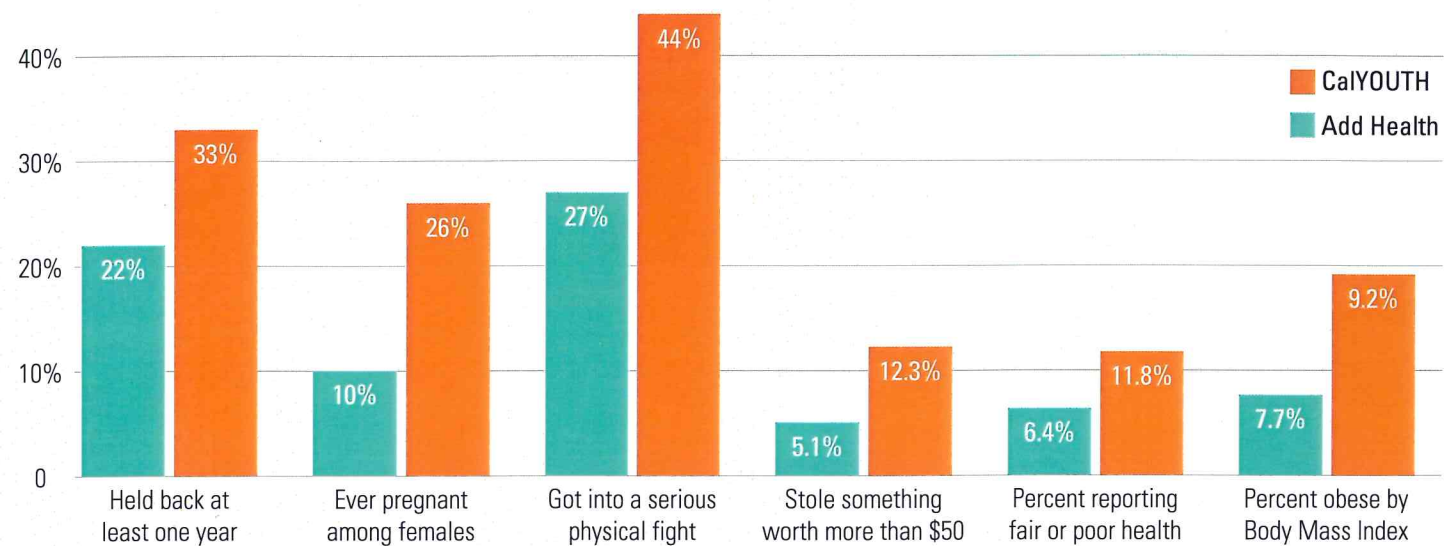


CalYOUTH Participants Compared to Same-Age Peers in Add Health Study



NOTE: Add Health (National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health) is a longitudinal study of a nationally representative cohort of adolescents that collected data on multiple social contexts and health and health-related behaviors.

The involvement of youth in foster care with the criminal justice system further illustrates the behavior problems many of them bring to the transition to adulthood

- Not surprisingly, given the well-established relationship between child maltreatment and later criminal behavior, CalYOUTH participants were more likely than their peers to engage in a wide range of delinquent behaviors.
- Two-fifths of CalYOUTH participants had been arrested at least once, and one in five had been convicted of a crime.

- However, they also reported educational delays and behavior problems that, in the absence of additional assistance, are likely to get in the way of their future educational attainment: one-third had been held back at least one grade; one-third had been placed in special education; and two-thirds reported an out-of-school suspension.

The experiences of females differed from those of males in a number of areas.

- Females reported more mental health problems than males. Compared to males, females had higher prevalence rates for major depression, dysthymia, past mania and hypomania, and PTSD.
- Females were also more likely than males to report both physical abuse and neglect from a parent or other custodial caregiver prior to entering foster care.
- Over 90% of respondents felt prepared to deal with sexual health, family planning, and relationships. However, 26% of females surveyed stated that they had been pregnant, and 36% of those youth gave birth to a child.

Youth in foster care had high educational aspirations, but many faced challenges to achieving their goals.

- Four-fifths of youth surveyed reported that they wanted to graduate from college and nearly as many expected to do so.

Next Steps

Moving forward, the study will seek to examine youth responses in greater depth, examining how needs vary between subgroups of youth and across California's counties. The study will also compare and contrast youths' and caseworkers' perspectives. Understanding both the caseworker and the youth perspectives on extended care will help California and the nation successfully implement extended foster care.

In the meantime, policy makers and service providers can look to these findings to begin to assess the needs and aspirations of youth approaching the transition to adulthood from foster care as they design approaches to providing extended foster care. The study shows that housing, employment, education, and physical and mental health are areas where youth are likely to require additional attention. Importantly, the study highlights that most youth view the extended foster care program as a critical support in their transition to adulthood.

California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH)

Policymakers have extended foster care to age 21 in the hopes of helping these young people overcome earlier adverse experiences and have a more successful transition to adulthood.

In 2008, the federal government passed the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act marking a fundamental shift in supporting foster youth transitioning to adulthood. California was one of the first states to adopt the extension of foster care through age 21 with the passage of Assembly Bill 12, the California Fostering Connections to Success Act. California has the largest state foster care population in the U.S. and like many states runs a county-administered child welfare system. As such, California is uniquely positioned to provide lessons for other states implementing extended care.

CalYOUTH is a five-year study, from 2012-17, designed to evaluate the impact of extended foster care on youths' outcomes. CalYOUTH seeks to answer the following questions:

- Does extending foster care past age 18 influence youths' outcomes during the transition to adulthood?
- What factors influence the types of support youth receive during the transition to adulthood in the context of extended foster care?
- How do living arrangements and other services that result from extending foster care influence the relationship between extending care and youth outcomes?

To help answer these questions, the study is collecting and analyzing data from transition-age youth and child welfare workers providing services to foster youth, and analyzing government program data. Interviews are being conducted with the same youth at ages 17, 19 and 21.

The study is the result of a public and private collaboration among:

- California Department of Social Services
- County Welfare Directors Association of California
- University of Chicago
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