



RESEARCH & POLICY BRIEF

RAISING THE BAR:

Building system- and provider-level evidence to drive equitable education and employment outcomes for youth in extended foster care

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Armed with a 20+ year history of providing services and support to transition age foster youth, First Place for Youth is now using precision analytics and data science to make new predictions about how we better serve this vulnerable population in the United States. This research brief reflects our commitment and our passion for driving a more equitable foster-care system.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Youth who exit foster care at **18 years old are at tremendous risk** for financial & life-altering hardships
- Youth who engage in extended care have reduced rates of **homelessness, unemployment, & imprisonment**
- However, **evidence is lacking** on how extended care services aid in education goals & an ability to earn a living wage
- Successful self-sufficiency timelines** in extended care range from **1.5-5.5 years**
- This wide range suggests **youth would benefit from a more personalized approach** with customized milestones & goals
- First Place built the **Youth Success Roadmap Tool** to leverage historical data & build personalized roadmaps
- When one participant group received “what works,” their chances of earning a living-wage appeared to rise from **20% to 80%**
- Most significant predictors of living-wage at exit: **age at entry, number of prior placements, & history of group care**
- Top High-Impact Goals Identified:** career progress, good household maintenance, relationship stability, & public assistance
- Top High-Impact Services Identified:** length of stay, engagement with care manager & employment specialists, good tenancy

WHY THIS MATTERS

FOR FOSTER CARE YOUTH

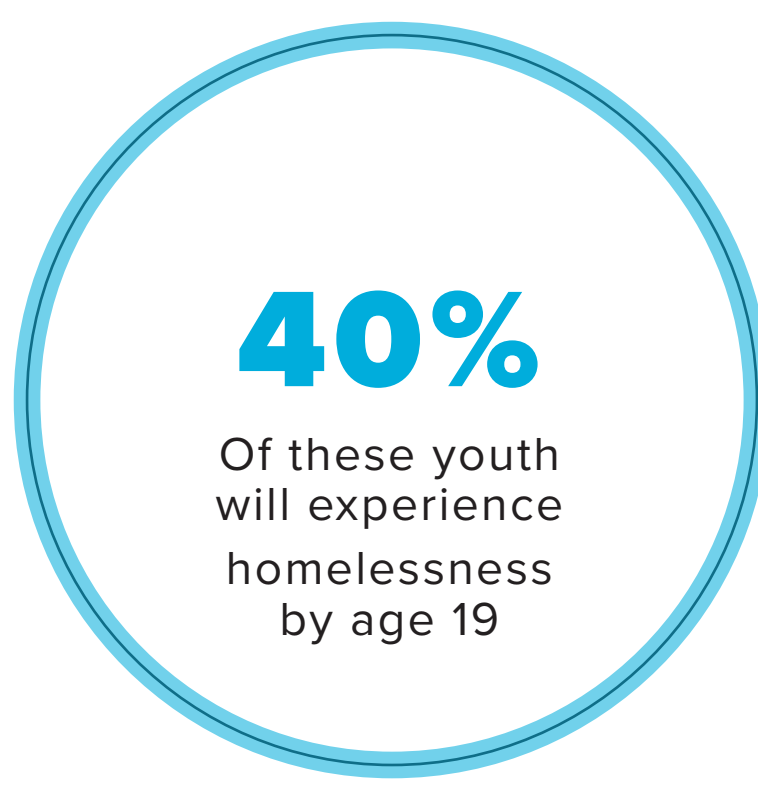
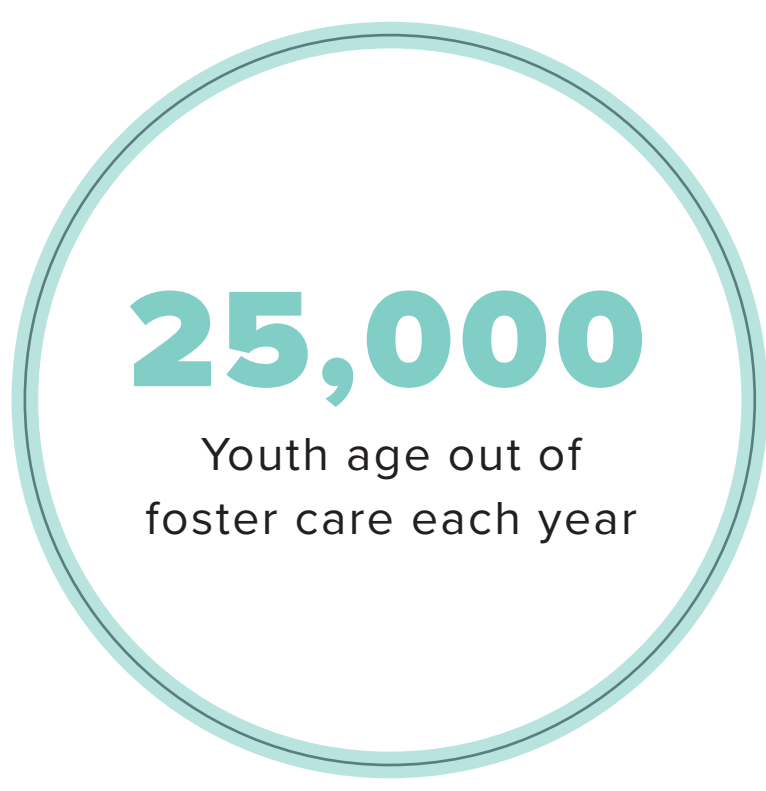
The wealth of historical data we possess - and continue to collect - **can help us solve the puzzle**, ensuring these youth have a fair and equitable shot as they head into adulthood.

FOR NONPROFITS IN GENERAL

Tech companies have been using data to personalize experiences for decades. **Nonprofits have a responsibility to raise the bar** to improve outcomes for transition-age youth and all the populations we serve.



THE REALITY OF FOSTER LIFE AT 18



With every year of extended care, **we improve the long-term odds of success for foster youth**. We believe in honoring the unique history of each individual and using our data to craft customized service & support plans that really work for them.



“When I look at the future of our organization, I see First Place for Youth as connective tissue between policy, technology and improved outcomes for foster youth across the United States.”

DR. ERIKA VAN BUREN, VICE PRESIDENT OF LEARNING, EVALUATION & STRATEGIC IMPACT AT FIRST PLACE FOR YOUTH

TOP PRACTICE & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Change to: Invest in Extended Foster Care with a Focus on Education-to-Employment Services and Goals

Open the data gates and empower program improvement.

Implement postsecondary education (PSE) readiness coaching.

Strengthen and fund education and employment requirements for THP-NMP programs.

Remove barriers to WIOA for foster youth.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

Individualize Placement Decisions and Prolong the Extended Service Care Runway

Use data to drive individualized and equitable service delivery.

Ensure needs-based placement decisions.

Increase THP-NMD capacity.

Increase capacity and fiscal sustainability of THP-Plus program.

and more ..



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