Increasing Adoptions from Foster Care Can Yield Significant Cost Savings and Societal Benefits

Adoption Improves Outcomes

Increases

- Educational Achievement
- Employment Rates
- Wage Earnings
- Tax Revenues
- Housing Security
- Mental Health
- Role Model Exposure

Decreases

- High School Dropout Rates
- Joblessness
- Poverty
- Public Assistance
- Homelessness
- Addiction
- Unplanned Pregnancy
- Justice Involvement

Approximately 18,000 youth age out of the foster care system each year.

We can save an estimated $8 billion by finding adoptive families for these youth instead.

Outcomes for Foster Youth Who Age Out

Young people who leave the child welfare care system without a permanent family enter the mental health, substance abuse, homeless services, employment services and criminal justice systems in disproportionate numbers and at great cost.

Only 58% will graduate **high school** by age 19 [1]
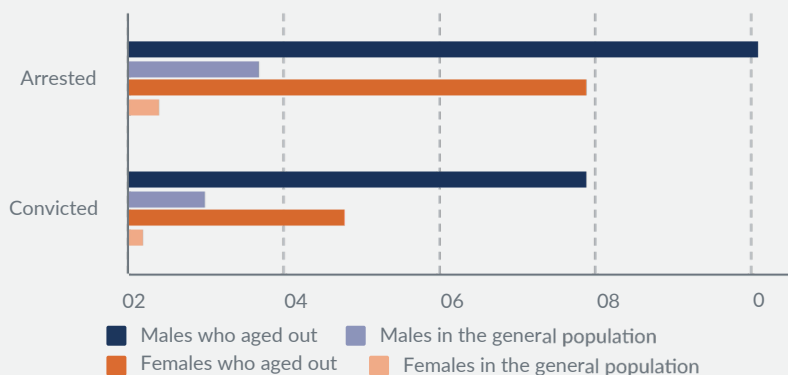
Fewer than 3% will earn a **college degree** by age 25 [1]

Only 50% are **employed** by age 24 [1]

More than one in five will become **homeless** after age 18 [1]

71% of young women are pregnant by age 21, facing higher rates of unemployment, criminal conviction, public assistance, and involvement in the child welfare system. [2]

81% of males who age out are arrested within six years of aging out, and 59% are convicted of at least one crime, compared to 17% and 10% respectively in the general population. [2]

59% of females who age out are arrested within six years of aging out, and 28% are convicted of at least one crime, compared to 4% and 2% respectively, in the general population. [2]

	Arrested	Convicted
Males who aged out		
Females who aged out		
Males in the general population		
Females in the general population		

Legend:
- Males who aged out
- Females who aged out
- Males in the general population
- Females in the general population

[1] https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/JCYOI-CostAvoidance-2013.pdf
[2] https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/05_adoption_foster_care_zill.pdf

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A permanent, supportive, loving family through adoption is the best and least costly preventative measure.

Adoption reduces risk factors, leads to demonstrably improved outcomes, and significantly reduces public costs.

For an annual cohort of youth transitioning from foster care, the impact of graduating at the average rate would be $61,047,000 in additional wages in the first year...$1,867,320,000 more over their working lifetimes and pay $430,000,000 in additional taxes. The total positive impact would be well in excess of two billion dollars for each annual cohort of youth. [1]

Reducing the teen pregnancy rate among young people transitioning from foster care to the national average would result in savings of nearly $250 million for each cohort year.[1]

If young people transitioning from foster care in a single year were involved in the criminal justice system at the much lower rate of the general population, it would produce savings in excess of $5 billion over their lifetimes.[1]

For every child who is adopted out of foster care, taxpayers save between $65,000 and $127,000.[4]

Increasing adoptions from foster care has the potential for massive cost savings and societal benefits. Incentivizing adoptions through a refundable tax credit is smart fiscal policy.

> Even among the most however, the focus quickly turns from caring to thinking about resources – where do we expect to get the financial support necessary to underwrite health care, post secondary education costs, safe and secure housing and other expenses needed to turn bad outcomes around? The answer lies in the age-old promise of prevention." [1]

ZACH'S STORY

Every day, more than 50 youth, like Zach, age out of foster care in the United States with no permanent family and no safety net. Sadly, Zach's older brother was one of them.

"My brother aged out of the system and never finished high school," Zach shared. "He doesn't have anybody to look out for him and isn't taking care of himself. He just doesn't have the guidance that I have now."

"I think we've given Zach a home, stability, someone that's going to be there for him no matter what. He's just such a caring human being, and I wonder all the time, where would Zach be if he didn't have a family?" says Zach's mom, Kim, with a tear in her eye.

Now 19, Zach is thriving in college on a full scholarship. He is studying to become a teacher, just like his mom. [3]

[3] https://www.gosanangelo.com/story/news/2021/07/10/san-anglo-teen-adopted-local-same-sex-couple-foster-parents/7923371002/

[4] https://adoptioncouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Adoption-Tax-Credit-Refundability-2020-Factsheet.pdf

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