

Foster Youth to Independence Webinar Series

Child Welfare 101

**Tuesday, August 17, 2021
3:00 – 4:00 p.m. EDT**



AGENDA

Welcome/Introduction

Purpose of Child Welfare and How it Works

Describe and Define Relevant Legislation

Experiences of Youth in Care

Next Steps/Close

WEBINAR GOALS

Participants will better understand:

- **The purpose of child welfare and how it works**
- **Child welfare policies and funding relevant to FYI**
- **The unique needs of the FYI target population**

INTRODUCTION: FOSTER YOUTH TO INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE

04

- **Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) for youth eligible under the Family Unification Program (FUP)**
- **Community partners coordinating to identify, target, connect eligible youth at-risk of or experiencing homelessness to housing and related supports**
- **For youth who:**
 1. Are at least 18 years and not more than 24 years of age
 2. Left foster care, or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act
 3. Is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older
- **Provides 36 months of rental assistance**
- **Provides support services to foster self-sufficiency**

POLL QUESTION

What's the first word that comes to mind when you think of child welfare?



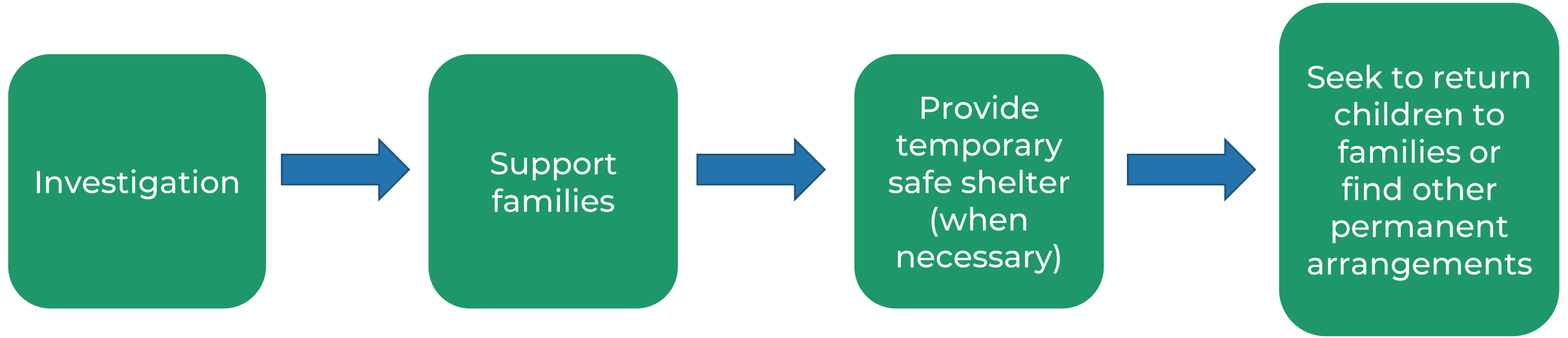
OVERVIEW:

CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS

- Child welfare (CW) systems are complex, and specific procedures vary widely by State
- CW system is not a single entity. Many organizations in each community work together to strengthen families and keep children safe
- CW system is a group of services designed to promote the well-being of children by ensuring safety, achieving permanency, and strengthening families
- Primary responsibility is with the states, but the federal government supports States through funding and legislative initiatives
- Each state has its own laws that define abuse and neglect, the reporting obligations of individuals, and the required State and local CPS (Child Protective Service) interventions

Resource: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/cpswork.pdf>

Overview of Child Welfare Process



OVERVIEW:

CHILD WELFARE LEGISLATION

- Primary responsibility for child welfare services sits with States-- each state has own legal and administrative structure and programs to address needs of children and families
- States must comply with Federal requirements and guidelines to be eligible for Federal funding under certain programs
- Several laws since 1970s have had a significant impact on State child protection and child welfare services
- Largest federally funded programs that support State and Tribal efforts for child welfare, foster care, and adoption activities are authorized under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act

Resource: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/otherpubs/majorfedlegis/>

JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999

- **Provided eligibility guidelines for youth receiving independent living services**
- **Supports young people who are at risk of aging out and provides financial resources for independent living services up to age 21**
- **Services vary by jurisdiction but usually include: financial education, mentoring, post-secondary preparation, and tutoring**
- **Created the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), which provides researchers and policymakers with administrative data on service utilization, and survey data on young people's experiences transitioning out of foster care**

PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES ACT (2001)

- **Authorized voucher program as part of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program to provide for education and training, including postsecondary training and education, to youth who have aged out of foster care**
- **Up to \$5,000 each year – for youth to attend an institution of higher education**

FOSTERING TRANSITIONS TO SUCCESS AND INCREASING ADOPTIONS ACT (2008)

- **Provided additional federal guidance and expanded funding to states that extend foster care past age 18**
- **Enables older youth to remain in foster care through 21st birthday if:**
 1. Enrolled in high school or post-secondary education
 2. Employed or participating in an employment training program
 3. Unable to meet criteria due to disability
- **Allows states to decide whether to use federal funds for extended foster care**

THE FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT (2018)

- **Amended age eligibility requirements of Chafee to include all youth ages 14 to 23 who are either in or have aged out of care**
- **Intended to encourage states to provide independent living services to young people regardless of whether they are involved in extended foster care**

IMPLICATIONS FOR FYI INITIATIVE

- Legislation has provided extended supports for youth of older age
- Youth participating in Title IV-E foster care program are not eligible for FYI initiative
- Youth receiving ETV funds may be eligible for FYI assistance if they meet eligibility requirements and are not receiving Title IV-E foster care funds
- NYTD data can be a valuable resource for understanding and determining the need in your state
- PCWAs determine eligibility– must have shared understanding between PHAs and PCWAs

POLL QUESTION

What resources do you leverage to support FYI youth, including local, state, or federal funds?



UNDERSTANDING THE FYI TARGET POPULATION

“The first month in my apartment, I was nervous. It was my first time not being bounced around, where I had a solid foundation. I finally had a place to stay on my own.”

*-FYI voucher
recipient*

OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH

- **Young people who leave foster care unprepared to live on own are at risk of becoming homeless soon after discharge**
- **According to NYTD data, 27% of 21-year-olds surveyed in 2018 reported experiencing homelessness within past two years**
- **Young people who age out of foster care are more likely than other youth to:**
 1. Be involved with justice system
 2. Develop substance dependence
 3. Become pregnant by 21 years old
 4. Experience unemployment

Resources:

- [National Youth in Transition Database Data Briefs](#)
- [Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative](#)

EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

- Limited opportunities as youth to make decisions
- Self advocacy to access resources
- Lack of direction tied to lack of parental figures
- Constant feelings of being lost
- Transience— new homes, new schools lead to feelings of loneliness, being unwanted
- Lack of trust in relationships, including with service providers
- Good and bad experiences
- Everyone has different experiences depending on where you are, resources, and caseworker

IMPLICATIONS FOR FYI INITIATIVE

- The initiative is important and necessary
- Building trust leads to better outcomes
- Understand the unique experiences and needs of individuals in your program
- The needs for this target population differ than other populations served by PHAs
- For each part of this webinar series, we will emphasize and elaborate on approaches to engage and meet the unique needs of this target population

POLL QUESTION

For those who have been administering the FYI voucher, what have you learned by interacting with and serving this target population?

For those thinking about applying for the FYI voucher, how would you incorporate this target population's experiences into your program?



QUESTIONS

NEXT STEPS/CLOSE