

2013-14  
Survey Findings

# Voices and Visions of SC Youth in Transition

A Report of the Survey of 17-Year-Old Youth in Foster Care

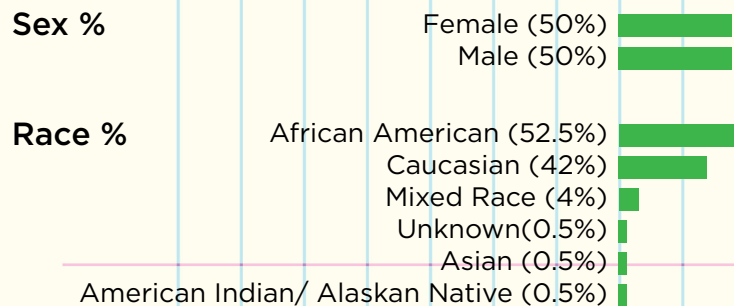


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**Voices and Visions of SC Youth in Transition** is a research study being conducted at the University of South Carolina that includes the federally mandated NYTD questions as well as questions specific to South Carolina, which ask youth about their experiences and thoughts of independent living services and the transition out of foster care. **The National Youth in Transition Database** (NYTD) is a federal data collection that requires all States to collect information from youth in care who were 17 years old between October 2013 and September 2014 and then again when these youth turn 19 and 21. The South Carolina Department of Social Services has partnered with The Center for Child and Family Studies at the University of South Carolina in this exciting project to learn more about the experiences of youth in foster care.

### Who completed the Voices and Visions of SC Youth in Transition survey in 2013-2014?

196 youth in foster care who were 17 years old completed the survey with both the federal (NYTD) and state questions.



This report addresses eight critical areas related to a youth's transition out of foster care:

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| Employment                             | Homelessness        |
| Education                              | Health Insurance    |
| High-Risk Behaviors                    | Transition Planning |
| Relational Connections<br>& Permanency | Personal Goals      |

What do youth in South Carolina have to report about these critical areas? The 2013-14 survey reveals that....



### Employment

The majority of youth reported they did not have a full-time or part-time job. Only 27% of youth reported they had completed an apprenticeship, internship, or other on-the-job training (either paid or unpaid) in the last year.



**“The only concern I have is finding a job.”**

## Education

92% of youth were currently enrolled and attending high school, GED classes, post high school vocational training, or college, compared to 8% who were not currently enrolled.



2% of surveyed youth had already received their high school diploma or completed a GED certificate at the time of survey administration.

## High Risk Behaviors

19% of surveyed youth had referred themselves or been referred for an alcohol or drug abuse assessment or counseling at some point in their life.

The majority of youth (68%) reported they had not been confined in a jail, prison, correctional facility, or juvenile or community detention facility in connection with allegedly committing a crime. Males reported being confined in a jail, prison, correctional facility, or juvenile or community detention facility, in connection with allegedly committing a crime at some point in their life more often than did females.

7% of surveyed youth reported giving birth or fathering children in their life. All of these youth, with the exception of one who declined to answer, reported they were not married to the child's other parent at the time the child was born.

## Relational Connections & Permanency

85% of surveyed youth indicated they had at least one adult in their life, other than their case worker, that they could go to for advice or emotional support, compared to 14% of youth who indicated they had no such adult in their life.



The three relationships most frequently identified by youth as providing the most trusting, supportive, and unconditional relationship were: foster parent/ former foster parent, birth parent, and DSS staff.

## Homelessness

1 in 3 of surveyed youth indicated that they had experienced homelessness at some point in their life. Females reported experiencing homelessness at some point in their lives more often than did males.



**“I’m concerned if I leave too early that I might not be ready to experience what happens like dealing with paying for an apartment and living on my own, not depending on anyone.”**

## Health Insurance



82% of surveyed youth indicated they were enrolled in Medicaid, compared to 5% of youth who were not enrolled in Medicaid, 12% of youth who did not know if they were enrolled in Medicaid, and 1% who declined to answer the question.

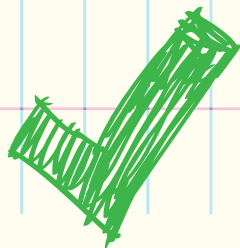
34% of youth did not know if they had health insurance other than Medicaid.

10% of surveyed youth indicated that they had health insurance other than Medicaid. 8% reported that their health insurance included coverage for medical services; 6% reported that their health insurance included coverage for mental health services; and 7% reported that their health insurance included coverage for prescription drugs.

## Personal Goals

The majority of youth who completed the SC NYTD survey reported personal goals they wanted to achieve in the next five years. The goals that were most frequently reported by youth were graduating high school and/or pursuing higher education; becoming employed and having their own home/apartment.

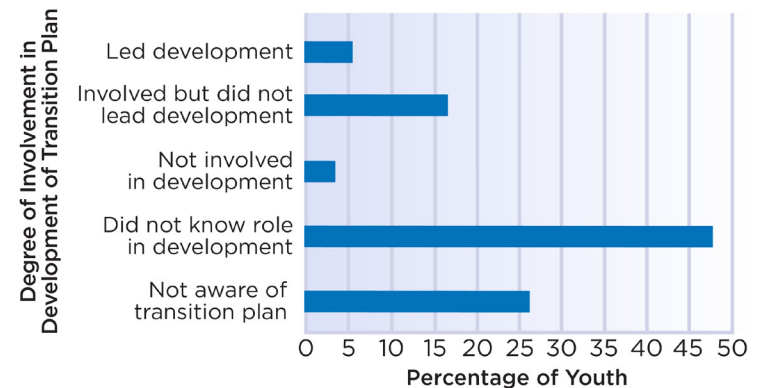
**“My goal is to be a teacher, social worker, or something to help children and young adults.”**



## Transition Planning

73% of youth were either not aware of their transition plan or did not know the role they played in the development of their transition plan. Only 6% led the development of their transition plan. 4% of youth were not involved and 17% of youth were involved but did not lead the development of their transition plan.

### The Transition Plan & Youth Involvement



The survey findings reveal that most youth were either not aware of their transition plan or did not know the role they played in the development of their transition plan. These findings suggest that youth are not receiving a vital component of their case plan that not only has the potential to considerably enhance their wellbeing as they transition out the foster care system but also is required in policy.

## Acknowledgements

The SC NYTD team would like to extend a warm thank you to all the youth who shared their ideas and experiences about independent living and preparing for the transition out of foster care. We are also grateful to the members of the state youth advisory panel, SC NYTD Youth Voice, who provide valuable feedback on the research project's survey questions, survey design, survey findings, and youth-centered reports.

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