

6-2014

## EXPERIENCES OF SUCCESSFUL YOUNG ADULTS IN EXTENDED FOSTER CARE IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

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EXPERIENCES OF SUCCESSFUL YOUNG ADULTS IN EXTENDED FOSTER  
CARE IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Social Work

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by  
Nicole Michele Chavarria  
Denise Marie Johnson

June 2014

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## ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study that was conducted in conjunction with San Bernardino County to explore the experiences of young adults in Extended Foster Care. Extended Foster Care is an extension of foster care services offered from age 18 to 21 as a result of the passing of Assembly Bill 12. This study focuses specifically on the experiences of young adults deemed “successful” based upon their enrollment in school, work status, and overall plans for their future. The data was collected through telephone and face-to-face interviews with young adults currently involved with Extended Foster Care in San Bernardino County.

The findings of this study indicated that successful young adults tend to demonstrate some level of resiliency and have an overall positive outlook, are self-motivated, have better relationships with their social workers, an overall good understanding of the program and services offered, stable supports, and all participants became involved in EFC immediately following regular foster care. Young adults also expressed a desire for more assistance in gaining work experience. The strengths of this study include the use of open ended questions and triangulation of analyzing data. Limitations of this study include participant self-selection bias and the briefness of the interview that may have not allowed for sufficient time for young adults to reflect intensely on their experiences.

Recommendations for future social work policy, practice, and research based on the findings of this study include extending foster care services beyond

age twenty-one, the importance of social workers roles in young adult clients' lives, and the need for continued, more intensive research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researchers would like to thank Dr. Carolyn McAllister for her guidance, assistance, and support throughout the process of completing this research project. We would also like to thank San Bernardino County and the participants of this research for allowing this research to be possible. Furthermore, we thank our professors, the School of Social Work at Cal State San Bernardino, our cohort, and loved ones for their continued support throughout our educational experience in the Master's of Social Work program.

## DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to all young adults in Extended Foster Care both currently and those to come. We wish you bright futures with successful outcomes and hope that this study, along with studies to come, will assist in making your journey to self-sufficiency a smoother, less stressful transition.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Problem Statement

At the age of eighteen a teen is considered an adult from a legal perspective; however, in today's society it is very rare for anyone to become a self-sufficient adult at the young age of eighteen. This is especially an issue for youth emancipating from the foster care system, as they do not tend to have a parent figure to offer them stability or housing. Until recently, most foster youth were terminated from the foster care system on their eighteenth birthday, leaving many homeless. It is estimated that every year in the United States over 20,000 youth age out of the care system at the age of eighteen, 30% of which have not had a stable placement for at least nine years previous to emancipation (USDHHS, 2006).

Fifty years ago it was common for someone to find a job, love, and fully become an adult by their late teens or early twenties (Arnett, 2011). In today's world it is much more difficult than that. Many employers will not hire employees without a college or vocational degree, in addition to a high school diploma. The work force has become much more competitive. Currently in the United States over 60% of the population pursues an education beyond high school (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009). It is extremely common for young adults today to complete college before obtaining a job or moving out on their own, and

even then, most young adults not in foster care still have the safety net of parental support and stability to rely on if needed (Arnett, 2011). Many foster youth who emancipate from the system do not have the luxury of stable parent figures to provide them material or emotional support (Yen, Powell Hammond, & Kushel 2009). Youth that age out of the system are more likely to experience homelessness, unemployment, poverty, lack of access to healthcare, utilize government aid, display criminal like behaviors, and be less educated than others (Atkinson, 2008).

When foster youth emancipate from the system, many of them do not have the skills necessary to live a mature, responsible, and independent lifestyle. Statistics show that, when foster youth emancipate from the system, 61% emancipate without a place to live, 51% are unemployed, less than 3% go to college, female youth are four times more likely to end up on government assistance, and despite the fact that foster youth only make up 0.3% of California's population, 40% of people living in homeless shelters in California are former foster youth (Delgado, Fellmeth, Packard, Prosek & Weichel, 2007).

In response to this issue, Assembly Bill 12 was created and passed in to law in 2010. This bill allows young adults to remain in the foster care system as "non-minor dependents" beyond the age of 18. Beginning in 2012, services were extended to those up to nineteen years of age, followed by those up to twenty years of age in 2013, and finally beginning in January 2014, foster care services will be extended to young adults up to the age of twenty-one (California

Department of Social Services, 2011). Youth are permitted to enter and reenter the program at any time given that they meet the minimum requirements to be enrolled in the program (California Department of Social Services, 2011).

Considering that Extended Foster Care was only recently implemented, there has been little research conducted on the experiences of young adults who participate in this program. Examining the experiences of young adults within the program will assist social work practice in determining which policies and practices are successful and which areas of the program could use improvement.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of young adults in the Extended Foster Care program. This study will focus on those young adults who have proven to be “successful”. The term successful will be used to describe young adults who are pursuing an education or have obtained employment, and who are on their way to becoming self-sufficient adults as a result of their involvement in Extended Foster Care. Focusing on the experiences of young adults who have proven to be more successful in transitioning to adulthood will give insight into what services and approaches have led them to a higher level of success in the program.

This study is qualitative in nature and involved interviewing numerous clients involved with the Extended Foster Care program in San Bernardino County. This research method allowed for more in-depth and detailed responses

from young adults. The young adults interviewed range from eighteen years of age up to twenty years of age and are of various ethnicities and cultures.

The researchers worked directly with San Bernardino County Children and Family Services. San Bernardino County Children and Family Services will be provided with the results of the study conducted on their specific program. These results will assist the county in future practice and policy related to the Extended Foster Care program. The goal of the research is to determine which experiences young adults feel to be the most useful in preparing them to become self-sufficient.

#### Significance of Project for Social Work Practice

This study is needed in order to give feedback as to what the experiences are of young adults involved with Extended Foster Care are and what is being done currently that in the youth's opinion, is adding to their success in transitioning into adulthood. This study will not only benefit San Bernardino County, but other counties and states that currently practice or plan to create similar programs for youth over the age of eighteen. Child welfare practice in general will be able to relate to this study, as there are aging out youth in all Children and Family Services agencies throughout the United States.

The results of this study will assist in guiding practice, policy, and future research on the experiences of young adults in Extended Foster Care. Practices that are found to be helpful to the youth will become known and areas of

improvement will be addressed as well. Policy may also be affected, depending on the needs of young adults and the success of current programs. Currently, research on this topic is limited, especially in San Bernardino County, as the program has not been in existence in California for long and little research has yet to be conducted. This study may open a window for future or extended research on this topic. This study specifically addresses the following question: What are the experiences of successful young adults in Extended Foster Care in San Bernardino County?

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Chapter two discusses existing literature in relation to AB12, The California Fostering Connections to Success Act. Transitioning youth as seen through the stages of development are explained. This population is at risk for negative outcomes; they are more likely to experience homelessness or difficulty in securing housing, lack of adequate social support, are less prepared to enter the workforce, and face challenges obtaining education (Stott, 2013). An overview of Independent Living Programs is provided. And finally, because the intent of this study is to look at positive outcomes, we review research on transitional youth who fared better than their same-age foster peers.

#### Homelessness and Transitional Housing Programs

Of the 399,546 foster children in the U.S. in 2012 there were over 15,000 foster youth between the ages of 18 and 20 in the dependency system (Dworsky et al., 2012). Many of these foster youth are leaving with no place to go. Transitional housing programs have been offered with mixed results. Transitioning youth are exiting foster care at a deficit; they are often experiencing loss from their families of origin as well as facing the challenges of having experienced abuse, neglect, and loss (Stott, 2013).

This period of growth is usually filled with learning about the self in the social world, however for these foster youth they often have more obstacles to progressing through this stage successfully. Children in dependency are more likely to exit foster care only to experience negative outcomes such as homelessness, less education than their peer counterparts, lower wages, higher rates of incarceration, etc. (Courtney, Dworsky, & Napolitano, 2013). Teen-pregnancy is another concern for this population. One study of Midwest transitioning foster youth found they were twice as likely as their non-foster counterparts to experience teen pregnancy (Dworsky & Courtney, 2010). This longitudinal study revealed multiple pregnancies in some cases as well. Homelessness and lack of stable housing is another potential negative outcome. Based on a collection of 15 studies, there is no certain figure on how many transitioning foster youth experience homelessness; figures range anywhere from 11-36% (Dworsky et al., 2012).

Stable housing is correlated with positive outcomes, such as employment, better physical and mental health, and feelings of self-sufficiency (Dworsky et al. 2012). The 2010 report *Exit Outcomes for Former Foster Youth Participating in California's THP-Plus Transitional Supportive Housing Program* showed mixed results for the state's efforts to address this need. Programs are facing difficulty keeping youth in placements longer than two years, and residents are often exiting with little stability, but further research is needed to address improving THP programs (Kimberlin, S. & Lemley, A. 2010). Determining the effectiveness

of transitional housing program efforts is challenging given the various methods applied and the fact that outcomes are often only measured within a year of discharge. Programs that are catered to their specific community needs are likely to be the most effective (Dworsky et al., 2012).

### Social Support

Transitioning youth experiencing a separation from their family of origin are often moving around the dependency system, creating a lack of permanent connections. Emerging adulthood is a period of change and exploration (Arnett, 2000), and foster youth need to be able to make efforts towards becoming self-sufficient with enough support around them to withstand failures. Transitioning youth without strong social supports are missing these opportunities or may experience more severe consequences when striking out. Social support is not just a concrete reassurance for transitioning youth --it has an impact on self-perceptions. The potential benefits of social support are great. In a study on youth attending asset-based approach camps where the focus is on positive interactions with staff, those surveyed had a higher opinion of their own strengths (Howse, Diehl & Trivette, 2010). Much of the available literature is qualitative in nature. Overall research shows transitioning youth wanting an adult in their lives while transitioning; others remark upon how they enjoyed their relationship with their social worker after they became adult dependents (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2007).

## Education and Employment

Foster youth often have disruptions in their education. While they may be dealing with the emotional aftermath of being moved around they also have to find a way to meet their needs, such as housing, income, etc. The longer children are dependent on the state the more disruptions they are likely to have had. For example, over-represented groups such as African-American males have lower adoption rates. In other words, youth that are against the greatest odds to succeed with the highest risk of failing to succeed are the ones often facing the most systemic challenges, such as racism (Simmel, Morton & Cucinotta, 2012).

Education can be a stretch for anyone let alone those facing large obstacles. Foster youth are more likely to experience disruptions such as changing schools and losing credits. California Assembly Bill 167 was developed to address the needs of foster youth by providing some flexibility on standard school district requirements that normally would reduce the likelihood they would graduate (California Foster Youth Education Task Force, 2010).

Obtaining higher education can be a challenge for many students but may be particularly difficult for those facing large obstacles, such as transitioning foster youth. The consensus is that EFC services will increase college attendance because it expands services and benefits to the age of 21; however, other researchers argue this is not long enough. Other research indicates EFC will end too soon, and services should be extended until age 24. The rationale is that transitioning foster youth are already behind and while having services until

the age of 21 is a step in the right direction, it may not be enough to accomplish its goal (Okpych, 2012). A study of foster youth who obtained college degrees reports they are meeting similar status of their non-foster peers; however, they still struggled in other outcomes such as mental health (Salazar, 2013).

After foster youth leave the system of dependency, they face an increasingly competitive job market. Societal expectations for education has increased (Arnett, 2000), and the current economic climate has added pressure to those preparing for the work force.

#### Independent Living Plan Outcomes

The California Department of Social Services has created groups to monitor EFC. There are a number of administrative groups, and one dedicated to gathering data although procedures and measures are still being developed. Since EFC has not been in effect prior to 2012, there is a lack of literature on its effectiveness. Therefore, we discuss issues surrounding programs that are well-established offering services to the AB12 population.

With all of the needs that emerging adult foster youth have, government policy and the agencies charged with implementation are continually seeking ways to be successful, but this can cover a vast amount of literature due to the broad nature of the policy's goals, therefore much research has been focused around the each agency's individual population. Qualitative studies have looked at satisfaction with program services. Foster youth are often unaware of

community resources and therefore do not avail themselves of them; Lucas County Ohio, for example, found they were amply staffed, but services were being underutilized (Mares, 2010). Other studies suggest there is confusion about programs, resources, and benefits.

According to a review of EFC's short history, there is a feeling amongst the transition youth about conflicting information about EFC and what it really means to those it is supposed to benefit (Courtney, Dworsky & Napolitano, 2013). AB12 is the result of the 2008 federal bill Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, in which California implemented through Assembly Bill 12 in 2012. California is newer to start implementation however in other states foster youth have had more time to evaluate some of these services.

On a more positive note, some youths reported experiencing relief due to the financial assistance, which allowed them to focus on other goals like school. Students can also receive assistance with school expenses.

### Positive Outcomes

Those who fare better transitioning from foster care tend to be resilient (Haas & Graydon, 2009). Resiliency is defined as a normal phenomena experienced due to personal strengths and environmental factors resulting in feelings of competence, ability to problem solve, and having a sense of purpose for example (Haas & Graydon, 2009). In a study of 44 former foster youth of who have achieved at least junior standing in post-secondary education,

characteristics of resiliency were examined. Surveys employing various types of questions were provided, open-ended as well as Likert-scale. Eighty-four percent of participants attributed a social support to their resilience, while a small percentage reported internal strengths such as spirituality (Haas & Graydon, 2009). Results suggest that resiliency stems from feeling an internal locus of control, reflection on positive experiences, perceived social support—especially from adults and/or authority figures, and making connections within the community (Haas & Graydon, 2009). Another small qualitative study of seven minority females showed the importance of making a connection to children to provide them the opportunity to develop resilience within themselves (Greeson & Bowen, 2008).

In contrast, there are youth who report feeling different from their peers due to their experiences and are more reluctant to seek support from others, which raises questions about the identity dependent youth are internalizing (Greeson & Bowen, 2008). Due to the small sample sizes there are no real answers about where resiliency comes from; however, the literature agrees that meaningful relationships are one factor that may play an important role.

### Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Erik Erickson's eight stages of psychosocial development can be a useful theory when looking at the issues faced by aging out youth. This theory indicates that there are many stages of life transitions that one must go through at one

point or another. Erikson states that mastery of each stage and one's ability to cope will reflect the formation of a person's identity (Lesser & Pope, 2011).

Foster youth tend to face more crises during these developmental stages due to their experiences with the foster care system and lack of stability.

According to Erikson, at the age of transition, youth should be at the stage of identity versus role confusion, where they will either gain a sense of identity or they will question who they are and what they want to do in life (Lesser & Pope, 2011). Many youth may have issues in mastering this stage of achieving self identity, which may be a reason for their inability to become self-sufficient at the age of eighteen.

Stemming from Erikson's theory is another theory relating to the experiences of youth around the age of transition. This theory is David Levinson's theory of life stages and development. Levinson's theory describes stages of life as different eras (Lesser & Pope, 2011). The era of pre-adulthood is said to be the stage where adolescents start to become more independent and begin to transition into early adulthood. According to Levinson, early adult transition occurs between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two (Levinson, 1986). During this stage adolescence are beginning to become independent. Levinson states that even at successful completion of the early adult transition, "One is at best off to a shaky start..." (Levinson, 1986, p.5). Forcing independence on a youth during this era where they are not yet prepared to transition into early adulthood may prove to be unsuccessful and cause

difficulties for youth to achieve self-sufficiency when they are not yet prepared for it developmentally.

In addition to these theories, another applicable theory is Maslow's hierarchy of need. This theory states that there are five levels of needs organized into a pyramid and that in order to move upward on the pyramid, each need must be met (Lesser & Pope, 2011). The bottom two levels of needs that must be met are basic and safety needs. Once those levels have been met one may then move on to love/belongingness, esteem, and lastly self actualization (Lesser & Pope, 2011).

The foster care system ensures the two most basic human needs; safety and physiological needs. Foster youth are provided with food, a safe home, water, clothing, transportation, healthcare, etc. When a youth ages out of the system they are no longer entitled to such provided resources and these needs may become their main struggle and priority. Without the assistance of foster care, meeting basic needs can prove to be challenging (Yen, Powell Hammond, & Kushel 2009). According to Maslow, not being able to meet basic needs will prevent these young adults from achieving other higher levels of needs that are necessary in transitioning to successful self-reliance.

Lastly, the guiding theory of this study is a cultural theory referred to as Emerging Adulthood by Jeffrey Arnett. This theory proposes emerging adulthood as a new life stage that is experienced between the late teens and mid-twenties (Arnett, 2000). Arnett discussed that during this new stage of early adulthood, the

twenties is a time of instability, possibility, self-focus, exploring one's identity, and the feeling of being in between adulthood and adolescence (Arnett, 2011). This is a time of transition into becoming an adult, finding a personal identity, obtaining a stable job, and make important decision regarding love (Arnett, 2011).

With acknowledgement of this new life stage, it is essential that services, including foster care, be geared towards assisting foster youth during their time of instability. It is important to realize that becoming an adult in one's late teens to early twenties has become a thing of the past and is not a likely situation for young adults today, especially foster youth.

### Summary

While the difficulties and future challenges facing foster youth are well-known, social work on the whole is still looking for best way to interrupt the course towards negative outcomes. The lives of these youth are multi-faceted with needs interpersonal, intrapersonal and concrete in nature such as financial resources. This period of transition is crucial in developing self-sufficiency that will carry them through to adulthood. Independent Living Programs often in part address all these types of needs. Transitional Housing Programs are also seen as beneficial, especially in the case of providing the basic need for shelter. Long term success is more challenging to understand because of the complexity of needs.

Transitioning foster youth that have been considered more successful tend to do so with a level of perceived support. Concrete skills taught in Independent Living Programs are also useful for the transitioning youth. EFC offers a lot of support that individual agencies will have to be creative in administering. In order to fully understand the needs of the population individual communities will need to begin by understanding how their programs have been effective and where they can improve services provided to transitioning youth.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methods and procedures that will be used in conducting this particular study. The specific topics that will be discussed in this chapter include the design of this study, sampling methods, data collection and instruments, data analysis, and the protection of human subjects.

#### Study Design

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of young adults who are successfully meeting or exceeding expectations in the Extended Foster Care program in San Bernardino County. This study was qualitative in nature to ensure young adults were able to openly discuss their personal experiences. Qualitative research involves asking people about their experiences and receiving data in the form of words rather than numbers (Grinnell & Unrau, 2011). The qualitative design of this study allowed researchers to gear specific questions to young adults based upon their personal experiences. The young adults were interviewed regarding their education, housing, employment, perception of services, etc. This information provided San Bernardino County's young adults in EFC with a voice regarding their personal experiences, what they believe was helpful to them, and what areas of the program can be improved

upon. This information was shared with San Bernardino County in order to improve the program for young adults to come.

A limitation of this study is that only those actively involved in Extended Foster Care at the time of research were used in this study, therefore, this research will not reflect the experiences of those who may have chosen to opt out or leave the program. Also, participation was voluntary; therefore, only young adults interested in discussing their experiences were used in this study.

### Sampling

Using a list of young adult clients and their contact information provided by the San Bernardino County Legislation, Research and Quality Support Services Unit, young adults were selected at random to participate in this study. The list included approximately 250 young adults. Researchers went down the list and contacted every 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> young adult to be used in this study. Participants were chosen at random in an effort to gain a diverse sample involving young adults in various situations. The young adults selected were mailed a letter asking for their voluntary participation. These young adults were also called via telephone and asked to participate in this study. Researchers also contacted Extended Foster Care caseworkers to inform them of the study. Young adults whose social workers were not comfortable with the study were not contacted. Interviews were offered both in person and over the phone in an attempt to make interviews as convenient as possible for young adults. There were three waves of

letter mailed out followed by phone calls. When young adults did not show as much interest as the researchers had hoped, additional young adults were contacted from the list of clients provided by the county.

In total, twelve young adults were interviewed by researchers conducting two different studies. This specific study focused on the young adults who are more successful while another study focused on less successful young adults involved with the Extended Foster Care program. The number of young adults represented in this study was determined by the number of participants deemed successful.

#### Data Collection and Instruments

Data was collected through a questionnaire containing demographic information as well as a 30 to 45 minute interview with each participant. Demographic data was filled out by participants, or the researcher when the interview was conducted over the phone, on paper before the interview began. This included questions, such as: What is your birth date? What is the highest level of education you have completed? What is your current living arrangement? Are you in school, if so where? Do you work, if so how often? What is your gender? What is your ethnicity? This questionnaire included both open ended questions as well as options to circle the answer.

Interviews were audio recorded so that researchers could reference them later for analysis. These recordings were later transcribed and used to analyze

the overarching themes and experiences of young adults in foster care. The types of questions used during each interview were slightly different to match the specific young adult's experiences. For example, if the questionnaire indicated that a young adult was not enrolled in school, they were not asked questions regarding what school they attend. Interviews generally included questions relating to the young adults knowledge of Extended Foster Care, differences they noticed in Extended Foster Care compared to regular foster care, their relationship with their caseworker, their current and future living situations, their support systems, their goals, and how useful they feel Extended Foster Care has been for them personally. Interviews were guided by the participants' responses and personal experiences.

### Procedures

Researchers/Interviewers reviewed the informed consent with the interview participant. After receiving informed consent from the participant, a demographic questionnaire was completed to gather basic information about the participant. Audio taping was used as the interviewer and participant went through the nineteen item interview. Following the interview, participants received a ten-dollar Wal-Mart gift card as a token of appreciation for their time and participation. Interviews were conducted in-person or over the phone depending which the participant preferred or was reasonable due to circumstances such as driving distance and availability.

## Protection of Human Subjects

Interviewers explained confidentiality to client participants during the recruitment phase; and this information was reviewed as part of the interview procedures. Email correspondence containing any participant's identifying data was encrypted, and all data was kept in password protected data storage devices, on password protected computers. All data will be destroyed upon completion of all aspects of the research, including writing.

## Data Analysis

The research was explorative in nature and a constant comparative method was used to analyze the data. Qualitative procedures utilized were a list of open-ended questions in addition to some demographic questions for categorization purposes. Emerging constructs were anticipated to be knowledge of EFC programs and services, experiences as a foster youth and non-minor dependent, utilization and usefulness of services, perception of social support system through Department of Children and Family Services, and the status of life outcomes, such as housing (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg & Coleman, 2000).

In this qualitative study, data was analyzed using the Constant Comparative Method. All interviews were transcribed for easier analysis. Researchers compared information found from all interviews and narrowed them down to categories. To determine whether interviewees should be categorized into the positive outcomes pool, they were initially screened by demographic

data; participants that were not enrolled in some form of post-secondary education and/or not employed were removed. Upon second review, participants that were in high school with dependents and unemployed were also removed, leaving young adults whom were either acquiring a post-secondary education or attending high school fulltime with a plan for themselves after graduation remaining in the sample. From there, the researchers determined common themes based on the common categories of information derived from participant's answers to interview questions. This provided the researchers with a more comprehensive overview of the experiences of successful young adults in Extended Foster Care.

Interviews were gleaned for themes related to positive outcomes of clients whom used Extended Foster Care Services through San Bernardino County Children and Family Services.

### Summary

This chapter discusses the methods in which San Bernardino County Department of Children and Family Services received feedback from their AB12 Program participants at the time of the study. This population was sampled, and approximately one hundred and twenty-five young adults were contacted and twelve were interviewed using open-ended questions. Responses were digitally recorded and transcribed to ultimately compare and find potential emerging constructs that were included in the discussion to follow.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the general findings of the interviews conducted. A total of twelve clients of San Bernardino County's Extended Foster Care Program were interviewed in a period of two months beginning in February, 2014. Through Constant Comparative Analysis the participant pool was narrowed down to nine interviews. Participants were asked to provide demographic information: age, highest grade completed in school, living arrangements, current city of residence, whether they were attending school at the time of the study, which school they were attending, whether they were working, their place of work, how many hours they worked weekly, gender, and ethnicity.

Participants range in age from eighteen to twenty-one years old.

Participant gender was nearly evenly divided; five participants were female, and four participants were male. Eight participants identified themselves as African-American; two as Caucasians, and zero Hispanic/Latino or other race/ethnicity.

Two participants were finishing their senior year in high school, and seven participants were receiving post-secondary education (trade school, community college, and four-year University).

Eight out of the nine participants lived in San Bernardino County and one was residing out of state; five were living in a Supervised Independent Living

Program (SILP), two in foster homes, and two in group homes. Three participants were holding part-time jobs (while also attending high school or a post-secondary school), and one participant was working full-time (while attending a post-secondary school).

## Results

Once the participant pool was refined there were several themes which emerged. The young adults with positive outcomes reported the various supportive services they receive in Extended Foster Care that were felt to be useful. The second major theme was the participants' positive outlook. They often demonstrated a positive attitude towards topics such as: their experience, the services, themselves, their futures, etc. The third major theme found were the significance of informal supports such as family, friends, community or professionals. Lastly, many young adults expressed a desire for more employment experience opportunities.

### Supportive Services

In general, when asked what Extended Foster Care was or what services it offered, many clients were vague in their responses, and did not report specific programs to be helpful. This theme was common with the entire pool of participants interviewed; however the positive outcomes young adults were able to provide more specific feedback as to the different aspects of the program they felt were benefiting them. Out of a series of open-ended questions, the most

common theme amongst the young adults was the importance of their social worker in acquiring services; and many reported having very positive relationships with their EFC case workers.

Additionally, the successful young adults that were interviewed had all entered EFC straight from regular Foster Care and have not left the program. These young adults did not have a lapse in services, i.e., they chose to be in Extended Foster Care at the time they were eligible. Young adult clients recognized the value of receiving financial support/benefits that the program includes.

Several participants also reported Independent Living Programs, and the Transitional Aged Youth Center (TAY) as being instrumental in teaching them valuable transitional skills. One young adult stated “they [ILP] provide us with information on the measure, or the bill and they were very informative.” (Interview #8, personal interview, March, 2014.) Others reported the TAY Center and ILP Center to be the most helpful benefits of EFC. Young adults receiving funding for housing through SILP were appreciative to have the option to live independently. “I’m in a SILP Program. It’s helping me keep a roof over my head. So it’s helping me be able to pursue these goals” (Interview 7, personal interview March, 2014.)

Young adults reported positive relationships with their workers. When asked about their feelings towards their workers, they described them as being “reliable” and “a great worker”. They described their relationships with their workers as “very wonderful” and positive in general. One young adult even

stated, “My county worker has a magic wand.” (Interview #11, personal interview, April, 2014).

### Positive Outlooks and Future Perspectives

These young adults with positive outcomes had much in common in the way they presented their experiences. First, they generally expressed some attribute of resilience; one noticeable difference between some of the initial pool of participants and the selected interviews was their positive outlook. The following is an example of one interviewee’s perspective on EFC:

You know, it’s very sad to see so many people, uh, you know, not think of it [EFC] as you know, a resource, they think of it as like, uh, you know –a set-back. They don’t think of it that way and it’s very difficult for people to get on their own when they, you know, think of EFC in such a way.

(Interview #8, personal interview, March, 2014)

Discussing her concern for her roommate, a former foster youth, she stated,

...sometimes I tell him, you should really take this as an opportunity, and he says he doesn’t need it...I really want to let him know there are things out there for him. (Interview #8, personal interview, March, 2014)

Most of the interviewees expressed some positive outlook on their future, such as having career and/or educational goals, and the belief that they will be

able to achieve these goals. Participants displayed a level of self-motivation when it came to learning how to reach these goals and striving for them. For example, one participant stated, “You know, I’m really happy with myself at the present time, that I’ve come so far.” (Interview #8, personal interview March, 2014). Another young adult stated his resources to reach his future goals were “myself, motivation, and hard work” (Interview #9, personal interview, February, 2014).

### Support Systems

It was also noticed that all successful youth had a support system of some kind. Some were close with family members, friends, or both, and overall felt that they had someone there for support whenever they needed it. One youth stated, “... I’ve gotten support from my therapist and my family, my foster family as well as my biological family. Emotional support basically...” (Interview #8, personal interview, March, 2014.) Another young adult stated, “I have a lot of really good friends, a lot of good friends and their parents are very helpful, and they’re very understanding um, so, I can rely on them. (Interview #11, personal interview, April, 2014).

### Expressed Needs of Young Adults

Many of the young adults were also interested in acquiring work experiences. They felt that while they were willing to work and often were focused on seeking employment, there were not many opportunities for young adults to develop skills and gain necessary experience for entry-level jobs. Five

out of the nine young adults were not working and this was a big concern for their future once EFC was no longer available to them.

I would like to transfer to a university, but unfortunately if I don't work and I won't be able to pay my bills, then I won't be able to go to school, cuz, you know, like I said college doesn't pay our bills ...it would be much helpful if I knew somebody that was working already that can refer me into a job, that way it would make it easier to get my foot in the door...My main goal is to get a job before then [before leaving EFC], so I can continue paying my bills and I don't become homeless. (Interview #7, personal interview March, 2014.)

### Summary

Overall, the successful young adults interviewed all experienced positive experiences with services, supports, and displayed a positive outlook toward their futures. Formal supports, such as ILP Programs, TAY Center and continued support from a social worker were reported to be an important aspect of Extended Foster Care. A positive outlook and an overall feeling of appreciation was also a commonality amongst the young adults with positive outcomes. Additionally, informal social supports, such as friends and family were acknowledged. However, many young adults felt they would benefit from additional work experience opportunities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

Chapter five provides a discussion of the research based on the findings from the interviews conducted. This study was explorative in nature and the resulting data is presented in comparison to previous research regarding Extended Foster Care services being provided by Child Welfare agencies throughout the U.S. Study limitations, and strengths, conclusions, implications for social work practice, policy, research, and recommendations for directions in future research are also discussed.

#### Discussion

Overall the benefits of Extended Foster Care are similar. Other implementations of EFC tend to address the same issues facing young adults. Several major concerns are for housing and financial stability, difficulties attaining education, and lack of social supports (Stott, 2013). San Bernardino County provides assistance in these areas as well. Participants found these formal supports to be important in their satisfaction of EFC. These programs are a staple of the EFC program and provide much needed stability for transitioning young adults. This finding was expected as it often provides a tangible benefit and concrete skills, such as money management.

In other studies, young adults that did not have a good grasp on what the services were or how they would help them, did not engage in EFC programs (Mares, 2010.) It is possible that certain clients are more ready than others to receive the information about EFC when the program is explained to them, and may be an additional challenge to EFC social workers that are tasked with engaging these youth to utilize the programs. This may also explain why this study's sample was able to be specific about the benefits they felt they were receiving through EFC.

The young adults' relationship with their social worker was a strong theme in the interviews. This population reported very positive relationships with their workers. Previous literature discusses the importance of the presence of an adult in the lives of the young adult and social supports (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2007). Depending on the nature of the relationship this may also be somewhat of an informal social support such as those one would have with a friend or family.

These young adults were also very positive when discussing their future plans. According to Haas & Graydon, (2009), foster youth who fare better as they transition into adulthood tend to be resilient. This study found this to be a characteristic of the interviewees as well. Consistent with previous studies (Haas & Graydon, 2009), these youth had future goals for themselves and felt they possessed intrapersonal strengths and feelings of self-competence to achieve their goals. It is also worth noting having stability increases feelings of self-efficacy and improves outcomes for this population in general (Dworsky et al,

2012). This may also contribute to their feeling they had more positive experiences and having more positive relationships. While this study finds these young adults present with a positive attitude it does not infer any causal relationship. These resilient youth may simply have received better services and had more quality relationships to feel positive feelings towards.

The third major theme found was the role of informal social supports. As mentioned previously, the importance of feeling supported is crucial. This is not only a necessity; it contributes to the quality of self –perception (Howse, Diehl, & Trivette, 2010). This again, may be attributed to experiences or may be a benefit of those with a more positive attitude or better social skills. This theme is consistent with previous literature.

The focus of this study was to explore how young adults who fared well felt about the EFC programs and services. While there was a general consensus that EFC is very helpful, they did provide feedback when asked about their needs. Many young adults in EFC struggle to reach employment goals and are concerned the program will end prior to reaching independence (Okpych, 2012). This is one reason there Extended Foster Care services. The job market is increasingly competitive (Arnett, 2000). This is consistent with other findings and opinions regarding the needs of this population. The challenges in educational attainment and employment continue to be a concern for their future.

### Limitations

Participants in this study were self-selected; which may have caused a self-selection bias, as many clients contacted were reluctant to provide interviews. This may explain the ratio of the positive outcomes sample to the few that were screened out with less positive outcomes. Those with more positive experiences may be more willing to discuss their experiences than those with more negative feelings towards their experiences. Also, young adults that volunteered to participate are currently receiving services however; during our brief interview, they may not have had enough time to reflect on which aspects of services will be useful as they leave the program.

Lastly, as in most qualitative studies, the data received may not be an accurate representation of the rest of the Extended Foster Care population (Grinnell & Unrau, 2011). While the information discussed above was true for the participants in this particular study, it may not be true for all young adults.

### Strengths

Young adults receiving EFC services were provided with open-ended questions allowing them to say anything about their experience using EFC services. This qualitative research allows for more in depth information regarding the young adults personal experiences, allowing for researchers to determine categories and themes based off of this information (Grinnell & Unrau, 2011). The qualitative nature of this study also allowed for flexibility in gearing the interview towards the participant's specific experiences.

An additional strength of this study is that it was analyzed by two researchers which provided a triangulation of perspectives on the data. Each researcher determined categories and themes on their own and came together and found similarities between findings, which gives evidence that the findings were appropriate (Grinnell & Unrau, 2011). All findings were discussed and agreed upon as valid.

#### Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy, and Research

This research provides insight on what services, relationships, and motivations are currently assisting young adults in Extender Foster Care to successfully prepare for self sufficiency. Reviewing the result of this research can offer valuable insights for future research, policy, and practice related directly to assisting young adults in reaching successful outcomes through Extended Foster Care.

#### Practice

The most important recommendation to social work practice based upon this study is the importance of the social workers role in a young adult's preparation for adulthood. Many of the young adults in EFC do not have a parent figure and or mentor to look up to or lean on for advice, motivation, and assistance. As presented in the findings of this study, many successful young adults, to some degree, attribute their successes to their social worker. Whether it be through informing the young adult about the program, services available,

finding housing, providing bus passes, assisting in getting financial aid and getting into college, or even just returning a phone call, young adults who feel they have a better relationship with their social worker, on average, appear to be heading towards more successful outcomes. This finding reveals to social workers just how important their role is in a young adult's life and the amount of impact they may potentially have on the outcomes of the young adults on their case loads.

Another practice recommendation derived from this research is the importance of social workers informing their clients about services offered and the benefits of entering EFC well before they turn eighteen. It is important that social workers encourage their clients to pursue EFC immediately after turning eighteen so that there are no gaps in their services. As found through this research, continuity of participation in foster care services and knowledge of services offered have shown to be an indicator of success levels for young adults.

### Policy

It was noted by several young adults that they feel they would benefit from Foster Care extending even beyond age twenty-one. It was suggested by one participant that services should be extended to age twenty-five or twenty-six. This idea is supported by Arnett's theory on Emerging Adulthood. This theory focuses on the life stage of Emerging Adulthood which according to Arnett, occurs between ages eighteen and twenty-five (Arnett, 2000). This implies that reaching

actual adulthood typically does not occur until after age twenty-five. It is no longer common to reach adulthood in the late teens or even early twenties, therefore it is not reasonable to expect foster youth who have typically experienced more hardships and may not have the supports and resource than the average person may have, to be able to become self sufficient, even by the age of twenty-one. Extending foster care services beyond age twenty-one would allow young adults more time to fully reach adulthood and self sufficiency.

### Research

Further research on the experiences of young adults in foster care is necessary, as there is not much research previously conducted with this population. Considering that this program is fairly new and still becoming established, it will be important to continue research into the future. Interviewing a larger range of young adults will be beneficial as it will provide a more accurate representation of the experiences of these young adults. It may also be beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study that follows young adults through their entire experiences with Extended Foster Care in order to give a more comprehensive overview of the program and outcomes experienced after aging out of the program. When conducting future research it is recommended that measures be taken to ensure that a variety of young adults with various education levels, work experience, ages, and levels of participation within the program are included in the study.

## Conclusion

Overall, many young adults involved in Extended Foster Care who demonstrate higher levels of “success” and higher probabilities for successful outcomes after aging out tend to be resilient, display some level of self-motivation, are aware of various programs offered, have a positive relationship with their social worker, an overall positive outlook, and enter Extended Foster Care immediately after turning eighteen and exiting regular foster care. Extended Foster Care has given young adults a greater opportunity to achieve successful outcomes after aging out of foster care. It is important that as this program continues to grow, research continues to be conducted to assist in bettering the program for generations to come. Focusing on aiding young adults in becoming self-sufficient will likely increase the amount of successful outcomes experienced by young adults and make a large impact on society overall.

APPENDIX A  
INFORMED CONSENT



College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
School of Social Work

**INFORMED CONSENT**  
**Experiences and Short-term Outcomes of Young Adults in Extended Foster Care**

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to learn more about the experiences of young adults receiving Extended Foster Care services. This study is being conducted by Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Assistant Professor of Social Work, Dr. Janet Chang, Professor of Social Work, Dr. Herb Shon, Assistant Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), Nicole Chavarria, MSW Student, Elaine Contreras, MSW Student, and Denise Johnson, MSW Student, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

**PURPOSE:** This study is seeking to learn more about your experiences while you have received Extended Foster Care (services after the age of 18) through San Bernardino County Children and Family Services.

**DESCRIPTION:** Your participation would consist of completing an interview with members of the research team. This interview would be audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to see the ways your responses are similar to and different from other participants. You have been identified to participate in this study because you are currently receiving Extended Foster Care services through San Bernardino County Children and Family Services

**PARTICIPATION:** Your participation in this study is voluntary. A refusal to participate will involve no penalty of loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue or withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your participation in this study does not have any impact on your participation in Extended Foster Care. No employee of San Bernardino County Children and Family Services will be informed of your participation or refusal to participate in this study.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** This is a confidential study, and all researchers will diligently work to ensure that any identifying information provided be kept confidential. The informed consent form and any other identifying information about you will be kept in a locked office. The digital audio files, transcribed interviews, and analysis will be kept on password protected memory drives, and will not contain any identifying information about you. Findings will be presented in aggregate (group) form. Any quotations used from interviews will not contain any identifying information about you or anyone else. Upon completion of this study, all audio files and identifying information will be destroyed.

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APPROVED 1/29/14 VOID AFTER 1/29/15  
IRB# SW1432 CRAIG [Signature]

909.537.5501

5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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Maritime Academy • Monterey Bay • Northridge • Pomona • Sacramento • San Bernardino • San Diego • San Francisco • San Jose • San Luis Obispo • San Marcos • Sonoma • Stanislaus



College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
School of Social Work

**DURATION:** The interviews are expected to take 30-45 minutes. We may contact you for clarification as needed, however this is not expected.

**RISKS:** There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you in participation in this research. However, some questions may be of a sensitive nature, and may elicit an emotional response to you. If these questions make you upset in any way, you can refuse to answer the question or stop the entire interview at any time.

**BENEFITS:** The findings of the research may assist San Bernardino and other counties to identify area for future training and support, as well as what is going well during the ongoing implementation of Extended Foster Care.

**AUDIO:** The interviews will be audio recorded for clarity and to ensure accurate data collection. These will be studied by the research team for use in the research project only. Please initial the following statement:

I understand that this research will be audio recorded, and agree to be recorded for use by the research team only. Mark \_\_\_\_\_.

**CONTACT:** If you have questions about the research or your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work, at (909) 537-5559 or [cmcallis@csusb.edu](mailto:cmcallis@csusb.edu).

**RESULTS:** Results of this study can be located in the CSUSB Library after September, 2014.

**SIGN:** Please place a mark below if you agree to the conditions of this study and volunteer to participate.

Mark: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO  
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Maritime Academy - Monterey Bay - Northridge - Pomona - Sacramento - San Bernardino - San Diego - San Francisco - San Jose - San Luis Obispo - San Marcos - Sonoma - Stanislaus

## INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the experiences of young adults in Extended Foster Care in San Bernardino County. This study is being conducted by Nicole Chavarria, MSW Student, California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) and Denise Johnson, MSW Student, CSUSB under the supervision of Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Assistant Professor of Social Work, CSUSB. This study has been approved by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of successful young adults who are involved in the Extended Foster Care program in San Bernardino County.

**DESCRIPTION:** Your participation would consist of completing a questionnaire and an interview with researchers. This interview will be audio recorded and later analyzed to search for common themes in experiences of young adults in Extended Foster Care. You have been asked to participate in the study because you are currently receiving Extended Foster Care Services in San Bernardino County.

**PARTICIPATION:** Your participation in this study is voluntary. A refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled to. You may choose to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled to.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** This is a confidential study. Researchers will work diligently to ensure that your personal identifying information will be kept confidential. All physical forms that you sign will be kept in a locked office. All digital audio files, transcribed interviews, and analysis will be kept on a password protected flash drive. The findings of this research will not be presented individually, they will be tied together to discuss themes only. Any quotations that may be used from interviews will not contain any identifying information about you or anyone else. When this study is completed, all audio files and any identifying information will be destroyed.

**DURATION:** Interviews will last approximately 30-45 minutes. You may be contacted at a later date if clarification is needed; however, this is not expected.

**RISKS:** There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation in this research. However, some questions may be of sensitive nature and may cause an emotional response to you.

**BENEFITS:** This study will highlight similar experiences shared by young adults that assist in their success levels. The results will assist San Bernardino County in identifying which practices young adults find helpful and which areas could be enhanced or adjusted to improve success.

**AUDIO:** The interviews will be audio recorded for clarity and later analysis of data collected. These audio recordings will be used the research team for this research project only.

I understand that this research will be audio recorded and I agree to be recorded for use by the research team only. Initials/Mark\_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT:** If you have any questions about the research or your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work, at (909)537-5559 or [cmcallis@csusb.edu](mailto:cmcallis@csusb.edu).

**RESULTS:** The results of this study will be available either online or at the CSUSB Library after September, 2014.

**CONFIRMATION STATEMENT:**

I have read the information above and agree to participate in your study.

**SIGNATURE:** Please place a mark below if you agree to the conditions of this study and volunteer to participate.

Mark: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Developed by Elaine Contreras Nicole Chavarria, and Denise Johnson

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me (us) about your experiences in Extended Foster Care. I am going to ask you a number of questions about what you know about Extended Foster Care, what kinds of services you are using, what is working and what you feel could be improved about Extended Foster Care, what your plans are while you are using Extended Foster Care, and what your goals are during and after Extended Foster Care. If you choose not to answer any particular question, I can skip it. Although I will be discussing the findings with San Bernardino County CFS in general, I will not ever reveal your name or anything else that might let someone else know it was you I talked to.

1. When did you first hear about AB12 or Extended Foster Care?
  - a. Who told you about it?
  - b. What did you learn about it?
2. At what point did you decide to use Extended Foster Care?
  - a. Did anyone help you make this decision?
  - b. Did you ever consider not using Extended Foster Care? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever left Extended Foster Care and returned to it?
  - a. What make you decide to leave (if you did)?
  - b. What made you decide to return?
4. What do you currently know about Extended Foster Care?

- a. Who/ what agencies have discussed this with you?
  - b. Do you have any questions about Extended Foster Care? Who would you ask about them?
5. Is Extended Foster Care different than foster care was before you turned 18?
  - a. If yes, in what ways?
6. What is your relationship like with your caseworker?
  - a. Do you have a different caseworker than you had before you were 18?
  - b. If you have a new caseworker, when did that happen? How old were you?
  - c. How would you describe your relationship with your current caseworker?
  - d. Is this relationship different than it would have been before you were 18? Why or why not?
7. What is your current living situation?
  - a. Is this different than it was before 18?
  - b. If you are in the same living situation as you were before 18, does it feel different to live here? Why or why not?
  - c. Have your relationships with your foster parents/ group home staff/ etc. (depending on their living situation) changed? If so, in what ways?

8. How do you see your living situation by the time you leave Extended Foster Care?
  - a. Who would you be living with?
  - b. Do you receive support in reaching this goal? Have you found it helpful?
  - c. How are you preparing for this goal (money, bank account, independent living skills, transportation, furniture/ appliances, etc.)?
  - d. Do you feel you need any support in reaching this goal? What kind of help would be useful to you?
9. Who in your life do you feel you can count on when you need help?
  - a. Friends/ family/ workers/ etc.
  - b. Are there people that you would like help connecting with? What kind of help would be useful?
10. Are there any reasons why you cannot work or attend school?
  - a. What are those reasons?
  - b. Do you feel you are getting help getting help on this? What has been helpful?
  - c. What kinds of support do you think would be useful to you?
11. Are you currently in school (or, when were you last in school, depending on the information given in the demographics)?
  - a. What grade are you/ were you in?
  - b. What kind of school do you/ did you attend?

- c. How often do you/ did you attend school?
12. What would you like to ultimately do for a job or career?
- a. What are your plans to achieve this goal?
13. What are your educational goals?
- a. Particular degree/ vocational training?
  - b. Do you feel you can achieve these goals?
  - c. What kinds of help do you feel you have to achieve these goals?
  - d. Are there services you feel you need to achieve these goals? What are they, if any?
14. Are you currently working (or, have you worked in the past)?
- a. What kind of work are you doing/ did you do?
  - b. Where do you/ did you work?
  - c. How many hours a week do you/ did you work?
  - d. Are you/ were you happy with this kind of work?
  - e. If you are no longer working there, what led you to leave?
15. What are your work goals?
- a. Particular profession/ career?
  - b. If you aren't sure what you would like to do, do you feel you need help deciding? What kind of help?
  - c. What kinds of support have you gotten towards choosing or working toward a particular career? Has it been helpful?
  - d. What kinds of support do you think would be useful to you, if any?

16. Do you have any other goals that you hope to meet before you leave Extended Foster Care?

- a. How long do you hope to continue to use Extended Foster Care?
- b. What other services do you hope to use before you leave Extended Foster Care?

17. Overall, do you feel Extended Foster Care has been useful to you?

- a. What about it has been useful?
- b. What about it has not been useful?
- c. What services do you find the most helpful?
- d. What services do you find the least helpful?
- e. What services do you think need to be added?

18. Is there anything else about Extended Foster Care I forgot to ask?

Anything else you feel would be helpful to know about Extended Foster Care?

Thank you very much for your time. I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with me openly and honestly about your experiences.

APPENDIX C  
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

## DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

This will provide general data to describe the sample and will help guide some of the questions (about employment and schooling, specifically).

What is your birth date (month and year only)?

What is the highest grade in school you have completed? (please circle your answer)

Less than 10<sup>th</sup> grade

10<sup>th</sup> grade

11<sup>th</sup> grade

High School Diploma

GED

Some vocational schooling

A vocational certificate/ degree

Some community college

An Associate degree

Some college (4 year school)

How would you describe your living arrangements? (please circle your answer)

Group Home

Foster Home

THP Plus

SILP

Dormitory

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What city do you live in?

Are you currently in school?

Yes

No

If you are in school, please list the school you attend.

Are you currently working?

Yes

No

If you are working, please list where you work and how many hours you work  
(per week).

What is your gender? (please circle)

Female

Male

What is your race/ ethnicity? (please circle all that apply)

African American

Asian/ Pacific Islander

Caucasian

Hispanic/ Latino

Native American

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This was a two-person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:

Team Effort: Nicole Chavarria, Elaine Contreras, Denise Johnson

2. Data Entry and Analysis:

a. Data Entry:

Team Effort: Nicole Chavarria, Elaine Contreras, Denise Johnson

b. Data Analysis:

Team Effort: Nicole Chavarria and Denise Johnson

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:

a. Introduction and Literature

Team Effort: Nicole Chavarria and Denise Johnson

b. Methods

Team Effort: Nicole Chavarria and Denise Johnson

c. Results

Team Effort: Nicole Chavarria and Denise Johnson

d. Discussion

Team Effort: Nicole Chavarria and Denise Johnson