

2014-15
Survey Findings

Voices and Visions of SC Youth in Transition

A Report of the Survey of 21-Year-Old Youth Alumni of Foster Care



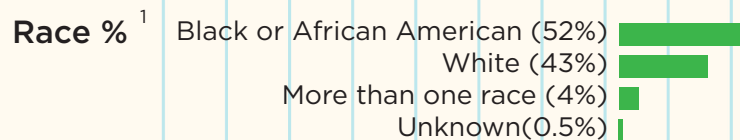
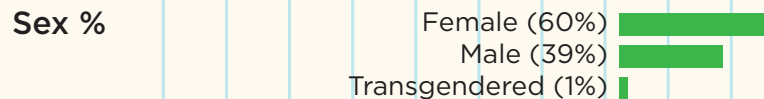
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Voices and Visions of SC Youth in Transition is a research study being conducted at the University of South Carolina that includes the federally mandated NYTD questions as well as questions specific to South Carolina, which ask youth about their experiences 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 2010 and September 2011 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.

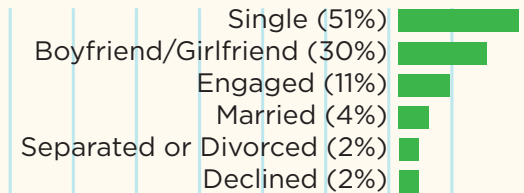
Who completed the Voices and Visions of SC Youth in Transition survey in 2014-2015?

212 youth who were 21 years old and formerly in foster care completed the survey with both the federal (NYTD) and state questions.

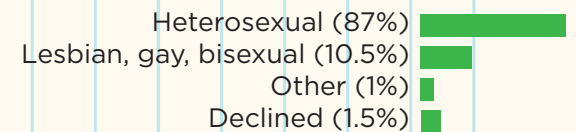


¹ Disclaimer: The authors of this report respect the right of persons or groups of people to be referred to in their preferred language describing their race and ethnicity. As these preferences vary from person to person and within groups, the authors have chosen to employ the language adopted by the US Census Bureau to describe demographics and research findings by race.

Relationship Status%



Sexual Orientation %



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

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Employment | Positive Connections with Adults |
| Finances | Health Insurance |
| Homelessness | Loss & Transitions |
| High-Risk Behaviors | Independent Living Preparation |
| Education | Life Purpose & Inspiration |

What do youth in South Carolina have to report about these critical areas? The 2014-15 survey reveals that...



Employment

Half of all survey participants reported being currently employed. One in three (or 30%) of surveyed youth were employed full-time and 28% reported working part-time. 35% of youth reported they had completed an apprenticeship, internship, or other on-the-job training (either paid or unpaid) in the last year.

Females were less likely than males to report being currently employed and receiving employment related skills training in the past year.

Finances

Currently receiving public food assistance	37%
Currently using a scholarship, grant, stipend, student loan, voucher, or other type of educational financial aid to cover any education expenses (i.e., educational aid)	20%
Currently receiving social security payments (Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, or dependents' payments)	8%
Receiving housing assistance from the government	5%
Receiving ongoing welfare payments	3%

Females (53%) were more likely than males (12%) to report currently receiving public food assistance. White youth were less likely than youth of other races to report having educational aid.

Homelessness

28% of surveyed youth indicated that they had experienced homelessness in the past two years.



High Risk Behaviors

5% of surveyed youth had referred themselves or been referred for an alcohol or drug abuse assessment or counseling in the past two years.

The majority of youth (82%) 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 in the past two years. Males reported being confined in a jail, prison, correctional facility, or juvenile or community detention facility, in connection with allegedly committing a crime in the past two years more often than did females.

31% of surveyed youth reported giving birth or fathering children in the past two years. The majority of these youth (88%) were not married to the child's other parent at the time the child was born.

Females (45%) were more likely than males (10%) to report having parented a child in the past two years.



Education

“I’m passionate about learning because I never get tired of learning, and it excites me. Even now I’m in college, and if I’m learning something new I’m like so giddy and so happy and so eager to learn and get that knowledge from other people and that wisdom that’s been passed down...kinda inspires me to pass the baton on to the future generations of people.”

Receipt of high school diploma or completion of GED certificate	67%
Currently enrolled and attending high school, GED classes, post high school vocational training, or college	32%
Experiencing barriers to pursuing an education (e.g. the need for financial assistance, transportation, and access to affordable child care)	31%
No high school diploma or GED certificate	27%
No high school diploma or GED certificate <i>and not</i> enrolled in school	20%
Completion of a post-secondary degree or certification	5%

African-American youth were more likely to report being enrolled in school than youth of other races. Males (81%) were more likely than females (68%) to report having at least a high school diploma or GED certificate at the time of survey administration.

Positive Connections with Adults

81% 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. White youth were more likely to report having at least one adult in their life, other than their case worker, that they could go to for advice or emotional support than did youth of other races. The three relationships most frequently identified by youth as providing advice and emotional support were foster parent/former foster parent, birth parent, and aunt/uncle.

“I felt like he’s just been there for me - like throughout the entire thing. Everything that went on in my life...Even if he’s busy he’ll take the time to hear me out and listen....I feel like that’s one person that I have so much love for who I know has a big impact in my life.”



Health Insurance

55% of surveyed youth indicated they were enrolled in Medicaid, compared to 41% of youth who were not enrolled in Medicaid. 4% of youth did not know if they were enrolled in Medicaid.

Females (65%) were more likely than males (41%) to report being enrolled in Medicaid. African-American youth were more likely to report being enrolled in Medicaid than youth of other races.

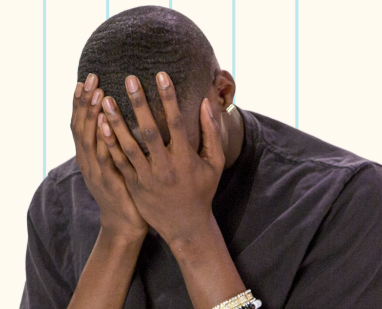
14% of surveyed youth indicated that they had health insurance other than Medicaid. Of these youth, 90% reported that their health insurance included coverage for medical services; 60% reported that their health insurance included coverage for mental health services; and 83% reported that their health insurance included coverage for prescription drugs.



Loss and Transitions

Youth reported the loss of people and relationships while entering and exiting foster care. These losses included, but were not limited to, the loss of siblings, parents, and extended family members.

“Well, going through foster care in a way kinda has to force you to grow up more faster... because you’re took away from everything that you know and love and then you have to live with new people and you kinda have to make the best of everything.”



Independent Living Preparation

Youth were asked to assess their confidence in completing tasks related to career preparation, educational preparation, financial management, healthcare management, household management, housing preparation, and interpersonal communication.

Least Confident Skills

- Knowing how to extend Medicaid enrollment to age 26 (59%)
- Completing the FAFSA and grant/scholarship applications (45%)
- Filing taxes (43%)

Most Confident Skills

- Doing Laundry (95%)
- Communicating respectfully (95%)
- Being a positive team player (94%)

Life Purpose and Inspiration

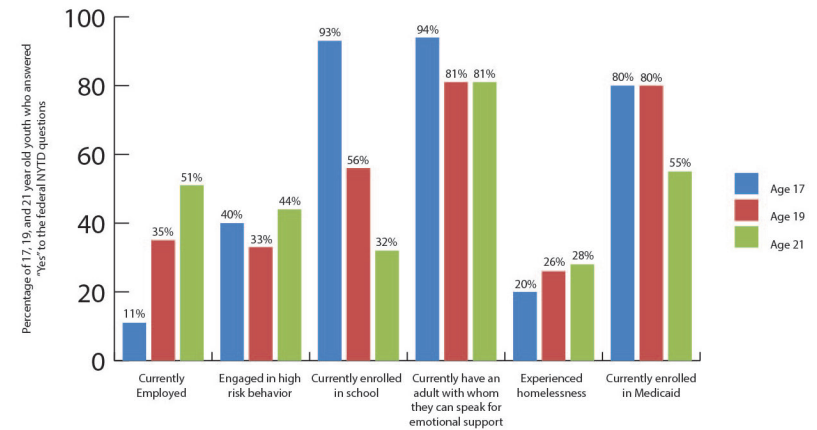
“I think my purpose is to instill in other females, like teenagers and girls, that we all can be something. No matter what we go through, we can overcome it. So, I feel like maybe I’ve been through what I’ve been through to teach someone else that they can be something, no matter what happens in life.”

The majority of surveyed youth (90%) reported believing they had a purpose in life. Many youth indicated that their life purpose involved helping or being a mentor to others. Youth also discussed the people and or things in their lives who served as inspirational teachers. These people/ things included, but were not limited to, siblings, care providers (e.g. former foster parents and group home staff), their children, extended family, and their spirituality.



NYTD Outcomes at 17, 19, and 21

Comparison of youth responses to the federal NYTD questions by age. ²



² At 17, youth were asked if they had ever engaged in high risk behavior and/or experienced homelessness. At 19 and 21, youth were asked if they had engaged in high risk behaviors and/or experienced homelessness in the last two years.

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For more information contact the SC NYTD Research Director:

Dr. Monique B. Mitchell, PhD

Center for Child and Family Studies

College of Social Work

University of South Carolina

Benson Building, Columbia, SC 29208

Phone: 803.777.9406

Email: monique.mitchell@sc.edu