



Child Welfare - What do you need to know?

More than 700, 000 youth are served by child welfare each year.¹ This is about equal to the number of people living in Ft. Worth, Texas.

The majority (80%) of these youth have developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems² and yet, of this majority, less than 1/3 receive mental health services.³

In one study of children and adolescents who had previously been in foster care, 25% had Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This is twice the rate of U.S. war veterans.⁴

More than 1/3 of homes seeking to adopt a youth with special needs back out because of their prospective child's emotional, mental or behavioral problems.⁵

Every hour 2.9 youth age out of foster care without a permanent relationship with a caring adult.⁶

Of youth who age out of foster care, ¼ are incarcerated within two years and only ½ graduate from high school.⁷

"As a foster kid, I struggled with mental health issues. I was lucky because I was able to get support while I was in care. Many of my friends who experienced foster care didn't get the help they needed and are struggling today as young adults. The point of foster care is for youth to be provided with the support they need to be successful, and mental health supports play a big role in that."

-- Aaron W. Nebraska, foster care alumni (age 26)

Make a Change Today:

- Educate your legislators, policy makers, and local decision makers
- Learn more about your local child welfare system and the children they serve. Educate your community
- Reach out and develop supportive, caring relationships with youth in foster care
- Engage children and youth in foster care in community activities

¹ http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/trends.htm 3/30/10

² <http://www.cwla.org/programs/bhd/mhfacts.htm> 3/30/09

³ Austin, Lisette. (2004) Mental Health Needs of Youth in Foster Care: Challenges and Strategies. The Connection, 20(4).

⁴ Pecora, P. J., et al. (2005). Improving family foster care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni study. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Program.

⁵ http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/barriers/family_3.htm#barriers 3/30/10

⁶ Annie E Casey, Kids Count Data Book. (2007)

⁷ Time for Reform: Aging Out and On Their Own. (2007). Kids are Waiting Fix foster Care Now. The Pew Charitable Trusts.

