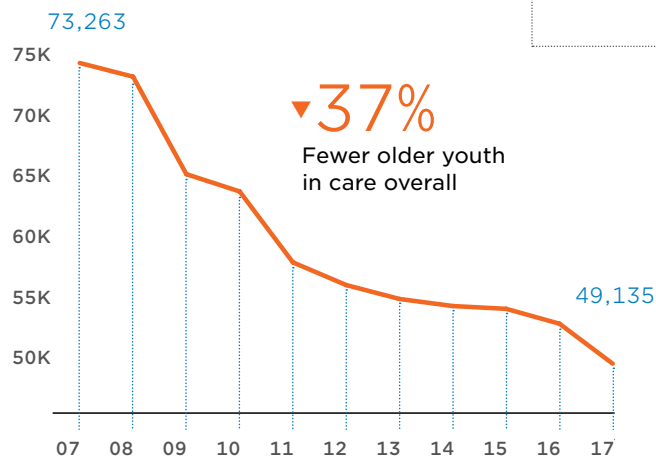


Older Youth Need Support Transitioning from Foster Care to Adulthood

The 1999 John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee) expanded a federal funding stream for independent living/transition services offered to older youth (ages 14+) in and transitioning from foster care. Aging out occurs when young people reach the age of majority (18 in most states) without a permanent legal family. Chafee was one of the first large pieces of legislation to focus on older youth in care.

Since Chafee, a lot has changed for older youth.¹

THE NUMBER OF OLDER YOUTH ENTERING FOSTER CARE HAS DECREASED FROM 2007 TO 2017:



AMONG THOSE OLDER YOUTH WHO DO ENTER CARE

▼21%

Decline in the share entering due to behavioral issues

▼57%

Decline in the share with long-term foster care as a case plan goal

Extended foster care helps in the transition to adulthood.²

COMPARED TO OLDER YOUTH WHO EXITED CARE AFTER AGE 18, THOSE IN EXTENDED FOSTER CARE AT AGES 19 AND 21 ARE MORE LIKELY TO:

- Be employed
- Be in school
- Receive educational aid
- Avoid homelessness
- Avoid disconnection from work and school
- Delay parenthood

¹ Based on Child Trends analysis of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data, 2007-2017.

² Based on Child Trends analysis of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Outcomes data, Cohort 1, 2015; Cohort 2, 2016.

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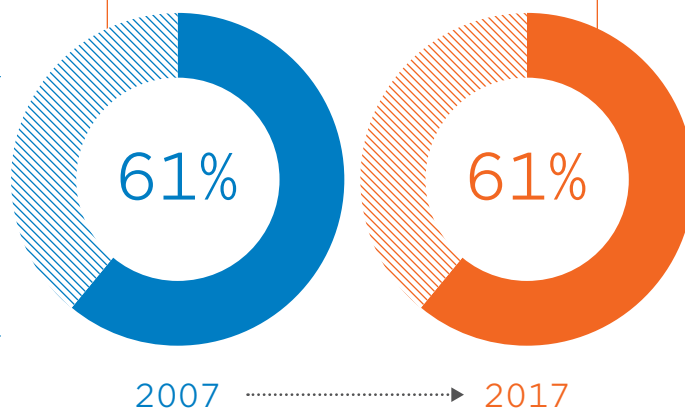
Key legislation involving older youth in foster care

1997	Adoption and Safe Families Act modifies child welfare policy to reduce time in care and increase adoptions.
1999	John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (Chafee) provides federal funding for independent living and transition services for older youth.
2001	Education and Training Voucher Program provides federal funding for young people in foster care to promote post-secondary or vocational programs.
2008	Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act provides federal funds for voluntary extended foster care after age 18. This policy aims to allow young people more time to prepare for adulthood with support from the child welfare system.
2014	Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act promotes access to everyday activities by allowing caregivers more leeway to make decisions about extracurricular and social activities for young people in foster care.
2015	Every Student Succeeds Act aims to prevent unnecessary school transfers for young people during their involvement in foster care.
2018	Family First Prevention Services Act provides additional funding for prevention services, and expands Chafee eligibility to all youth ages 14-23 and education training voucher eligibility to age 26.

There are still opportunities for improvement.³

Older youth achieve permanency when they exit care to a safe and stable family setting. When the child welfare system cannot achieve permanency for youth (a process called emancipation), older youth often struggle in their transition to adulthood.

THE PERCENTAGE OF OLDER YOUTH ACHIEVING PERMANENCY HAS NOT CHANGED IN THE PAST DECADE.



³ AFCARS 2007-2017