

Summary of Survey Results
(taken from full Youth Survey Data Report at pp. 16-22)

Summary of Survey Results for All Youth Participating in the Survey

The survey results presented in this report are for all foster care youth who participated in this survey. The survey results are generalizable to all youth in foster care in Washington State who are 15 to 18 years of age. This summary is organized by question topic, and largely follows the question sequence of the interview.

Placement

- The median number of years spent in foster care, including relative placements, for these youth is five years.
- 51% of these youth were in the same placement for all of 2007; 25% were in two placements in 2007.
- Youth behavior problems, problems in the family, and not getting along in the placement accounted for 56% of the reasons that youth were moved to different placements in 2007.
- The median number of different placements experienced by these youth during their entire years in foster care is four. However, 19% of these youth reported having more than 10 different placements during their years in foster care.
- 55% of these youth were in a foster home during 2007, and 20% were living with relatives.
- Their current placement was headed by dual parents for 69% of these youth.
- The majority of these youth were in placements with two or fewer other children living there. For 17% they were the only child in the placement; for 20% there was one other child; and for 21% there were two other children present.
- Almost 17% of these youth had lived three or more years at this placement, and 52% had lived there for 12 months or less.
- 46% of these youth said that the foster care system had treated them very well in 2007; 42% said somewhat well; and 12% said not very well.
- Asked for the main reason that they felt the way they did about the foster care system, the dominant positive reason given by 17% of these youth was that they got lots of help and were well taken care of and supported. The dominant negative reason given by almost 13% of youth was they didn't like being in foster care, and didn't feel that they were supported.
- Asked how they felt about their current placement, almost 65% said very positive.

- 79% of these youth said that they were very or somewhat involved in their case planning in 2007.

School

- 42% of these youth said they received mostly A's, B's or A's and B's in 2007. Another 28% said they received mostly B's and C's.
- 30% of these youth said that they were suspended or expelled from school during 2007.
- About 71% of these youth say that they hope to achieve an associate's degree or higher in the future.
- 85% say that they are very well prepared or somewhat prepared to achieve their educational goals.
- 68% of these youth have heard of an IEP or 504 Plan, and of these 55% have an Individual Education Plan now (43% of all youth age 17.5 and older).
- Among these youth who are knowledgeable about IEPs, 58% say they have attended an IEP meeting, and of these, 36% said that their social worker attended the most recent meeting with them.

Runaways/Homelessness

- About 25% of these youth said that they ran away from their placement in 2007. Of those that ran away, most only ran away once (40%) or twice (24%).
- The majority of those that ran away stayed with a friend (56%). The dominant reasons given for running away were that they didn't get along with the foster parents or family, and/or didn't like the placement or the way they were treated there.

Significant adult relationships

- 77% of these youth said they had contact with an adult member of their biological family in 2007.
- For those that did not have such contact in 2007, 27% said this was by choice, and 73% said it was not possible to arrange contact.
- For those that did have such contact in 2007, 35% said they were in contact a few times a week, 15% said about once a week, and 19% said a few times a month. 48% of these youth said this was the right amount of contact, and 44% said they would have preferred more contact.
- Asked if there was one adult that has had an important positive influence on their life currently, 81% of youth said yes. Asked how this person was related to them, 27% said it was a foster parent, 15% said a grandparent, and 16% said another relative.
- 88% of these youth said that there is definitely or probably someone in whom they can confide or talk to.

- Asked who they go to first when they have a problem, almost 27% of these youth said foster parents, and 28% said friends.

Health/Mental Health Services

- 88% of these youth said their health was excellent, very good, or good.
- Almost 82% said they had had a physical examination by a doctor less than a year ago. 88% said they had a dental examination less than a year ago.
- About 12% of these youth said that there were times in 2007 when they thought they needed medical care but didn't get it.
- 50% of these youth are currently seeing a psychological counselor, psychiatrist, or therapist. 46% have been seeing this person for more than one year. 49% said that this has been very helpful to them, and 36% said it has been somewhat helpful.
- About 56% of these youth seeing a therapist said there was no change in whom they were seeing during 2007. For those whose therapists changed in 2007, the dominant reasons for this were due to a change in placement (51%) and that the therapist decided to leave (22%).
- 9% of these youth said that there were times in 2007 when they thought they needed counseling or therapy but didn't get it. The main reasons given were for depression and sadness, help with problems and issues, and needing to talk with someone. The main reason given for not getting the needed therapy or counseling (by almost 32%) was not following through to ask for it.
- 23% of these youth said they have had an assessment or counseling related to alcohol or drug abuse in 2007.

Social Worker

- The median number of social workers that these youth have had since they've been in foster care is three.
- 87% know their current social worker's name, and 93% know how to contact them. Almost 54% of these youth communicate with their social worker at least once a month or more. 52% know how to contact their social worker after hours or on weekends.
- 44% of these youth have a face-to-face visit with their social worker at least once a month. 87% of these visits were at the youth's placement.
- 43% of these youth are very satisfied with the quality of support provided by their social worker, and 31% are somewhat satisfied. 26% are dissatisfied.

Sibling Relations

- 95% of these youth have biological siblings, and for most (75%) their siblings are not living with them.

- 50% of these youth with siblings not living with them have visits and other forms of contact with their siblings at least once a month or more often.
- For those that have the least contact with their siblings, a main reason is that the siblings live far away, or are in another state (30%).

Court Awareness

- 41% of these youth have a Guardian Ad Litem. 78% of these youth say they are represented by an attorney.
- 74% of these youth say that their wishes and interests were heard in court in 2007.
- Asked how often they were notified in advance about upcoming dependency court hearings, 35% of these youth said always, and 22% said most of the time.
- 33% of these youth attended no dependency court hearings in 2007, and 27% attended three or more.
- 43% of these youth did not miss any dependency court hearings that they were aware of, and 23% missed three or more.
- Over 77% of these youth say that they were advised as to the results of court hearings in 2007, including the ones they missed.

Service Awareness

- Only 32% of these youth had ever heard of the Educational Advocacy program.
- 58% of these youth had heard about the Foster Care to College Mentoring program or the Treehouse Coaching to College program.
- 43% of these youth had heard about the "you-can-go-to-college" or the "foster care to college" workshops put on by Independent Living providers.
- 46% of youth had heard of the Make-It-Happen summer college experience program.

Job Opportunities

- 22% of these youth are currently working for pay. And, 60% have ever worked for pay.
- Among those who have not ever worked for pay, 55% said that they wanted to work but couldn't find any paying jobs.
- 62% of these youth said that they are currently looking for work.
- 79% of these youth said that their caregivers were supportive of their efforts to look for work. Only 4% said they were not supportive.

- 35% of these youth say they feel very well prepared to get a full time job, and 47% feel they are somewhat prepared.

Independent Living

- 49% of these youth say that a social worker referred them to an IL or TL program. 37% of these youth say they have ever participated in an Independent Living or a Transitional Living program.
- Among those who have not participated in these programs the main reasons given for not participating include not knowing about them (39%), that a social worker had not invited them or set it up (14%), not needing it or wanting it (13%), and being too busy with school or work (10%).
- 31% of these youth say they completed a life skills assessment such as the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment in 2007. 62% of these youth said that their social worker reviewed the results with them.
- 35% of these youth said that their social worker or IL provider invited them to develop an Independent Living plan. Among these, 80% said they did participate in developing this IL plan.
- Asked how well their IL plan would help in making the transition to adulthood, among those with an IL plan, 47% said very well and 50% said somewhat well.
- Youth were asked whether they had received any information or training about 11 skills needed for independent living. The table below displays the percent of these youth that responded “yes” to these skills.

	% YES
A. How to succeed in high school or college	39%
B. Assistance with applying to colleges	37%
C. Preparing for college	48%
D. Finding a job	50%
E. Keeping a job	41%
F. Finding housing	30%
G. Daily living skills	55%
H. Interpersonal skills	40%
I. Advocating for yourself	43%
J. Making healthy connections with your biological family	37%
K. Making healthy connections with your extended family	39%

Youth Aging Out Plans (asked only of youth age 17 and a half or older)

- 33% of these youth say that they have ever been invited to a shared planning meeting to discuss their transition from foster care. Among these youth, 66% said the meeting had already taken place. And, 94% of youth invited to a planning meeting said that they had participated or will be participating in this shared planning meeting.
- 44% of these youth said that they had talked with their social worker or their IL provider about developing a transition plan for their exit from foster care.

- 36% of these youth said that they participated in developing a transition plan.
- 19% of these youth said they have a written plan for transition from foster care.
- Youth were asked about five specific aspects of things needed for independent living. The table below displays the percent of these youth that responded “yes” to each of these.

	% YES
A. Are you taking or have you completed a Driver’s Education class?	33%
B. Do you have an official copy of your birth certificate?	69%
C. Do you have a driver’s license or ID card from Washington State?	50%
D. Do you know how to get your medical records if you need them?	59%
E. Do you know how to get your school records if you need them?	80%

- Asked how prepared they are to live on their own, only 26% said very prepared, and 51% said somewhat prepared. 23% said they felt not very or not at all prepared.

Physical Safety questions

- Youth were asked if there was any time in 2007 when another person at their placement made them feel physically unsafe. 14% of these youth responded “yes.”
- In the majority of these instances (50%), the person that made the youth feel unsafe was another youth. But, almost a third of these youth said it was a foster parent.
- The main reason given for feeling unsafe (41%) was that the youth felt threatened. 62% of these youth said they told their social worker about the incident.
- 18 of these youth asked to be contacted, and their information was forwarded to Children’s Administration for followup immediately following the interview. Additionally 10 youth requested and were provided a phone number to contact for help.

Demographic questions

- Youth were asked how optimistic they were about their future. 53% of these youth said they were very optimistic, and 36% said they were fairly optimistic. Only 11% said they were not too optimistic.

- 51% of these youth are male, and 49% are female.
- 97% of these youth were born in the United States.
- 68% of these youth live on the west side of the state, 26% live on the east side, and 6% are out-of-state.
- The majority of these youth live in a small town (42%) or an urban area (40%).
- Asked to identify their ethnic background 7% say they are Native American, 12% Black, 3% Asian, Hawaiian, and Aleut, 8% Hispanic, 52% White, and 18% of mixed ethnic backgrounds. Separately almost 18% of these youth say they are of Hispanic background.
- 87% have a computer in their placement. Of these, 80% have Internet access in their placement.
- 93% of these youth say they know their sexual orientation, and 96% believe that their foster parents know as well.
- 91% of these youth identified themselves as heterosexual, 2% said they were homosexual, 6% said they were bisexual, and only one person identified themselves as transgender.
- About 4% of these youth indicated that their sexual orientation had created problems for them in their placement. The main problems mentioned dealt with problems at school, harassment, and not being accepted by others.
- Two of these youth asked to be contacted, and their information was forwarded to Children's Administration for followup immediately following the interview. Additionally three youth requested and were provided a phone number to contact for help.