

A Family For Every Child Matching Assistance



*"We should not be asking who this child belongs to,
but who belongs to this child."*

Aging out of Foster Care

Aging Out of Foster Care: The Facts

More than 26,000 children aged out of the foster care system in 2011. Of the children who exited foster care in 2011, 11% aged out. This is an increase from 2000, when only 7% aged out of foster care. For most states, children age out of foster care when they are 18 years old. With no home, money, or family to support them, they face many challenges, such as finding adequate housing, a job, health care, and more. Various studies conducted around the country found that between 12 and 30% of those who aged out struggled with homelessness. Between 31 and 42% were arrested, and 18-26% were incarcerated. For girls who aged out of foster care, 40-60% were pregnant within the first 12-18 months after leaving the foster care system. Can you imagine being 18 years old, with no family to turn to, no money, and no home?

Statistics pulled from the [2011 AFCARS Report](#) and [Children's Rights](#).

The Costs of Aging Out

Aging out of foster care doesn't only affect the child aging out, it effects the taxpayers in their community, too. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative found that taxpayers pay \$300,000 on average in social costs like public assistance, incarceration, and lost wages, for every adolescent that ages out of foster care. **\$300,000 on average**. Conservatively, aging out costs the United States \$8 billion in social costs every year. **\$8 billion**. So, what can we do?

Source: [Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Aging Out of Foster Care in America](#).

How You Can Help

With the number of adolescents aging out increasing over the last 13 years, and with the astronomical cost to society, something needs to be done. We need to help those adolescents aging out of the foster care system, to help give them a better chance at becoming productive members of society and improving their quality of life. The following are some ways to make this happen:

Extend foster care services beyond the age of 18.

In 2008, a law was passed by the federal government giving more money to states who extended foster care services to adolescents over the age of 18. Services should include independent living options for adolescents aged 18-21, and providing things like financial literacy and other skills that adolescents will need to succeed. Providing access to educational and work opportunities is also important. Adolescents over the age of 18 will choose to stay in the foster care system only if quality services are offered to them.

The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative suggests the following policies to help adolescents succeed after life in foster care:

- All adolescents should have a permanent family,
- Access to services and supports,
- Stable education,
- Opportunities to achieve economic success,
- A place to live,
- Physical and mental health care access,
- And the opportunity to shape their own future.

To learn more about how policymakers can help implement the above suggestions, visit their [Strong Policies](#) page.

To learn more about how to get involved with the Jim Casey Success Beyond 18 campaign and take action in your community, click [here](#).

Become a mentor.

Youth in foster care can all use a mentor-someone who spends time with them, help them achieve success in school and stay out of trouble. A mentor can provide support and guidance to an adolescent, when they feel like they are alone. To learn more about how you can get involved as a mentor, check out the [Big Brother, Big Sister](#) site and the [Mentor](#) partnership. If you live in Oregon, consider volunteering for [A Family for Every Child's mentoring program](#).

Become a CASA/Guardian at Litem.

CASAs give youth in foster care a voice. They advocate for them in the court system. They talk to a child's foster parent, teachers, doctors, and therapists and compile a report about what the best course of action is to help the child to succeed. You can help make sure that children in foster care have the best opportunities available to them before they "age out". Learn more about becoming a CASA by visiting their [site](#).

Consider adopting an "older child".

According to the 2011 AFCARS report, the average age of a child in foster care is 9 years old. Families seeking to adopt children from foster care typically focus on finding a child between the ages of 0 and 8, leaving many children over the age of 8 in foster care for years. There are so many [great benefits](#) to adopting a child over the age of 10, so if you can, consider it. [This woman did.](#)

Sources and Additional Information

Huffington Post - [Aging Out of Foster Care: The Costs of Doing Nothing Affect Us All](#)

Jim Casey Youth - [Aging Out of Foster Care in America](#)

[From Foster to Fabulous](#) blog - One little girl's journey through abuse, foster care, aging out, and life beyond.

Dallas News - [Texas foster kids find transitional support, housing before 'aging out' of system](#)

KJZZ - [The big leap: Aging out of Arizona's foster care system](#)

Upcoming Child Matching Events

Child Matching Events are a great way to connect one-on-one with a child's caseworker to introduce your family to the worker, and learn more about the children on their caseload! Families are required to pre-register and must have a current home study to participate. You can learn more about our upcoming matching events and register [here](#).

Upcoming Child Matching Events:

Wednesday, November 20th, 2013 at 2PM PST. See the children that will be featured in the event [here](#). Please register [here](#).

Thursday, December 5th, 2013 at 12PM PST. See the children that will be featured in the event [here](#). Please register [here](#).

**If you don't see any children listed on the event page, please continue to check back for updates.

If you have any questions about our Matching Events, please contact our Recruitment Coordinator at rebecca@afamilyforeverychild.org

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