

VDSS Research Brief

What Are the Characteristics and Circumstances of 17 Year Olds in Foster Care in Virginia?

Context: Public Law 106-169 established the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) that gives states funding to develop programs for youth as they transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. In addition, the law requires the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to create a system for collecting information on independent living services and outcome measures for these programs.

ACF published a final rule in the Federal Register on February 26, 2008 for this regulation which creates the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). States must document demographic information for youth who receive independent living services that are paid for or provided by CFCIP agencies. In addition the States must survey youth in foster care on or around their 17th birthday and follow these youth over time to determine outcomes for these youth. NYTD requires states to conduct follow-up outcome surveys when the youth reach ages 19 and 21; follow-up surveys in Virginia will begin in October 2012.¹

This research brief reports the results of the first NYTD baseline survey in Virginia. Out of 519 eligible youth, 409 surveys were completed, resulting in a response rate of 79 percent (Table 6).

Objective: This analysis summarizes the results of the baseline survey administered to foster youth in Virginia between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011 and describes the types of independent living services recorded for these youth.²

Data Source: The data include the NYTD survey and Independent Living service data for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2011.³ These records were linked with the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data files for the same time period to provide additional demographic information.

Methods: Local agency workers administered a survey to foster care youth who turned 17 during FFY 2011 and recorded the survey responses in the Online Automated Services Information System (OASIS).⁴ In addition, local workers documented the Independent Living services provided to the youth during FFY 2011 in OASIS. For those youth

¹ See http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/nytd/about_nytd.htm

² Note that this report provides information on Independent Living services for the 17 year old (baseline) population. The NYTD file contains information on these services for all youth age 14 and older in Virginia for the reporting periods.

³ NYTD data for youth whose 17th birthday fell after August 15, 2011 (n=73) were excluded from the analysis as federal requirements do not require reporting for these youth until the March 30, 2012 data submission.

⁴ Surveys were to be administered to the youth within 45 days of their 17th birthday.

completing surveys, 73 percent completed the survey within 45 days of their 17th birthday.

Caveats: FFY 2011 was the initial year that local workers administered the NYTD survey and recorded Independent Living services for each youth in OASIS. Youth may have received Independent Living services that were not recorded due to changes in the information system and reporting procedures.⁵

Key Findings: Although nearly all (95%) of respondents were enrolled in school at the time of the survey, **very few respondents were currently employed either full-time (2%) or part-time (12%). Only one quarter (25%) of these youth indicated that they had completed an apprenticeship, internship, or other on-the-job training in the past year.**⁶ The likelihood of employment or the receipt of employment-based training did not differ between female and male youth (Table 1).

Many survey respondents reported difficult life experiences (Figure 1 and Table 2). Even though respondents were only 17 years old, over one-third (35%) had been incarcerated, with nearly half (45%) of male respondents reporting incarceration. In addition, over one-fourth (28%) of the respondents had been referred for substance abuse treatment. One out of six (17%) of these youth reported that they had been homeless at some point in their life. Thirteen percent of female respondents reported having ever given birth, and three percent of male respondents reported fathering a child. More positively, nearly all survey respondents (97%) indicated that they had a significant connection to an adult.⁷

NYTD data indicate that nearly half of these youth (48%) did not have records of Independent Living services during FFY 2011 (Table 3). It is unclear if these youth did not receive services or if some services were not documented in OASIS.⁸ Respondents were slightly more likely to have records of services than non-respondents. The most commonly recorded services were budget/financial management (26%) and academic support (24%). Less than one fifth (17%) of youth had an Independent Living Needs Assessment recorded in OASIS within the previous year.

For the most part, survey respondents did not have different demographic characteristics than non-respondents (Tables 4 and 5). A majority (84%) of youth did not have a disability documented in OASIS (Table 4). Non-respondents were slightly

⁵ OASIS data screens for the recording of survey responses and Independent Living services were revised as of September 24, 2010 (version 3.07). Prior to this new version of OASIS, local agencies had not used OASIS to record Independent Living services but had reported these data in aggregate to VDSS on a quarterly basis.

⁶ The training could have been either paid or unpaid.

⁷ The adult could not include: current caseworker, boyfriends, girlfriends, or partners. The adult had to be easily accessible to the youth, either by telephone or in person.

⁸ Many of these youth may have been in placements where the local agency was responsible for documenting services provided by residential or detention facility staff and did not do so. An examination of the case records of a random sample of 10 youth without services indicated that 6 of the youth were in residential or detention placements on their 17th birthday.

more likely to have “mental retardation” indicated in their OASIS records (7%) than respondents (2%).

Table 1: Employment and Educational Characteristics of NYTD Baseline Survey Respondents, Virginia FFY 2011

	Female Respondents (n=216)		Male Respondents (n=193)		All Respondents (n=409)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Employment						
Current Full-time Employment	3	1%	4	2%	7	2%
Current Part-time Employment	28	13%	23	12%	51	12%
Employment-Related Skills	54	25%	48	25%	102	25%
Education						
Highest Education Certification – HS/GED	13	6%	11	6%	24	6%
Currently Enrolled/Attending School	203	94%	184	95%	387	95%

Note: Employment-related skills include completing an apprenticeship, internship, or other on-the-job training. The training could be either paid or unpaid.

Source: NYTD FFY 2011 Data Files

Figure 1: Reported Life Experiences of NYTD Baseline Survey Respondents

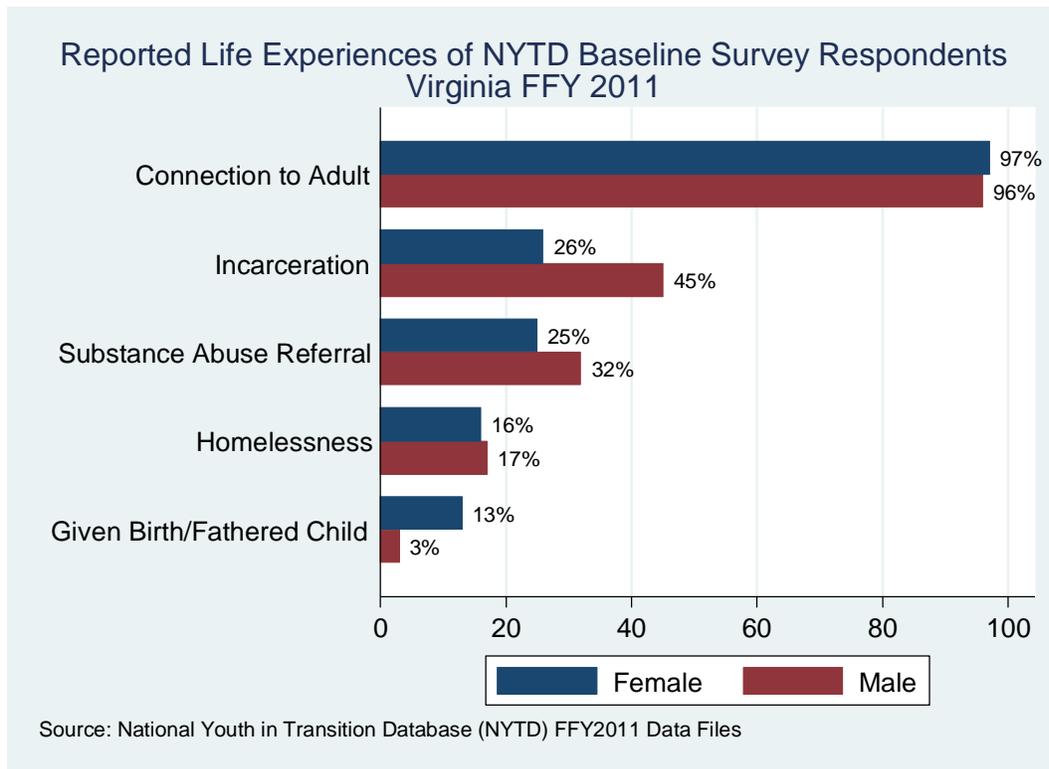


Table 2: Reported Life Experiences of NYTD Baseline Survey Respondents, Virginia FFY 2011

Experience	Female Respondents (n=216)		Male Respondents (n=193)		All Respondents (n=409)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Connection to Adult	210	97%	185	96%	395	97%
Incarceration	57	26%	88	45%	145	35%
Substance Abuse Referral	54	25%	62	32%	116	28%
Homelessness	35	16%	33	17%	68	17%
Given Birth/Fathered Child	29	13%	6	3%	35	9%

Source: NYTD FFY 2011 Data Files

Table 3: Independent Living Services Received in FFY 2011 for Youth Eligible for the NYTD Baseline Survey, Virginia

	Survey Respondents (n=409)		Non-Respondents (n=110)		Total (n=519)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	Received No Service During FFY 2011	187	46%	60	58%	247
Employment						
Career Preparation	74	18%	14	13%	88	17%
Employment Programs or Vocational Training	32	8%	11	10%	43	8%
Education						
Academic Support	103	25%	19	17%	122	24%
Post Secondary Academic Support	20	5%	0	0%	20	4%
Independence Preparation						
Budget and Financial Management	113	28%	20	18%	133	26%
Housing Education and Home Mgt. Training	77	19%	15	14%	92	18%
Independent Living Needs Assessment	73	18%	13	12%	86	17%
Supervised Independent Living	15	4%	2	2%	17	3%
Interpersonal/Health						
Health Education and Risk Prevention	86	21%	13	12%	99	19%
Mentoring	59	14%	9	8%	68	13%
Family Support/Healthy Marriage Education	52	13%	7	6%	59	11%
Financial Assistance						
Other	13	3%	4	4%	17	3%
Room and Board	7	2%	0	0%	7	1%
Education	11	3%	3	3%	14	3%

Note: A youth could have received more than one type of service. Eligible youth include only those whose 17th birthdays fell before August 15, 2011.

Source: NYTD FFY 2011 Data Files

Table 4: Physical and Mental Health Characteristics of Youth Eligible for NYTD Baseline Survey, Virginia FFY 2011

	Survey Respondents (n=409)		Non-Respondents (n=110)		Total (n=519)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No Disability or Medical Condition	345	84%	93	85%	438	84%
Diagnosed Disability	64	16%	17	15%	81	16%
Mental Retardation	10	2%	8	7%	18	3%
Visually/Hearing Impaired	4	1%	0	0%	4	<1%
Physically Disabled	2	<1%	1	1%	3	<1%
Emotionally Disturbed	53	13%	14	13%	67	13%
Other Medical Condition	20	5%	8	7%	28	5%

Source: NYTD FFY 2011 Data Files; AFCARS FFY 2011 Data Files

Table 5: Demographic Characteristics of Youth Eligible for NYTD Baseline Survey, Virginia FFY 2011

	Survey Respondents (n=409)		Non-Respondents (n=110)		Total (n=519)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Female	216	53%	50	45%	266	51%
White	221	54%	66	60%	287	55%
Black/African American	194	47%	44	40%	238	46%
Asian	8	2%	2	2%	10	2%
Other	4	1%	1	1%	5	1%
Unknown	2	<1%	3	3%	5	1%
Hispanic/Latino	42	10%	11	10%	53	10%

Note: More than one race could be selected for a youth. Hispanic /Latino includes youth of any race.

Eligible youth include only those whose 17th birthdays fell before August 15, 2011.

Source: NYTD FFY 2011 Data Files

**Table 5: Financial and Health Insurance Status of NYTD Baseline Survey Respondents,
Virginia FFY 2011**

	Female Respondents (n=216)		Male Respondents (n=193)		All Respondents (n=409)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Financial						
Receiving Social Security	25	12%	34	18%	59	14%
Receiving Educational Aid	11	5%	4	2%	15	4%
Receiving Other Financial Support	26	12%	22	11%	48	12%
Health Insurance						
Eligible for Medicaid	200	93%	183	95%	383	94%
Have Other Health Insurance	24	11%	16	8%	40	10%

Source: NYTD FFY 2011 Data Files

**Table 6: Survey Status of Youth Eligible for the NYTD Baseline Survey,
Virginia FFY 2011**

Survey Status	Number	Percent
Youth Participated	409	79%
Youth Declined	33	6%
Parent Declined	13	3%
Runaway/Missing	9	2%
Youth Incapacitated	8	2%
Incarcerated	3	1%
Unable to locate/invite	2	<1%
Missing Data	42	8%
Total	519	100%

Note: Missing includes 2 youth who were incorrectly noted as “not in sample”.
Eligible youth include only those whose 17th birthdays fell before August 15, 2011.
Source: NYTD FFY 2011 Data files