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## **Social workers' attitudes and perceptions towards extended foster care**

Mina Nahavandi Moghaddam

Amanda Ellen Garcia

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SOCIAL WORKERS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS  
TOWARDS EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

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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

---

by  
Mina Nahavandi Moghaddam

Amanda Ellen Garcia

June 2013

SOCIAL WORKERS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS  
TOWARDS EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

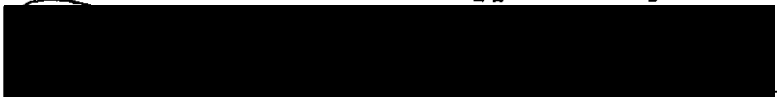
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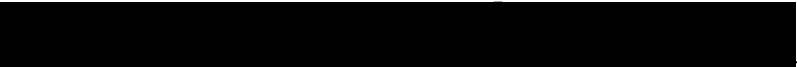
by  
Mina Nahavandi Moghaddam  
Amanda Ellen Garcia  
June 2013

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6/6/13  
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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored social workers' attitudes and perceptions towards the implementation of extended foster care, explored how the recently implemented program is running based their perspectives, and to address any challenges of working within extended foster care. Social workers from different regional offices within San Bernardino County Children and Family Services were interviewed about their thoughts of working with a young adult population, types of support they have received from San Bernardino County CFS and those within the agency, challenges and benefits of the program, and suggestions that could improve the program. Responses from the interviews revealed that, overall, the extended foster care program is proving to be beneficial to the young adult population, as it provides them with services and resources to live independently and experience the transition into adulthood with a support system by their side. However, participants in the study noted some challenges regarding regulations such as policy versus workers' discretion, and lack of housing, mental health and substance abuse services within San Bernardino County. Social workers also provided vast information on

ways to improve extended foster care and in turn, such as balancing the centralized and de-centralized units, balancing policy and flexibility, considering timing and case load size, as well as expanding services.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writers would like to sincerely thank Project Supervisor Carolyn McAllister for her sharing her extensive knowledge, direction, guidance, patience, positive support, and consultation in the writing of this thesis. Working together to develop and complete a study such as this one has been an enjoyable and informative experience. Special thanks to Sandra Wakcher for her dedication and time in assisting us with the data collection of this research study.

The writers would also like to express thanks and gratitude to the County of San Bernardino, Children and Family Services Agency for allowing us to conduct and complete the research study. Special acknowledgement is given to Supervisor Social Services Practitioner, Sally Richter, for her support and advising throughout the process.

We hope this research study can serve as a beneficial tool for Child Welfare services, as well as a positive contribution to the field of social work as a whole.

## DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this to my wonderful parents, without whom I would not be the person I am today. Your unconditional love, support, encouragement, and open-mindedness have taught me to always continue reaching further in life and to never stop questioning. You have taught me the meaning of dedication, hard work, persistence, and advocacy, as you have dedicated your whole lives to nothing but the well-being and growth of my brother and I. I hope I've made you proud. Thank you to my grandmother for guiding me with her words of wisdom and kindness.

I would also like to dedicate this to my loving brother, Arya, who has taught me to become more accepting, tolerant, sensitive, and emphatic towards others by his presence in my life. Growing up with a brother struggling with deafness and autism has been a challenging, yet extraordinarily rewarding experience - so thank you for opening my eyes to a whole new world. I am fortunate to have you as my little brother.

Thank you to my research partner, Amanda Ellen Garcia, for collaboratively working with me on this project. Last but not least, I would like to warmly thank my cohort and amazing professors who have nurtured and

enhanced my academic and social growth - this has been a wonderfully life changing experience, and I have all of you to thank for. Thank you for brightening my life with your presence.

"Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened." - Buddha

Mina Nahavandi

Moghaddam

First, I would like to thank my parents, Claudio and Maria Garcia, for their ongoing love and support throughout my collegiate career. Thank you for pushing me towards pursuing a higher education and striving for the best. I would also like to thank my sister, Diana Garcia, for her support, humor and encouragement during this time. Additional thanks go to my family, close friends, and those who have guided and supported me throughout this process, your words of encouragement or gestures are truly appreciated. A final thank you goes to my cohort as well as my thesis partner, Mina Nahavandi Moghaddam, as I could not have completed this program without the support and encouragement from you all.

Amanda Ellen Garcia



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Chapter One provides an overview of the evolution of AB12: California Fostering Connections to Success Act and Extended Foster Care (EFC). The chapter provides a description of EFC, the eligibility requirements, and the types of services provided within the program. It notes the issue of whether the services provided through EFC are effective through assessing the attitudes of the child welfare social workers that are working within this scope, as the program is relatively new to the state of California and its counties.

#### Problem Statement

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, the state of California began full implementation of Assembly Bill 12: Fostering Connections to Success Act. This act encourages foster youth who are of legal age to remain in the system up until age 21 if needed. By remaining in the system as a non-minor dependent, also referred to as young adults, and adhering to certain obligations, these individuals are eligible to continue to receive funding and opportunities to promote independent living and a

maintainable lifestyle as an adult. A number of states in the U.S. have implemented services for foster youth after they turn 18, but participation by states is optional (Burton, 2012).

In 2010, around 4,800 youth were emancipated from foster care in California (Shared Vision Consultants & Child and Family Policy Institute, 2011). Before AB12 was put into action in California, youth aging out of the foster care system at ages 18 and sometimes 19 were essentially "thrown out," and left to provide for themselves as independent adults (Shared Vision Consultants & Child and Family Policy Institute, 2011). More often than not, former foster youth are faced with issues and struggles once they have exited the system. With AB12, now known as Extended Foster Care (EFC), the goal is to provide those struggling youth with the option to receive more time and services to help with the transition from adolescence and into adulthood (Shared Vision Consultants, 2011). AB12 authorizes California legislation to extend foster care to youth until age 21, provide Kin-GAP benefits to relative guardians, provide Kin-GAP and AAP assistance to youth up until age 21 should they be eligible (Shared Vision Consultants &

Child and Family Policy Institute, 2011). To be eligible to receive extended foster care services, the youth must meet one or more of the criteria listed below:

- The youth must be enrolled in high school or an equivalent program (continuation, etc.)
- The youth must be enrolled in college, community college, or vocational school
- The youth must be employed and work at least 80 hours a month
- The youth must participate in a program or activity designed to remove barriers to employment
- The youth must be unable to fulfill any of the listed requirements because of a mental disability (Shared Vision Consultants, 2011, p. 18)

Youth choosing to stay in the system and participate in extended foster care can live in a variety of placements. Upon meeting certain criteria regarding the situation of the youth and the social worker's approval of such living arrangements, the youth may live in these types of placements as listed below:

- An approved home of a relative or non-related extended family member (NREFM), licensed foster family home, foster family agency certified home, small family home, or home of a non-related legal guardian (approved by the court). This does not have to be the same placement the youth was in prior to turning 18.
- Group home placement (up to age 19. Group Home placement is prohibited after age 19 UNLESS the youth meets the medical condition criteria).
- Transitional Housing Placement Program (licensed) or THP - Plus Foster Care (approved). This is only until age 18.
- Supervised Independent Living Setting (approved) (new option).
  - Such as:
    - An apartment
    - Room and board arrangements
    - College dorms
    - Shared room mate (Shared Vision Consultants, 2011, p. 18)



Furthermore, social workers working with EFC also have specific requirements when working with these types of complex cases. The social worker is required to schedule and meet with the client on a monthly basis. These visits are to be well structured and should focus on any issues pertaining to the client's case and visits must be held face to face. States with EFC programs are also required to provide data on the percentage of children who are receiving these visits to ensure that 90% of all children in EFC are receiving their monthly visits. Upon reaching the age of emancipation from foster care, the social worker must also develop a case plan with the child to help the child transition into EFC, individualized to the child's interests (Administration for Children and Families, 2009).

While it is still early to test the outcomes of the program to its fullest extent, EFC is intended to promote permanency for older foster youth, by enabling them to experience some independence while continuing to have a trusting safety net in place, and help these youth become better prepared for successful transitions into adulthood (Shared Vision Consultants & Child and Family Policy Institute, 2011).

The federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act was put into law in October of 2008. California signed into law the AB12: Fostering Connections to Success Act in September of 2010, although implementation did not begin until January 1, 2012 (Burton, 2012). Due to the fact that California has only been implementing AB12 and the extended foster care programs since January of 2012, limited information is available portraying how these programs are running. Additionally, due to the lack of information, it is still a struggle to distinguish whether or not Extended Foster Care is beneficial or detrimental to those receiving such services. Social workers, especially those working within child welfare, are at the front lines when providing EFC services as they spend the most time interacting with the youth population. In order to gain a better understanding of how effective extended foster care could be for the emancipating youth, a study of the social workers' potential perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of EFC could construct a vast amount of insight and information towards the program, which would prove to be beneficial to child welfare and the field of social work at large.

Now that EFC has been implemented in California, child welfare social workers will need to have the training and capability to work with this type of youth in order to provide them with the appropriate services. Multiple training guides are available for supervisors in California to teach and train their colleagues on EFC, and how to work with clients who will need these services provided within the program. While training guides and modules are provided on the California Fostering Connections website (California Fostering Connections to Success, 2010), there has been little information or studies conducted, showing how social workers working with this youth group are coping with this new sense of responsibility and workload. There is also little information that dictates whether social workers are competent and well informed enough on the regulations, information, or policies regarding EFC. Additionally, now that these EFC cases are no longer closing out due to the youth's choice to stay in the system, they continue to circulate agencies for a number of years, thus potentially adding to the social workers already large workload. Currently, there is no specific information available that discusses EFC cases and the potential

effects they pose on social workers caseloads, nor has there been research discussing the social workers' added amount of responsibilities, upon the implementation of EFC.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research study was to assess the attitudes and perspectives of social workers on the implementation of Extended Foster Care within the Department of Child and Family Services in San Bernardino county. The overall research method used in this study is the qualitative design. The study utilized a face-to-face interview design, where the child welfare employees had the opportunity to state their demographic background, as well as answer a series of questions regarding their perspectives on the implementation of Extended Foster within San Bernardino County. Exploring and gathering the social workers' level of knowledge and assessing their attitudes toward Extended Foster Care allowed the researchers to collect information that could be utilized to understand challenges, and come up with interventions to assist professionals to better prepare the foster youth for independence.

The implementation of EFC in the San Bernardino Child and Family Services consists of various steps. To begin with, young foster youth must sign the "SOC 162" for Mutual Agreement For Foster Care, indicating the consent to voluntarily remain in foster care until after age 18 (County of San Bernardino, Human Services, 2005). Secondly, a Young Adult case plan, known as TILP, must be completed and updated every 6 months, assessing the youth's progress with goals and responsibilities (County of San Bernardino, Human Services, 2005). Additionally, Children and Family Services' Social Workers are required to follow the practice standard by assessing the appropriateness of youth's return home, discussing EFC with the youth and caregivers, supporting the youth with any needed assistance in EFC enrollment and maintenance, as well as evaluating the youth's progress into the program (County of San Bernardino, Human Services, 2005).

The research design selected was qualitative research, as it aimed to further explore the perspectives of case managers and supervisors involved in the implementation of EFC. In addition, the selected research design was the most suitable due to the new emergence of this implementation, and the lack of research and

knowledge about this topic. Using the face-to-face interview design allowed the researchers to gather extensive and detailed information regarding the child welfare employees' perspectives and thoughts about EFC implementation. A more thorough set of data on this topic enabled the researchers to utilize exploratory research in order to shed some light on the dynamics and the depth of this newly implemented program.

#### Significance of the Project for Social Work

The need to construct this research study arose from the researcher's desire to learn more about the process of implementing EFC within San Bernardino County. Additionally, the researchers were interested in providing useful information to San Bernardino County CFS about the strengths of EFC as it is being implemented, as well as areas of needed growth or change to maximize the benefits of EFC.

One of the primary reasons the study contributes to social work practice is its ability to aid the county in the implementation of EFC, and in maximizing the potential for positive outcomes for young adult clients. Knowledge of the perception and attitude of the social

workers who are dealing with the newly implemented laws that directly affect them and their clients, brings awareness to the issues that concern them in search of interventions on how they could get resolved. In addition, it is important to assess how these individuals view the extended foster care program as it is considered to be relatively new and still in a testing phase, with not much research done on its outcomes and effectiveness.

The study also has a significant impact on social work policy, particularly the Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB12). Assessing the social workers' attitudes and perceptions about the program can assist in the understanding of this policy, as it sheds light on the strengths and weaknesses that a professional in the field may observe in this newly implemented change in the system. Understanding such strengths and weaknesses can assist policy makers to evaluate and assess the possible outcomes of their policy, and perhaps make adjustments for further improvement.

In addition, this study contributes to the field of social work research, as it can be considered a source of additional research to add to previous findings. One can agree that research findings go hand in hand with

policies as well as practices. Certain policies will be created in response to previous findings about various challenges, dilemmas, failed attempts, shortcomings, as well as strengths and positive outcomes of experiments and studies. It is through research that professionals and policy makers are able to implement practices through programs that have proven to be effective in order to enhance the well-being of individuals in meeting their potentials. This study aimed to fill the existing gap in previous findings regarding Extended Foster Care, as it sheds light on how professionals view their new set of responsibility and accountabilities.

The phase of the generalist intervention process that would apply to this research study is the evaluation phase, as it assessed and analyzed the results and outcomes of Extended Foster Care, and whether or not it is perceived to be effective. The findings of this study allow the policy makers as well as practitioners to understand the issues that a professional in this field may face, enabling them to make changes and design interventions that would provide a better working experience for the social workers, as well as enhance the services for their clients.



The study is of a great relevance to child welfare practice, as it assessed the attitudes and perceptions of the child welfare workers about a newly implemented program in child welfare practice. EFC extends the age of eligibility for foster youth to remain in the system from the previous age of 18 to 21 (California Fostering Connections to Success, 2010). Doing so requires more financial resources, training, knowledge, time and perhaps heavier caseloads for child welfare workers who are now hold onto certain cases remaining in the system, rather than exiting them out of the system as they would have done so in the past. Assessing the social workers' attitudes and perceptions on the outcomes of the program plays an important role in evaluating the progress and reviewing possible interventions in providing more efficient and beneficial services to foster youth, striving to make it out on their own in the harsh world of reality.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

In looking at the history of child welfare and the services provided for the foster youth, it is crucial to study previous research done on various aspects of this population in order to grasp a better understanding on the topic of Extended Foster Care (EFC) and the child welfare workers' perspective on implementation. To begin with, emancipated foster youth face a variety of challenges as they exit the system, such as housing and residential instability, employment, and educational obstacles that make their road to independence an unstable one. Furthermore, studying social workers' perspectives on EFC implementation can play a significant role in gaining a better understanding of how the professionals in the field view the change, and whether or not they have sufficient knowledge on how to deliver the services to their clients. The following section will discuss literature reviews findings on the challenges foster youth face when they exit foster care at 18, studies done on social workers' attitudes and perceptions

regarding Extended Foster Care, studies conducted in relation to Extended Foster Care, as well theories guiding the conceptualization of this area of study.

#### Challenges of Foster Youth Exiting Foster Care

Before the implementation of EFC, foster youth would be left with no choice but to age out or emancipate from care at the age of 18. Research done on the challenges that these youth face upon emancipation, point to areas of challenge in residential stability, employment, education, and mental and physical health. The issues of housing and residential stability continue to be some of the main struggles for youth as they are transitioning into adulthood and adjusting to the newly faced responsibilities that many may not be adequately prepared for. Homelessness has become one of the disturbingly common challenges for American youth. Studies have shown that about 5 to 7.7 percent of youth are experiencing homelessness annually (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006). In addition to the challenges that the youth usually face for housing as it is, the current economic recession and foreclosure crisis have increased the rate of homelessness even higher (National Alliance

to End Homelessness, 2006). It has been estimated that around 2 million children as well as youth will greatly be affected by the foreclosure crisis, putting their placement options at an even further risk (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006). Even though homelessness has been a huge challenge for youth in general, emancipated foster youth are at an even higher risk. Research has shown that approximately 24,000 foster youth exit the system and one forth of them have reported homelessness at least one night within 2 and half to 4 years after emancipation (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006).

One of the factors that greatly contribute to youth's homelessness is residential instability. Roman and Wolfe (1995) study showed that one's history of foster care correlates positively with homelessness at an earlier age, as well as remaining homeless for a long period of time. They found that those who exit out of the foster care system are more likely to become homeless than a non-foster youth, as they may simply not have the proper resources and knowledge to live independently. According to a study done by Bass (1992), one in five youth arriving at shelters came directly from foster

care, and that one forth of them had been in foster care the year before. One of the major challenges facing the approximately 29,500 young people who aged out of foster care each year was finding an available, safe and affordable place to live (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009).

Even with all the efforts and dedication to provide extra assistance for the emancipated youth, there still exist some challenges to be addressed. Courtney et al (2010) found that many foster youths are still becoming homeless during their transition to adulthood. They reported that although extending services to the foster youth until the age of 21 does have an impact on reducing homelessness between the ages of 19 to 21, it seems that it does not decrease their chances of becoming homeless by age 24 (Courtney et al., 2010).

Another major challenge faced by the emancipated foster youth is employment. Patterns of unemployment for the emancipated foster youth vary across the nation. A study suggested that, from the national standpoint, about 30 percent of emancipating foster care in Illinois, 23 percent in California, and 14 percent in South Carolina

had no earnings (George, Bilaver, Lee, Needell, Brookhart, & Jackman, 2002). For youth who emancipated from foster care, 50 percent in California and Illinois and 75 percent in South Carolina had earnings before they reached the age of 18 (George et al., 2002). In California and South Carolina, if youth did not work prior to emancipation, there was slightly more than a 50 percent chance of beginning employment after exiting (George et al., 2002). Many of the emancipated foster youth who are employed are underpaid. It has been reported that 63 percent of former foster youth in Clark County, Nevada were employed with an average hourly wage lower than the minimum wage, at \$7.25 (Reilly, 2003).

Subsequently, youth aging out of foster care have average earnings below the poverty level. These struggling individuals had a lower income than non-foster youth before and after they reached the age of 18 (Reilly, 2003). Even though the average earnings in each state increased an estimated \$500 per quarter, these youth acquired less than \$6,000 per year in wages, which is significantly below the 1997 poverty level of \$7,890 for a single individual (George et al., 2002).

Furthermore, McMillen and Tucker (1999) completed a case record study of 252 youths, assessing the status of foster youth in one Midwestern state, from out-of-home care. The study utilized a random selection sample of older adolescents in Missouri, in which one of the areas observed is foster youth's status of employment. The researchers found that youths with fewer change of placements or those who had completed high school had a higher chance of becoming employed upon exiting the out-of-home care. The study also associated several factors with a lower chance of employment, such as originating from an urban area or being placed into the system because of sexual abuse. The researchers found a negative correlation of employment and number of placements, where the youth with a higher number of placements would have a lower rate of employment upon exiting care (McMillen & Tucker, 1999). The study recognized participation in an independent living skills program as one of the interventions that could help increase the rate of employment for the emancipated youth to gain independence (McMillen & Tucker, 1999).

Additionally, emancipated foster youth progress more slowly in the labor force than other youth. In Wisconsin,

only half of former foster youth were employed 12 to 18 months post-discharge. Low-income and aging-out youth in California receive a larger increase in their earnings than reunified youth (George et al., 2002). Such factors can serve as serious levels of concern and struggle for those exiting the system to strive on their own for the first time.

Furthermore, another major challenge faced by the emancipated youth is attaining an education. Many foster youth face various academic difficulties while in the system. They often times lack a sense of motivation as well as the proper skills to succeed in school, leading to a poor performance in school and failure to graduate. According to research, only half of foster attain a high school Diploma, and less than 20 percent of foster youth enroll in college-prep classes during high school (Casey Family Programs, 2006; Wolanin, 2005).

Moreover, foster youth may also struggle with mental and physical health as they enter adulthood. According to Ziotnick, Tam, and Soman (2012), 20 percent of the 250,000 children that enter foster care every year in the U.S display rates of psychological, physical and social problems and challenges. Some of these social setbacks



can include high rates of teen pregnancy, high number of arrests as well as substance abuse dependency and addictions (Ziotnick, Tam, & Soman, 2012). They conducted a study in which they compared the rates of mental and physical health problems between adults who had been placed in foster care and those who hadn't. Ziotnick et al. (2012) found that there exists a higher occurrence of asthma, diabetes, hypertension, seizure disorder and high rate of smoking within those adults who have had a foster care background. The study also found that those who had been placed in foster care were twice as likely to receive Social Security Disability Insurance, since they were struggling with mental and physical issues, inhibiting them to sustain employment (Ziotnick, Tam, & Soman, 2012).

#### Studies Conducted in Relation to Extended Foster Care

While extended foster care (EFC) is a relatively new service derived from AB12, research has found some costs and benefits that stem from this new service. One study facilitated by Mark Courtney analyzed the potential benefits and costs of extended foster care, where a foster youth would remain in care until age 21 (Courtney

et al., 2009). Courtney and his colleagues (2009) based their findings of costs and benefits on research of EFC services in the state of Illinois, data on emancipated youth who received public assistance, college participation rate of youth at age 21, and data on increased employment earnings associated with pursuing a higher education. Estimates were gathered from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the 1988 National Education Longitudinal Study and the US Census Bureau (Courtney et al., 2009).

In order to discuss the research at hand, Courtney's "Midwest Study" should be discussed shortly beforehand. Courtney's "Midwest Study" served to provide states with the first comprehensive view of how emancipated foster youth are coping with the transition into adulthood (2007). Starting in 2002, interviews were conducted with 732 youth from Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin who were reaching the age of emancipation before EFC services were implemented. Three portions of interviews on the youth were conducted over 2003-2009 in order to observe their progression or digression throughout their years out of the foster care system. Studies showed that large percentages of the youth were struggling with issues of

accessing health care services, pregnancy, employment, financial hardships, education, as well as criminal activity (Courtney et al., 2009).

In regards to the costs of extending foster care to age 21, the study found that the cost per youth in EFC in the state of Illinois after his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday until emancipation would approximate to \$37,968 (Courtney et al., 2009). While there were no specific figures found for the cost per youth in EFC in California, Courtney and his colleagues (2009) suggest that the costs of extending foster care in the state would estimate a total of \$41,600. Beneficially, foster youth in extended foster care are 2.5 times more likely to receive a Post Baccalaureate degree in comparison to pre-EFC implementation. In conjunction with this finding, the National Center for Educational Statistics has found that young adults with at least a Bachelors degree are earning 61 percent more than those with only a high school diploma or GED (Planty et al., 2007). Lastly, while it is not easily monetized, research from Courtney's study also suggested that youth receiving EFC services have a 38 percent less likely to become pregnant, impregnate their partners, as well as better personal and family health,

which was discussed to be a likelihood of becoming more knowledgeable by attaining a higher education (Courtney et al., 2009).

Limitations in this study should be recognized as the research was made off of estimates derived from previous studies. It can be observed that the costs portion of the study was directed more toward expenditures from EFC, while the benefits focused solely on the youth who would be receiving services and opportunities through EFC. Courtney and colleagues (2009) took note that the costs and benefits listed within the article were based on observed differences from policies of the state of Illinois and other states with similar but not identical policies on EFC (Courtney et al., 2009). Furthermore, the conducted studies show that there is, in fact, a gap between estimates and accurate findings on the costs and effectiveness of EFC due to the program having only been implemented for a short amount of time. It is also apparent that there is very little research regarding the proposed study of social workers attitudes and perceptions of EFC. Additionally, many of the studies conducted regarding implications for EFC, especially in California, are merely estimates of data

due to the lack of research on the emancipated foster youth (Kimberlin & Lemley, 2012). However, the proposed study conducted will prove itself to be beneficial to the issue, as perceptions and attitudes of social workers will be widely examined to observe certain perceptions or attitudes and their correlation with the effectiveness of EFC services.

#### Social Workers Attitudes and Perceptions Regarding Extended Foster Care

The attitudes and perceptions of social workers working within the child welfare field should be considered to be of high importance due to their key roles in working to serve and protect children and youth. Thomson (2007) explored the views and perceptions of child protection workers regarding their careers and the foster care system they worked in. This qualitative study consisted of in depth interviews from 12 child protection workers employed in Queensland (Australia) Department of Child Safety.

This study examined the child protection workers perceptions in order to gain some form of understanding of their rationalizations and actions when interacting with foster parents or caretakers. The interviews made

focused on challenging topics such as foster parent's salary for taking care of the foster youth, their motivation for fostering a child, their support needs as well as the ability to remain focused on the child (Thomson, 2007). The study revealed that child protection workers were highly committed to children in their caseloads, but high workloads caused these workers a large amount of stress. The study also showed that the social workers who expected the foster parents or caregivers to consistently meet the child's needs at the highest level, suggested that they were not motivated to work towards the needs of the children and were more interested in the financial gain of caring for a foster child (Thomson, 2007).

While the study was qualitative and exploratory, several implications and conflicting findings were noted. One implication includes the fact that all subjects interviewed were female, and the notion that due to the sample size being so limited, the outcomes were viewed more as a forerunner toward a large-scale study rather than representing the social workers views. Due to the article and research having been written and studied in Australia, conflicting findings occurred. While the

article stated many similarities that child welfare workers in Australia experience and perceive are comparable and quite similar, social workers in the US could not necessarily be able to compare cases regarding Indigenous and non-Indigenous caretakers (Thomson, 2007). Conclusively, findings in the literature suggest that in order to provide quality services to the child at hand, both the social worker and the foster parent or caretaker need better training on and support for their respective roles.

Furthermore, not only do social workers feel that they need to be better prepared and more supported in regards to their clients in the foster care system, youth continuing in the system feel the same way. Interview results from a study sample of 15 participants examining the need for services of transitioning foster youth in Northern California indicated that while basic necessities, services, programs, and opportunities need to be available for the transitioning foster youth, have a mentor or supportive figure available was also influential (Stiving, 2012). Gathered from interview responses, the study showed that 13% of the subjects interviewed felt that social workers would be more

beneficial to the youth if they assisted more in providing resources to youth, as they felt that some social workers did not complete this task of providing services and mostly focused on the completion of paperwork.

Regarding the findings made, the Stiving (2012) found that staff members and social workers failed to provide the support and resources needed for the youth upon emancipation as well as the perception that the social workers treat the youth as just another case. The findings of the study seemed to be consistent with the idea that the social workers' attitudes towards working with emancipating youth can have a negative or positive affect, given the worker's level of involvement and support.

#### Theories Guiding Conceptualization

One of the theoretical perspectives that have guided this research is the Human Development Theory, where the existence of important transitional periods in one's life is viewed as significant stages of development. According to this theory, one's sense of social support is critical during the transition to adulthood, as the youth is



striving to build meaningful and supportive relationships with those around them (Mech, 1994). The transition to independence is a difficult time for youth leaving the system, as they may not be equipped with the knowledge and tools for independence (Courtney et al., 2010). Mech (1994) states that at some point, all young people in out-of-home care must leave the control of the child welfare and placement system, but raises the question as to what extent are foster youth prepared for independence and effective community living? (Mech (2004) discusses the expected emancipation of foster youth at some point in their lives, but questions the extent of preparation for the foster youth to live independently, and whether or not this big sense of reasonability should be put upon their shoulders at such a young age. As the result, there has been an encouraging effort by many researchers, administrators, and foster care to work collaboratively and efficiently on identifying successful strategies and tools for youth development and transition into adulthood and independence (Mech, 2004).

Another conceptualizing theory relating to this topic is Erikson's Model. According to theorist Erik Erikson, youth in this stage experience the conflict of

intimacy versus isolation. If not achieved successfully, these youth may retreat from their social lives and develop impersonal relationships with others and also develop healthy career or lifestyle commitments (Boeree, 2006). Youth in this developmental stage are still attempting to figure out the world around them, and understanding and building a sense of who they are as individuals, and how they can relate to others and seek a positive and trustworthy sense of support.

Arnett (2007) refers to the youth between 18 and 21 as "emerging adults" and recognizes various issues such as instability, the age of identity exploration, the age of feeling in between, and the age of possibilities as some of the main transitional phases and challenges of this population. Arnett's study on the emerging adults is significant to the implementation of Extended Foster Care, as it sheds light on the complexity and challenges that the youth population face as they transition into a new area of exploration and possibilities that they may not have experienced before. As the result, many may not be prepared to conquer life tasks on their own without a safety net of support.

## Summary

In overview, there are a variety of challenges, costs, and benefits that stem from Extended Foster Care. Additionally, common attitudes and perceptions of youth receiving EFC services have experienced social workers in this is spectrum of child welfare to show little support or offer little assistance in helping with the transitioning phase into independent living and adulthood. Additionally, there is very little research or studies pertaining to working with the now voluntary adult population in foster care versus their involuntary status as minors. Due to the implementation of Extended Foster Care in California being relatively new, there is a scarce amount of research available discussing Extended Foster Care in its entirety. Additionally, there is also little information that could help suggest that social workers' perceptions and attitudes of Extended Foster Care can be correlated with these preceding factors. Conclusively, it is because of the significance of these factors in possibly determining or correlating with the perceptions and attitudes of the social worker that the present study was developed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Introduction

This section of the research entails a detailed description of the research methods and procedures that will be administered in this study. The design of the study, sampling methods utilized, data collection and instruments, procedures, protection of human subjects, data analysis and summary will be topics addressed.

#### Study Design

Due to the newly implemented extended foster care program, very limited research has been conducted to assess social workers' perspectives about the change in the system. The following study explored social workers' perspectives and attitudes towards extended foster care within San Bernardino County Child and Family Services. As the implementation of extended foster care presents a major change in the services provided in child welfare, the purpose of this study is to assess child welfare employees' perspectives and needs during those changes. The study assessed how social workers view this change for their clients in terms of their needs, growth and

progress, independence, readiness as well as the effect on the employees themselves in terms of their own role in the process, willingness, and change in case load.

The research method utilized for this research study is a qualitative survey design, using interviews to assess the perspectives of case managers/supervisors working with young adults from San Bernardino County through Extended Foster Care. The study interviewed 8 participants, due to the relatively small numbers of case managers that currently work with young adults in Extended Foster Care, since its recent implementation in January of 2012.

### Sampling

The participants for this study were recruited from the seven offices within Departments of Children and Family Services in San Bernardino County. Therefore the participants selected for this study were from social workers of Gifford Office in San Bernardino, Carousel Mall in San Bernardino, Rancho Cucamonga, Rialto, Victorville, Yucca Valley, and Barstow. The other main criteria will be that the worker either was primarily assigned to EFC cases, or has a number of EFC cases in

his/her caseload. The sample for the study consists of the primary service providers, who are divided into two categories: Social Service Practitioners (SSP) and Social Worker IIs (SW II). Supervisors that have responsibility for workers assigned to EFC cases were also sampled. The sample chosen is appropriate for this study as the services and implications of EFC are carried out to the foster youth through Social Service Practitioners, Social Worker IIs, and many of the issues that may come down from EFC implementation will also affect the supervisors of these caseloads. Therefore, assessing their perspectives about their own responsibilities as well as their views on the effectiveness of the program for their clients is crucial in better understanding the strengths and weaknesses of such a new program.

Social Service Practitioners and Social Worker IIs differ in their responsibilities, task management, as well as level of education in Child and Family Services. SW IIs are generally those with a Bachelor degree, whereas SSP's are individuals with a Masters in Social Work. Social Worker II's are only assigned to and responsible for general neglect cases, in contrast to Social Work Practitioners who are trained and responsible

for cases under physical abuse, sexual abuse as well as emotional abuse. The sample studied consisted of both male and female SSP and SWII's, with various ages, races, lengths of employment with CFS, education levels, and job titles.

#### Data Collection and Instruments

The data was collected using a face-to-face interview format. The subjects were asked to provide some background information on themselves through a demographic questionnaire, followed by interview questions about their thoughts, attitudes and perceptions towards the implementation of EFC. More precisely, the demographic section of the questionnaire includes questions about the participants' gender, age, marital status, education, race, and location of employment.

The interview questions instrument focused on assessing the participants' thoughts, attitudes and perceptions regarding EFC in terms of their clients' needs, growth, progress, independence, readiness and success, as well as the effect on the employees themselves in terms of their own role in the process, willingness, and change in caseload and time dedication.

The self-administered interview presents some strengths in assessing the study's research question. To begin with, the study's qualitative design utilized exploratory research as the research topic is relatively new, allowing the researchers to gather more detailed information from the participants on their views toward EFC (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008). This qualitative study utilized open-ended questions during the face-to-face interview. By providing open-ended questions, the participants were given the opportunity to expand on their answers, and provide additional information and insight regarding their perspective individual perspectives.

Nevertheless, this design presents some limitations in addition to its strengths. Even though qualitative research design utilizes more detailed information about its participants, the information was gathered from a smaller sample size than a quantitative research design. The smaller sample size, therefore, provides data from a small number of the population, limiting the generalization of the gathered info to the population as a whole (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008). The face-to-face interview design utilized by qualitative research is more



time consuming than a survey design as it requires the researchers to spend individual time with each research participant in order to gather a more detailed source of information (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008). Furthermore, the data collected through this research design is more vulnerable to biases of the data collector, as the researchers will be making a face-to-face interaction with the participant, with the possibility of influencing his/her subjective interpretations of the responses (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008).

#### Procedures

Approval to complete this study was obtained from the California State University, San Bernardino Institutional Review Board. CSUSB and San Bernardino County Children and Family Services completed a Memoranda of Understanding for this study. Perspective participants in this study included all social workers, social service practitioners, and supervisors employed within the CFS offices that current engage in EFC casework or supervision. The San Bernardino County Legislative and Research Unit provided the researchers with a list of all prospective participants. Potential interviewees were

contacted by phone and email, and were sent the informed consent documents in advance of a scheduled interview. Interviews were completed at a place of the interviewee's choosing. All interviews were audio-taped for accuracy of transcription. Once the interviews were completed, data analysis and transcribing of the material then took place.

### Protection of Human Subjects

The researchers of the study ensure that the protection of rights of those who chose to participate in the study to be kept fully confidential and safeguarded to protect any viable information of the participants. Since data collected was derived directly from the participants in the study, informed consent was provided to ensure the participant is aware of the information requested from the study and to ensure that permission has been granted from the participant to the researcher to use for exploratory research. The participants were individuals that are either case managers/supervisors working with young adults from San Bernardino County through Extended Foster Care.

First, the researchers of the study did not intend for the research be manipulative, stressful, or in any way harmful to the participants. Personal information about the interviewees was kept separately from any documentation of who participated in the study. The informed consent document also states that participation in the study is completely voluntary, and will not count against them in any way should they choose not to participate in the study. Additionally, while full participation is suggested, participants could have chosen not to answer any question that might reveal their identity. Participants granted consent to the researchers by signing the consent form with an "X" mark at the signature line instead of their name in order to keep confidentiality in the study. Once all questionnaires are returned to the researchers, all information gathered was stored in a password-protected computer and all gathered information from the participants will be destroyed once the study is fully completed.. All findings will be presented anonymously in aggregated data and all hard and soft copies of any information related to the study will be destroyed once the study is complete.

## Data Analysis

The study employed qualitative data analysis study techniques. The study establishes a baseline for social workers' perceptions and attitudes of EFC, mainly due to the lack of previous research and studies conducted on said topic. Data from the audio-recorded face-to-face interviews was transcribed verbatim. Coding was developed to organize the data into specific themes. Due to the research study being qualitative and relatively new, it is too soon to postulate an indication that gathered information represent a dependent or independent variable. Therefore, the research study has only one variable, which is the attitudes and perceptions social workers' have on EFC and information was explored through descriptive univariate statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarize demographic data of the social workers' who participated in the study by using measures of frequency. Through exploratory research conducted by face-to-face interviews, the researchers discovered and explored social workers' attitudes and perceptions of their EFC clients as well as the effects these variables have on the social workers' themselves.

## Summary

The research method utilized for this research study was a qualitative survey design, and the information needed was obtained by having participants' complete face-to-face interviews as well as completing a brief demographics questionnaire. Participants for this study were sought through all seven San Bernardino County Child and Family Services (CFS) offices. Data was collected by interview, and qualitative analytic techniques were used to identify key themes and commonalities in the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The information in this chapter was obtained from the interview responses of the participants in the study. Data presented in this section includes demographic information of the participants in the study as well as major themes that presented themselves from the data analysis. Direct quotes from the participants supporting the given themes are also provided herein. A discussion of the demographical information as well as a presentation of the findings under specific themes is also provided.

#### Presentation of the Findings

##### Social Workers' Demographics

The sample for this study was collected from a total of nine social workers within San Bernardino County Children and Family Services. These social workers vary within job titles as well as their roles with youth in EFC, however, each employee works under the Extended Foster Care unit at their respective regional offices. Each interviewee was asked a series of questions

regarding their views and perceptions of extended foster care and completed a demographic information form to provide additional information pertaining to the study. The experiences that were reported were on the social worker's perceptions and attitudes towards extended foster care as well as their experiences in working with the population that extended foster care serves. To maintain confidentiality, gender will not be regarded when providing demographic information or presentation of the findings. Additionally, specific job titles of these social workers will not be specified as to maintain confidentiality of the participant.

Ages of participants in the study ranged from 26-65. Four of the participants identified themselves as African American, two participants identified as Caucasian, one identified as Hispanic/ Latino, one identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, and one identified as Hawaiian. Regarding the level of education amongst the participants, five participants indicated having received an MSW, three participants listed the completion of another type of Master's Degree, and one participant listed their highest level of education as receiving a BSW degree. The participant's length of time in working

for San Bernardino County Children and Family Services ranged from 2 years and 13 months to 13 and one half years with a mean of 8.4 years.

The participant's length of time of working in Child Welfare ranged from 4 years to 25 years with a mean of 11.8 years. Based on responses from the study, participants noted their services as case managers, life coaches, supervisors, and resource providers to the youth. Participants in the study also indicated their assistance in providing youth in special health care needs and providing the youth access to services.

Additionally, all but one participant indicated having received training on EFC. Trainings on case management, court, AB12 laws, and how to work with young adults, were listed. Two participants stated to be members of several EFC committees and two other participants indicated attending monthly EFC meetings.

Participants worked for CFS from between 2 years and 13 and one half years ( $M = 8.4$ ), and worked in child welfare between 4 years and 25 years ( $M = 11.8$ ). Please see Table .1 for the demographic data.



Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Highest Educational Degree	
MSW	4
Other Master's Degree	3
BSW	1
Age	
26-30	1
31-35	1
36-40	2
41-45	2
46-50	0
51-55	1
56-60	0
61-65	1
Race/Ethnicity	
African American	4
Hispanic/Latino	1
Caucasian	2
Asian/Pacific Islander	1

### Commitment to the Project

#### Workers

Upon beginning the interview process, the participants were asked to discuss their thoughts about Extended Foster Care when they first learned about it. Out of eight participants, all but one stated that they viewed the new program as a positive concept as they recognized a need for further services for this

population. "I thought it was a great concept, as far as trying to help, because we failed", stated one of the participants (Interview 03, personal interview, February 2013). Some of the common themes were that it would provide extra support and assistance for youth who exit prematurely, form connections when they exit, as well as the opportunity to attain their education, work experience, and becoming more independent and focused on their goals. When asked about how they first heard about EFC, all of the participants stated having had some experience working with the adolescent population. The majority of the participants stated having a passion for working with this population, and either volunteering to take on EFC cases, or being approached by management, due to prior experiences working with this population. The participants reported having learned about EFC thorough their supervisors, their committees, and word of mouth.

Another shared characteristic within the responses was the workers' thoughts about working with this population. A common theme with the responses was stating a sense of comfort, as they all shared the past experiences of working with the youth and being familiar with their challenges and concerns. "My thoughts were

that is was going to be something very positive, but at the same time, something very challenging....as there is a lot of resistance" (Interview 01, personal interview, February 2013). Most of the participants stated not having any particular concerns about working with this population, while some stated that the change of how things were in the past to what would be in the future would be a challenge in adjustment.

#### Transitioning to New Processes

One of the underlying themes gathered from the participants responses regarding EFC, was recognizing a transition into new processes and the changes that it would entail. This new transition was discussed by observing the effect on administration, workers, as well as foster parents.

#### Administration

The participants discussed a transition into new processes from the administration perspective, as supervisors and managers are the individuals responsible for the implementation of EFC policy into practice at the county. The majority of participants stated having encouraging, supportive, and caring supervisors, who

discuss the cases and the workers' concerns when working with the youth.

Well, the management team is really behind this program, and I think that the agency itself, Children and Family Services, has brought into the idea that it's really something positive, so we have a lot of support from the supervisors, and upper management. (Interview 02, personal interview, February 2013)

Even though it was noted that management has been very knowledgeable and supportive in providing guidance in the implementation process, some participants stated that there seems to be a disconnect between management and the workers when considering the changes.

I think there is a disconnect though, between the higher up management, in regards to what it really takes to work with this population. Even the ones that appear to be doing well, and graduating from high school, and moving into college, they still need a lot of support and guidance, much like someone's kids would...kind of letting them go at 18 or 19, and expect them to flourish and they still need that guidance and support, so there is a lot of

time involved in working with them. (Interview 02, personal interview, February 2013)

The participant also stated that attending different trainings, conferences, and committees has helped them become more familiar with the changes and the transition into new processes.

It was so many changed initially about it, it was this bill and that bill and then well we're going to change it now, there's more changes coming down from the state because they didn't think about this part of it or that part of it. (Interview 01, personal interview, February 2013)

### Workers

The participants were asked about how they view the transition into Extended Foster Care and new processes and its effect on as county employees and their colleagues. Most of the participants identified their colleagues as supportive and helpful throughout the transition phase. Nevertheless, this sense of support was expressed in different ways. Some coworkers express their sense of support by helping one another throughout the process by being a source of guidance, assistance as well

as partner in understanding one another's struggles and attaining proper services as needed.

We rely heavily on one another so we have access to one another but in terms of being supported, I believe that CFS knows that this is a good... We've all been waiting for this to happen, to be able to work with this population so they've been very supportive of the program, they're all tend to be very excited about it as well. (Interview 05, personal interview, February 2013)

Other workers expressed their sense of support by recognizing that some of their clients should be case managed by a more experienced worker, familiar with EFC policy and procedures and recognizing that they not be competent to do so.

"A lot of my coworkers and colleagues, they don't share that passion, so they are very happy that I do, and they are very quick to pass on their cases - particularly the difficult ones" Interview 02, personal interview, February 2013).

"I think the concept should be, treat these young adults as if they were your own. You know and my workers

they do that..." (Interview 03, personal interview, February 2013).

"The big thing was letting go of that control, not me per say because the way I see EFC you treat them like adults..." (Interview 01, personal interview, February 2013).

### Foster Parents

When considering the new changes of Extended Foster Care, the social workers were asked about how they view this transition for EFC foster parents. The majority of the participants stated that foster parents need further training on understanding the critical stage of transitioning into adulthood, and the special difficulties and challenges these foster youth face as they also are dealing with mental health, substance abuse and behavioral issues. One common theme between the participants' responses is the foster youth's challenge of balancing the young adult's roles and responsibilities as they transition into Extended Foster Care. The majority of the interviewees identified this transition as ambiguous and challenging, as foster parents struggle to identify their new roles as caregivers. "I think liability is a big concern, so they just kind of take

over and make sure that those appointments are made or make sure that certain things are done..." (Interview 04, personal interview, February 2013).

They need to work with them not just when they turn 18. They need to have their own key to the house, they need to learn how to cook, to do their own laundry. Some of these foster parents won't even let them touch the washer and dryer. They won't let them touch the oven. And they always sway we're going to send you when you are 18. You're not ready. They need to help them find a job. They need to be more of a parent and that's the problem, they are not.

(Interview 09, personal interview, February 2013)

Another participant stated "Being supportive in a different kind of way, where the non minor dependents are not continuing to be dependent on THEM, but they are getting them the responsibility and continuing to guide them" (Interview 02, personal interview, February 2013).

It's either one way or the other - after they turn 18, there are some foster parents that are like, 'Okay, go do everything for yourself, or there are some that still try to do a lot of stuff for them.



There's very few that are kind of in the middle.

(Interview 04, personal interview, February 2013)

...Support of the young adults and this is our agreed upon living arrangement and lets work on this together because we are two adults and I'm still going to respect you as my foster parent but sometimes they want to treat them like children, but I think if they had that support of were an adult age wise, but they still make mistakes, we all do. The young adults think they can conquer the world without going through any challenges. I'm a super hero. (Interview 01, personal interview, February, 2013)

### Push/Pull

The Social workers interviewed for this study mentioned the transformation stage the youth face when they reach the age of eighteen and are transitioning into extended foster care. The majority of the participants noted a trend that many of the young adults were experiencing regarding the transition into adulthood. While the young adults are reaching the age where they are able to make their own decisions, the participants feel that the young adults may not be fully capable of

doing so on their own. Many of the participants' responses stated that even though the young adults are legally able to make their own decisions, they may not be mentally prepared or capable of necessarily doing so.

They need to understand the challenges. They need to be prepared to realize that even though they are an adult, that they are not an adult. And I think that is something that you just find that their expectations seem to go through the roof once they turn 18 and they have the same developmental challenges that they had when they were 17.

(Interview 09, personal interview, February 2013)

Most of our 18 year olds don't know how to do some things. They don't know how to fill out paperwork, they don't know how to make a doctor's appointment, they don't know how to balance a checkbook or budget or anything because everything is bought for them, and everything is done for them. Part of it is because of liability and the fosters, especially foster agencies are told, you know, are foster youth needing certain things, they have to have this stuff so they go make sure that they have it. Which, is good, but, at the same time they're not doing

anything for themselves. (Interview 04, personal interview, February 2013)

They need to understand the challenges. They need to be prepared to realize that even though they are an adult, they are not an adult. I think that is something that you just find that their expectations seem to go through the roof once they turn 18 and they have the same developmental challenges that they had when they were 17. (Interview 09, personal interview, February 2013)

One participant in particular noted a situation with a young adult receiving EFC benefits where the youth attempt to lead a more independent life, but retreating back to the help of the social worker:

There was one girl that came up in here, 'I need a bus pass right now, and I need one right now. If I don't go to school today then I'm going to get kicked out.' She had a of sense of entitlement and I did have to tell her, 'well maybe you need to look at why you're in extended foster care, because a part of getting to independence is not waiting until the last minute and then waiting on somebody else. (Interview 01, personal interview, February 2013)

Another social worker felt that the youths' perceptions of extended foster care are skewed once they reach age eighteen.

They think that as soon as they turn 18 that they can do whatever they want. And that magically, their birthday changes a whole lot of things. And that they can just be gone all the time and that they can just move wherever they want or they can just get their own place. (Interview 04, personal interview, February 2013)

Evidently, there is an issue on how independent these young adults can be once they enter into the program. While these young adults are given a greater sense of independence, the study suggests that social workers as well as foster parents need to grant them the independence they need while also providing them with a "safety net" type of supervision. There, the young adult can gain the ability to make mistakes and learn from them, thus growing into their own form of independence. One social worker noted that this push should begin before the young adult reaches the age of eighteen.

They need to work with them not just when they turn 18. They need to have their own key to the house,

they need to learn how to cook, to do their own laundry. Some of these foster parents won't even let them touch the washer and dryer. They won't let them touch the oven. And they always say were going to send you when your 18. You're not ready. They need to help them find a job. They need to be more of a parent and that's the problem, they are not.

(Interview 09, personal interview, February 2013)

While the social workers interviewed stated that the young adults are struggling with the new sense of independence while also retreating back to the aid of the worker or foster parent, six of the eight participants agreed that extended foster care is giving the young adults increased learning and maturing opportunities.

"I think it definitely gives them the chance to finish high school, it gives them to assess where they are at, with understanding finances... it gives them a chance to understand how to access services" (Interview 08, personal interview, February 2013).

"I think they are learning how to be responsible. I believe it's helping them mature, whereas if they were on their own...and you know, one of the things that they are

learning responsibility and from their mistakes"

(Interview 03, personal interview, February 2013).

#### Policy versus Worker's Discretion

Social workers in this study also discussed issues of the limits variances of discretion the worker has when working with the young adults within extended foster care in comparison. Workers addressed certain issues regarding the policy of the extended foster care program and their ability to work within those regulations. Due to the program being relatively new, many CFS workers in the county are still experiencing challenges when applying direct social work practice into their caseloads while also experiencing hardships from the ever changing rules and regulations. The participants in this study expressed issues such as the exact qualifications for a SILP across the county, criteria for qualification into the program, and legislations that have not clearly been addressed. The majority of the participants felt as though the rules, policies, and regulations were constantly changing. When asked about suggestions for improving extended foster care, one participant requested, "that the State stop changing so many laws" (Interview 01, personal interview, February 2013). Variances of work

styles and case management from worker to worker within each respective agency as well as frequent changes within policy standards from a federal standpoint also create some issues.

I just need them to stop changing everything, every other day. And then we find out something has changed, when we do something, and get the court to tell us, 'Oh no, we don't do that anymore'. Couldn't you have told us?! (Interview 03, personal interview, February 2013)

What we're finding departmental wide is that these cases are really not serviced the way they should be serviced. We're not sure if its due to a lack of understanding, due to a lack of 'Well they're an adult now I don't have to do a lot,' we're not certain. (Interview 01, personal interview, February 2013)

We're always trying to play catch up, the feds make a decision and it trickles down to the states and then down to us and then we're like 'uh oh' and have to scramble and keep up. So that's really the big challenge. We learn something new and then it changes and then we kind of have to switch

everything up at that point, so that's been a challenge as well. (Interview 05, personal interview, February 2013)

I find that, and this is not only with EFC, but also with all, that management looks more at the numbers or the money, than the relationships, because sometimes we are the only stable person in that child's life. And they don't think twice about switching the case to another worker. (Interview 03, personal interview, February 2013)

The lack of communication between the court, in regards to the continuous changes, and us has been very difficult. We get word that it's one way, and I guess the court is aware that it's been changed, so it's different and hasn't been brought into our attention. Even for myself, which I'm part of the committees, things are continuously changing.

Especially when things first rolled out in 2012, it was continuously changing, and even now, it's continuously changing as it evolves. (Interview 02, personal interview, February 2013)

Issues regarding the criteria for a young adult to receive extended foster care services were also made



known during the study. Three of the eight participants indicated a sense of discord regarding criteria, rules, and regulations of the program.

I think the five criteria is a challenge for me because, yeah the kid can be attending school, they meet the qualifications but are they participating, are they doing their homework are they sleeping in class how many credits to they have. I think the criteria is too loose, it creates a problem for us because it's too loose of criteria. (Interview 07, personal interview, February 2013)

I think some of the legislations haven't been addressed. You know the ones that really and truly don't want to participate; they just want a place to live. That hasn't truly been addressed on how to manage that person. Or if the person that is abusive to younger children in the foster home, and you know, serves time in jail, or someone who has extreme substance abuse issues and won't seek treatment. What is our breaking point for the young adults, like how many chances do we get? (Interview 08, personal interview, February 2013)

Issues regarding SILPs were also some of the major themes of the study. Participants of the study expressed their thoughts on qualifications for a SILP, as they mentioned that each region's qualification and standards regarding SILPs varied considerably. A number of the participants noted ways to improve such variances within the workers discretion of case management as well as certain regulations by making procedures and policies more uniform and concrete at a higher level rather than just regional.

Um, just making it more, making the procedures more regional or statewide and not vary from every single supervisor, every single region and procedures. And I just think it needs to be standard procedures across the board, so, within the whole county (Interview 04, personal interview, February 2013). Right now we just kind of go off of their goals, which is kind of like "If it was your child, what would you want them to be ready for?" Or "What did you need when you were a young adult?" But there's no real guideline, there's no checklist to go off and say this is what we should be asking them or

what we should be making sure they're doing.

(Interview 04, personal interview, February 2013)

While some participants expressed the need to have set guidelines and requirements, some emphasized the need to exercise worker's discretion and flexibility regarding SILP eligibility as well.

...With SILPs, I think we can both agree - they shouldn't be uniform, because some situations are different, some are going to go to college, some the best they are going to do is a high school diploma or vocational program, or nothing...it's about meeting that adult where they are at and figuring out what placement options can be best. (Interview 08, personal interview, February 2013)

I just think that it's hard to put everyone on a piece of paper: on black and white. Everyone's situation is so unique. Just like we talked about it in the meeting, how people can go from an AWOL status to a SILP or from a group home status to a SILP, and there are a lot of kids who can...I have a kid right now who is living with a group home staff. Not the most stable but he's able to do it. It's

working. (Interview 09, personal interview, February 2013)

When discussing the hurdles of the THP program, one participant stated that, "A lot of kids that would fit into that category, are not going to get accepted. They are just not going to. And these are the kids that we need to work with the most" (Interview 09, personal interview, February 2013).

#### Gaps in Services

Given the recent implementation of extended foster care, gaps and faults of the services within the extended foster care program do exist. Social workers noted key themes and issues that the program faces regarding lack of or faulty services or support. Participants frequently mentioned the issues regarding housing and living arrangements, education, even obtaining a drivers license to be significant in working with the non-minor dependents. While each participant stated either having received training on extended foster care or attended workshops on the matter, certain services within extended foster care do face some issues.

Right now our foster youth have to wait till they're 18 then they can get a driver's license. But,

they've had no training, you know? Who are they going to be driving with because most of their foster parents are not proudly committed to actually showing them how to drive? They're probably driving with friends or they're driving illegally and then they go get their license and now we've got all these people on their own. (Interview 04, personal interview, February 2013)

I think that housing is something that we definitely have to work on. There is very limited number of placements, and with the struggles that I've had, there have been a few cases where we had to wait over a month, and we don't do emergency placements like we do the minors, so they would possibly have to wait for a month, as long as it takes for us to find something. (Interview 02, personal interview, February 2013)

More services out in the community that target this population at transition would be very nice. Also, services from mental health, to psychotropic medication, to just different kinds of support groups. Housing is a huge one that would; it would

be very beneficial too. (Interview 02, personal interview, February 2013)

Housing, employment, drug and alcohol services for this population, mental health services for this population, and just in general we're going to need more financial resources to support all of those services. (Interview 05, personal interview, February 2013)

...I'd like to see therapeutic services that I don't have to fight tooth and nail to get them into ...and I wish there were specific drug places for young adults, you know. Also would love to see THP+ foster care, I think that would be great for them, those who are ready to go live in with their roommate. I'm hoping they are going to get those soon because it would be wonderful. (Interview 03, personal interview, February 2013)

Each social worker in the study indicated that funding was a large factor in the lack of services. One participant mentioned, "Just in general, we're going to need more financial resources to support all of those services" (Interview 05, personal interview, February 2013). On the topic of obtaining a drivers license and

funding, another social worker stated that, "It should go hand in hand that they offer Drivers Ed and expect that you to do Drivers Ed, and then do the car match but again, funding is an issue too" (Interview 04, personal interview, February 2013). Funding is scarce, and apparently, obtaining funding is also an issue, which causes gaps, and issues with services for the young adults in extended foster care.

The car match program is if they save 2,000 dollars our people (CFS) sometimes match those 2,000 dollars so that they can buy themselves car. But only if funds are available and most of the time funds are not available or very limited. (Interview 04, personal interview, February 2013)

Mentorship and support were also some of the common themes that all eight participants touched on. Support from the social workers as well as foster parents to the young adult plays a large role in the services received through EFC. Often, without support, young adults may not have access to the services provided, and may therefore end up with no services at all. All the social workers in the study mentioned that these young adults are lacking a form of support, which was one of the only non-material

items that the EFC recipients were lacking regarding services.

"Being supportive in a different kind of way, where the non-minor dependents are not continuing to be dependent on them, but they are getting them the responsibility and continuing to guide them" (Interview 02, personal interview, February 2013).

"They are supposed to be their foster parent, they are still supposed to provide them with support, and to bring them places, like bring them to a job interview, bring them to ILP classes, bring them to wherever" (Interview 03, personal interview, February 2013).

#### Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the data received through interviews of the participants in the study. Major themes regarding the social worker's perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of extended foster care were discussed. Overall, the results indicated that social workers enjoy working in extended foster care as well as with the youth the program serves. The study found that while these young adults are now at the legal age of adulthood, they may not necessarily be



equipped with taking on such roles and tasks as easily as other young adults not involved in the foster care system. Results provided pertinent information on how extended foster care policy and regulations can be improved. The results also indicated that the current situations and challenges the youth and social workers face within the program may be due to extended foster care being a fairly new implementation within child welfare, where there may exist a misbalance between workers' discretion and policy regulations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This chapter will discuss and explore the study's demographics, major findings, and link the findings to the literature. Implications for social work practice, policy and research will be presented utilizing the NASW code of ethics, and the limitations and directions for future research will be addressed.

#### Discussion

##### Demographics

Most of the demographic data on the participants in the study did not appear to influence their responses in the study. Length working for CFS, length working in child welfare, gender, age, race, and ethnicity did not appear to be a factor in the responses of the social worker's responses during the interviews. However, slight variances of the findings occurred with the participants selections in highest educational degree earned as well as job title, as those with different degrees possess different titles within CFS, therefore offering different types of caseloads to a particular social worker.

## Commitment to the Project

### Workers

The study found that the majority of the participants viewed the program as a positive concept within child welfare. Many felt that the opportunities and services EFC provides to youth would be beneficial to the transitioning youth. The youth obtaining higher education through EFC was noted within this study and also related back to the literature (Planty et al. 2007), as social workers found more students to graduate from high school and pursue a higher education. Additionally, the study found that all participants had worked previously with the adolescent population. In relating back to the literature, Thomson's (2007) study of social workers working with this population were also highly committed to the children within their caseloads, thus supporting the findings within the study. The majority of the workers felt confident in working with the youth, as they had previously worked with youth with their challenges and concerns.

## Transitioning to New Processes

### Administration/Workers

When participants were asked questions regarding support from colleagues, supervisors, and administrative workers within CFS, the majority of participants stated they had a supportive staff behind them, providing support and supervision when working with the caseloads of this population. However, some participants stated a sense of disconnect between higher up management and those working directly with the EFC participants. Support from worker to worker was expressed through being a source of guidance, assistance, understanding struggles and attaining services through each given caseload. The study found that all participants had some form of previous training before working with this population to best prepare themselves for working with the youth, thus indicating that administrators working within EFC seeking to ensure that social workers are fairly skilled and equipped to work within this scope of child welfare. This also supports the literature, as Stiving (2012), noted that social workers feel the need to be better-prepared and more supportive in regards to their clients in foster care.

### Foster Parents

Participants in the study were also asked about their opinion of EFC and foster parents. The study found that the majority of participants feel that foster parents need additional training on how to appropriately serve the young adults in EFC, as they deal with a different set of needs in comparison to dependent youth in foster care. Particularly, the need for additional training on how to deal with youth experiencing mental health, substance abuse, and behavioral issues was seen as of high importance. Given also that EFC is designed to promote independence within the population it serves, the study of the findings also suggest the need for foster parents to provide the youth with that sense of independence as opposed to doing everything for them. These findings oppose those in the study provided by Thomson (2007), as this study suggests for a less extensive effort from foster parents in ensuring that the youth is being met with the appropriate services and needs, rather than expecting the foster parents to meet every single one of the youth's needs at every level as according to Thomson's (2007) findings. Additionally, it can be noted through the findings of this study that

should the social worker receive support from his or her agency, he or she would be more likely to provide quality services towards EFC clients and each given caseload. According to Stiving (2012), given the workers level of involvement and support, the social workers attitude toward working with these young adults can have a negative or positive effect on them, thus supporting the findings within the study as well.

#### Push/Pull Transition

The study found that the young adults in EFC experience struggles in decision making and making choices independently. Social workers in the study feel as though these youth, while they are legally considered adults, are not necessarily ready to make certain decisions as adults. The study found that as the young adults found their new sense of independence within EFC, quite often; they would retreat back to the social worker when issues then occurred.

When analyzing the social workers responses on this phase the youth experience, data indicated that the social workers are in fact, allowing youth to experience adulthood independently through EFC, while continuing to provide support when the youth needs it. This finding

supports the literature indicating that EFC provides a type of safety net for the youth, as they can make mistakes but still have the social worker's support should they experience those mistakes (Shared Vision Consultants & Child and Family Policy Institute, 2011). The study found that this type of safety net during this transitional stage for the youth allows them to grow and develop a sense of responsibility, develop adult-like skills, how to access services, and continue on with their education.

Relating back to the Human Development Theory, where social support is critical during transition to adulthood (Mech, 1994), the youth are being given the opportunity to explore this new style of independent living, while continuing to have something to fall back on. During this time, the social workers are aware that the young adult needs to make decisions on their own, but also needs to be aware of the realities of adulthood, thus providing the young adult with a sense of support that they can use to their discretion. The findings of the study also relate back to the Arnett (2007) study, as it notes the same issues and challenges the young adults face within EFC as the social workers in this study mentioned as

well, such as instability, identity exploration, and the "in-between" feelings they face, and they push and pull to seek the independence that EFC provides for them.

#### Worker Discretion versus Policy

The findings of the study suggest that due to the EFC being a relatively new program, social workers are experiencing issues regarding the inconsistent rules and regulations implemented within the agency. Qualification for various programs within EFC, such as eligibility for the program, SILP placements, and other issues were mentioned from various participants within the study.

The participants of this study felt that since the laws are ever changing, they inhibit them from having a concrete style of skill when working with this population. Major findings of the study within this theme suggested that SILPs were a large issue within EFC. In accordance with the literature from Roman and Wolfe (1995), participants within this study felt as though the youth do not have the proper resources and knowledge to live independently. Therefore, they are often weary to determine whether certain youth should be able to live independently within a SILP, or continue to stay in placement with foster parents or other caregivers. Data



from the study suggested that should the region's qualifications and standards for SILPs be uniform and concrete throughout all regions as well as federally, as to better assess and decide which youth would be able to benefit the most from these SILPs.

Findings within the study indicated that there is no real procedure or checklist that the social workers utilize when providing services to their clients within EFC. Participants in the study stated that they frequently use their own social work skills and judgment when working with this population. While this is not necessarily a negative thing, the variances between worker to worker could potentially pose issues down the line, as they may or may not be adhering to the regulations of the program. When analyzing the issues regarding dilemma, it can be said that due to policy changes as well as the short time that EFC has been in implementation, protocols, and practice methods have not yet been fully addressed, leaving the social workers in the dark for how to appropriately provide adequate case management services to these youth in EFC.

### Gaps in Services

The study found key issues and themes EFC faces regarding gaps in services and support. Housing and living arrangements, obtaining a drivers license, and other age issues are common among youth in EFC. Given these issues and lack of services, data suggests that there is simply a lack of resources and services for the youth, which may be due to the program being newly developed. The study found that funding was also an issue, assuming that the lack of funding played in part with the lack of services and resources for the youth. Participants in the study suggested additional services and programs exclusively for the young adults could be beneficial to the program.

Findings in the study also indicated that support was highly beneficial for the youth in EFC. Each participant felt that support from the social workers to the youth plays a large part in their access to services, and was also something that EFC recipients were lacking. A study from Stiving (2012) supports this idea, as participants within that study felt that social workers would be more beneficial to their clients if they were more supportive in helping the youth achieve access to

services. Therefore, data collected indicates that the social workers should also serve as a mentor to the youth, as it presents benefits for the youth in EFC. Relating the data collected to literature noted in Stiving (2012), a mentor or supportive figure in the youth's life is just as important as the services they are provided with from the program.

#### Limitations

Even though this study explored some influential factors in the implementation of Extended Foster Care services within San Bernardino County, it also presented some weaknesses as well. As a qualitative research study, this study aimed to further understand and explore an area of practice that has not been examined in great depth. Since Extended Foster Care is a newly-implemented program, one of the limitations of this study was the lack of previous research on the topic. Due to the limited amount of time available to conduct this research study, another limitation is a small number of participants, as it may lack generalizability in the results. In addition, since this study only utilized specialized EFC worker as participants versus a regular

child welfare worker, further research could include a study on different types of social workers and their experiences with EFC clients. Furthermore, this study focused on the implementation of EFC services within San Bernardino County only, and therefore the findings may lack generalizability from a macro perspective.

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

##### Practice

This area of research directly applies to the social work practice as it incorporates some of the values embodied within the Social Work Code of Ethics.

"Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems" (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008, para. 16). One of the primary values of the profession of social work is advocating for services to those in vulnerable populations, one of which is the foster youth population. The absence of resources and services available for this high-risk population serves as a social problem that continues to be a challenge within San Bernardino County. Wider variety of housing options, substance abuse, and mental health services could help to enhance the

transition process of foster youth into Extended Foster Care. Since most of the services are provided through referrals, San Bernardino County of Child and Family Services could enhance this process by developing stronger partnerships with agencies that could assist in providing such needed services for the youth.

"Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships" (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008, para. 19). Human relationships and its importance can especially be evaluated and observed for the foster youth population preparing to transition into EFC services. As part of being in the system for so long, these foster youth need long lasting relationships and proper guidance on how to gain independence and become self-sufficient. The clients, as well as foster parents, would benefit from attending various types of trainings and conference on how to provide care for non-minor dependents.

"Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the wellbeing of clients" (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008, para. 24) As one of their primary ethical responsibilities, social workers have a commitment to clients. Advocating and providing the

needed services for clients is a crucial aspect of EFC case management, as non-minor dependents are encouraged to attain proper life skills and tools to gain independence. For this reason, it is especially important to provide substance abuse and mental health services for the transitioning foster youth, as failure to receive proper treatment may prevent them from maintaining stability in order to attain independence and enhance their quality of life. Furthermore, the clients could benefit from being provided with a variety of housing options and it is therefore suggested for San Bernardino County to continue exploring ways to manage housing. Developing stronger partnerships and collaborations with other agencies could facilitate this process.

### Policy

This section of the study discusses the implications for policy through San Bernardino Children and Family Services.

To begin with, it is important to acknowledge that San Bernardino County Children and Family Services has been efficient in providing various types of EFC trainings, conferences as well as providing a sense of support for its employees. The administration should be

aware that the workers value the support, and have positive views toward EFC implementation within San Bernardino County. "I this county is doing a great job and I can say from my perspective that I'm hoping this study can help other counties see what they can be doing" (Interview 09, personal interview, February 2013). The EFC workers have found the trainings and committees to be extremely beneficial in familiarizing oneself with the on-going changes in EFC policy and regulations, and can therefore be recommended to continue.

Even though participants viewed their management team and supervisors as supportive and compassionate, they also discussed concerns that deserve some acknowledgement. Such implications include maintaining a balance between centralized versus de-centralized EFC unit in order to keep an open channel of communication with previous workers in facilitating the transfer of services. The participants reported facing a challenge when receiving new EFC cases from previous workers as they would not be as informed about the clients previous services, strengths and challenges.

It may be helpful for the administration to consider case load size for EFC cases, due to the amount of time

it requires to build rapport, assess and plan services for non-minor dependents.

Another implication from this study is for the county to develop specific guidelines for development, while leaving room for workers to exercise elements of discretion. According to this study, some clients reported preferring a set guidelines on what is expected of them and what the policies are exactly and how they should be followed. Other participants, however, discussed preferring a more flexible set of guidelines, varying from case to case instead of a "one size fits all" approach. It would be suggested for the county to come up with techniques and strategies to maintain a sense of balance between guidelines and flexibility.

#### Directions for Future Research

Since the nature of this qualitative study to further explore and understand the initial implementation process of Extended Foster Care, there are many areas for further research on this newly introduced topic. One of the areas that may assist in further understanding the needs of the foster youth population would be further research to expand on young adults' attitudes and



perceptions regarding extended foster care, as they are the primary recipients of services.

Additionally, further research on this topic could include exploring the implementation of Extended Foster Care from a wider macro perspective, such as within other counties, as well as the state of California as a whole for generalizable findings.

Moreover, it would also be of interest to examine why some foster youth clients decide to opt out of Extended Foster Care and the factors that have an effect on this decision.

### Conclusion

When taken as a whole, the implementation of Extended Foster Care has been received positively by social workers within San Bernardino County. Although there continues to be challenges and areas of adjustment in this newly implemented program, this study provided some exploratory evaluations of the implementation of this program. This area of research is particularly valuable and applicable to social work practice, policy, and research as evaluates the implementation of a program designed to empower a population that has been

marginalized and disadvantaged. This study also provided many opportunities and possibilities for further study on how to further enhance extended foster care services.

APPENDIX A  
INFORMED CONSENT

## **INFORMED CONSENT**

### **A Process Evaluation of Extended Foster Care Implementation**

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the implementation process of Extended Foster Care in San Bernardino County. This study is being conducted by Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Assistant Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), Amanda Garcia, MSW Student, CSUSB, Brandi Guzman, MSW Student, CSUSB, Sandy Melancon, MSW Student, CSUSB, Mina Moghaddam, MSW Student, CSUSB, Heidie Morris, MSW Student, CSUSB, and Tosha Thomas, MSW Student, 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:** This study is seeking to learn more about your experiences in implementing Extended Foster Care (AB 12) with young adults, and to gain your perspective on what is working, what could be changed, and how you believe it is impacting young adults.

**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 working with, or are a foster parent to, at least one young adult (age 18 or 19) in Extended Foster Care (AB 12).

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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 statements:

I understand that this research will be audio recorded, and agree to be recorded for use by the research team only. Initials/ 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 2013.

**SIGN:** 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

I am going to ask you a series of questions regarding Extended Foster Care. I am interested in learning about your perspectives on these questions as they pertain to the cases you are working with.

1. What were your thoughts about extended foster care when you learned about it? How did you learn about it?
2. What were your thoughts about working with a young adult population (18+ year old) before extended foster care began implementation (before January, 2012)? Did you feel comfortable working with this population? Did you have any particular concerns about working with this population? Were you looking forward to working with this population?
3. What kinds of support have you received from San Bernardino County CFS as you started working with young adults? From your supervisor? From higher administration? From your colleagues? What has been the most helpful? What additional supports would be useful to you?
4. Are there any trainings or workshops for working with young adult/ NMD clients or on the implementation of extended foster care that you feel would help you or your colleagues?
5. Have there been any challenges or times you were uncertain of what to do in regards to implementing the extended foster care regulations? How did you resolve those instances?
6. What do you think about the processes of extending current living arrangements or establishing new living agreements such as a SILP? Do you feel such arrangements are reasonable for young adults/ NMDs as well as for caregivers? If they are not reasonable, what changes might you suggest?
7. What (additional) services/support/programs do you think young adults/ NMDs currently need most?
8. What (additional) services/support/programs do you think caregivers/placement managers currently need most?
9. What are, in your view, major benefits (strengths) of extended foster care? What benefits do you feel young adults/ NMDs are receiving from extended foster care?
10. What are, in your view, major challenges of extended foster care?
11. What have been the reactions of young adults/ NMDs you have worked with/ are working with about extended foster care?
12. If you are working with transition age youth (16-17 years old), have any of them talked with you about extended foster care? What do they appear to know about it?
13. Do you have any suggestions for improving extended foster care?
14. Are there any other topics/ issues that I did not ask about that you feel are important?

Thank you very much for your time!

APPENDIX C  
DEMOGRAPHICS

## Demographics

**Please answer the following questions, which will be used only to describe some of the characteristics of the interviewees. Please feel free to skip any question you would choose not to answer.**

How long have you been working for San Bernardino County CFS?

How long have you been working in child welfare?

What is your highest educational degree?

What is your job title?

What have been your roles in working with youth in extended foster care?

Have you had extended foster care training? What kinds of training have you had?

What is your gender? (please circle)

Female

Male

How old were you on your last birthday? (please circle)

20-25

46-50

26-30

51-55

31-35

56-60

36-40

61-65

41-45

66 or older

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

African American

Asian/ Pacific Islander

Caucasian

Hispanic/ Latino

Native American

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

Developed by: Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Amanda Garcia, Brandi Guzman, and Mina Moghaddam.



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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: Mina Moghaddam, Amanda Garcia, and  
Brandi Guzman

### 2. Data Entry and Analysis:

#### a. Data Entry:

Team Effort: Mina Moghaddam, Amanda Garcia, and  
Brandi Guzman

#### b. Data Analysis:

Team Effort: Mina Moghaddam and Amanda Garcia

### 3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:

#### a. Introduction and Literature

Team Effort: Mina Moghaddam and Amanda Garcia

#### b. Methods

Team Effort: Mina Moghaddam and Amanda Garcia

#### c. Results

Team Effort: Mina Moghaddam and Amanda Garcia

#### d. Discussion

Team Effort: Mina Moghaddam and Amanda Garcia