

1-page summary: Which youth receive Chafee Independent Living Services?

Article Title Okpych, N. J. (2015). Receipt of independent living services among older youth in foster care: An analysis of national data from the U.S. Children and Youth Services Review, 51, 74-86.
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Purpose

1. Estimate the percentages of older youth in foster care who receive different types of Chafee-funded independent living (IL) services
2. Examine disparities in IL service receipt by gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, and regional variation
3. Since this is one of the first studies to analyze National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Services file, to draw attention to limitations of the NYTD data (helpful to other researchers using NYTD Services data)

Data & Methods

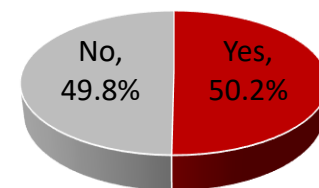
Sample: All youth who were in U.S. foster care for at least three months between the ages of 16 and 21 in fiscal years 2011 and 2012. The population was obtained from AFCARS. AFCARS data were linked to the NYTD Services file. NYTD Services data captures IL services received by youth that were provided or funded by a state agency that administers the Chafee IL program. The final sample included 131,204 youths.

Analytic methods: The main outcome captured which of the 13 different types of Chafee-funded IL services youth received (e.g., academic support for secondary education, postsecondary education support, career preparation, budgeting and money management, room and board, etc.). Disparities in services receipt rates were examined by youths' demographic characteristics, disability status, and medical/psychological condition, as well as the geographic location of the child welfare agency responsible for the youth. T-tests and z-tests were used to identify statistically significant differences in IL service receipt rates ($p < .01$).

Main Findings

- 50.2% of youth received an IL service. On average, youth received 2.3 different types of IL services. The most commonly received types of services were secondary education (30.1%), career preparation (26.2%), housing/home management (24.8%), and health education/risk prevention (24.5%).
- Females were more likely than males to receive IL services, and multiracial and Hispanic youth had highest service receipt rates among all race/ethnicity groups. Black youth were least likely to receive IL services, and among those who received services, received the fewest kinds.
- Youth with disabilities were more likely than their peers to receive IL services.
- Youth in large metropolitan areas were less likely to receive IL services and received fewer types of IL services than youth in less urban regions. The disparity was especially pronounced for African American youth, and over 70% of African American youth lived in large metropolitan areas (more than any other group).

Received any Chafee IL Service



Implications

- Overall, results indicate that **about half of older youth in care receive at least one Chafee service**, and differences emerged by gender, race, and disability status.
- **To narrow racial disparities** in Chafee service receipt, a good target would be to direct efforts to **increase service use among Black youth in large metropolitan areas**.
- Services such as financial training and housing may be particularly important for youth in large metropolitan areas (52% of the sample) where housing and daily living costs are high, yet youth in these high-density areas are the least likely to receive these and other IL services.
- The study **highlights several limitations of NYTD Services data** that researchers should be cautious about. For instance, NYTD merely indicate whether a youth received an IL service during a six-month period, and says nothing about the quality, duration, or intensity of the service. It is also not clear how reliable the data are, and whether reliability varies across geographic regions.