



MAP Newsletter

Aging Out of Foster Care (aka On Your Own: Ready or Not)

As teenagers we all dreamed of being "free" from the constraints of parental guidance and able to make our own decisions. After all, we were informed and knowledgeable 16, 17 and 18 year olds - so much smarter than we were given credit for (never mind we hadn't yet earned it!)

This confidence in our abilities is a direct reflection of the size of the safety net our families and support systems had set up for us, not that we would ever admit or appreciate that fact; it will take years for this realization to settle in.

Imagine at that young age, or younger, your support system disappeared through no fault or action of your own. Your family, friends, house, room, clothing, toys, pets and anything else familiar and comforting is gone. No one is there to answer your questions, help with any problem, support you or feed and cloth you.

Young people leaving the foster care system are not adequately prepared for independent living outside of the system. In most cases these youth have never made any major life decisions, they have had little choice in the direction their life has taken, they have never handled any significant amount of money, they have no idea what independence really is.

Another issue is many young people want to maintain a relationship with their parents and the system doesn't always support that so this can create a disconnect.

Listen to Shirley's story here:

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89570059>



In Kalamazoo, MI

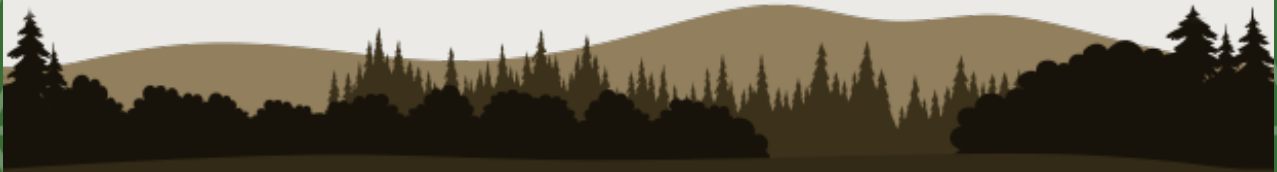
<http://wwmt.com/news/local/foster-care-youth-struggle-to-find-housing-after-aging-out-of-system>

51 Useful Aging Out of Foster Care Statistics

<https://www.nfyi.org/51-useful-aging-out-of-foster-care-statistics-social-race-media/>

We are making some promises to these children when we place them into foster care. We are telling them that they are getting the chance to create a better life for themselves. They are promised a safe home where they can have a family that can be called their own. For many children, these promise are just empty words that have no meaning. As the statistics show, many foster kids are aging out of the system and have nowhere to turn.

- More than 23,000 children will age out of the US foster care system every year.
- After reaching the age of 18, 20% of the children who were in foster care will become instantly homeless.
- Only 1 out of every 2 foster kids who age out of the system will have some form of gainful employment by the age of 24.
- There is less than a 3% chance for children who have aged out of foster care to earn a college degree at any point in their life.
- 7 out of 10 girls who age out of the foster care system will become pregnant before the age of 21.
- The percentage of children who age out of the foster care system and still suffer from the direct effects of PTSD: 25%.
- Tens of thousands of children in the foster care system were taken away from their parents after extreme abuse.
- 8% of the total child population of the United States is represented by reports of abuse that are given to authorities in the United States annually.
- In 2015, more than 20,000 young people — whom states failed to reunite with their families or place in permanent homes.



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