



**Kirk
Brown**
Chief Executive
Officer
HANDY, Inc.



**Dr. David
Kenton**
Sr. Associate Director
Florida International
University

The Forgotten Topic: A Review on the Transition College Experiences of Former Foster Youth

**Register Today at
fcansummit.org**

May 7-8, 2019

Rosen Centre Orlando

FLORIDA
COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

Study Significance

- The foster care system **does not adequately prepare** students for access to and transition through higher education (Hernandez & Naccarato, 2010).
- **More than 70%** of foster care students between the ages of 15-19 have a reported **desire** to go to college, although by age 19, **less than 18% are pursuing a four-year degree** (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2009).
- Policymakers and child welfare practitioners are looking to find **meaningful and sustainable ways** to support these students in their transition from foster care to independence (Courtney et al., 2001; Strangler, 2013).

Researcher Questions

General research question:

What have been the transition experiences of foster care students at the university, who have participated in the foster care support program?

Two sub-questions:

- (1) *What are the supportive practices foster care students identify as **helpful** in their transition experiences to college?*
- (2) *What events and practices have foster care students identified as **not being helpful** to them in their transition experiences?*

Study Methodology

Purposeful Sampling Methods

Criterion Sampling

Inclusion criteria are characteristics that a **participant must have** (Robinson, 2014).

- ✓ accepted admissions to the University
- ✓ enrolled in an undergraduate degree-seeking program
- ✓ good academic standing
- ✓ satisfied the requirements for DCF tuition exemption or a homeless tuition exemption

***Exclusion** criteria **disqualify prospective participants** from being able to participate in the study (Robinson, 2014).

Snowball Sampling

The snowball sampling method starts with **one or a few relevant-rich interviewees**, who are then asked to **provide additional relevant contacts** (Patton, 2015).

Findings

The study participants provided candid and transparent responses to the interview questions. Broken down by emerging themes:

General Research Question

Research Sub-question # 1

Research Sub-question # 2

Findings-In response to the general research question

Emerging theme # 1-Transferring from a State College

- Henry, Osendam, Rex, Dom, and Cat** all discussed transferring from the state college system as a part of their transition experience.

- Osendam** stated, “I saw that my lack of understanding was fundamental, starting from as far as Algebra. I had to learn a lot of these things for myself [in transferring to the university].”

- Henry** was unsure about the “big schools” so he started at the state college, and eventually applied to the larger institutions with the help of a family friend.

Findings-In response to research sub-question # 1

Research sub-question # 1

*What are the supportive practices foster care students identify as **helpful** in their transition experiences to college?*

Emerging themes below-

1. Family and Friends
2. Foster Care Support Program
3. Community Based-Partners and Agencies
4. Perceived Support

Findings-In response to research sub-question # 2

Research sub-question # 2

*What events and practices have foster care students identified as **not being helpful** to them in their transition experiences?*

Emerging themes below-

1. No Flexibility in the Foster Care Support Program Requirements
2. Better Dissemination of Information
3. Forced to Negotiate Life Choices

Findings-In response to research sub-question # 2

Emerging theme # 3- Forced to Negotiate Life Choices

- Cat's biggest worry right now is her **commute to campus**. Due to commuter traffic and delays, her round-trip commute to the campus **takes closer to five or six hours**.

- She was spending close to **400 dollars per month during** the summer months so she could make it to class on time.

- Cat is not able to move closer to the campus because the cost of apartments are higher. Cat has two children, so she is **mandated to have more than a one-bedroom** apartment.

Implications

Implications for Administrators

- Need for More Humanity
- Need for More Training
- Students also have a Responsibility

Implications for Foster Care Support Program

- Better Resources
- Mentorship and Coaching
- More Fluidity in the Transition Process

Future Research

- Program Effectiveness
- Foster Care Versus Homeless
- Non-Foster Care Support Program Students



HANDY

Built for Youth, By Youth



Background to the Inspiration

2% are employed full time at age 18; 9% at 22.

40% of 18- 22 year-olds had no home and “couch surfed.”

28% have been homeless.

47% between ages 18- 22 receive public food assistance.

**40% report that they have been arrested;
30% report they have been in jail or detention.**

27% of females have a child by the time they are 18; 59% of females who are 22 have a child



Source: 2018 My Services Survey



Road to Dependency

- Trauma of abuse/neglect effects academics
- Poor academics  homelessness, poverty, public assistance, and court involvement
- Statistics show that many children in care have academic difficulties
- Almost 1/3 have high levels of emotional or behavioral problems-Florida 40% reported SED
- 2.5 times more likely to repeat a grade than their maltreated peers.



*“Alone we can do
so little; together
we can do so
much.”*

-Helen Keller





Understanding the implementation theories leads to the Outcomes

Major Social Work Theories that drive operations

- Systems Theory
- Psychodynamic
- Social Learning
- Conflict
- Faces of oppression
- Poverty



LIFE Program Outcomes



- **95%** of youth improve one letter grade on report cards per marking period
- **94%** of youth decrease drug use & involvement with criminal justice system
- **92%** of youth demonstrate improved interactions with peers & adults
- **95%** of youth remain in school & are promoted to next grade
- 95% become gainfully employed after WEX programming.



Educational Case Management

For Young People Who
Have Lived The Way
That “OUR” Youth
Have, A Seat In A
Classroom Simply Is
Not Enough





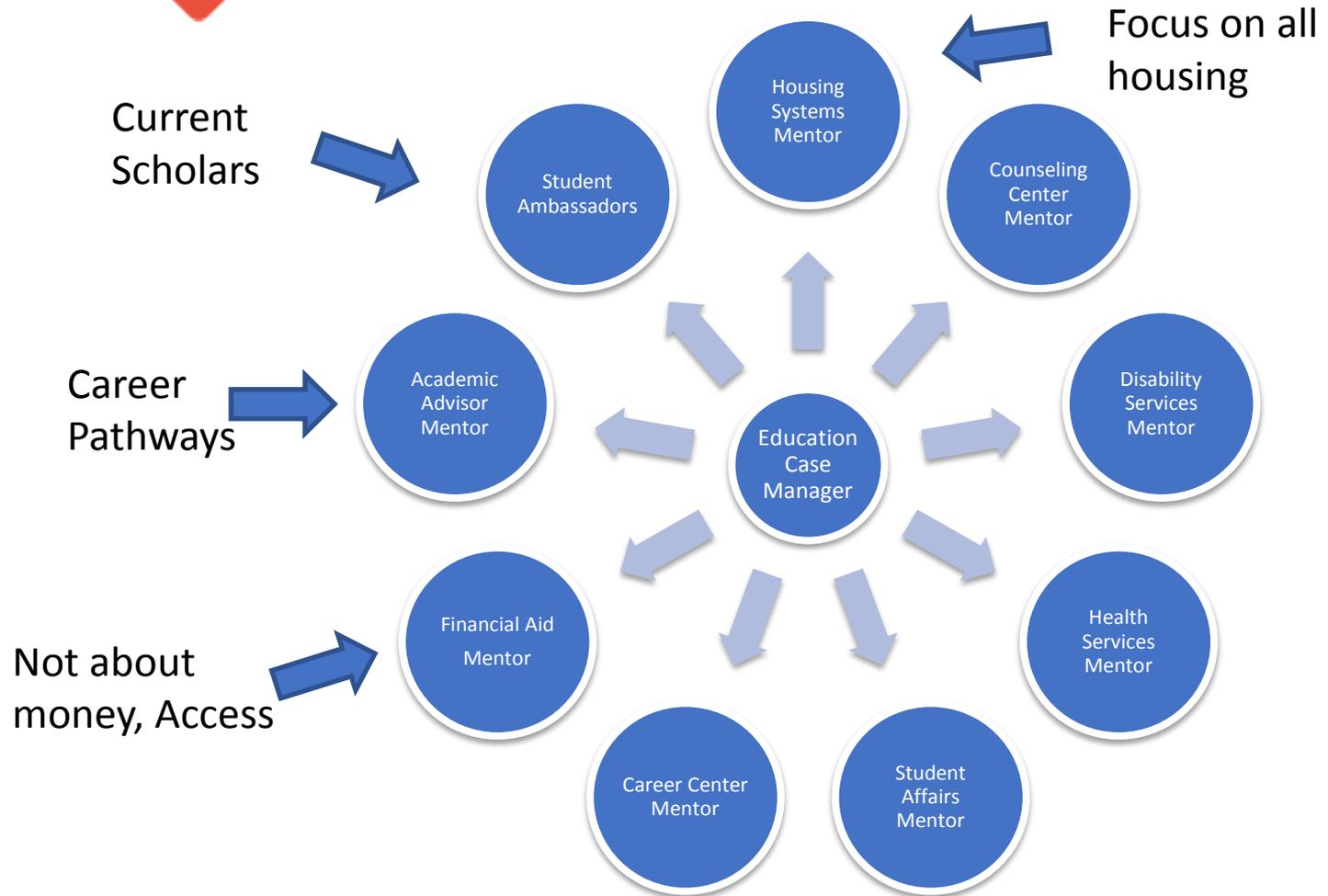
Educational Case Management

From High School to College Graduation

- Foster Academic and Career Planning
- Assist with Post-Secondary Education Choices
- Assist Students with Application, Enrollment, and Financial Aid Processes
- Full Financial Aid Package
- Orientation to University Life
- Housing Assistance
- Academic Advisement
- Employment Services, Mentoring and Career Counseling
- Personal Guidance, Counseling, Tutoring
- Support Services throughout their College/Vocational Education

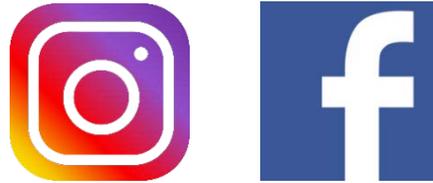


LIFE Scholars Success Model



Contact

David H. Kenton, J.D., Ed. D.
David@kentoneducation.com
www.kentoneducation.com



@KentonEducation

Kirk Brown, MSW
CEO
954-522-2911 ext. 442
KBrown@HANDYinc.org



References

- Center for the Study of Social Policy (2009). Chapter 8. Youth in transition to adulthood. *Policy matters: Setting and measuring benchmarks for state policies. Promoting child safety, permanence, and well-being through safe and strong families, supportive communities, and effective systems* (pp. 88-95). Washington D.C.: Center for the Study of Social Policy.
- Courtney, M. E., & Piliavin, I. (1998). *Foster youth transitions to adulthood: Outcomes 12 to 18 months after leaving care*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin School of Social Work and Institute for Research on Poverty.
- Courtney, M. E., Piliavin, I., Grogan-Kaylor, A., & Nesmith, A. (2001). Foster youth transitions to adulthood: A longitudinal view of youth leaving care. *Child Welfare, 80*(6), 685-717. Retrieved from <https://login.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/docview/213811257?accountid=4840>
- Educational Scholarships, Fees, and Financial Assistance Statute, FLA. STA. §1009.25 (2012).
- Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., Guido, F. M., Patton, L. D., & Renn, K. A. (2010). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 20*(9), 1408.
- Hernandez, L., & Naccarato, T. (2010). Scholarships and supports available to foster care alumni: A study of 12 programs across the US. *Children and Youth Services Review, 32*(5), 758-766. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.01.014
- Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. B. (2014). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Mitchell, M. B., Jones, T., & Renema, S. (2014). Will I make it on my own? Voices and visions of 17-year-old youth in transition. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 32*(3), 291-300. doi:10.1007/s10560-014-0364-2

References

- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Pecora, P. J., Kessler, R. C., O'Brien, K., White, C. R., Williams, J., Hiripi, E., . . . Herrick, M. A. (2006). Educational and employment outcomes of adults formerly placed in foster care: Results from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study. *Children and Youth Services Review, 28*(12), 1459-1481. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2006.04.003.
- Proceedings Relating to Children, FLA. STA. §39.5085 (2012).
- Rendon, L. I. (1994). Validating culturally diverse students: Toward a new model of learning and student development. *Innovative Higher Education, 19*(1), 33-51. doi:10.1007/bf01191156
- Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research In Psychology, 11*(1), 25-41. doi:10.1080/14780887.2013.801543
- Salazar, A. M. (2012). Supporting college success in foster care alumni: Salient factors related to postsecondary retention. *Child Welfare, 91*(5), 139-167. Retrieved from <https://login.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/docview/1509850597?accountid=4840>
- Salazar, A. M., Roe, S. S., Ullrich, J. S., & Haggerty, K. P. (2016b). Professional and youth perspectives on higher education-focused interventions for youth transitioning from foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 64*, 23-34. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.02.027
- Samuels, G. M., & Pryce, J. M. (2008). "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger": Survivalist self-reliance as resilience and risk among young adults aging out of foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 30*(10), 1198-1210. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.03.005