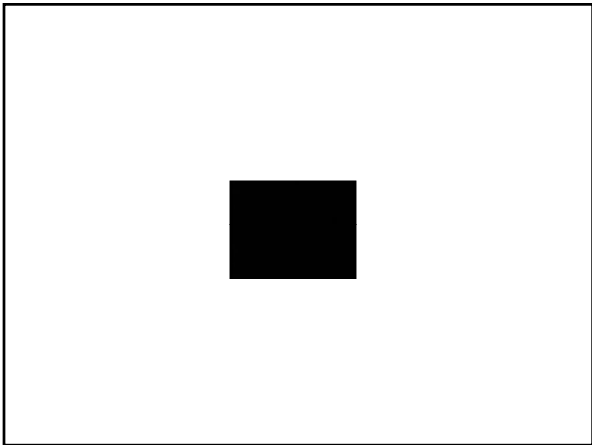
**Enhanced Management Training
First Jobs Academy
Dr. Doreen Arcus**

In their own voices

Youth in foster care

Video produced by AdoptUSKids

Cooperative agreement: US Children's Bureau,
Administration for Children and Families, & Department
of Health and Human Services
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFBa0cK52vM>



Why Foster Care?

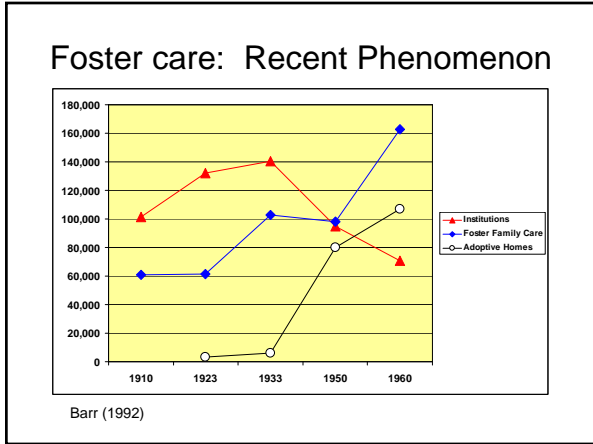
- Parents not providing care and protection
- Child is in danger
- State steps in

- State Laws not until 1850's
- Henry Berg founder of SPCA
- 9 yr old Mary Ellen Wilson

Evolution of Foster Care

- Beginning = primarily institutional care
 - Many children in orphanages not orphans
- Early 20th century: Move toward families
 - Poor health in overcrowded orphanages
 - Orphan Train movement: NYC→West & Midwest



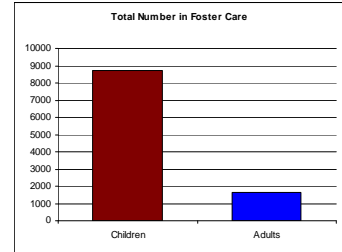



How do you get to Foster Care?

- Foster Care is never the first choice
- Necessary alternative
- Caregiver not providing protection
 - Physical Abuse
 - Sexual Abuse
 - Neglect
- Physical and psychological trauma
- Interference with developmental tasks

Who is in Foster Care?

- Over 500,000 US
- Over 9000 in MA
- Children
 - Transition to another agency, DMR or DMH
 - Support through vocational training or college degree to age 23 for BA
- Adults

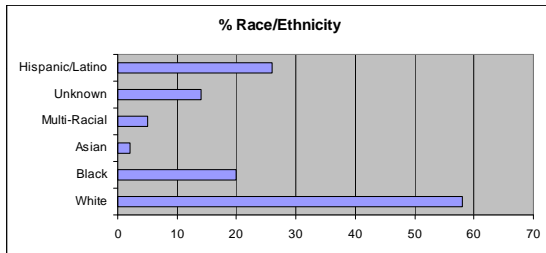


Data from DCF 2010

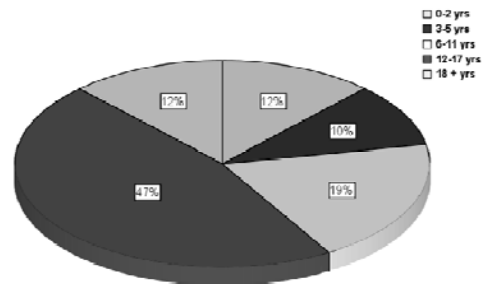
Who?

Gender: 49-51% Females-Males

Race & Ethnicity



Distribution of MA children & youth in foster care by age



Data from MA DSS Quarterly Report for the fourth quarter 2006

What is Foster Care?

- Temporary placement
- Safety
- Provide Care and Protection
- Default goal: Family Reunification
- In most cases supervised family visits

First step: Safety

Judith Herman

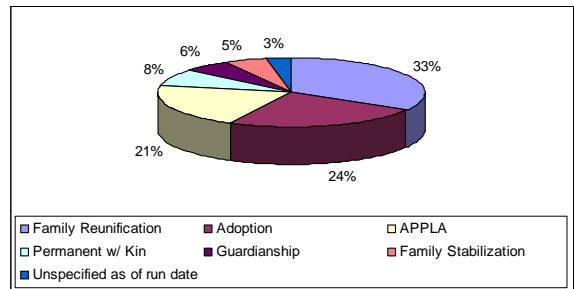


1. Establish safety
2. Remembrance
 - Reconstruct
 - Transform
3. Mourning
4. Reconnection
 - Self
 - Others

Goals of Foster Care

- Default Goal = Reunification
- Almost 40% rejoin original family
- About 25% adoption
 - Requires termination of parental rights
 - "Frees" the child for adoption
 - A process, not a hand-off
 - Legal finalization not until 6 mos post-placement
- About 20% APPLA
 - Alternative Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Goal of Foster Care Placements



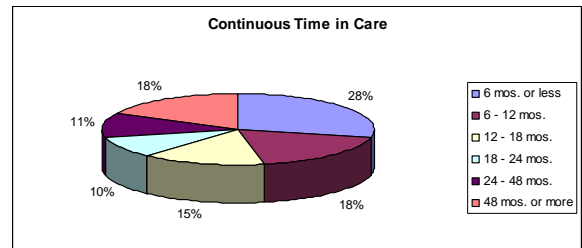
APPLA: Alternative Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

How long and how many?

On Average

- Length of stay: 15 mos
- Placement changes per stay: 3

How long?



Nearly half in foster care 1 year or less

Nearly 1:5 children in foster care 4 years or more

Change not just home

Adults formerly in foster care school histories

- 35% At least 5 elementary schools
- 65% At least 7 school changes K-12
- 74% Graduate HS or obtain GED

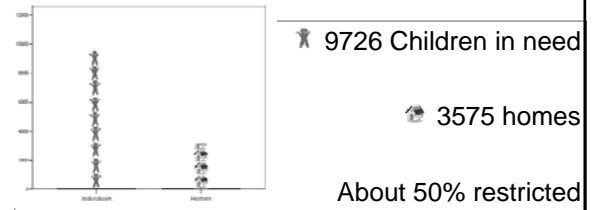
Developmental Context

- Not just Foster Care alone
- Why it was necessary
- Impacts every developmental domain
 - Personal-Social-Emotional
 - Cognition & Achievement
 - Confounding of Attachment & Loss
 - Emotion Regulation

Foster care & age

- Younger children
 - More likely shorter stays
- Older youth and young adults
 - Adolescents likely to “age out”
 - Continued support through college or vocational school (age 23 for BA)
 - Varies by state

How many foster homes?



Not enough

Tough teen years

- Adolescents & Young Adults
 - 90% of those in Group Homes
 - 98% of those in Other facilities
- More than 3x as likely to be in group or other facility compared to younger children

Youth who “Age Out”

- Employment
- Homelessness
- Incarceration or involvement with justice
- Pregnant earlier and unmarried

Who IS ready at 18?

But DON'T write them off

- Alanzo Mourning, Dan O'Brien, Ice T, Charlotte Ayanna, John Lennon



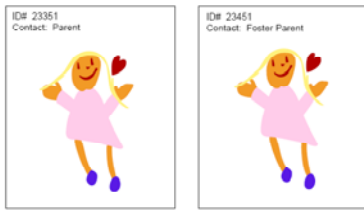
- FosterClub.com
- Voices of youth

What do we know about these children/youth & how do we know it?

- Media, popular press
- What makes news?
- Not “Child is doing fine”
- Abuse—Neglect—Removal—Upheaval—And you want me to be a poster child too??



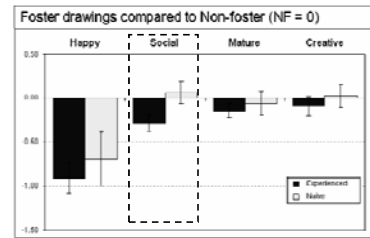
Awareness & Understanding



Study examine beliefs about children in foster care by asking participants to rate children's drawings

Important: Personal knowledge of someone connected to foster care

Experienced v. Naïve



ALL: FC rated less happy than NFC ($t(91) = -4.87; p < .05$)

Experienced v. Naïve rated FC personal-social adjustment lower, i.e., less confident, likable, & cheerful, lower self image & self esteem, more depressed, having more school problems and difficult relationships ($F(1,89) = 5.79; p < .05$)

Learning → Understanding

- Challenges for children
- Challenges for the systems
- Understanding the challenges
 - Impact
 - Identify solutions

Employment Outcomes for Youth Who Age out of Foster Care

Data from the Midwest Study
 Courtesy of Brian Lyght
 Annie E. Casey Foundation

Current employment?

Table 22. Employment: Midwest Study Compared with Add Health Study

	Midwest Study (N = 602)		Add Health Study (N = 1,486)		p
	#	%	#	%	
Ever held a job	570	94.7	1446	97.3	*
Ever worked since exiting foster care	508	84.4	-	-	
Currently employed	289	48.0	1122	75.5	*
Currently employed (non-incarcerated only)	289	51.9	1122	75.7	*

Source: Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth

Earnings?

Table 28. Income from Employment During the Past Year: Midwest Study Compared with Add Health Study

	Midwest Study			Add Health Study ^b			p
	N	#	%	N	#	%	
Any income from employment during the past year	583	424	72.7	1,482	1,357	91.6	*
Amount of income from employment (if any) ^c	425			1,291			
\$5,000 or less		163	38.4		281	21.8	
\$5,001 to \$10,000		74	17.4		142	11.0	
\$10,001 to \$25,000		124	29.2		441	34.2	
\$25,001 to \$50,000		53	12.5		367	28.1	
More than \$50,000		4	0.9		60	4.6	
Missing		7	1.6		107	15.3	
Mean			\$12,064			\$20,349	*
Standard Deviation			\$11,675			\$16,760	
Median			\$8,000			\$18,300	

Source: Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth

Table 30. Asset Accumulation: Midwest Study Compared with Add Health Study

	Midwest Study			Add Health Study			p
	N	#	%	N	#	%	
Any savings/checking account	602	285	47.3	1,488	1267	85.1	*
Owms a vehicle	602	270	44.9	1,487	1209	81.3	*
Owms a residence ^a	557	36	6.5	1,484	290	19.5	*

Source: Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth

Self support?

Table 31. Economic Hardships during the Past Year: Midwest Study Compared with Add Health Study

	Midwest Study			Add Health Study			p
	N	#	%	N	#	%	
Not enough money to pay rent	583	166	28.5	1,478	109	7.4	*
Not enough money to pay utility bill	582	157	26.9	1,180	175	11.8	*
Gas or electricity shut off	583	51	8.7	1,480	64	4.3	*
Phone service disconnected ^b	583	176	30.2	1,183	220	14.8	*
Evicted	583	50	8.6	1,479	10	0.7	*
At least one hardship	583	277	47.5	1,485	144	23.2	*
Mean number of hardships		1.03			0.39		*

Source: Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth

Employment Trajectories of Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care

Coming of Age: Employment Outcomes for Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care Through Their Middle Twenties (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2008).

Methodology:

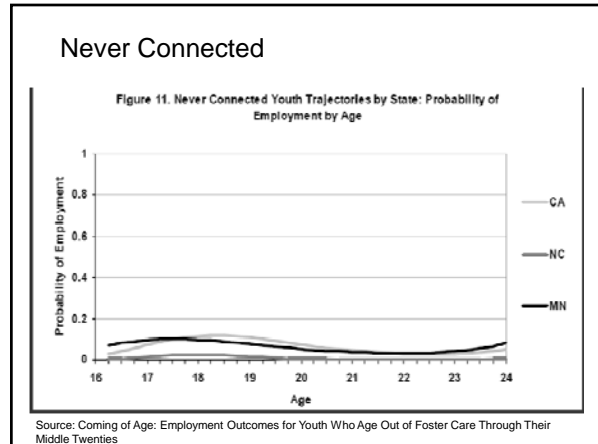
- Focus on youth who age out at age 18
- Presents employment outcomes six years after care
- Three states: California, Minnesota, North Carolina
- Data
 - State Child Welfare Administrative Data
 - Unemployment Insurance Wage Reporting Data
 - Public Assistance Data
 - National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997
- Comparison Groups: similar-age youth and low-income youth

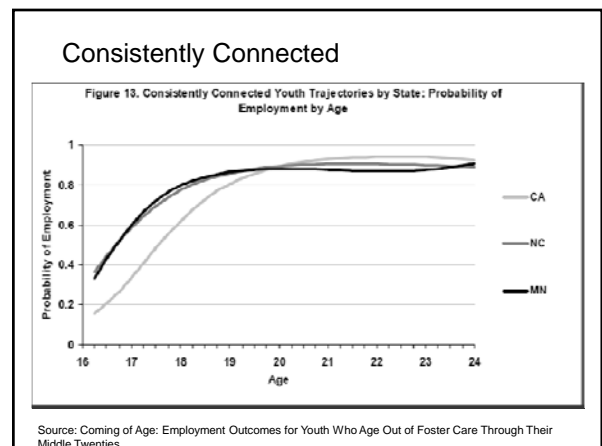
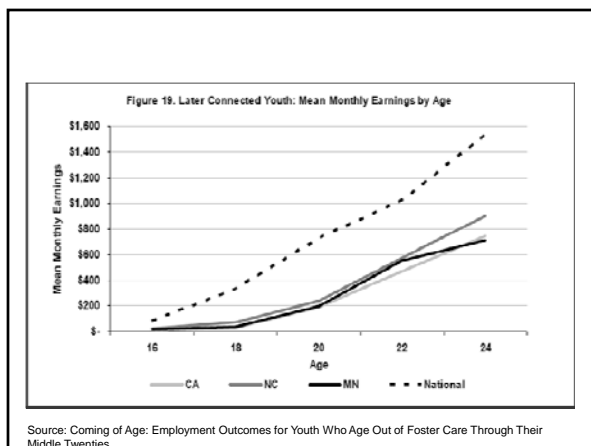
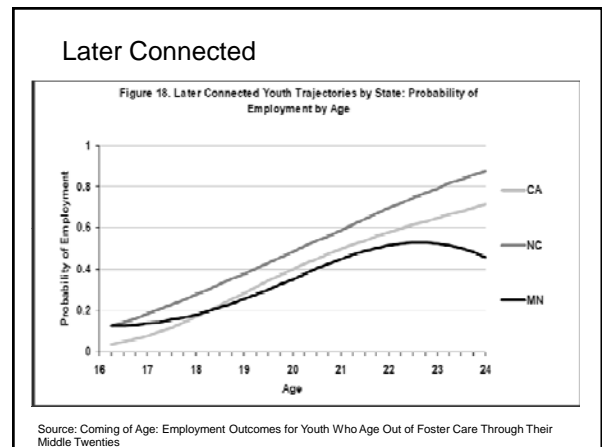
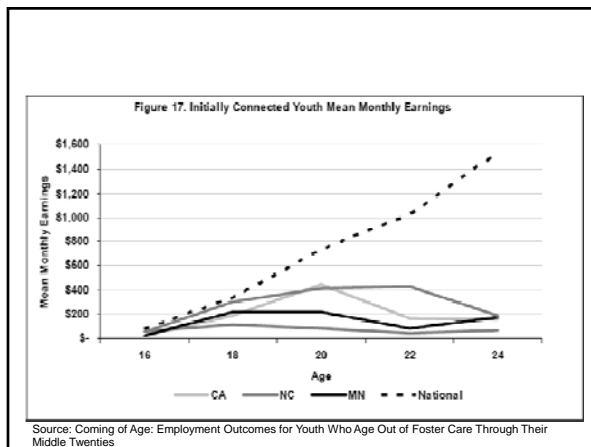
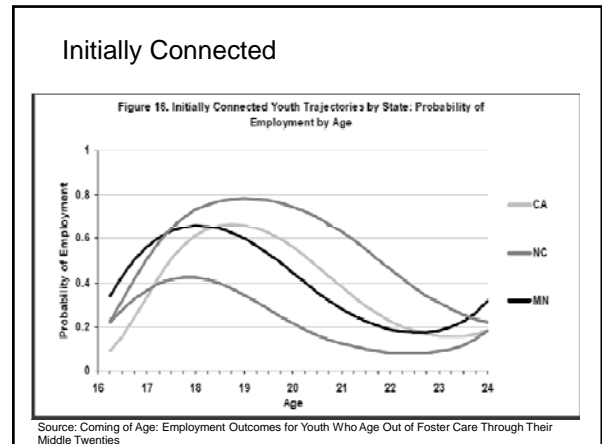
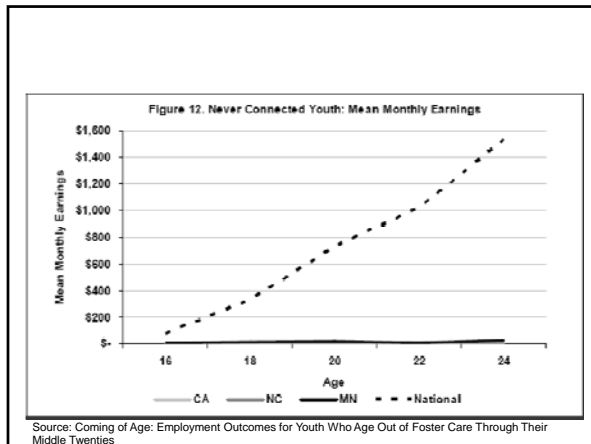
Findings:

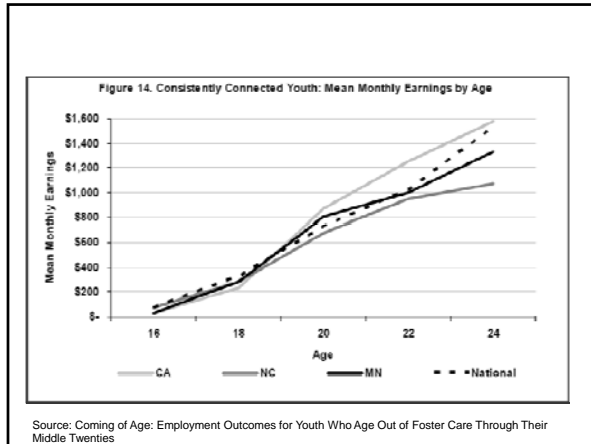
- Low rates of employment persist through age 24
- Low earnings persist through age 24
- Youth who age out of foster care tend to follow one of four employment trajectories as they transition to adulthood:

Employment Trajectories of Youth who Age out of Foster Care

- Never Connected
- Initially Connected
- Later Connected
- Consistently Connected







Best Employment Trajectory:
 Summary of Findings from DHHS Study

Consistently Connected:

- Maintain high probabilities of employment between 18 and 24
- Average earnings are comparable to youth nationally
- Begin connecting to the workforce prior to age 18

Discussion