Child Welfare Professional Education Screen

An Overview:

Improving Educational Outcomes
for Children in Care

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Why Education Matters

A high school drop out is . . .

- ☐ Eight times more likely to be incarcerated
- ☐ 40% more likely to be on public assistance
- ☐ Far more likely to be unemployed
- ☐ More likely to become a drug addict
- ☐ Estimated cost of a youth who drops out and turns to crime & drugs -- $1.7 to $2.3 million

# Improving Education = Improving Lives

Poor academic performance affects lives dramatically and contributes to higher than average rates of homelessness, criminality, drug abuse and unemployment.

Maryland Public Policy Institute, Focus Group Study: Foster Care Families, Children, and Education, December 2006, at *www.mdpolicy.org/docLib/20061130_ FosterCareFocusGroupStudy.pdf* (April 10, 2007).

Current Outcomes:
Children in Educational Crisis

- **<u>Only one third</u>** receive high school diploma in four years;

- **<u>Twice as likely to drop out</u>**
  - Philadelphia study: **<u>75.2% of youth in care dropped out of high school in 2005</u>**

- **<u>2-4 times as likely to repeat a grade</u>**
  - California study: 83% of children in care in Los Angeles were held back in school by the third grade

- **<u>Significantly below their peers on standardized tests</u>**
  - lower reading levels and lower grades in core academic subjects

- While 70% of foster youth dream of attending college, 7-13% gain access to any higher education programs and **<u>3% obtain bachelor's degrees.</u>**

Educational Outcomes
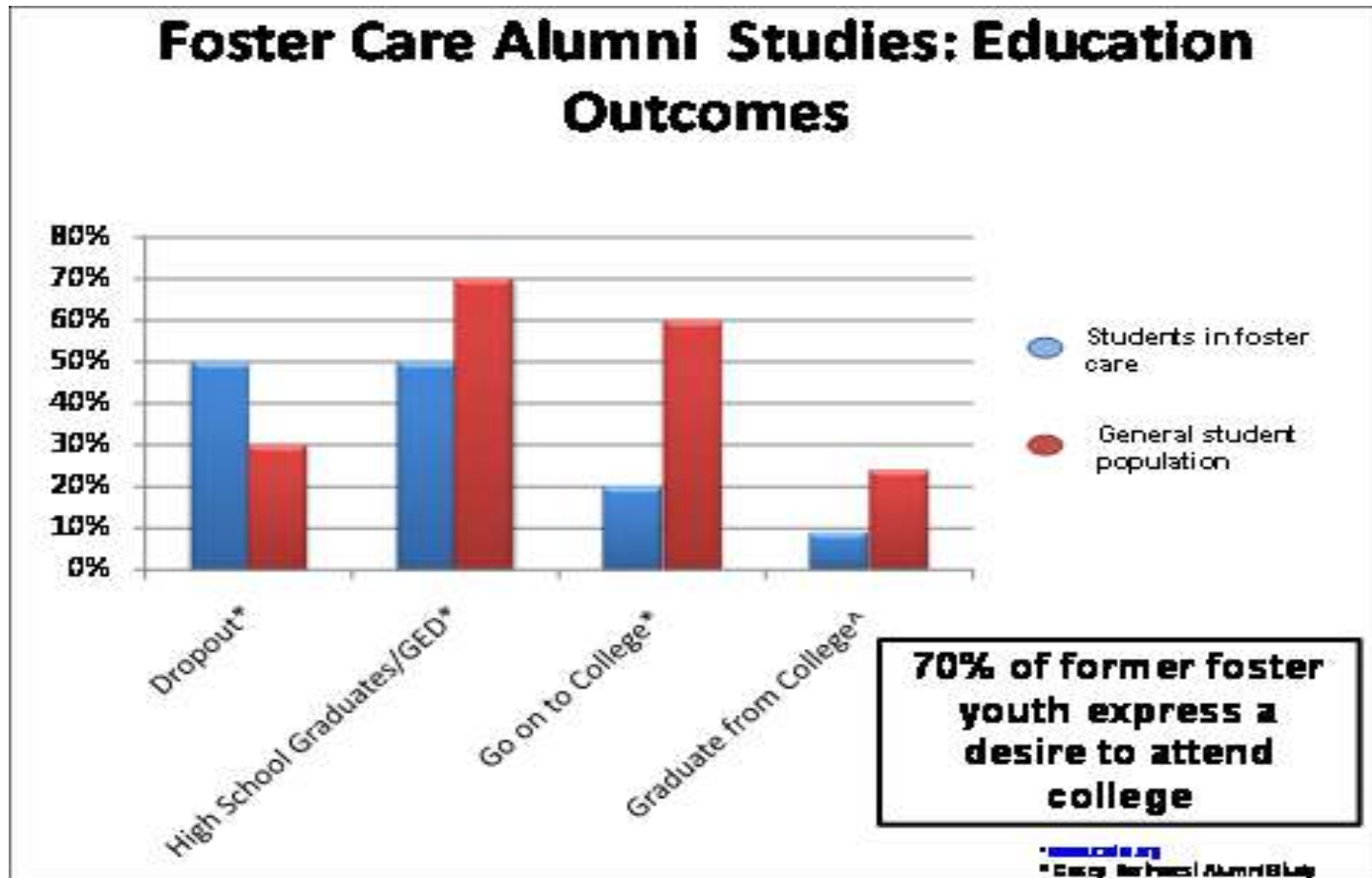
Challenges: Changing Schools

- School mobility has negative effects on academic progress and is associated with dropping out.
- Students in foster care change schools more often than their non-foster care peers:
  - Nationally, 65% of students in care experienced 7 or more school changes during K- Grade12.
- Too often changing schools results in enrollment delays and can lead to negative impacts, such as repeating courses, failing to address special needs or inappropriate classroom placements.

Challenges: Attendance

- **Attendance Matters from Day ONE!   Kindergarten attendance is the strongest, early predictor of H.S. drop out**

- Students in care often have **higher school absence rates.**

- One study conducted in Pittsburgh found that children who **missed the first day of Kindergarten on average had 18 absences that year – 2X the rate of those who attend the first day of Kindergarten!**

- **This 18 missed days is the benchmark for what is called "Chronic Absenteeism" (missing 10% of the school year).**

- National studies re "Chronically Absent" in Kindergarten:

- **Only 17% are reading at grade level in 3rd Grade.**

Challenges: Special Education

☐ Children and youth in foster care are **between 2.5 and 3.5 times more likely to be receiving special education services** than their non-foster care peers.

☐ Children in foster care who are in special education tend to be placed in **more restrictive educational settings and have poorer quality education plans** than their non-foster care peers in special education.

Challenges: Ranking

- Delayed enrollment & low attendance
- Lack of school stability
- Confusion about who has educational rights
- Special education needs remain unidentified/unmet
- Absence of "active" involved educational decision maker
- Disproportionate referrals to disciplinary placements
- Need for remedial services, ESL, PBS etc.
- Credit transfers/diploma requirements
- Youth fail to engage in school & transition planning

Educational Success = Well Being & Permanency

☐ Provides **essential stability**

☐ Improves **current well being**

☐ Increases **opportunities for permanency**
(*e.g.*, New York, California, Toledo, Ohio)

☐ Supports **transition to <u>lifelong stability and permanency</u>**

Educational Success IS Possible: Promising Data

☐ **School Stability**

  ◾ One fewer placement change = 2x more likely to graduate

  ◾ 6 or fewer school changes = 2x more likely to graduate
    than 10 or more school changes

☐ Mentoring program = 3x more likely to graduate

☐ One-to-one tutoring for 6 months = increase RL 1.7 grades

*** Source: *Education is the Lifeline for Youth in Foster Care*

Blueprint for Change:
Education Success for Children in Foster Care

- 8 **Goals** for Youth

- **Benchmarks** for each goal indicating progress toward achieving education success

- National, State, and Local **Examples**

Blueprint for Educational Success

- ☐ **Goal 1: Educational Stability:** Youth remain in theirschool of origin whenever possible and in their best interests.

- ☐ **Goal 2:** Youth are guaranteed **smooth transitions** between schools.

- ☐ **Goal 3:** Young children in foster care enter school **ready to learn**.

- ☐ **Goal 4:** Youth have **equal access and opportunities** to participate successfully in all academic and non-academic aspects of the school experience, including support services.

Blueprint Goals (Cont'd)

- **Goal 5:** Youth in care have <u>dropout, truancy and</u> <u>school discipline rates equal to or less than</u> <u>those of other children</u>.

- **Goal 6:** <u>Youth are involved and engaged</u> in all aspects of their education and educational planning and are empowered to be self advocates for their education needs and pursuits.

- **Goal 7:** Each youth has at least <u>one significant adult</u> consistently involved in his or her life and education.

- **Goal 8:** Youth in care enter into and <u>complete post-secondary education</u> pursuits at rates at least comparable to those not in care.

Promising Practices - Ranking

- Keep Children in Same School
- Ensure Immediate Enrollment
- School Liaison/Single Point of Contact
- Prioritize Access To Early Childhood Education
- Address Unfair Treatment/Discrimination
- Improve Access to Services (e.g., remedial, special ed.)
- Provide Mentoring and other Adult Support
- Improve Responses to Discipline and Truancy
- Support Post-Secondary Education

Role of Courts: Juvenile Rules

- Ensure school stability
- Identify decision-maker
- Ensure "appropriate education" & progress
- Support transition to adulthood
- Ensure services & accommodations for disabilities
- Examples – NY, CA, PA

Pennsylvania Tool:
Child Welfare Education Screen

- History & Purpose of Screen

- Development, Structure & Input

- Infrastructure Supporting Screen: Ed Liaisons in each county receive specialized ongoing training and serve as resource to caseworkers

- Accountability
  - Reviewed/Signed by Supervisor
  - Subject to citation by State's audit/review

Child Welfare Professional Education Screen

- Purpose
- How the Screen Will Be Used
- How Often
- Role of Education Liaison
- Role of Caseworker
- Role of Private Provider
- Use of Education Screen in Court
- Use of Screen to Track Outcomes

Who Completes the Education Screen

- If child is in **placement** – placement provider does initial screen, subsequent screens an 30 day screen if new placement
    - Note – if a DHS Independent Living Education Liaison is assigned to a child, he/she will take over screening responsibilities after the initial screen is done.
- **Independent Living**
    - When an IL Provider is assigned to a child IL Provider is responsible for every screen after the 30 day initial screen
- If family receives **services in the home**
    - Truancy/Special Casework Assignment
    - Family Group Decision Making
    - Inua Ubuntu
    - Crisis or Regular in-home worker
- CYF staff responsible if no 'purchased' service–hierarchy is as follows
    - OCYF Foster Care Caseworker
    - OCYF FGDM CW
    - OCYF Inua Ubuntu CW
    - OCYF Family Services CW
    - OCYF Intake CW (GPS)
    - OCYF Intake CW (CPS)

How Often?

- The Education Screen is to used with children
  - In in-home care <u>AND</u>
  - Out-of home care
- Most sections WILL apply (w/ exception of school stability etc.)
- Timelines are different
  - Annually for in-home care
  - Every 6 months for out-of-home care
- Screen SUPPORTS children who remain in in-home care by supporting placement stability & life-long permanency.

Demographic Information

- ☐ **Student's Name:**
- ☐ **Case Number:**
- ☐ **Date of Birth:**
- ☐ **Education Decision-Maker:**
- ☐ **Special Education Decision-Maker:**
- ☐ **Student ID Number:**
- ☐ **School Grade:**
- ☐ **Current School:**

Education Screen: Topical Sections

☐ Screen Elements

- ■ Education Records & FERPA Consent
- ■ School Stability & Prompt Enrollment
- ■ Special School Settings/Situations**
- ■ Progress Towards Graduation/Promotion
- ■ Preparation for Post Secondary Ed
- ■ Need for Special Ed Evaluation
- ■ Adequacy of Special Ed Services
- ■ Need for Special Ed Decision Maker
- ■ Need for Accommodations for Disability

Education Screen Tools/Action Steps

- ☐ What does the law say
- ☐ What should a caseworker do
- ☐ Step-by-step guide
- ☐ Citations to statutes, Regs & Education agency guidance

Role in Court

Juvenile Court Rules, Effective July 2011

Child Welfare Professionals must be prepared to address education issues in court including:

- ☐ School enrollment/attendance
- ☐ School stability
- ☐ Identify or recommend Education Decision Maker
- ☐ Appropriate placement, services &progress
- ☐ Special education Issues
- ☐ Transition planning & services

Know What Other Information is Available From Other Systems

- Early Intervention/Head Start Participation
- Truancy/Attendance
- Assessments completed by other systems;
- Counseling Evaluations
- Student Assistance Programs
- Vocational Assessments

Allegheny County Data Warehouse

Contacts and Resources

☐ DHS Ed web site:
www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/education/index.aspx

☐ PA child welfare training web site:
www.pacwcbt.pitt.edu/Curriculum/306AchievingPositiveEducationalOutcomes.html

☐ AIU Homeless Children's Ed Fund web site
www.aiu3.net/Level3.aspx?id=1250

Contact Information

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