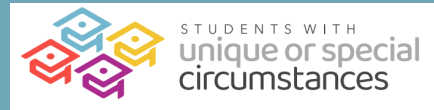


Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system



Defined:

The term 'age out' refers to the time frame after which a foster care child is eligible for state services. Eligibility for state services varies depending on the state in which the child resides. Transitioning out of the child welfare system may occur as early as 18 or as late as age 23.

The term 'foster care' means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians, for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, childcare institutions, and pre-adoptive homes.

Program Examples:

- Austin Community College – Foster Care Alumni
- Education Reach for Texans Annual Conference
- PAL: Preparing for Adult Living.
- Sam Houston State University - FORWARD
- The Foster Care Initiative
- Texas A&M Commerce – Foster Care College Weekend

* Nationally, there are approximately 400,000 children in the foster care system on any given day, and an estimated 26,000 young people “age out” of our nation’s foster care system annually.

* Within four years of aging out of the foster care system, 70% of foster youth will be on government assistance, 25% will not have completed high school, 50% will have no earnings.

* On average, youth live in 3.4 different foster placements, and some change homes over 10 times

* A national study found that 84% of youth in foster care wanted to attend college, but only 20% of those who completed high school did so.

* Youth previously in foster care are eligible for a tuition waiver at public colleges in Texas. But just 3.5% earn a degree by the time they’re 24, according to an analysis of state data and a new study shows the number has recently dropped to 2.3%.

* Many young people who leave foster care without permanent, legal connections to family or caregivers are exposed to risks, including homelessness and economic instability.

* From an educational standpoint, youth formerly in foster care are one of the most disadvantaged groups in our country.

*2023 Data

Access and Equity Considerations & Additional Information

Access and Equity Considerations:

The importance of maintaining a student's privacy cannot be overstated. Sensitivity, compassion, patience, and respect for boundaries are absolutely critical when communicating and working with students formerly in care.

- Provide support for older foster youth students via transitional services including, but not limited to, independent-living skills training, college financial guidance, and housing assistance.
- Establish systems to help teach self-sufficiency because they are less likely to have secure support networks, stable housing and employment, medical insurance, and they're less likely to have a safety net to fall back on during any crisis.
- Implement opportunities for students to create meaningful relationships with supportive adults, provide reliable resources to meet basic needs, and evaluate their accessible opportunities for education and work.
- Evaluate and consider implementing the following:
 - Admissions assistance,
 - Early outreach and recruitment,
 - Foster care liaison or designated contact,
 - Tuition waivers and financial assistance,
 - Coaching/life skills workshops, including orientation to college life,
 - Clothing and basic needs care packages,
 - Books, bags, and computers,
 - Counseling and support,
 - Academic mentorship/fellowship,
 - Medical care,
 - Student drop-in centers,
 - Housing assistance and support over holidays and academic breaks,
 - Campus employment opportunities,
 - Transportation,
 - Social support/gatherings, including graduation celebrations, and
 - Work and career readiness.
- Have specific foster care advocates on campus with knowledge and training in Trauma-Informed Care as it pertains to programming through the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) model.

Additional Information:

Organizations

- Buckner International
- One Circle Foundation
- Hearts to Homes
- Texas Foster Youth Connections
- Texas Foster Youth
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Way Alliance

Initiatives

- Education Reach for Texans
- Freshmen Success Fund for Foster Youth
- Foster Care to Success: America's College Fund for Foster Youth
- Foster Care and Student Success: Texas Systems Working Together to Transform Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care Supporting Success
- Texas Foster Care Education Initiative

Services

- Aftercare room and board
- Child Welfare Information Gateway
- Circles of Support and Transition Plan Meetings
- Extended foster care (including SIL – supervised independent living)
- Former Foster Care Child (FFCC) Medicaid
- I'm Aging Out - A Foster Care Resource Guide
- Texas Education Training Voucher (ETV) Program
- Texas Department for Protective and Regulatory Services: Services for Youth and Young Adults
- Texas Tuition and Fee Waiver
- Upbring BeREAL

Current Literature and Research for Foster Care Students

Current Literature and Research:

- A Guide for those “Aging Out” of Foster Care in Texas: 8th Edition. By Texas Foster Youth. 2021.
- Aging Out of Foster Care in Texas: Proposed Solutions and Collaborations. By Texas Alliance of Children and Family Services. April 2021.
- College Affordability Challenges Facing Youth with Experience in Foster Care. By Anthony Walsh. Feb. 2021.
- Foster Care Transition Toolkit. By Department of Education. May 2016.
- Fostering Youth Transitions 2023: State and National Data to Drive Foster Care Advocacy. By Ann E. Casey Foundation. May 2023.
- Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Young Adults in Foster Care Readings, Resources, and Program Links. By Casey Family Programs. 2016.
- Safe, Strong, Supportive: Fostering College Success Mentorship Program. A public-private partnership to build a better tomorrow for youth in foster care. By Casey Family Foundation. Date unk.
- Supporting Success: Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Students from Foster Care. By Education Reach for Texans. December 2010,
- Texas Higher Education Foster Care Liaisons: Information & Reference Guide. By THECB. 2017,
- Transitioning From Foster Care: An Experiential Activity Guidebook. By Shannon Heath Nancy Markowitz. April 2006.
- Transitional Living Services Resource Guide. By Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. April 2020.

