



# Problems in the Foster Care System

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# History of the Foster Care System

- Colonial America
  - English Poor Laws
- Pre-Progressive Era
  - Immigrant and Orphaned Children
  - Almshouses
  - New York Children's Aid Society (1853)
- Eventual Government Monitoring



# Case Writing

- Case plans are plans for foster youth written by social workers that outline a plan for the resources to be offered to the child in order to increase their general well-being.
- However, foster youth are not always involved in their own case writing process
  - Only 14 states allow children to elect representatives (“Case Planning”, 2018, pg. 2)
  - Only 31 states require children to be involved in their own case writing
- Although all foster youth qualify for mental health resources, these are not always written into their case plans
  - Idaho - Children know about what is available to them
  - California and Connecticut - Integrated in

# Issues within the Foster Care System

- Lack of Resources for Alumni
  - 1 in 5 children who age out become instantly homeless (“Aging Out”, 2017, para. 1)
  - 1 in 2 children who age out find some gainful employment by the age of 24 (“Aging Out”, 2017, para. 1)
- Poor Retention Rates of Foster Families
  - Only 40% of foster families continue after the first year (Flynn, 2019, para. 5-9)
  - 80% of families experienced reported emotional grief and only 33% felt they were sufficiently trained (Flynn, 2019, para. 5-9)
- Prevalence of Mental Illness
  - 80% of foster care children experience some significant mental health issues as opposed to 20% of the general population (“Mental Health and Foster Care”, 2019, para. 1)
  - Depression, PTSD, panic disorders, etc.
  - Care for these issues are from generalized sources and not a private counsellor
- Pre-Exposed Trauma or System Induced Trauma?

# Child Involvement in Case Writing

- Mandate child involvement in case writing
  - Increases a range of positive behaviors in youth (Salazar, 2020, para. 8)
  - Decrease the stress of the transition placed on the child
  - Require individual mental health evaluation and counselling
  - A majority of states already do this and it has led to no loss of efficiency and no major costs to the state



# Increasing the Maximum Age

- Increase the age at which youth age out of the foster care system to 20 years old
  - Costs offset by success of foster youth care alumni
  - Illinois - Higher College completion rates
  - Illinois - Higher Costs - \$37,948 (Courtney, 2015, pg. 3-4)
  - Every \$1 dollar spent on youth after the age of 18 resulted in a benefit of \$2 to foster youth in their lifetime (Courtney 2015, pg. 7).



# Sources

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