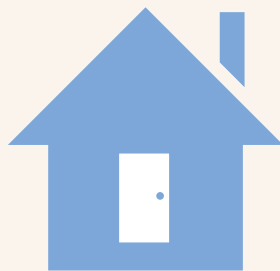


Youth Perspectives on Out-of-Home Placement



BEING WITH
OR NEAR
FAMILY



BEING
PLACED IN A
FAMILY SETTING



STAYING IN
THEIR HOME
SCHOOL

February 2018



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From 2012 through 2015, 1,255 youth ages 14 through 17 entered into out-of-home placements in Allegheny County. The “Youth Voice” survey was conducted in order to understand their experiences and identify opportunities for improvement.

More than 200 youth ages 14 through 17 completed the anonymous paper-based survey over the three-year period. Surveys were sent to youth residing in both family-based settings (foster/kinship care) and facility-based settings (referred to as congregate care in this report and consisting of group homes, residential facilities and supervised independent living).¹ For additional details on survey methodology, analysis and respondents, see the **Appendix** on page 14. This report provides an overview of the key findings, a closer look at the experiences of youth representing various subpopulations, and an exploration of youth respondents’ ideas about how their experiences with the child welfare system could be improved. The survey results will be used for planning and program development, and to identify opportunities to improve the youth experience in child welfare.

¹ The majority of surveys were completed by youth in congregate care (75%) because the early surveys focused on this group. Later surveys targeted youth in foster/kinship care, but the response rates were not as successful. As such, the findings described in this report do not reflect the entire population in out-of-home care and should be considered preliminary. Future survey initiatives will focus on expanding recruitment efforts to youth in foster/kinship care through staff interactions and meetings or events.

OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT SETTINGS

Foster care: Out-of-home care by a trained caregiver in a family setting

Group home: Out-of-home care in a facility-based setting

Kinship care: Out-of-home care in a family setting with a relative or family friend

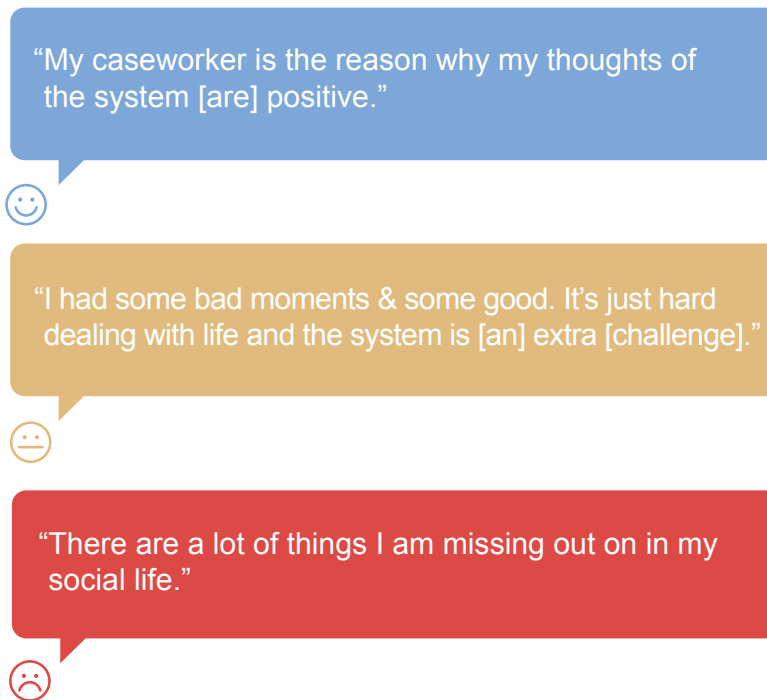
Residential facility: Out-of-home care in a structured living facility in which youth may receive care from doctors, therapists, social workers and child care workers

Supervised independent living: Out-of-home care for older youth transitioning from the foster care system; may be in scattered-site or semi-supervised apartments, clustered or supervised apartments, or shared homes

KEY FINDINGS

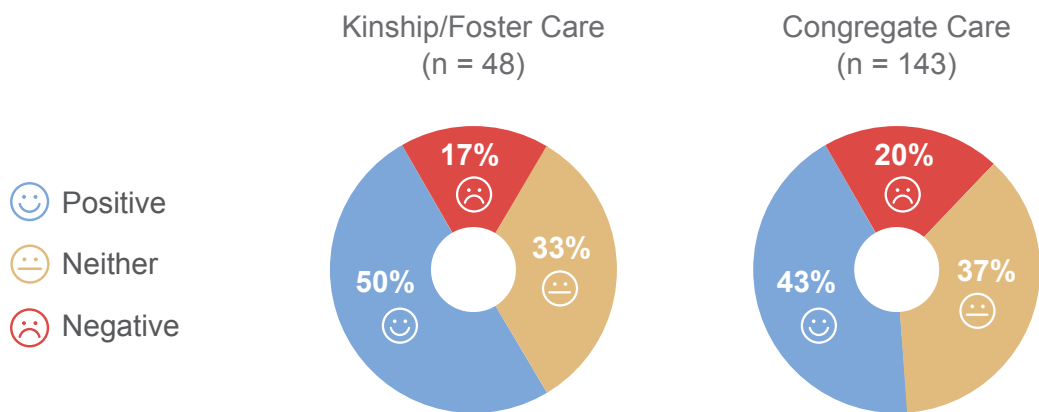
Youth had mixed feelings about their experiences with the child welfare system. Approximately half described their experience as positive/very positive and half described the opposite (see **Figure 1** for examples of quotes from survey respondents).

FIGURE 1: Youth Responses about Their Experience with the Child Welfare System



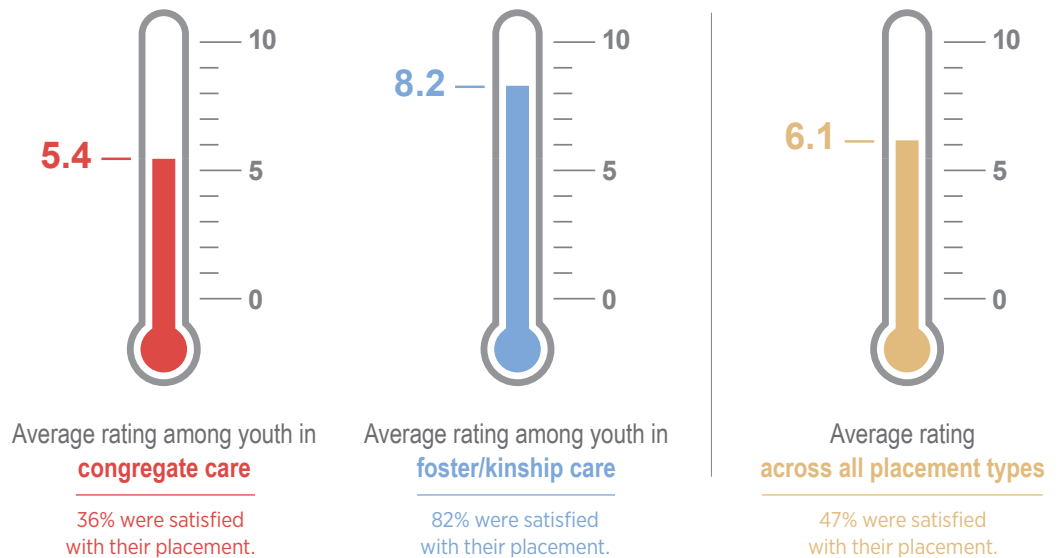
When comparing the responses of youth in foster/kinship care with those of youth in congregate care, youth in foster/kinship care reported a more positive experience than youth in congregate care facilities (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: Experience with the Child Welfare System by Placement Type



Youth were also asked to rate their satisfaction with their placement on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being least satisfied and 10 being most satisfied. The average rating was 6.1 (see **Figure 3**). Using 7 or greater as an indicator for positive satisfaction, fewer than half (47%) of all survey respondents reported that they were satisfied. However, when responses were examined by placement type, the findings revealed that youth in congregate care were less satisfied with their placement than youth in foster/kinship care. Specifically, youth in congregate care gave their placement an average satisfaction rating of 5.4, with 36 percent reporting positive satisfaction. This is compared to an average satisfaction rating of 8.2 for youth in foster/kinship care, 82 percent of whom rated their placement positively.

FIGURE 3: Youth Satisfaction with Their Placement, by Placement Type



When placed out-of-home, youth valued being with or near family, being placed in a family setting and staying in their home school.



BEING WITH OR NEAR FAMILY



BEING PLACED IN A FAMILY SETTING



STAYING IN THEIR HOME SCHOOL

Youth across all placement settings and all demographics (e.g., gender, race and sexual orientation) prioritized maintaining family relationships. They also preferred being placed in a family-style setting and being able to stay in the same school before and after placement.

Youth wanted more information and resources related to employment, job training and housing.

Youth in congregate care also wanted more information about transitional living opportunities, whereas youth in foster/kinship care felt they needed more information on post-high school opportunities. The general interest in information about employment and housing suggests a desire for practical tools to prepare for adulthood.

² Clinic Visits/Appointments:
16% Congregate Care vs.
2% Kinship/Foster Care

Youth also expressed wishes to have had other resources, including clinic visits and appointments (identified by more youth in congregate care than foster/kinship care²), contraception, sexual education, pregnancy counseling, mental health services, adolescent help groups, and drug and alcohol programs.

Most youth had ideas about how their out-of-home placement might have been prevented.

Open-ended comments were analyzed and three main themes were identified: **changes in parental behavior, changes in youth behavior, and participation in family therapy or counseling.** Other ideas included more attention toward resolving family conflict, prevention or in-home services, a safe and affordable home, improving family’s finances, changing to a different school and/or expressing concerns to child welfare earlier. However, more than one in four youth (28%) believed that nothing could have been done to prevent their out-of-home placement.

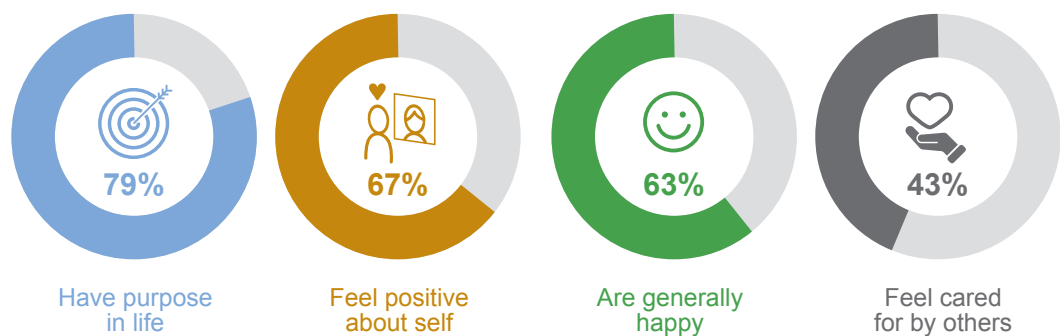
YOUTH RESPONSES TO “HOW COULD YOUR OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED?”

- “...If my parents did not abuse drugs.”
- “Listening more, not being disrespectful.”
- “[I] should’ve [gone] to school.”
- “I could have been open and honest about what I was feeling.”
- “We should have had family therapy or something to improve our relationship... but nothing was done.”

Youth described positive well-being and determination to overcome challenges, but were less likely to feel that they were cared for by others.

The majority of youth reported that they have a purpose in life (79%), with more than half reporting that they feel positive about themselves (67%) and are generally happy (63%). Fewer than half of all youth (43%) responded that they feel cared for by others, however (see **Figure 4**). See the next section, “Analysis by Youth Characteristics,” for more detailed information about how youth of different races, sexual orientations, genders and placement types perceived their well-being.

FIGURE 4: Psychological and Social Well-Being Characteristics



Note: % indicating Sometimes, Often or All of the Time

ANALYSIS BY YOUTH CHARACTERISTICS

Since experiences in out-of-home placement vary widely, the survey responses of select groups were further analyzed for preliminary comparisons and potential insights. The following analysis examines youth responses by race, sexual orientation, gender and placement type.

Experiences by Race³

- **Bi/multiracial youth reported lower satisfaction with the child welfare system and with their placement than white and black youth reported** (see **Table 1**). Black and white youth reported negative or very negative experiences with the child welfare system at similar rates (17% and 18% respectively) while 23 percent of bi/multiracial youth reported negative or very negative experiences. Survey responses about satisfaction with placement type were similar; black and white youth reported similar rates of satisfaction with their placement (48%) while bi/multiracial youth were less likely (42%) to indicate that they were satisfied with their placement.

³ Four youth identified as Hispanic and four identified as “other” or did not identify a race on the survey. These responses are not included in the race component of this analysis due to their small sample sizes.

⁴ Race was not identified in two cases and analysis was not completed in two cases. Four youth identified as Hispanic.

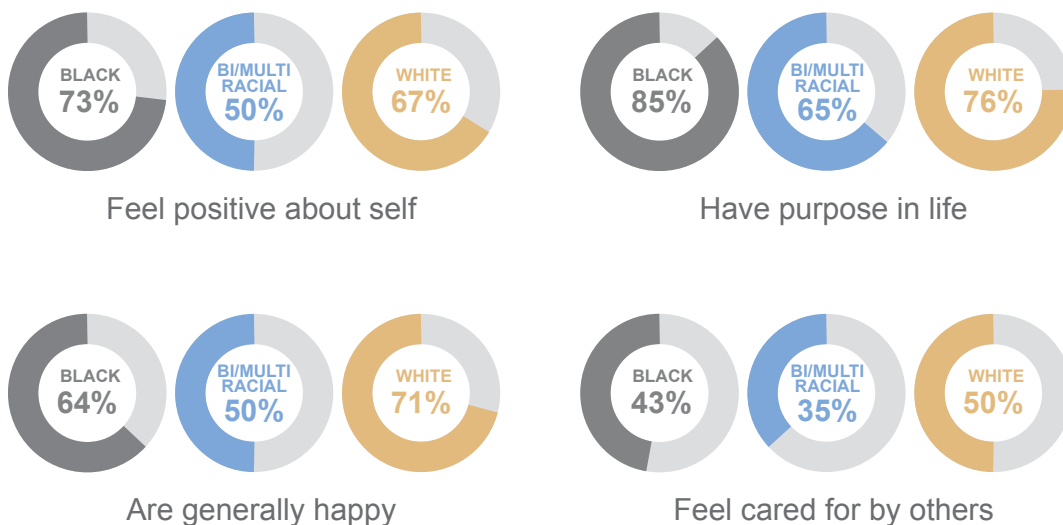
TABLE 1: Child Welfare System Experience by Race⁴

	BLACK (N = 117)	BIRACIAL (N = 26)	WHITE (N = 45)
Very Negative or Negative	17%	23%	18%
Neither or Unsure	35%	35%	38%
Very Positive or Positive	48%	42%	44%

- **Bi/multiracial youth reported more frequently that they are using drugs or alcohol to cope.** Thirty-one percent of bi/multiracial youth said that they use drugs or alcohol to cope, compared to 23 percent of black youth and 22 percent of white youth.
- **When asked about their psychological and social well-being, bi/multiracial youth generally responded more negatively than their black and white peers.** Bi/multiracial youth were less likely to respond that they felt positive about themselves, that they had a purpose in life, that they are generally happy, and that they feel cared for by others (see Figure 5).
- **On the other hand, bi/multiracial youth fared better than their black and white peers in feeling that they could bounce back from setbacks.** Seventy percent of bi/multiracial youth reported that they felt they could bounce back compared to 62 percent of black youth and 48 percent of white youth.
- **When comparing the reported psychological and social well-being of black and white youth, responses were mixed.** Compared to white youth, black youth were more likely to report that they felt positive about themselves and had a purpose in life, but less frequently responded that they were generally happy and felt cared for by others.

Figure 5: Psychological and Social Well-Being by Race

● = Black (n = 17) ● = Bi/multiracial (n = 23) ● = White (n = 45) | Percent out of 100



Note: % indicating Sometimes, Often or All of the Time

Experiences by Sexual Orientation

- **Youth who identify as LGBTQ reported lower satisfaction with the child welfare system and their placement experience.** However, LGBTQ and heterosexual youth had similar satisfaction ratings with congregate care placement, with only about a third expressing satisfaction with their placement.⁵

⁵ Differences by sexual orientation in foster/kinship care placement were not calculated because of limitations in sample size.

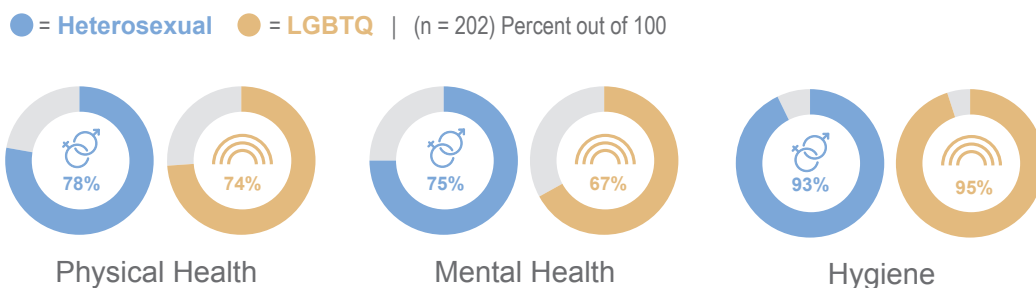
⁶ Sexual orientation was self-reported.

TABLE 2: Child Welfare System Experience by Sexual Orientation⁶

	HETEROSEXUAL (N = 145)	LGBTQ (N = 39)
Very Negative or Negative	17%	26%
Neither or Unsure	37%	31%
Very Positive or Positive	46%	44%

- **LGBTQ youth had more concerns about their psychological well-being than their heterosexual peers.** For instance, 18 percent of LGBTQ youth said that they felt understood by others compared to 32 percent of heterosexual youth. Thirty-six percent of LGBTQ youth believed that they were cared for by others compared to 46 percent of heterosexual youth. Relatedly, LGBTQ youth were less likely to report that their physical and mental health needs were being met compared to heterosexual peers (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6: Psychological and Social Well-Being by Sexual Orientation



Note: % indicating Sometimes, Often or All of the Time

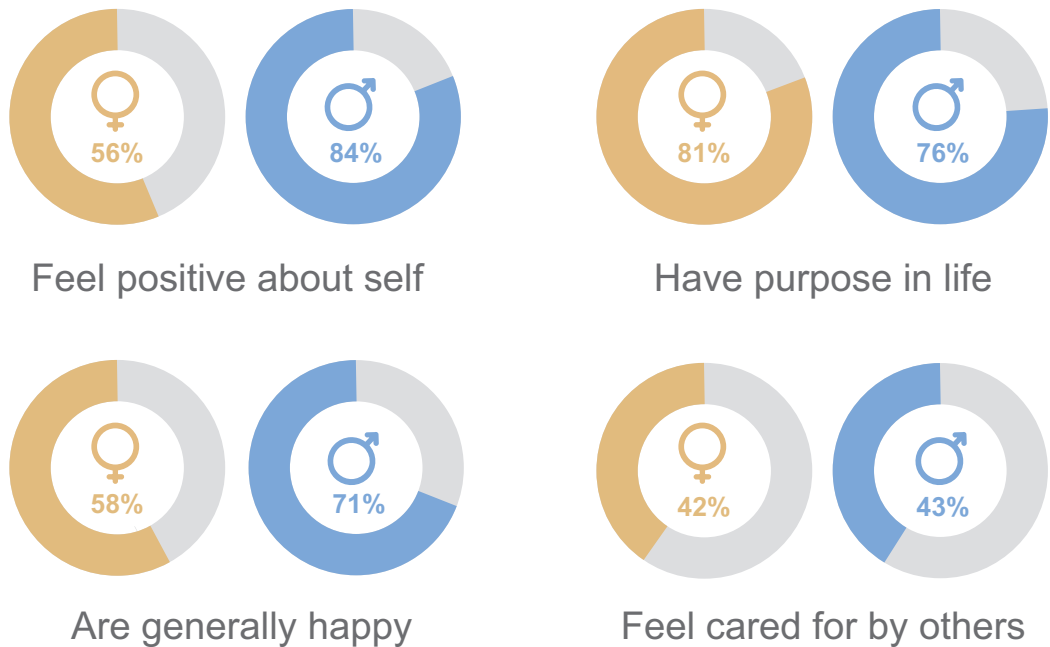
- **LGBTQ youth report higher levels of substance use.** Four out of 10 LGBTQ youth said that they use alcohol and/or drugs compared to two out of 10 heterosexual youth. LGBTQ youth also more frequently reported that they were concerned about their substance use and that others were concerned about their use.

Experiences by Gender

- Girls were less satisfied with their overall experience in the child welfare system than boys.** Almost 25 percent of girls said that their experience with the child welfare system was negative or very negative, compared to nine percent of boys. Girls more frequently reported having negative experiences with the child welfare system regardless of placement type.
- When asked specifically about their placement, girls in foster/kinship care were less satisfied than their male peers.** The average satisfaction score for boys in foster/kinship care was 9.2, while the average score for girls was 7.7. Satisfaction scores for congregate care were relatively similar for boys and girls.
- Girls reported a lower self-image than boys but more purpose in their life.** A little more than half (56%) of girls said they feel positive about themselves, compared to 84 percent of boys (see Figure 7). This trend was seen across both placement settings. Girls also fared worse in being generally happy (58%), but reported similar experiences to their male counterparts when asked whether they had a purpose in life (81%) and felt cared for by others (42%).

FIGURE 7: Psychological and Social Well-Being by Gender

● = Girls (n = 117) ● = Boys (n = 84) | Percent out of 100



Note: % indicating Sometimes, Often or All of the Time

Experiences by Placement Type

- Compared to youth in foster/kinship care, **youth in congregate care were less likely to respond that they had a purpose in life and felt cared for by others** (see Figure 8). On the other hand, youth in congregate care more frequently reported feeling positive about themselves than youth in foster/kinship care.

FIGURE 8: Psychological and Social Well-Being by Placement

● = Congregate Care ● = Foster/Kinship Care | Percent out of 100



Note: % indicating Sometimes, Often or All of the Time

- **Youth in congregate care were less likely to report that their needs (e.g., physical, emotional, hygiene) were being met** than youth in foster/kinship care. For instance, 71 percent of youth in congregate care reported that their mental health needs were being met compared to 85 percent of youth in foster/kinship care.
- **Slightly more than 25 percent of youth in congregate care reported that they use substances to cope with stress**, compared to only 10 percent in foster/kinship care. Youth responses suggest that they recognize that others are concerned about their use, but they themselves are not as concerned. Available survey data do not allow for an analysis of whether youth's home removals were related to substance use.

YOUTH IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

⁷ The open-ended survey question was “What could the child welfare system do differently to improve things for you and/or your family?”

Youth were asked how they would improve the child welfare system,⁷ and open-ended comments were categorized into two general themes: 1) providing support for specific needs or concerns, and 2) improving the quality of service interaction and staff engagement. See **Table 3** for these themes and how DHS might help address them. Approximately one-third (30%) of youth said either they didn’t know what to improve or there is nothing to improve.

“I would like opportunities and activities made known for youth like me to better ourselves and keep us out of the streets.”

“Work to get me and my family together.”

“Look at it from our perspective.”

“They could ask us more of what we want for ourselves and also provide us with the best options and services to help achieve those goals we want to be met.”

“Better prepare me for the future, help me get through high school and college.”

TABLE 3: Youth Improvement Ideas and How They Might Be Accomplished

THEME	HOW MIGHT DHS HELP ACCOMPLISH THIS?
Providing support for specific needs or concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance (self, family) • Options about future • Social activities • Therapy or counseling • Clothing allotment • More efficiency with child welfare process • Housing • More freedom • Focus on prevention rather than intervention
Improving the quality of staff engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy or understanding • Listening to youth preferences for shared decision-making • Being treated with dignity and respect • Receiving information • Better communication • Being more attentive

DISCUSSION

The “Youth Voice” survey provided rich insight into the diverse experiences of youth in out-of-home placement. It also offered valuable information on youth perceptions of themselves and their own well-being. The diverging experiences of youth in different placement types and demographic groups point toward the need to better understand the reasons for these differences. In particular, bi/multiracial youth, LGBTQ youth, girls and youth in congregate care may warrant a closer look in the future so that their needs can be better met.

DHS’s child welfare office is currently experiencing a system-wide transformation with a number of initiatives designed to improve the child welfare experience for all involved. These include:

⁸ <http://fostergoodness.org/>

- *Transitioning away from congregate care and toward more foster/kinship care.*⁸ The Foster Goodness campaign, a media effort to spread awareness about the need for foster parents, and Diligent Recruitment, a program to recruit and support more foster parents for youth, are aimed at reducing reliance on congregate care and placing youth in family settings.
- *Spreading awareness of the complex needs of LGBTQ children and youth in the child welfare system.* These efforts include staff training sessions, curriculum for foster families and specialized support for homeless LGBTQ youth.
- *Developing briefer surveys and engaging youth on their design.* Some future surveys may incorporate technology and more participatory methods such as mobile research and photovoice methods. Focus group and brainstorming sessions with youth will help to improve survey design, while shorter, more engaging surveys like the example below may also help to increase participation.

FIGURE 9: Examples of Newly Designed Youth Surveys

Please circle the box that best describes how you feel about each statement.

The ? means you have no opinion or feel neutral about the statement. If you feel strongly one way or another, circle the box with the ! Please detach and drop in the mail.

I can talk about my problems with my family.	NO!	No	?	Yes	YES!
Staff (e.g., coach, teacher) at my school care about me.	NO!	No	?	Yes	YES!
There is someone that I can talk to about what's going on in my life.	NO!	No	?	Yes	YES!
I am understood by others.	NO!	No	?	Yes	YES!
I know about resources in my town or neighborhood that can help me and my family.	NO!	No	?	Yes	YES!

What can your CYF team (your caseworker, Youth Support Partner, probation officer, etc.) do to get you the help you think you or your family need?

Gender:
 Female
 Male
 Non-binary
 Trans

Race/Ethnicity:
 Asian
 Black/African American
 Latino/a
 White
 Other

Circle the best answer for each activity if you were able to participate, were not interested, or were not able to participate in your current placement. If something is not applicable to you, please leave it blank.

	I WAS ABLE TO DO THIS	I DID NOT WANT TO DO THIS	I WAS NOT ABLE TO DO THIS
Participate in school activities, such as sports, clubs, cheerleading and music.			
Attend school events, such as sports games, music concerts, theater/play events.			
Go on school field trips.			
Allowed to get my learner's permit or driver's license.			
Drive myself or ride in a car with friends.			
Have a cell phone.			
Go to a friend's house for a sleepover.			
Participate in activities with friends, such as shopping, movies, or going out to eat.			
Have access to the internet or social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat.			
Have a job or earn an allowance.			
Have a say in how I want to get my hair cut or styled.			
Have a say in what clothes I want to wear.			
Practice my spiritual or religious beliefs, such as attending a place of worship or celebrating holidays.			
Have access to information about safe sex and pregnancy prevention.			
Go on trips with family or friends.			
Express my sexual orientation.			
Express my gender identity.			
Have a trustworthy adult in my life who cares about my feelings.	Yes	No	I don't know
Anything else you want to share?			

DATA ANALYSIS AND CONTENT

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APPENDIX

SURVEY OVERVIEW

Survey Methodology

The Youth Voice survey was conducted to understand the perspectives of youth in out-of-home care and their perceptions of their health and well-being and the child welfare system.⁹ The survey consisted of a total of 71 questions divided into nine sections,¹⁰ and included both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. See **page 16** for excerpts from survey materials.

The survey was mailed to youth ages 14 through 17 residing in out-of-home placements at the time of the survey. The survey was administered at three times: 2012 (sent to youth in congregate care), 2013 (sent to youth in foster/kinship care) and 2015 (distributed in-person and sent to youth in both types of placements). Each mailing included a letter explaining the scope of the project and the purpose of the survey, a consent form, a self-report survey and a self-addressed stamped envelope for returning the survey. Youth received a gift card for completing the survey.

Survey Analysis

Closed-ended survey items that included one or multiple response options were analyzed using frequency counts, and as appropriate to facilitate analysis, response options were grouped together (e.g., agree and strongly agree). For purposes of this analysis, out-of-home placements were categorized as either (1) foster/kinship care, which are home-based placements with a family member, friend of the family or foster parent, or (2) congregate care, which includes group homes, residential treatment facilities and supervised independent living.

In addition to analysis at an aggregate level, an exploratory,¹¹ in-depth examination was done comparing subgroups to identify noticeable differences. Cross-tabulation analyses were done to examine patterns, trends and observable differences by subgroups, including by placement type, race, sexual orientation and gender, as applicable given subgroup sizes.

Open-ended responses were analyzed following qualitative analysis procedures to identify recurring themes.¹²

⁹ The original survey was developed by a DHS student intern who was a former foster youth. She drew from her own experiences and developed the survey for use with Allegheny County youth.

¹⁰ Demographics, Experiences in Care, Overall Child Welfare (CYF) Experiences, Relationship with Family, Social Support, Well-Being, Education, Social Activities and Final Thoughts

¹¹ The goal of exploratory analysis is to “discover patterns in the data” and generate hypotheses for later confirmatory research. Behrens, J. T. (1997) Principles and procedures of exploratory data analysis. *Psychological Methods*, 2(2), 131.

¹² Seidel, John V. (1998) Qualitative Data Analysis, www.qualisresearch.com (originally published as Qualitative Data Analysis, in *The Ethnograph v5.0: A User's Guide*, Appendix E, 1998, Colorado Springs, Colorado: Qualis Research).

Appendix

(continued)

¹³ Four youth did not include placement setting information.

¹⁴ The typical response rate for mailed, paper-and-pencil survey research is 20%–40%.

Survey Respondents

In total, 202¹³ youth responded to the three survey mailings for an average response rate of 31 percent.¹⁴ **Figure A** shows respondents by gender, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and placement setting.

FIGURE A: Youth Survey Respondent Demographics

Congregate Care	75% (n = 149)
Foster/Kinship Care	25% (n = 49)
Female	58%
Male	42%
Transgender	1%
Black/African American	61%
White	23%
Multiracial	13%
Hispanic	2%
LGBTQ	21%
Average Age	16 Years Old

One limitation of the survey was that the demographics of survey respondents did not accurately reflect the makeup of the entire population in out-of-home care. This is particularly true for placement type. Of the youth who entered out-of-home care between the beginning of 2012 and the end of 2015, 77 percent were in foster/kinship care, compared to the 25 percent of survey respondents who were in that type of care. In addition, survey responses slightly over-represented females (54% of youth who entered placements from 2012 through 2015 were female), black youth (57% of youth who entered placements were black) and multiracial youth (3% of the youth who entered placements were multiracial).

Appendix
(continued)

EXCERPTS FROM YOUTH VOICE SURVEY

Letter Sent to Youth and Informed Consent



COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

[Date]

Dear [Youth Name]:

We want to hear from you!

You are invited to participate in a survey of youth living in CYF placement. We want to hear from you about who you are, what is going well, what is not going well, and how CYF could serve you better.

The researchers conducting this survey do not work for CYF, but we do work for an office in the same County Department (the Office of Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation in the Department of Human Services). Everything you share will be **confidential**, and we will use the information you and your peers provide to impact efforts to make CYF better.

Why you? We recognize the importance for your voice and concerns to be heard so that improvements can be made that would be beneficial to you and your peers. We also want to know more about you and your experiences so that the Department can provide better services that meet your needs and the needs of other youth in placement.

We are currently surveying teenagers who are 14 to 17 and have been living in an out of home placement or with a relative for more than 2 months. Our records indicate that you meet these criteria, so we want to hear from you! Our goal for the future is to provide ways for all youth to share their feedback.

All views are important in this survey, and honesty is even more important. Your feedback will help to create awareness and give insight into the lives of youth in care. As a thank you for your time and for sharing your personal stories, we will provide a **\$15 gift card** to all youth participating in the survey.]

If you want to complete the survey, please see the information on the following pages.

Please complete the survey by Friday, July 24, 2015.

If you have any concerns that you wish to immediately report, please contact the Director's Action Line at 1-800-862-6783, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or at DAL@alleghenycounty.us.

Thank you for helping with this important project!

Sincerely,

Project Voice Research Team
Sarah Thurston
Lynn Bottoms

MARC CHERNA, DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF DATA ANALYSIS, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING • ONE SMITHFIELD STREET • SUITE 400 • PITTSBURGH, PA 15222
PHONE (412) 350-5701 • FAX (412) 350-4004

Appendix

(continued)

Informed Consent**Keep this copy for your information****Purpose**

The purpose of this survey is to provide youth with the opportunity for their voices to be heard, and for them to share their perspectives and experiences. The goal of this project is for professionals to better understand youth in care, and for youth's feedback to contribute to efforts to make changes that would benefit youth and the child welfare (CYF) system as a whole.

As a current youth in care, we are asking you to participate in the project and share information about your experience with CYF. You will be asked questions about your current living situation, relationships with family, relationships with caseworkers, support systems, well-being, education and employment, social activities, sexual activity, and resources. We want to capture how well services are performing to meet your needs.

Confidentiality

All information gathered from the surveys will be kept **confidential**. This means that only the researchers will have access to the interview materials, and your individual responses will not be shared when we present results, or shared with your caseworker, residential staff, or other service providers. Any information that could be used to identify you will be removed prior to preparing any reports. The only event in which individual responses may be reported is if you indicate that your safety may be at risk. In this case, we will share your information with the appropriate child welfare staff, and they will follow standard procedures to address these concerns.

Terms of Participation

Participation in this survey is voluntary. The survey is estimated to take about 30-40 minutes to complete. If, at any time, you no longer wish to continue with the survey, you may choose to stop. If there are any questions that you are uncomfortable answering, you may skip them.

Compensation

We appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey, and your willingness to share personal information. All youth who complete the survey will receive a **\$15 gift card**. Skipping questions that you are not comfortable answering will not impact your ability to receive a gift card.

Questions

If you have any questions or comments about this study we would be happy to talk with you. Please feel free to contact either of the following individuals.

Sarah Thurston	Project Advisor	412-350-2735	Sarah.Thurston@AlleghenyCounty.US
Lynn Bottoms	Project Manager	412-350-6345	Lynn.Bottoms@AlleghenyCounty.US

Appendix
(continued)

Sample Survey Questions

Experiences in Care

The next few sections will ask about your experiences with CYF, starting with questions about when you first entered placement, then where you currently live, overall experiences with the system, and your hopes for the future.

Entering Placement

1. I felt safe at home before I was removed and placed into care.

Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Neither Agree nor Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
 I'm not sure

2. Do you know why you were removed from your home?

Yes
 No
 Unsure

3. What could have been done to help you and your family before you were removed from home and placed into care?

4. What do you know now about the place where you currently live that you wish you'd known before moving there?

5. How important are the following elements in a potential placement?

	Not Important/ Not Desired	A Little Bit Important to Me	Very Important to Me
Placed with a caregiver of the same religion			
Staying in the same school			
Living close to family			
Placed with a caregiver of the same race			
Placed with someone willing to adopt			
Being with sibling(s)			
Living with other children			
Not living with other children			
Placed in a family setting			
Placed in a group setting			

Appendix
(continued)

	Never	Not often	Sometimes	Often	All of the time
I feel cared for by others.					
It's difficult for me to make new friends.					
It's difficult for me to keep friends.					
I drink alcohol to cope with stress.					
I am concerned about my alcohol usage.					
I use drugs to cope with stress.					
I am concerned about my drug usage.					
Others are concerned about my alcohol/drug usage.					

45. Please check the box with the answer that you feel best describes you for each statement below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	I'm Not Sure
I have many strengths and talents.						
I participate in activities that make me feel good about myself.						
I feel that I am in charge of what happens in my life, good and bad.						
In general, I feel positive about myself.						
I feel that I get the recognition I deserve for what I do.						
I bounce back from setbacks.						
I believe I have a purpose in life.						
I am able to access resources on my own to meet my needs.						
I am generally a happy person.						

Final Thoughts

This is the last section. Please share any final thoughts with us here.

68. My overall experience with the system has been:

___Very negative ___Negative ___Neither ___Positive ___Very positive ___Unsure

Please explain:

69. What could the child welfare system do differently to improve things for you and/or your family?