

Programs and Services to help Foster Care Leavers during their Transition to Adulthood

A Study Comparing Chicago (Illinois) to Barcelona (Catalonia)

Josefina Sala-Roca (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

Laura Arnau (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

Mark E. Courtney (University of Chicago)

Amy Dworsky (Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago)

INDEX

I. INTRODUCTION.....	3
II. METHODS.....	6
III. RESULTS.....	6
1. Custody.....	6
2. Subsidies, allowances and financial management.....	7
3. Youth profile and eligibility.....	8
4. Type of transition programs.....	10
5. Staff.....	16
6. Youth participation.....	17
7. Research, Policy and Service Quality.....	17
8. Summary.....	20
IV. STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES.....	22
V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	25
VI. REFERENCES.....	25

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Like all other post-industrial societies, Spain and the US have established government-supported systems to provide care and supervision to minors that the state has deemed in need of such care due to the inability or unwillingness of the their parent(s) to provide care that meets community norms. For the most part these systems grew out of societal concern about child abuse and neglect, but in some U.S. states they also provide care to youth who are beyond parental control (e.g., runaway and throwaway youth) or have engaged in delinquent behavior.¹ Also, in some countries, in recent years, unaccompanied asylum seekers have come to be cared for by the same system that provides care for maltreated children. For the purposes of this report, we refer to the system that provides care to these populations as the *child welfare system*.

The last date for which data are available, there were 415,129 children and youth between birth and 20 years old in foster care in the U.S.² (ACF, 2015). Nearly half (47%) were living with an unrelated foster parent and over one-quarter (28%) were living with a relative foster care provider. About 14% lived in some kind of congregate care setting (group home or residential treatment) and the remainder lived elsewhere (e.g., a trial home visit, in a pre-adoptive home, in a supervised independent living setting, or on run from care). Approximately five percent of this population (n = 17,348) was 18-20 years old. The number of young adults still under the care of the state has increased in recent years as an increasing number of states have opted to allow youth to remain in care until their 21st birthday.

In Spain, in the early 90', child protection services were mainly run by religious orders. After the Constitution of 1978 was enacted, the Autonomous Communities that were created started providing different services and developing laws to create their own Child Welfare Systems. Catalonia provides considerable more transitional services than other Communities in Spain. According to DGAIA (2014), 6493 (0.6%) children in Catalonia were placed in out-of-home care by state and local child welfare agencies. Of those, 2685 (41%) were placed in residential care (group home

or institution), 3808 (59%) in foster family homes (2415 with relatives, 969 with non-relatives, and 424 in preadoptive homes), and 927 are being protected under other measures.

2. Experiences of Care Leavers in Spain and the US

The transition to adulthood in post-industrial societies has become increasingly complex in recent decades, with young adults facing challenges associated with globalization, rapid technological change, and changes in social norms, and generally continuing to rely on their families well into their 20s and 30s (Moreno, 2012; Requena, 2002; Settersten, Furstenberg, & Rumbaut, 2005; Settersten & Ray, 2010; IOM & NRC, 2014; Vogel, 2002). But if the transition can be challenging for youth who have the ongoing support of their families, those who have been separated from their families through placement in the child welfare system might reasonably be expected to fare particularly poorly during this period.

Several studies in the US have pointed out challenges that that youth aging out of care often bring to the transition to adulthood (see Courtney, 2009). Most youth have experienced frequent school changes, and many have been expelled from school and have learning disabilities, all of which contribute to poor educational outcomes as they approach adulthood (Barth, 1990; Courtney & Dworsky, 2006a; 2006b; Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor & Nesmith, 2001; Farruggia, Greenberg, Chen & Heckhausen, 2006) (for a review see Trout, Hagaman, Casey, Reid & Epstein, 2008). This is important because education has a major impact on later employment and earnings (Okpych & Courtney, 2014). In fact, Courtney, Hook & Lee (2012) identify four distinct subgroups of former foster youth, and the most successful group was characterized by higher levels of educational attainment, which in turn increased the likelihood of being employed, having a stable living situation and lower rates of criminal justice system involvement.

Foster youth are more likely to experience teenage pregnancy and parenthood than their peers in the general population (Courtney, Dworsky, Keller, Havlicek & Bost, 2005; Dworsky & Courtney, 2010; Hugues et al., 2008) (for review see Svoboda, Shaw, Barth & Bright, 2012). Thus, parental responsibilities are an additional difficulty that some youth aging out of care have to deal with. In addition, many youth aging out of care suffer from mental and behavioral health problems (Courtney et al., 2001; Havlicek, Garcia, & Smith, 2013; Hughes et al., 2008). Some of these

¹ Delinquent youth who are removed from their homes in the US are generally under the supervision of state and local juvenile justice systems.

² In the US, the term "foster care" refers to all forms of out-of-home care provided by the state to abused and neglected children, including foster family care, kinship foster care, and various forms of congregate care.

problems are due to the trauma experienced in their homes prior to placement. In fact, one study that compared outcomes of foster youth and youth from disadvantaged environments found that the difficulties former foster youth experienced were more likely to be linked to the disadvantaged environments from which they came than to placement in foster care (Berzin, 2008).

Youth aging out of care generally have lower wages and higher levels of unemployment than their peers not in care and experience higher rates of poverty (Courtney & Dworsky, 2006a; 2006b; Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor & Nesmith, 1998, Courtney et al, 2001; Courtney et al, 2005; Hook & Courtney, 2011; Hughes et al., 2008). Hook and Courtney (2011) also found that foster youth's earnings from employment were related to several factors including race, education, criminal behavior, and the length of time youth remained in care, with longer stays showing a protective effect. Youth in care are more likely to engage in criminal behaviors than other youth (Hughes et al., 2008) and have higher levels of recidivism (Ryan, Williams, & Courtney, 2013). However, higher educational attainment and employment seems to be associated with a lower risk for arrest (Cusick, Havlicek & Courtney, 2012). Considering the challenges described above, it is not surprising that youth aging out of care in the US have great difficulties during the transition to adulthood.

Observers have noted that many of the challenges facing foster youth are compounded by their frequent lack of social support (Geenen & Powers, 2007). Courtney et al. (2001) found that care leavers feel they have social support from their foster families and friends, but less from their biological family. In addition, they are sometimes resistant to seeking and receiving emotional support (Samuels & Pryce, 2008). Nevertheless, many foster youth do maintain contact with their families and within a short time of leaving care many return to the biological families from which they were separated when they entered care (Courtney, 2009; McCoy, McMillen, & Spitznagel, 2008). Despite these connections, youth aging out of foster care are at high risk of homelessness (Courtney et al., 2007a; Dworsky & Courtney, 2009; Hughes et al., 2008), with as many as two-fifths spending at least one night homeless by age 26 (Dworsky, Napolitano, & Courtney, 2013).

Similar outcomes have been reported in Catalonia and Spain. Youth in care and former foster youth have lower education levels than their peers not in care, and are less likely to earn a high school diploma and GED (Montserrat, Casas, Malo & Bertran, 2011; Sala, Villalba, Jariot & Rodriguez, 2009). In addition, care leavers report frequent changes in school settings, inadequate study spaces and insufficient educational support in

residential placements (Sala, Villalba, Jariot & Arnau, 2012). Nevertheless, as Del Valle, Sainero & Bravo (2011) pointed out, it is important to consider the high percentage of youth with disabilities among the population of youth in care. Teenage motherhood is also more common among former foster youth than among their peers in the general population (Sala, Villalba et al., 2009). These rates could be explained by the lack of a life prospects, earlier sexual behavior and cultural factors (Zarate, Arnau & Sala, 2013). Former foster youth in Spain have poor social support networks (Bravo & Fernandez del Valle, 2001; Bravo & Fernandez del Valle, 2003; Martin, 2011; Martín, García & Siverio, 2012; Martin, Muñoz, Rodríguez & Pérez, 2008; Sala et al., 2012), and high levels of psychological disorders (Del Valle, Bravo & López, 2009; Fernández-Molina, Del Valle, Fuentes, Bernedo & Bravo, 2011). Former foster youth also have more problems in achieving employment stability and most receive a low wage within non-permanent positions (Fernández del Valle, Álvarez & Fernanz, 1999; Sala, Villalba et al., 2009; Sala, Jariot et al., 2009). Despite all the difficulties they have in accessing and holding down a job, having significant adult connections seems to have a positive influence on employment (Arnau & Gilligan, 2015) as well as high levels of emotional and employability competencies (Sala, Jariot et al., 2009). Those employability competencies are essential to obtain and sustain a job (Arnau, Marzo, Jariot & Sala, 2014). In Catalonia, youth in care are also more likely to be involved in criminal activities than youth not in care (Oriol, Sala & Filella, 2015). Lastly, as in the US, many youth go back to their family or relatives when they leave care (Sala, Villalba et al., 2009).

3. Policies Supporting Care Leavers

Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain) and Chicago (Illinois, US), the sites of this study, provide considerable resources and services to support care leavers in their transition into adult life, though the two systems diverge in their utilization of residential and foster family care and in the relative importance of judicial oversight of care.

In the last two decades, the US has increased the number of programs and resources to support the transition into adulthood for youth in foster care. In 1985 the Independent Living Initiative (public Law 99-272) began providing funds to states to help prepare foster youth for independent living. This initiative was reauthorized indefinitely in 1993 (Public Law 103-66). This program was replaced in 1999 when the Foster Care Independence Act (Public Law 106-169) established the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. Among other things, this legislation doubled

the amount of funding available to states for independent living services and required rigorous evaluations of promising independent living programs. An amendment to the Foster Care Independence Act created the Education and Training Voucher program, which provides up to \$5000 for postsecondary education or training until age 23. Nevertheless there is a lack of knowledge regarding the effectiveness of independent living services (for a review see Courtney 2009). The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 gives US states the option to provide federally funded extended care from 18 to 21. Illinois is one of the 21 states that has taken advantage of this option.

Juvenile courts oversee the provision of out-of-home care by child welfare agencies in the US; while state and local child welfare agencies can provide foster care on a voluntary basis, in practice very few children are in care for more than a few days without a court order specifying the conditions of their care. While public child welfare agencies are ultimately responsible for providing care and supervision of children placed by court order in out-of-home care, they contract with nongovernmental agencies to provide a wide range of foster care services. In Illinois, county courts may keep a youth's case open to age 21 if the extension of service will be in the best interest of the youth, in which case the youth can continue to receive care and supervision by the public child welfare agency. The juvenile courts in Illinois, particularly in Cook County where Chicago is located, have played a central role in keeping youth in care until age 21; in Cook County 80.7% of youth remain in care until at least they are 19 (Peters, Bell, Zinn, Goerge & Courtney, 2008). The court's active role is associated with other indirect benefits such as caseworkers' involvement with youth and the range of services and living arrangements available to transition-age youth (Peters, Dworsky, Courtney & Pollack, 2009).

Benefits from extended care in Illinois are broadly documented in the literature. The Midwest Study, a longitudinal investigation of young people transitioning to adulthood in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin, found that who remained in care until 21 tended to have better outcomes than youth who left care at 18, including higher rates of postsecondary enrollment, higher rates of employment, and lower rates of incarceration (Courtney & Dworsky, 2006a; Courtney & Dworsky, 2006b; Courtney et al., 2007a; 2007b). Other benefits from extended care include a lower risk of arrest during the first year after exit (Lee, Courtney & Tajima, 2014), lower rates of homelessness at age 19 and lower rates of teenage motherhood between age 17 or 18 and age 19 (Dworsky & Courtney, 2010). Some authors pointed out that the benefits of the extended foster care could also be associated with

financial benefits for the government in terms of cost reduction (Peters et al., 2009).

In Catalonia, youth are discharged from foster care at the age of 18 and some youth are able to access services until 21. Catalonia is the Autonomous Community in Spain that has the most services and programs to support care leavers when they age out. In 1994 the Catalan Government approved the first plan to support care leavers, and plan that was enlarged in 2003. The administrative department in charge of coordinating programs and resources to support the transition to independent living (Àrea de Suport al Jove Tutelat i Extutelat - ASJTET) was created in 2005. More recently, the Law of the Rights and Opportunities of Children and Adolescents (LDOIA, 14/2010) passed, specifying measures to improve the transition to adulthood and independent living for young people in the welfare system and without possibility of return to family (FEPA, 2013). The programs provide include socio-educative supervision, legal and labor support and assessment, housing, and economic supports. These programs are mostly offered through non-governmental agencies that receive money from the Catalan government.

Studies in Catalonia provide some evidence of the benefits of transitional services. Based on case managers reports, ASJTET (2011) estimated that 59% of the youth they studied followed the designated case plan and had an appropriate discharge from the program. However, 11% did not follow the plan and 29% had uncertain progress in that they only partially achieved their aims or outcomes were not reported due to lack of data.

Montserrat, Casas & Sisteró (2013) found that caseworkers reported that 47.5% of youth left transition services programs because they had fulfilled their case plan goals, 28.4% left the programs by their own choice, and 24.1% had less favorable outcomes (e.g., the program found it to be impossible to meet the youth's needs, the youth was not making progress in the program, or the youth was expelled from the program for not respecting rules). Most of the youth from this last group were referred to social services upon program discharge. When youth left transition services 47.1% went on to live autonomously, 18.4% returned to their biological family, and 15% were referred to social services. It is not clear what happened to the remaining 19.5% of the youth. The authors report that the educational attainment of youth in transitional living programs is comparable to the educational attainment of their peers in the general population, seeing this as evidence that transition services contribute to improved academic outcomes.

Making comparisons between services and

programs provided in different jurisdictions, such as Chicago and Barcelona presents some major challenges, since services are designed based on the economic, political, and sociocultural realities of national and subnational contexts: employment rates, cost of living, the welfare system, cultural characteristics, etc. Nevertheless, adolescence and young adulthood are developmental stages experienced by youth around the world, and studies of care leavers around the world have found them to face similar difficulties across a range of national contexts. Moreover, the child welfare systems in Catalunya and Illinois have pioneered policies and services aimed at supporting transition age youth since the 1990s, making them excellent case studies of the current status of transition services.

This study compares programs and services to support youth in care during their transition into adult life in Chicago to those that support youth in Barcelona. It is intended to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of each system in order to provide guidance to practitioners, researchers and policymakers.

II. METHODS

Qualitative exploratory interviews with service providers, a document review (e.g., statutes, regulations and procedures, research and evaluation reports, and websites), and analysis of secondary data on care populations were undertaken to inform our understanding of both systems. For interviews, a topic guide was designed. The aim of the interviews was to better understand transition programs and interventions from the perspective of professionals involved in service provision. The main topics of the interviews included: type and aims of the transition programs; youth profile and eligibility; types of staff and their qualifications; data on youth outcomes; data on program effectiveness; and program strengths and challenges.

Twenty professionals from agencies that offer different services and programs to transition were interviewed (nine in Chicago and eleven in Barcelona). A focus group was also carried out with 6 professionals of different agencies. These agencies give support to current and former foster youth in many different areas such as housing, employment, education, financial literacy, participation, and advocacy. Some of the agencies also provided programs for special populations such as teenage parents in care, youth with mental illness, and youth with a history of delinquency. Moreover, four staff from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and one person

from the Office of the Cook County Public Guardian in Chicago and two from the Catalan Children Welfare Department (Direcció General d'Atenció a la Infància i Adolescència - DGAIA) in Barcelona were also interviewed. The interviews were transcribed and the content was analyzed to identify key themes relevant to the focus of the study.

III. RESULTS

1. Custody

Chicago

Even though Illinois Law considers 18 years old the legal age of majority for all purposes (755 ILCS 5/11-1), *“the court may continue the wardship of a minor until age 21 for good cause when there is satisfactory evidence presented to the court and the court makes written factual findings that the health, safety, and best interest of the minor and the public require the continuation of the wardship”* (705 ILCS 405/2). In general, this means that courts can extend guardianship to age 21 if there is not clear evidence that a youth is well prepared for independence. Moreover, a youth's lack of cooperation with services provided by DCFS should not, by itself, be considered sufficient evidence that it is in the best interest of the youth to be discharged from care. However, it is important that the youth's wishes be taken into account by the court, and that youth can leave care at any time after their 18th birthday.

Under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987³, the court is required to hold permanency hearings every six months to monitor the progress of the youth. In these hearings the youth is represented by an attorney of the Juvenile Division of the Office of the Cook County Public Guardian who advocates for the rights of the youth.⁴ The Office of Public Guardian interviews youth and makes recommendations to the court regarding the youth's services needs and permanency goals. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, whether guardianship is extended is ultimately decided by the court for each youth. In Illinois every county has its own juvenile court, and not all juvenile courts are as inclined as the Cook County court to extend care to 21. The main reasons for encouraging youth to remain in extended care were explained by a professional from DCFS:

We highly discouraged [youth] to leave the

³ <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs4.asp?DocName=070504050HArt.+I&ActID=1863&ChapterID=50&SeqStart=2300000&SeqEnd=6700000>

⁴ <http://www.publicguardian.org/juvenile/>

system at 18 (...) 90% of kids stay in care after 19 in Cook County. Downstate is a bit different. Most people know that those kids are not prepared to be self-sufficient because of their history of trauma (...), they don't have the financial resources, they don't have the educational resources (...) they are not ready (...). (Professional of DCFS)

Barcelona

Under Catalan jurisdiction (LDOIA 14/2010), a youth will remain in care until they are 18 and of legal age. Nevertheless the Catalan Children Welfare Department (Direcció General d'Atenció a la Infància i a l'Adolescència- DGAIA) is able to establish emancipation supportive measures to be provided after they are aged 17. This can be done with a justified ruling and with the consent of the interested person. These assistance measures can have economic, legal or social content and can provide housing for a youth they are 21 years old.

Once the youth has reached the age of emancipation or of an age where he/she can live alone, the measures of protection will cease. However the assistance measure could last for longer if it is deemed necessary. These measures of care may have an economic, legal and social implication consisting of granting or maintaining a place in the center and may extend to twenty-one years of old (LDOIA, 14/2010, art. 151).

In Catalan Law, the youth does not have an attorney who represents him or her. However, the Catalan government attorney could represent them to defend their interest: *"A Government attorney can represent and defend in court youth who have already reached the age of maturity provided that the representative initiated the process while being a minor."* (LDOIA, 14/2010, art. 151)

To promote equal opportunity, Article 152 of LDOIA (14/2010) establishes a provision of transitional programs to support emancipation and personal autonomy for former foster youths who are at risk. To obtain that, the youths must apply for those services and meet program requirements.

2. Subsidies, allowances and financial management

Chicago

According to the policy guide 2014.07 from

DCFS,⁵ all youth, independent of type of placement in which they reside, receive a one-time payment of \$1,200 in emancipation funds if they fulfill specific requirements. They must be enrolled in a program called "Countdown to 21" at the age of 19 and be in a DCFS-approved substitute care placement. Within this program youth must participate in a 90 day Discharge Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (D-CIPP) meeting. The D-CIPP is a guided planning process in which caseworkers, caregivers, family and other adults help youth develop a transition plan and budget. Youth must also successfully complete a DCFS-approved financial literacy course.

Each Transitional Living Program (TLP) and Independent Living Program (ILO) provider has to design a disbursement plan or financial management plan specifying the amount of money that the youth receives weekly for clothing, telephone, transportation and other expenses. This plan is reviewed quarterly to help youth learn to manage money prior to emancipation. Over time, through in TLP and ILO are expected to increase their contribution to the payment of rent and basic necessities, and funds that have not been used are placed in a savings account.

Youth who reach the age of majority in foster care are eligible under federal law for Medicaid, the health insurance program for low income individual and families, to age 26. Some youth are also eligible for other public aid programs that are available to members of the general population with limited incomes (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for young parents, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for adults and children with disabilities, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)).

There are other subsidies to promote youth enrollment in training and education such as the Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program (up to \$5,000 per year for postsecondary education or training) and the Youth in College program that allows the youth to pay for their college dormitory and college tuition until they are 23 year old.

Barcelona

Before 2014, youth who were in care (independent of the kind of placement) could receive a one-time financial package when they came of age (18 years old), based on how long they had been in care. From 2014 onwards this aid has been reformulated

⁵

https://www.illinois.gov/dcf/aboutus/notices/Documents/policy_guide_2014.07.pdf

because some youths were not able to manage a large amount of money by themselves. At 2015 youth who have been in care for three or more years are eligible for an emancipation package of 664€ per month for a maximum of three years if they follow an Individualized Educational Plan (Pla de Treball Individualitzat) agreed upon with their caseworker. If they have been in care for less than 3 years, they are eligible for an emancipation package of 664€ for six months (This may be extended to nine months as of 2015).⁶ This amount is equivalent to the Catalonia Adequate Income Indicator (Indicador de Renda de Suficiència de Catalunya) and is provided directly to the youth by the DGAIA. In the Catalan case, this emancipation fund is compatible with other subsidies, provided if the total amount that the youth receives does not exceed 150% of the total value of the economical aid. When youth are no longer eligible for emancipation aid, they can apply for a public subsidy called PIRMI (Renta Mínima de Inserción) (426€ monthly), which is linked with an individual work plan. Moreover, the Public Health System covers their health assistance. Youths that decide to continue living with their foster family after coming of age are also eligible for the subsidy, but the family won't receive any payments after the youth comes of age.

Caseworkers help youth who continue to receive support from the child welfare system after reaching age 18 develop skills to manage and save money. There is an agreement between the youth and the social educator about how youth will spend their budget (food, transport, etc.) and their savings, and every two months this agreement is reviewed.

3. Youth profile and eligibility

Chicago

Under the Fostering Connections to Success Act in 2008, states are eligible to claim federal reimbursement for foster care services provided to youth ages 18 to 20 if the youth are engaged in an educational program, working or in a job training program, or have a medical condition (including disabilities and behavioral health problems) that impairs their ability to engage in the other activities. In Illinois, the State assumes the cost of extended care for youth who do not meet the federal criteria mentioned above.

Most of the professionals interviewed reported that engaging youth in extended care is a major

6

http://www.govern.cat/pres_gov/AppJava/govern/notespremsa/282881/7-345-joves-shan-beneficiat-serveis-larea-suport-tutelats-extutelats-departament-benestar-social-familia.html

challenge. Many youth are not motivated to participate in services lack and there is a lack of trust in their caregivers (program staff, caseworkers, etc.) and other adults:

One of the challenges is keeping youth engaged and invested in the services. We have hundreds of referrals and they don't show up and when they do they never come back (...) older youth who grow up in foster care trust no one, trust is a big issue and if you want to help them, you have to gain their trust (...) they have different counselors, different case workers, they feel that the system has failed them, not only their family. (Professional from DCFS)

Some professionals reported that the lack of trust is due to the lack of stability the youth experience due to changes in their placements and caseworkers.

We have horrible turnover. Our caseworkers leave all the time and it's hard for kids to establish relationship. It's a big problem in our system (...) The older kids don't trust us because they say: I have to explain my story over and over again. (Case manager)

Some of the agencies try to find ways to help youth to reestablish trustful relationships with adults through the implementation of the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model for youth and young adults with EBD (Emotional and Behavioral Disorders)⁷.

Barcelona

Transitional programs and services are targeted to youth who are at least 16 years old and have little chance of being reunified with their biological family when they come of age (LDOIA 14/2010, art. 146). Even though the law states that these transition programs should target youths coming of age who are unable to be reunified with their biological family and could be at risk (LDOIA 14/2010, art. 146), every program has its own criteria, so the profile and number of youths taking part varies widely across each program (see Table 1).

Economic support programs are for youth who have been in care and don't have the resources to pay for essentials (housing, food, education, etc.)⁸ A total of 846 youth received economic support in 2014. Housing programs also provide assistance to youth who lack economic and family support and need housing with

⁷ <http://www.tipstars.org/OverviewofTIPModel.aspx>

⁸ http://www.govern.cat/pres_gov/AppJava/govern/notespremsa/282881/7-345-joves-shan-beneficiat-serveis-larea-suport-tutelats-extutelats-departament-benestar-social-familia.html

educative guidance. In 2014, 537 youth received assistance from these programs. Most youth in transitional housing placement receive counseling from their social educators. Their social educator also helps them develop a professional or training plan and refers them to community services. This may be why fewer youth (388 in 2014) are involved in the *employment* program, which focuses on employment. Youth who are not in a transitional housing placement can still receive socio-educative guidance.

A majority of the youth in housing programs are unaccompanied immigrant youth. These unaccompanied immigrant youth are referred to a legal advice program that is mainly focused on helping them obtain passports, residence visas and working papers. In 2014, 336 of the youth in housing programs were foreigners (mainly non-accompanied immigrants), and a majority of them were boys (see table 1).

Professionals who were interviewed complained about the difficulties in helping immigrant youth find employment training or a job because it is much harder for them to get work permits than residence permits.

Immigrant youth don't have the same opportunities that others do to get a job. As they arrived when they were minors, they have

their residence permits, but not the work permit. Because of that, caseworkers usually help them obtain financial aid such as emancipation aid, PIRMI, etc. while they don't have their work permits. (Professional from one agency)

Some professionals also reported girls are more likely than boys to pursue education:

Girls have more interest in education. Boys usually do some short courses for obligation or because they want get a job, but not because they have any intention to study. I'm not saying that they don't want to learn a profession; but their willingness is not to come to study. (Professional from one agency)

Nevertheless girls are also more likely than boys to leave the transition placement to go to live with their romantic partner: *"Girls are more independent because they leave the placement very quickly as they are engaged in a relationship. Boys prefer to go with some friends or with family, instead."* (Professional from one agency)

Table 1. Youth attended by Àrea de Suport al Jove Tutelat i Extutelat (ASJTET) in 2014

		GIRLS	BOYS	CATALONIA	%
Housing program	nationals	105	96	201	37,4%
	foreigners	70	266	336	62,6%
	<i>total</i>	<i>175</i>	<i>362</i>	<i>537</i>	<i>100,0%</i>
Employment program	nationals	77	118	195	50,3%
	foreigners	53	140	193	49,7%
	<i>total</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>388</i>	<i>100,0%</i>
Juridic program	nationals	14	8	22	8,1%
	foreigners	54	195	249	91,9%
	<i>total</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>271</i>	<i>100,0%</i>
Socioeducative support	nationals	289	145	434	56,1%
	foreigners	43	297	340	43,9%
	<i>total</i>	<i>332</i>	<i>442</i>	<i>774</i>	<i>100,0%</i>
Subsidised program	nationals	350	320	670	79,2%
	foreigners	68	108	176	20,8%
	<i>total</i>	<i>418</i>	<i>428</i>	<i>846</i>	<i>100,0%</i>

Source: Data from DGAIA, 2014⁹

⁹

Professionals reported that youth in Catalan transitional living programs have difficulties remaining connected to services and most of them leave the program before achieving their emancipation goals. According to professionals, their main reasons for leaving the program are lack of commitment to their socio-educative plans, not following norms and rules, and not being able to live together with others. The length of stay in the transitional living programs is in average 18 months.

When we have a youth whose behavior is found to be so difficult to coexist with others and who doesn't work on their socio-educative plan, we evict them. It's a long process, and we always give them many opportunities to change. Keeping them in the apartment means that the only thing that we do, apart from occupying the placement, is to help them not to do anything... and this is not educative. In these cases, we offer them help from outside the placement. (Professional from one agency)

4. Type of transition programs

4.1. Housing

Chicago

Youth who come of age while still in care have a variety of living arrangement options. According to DCFS data¹⁰, the two most common placements for Cook County youth in extended care in 2013 were: independent or transitional living (ILO and TLP) (37.3 %) and foster care with nonrelatives (20.6%). Other placements are home of relative or parents (12 %), group or residential care (9.3%), incarcerated (6.6%), other (6.2%), unauthorized placement (3.5%), college (3.4%) and Placement Alternative Contract (PAC) (1%) (see table 2).

DCFS gives a subsidy to caregivers if the placement is an authorized placement and the amount depends on whether the placement is licensed as well as the youth's age and needs. Placements are provided by private agencies contracted by DCFS. Most youth placed in TLPs and ILOs were previously placed in residential treatment facilities or group homes, but youth in foster homes can also access these placements.

Transitional Living Programs (TLP)

Transitional living programs provide continuous (i.e., 24/7) on-site staff supervision in apartments

owned or leased by the TLP provider. TLPs have a 1:6 house staff-to-youth ratio and 1:10 caseload ratio for case managers.

Youth are eligible to enter a TLP if they are 17.5 to 20.5 years old and enrolled in an accredited high school or GED program¹¹. However, the court can decide that it is in the best interest of a youth who does not meet the eligibility criteria to remain in a TLP. In such cases, DCFS does not receive federal reimbursement for the TLP services.

Enhanced TLPs for youth with special needs have a 1:8 caseload ratio for case managers. These include TLPs for:

- Youth who have been diagnosed with serious mental illnesses or emotional disturbances. The goal of these programs is to help youth make a smooth transition into the adult mental health services system.
- Youth with disabilities. The goal of these programs is to promote the skills that youth will need to function in a CILA (Community Integrated Living Arrangements) or other settings for adults with developmental disabilities.
- Youth with an extensive history of incarceration, including those with aggressive behaviors and sexual offender. The goal of these programs is to provide the support and treatment needed to integrate these youth into the community.

Independent Living programs (ILO)

Youth in ILOs live in their own apartments and receive supportive services to help prepare them to become self-sufficient and establish permanent connections with committed adults.

Youth are eligible to enter an ILO if they are at least 19 years old with one year of stable placement and a high school diploma or GED. Some post-secondary or professional training is recommended as well as basic skills for self-sufficiency. The caseworker must document the youth's progress towards prescribed outcome measures (e.g., saving money...). Nevertheless some professionals expressed concerns about ILO programs:

I have never lived on my own. It's not affordable in Chicago. In college I had roommates, I've lived with my family, I got married (...) saying to young people "you need to be ready to live in your own apartment", it's not affordable. We forget that peers are very important in

¹⁰ Unpublished data

¹¹ Youth with a substance abuse or dependency diagnosis must participate in substance abuse treatment before entering TLP placement.

adolescence to develop skills. (Agency Director).

In theory, TLPs are supposed to prepare youth for transition to an ILO *“If they go to TLP they usually stay until they are 19 and when they get their high school diploma they move to ILO”* (professional from DCFS). However, some youth in TLPs don’t transition to ILO because they are unable to function independently or because they don’t earn a high school diploma or GED. According to DCFS data, 23.1% of 20-year old Cook County youth in 2013 were still in TLP (see table 2). In those cases, a launch plan is established with the youth for a final living arrangement 9 months prior to

emancipation. The youth can be placed in an apartment, in a relative or friend’s home, in a single-room-occupancy (SRO) apartment.

For youth aged 18 or older who are unable to accept a traditional placement, a Placement Alternative Contract (PAC) is an option. These Youth with a PAC receive services and financial support from DCFS if the placement is safe, if there are written goals that promote the youth’s ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency, and if there is an adult advocate who will assist the youth achieve those goals. This contract is reviewed every 90 days.

Table 2. Living arrangements in Cook County from 18 to 21

	18	19	20	21	TOTALS
TLP	17,68%	22,64%	23,12%	12,50%	20,89%
ILO	3,66%	13,61%	33,48%	50,00%	16,44%
College	0,38%	5,28%	4,65%	12,50%	3,41%
Parents	2,02%	1,53%	0,00%	4,17%	1,27%
Relatives	14,65%	10,28%	6,91%	0,00%	10,72%
Foster family	27,27%	21,25%	12,46%	8,33%	20,62%
Residential or group home	15,03%	7,92%	4,20%	0,00%	9,26%
PAC	0,63%	1,81%	0,75%	0,00%	1,04%
Unauthorized	4,80%	3,33%	2,25%	0,00%	3,50%
Unknown	3,79%	3,89%	3,15%	0,00%	3,59%
Detention or correctional	6,69%	6,39%	6,91%	4,17%	6,63%
Others	3,41%	2,08%	2,10%	8,33%	2,63%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Data from DCFS, 2013

Some of the professionals interviewed expressed concerns about long waiting lists for transitional and independent living placements. Some youth are referred to a shelter while they are waiting to access a stable TLP or ILP placement.

There is a long waiting list. Most places will have 6, 10, 20 kids waiting for one bed. Agencies have more kids than beds. You cannot always find another place and get one kid from one TLP to another TLP. There will be wait times or shelter if you have to move. (Professional of the Public Guardian’s Office)

After care youth can get the Youth Housing Assistance Program is funded through federal Chafee funds. It has two major components: the Housing Advocacy Program (HAP) and the Cash Assistance Program (CAP)

HAP provides a housing locator to work with youth as they transition to adulthood. Most youth referred to HAP are referred a few months before their case closes when they turn 21. The housing advocate assesses the clients ability to locate and maintain housing. They also provide housing counseling and budget counseling. The housing advocate searches for appropriate units and attempts to develop positive

relationships with property managers to increase the likelihood that the youth referred to housing will be accepted. If the youth moves in prior to 21, the housing advocate also provides follow-up services. Federal funding requirements do not allow DCFS to pay for services after the youth turns 21.

CAP Provides assistance purchasing items necessary to stabilize the youth's housing situation. This includes security deposit and first month's rent. It also assists with kitchen and bedroom furniture for the youth and any children they may have as well as household items. The most cash assistance the program can provide is \$2,000 per youth. This is in addition to the \$1,200 that the youth receives through "Countdown to 21." All cash assistance requests must be approved prior to the youth's 21st birthday.

Youth who age out of care early (prior to 21) may also receive a partial housing subsidy of up to \$250 per month for 12 months. DCFS cannot provide the subsidy after the youths 21st birthday because of federal funding rules. If necessary, the program can also pay rental arrears or utility arrears that the youth may have accrued while their case was closed. Finally, youth who age out early are automatically referred to a housing advocate to attempt to address any housing needs they may have prior to turning 21.

Barcelona

The transition program is for all youth who have been in care (either residential care or foster families homes), but nearly all youth assisted by the housing program come from residential placement. Youth in foster family homes (relative and non-relative) usually continue living with the family after coming of age.

There are 5 different types of housing resources (DGAIA, 2011):

- Assisted apartments for youth aged between 16 and 18 aim to prepare youth in care for autonomy. Between 4 and 6 youths can live in the apartments, and there is a social educator 24/7 in the flat.
- Assisted apartments for youth aged between 18 and 21 are for youth without resources of their own or from their family who must leave their foster home when they come of age. There are usually 4 youth per flat, and a social educator who supervises youths (20 hours per week) . However, youth can contact the social educator at any time of day if they need support. Generally the social educator is not in the flat 24/7 hours.
- Residential centers are for youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who are in pre-labor training or in

a program for entering the labor market. These residential centers assist between 8 - 12 youths, and the ratio is 1:8.

- Rented Rooms by Servei d'Acompanyament Especialitzat per a persones Joves tutelades i extutelades (SAEJ) are a specialized service for youth ages 16 to 20 years old with high levels of autonomy, no economic means to support themselves, who are unable to be placed with family and for whom an institutionalized center is not recommended. There are two SAEJ in Catalonia, one in Barcelona and another in Girona. In the case of SAEJ in Barcelona, youths find a room to rent and, if the social educator agrees, the SAEJ pays the rent and supervises the youth's plan to enter the labor market. The main aim of this service is to help youth find a job. This service is mostly used by non-accompanied immigrant youth. Nevertheless it can also be used by Spanish youth if the caseworker considers this service is better for them than any other option. There is one service of this kind in Barcelona.
- Apartments for students ages 18 to 24 provide 24/7 supervision to care leavers who are enrolled in an education program. There is a building called "Espai Cabestany" in Barcelona with 8 apartments for 13 students.

All of these housing programs (with the exception of SAEJ), require youth to pay something for their housing so that they can learn how much living expenses are and how to manage their budget. The amount they pay can range from 80 to 240 euros depending on the criteria of the institution. Youth with no economic support or income can borrow or obtain financing for their housing. Institutions try to help these youth find economic support through economic aids available to the general population like PIRMI, or study grants if the youth is eligible. Meanwhile the institutions pay for their necessities. Professionals reported that they adjust the rent requirement depending on the income of the youth:

We adjust the conditions to the youth's status: if a youth has no income then he/she doesn't have to pay for anything and we give them some money for them to live; if the youth receives a PIRMI [economic aid for the general population] we negotiate with him/her regarding how much they are able to pay according to their possibilities and situation...we think that they need to pay because that is part of the reality they will encounter when they leave. (Professional from one agency)

According to one professional, *“the main criterion for a youth to be eligible is by having a plan and a strong commitment to reach their goals.”* Youth who receive housing resources must be enrolled in some sort of educational program or engaged in labor activity and have a minimum level of autonomy (ASJTET, 2011).

“Autonomous apartments are only for youth that the caseworkers or professionals of ASJTET think can work (...) In fact there aren’t enough placements for all the aging out youth.” (Professional from one agency).

Youth must also sign a contract agreeing to respect the rules of the apartment. Youth who don’t comply with those rules can be evicted:

When a youth accesses a placement, both youth and agency sign a contract about different things such as that they will clean common spaces, they will respect roommates and case workers... normal things... and that if they don’t fulfill them, the contract will be revoked. The contract is for 6 months, and it is renewed periodically. (Professional from one agency).

A professional from ASJTET is responsible for assessing the needs and autonomy of the youth and making a housing proposal to the service providers and the youth. As one of these professionals explained: *“We should have 10% of the beds free, so that we can match every youth with their needs”.*

4.2. Education, training, employment and life skills development

Chicago

As mentioned above, Illinois youth in care can access different educational programs and subsidies to help them meet their educational needs. The Education and Training Voucher program provides up to \$5000 per year for postsecondary education-related expenses and the Youth in College program provides a monthly grant of \$511 to attend an accredited vocational school, a four-year college or a community college until they turn 23 years old. Some agencies provide educational supports in the form of tutoring, homework help, life skills, counseling and violence prevention/social emotional learning.

In Chicago, there are three employment programs for specifically for youth in care: the WOW program run by Community Assistance Programs, the Added Chance Career Education run by the Alternative

Schools Network and My Time run by Lawrence Hall. Two of the programs help youth develop soft skills and provide work experience through mentoring; the other focuses on job placement.

I’m a big believer than those specific work programs don’t cure everything but do a lot for those kids, to have a job, feel that they succeed... increase their self-esteem. They feel good to contribute; to get paid (...) this is a big resource for them. (Professional from one agency)

Barcelona

In Catalonia there are very few specific programs for education, training or employment for youth in care. Instead, youth in care are referred to the employment and training programs available to the general population and youth at social risk. The majority of those programs are publicly funded and target low income individuals. L’ASJTET has an employment program with 6 job-sourcing specialists to assess the youths and the social educators. They are there to ensure that there are enough job offers to help youths that are at risk of social and work exclusion The program aims to improve their employability competencies to access the labor market.

Youth ages 18 to 24 years old who don’t receive any economic support or are no longer eligible for aid and they want to continue their studies can apply for an education grant for former foster youth funded by La Caixa (a Catalan bank) of 519,12€ monthly (in 2015) managed by FEPA. This grant is compatible with other education grants addressed to the general population.

A caseworker establishes an Individualized Educational Plan with the youth and helps the youth find the community services to fulfill the goals of the plan. Most of the youth are involved in education and training because of the high rate of youth unemployment in Catalonia.

There are some youth that are studying because they are good at that and there are others that would have never studied but they are studying now as the possibility of getting a job is very limited. There are some that want to study but others are doing it just to meet the plan requirements. Very few of them are working. (Professional from one agency)

Youth can also can receive educative support and enroll in courses to develop different independent life skills such as budgeting, time management, and cooking nutritious meals, from ASJTET (espai jove).

4.3. Specialized programs and services

Chicago

There are enhanced transitional support programs for youth with specific needs, for example LGBT youth, teenage parents, youth with severe mental illness, youth with disabilities, youth with criminal records, and youth who exhibit aggressive behavior and sexual offenders.

Teen Parenting Service Network is the umbrella program that oversees all services for pregnant and parenting youth in DCFS care throughout the state¹². The program provides clinical intervention services to help young parents cope with the possible effects of trauma and improve their parenting as well as mentoring and educational supports. Pregnant and parenting youth participate in an emancipation planning process beginning at age 19 that involves meeting with their caseworker, other significant adult, a DCFS facilitator, and a housing specialist. Young parents may also be eligible for Temporary Cash Assistance for Needy Families to help them meet the needs of their children for a maximum of 60 months. Between 70-80% of the young parents complete a New Birth assessment designed to identify unmet needs or risks to child safety and linked them to parenting services. A professional explained why some young parents refuse parenting services:

One of the reasons could be “child removal”, there are more people involve (...) what it is true. If you look at the studies about child removals, our youth tend to have more removals because there are so many eyes on them. Another reason is that they don’t want to be told off any more, they want to be independent or they have other supports: they have access to mom, to grandmother (...). (Professional from one agency)

Programs for young people with serious mental health challenges include the Emerge¹³ program, which serves for youth ages 18 to 26 years old (many of whom were previously involved in child welfare system) and the Young Adult Program¹⁴, which provides residential and transitional living placements for youth ages 16 to 21 years old who are currently under the custody of the state. Young people work with therapists, case managers, psychiatrists, and vocational support workers. Both programs utilize the evidenced-based Individual-Placement and Support Model of Supported Employment (Ellison et al. 2015) to support young

person vocational development. The programs are also informed by the Transitional Independent Process (TIP) Model (Hewitt 2004). The TIP model empowers young people with support to make their own decisions and navigate their transition to adulthood with the supportive of invested adults, both professionals and a young person’s self-identified family and other supportive adults.

The Regenerations program was designed for youth in care who have been involved in the juvenile justice system and may have difficulties adapting to transitional living programs¹⁵. This program aims to reduce recidivism and reestablish the youth’s connections with family and other adults who could help or foster them. Professionals provide these families and other adults with supportive services as well as help in times of crisis. The youth receive up to 30 hours per week of support from an advocate who helps the youth establish healthy connections in his/her community and provides him/her with training and employability experiences.

Onarga Academy has a program outside Cook County for youth in care with sexual behavior problems¹⁶. Through multidisciplinary treatment, youth safely address their problem behaviors, face emotional issues, improve social skills and rebuild their family relationships. Onarga Academy offers residential, group home, foster families, TLP and ILO placements. It also has a school, an employment program, aftercare and follow up services.

Barcelona

In Catalonia there are some specialized services for youth in care with mental illness, criminal records, problematic behaviors as well as pregnant or parenting youth. Nevertheless all of these programs are for youth under 18. There is a lack of transition specialized services for youth 18 and older: “*our major concern is not having specialized programs to meet specific needs of some Youth: mental illness, teenager motherhood, etc.*” (Manager from ASJTET).

The legal advice program provided by ASJTET, in collaboration with FEPA, provides guidance to youth with legal problems. A majority of their work involves helping immigrant youth obtain their passports, residence visa and working papers. They also undertake mediation processes and when youth have infractions with the law. However, if youth have committed an offense, then a public attorney defends them.

¹² <http://www.ucanchicago.org/tpsn/>

¹³ <http://www.thresholds.org/our-work/programs/emerge/>

¹⁴ <http://www.thresholds.org/our-work/programs/youth-and-families/>

¹⁵ <http://www.lcfs.org/page.aspx?pid=1557>

¹⁶ <https://www.nexustreatment.org/sites/onarga/about/index>

4.4. Relationships/ Connection with the community /family orientation

Chicago

One of the main aims of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (2008) is to return children to their biological family, if possible, and to connect youth to and support their relative caregivers.

In Chicago, about one third of youth age 18 and older who are still in care are living with foster families or relatives. However, most of the professionals interviewed in Chicago express their concern about the connections youth have with supportive adults once they leave care. Some agencies in Chicago help youth aging out of care develop a social support system by establishing trusting relationships with committed adults or reconnecting with their families and identify the individuals in their social network who can best support them. These agencies also provide youth with peer mentoring through the Young Adult Program or providing internships through the Adult Connections program.¹⁷ Some intensive programs connect youth with relatives who can offer them support, help families deal with youth during their initial transition period from care, and provide an individualized supervision for 30 hours per week similar to the Regeneration Program.¹⁸

Connections are important (...) having someone who they feel connected to, who they feel supported by having at least one adult in their life that they can trust that they can turn to, with whom they can share a holiday (...) it's a natural support whereas the caseworker is not real; when kids turns 21 the caseworker is in the next case and they won't talk with the kid anymore (...). (Professional from DCFS)

One agency manager expressed concern about the difficulties youth have in establishing relationships with relatives and other significant adults while they are in TLP or ILO

I don't know what it is. I'm 50 years old and I've never been independent all my life. I'm very interdependent. I'm not very good at fixing things (...) so I'm on the phone saying "father how do I fix this" (...) so we need to create that same thing for our kids. The transition living and independent living we don't do in it (...) we have the most teens than anybody (...). (Manager of an agency)

¹⁷ <http://www.childrenshomeandaid.org/adultconnections-landing>

¹⁸ <http://www.lcfs.org/Regenerations>

Barcelona

For the Catalan LDOIA (14/2010) the priority is returning children permanently to their families if it is safe to do so, and providing services to protect children in their family environment such as through socio-educative agreements with families to prevent children being returned to care (LDOIA 14/2010, art. 103). While children are in care, the main goal is permanency through adoption or long-term placement in a foster family or group home, while preserving the children's right to be in contact with their family (Departament de Benestar i Família, 2012). Transitional programs and services are for youth who are at least 16 years or old and have little chance of returning to their biological families when they come of age (LDOIA art 146). Owing to this, reconnecting youth with their biological families is not a goal of the transitional programs.

"We neither work nor orient the youth to have relationships with their parents, this program is for youth who aren't able to go back to their families. However, if the youth wants to maintain the contact with his or her family we add that as an objective in their work plan to give the appropriate support" (Professional of the ASJTET)

Even though caseworkers don't work with the biological family directly, they help youth deal with their family relationships. As one of the caseworkers mentioned:

Usually we don't interact with the family, but it doesn't mean that we don't talk with youth about them (...) we just try to see that the family doesn't interfere in the socio-educative intervention to much (...) youth have to decide which kind of relationship [they] want to have with their family and we help them rebuild this relationship positively. (Professional from one agency)

The supportive role of families (either foster and relatives) is central to practice and policy in Catalonia and in Spain, and in Catalonia most youth placed with foster families or relatives don't usually access support services – except emancipation subsidies. Although there are no comprehensive data available for Catalonia, the professionals interviewed explained that most youth in foster or relative care remain with those families when they reach adulthood. In fact, in Spain, 64.5% of youth in foster care remained with their foster carers after reaching adulthood as did 92.7% of the youth placed with relatives (Del Valle, López, Montserrat, & Bravo, 2009).

Nevertheless there are some programs that aim to connect youth with adults in the community who can

provide support. For example, Punt de Referència connects youth with a non-professional mentor in a one-to-one relationship¹⁹. This program creates supportive connections between immigrant youth and other adults in the community:

It is important to help them create bonds with adults that are doing voluntary mentoring. They are alone or have a peer group but they don't have any significant adult that accompanies them through the emancipation process, who encourages them to border new horizons and they miss that a lot. (Professional of one agency)

5. Staff

Chicago

There are three main types of professionals who work with youth in transitional living programs: On-site support staff, TLP agency caseworkers and DCFS case managers. On-site 24/7 support staff help youth learn skills and develop supportive relationships. Agency caseworkers must have contact with youth in person twice per month (and once a week during the first month); at least one of these contacts should be in the youth's living arrangement. Caseworkers encourage youth to maintain and increase their social network and family relationships. They also review the youth's transition or discharge plans, monitor the youth's progress, and report to their DCFS Supervisor. DCFS case managers, who must be in contact with the youth, assist in setting goals, verifying the completion of individual service plans, and ensuring that youth needs are met (DCFS procedures 301²⁰ and 409²¹).

Support staff usually have a high school degree and don't have specific training to work with youth. Caseworker should have a college degree (ideally a bachelor's degree in social work or counseling), and case managers should have a master's degree (usually in human/social services).

Some of those interviewed expressed concerns about staff turnover:

This year, for example, we had 40% turnover, so we have some kids that would have had three caseworkers this year... Awful...(...) some is because of money, huge stress (...) Most of our residential centers pay just the minimum wage.

¹⁹ <http://www.puntdereferencia.org/>

²⁰ https://www.illinois.gov/dcfs/aboutus/notices/Documents/Procedures_301.pdf

²¹ https://www.illinois.gov/dcfs/aboutus/notices/Documents/procedures_409.pdf

(Agency Director)

The private agencies must also provide a minimum of 10 hours of training to all staff per year (procedure 409.200). This seems to be of great importance since there is a general perception that the staff and caseworkers don't know how to deal with youth.

We try to think more about going to them rather than them coming to us, making much more one-on-one. Unfortunately our agency case workers are not equipped to do that, that's not what their job is, they are so busy and we haven't encouraged them to do that in training. (Agency Director)

Barcelona

In Catalonia there are two main types of professionals involved in transitional housing services (Camacho, 2013). The ASJTET case manager assess the needs and autonomy skills of the youth, proposes the housing placement to the youth and agency and supervises the services involved in the youth's case, the caseworker's work, and the progress of the youth. To become a case manager it is necessary to have a college degree in social education, psychology or a similar degree and have been working several years in the child welfare system.

The caseworker in transitional housing services is the professional who designs, alongside the youth, the Individualized Educational Plan, and helps the youth develop living and financial management skills, refers them to community resources to improve their education or employability, and helps them to develop a healthy social network. They also monitor and document the progress of the youth. By law (284/1996)²², educators in residential placements for children in care and transitional placements for youth under age 18 have to have a college degree in Social Education (4-years scholar degree). Because of that, most caseworkers have a degree in Social Education even though there is not an educational requirement to become a caseworker in transitional placements. ASJTET and the Federation of agencies that offer housing transitional programs (Federació d'Entitats amb projectes i Pisos Assistits -FEPA) also offer some training seminars for caseworkers every year.

²² http://dogc.gencat.cat/ca/pdogc_canals_interns/pdogc_resultats_fitxa/?documentId=133852&action=fitxa

6. Youth participation

Chicago

Youth are encouraged to participate in different boards and committees to make their voices heard and advocate for changes in policy and practice. Youth advisory boards are dedicated to youth empowerment and policy advocacy, and all 14 to 21 year olds in and/or adopted from foster care are invited to attend regional boards. The seven regional boards meet weekly and elect 5 members to participate on the state board that meets quarterly. Two private agencies oversee these boards and provide training to the youth.

Foster Youth Advisory Boards (YAB) benefit youth by promoting the development of leadership skills and skills for self-advocacy:

They have unique opportunities to learn skills for leadership and they are developing a community, there is significant mentoring that is happening and a lot of emotional support for adults (...) to help them to build trusting relationships with adults inside and outside the board. (Professional)

Despite these benefits, few youth attend those meetings regularly *“it seems necessary to provide information and realistic opportunities for access for all youth independently of the kind of placement.”* (Professional)

Federal legislation requires youth participation in decision-making about their own case plan. The Foster Connections Act of 2008 specifies that transition plans must be youth driven. More recently, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (2014) gives youth age 14 or older the right to participate in the development of their own case plans and in transition planning in consultation with members of their case planning team.

This new law it's all on youth rights (...) caseworkers need to provide information about their rights and include all foster youth in case planning (...) all is coming from youth advisory groups and advocacy movement (...) that give youth more opportunities to direct services when they are in foster care and planning. (Professional)

The Juvenile Court in Cook County holds benchmark permanency hearings to help youth prepare for independence. Youth receive individualized attention from a judge, other representatives from the court, and relevant agencies to help them identify and plan for long-term goals. To attend the hearings, youth must be at least 16 years old and meet other requirements like being in a stable placement for more

than 3 months.

Barcelona

According to the LDOIA (14/2010), the Government recently created the National and Regional Council of Youth and Adolescent Participation, where all children and youth from Catalonia are able to participate through their representatives and express their opinions and concerns regarding policy, norms, projects, programs and decisions that involve them. However, in Catalonia there are no youth advisory boards for youth in foster care.

Residential centers and group homes in Catalonia regularly have assemblies for all the youth and staff as part of their internal dynamics, but they are not coordinated with other residential centers or group homes or by the state. These assemblies represent one of the few opportunities for youth to make their voices and opinions heard.

Catalan policy promotes youth participation in some forms of decision-making. Caseworker must ask youth what they want to do and involve them in their own case plans. From the moment the youth enter care, they have to develop an Individualized Educational Plan that details the middle- and long-term goals and the activities the youth must do to reach them in collaboration with the caseworker and considering the community resources available. All the activities youth do to reach the Individualized Educational Plan goals are monitored and included in a tutorial follow up report (Informe Tutorial de seguiment -ITSE). Youth who access independent living programs should already have their own plans which are reviewed and adjusted with the advice of their caseworker and other professionals.

7. Research, Policy and Service Quality

Chicago

Program evaluation –monitoring- quality standards

The federal government has played a central role in increasing knowledge about the functioning of the state child welfare systems and the provision of foster care services. This includes funding evaluations of state innovations in the operation of their foster care programs through child welfare waivers (Social Security Amendments, 1994, 103-432) and demonstration projects that involve partnerships between public child welfare agencies and university-based researchers:

We are carrying out, in collaboration with the University of Chicago, a 5-year evaluation program through a quasi-experimental design

of a program to connect youth with other significant adults in the community (...) if we prove that the program is effective for youth in care, the federal government will provide funding to implement it around the country. (Agency Director)

Of particular relevance to improving services for care leavers, the Foster Care Independence Act (1999) requires that over \$2 million per year be set aside specifically for the evaluation of independent living services for transition-age foster youth. The Multi-Site Evaluation of Foster Youth Programs (Courtney et al., 2008a, 2008b; Courtney et al., 2011) was a used experimental method to evaluate four different independent living programs funded by Chafee dollars. However, many programs have yet to be rigorously evaluated, and most of those evaluated to date have not been shown to be effective (McDaniel, Courtney, Pergamit & Lowenstein, 2014). Another round of Chafee evaluations is currently being planned.

Both public and private agency child welfare professionals reported that the evaluation of youth outcomes during and after care is crucial to understanding the effectiveness of the services they provide and their impact on youth's future success. However, evaluation is still a challenge for many private agencies and for DCFS.

Since 1997, DCFS has implemented Performance Based Contracting (PBC) with their private agency service providers. PBC aims to reduce the number of children in substitute care by increasing permanency and stability and aligning performance initiatives with desired outcomes. More recently, some indicators relevant to care leavers including employment, education, self-sufficiency, and savings, have been added to PBC, and providers are required to submit data for those indicators on each youth to DCFS (Kearney, McEwen, Bloom-Ellis, Jordan, 2010).

Usually, there is a follow-up evaluation within 90 days of a youth leaving a program. However, most of the professionals from NGO's have some informal contact with youth. Professionals that were interviewed recognize the importance of follow up when youth leave care to know if the support that has been provided is helping them navigate autonomously in adult life.

The tradition of evaluation of services and youth outcomes seems to play an important role in the current US child welfare system. It provides a good opportunity to determine the effectiveness of promising programs and make changes in policy to improve youth outcomes.

Longitudinal follow-up studies, database and evidence base resources

In addition, some longitudinal research has been done to learn about the outcomes of youth transitioning from care into early adulthood. The Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth (Midwest Study) followed a sample of youth from three states (Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin) and collected five waves of data about their outcomes areas across a variety of domains such as education, housing, pregnancy and parenthood, relationships, and employment, and compared their outcomes to the outcome of a nationally representative sample of young people from the general population (Courtney & Dworsky, 2006a; Courtney et al., 2007b; Courtney et al., 2011). Comparison of youth outcomes between Illinois, which extended care to age 21, and the other two states, which did not, have provided evidence of the benefits of extended care for youth and influenced national policy (Courtney & Dworsky, 2006b).

Several federal data bases have been created to promote transparency and track the outcomes of youth in foster care. Since 2010, states have been required to report data on youth outcomes at ages 17, 19 and 21 to the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)²³. States are also required to submit data on child characteristics, placements, permanency goals, and outcomes every six months to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)²⁴.

Several electronic resources are available to researchers, policy makers and practitioners. These resources include summaries of research on critical issues (including research based on survey and qualitative data), identification of evidence-based practices and programs, and published practice guidelines for supporting families and improving youth outcomes. One example is the Clearinghouse on Foster Youth and Transition²⁵. Most of the professionals interviewed tried to integrate research into their practice and base their decision-making on research evidence rather than subjective perception, but it is still a challenge:

There is not any model for our age group in terms of evidence-supported programs for employment, so we adapted an evidence-based model for adults implemented in Canada and other countries and we included education, mentoring and did some other adjustments to meet better the needs of the young people we have (...). We don't have much evidence yet but

²³ <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/reporting-systems/nytd>

²⁴ <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/reporting-systems/afcars>

²⁵ <http://dredf.org/programs/clearinghouse/>

it works. (Agency Director)

Barcelona

Program evaluation –monitoring- quality standards

The Catalan LDOIA (14/2010, art. 6) says that the government must contribute to developing research on child abuse and create a national research center to undertake research and evaluation focused on child abuse and neglect. However, at this point, the law has not been implemented.

Some researchers in Spain have started to create procedures and criteria for the evaluation of interventions with families and youth in foster care and to create a movement for evidence-based programs (Arruabarrena, 2009). Nevertheless, in Catalonia, research and program evaluation on foster care is scarce and the evidence-based program movement is still very incipient. Currently the Administration has started designing an evaluation program to measure the quality of the intervention. In the last few years some programs aimed at improving parental abilities were rigorously evaluated (Amorós et al., 2011; Martínez, Arnau & Sabaté, 2015). However, none of them were addressed specifically towards youth in foster care and their families.

Longitudinal follow-up studies, database and evidence base resources

Long-term follow up studies of the transition to adult life or leaving care are very limited. Although some studies have been carried out in Spain (Fernández del Valle, Álvarez-Baz, & Bravo, 2003; Del Valle, López, Montserrat, & Bravo, 2008), few contributions have been done in Catalonia. Sala and coworkers (Sala, Villaba et al., 2009; Sala, Jariot et al., 2009) did a follow up study based on a survey of 143 care leavers who had left a residential center between 3 and 5 years earlier to learn about their outcomes in the areas of housing, supports, and employment, and to identify factors that helped them navigate their adult life. More recently, Arnau and Gilligan (2015) did a comparative study on care leavers' successful work trajectories in Ireland and Catalonia to better understand the factors influence care-leavers' entry into, and progress within, the world of work.

Regarding the Catalan transition programs, Montserrat et al. (2013), evaluated professionals' and youth' perceptions of the attention provided to 4,493 youth assisted by ASJTET between 1994 and 2012 and the youth' outcomes when they immediately left care at 18.

All service providers have to access an

electronic platform called SINIA that provides information about the progress of youth while they are in care. However, the information required is not organized enough to facilitate data analysis. Moreover, although the Catalan Department DGAIA regularly publishes data regarding child maltreatment and characteristics of youth in foster care, there is no system in place to gather data related to their transition outcomes when they leave care. This is a limitation for carrying out longitudinal follow-up studies.

Some Catalan guidelines on residential care were discussed among a group of experts and professionals from the policy and practice communities and summarized in a working report called best practices in residential centers (Avellaneda, Herrera, Torrens, Torredelflor & Hilarión, 2012). These guidelines describe the types of resources and their quality standards and highlight operation protocol, best practices, recommendations, and integration and coordination of services and practices. It was a foundation for creating a quality intervention model in residential centers in Catalonia.

More recently, Camacho (2013) tried to establish different procedures and indicators when working with young people in transition programs and monitoring their progress. The evaluation/monitoring process during and after care is still one of the big challenges in Catalonia.

With respect to electronic resources available, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Family created DIXIT²⁶, a Social Services Documentation Center oriented to professionals using research-based evidence and other resources to help them perform their tasks within the social sector. Exploring research on best practices could increase the quality of the service provided and the effectiveness of the interventions implemented.

²⁶ <http://dixit.gencat.cat/es/>

8. Summary of the main similarities and differences

The main similarities and differences between transitional services and programs in Chicago and Barcelona are summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Summary of the main similarities and differences between Chicago and Barcelona

Topic	SIMILARITIES	DIFERENCES
Transitional services provided	In both jurisdictions there are supportive services for youth between the ages of 18 and 21	In Chicago youth can remain <i>in care</i> until they are 21 if it is in their best interest, whereas in Catalonia, youth are considered adults at 18; they are able to ask for specific transition supports and programs if required.
Subsidies	<p>There are subsidies for specific types of services and supports for youth aged between the ages of 18 and 21</p> <p>In both cities, subsidies are subject to a work plan.</p>	<p>In Illinois, youths are eligible for a one-time emancipation payment of \$1200 whereas in Catalonia youths are eligible for monthly payments of €664 for 3 years until they are 21 years old.</p> <p>In Catalonia youth pay rent for their assisted apartment and their own expenses, while in Illinois, youth in TLP don't pay rent and receive allowances to buy food, clothes, etc.</p> <p>In Catalonia youth can apply for PIRMI (subsidy for the general population with low incomes) after.</p>
Youth profile and eligibility criteria	Professionals in both cities identify the lack of engagement as the main difficulty in helping youth.	<p>In Catalonia the criteria for accessing services is different for different types of programs but generally it includes being enrolled in an educational or training program, similar to the criteria set by US federal law. Nevertheless, Chicago doesn't apply these criteria in a strict way. So youth can be in extended care without being enrolled in an education or training program or being employed.</p> <p>There are a significant number of immigrant youth in transitional placements in Catalonia who arrived as unaccompanied minors.</p>
Placements	In both cities, youth in care between the ages of 18 and 21 have access to apartments for [TLP and ILO in Chicago, and shared apartments or rented rooms in Barcelona].	<p>In Chicago, most of the TLP placements are groups of apartments with one or two bedrooms and around the clock on-site staff supervision. ILO placements are usually one- bedroom apartments. If youth don't adapt to the TLP placement, an Alternative Contract can be made to place youth with an adult caregiver who can provide supervision. In Catalonia transitional placements tend to be 3 or 4 bedroom apartments, and the apartments are in buildings where the other tenants are not youth in care. An educator supervises youths a minimum of 20 hours per week but is available 24/7 by phone. There are also a few apartments with 24/7 on-site staff supervision for less autonomous youth.</p> <p>In Chicago the majority of the youth stay in transitional placements until they are 21, but in Catalonia most youth leave after 1 or 2 years because they prefer to live on their own, with friends or with their partner. Others leave because they don't want to follow the case plan or</p>

		the rules.
Education, training, and employment	<p>Funding for education and training is available for youth until they are 23 (Illinois) or 24 (Catalonia).</p> <p>There are a few programs to support youth in education and employment</p>	<p>In Chicago there are three employment programs that have been tailored specifically for youth in care whereas in Catalonia there is only one. Youth in Catalonia tend to access programs addressed to the general population. The ASJETET ensure that there are enough programs available for youths to attend.</p>
Specialized programs and services		<p>In Chicago there are some specialized programs to support subgroups of youth with specific needs such as: youth with mental illness; young parents; youth with justice system involvement; and LGBT youth. In Catalonia there are no specialized programs once young people become adults at 18. There are only some specific programs for immigrant youth to help them obtain resident and work permits.</p>
Connections and family orientation	<p>Families (either relatives and non-relatives) play a crucial role in both places, supporting youth into adulthood.</p> <p>Youth with foster families tend to remain with them.</p> <p>In both cities there are mentoring programs to help youth connect with significant and supportive adults</p>	<p>In Chicago, during the extended care period of 18-21, family reunification remains a case plan goal for many youth, but in Catalonia this goal is only considered before 18.</p> <p>In Chicago, there is a specific program to provide services and resources to the family.</p>
Staff	<p>All the professionals in Chicago and Catalonia receive some training every year provided by their agencies or departments.</p>	<p>In Chicago there are three main types of professionals involved in transitional programs: on-site staff, agency caseworkers and DCFS case managers. On-site staff usually don't need any special training to work in TLP. Case workers usually are required to have a college degree in social work or a similar discipline, and case managers need a masters degree. In some specialized programs there are also psychologists, therapist, and other professionals.</p> <p>In Catalonia, the social educator assumes the role of the on- site staff and caseworker. This professional is the person that has a daily contact in group homes and residences, and in transitional apartments they see the youths at different times a week but they are always on-call. To become a social educator they need a 4-year college degree in social education.</p> <p>One of the issues raised by the professionals in Chicago was high staff turnover. In Catalonia, staff turnover does not appear to be a problem.</p>
Youth Participation	<p>In both places youth are involved in decision-making and in developing their transitional plan.</p>	<p>In the US, youths in extended care are able to be involved in policy dialogues through Youth Advisory Boards (YAB).</p> <p>Illinois has 7 regional youth advisory boards and 1 statewide YAB. Catalonia has no advisory boards for youth in foster care.</p>
Research, policy and	<p>In both places there is still a lack of knowledge about the effectiveness of</p>	<p>There is a greater tradition in the US for research, program evaluation and data base creation. Foster Care</p>

<p>service quality</p>	<p>programs for youth in care.</p> <p>There is a lack of a systematic follow up studies of youth after they leave care.</p>	<p>Independence Act (1999) requires that Chafee funding be set aside for rigorous evaluation of programs and mandated the creation of the National Youth in Transition Database</p> <p>The existence of quality standards and indicators gathered in a Performance Based Contracting (PCB) for TLP and ILO providers could be a source of innovation and improvement.</p> <p>The longitudinal Midwest Study has been a huge contribution to provide evidence on youth outcomes.</p>
-------------------------------	---	---

IV. STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Tension between protective measures and autonomy (running on the Knife Edge)

Youth in developed countries need higher levels of education and training to access the labor market, especially when there are high rates of unemployment (Carnoy, 1999). Job insecurity and the housing costs have delayed the age on which youth are able to emancipate (Becker, Bentolilla, Fernandes & Ichino, 2010). Therefore most youth in care with low educational levels and without family support find the transition to adulthood extremely difficult when they emancipate. That's the reason courts in Illinois extended care to 21, even for youth who engaged in educational or training programs, and why in Catalonia a set of transitional services has been developed for youth involved in educative or training programs. Even though both child welfare systems aim to help youth in care with their transition into independent life, they do it from different perspectives. In Catalonia youth are considered young adults and the services are cut off if they don't follow their individual work plan whereas in Chicago the main goal is to protect youth so services aren't cut even when youth don't adhere to their case plans.

Adolescents struggle with the tension between the need for more freedom and self-determination and the duties that adulthood involves. During this developmental stage, parents tend to have great difficulties balancing their guidance between being responsive to youth demands for adult responsibilities and being more understanding when youth need it. Child welfare departments, as corporate parents (Courtney, 2009), need to find an approach that balances protection of youth with the promotion of adult responsibility. It is a complex and difficult goal, likened to "running on the knife's edge."

In this study we have identified practices that can help "run the knife's edge." One of these is the TIP

Model which allows youth make their own decisions and their own mistakes, and experience the consequences, both positive and negative.

Some youth will mature later because of the trauma they experienced prior to care. This may be particularly true for males. Even though girls in care seem to have similar socioemotional skills as their peers, most boys in care have fewer skills in problem solving, reality testing and self-regard than their peers not in care (Oriol, Sala & Filella, 2014). Because socioemotional skills have a major impact on success during the transition to adulthood (Sala, Jarriot et al., 2009), it is important to promote autonomy through the development of socioemotional and employability skills as early as possible and to not postpone this training until transitional programs (Arnau et al., 2014).

One specialized case worker or a multi-professional team?

The lack of qualified child welfare staff is a big problem in some countries (Del Valle & Bravo, 2013). Youth in care have experienced trauma and neglect, and professionals, including on-site staff who work with youth every day, need to be able to deal with the emotional troubles and ambiguous losses that they struggle with (Samuels, 2008).

Sage (2010) found that the high turnover rates among public child welfare agency staff is related with climate, culture, supervision and knowledge of the job prior to being hired. Therefore, adequate training prior to being hired could reduce turnover and improve youth-staff relationships and intervention results. In fact, in Barcelona, where on-site staff are social educators with a 4 year college degree specialization, professionals have not mentioned any problem with staff turnover, whereas in Chicago, it seems to be a significant problem according to those interviewed. Certainly there are other factors that can explain high turnover rates (salaries, schedules, etc.), but training that helps professionals better deal with youth could help reduce turnover.

Some programs in Chicago include teams of professionals who have different approaches and expertise (psychologists, art therapists, social workers, job coach, etc.). Although this can be expensive, it may be necessary to promote innovative practices. Transitional living programs in Barcelona don't have these multi-professional teams. However on-site staff are qualified as social educators and assume the role of caseworker. This could be seen as an advantage, because the daily contact facilitates a closer relationship with youth. In fact, even though Catalan youth called for more emotional engagement from educational teams, they also reported that social educators show them comprehension and empathy (Soldevila, Peregrino, Oriol & Filella, 2013), and some indicated that their educators were the only support they had when they left care (Sala et al. 2012).

Service provided on-site or in the community

Most youth in care do not pursue postsecondary education (Barth, 1990; Courtney & Dworsky, 2006a, 2006b; Courtney et al., 2001; Farruggia et al., 2006, Montserrat et al., 2011; Sala, Villalba et al., 2009), and those who do often fail to complete the programs in which they enroll. Their history of neglect and trauma, as well as frequent school and placement changes, are a barrier to educational success and make it difficult to build the social network and social skills that are helpful in educational contexts (Sala et al., 2012). Therefore, some NGOs in Chicago provide their own educational and employment programs to better meet youth needs for flexibility. Although this could improve youth outcomes, schools and training programs are the main social space in which to develop social skills and build a positive social support peer network. Limiting opportunities for youth in care to meet peers who are not in care could impact their identity and self-esteem and make them feel stigmatized.

Foster home placements can facilitate social inclusion since they puts youth in contact with neighborhood- and community-based services that meet their needs. In Chicago, the Regeneration program provides a professional mentor from the youth's neighborhood who links the youth to job experiences, prevents gang activity, and supports the family and youth in crisis.

Finally, we must point out that there aren't enough programs in either city aimed at preventing problems such as teen pregnancy or delinquency that could reduce some of the disappointing outcomes youth experience.

Need for youth-centered services

In both cities, there are different placements for youth with different autonomy levels, but the youth's level of autonomy does not always match the autonomy level required by the placement. This can cause a lack of engagement, feelings of abandonment and eventually a change in placement. Placements changes can negatively impact personal and social stability because they are often accompanied by changes in schools and caseworkers (Pecora et al., 2006). Engaging youth in the selection of their transitional placement can prevent some of these problems. In Chicago youth are offered two possible transitional placements from which to choose.

In addition, Chicago has NGOs that provide different transitional services, making it possible to easily move youth from one placement to another as their needs change. Some agencies help youth when they have a crisis in the new placement by moving them back for one or two days until they are stabilized.

As we have mentioned before, we find Alternative Contract Placements to be an interesting resource. Alternative Contract Placements are designed to support youth who don't want to live one of the offered placements as well as to prevent homelessness and high-risk situations. In fact, youth who don't accept the help that is given to them and feel more resentful towards the child welfare system may experience the worst outcomes (Sala et al., 2012).

Promoting youth participation and increasing their level of agency

In both cities some effort is made to involve youth in their case planning, and, especially in US, the policy dialogue. Professionals in both cities have expressed the importance of supporting youth in their decision-making during the transition and emancipation process, although they recognize that caseworkers need more training and supervision on involving youth. This includes providing youth with guidance and information to help them make their own decisions after considering the risks and benefits associated with each choice. Involving youth at every level of decision-making has been related to more successful outcomes in foster care (Bass, Shields, & Behrman, 2004).

In Illinois, one statewide and seven regional Youth Advisory Boards (YAB) were created to encourage youth in foster care to make their voices heard, while in Catalonia there are no advisory boards for youth in foster care. Research shows that participation in YABs can promote a sense of leadership, mentorship and permanence (Forenza & Happonen, 2015) and that youth can transfer what they are learning in the YAB to

their lives (i.e. jobs, college, friendships, DCFS, future plans) (Havlicek, 2015). Through YABs, youth can make specific recommendations to the DCFS director aimed at improving outcomes making real changes in practice and policy, including changes related to case and transition planning. Catalonia should consider implementing similar boards as the overall experience seems to have been positive for youth in care.

Interdependency and social support

Literature shows that former foster youth tend to lack consistent relationships with supportive adults and social support networks (Sala et al., 2009), in part because of the multiple moves they experience while they were in care (Bamba & Haight, 2006). Some studies report that maintaining connections with adults can have positive effects in their transition to independence (Massinga & Pecora, 2004) and give youth a sense of “permanency” in their lives (Courtney, 2009). Having a supportive adult relationship (e.g.: with the employer, foster family, foster siblings) could also help youth achieve successful employment outcomes (Arnau & Gilligan, 2015). However, there is little evidence of the permanent relationships these youth maintain or whether those relationships are supportive in helping them to navigate their adult life (Samuels, 2008).

Both cities are giving a high level of attention to improving the social connections, and, especially in Illinois, at reestablishing family connections. In Chicago, programs such as Regenerations aim to rebuild family connections and provide resources to families to help youth in the transition. In contrast, Catalonia has no specific aftercare programs oriented towards achieving that aim, as family reunification is not considered a goal after 18.

It is necessary to mention the role of relatives and foster families, in both sites, in supporting youth to independence. There is still a strong dependence of youth on family in both locations in making the transition to adulthood.

Notwithstanding family support, a lot of effort has been made to help youth in care and former foster youth expand their social support network with other adults. In Catalonia, this is especially true for youth placed in residential centers whose case plan goal is independence. Some mentoring programs such as Adult Connection in Chicago and Punt de Referència in Barcelona share that purpose.

It seems necessary to continue developing programs that link youth with mentors, help them to expand their social support networks, and build

relational skills. Caregivers (foster families, professionals, etc.) and other “informal caregivers” (i.e., mentors and employers) could benefit from training on how to support youth to create and maintain their supportive connections and cope with the demands of adult life.

Promoting research and quality improvement

The government and agencies in both cities seem to believe that doing research is crucial to learn about the effectiveness of services and to improve service quality. However, there are different traditions and consequently different research approaches and practices in both locations.

The US has a long tradition of evaluating services and youth outcomes, and some research and evaluation activities are funded by the federal government. However, there is still little knowledge about the service effectiveness for youth in care, as most of the rigorous evaluations were done on programs addressed to at-risk youth but not specifically to foster youth (Edelstein & Lowenstein, 2014).

Some NGOs in Chicago reported that they were carrying out federally funded program evaluations using experimental designs to have evidence of their effectiveness. In Catalonia, research and program evaluation is much scarcer, though some incipient movements in research-based programs and practices started some years ago in Spain (Del Valle & Bravo, 2013). Considering the lack of research tradition in Catalonia, it seems necessary to start promoting a culture of evaluation of promising programs to improve service effectiveness and youth outcomes.

In order to improve service effectiveness and transparency, DCFS decided to establish quality standards for service providers, and implemented Performance Based Contracting (PCB). These standards seem to be a great benchmark to guide intervention and monitor youth outcomes, and, if used correctly, could be a powerful source of innovation and improvement. In Catalonia, some documents were generated to decide which standards could be considered important in residential care but it is still a challenge to have them developed and implemented.

Little longitudinal research has been done in Catalonia. The Midwest Study (Courtney, Terao & Bost, 2004) could be serve as a model for a longitudinal study that tracks foster youth outcomes and has implications for changes in policy and practice.

Another point is related to the willingness of professionals to use evidence-based practices as a foundation for their interventions with youth in care. In both cities there are different digital sources (significant

practices, intervention guidelines, etc.) available that could be used to help carers to think more critically about their intervention.

Beyond 21: What happens the “day after?”

The literature shows that youth tend to perceive themselves more ready than their caseworkers do (Courtney, Charles, Okpych, & Halsted, 2015). Youth often face many challenges, and in most cases, are not prepared to live on their own. It is not surprising that youth outcomes continue to be quite disappointing. Literature shows high rates of teenage motherhood, homelessness, low levels of educational attainment, and high rates of unemployment (Courtney et al., 2005; Montserrat et al., 2011; Sala et al., 2009).

Not surprisingly, some of the professionals interviewed in both cities expressed concerns about the lack of after care services to help youth make a smooth transition to adulthood. The services that are available in both cities are very limited and focused on specific populations (e.g., youth with serious mental illnesses or developmental disabilities).

The poor outcomes of former foster youth indicate that tailored measures, such as grants for education or subsidies for housing need to be provided to help youth make a smoother transition. In Catalonia, the child welfare department helps youth obtain the PIRMI (a subsidy for general adult population) if they are not working to prevent homelessness and help youth connect with adult welfare services. However, it seems necessary to promote more opportunities for former foster youth to promote employment and higher education after 21. In this regard, it is important that the state assumes its corporate parenting role and facilitates the coordination between child and adult welfare agencies (Courtney, 2009).

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to thank the study participants for their time and valuable contribution. We also wish to thank Antoni Comasòlivas collaboration with the interviews to catalan NGOs. This study was developed during a research fellowship by Josefina Sala and Laura Arnau at the University of Chicago and Chapin Hall Institute with grants from the Ministry of Education of Spain (PRX14/00131 and CAS14/00092)

VI. REFERENCES

- Administraton for Children and Families. (2015). The AFCARS report: Preliminary FY 2014 estimates as of July 2015 (No. 22). Retrieved from: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcars_report22.pdf
- Amorós, P. (coord) (2012). *Programa “Aprender Juntos, crecer en familia”*. Informe del proceso de evaluación 2011-2012. Barcelona: Fundació la Caixa.
- Amorós, P., Fuentes, N., Mateos, A., Pastor, C, Rodrigo, M.J., Byrne, S., Balsells, M.A., Martín, J.C., & Guerra, M. (2011). Aprender juntos, crecer en familia. Barcelona: Obra Social “la Caixa”
- Arnau, L., & Gilligan, R. (2015). What helps young care leavers to enter the world of work? Possible lessons learned from an exploratory study in Ireland and Catalonia. *Children and youth services review*, 53, 185-191.
- Arnau, L., Marzo, M. T., Jariot, M., & Sala, J. (2014). Learning basic employability competence: a challenge for the active labour insertion of adolescents in foster care in their transition to adulthood. *European Journal of Social Work*, 17(2), 252-265.
- Arruabarrena, I. (2009). Procedimiento y criterios para la evaluación y la intervención con familias y menores en el ámbito de protección infantil. *Papeles del psicólogo*, 30(1), 13-23.
- Àrea de Support al Jove Tutelat i ExTutelat. (2011). Informe 2011. Retrieved from: http://benestar.gencat.cat/web/.content/03ambits_tematicas/07infanciaiadolescencia/temes_relacionats/jornades_treball_dgaia_2012/docs_20_abril/asjitet.pdf
- Avellaneda, A., Herrera, E., Torrens, G., Torredelflor, M., & Hilarión, P. (2012). *Guia de bones pràctiques per a centres del Sistema de protecció a la infància i l'adolescència*. Infància i Adolescència (8). Departament de Benestar i Família. Retrieved from: http://benestar.gencat.cat/web/.content/01departament/08publicacions/coleccions/infancia_i_adolescencia/num_8/guia_bones_practiques_infancia.pdf.
- Bamba, S., & Haight, W. L. (2006). Helping maltreated children to find their Ibasho: Japanese perspectives on supporting the well-being of children in state care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 29, 405–427.
- Barth, R. (1990). On their own: The experiences of youth after foster care. *Child and Adolescent Social Work*, 7, 419–440.
- Bass, S., Shields, M., & Behrman, R.E. (2004). Children, Families, and Foster Care: Analysis and Recommendations. *The Future of Children* 14(1), 4-29.
- Becker, S. O., · Bentolila, S., · Fernandes, A., & · Ichino, A. (2010): Youth emancipation and perceived job insecurity of parents and children. *Journal of Population Economics*, 23, 1175-1199.
- Courtney, M.E., Skyles, A., Miranda, G., Zinn, A., Howard, E. & Goerge, R.M. (2005): Youth Who Run Away from Out-of-Home Care. Chicago: Chapin Hall. Retrieved from: <http://www.chapinhall.org/research/brief/youth-who-run-away-out-home-care>
- Berzin, S. C. (2008). Difficulties in the transition to adulthood:

- Using propensity scoring to understand what makes foster youth vulnerable. *Social Service Review*, 82(2), 171-196.
- Bravo, A., & Fernandez del Valle, J. (2001). Evaluación de la integración social en acogimiento residencial. *Psicothema*, 13(2), 197-204.
- Bravo, A., & Fernandez del Valle, J. (2003). Las redes de apoyo social de los adolescentes acogidos en residencias de protección. Un análisis comparativo con población normativa. *Psicothema*, 15(1), 136-141.
- Camacho, J. (2013): De la dependencia a l'emancipació dels joves tutelats i extutelats. Claus per a l'acompanyament en aquest procés. Eines 15. Departament de Benestar Social i Família. http://benestar.gencat.cat/web/.content/01departament/08publicacions/coleccions/eines/num_15/eines_15.pdf
- Carnoy, M. (1999). *Globalization and Educational Reform: What planners need to know*. Paris: Unesco. Retrieved from: <http://unesco.amu.edu.pl/pdf/Carnoy.pdf>
- Childrens Bureau. The children's Bureau Legacy. Ensuring the Right to Childhood. Retrieved from: https://cb100.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb_ebook/cb_ebook.pdf.
- Courtney, M. E. (2009). The Difficult Transition to Adulthood for Foster Youth in the US: Implications for the State as Corporate Parent. *Social Policy Report*, 23(1), 3-18.
- Courtney, M. E. Zinn, A., Koralek, R., Bess, R. J., Stagner, M., Pergamit, M., Johnson, H. (2011). *Evaluation of the Independent Living – Employment Services Program in Kern County, California: Final Report*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from: <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000128-Supporting-Youth-Transitioning-out-of-Foster-Care-2000128-Supporting-Youth-Transitioning-out-of-Foster-Care-Employment-Programs.pdf>
- Courtney, M. E. Zinn, A., Zielewski, E. H., Bess, R. J., Malm, K. E., Stagner, M., & Pergamit, M. (2008a). *Evaluation of the Early Start to Emancipation Preparation – Tutoring Program in Los Angeles County, California: Final Report*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/evaluation_estep.pdf
- Courtney, M. E. Zinn, A., Zielewski, E.H., Bess, R.J., Malm, K. E., Stagner, M., & Pergamit, M. (2008b). *Evaluation of the Life Skills Training Program, Los Angeles County, California: Final Report*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/evaluation_lst.pdf
- Courtney, M. E., & Dworsky, A. (2006a). Early outcomes for young adults transitioning from out-of-home care in the U.S.A. *Child and Family Social Work*, 11, 209-219.
- Courtney, M. E., & Dworsky, A. (2006b). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 19. ILLINOIS*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/ChapinHallDocument_5.pdf.
- Courtney, M. E., Charles, P., Okpych, N. J., & Halsted, K. (2015). *California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH): Early Findings from the Child Welfare Worker Survey*. Chicago: Chapin Hall.
- Courtney, M. E., Dworsky, A. L., Cusick, G. R., Havlicek, J., Perez, A., & Keller, T. E. (2007a). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 21*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/ChapinHallDocument_1.pdf
- Courtney, M. E., Dworsky, A. L., Cusick, G. R., Havlicek, J., Perez, A., & Keller, T. E. (2007b). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth from Illinois: Outcomes at age 21*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/Midwest_Study_Illinois.pdf
- Courtney, M. E., Dworsky, A., Brown, A., Cary, C., Love, K., & Vorhies, V. (2011). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at Age 26*. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.
- Courtney, M. E., Dworsky, A., Keller, T., Havlicek, J., & Bost, N. (2005). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 19*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/ChapinHallDocument_4.pdf
- Courtney, M. E., Hook, J.L., & Lee, J.A. (2012). Distinct subgroups of former foster youth during young adulthood: Implications for policy and practice. *Child Care in Practice*, 18(4): 409-18.
- Courtney, M. E., Piliavin, I., Grogan-Kaylor, A., & Nesmith, A. (2001). Foster youth transitions to adulthood: A longitudinal view of youth leaving care. *Child Welfare*, 80(6): 685-717.
- Courtney, M. E., Piliavin, I., Grogan-Kaylor, A., & Nesmith, A. (1998). *Foster youth transitions to adulthood: Outcomes 12 to 18 months after leaving out-of-home care*. Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Courtney, M. E., Terao, S., & Bost, N. (2004). *Evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Conditions of youth preparing to leave state care in Illinois*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/ChapinHallDocument_9.pdf
- Cusick, G. R., Havlicek, J., & Courtney, M. E. (2012). Risk for arrest: The role of social bonds in protecting foster youth making the transition to adulthood. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 82(1): 19-31.
- Del Valle, J. F., Sainero, A. M., & Bravo (2011). *Salud mental de menores en acogimiento residencial*. Badajoz: Servicio Extremeño de salud
- Del Valle, J. F., Bravo, A., & López, M. (2009). El acogimiento familiar en España: implantación y retos actuales. *Papeles del Psicólogo*, 30(1), 33-41.

- Del Valle, J. F., Lopez, M., Montserrat, C., & Bravo, A. (2008). *El acogimiento familiar en España. Una evaluación de resultados*. Madrid: Ministry of Work and Social Affairs.
- Del Valle, J. F., López, M., Montserrat, C., & Bravo, A. (2009). Twenty years of foster care in Spain: Profiles, patterns and outcomes. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(8), 847-853. □
- Del Valle, J., & Bravo, A. (2013). Current trends, figures and challenges in out of home child care: An international comparative analysis. *Psychosocial Intervention*, 22, 251-257.
- Departament de Benestar i Família. (2012). *Guia de bones pràctiques per a centres del sistema de protecció a la infància i adolescència*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya. Retrieved from http://benestar.gencat.cat/web/.content/01departament/08publicacions/coleccions/infancia_i_adolescencia/num_8/guia_bones_practiques_infancia.pdf
- Direcció General d'Atenció a la Infància i Adolescència. (2011). *Mapa de recursos*. Retrieved from: http://benestar.gencat.cat/web/.content/03ambits_tematicos/07infanciaiadolescencia/temes_relacionats/informe_mapa_recursos_2011.pdf
- Dworsky, A., & Courtney, M. E. (2009). Homelessness during the transition to adulthood among 19 year old former foster youth. *Child Welfare*, 88(4): 23-56.
- Dworsky, A., & Courtney, M. E. (2010). The risk of teenage pregnancy among transitioning foster youth: Implications for extending state care beyond age 18. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(10): 1351-56.
- Dworsky, A., Napolitano, L., & Courtney, M.E. (2013). Homelessness during the transition from foster care to adulthood. *American Journal of Public Health*, 103(S2): S318-S323.
- Edelstein, S. & Lowenstein, C. (2014). Supporting Youth Transitioning out of Foster care. Employment Programs. OPRE Report No. 2014-70. Chicago: Urban Institute.
- Ellison, M.L., Klodnick, V.V., Bond, G.R., Krzos, I.M., Kaiser, S.M., Fagan, M.A., & Davis, M. (2015). Adapting Supported Employment for emerging adults with serious mental health conditions. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*, 42(2), 206-222. doi: 10.1007/s11414-014-9445-4.
- Farruggia, S. P, Greenberger, E., Chen, C.S., & Heckhausen, J. (2006). Perceived social environment and adolescents' well-being and adjustment: Comparing a foster care sample with a matched sample. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 35(3), 349-358.
- Federació de Pisos Assistits (2013). La emancipación de jóvenes tutelados y extutelados en España. <http://www.fepa18.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/LA-EMANCIPACION-EN-ESPAÑA-DIC13.pdf>
- Fernández del Valle, J, Álvarez-Baz, E., & Bravo, A. (2003). Evaluación de resultados a largo plazo en acogimiento residencial de protección a la infancia. *Infancia y Aprendizaje*, 26(2), 235-249.
- Fernández del Valle J., Álvarez E., & Fernánz, A. (1999). *Y después... ¿qué? Estudio y seguimiento de casos que fueron acogidos en residencias de protección de menores en el Principado de Asturias*. Oviedo: Servicio de Publicaciones del Principado de Asturias.
- Fernández-Molina, M., Del Valle, J. F., Fuentes, M. J., Bernedo, I. M., & Bravo, A. (2011). Problemas de conducta de los adolescentes en acogimiento preadoptivo, residencial y con familia extensa. *Psicothema*, 23, 1-6.
- Forenza, B., & Happonen, R. (2015). A Critical Analysis of Foster Youth Advisory Boards in the United States. *Child Youth Care Forum*. DOI 10.1007/s10566-015-9321-2
- Geenen, S., & Powers, L.E. (2007). Tomorrow is another problem"□The experiences of youth in foster care during their transition into adulthood. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 29,1085–1101
- Havlicek, J. (2015). *Web Survey of Foster Youth Advisory Boards in the U.S.* Non published document.
- Havlicek, J. R., Garcia, A. R., & Smith, D. C. (2013). Mental health and substance use disorders among foster youth transitioning to adulthood: Past research and future directions. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35(1): 194-203.
- Hewitt B. C. (2004). Transition to Independence Process (TIP) System: TIP System Development and Operation Manual, Transition to Independence Process System (revised October 2004). Retrieved on 07/15/2015 from: <http://tipstars.org/Portals/0/pdf/TIPOperationsManual-October04.pdf>
- Hook, J. L. & Courtney, M. E. (2011). Employment outcomes of former foster youth as young adults: The importance of human, personal, and social capital. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(10): 1855-1865.
- Hughes, D. M., Condrón, B., Jackson, N., Pitchal, E., Garton, N., & Elliott, S. P. (2008). Preparing our kids for education, work and life: A report of the task force on youth aging out of DSS care: The Boston Foundation Retrieved on 07/15/2015 from https://folio.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/10244/738/DSS_Report_0522.pdf?sequence=2
- Institute of Medicine & NRC National Research Council. (2014). *Investing in the Health and Well-Being of Young Adults*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- Kearney, K.A., McEwen, E., Bloom-Ellis, B., & Jordan, N. (2010). Residential Care and Treatment: Driving Policy and Practice Change Through Public-Private Partnership in Illinois. *Child Welfare*, 89(2), 39-55.
- Lee, J.S., Courtney, M. E., & Tajima, E. (2014). Extended foster care support during the transition to adulthood: Effect on the risk of arrest. *Children and Youth Services Review* 42: 34-42.
- Martin, E. (2011). Apoyo social percibido en niños y adolescentes en acogimiento residencial. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*, 11(1), 107-120.
- Martin, E., Muñoz, M. C., Rodríguez, T., & Pérez, Y. (2008). De la residencia a la escuela: la integración social de los

- menores en acogimiento residencial con el grupo de iguales en el contexto escolar. *Psicothema*, 20(3), 376–382.
- Martín, G., García, D., & Siverio., M.A. (2012). Inadaptación autopercebida de los menores en acogimiento residencial. *Anales de Psicología*, 28 (2), 541-547.
- Martínez, M., Arnau, L., & Sabaté, M. (2015). *Recerca avaluativa sobre el programa Límits*. Barcelona: CEJFE, Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Massinga, R. & Pecora, P.J. (2004). Providing better opportunities for older children in the child welfare system. *Future Child*, 14(1), 150-173.
- McCoy, H., McMillen, J. C., & Spitznagel, E. L. (2008). Older youth leaving the foster care system: Who, what, when, where, and why? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30(7), 735–745.
- McDaniel, M., Courtney, M. E., Pergamit, M. R. & Lowenstein, C. (2014). *Preparing for a "Next Generation" Evaluation of Independent Living Programs For Youth in Foster Care: Project Overview*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/cha_fee_overview_brief_final_to_opre_012015.pdf
- Montserrat, C., Casas, F., & Sisteró, C. (2013). *Estudi sobre l'atenció als joves extutelats: Evolució, valoració i reptes de futur. Informe de resultats*. Retrieved from: <http://www.fepa18.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Informe-Recerca-FEPA-Universitat-de-Girona-Juliol-2013.-DEFINITIU.pdf>
- Montserrat, C., Casas, F., Malo, S. & Bertran, I. (2011). *Los itinerarios educativos de los jóvenes ex-tutelados*. Madrid: Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad.
- Moreno, A. (2012). The transition to adulthood in Spain in a comparative perspective: The incidence of structural factors. *Young: Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, 20(1): 19-48
- Okpych, N. J., & M. E. Courtney (2014). Does education pay for youth formerly in foster care? Comparison of employment outcomes with a national sample. *Children and Youth Services Review* 43: 18-28.
- Oriol, X., Sala-Roca, J., & Fillela, G. (2014). Emotional competences of adolescents in residential care: analysis of emotional difficulties for intervention. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 44, 334-340.
- Oriol, X., Sala-Roca, J., & Filella, G. (2015). Juvenile delinquency in dependent youths coming from residential care. *European Journal of Social Work*, 8(2), 211-227
- Pecora, P. J., Kessler, R. C., Kirk, O., White, C. R., Williams, J., Hiripi, E., English, D., White, J., & Herrick M. A. (2006). *Educational and employment outcomes of adults formerly placed in foster care: Results from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study*. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28, 1459-1481.
- Peters, C., Bell, K.C., Zinn, A., Goerge, R.M., & Courtney, M. (2008). *Continuing in foster care beyond age 18: How courts can help*. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
- Peters, C., Dworsky, A. Courtney, M. E., & Pollack, H. (2009). *Extending foster care to age 21: Weighing the costs to government against the benefits to youth*. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
- Requena, M. (2002). Juventud y dependencia familiar en España. *Revista de Estudios de Juventud*, 58(2), 12-24.
- Ryan, J.P., Williams, A.B. & Courtney, M.E. (2013). Adolescent neglect, juvenile delinquency and the risk of recidivism. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42(3):454-65.
- Sage, M. D. (2010). *Child welfare workforce turnover: Frontline workers' experiences with organizational culture and climate, and implications for organizational practice*. Doctoral dissertation. Portland State University
- Sala-Roca J., Jariot, M., Villalba, A. & Rodríguez, M. (2009). Analysis of factors involved in the social inclusion process of young people fostered in residential care institutions. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(12), 1251-1257.
- Sala-Roca, J., Villalba, A., Jariot, M. & Arnau, L. (2012). Socialization process and social support networks of out-of-care youngsters. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 1015–1023.
- Sala-Roca, J.; Villalba, A.; Jariot, M. & Rodríguez, M. (2009). Characteristics and sociolabour insertion of young people after residential foster. *International Journal of Child y Family Welfare*, 12(1), 22-34.
- Samuels, G. (2008). *A Reason, a Season, or a Lifetime: Relational Permanence among Young Adults with Foster Care Backgrounds*. Chicago: Chapin Hall.
- Samuels, G. M. & Pryce, J. M. (2008). "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger": Survivalist self-reliance as resilience and risk among young adults aging out of foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30(10), 1198–1210
- Settersten, R. A., & B. Ray. (2010). *Not Quite Adults: Why 20-somethings are Choosing a Slower Path to Adulthood, and Why It's Good for Everyone*. 1st ed. New York: Delacorte Press.
- Settersten, R., Furstenberg, F. F., & Rumbaut, R. G. (eds) (2005). *On the Frontier of Adulthood: Theory, Research, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Soldevila, A., Peregrino, A., Oriol, X. & Filella, G. (2013). Evaluation of residential care from the perspective of older adolescents in care. The need for a new construct: optimum professional proximity. *Child & Family Social Work*, 17(2).
- Svoboda, D., Shaw, T., Barth, R., & Bright, C. (2012). Pregnancy and parenting among youth in foster care: A review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 867–875.
- Trout, A. L., Hagaman, J., Casey, K., Reid, R., & Epstein, M. H. (2008). The academic status of children and youth in out-of-home care: A review of the literature. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30(9), 979-994.
- Vogel, J. (2002). European Welfare regimes and the transition to adulthood: A comparative and longitudinal perspective. *Social Indicators Research*, 59(3):275-299
- Zárate, N., Sala, J. & Arnau, L., (2013). Motherhood of adolescence in care in Catalunya. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Retrieved from:

http://ddd.uab.cat/pub/worpaper/2013/132062/diptic_angles.pdf