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What is the Evidence on Extended Care?

Mark Courtney, MSW, PhD

Co-Director, TAY-Hub

University of California, Berkeley



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My purpose today

- Summarize some takeaways from international research on the extension of care to young adults
- Summarize evidence of participation in and benefits of extended care in the USA, focusing on recent findings
- Lessons learned that should influence implementation
- Importance of evaluation for successful implementation
- Q & A

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What is extended care???

- Most basic level: Provision of services offered or supported by government policy targeting young adults transitioning to adulthood from out-of-home care
- Not much consistency in definition and implementation of extended care cross-nationally or, in many cases, within nations

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International takeaways on extended care

- Definitional ambiguity (e.g., aftercare or continuing care?)
- Financial arrangements
- Implementation in practice
 - Eligibility criteria and their enforcement
 - Resource constraints lead to disconnect between policy and what is offered
- Informal extended care
- Research on extended care
 - Little of it, mostly descriptive of the transition from care and of particular providers, programs, and subgroups
 - Almost nothing evaluating the influence of extended care on outcomes

van Bredda et al. (2020). Extended care: Global dialogue on policy, practice and research. *Children and Youth Services Review*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105596>

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Evidence of participation in and
benefits of extended care in the
USA

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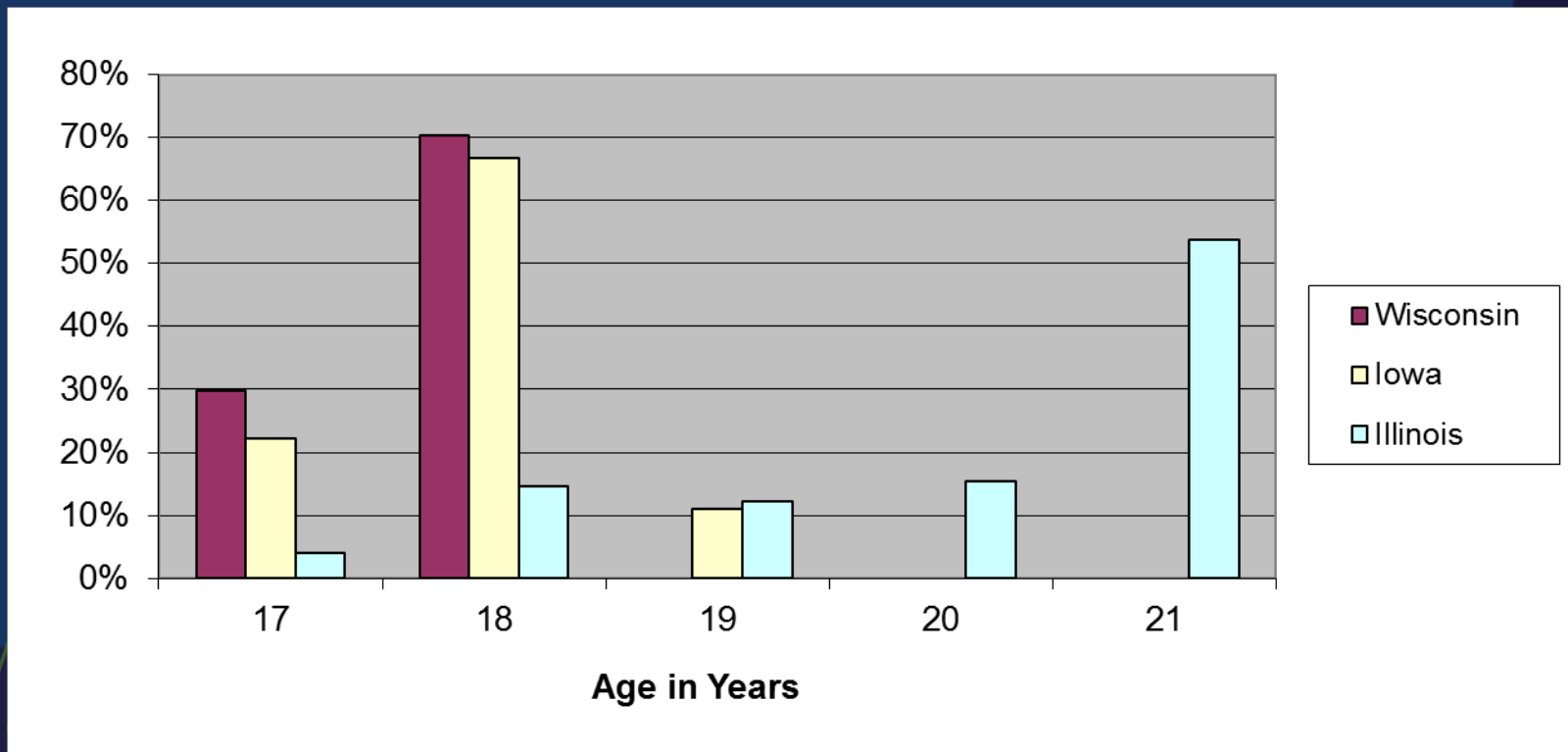
Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth

- “Midwest Study” of foster youth making the transition to adulthood in the wake of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999
- Collaboration between state child welfare agencies and researchers
- Foster youth in states of Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois who:
 - Were still in care at age 17
 - Had entered care before their 16th birthday
 - Had been placed in care because they were abused, neglected or dependent
 - Not originally placed because of delinquency
- Data from in-person interviews at ages 17, 19, 21, 23, and 26 and government program administrative data

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If you build it, they will come...

Age at Discharge by State



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Summary of findings on extending care: Illinois

- Allowing foster youth to remain in care until age 21, possible in Illinois but not the other states, was associated with:
 - Increased likelihood of completing secondary and obtaining post-secondary education (Courtney, Dworsky, & Pollack, 2007; Courtney & Hook, 2017; Okpych, 2021)
 - Increased earnings (Hook & Courtney, 2011)
 - Delayed pregnancy (Dworsky & Courtney, 2010)
 - Reduced crime, particularly among females (Lee, Courtney, & Hook, 2012)
 - Delayed homelessness (Dworsky, Napolitano, & Courtney, 2013)
 - Increased involvement of noncustodial fathers with their children (Hook & Courtney, 2013)
- Allowing foster youth to remain in care until age 21 also increased their likelihood of receiving independent living services after age 18 (Courtney, Lee, & Perez, 2011).

Overview of CalYOUTH

CalYOUTH is an evaluation of the California's extension of foster care to age 21

1. CalYOUTH includes:

- **Longitudinal study** of young people in CA foster care making the transition to adulthood (n = 727)
- **Periodic surveys of caseworkers** serving young people in CA foster care
- **Analysis of government program administrative data**

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CalYOUTH Youth Survey Purpose: Obtain information about a range of life experiences & young adult outcomes

- E.g., Foster care placement, Service utilization & preparation, Education & employment, Health & development, Social support

Sample: Youths ages 16.75-17.75 in CA foster care for 6+ months as of December 2012

Interview wave	Date	Age of youths	# Participants	Response Rate
Wave 1	2013	17	727	95%
Wave 2	2015	19	611	80%
Wave 3	2017	21	616	81%
Wave 4	2019	23	622	82%

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Administrative Data Study

Sample

- Youth in care at some point in time after their 16th birthday (between 2006-2019)(n = 100k+)
- Youth in pre-EFC and post-EFC eras

Outcomes

- Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) data linked to:
 - College attendance, persistence, and degree completion (National Student Clearinghouse)
 - Employment and earnings (Unemployment Insurance system)
 - Public benefit programs: CalFresh (food assistance); CalWORKS (cash assistance for low-income parents)

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CalYOUTH and benefits of EFC

- CalYOUTH research has found more time in EFC is significantly associated with outcomes at age 21, when EFC ends in California:
 - Education (secondary school completion & college enrollment)
 - Employment (more time employed)
 - Savings (greater amount in savings)
 - Social support (more connections to professionals)
 - Hardships (lower public food assistance, fewer economic hardships, less homelessness/couch-surfing)
 - Family formation (decreased pregnancy)
 - Criminal justice (lower arrest & conviction)

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But do EFC benefits last beyond 21?

- What are associations between EFC and youth outcomes at age 23, about 2 years after EFC age limit, based on analyses of youth survey data?
- Is more time in EFC associated with age-23 outcomes?
 - About 2 dozen outcomes evaluated
 - Span many developmental domains (e.g., education and employment, hardships, family formation, physical and behavioral health, criminal justice system involvement)

Courtney, M. E., Okpych, N. J., & Park S. (2021). *Report from CalYOUTH: Findings on the relationships between extended foster care and youths' outcomes at age 23*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

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Descriptive Statistics on Outcomes at Age 23

Domain	Outcome	N	% or Mean(SD)
Education	Completed high school diploma, GED, other credential (%)	529	83.6
	Ever enrolled in college (%) ^a	619	63.9
	Enrolled in college between last interview and W4 (%) ^b	620	35.0
	Completed a 2-year or 4-year college degree by W4 (%) ^c	619	10.9
Employment	Worked in last 12 months before W4 at a job that lasted 3 or more months & worked at least 20 hours per week (%)	577	82.3
	Amount of income from employment in 12 months before W4 (Mean/[SD])	606	\$14,761 (\$18,019)
Assets	Current balance of all checking, savings, and money market accounts (Mean [SD])	601	\$1,704 (\$5,749)

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Descriptive Statistics on Outcomes at Age 23 (con't)

Domain	Outcome	N	% or Mean(SD)
Hardships	Number of economic hardships in past year before Wave 4 (scale of 0–6; Mean [SD])	609	1.2 (1.6)
Food insecurity	USDA Food Insecurity Measure at Wave 4 (%)	620	28.2
Homelessness	Ever homeless or couch surfed since last completed interview (%)	622	36 .0
	Number of times homeless since last completed interview (0–5 or more; Mean (SD))	617	0.7 (1.4)
	Total number of days homeless since last completed interview (0–365; Mean [SD])	616	30.0 (81.3)
Public assistance	Amount of CalFresh benefits received in 12 months before W4; Mean [SD])	614	\$850 (\$1,495)

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Descriptive Statistics on Outcomes at Age 23 (con't)

Domain	Outcome	N	% or Mean(SD)
General health	General health rating (%)		
	Poor/Fair	620	24.3
	Good		33.5
	Very good		22.8
	Excellent		19.5
Behavioral health	Any mental health disorder ¹	597	28.8
	Any alcohol/substance use disorder	617	15.3
Social support	Total number of nominated supports (maximum of 9; Mean(SD))	621	2.8 (1.4)
	Total number of nominated professionals (maximum of 3; Mean(SD))	620	0.18 (0.49)
	Adequacy of social support (scale of 0 to 6; Mean(SD))	620	4.63 (1.61)

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Descriptive Statistics on Outcomes at Age 23 (con't)

Domain	Outcome	N	% or Mean(SD)
Pregnancy and parenthood	Became pregnant/impregnated female since last completed interview ^a (%)	601	33.2
	Had a child since last completed interview ^b (%)	600	17.1
Criminal justice system involvement	Arrested since last completed interview (%)	596	14.4
	Convicted of a crime since last completed interview (%)	594	6.9
Victimization	Physically assaulted in 12 months prior to Wave 4 (%)	618	5.9
	Weapon pulled or used on respondent in 12 months prior to Wave 4 (%)	597	8.1
	Sexual victimization since last completed interview (%)	590	11.2

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Domain	Each additional year in extended foster care and outcome at age 23:	Outcome unit	Estimate	P-value
Education	Increased the expected probability that youth completed a high school credential by about 8 percentage points.	Percentage points	8.0	<.001
	Increased their expected probability of ever enrolling in college by about 10-12 percentage points ^a	Percentage points	11.7	<.001
	Increased their expected probability of enrolling in college since last completed interview by about 7 percentage points ^b	Percentage points	6.5	<.001
	Increased their expected probability of completing a 2-yr or 4-yr college degree by about 3 percentage points ^c	Percentage points	3.2	.002
Employment	Increased their expected probability of working in past year for 3+ months, 20+hrs/week by about 5 percentage points.	Percentage points	4.6	.005
	Increased amount of money youth had in bank accounts by about \$640	Dollars	\$642	.002

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Domain	Each additional year in extended foster care and outcome at age 23:	Outcome unit	Estimate	P-value
Public food assistance	Decreased receipt of need-based public food assistance by about \$140 in past year	Dollars	-\$143	.024
Food insecurity	Decreased odds of being food insecure in past year by about 21%	Odds ratio	0.79	.012
Homelessness	Decreased odds of being homeless or couch-surfing since their last interview by about 19%	Odds ratio	0.81	.025
	Decreased risk of additional time homeless by 23%	Relative risk ratio	0.77	<.001
	Decreased expected number of days homeless since last interview by about 10 days	Days	-9.5	.004
Criminal Justice	Decreased odds that youth had been arrested since last interview by about 28%	Odds ratio	0.72	.010
Social Support	Increased the likelihood of youth feeling like they have adequate support by about 25%	Relative risk ratio	1.25	.005

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Outcomes not found to be significantly associated with the number of years in extended care:

- Earnings from employment in past year
- Number of economic hardships in past year
- Physical and behavioral health
- Number of nominated supports and professionals
- New pregnancies and childbirths since last interview
- Conviction of crime since last interview
- Victimization in past year

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Study Limitations

- Data limitations
 - Self-report data may not be accurate
 - Data on college graduations missed those in May/June 2019
- Longitudinal survey analysis only includes post-AB12 youth
 - May be differences between youth who spent more/less time in EFC that are not accounted for in statistical models
- Analyses use generic sets of control variables, and key control variables may not have been included
- The study period includes early years when EFC was still very much a work in progress

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Overall conclusions

- Findings from the most recent analyses reinforce many findings from earlier analyses, in California and elsewhere, of the influence of EFC on young adult outcomes
- Findings thus far are encouraging
 - EFC appears to positively influence a wide range of outcomes, including education, employment, savings, food insecurity, criminal justice system involvement, and social support
 - We have found no evidence of harm associated with time in EFC

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Lessons learned and EFC implementation

- Eligibility for and benefits offered through extended care significantly influence utilization
 - Who is included and who is left out by eligibility criteria?
 - How developmentally appropriate and accessible are services and supports made available through extended care?
- One size will not fit all: Distinct subgroups have distinct needs
 - Many adolescents in residential care will likely need supportive housing
 - Many youth become parents for the first time during this period
- Coordination and collaboration with other adult-serving institutions (e.g., housing, public assistance, education, employment, health and behavioral health, tribes...) is essential
- Providing corporate parenting to young adults is new to child welfare agencies; expect your policies and programs to be works in progress for quite a while!

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Evaluation, Evaluation, Evaluation!!!

- Child welfare agencies have experimented with countries' most marginalized communities and families for well over a century, with scant protections for the human subjects of those experiments
- Extended care is a brave new experiment
- Research to date has called into question many assumptions of those responsible for the care of transition-age youth
 - “they don't like us, so they won't take advantage of extended care”
 - “many youth aging out of care stay with their foster carers”
 - “most youth aging out of care rely on other care leavers for support”
- Evaluation research has been instrumental in building support for continuing care
- Evaluation research is beginning to identify effective EFC practice

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TAY-Hub

TAY-Hub
Transition-Age Youth
Research & Evaluation Hub

CCWIP
California Child Welfare
Indicators Project

Secure Login

TAY-Hub
Transition-Age Youth
Research & Evaluation
Hub

The TAY-Hub seeks to improve policies and practices affecting TAY by monitoring outcomes and through applied research that is grounded in engagement with members of the child welfare services community, including those with lived experience of foster care.

TAY Report Index
All Measures

Journal Articles
Peer-Reviewed

Research Memos
Policy Briefs

CalYOUTH Evaluation
Transitions to Adulthood

TAY Programs
Extended Foster Care
(AB 12)

<https://ccwip.berkeley.edu/TAY/>

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TAY-Hub: Enhances capacity to use evidence to inform policy and practice

Building on the foundation created by the CalYOUTH project...

- Collaborate with the child welfare services community to identify topics for TAY-Hub research and evaluation activities
- Conduct research and evaluation activities, and sponsor activities of third-party partners
- Engage young people and key players providing services to TAY in interpreting the meaning and implications for policy and practice of TAY-Hub research and evaluation findings
- Engage the child welfare services community in dissemination of findings and the implications for policy and practice of project-sponsored research and evaluation