

Family Strengthening & Alternative Care

A GLOBAL MONTHLY NEWS WRAP-UP & RESOURCES

This monthly wrap-up is intended to serve as a compendium of the latest developments in the area of family strengthening and alternative care. We hope you will find it useful and be able to use it in your day-to-day work on research, writing, and practice on child and youth care.

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GENERAL ALTERNATIVE CARE NEWS

INTERNATIONAL

- [Quality Parenting Initiative bridges gap between foster and biological parents](#)
The news article discusses the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) in Florida, which aims to strengthen relationships between foster and biological parents. It highlights how QPI is improving communication, collaboration, and support between these two groups to enhance the overall well-being and outcomes of children in foster care.
- [Senate Bill 151 looks to improve benefits for kinship care in Louisville](#)
The bill proposes increased financial support and improved access to resources for kinship caregivers, reflecting efforts to provide better assistance and stability for families in these circumstances.
- [Bipartisan Bill would expand federal extended foster care program](#)
The article covers a proposed bill to expand the federal Extended Foster Care program, aiming to extend support for foster youth beyond the age of 21 discussing the potential impact on improving outcomes for older youth transitioning out of foster care by providing continued assistance and resources.
- [Aging out of foster care at 18 in Georgia? The NSORO Educational Foundation, is helping teens get a college education](#)
A local non-profit, the NSORO Educational Foundation, provides crucial support and funding for teenagers aging out of foster care to pursue higher education. Through scholarships, mentoring, and counselling, the foundation helps these young adults achieve their academic goals and build successful futures, highlighting the transformative impact of education on their lives.
- [Ban on child marriages in Washington could soon be law](#)
The news article discusses the passing of a bill by the Washington Senate to set a minimum marriage age of 18, aiming to end child marriage in the state. It highlights the prevalence of child marriage, debates among lawmakers, and personal testimonies, emphasizing the need for legislative action to protect minors from forced marriages.
- [Organization gathers to pack bags of love for foster youth](#)
The news article highlights the efforts of volunteers in the Pikes Peak Region to provide comfort cases filled with essential items and love to children in foster care, inspired by the personal story of Rob Scheer, who aims to ensure no child enters foster care with just a garbage bag for their belongings.
- [Councils consider care leavers protected status](#)
Two West Yorkshire councils, Leeds and Kirklees, to grant "protected characteristic" status to individuals who have spent time in care. The move aims to address discrimination faced by care leavers in areas such as housing, education, and employment, with a national campaign advocating for their inclusion under the Equalities Act.

ASIA

- [Thai Government and UNICEF step up efforts to curb disturbing rise in child online sexual exploitation and abuse](#)
The news article discusses the National Conference on Child Protection in the Digital Age held in Thailand to address the escalating issue of child online sexual exploitation and abuse. Stakeholders emphasized the need for collaborative efforts, enhanced policies, legislation, and protective services to safeguard children from online harm and promote digital safety.
- [Social media influencers take on challenge to be Creators #ForEveryChild to protect children from online abuse and exploitation](#)
UNICEF Philippines award digital influencers with the first-ever annual badge of recognition for their contribution to protecting children from online abuse and exploitation emphasizing the importance of collaboration with the government to implement legislation aimed at strengthening child protection online and highlights the need to increase awareness and reporting of online abuse among children and youth.
- [UNESCO helps Vietnam strengthen vocational education for out-of-school children](#)
The news article discusses UNESCO's assistance to Vietnam in enhancing vocational education for out-of-school children, aiming to improve their employability and integration into society. It highlights UNESCO's support in developing relevant policies and programs to address the needs of marginalized youth in Vietnam.

INDIA

- [SOS Children's Villages India partners with Uttarakhand Government to strengthen Child Welfare](#)
A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between SOS Children's Villages India and the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Development, Uttarakhand, to focus on enhancing child welfare initiatives across the state with an aim to provide family-like care solutions, support vulnerable families, promote kinship care arrangements, and enhance the capacity of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) in providing quality care to children.
- [On World NGO Day, SOS Children's Villages India commits to embracing sustainability for a brighter future](#)
The news article highlights SOS Children's Villages India's commitment to sustainable development in alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through various initiatives, including education, healthcare, and community empowerment, the organization aims to uplift marginalized communities and ensure holistic development for children under its care.
- [NCPCR Launches GHAR portal for child restoration and repatriation](#)
The Ministry of Women and Child Development has introduced two vital portals: The Track Child Portal for tracing missing children and the GHAR Portal for their restoration and repatriation. These platforms streamline processes, engage citizens, and promote efficient case management, bolstering child protection efforts nationwide.
- [What India can do to strengthen community-based foster care for children in need of nurturing](#)
The opinion piece emphasizes the importance of parental care for children's safety and well-being, highlighting the significant number of orphaned and vulnerable children in India. It discusses the role of foster care as an alternative community-based care, citing challenges in its implementation such as lack of awareness, insufficient frontline workers, and bureaucratic hurdles. The author calls for collective efforts from civil societies and the government to bridge these gaps and expand support for vulnerable children through schemes like Mission Vatsalya.
- [197 orphans in Una district get foster care facility](#)
The news highlights that 197 orphan children in the district of Una, Himachal Pradesh, are receiving foster care under the government's 'Sponsorship and Foster Care' scheme, with each child receiving Rs 4,500 per month for education and general expenses. Deputy Commissioner Jatin Lal directed officials to ensure regular visits to government-funded centres for children's welfare and to provide necessary infrastructure for migrant children studying at special training centres.



NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

PUBLICATIONS

- [Family Strengthening Interventions: A Practitioner's Perspective and Insights from the Field](#)
This new article published in *CYC- Online* journal discusses the challenges faced by vulnerable children in accessing their rights, particularly in India's alternative care system and emphasizes Udayan Care's role in implementing family-focused interventions and preserving familial ties for children and youth at risk.
- [IACN \(India Alternative Care Network\) quarterly newsletter](#)
- The 14th edition of the IACN Quarterly features diverse content on family-based care interventions, including work with faith-based organizations, case studies on non-institutional alternative care, and the role of Master Trainers in India. It also highlights key events and announcements in the field.
- [5th BICON 2023 final report](#)
BICON, an inter-agency cooperation of 8 leading international NGOs focused on alternative care for children, published a report presenting the highlights and main findings of the two-day conference, held on September 6-7, 2023, in Kathmandu, Nepal, and online.
- [Understanding the needs of foster parents of youth with special health care needs: Perceptions, barriers, and recommendations](#)
This new study published in the journal *Children and Youth Services Review*, Vol 158, examines the needs and barriers faced by current, past, and prospective foster parents in caring for youth with special health care needs (SHCN). The findings underscore the importance of additional support, tailored guidance, and resources to enhance the ability of foster parents to effectively care for youth with SHCN, ultimately aiming to improve placement stability and outcomes for these children.
- [Making a way out of no way: The importance of improving financial instability among African American kinship care families](#)
This new study published in the journal *Children and Youth Services Review*, Vol 158, examines financial challenges and coping strategies among African American families providing informal kinship care. The findings highlight the need for targeted support and policy interventions for kinship care families.
- [Fourth anniversary of "The Promise"](#)
This report published in the e-newsletter of *CELCIS*, aims to showcase the progress made in Scotland towards implementing The Promise principles and Plan 21-24 recommendations. It focuses on key themes such as A Good Childhood, Whole Family Support, Planning, Supporting the Workforce, and Building Capacity, providing data-backed insights and highlighting areas needing further attention. The goal is to facilitate cross-referencing with resources provided by The Promise Scotland and support efforts to measure Scotland's journey in fulfilling The Promise.
- [Identifying strategies to better support foster, kinship and permanent carers: Summary report](#)
The report published by *Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)* presents findings from a research project conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) and Murawin, funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, focusing on understanding the needs of carers in order to attract and retain more carers for longer durations. It includes insights gathered from interviews with carers and representatives from various organizations and government agencies across different states in Australia.
- [Emerging Minds Fortnightly Newsletter](#)
Emerging Minds has published its fortnightly e-newsletter features new resources focusing on cultural sensitivity and family support, including an online course on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences and webinars on culturally responsive practice and child-centred approaches in out-of-home care.
- [BCN \(Better Care Network Newsletter\)](#)
Better Care Network has published its e-newsletter covering an in-depth analysis of the situation of children in alternative care and in adoption in Europe and Central Asia; several peer-reviewed articles on transitioning from care; the first ever global, practitioner-informed guidance on how to support kinship care; an in-depth scoping review on different types of transitional support interventions available to support transition to independent living for care leavers and much more.

STUDIES

- [Residential care worker perceptions on the implementation of trauma-informed practice](#)
This new study investigates the perceptions and experiences of residential care workers regarding the implementation of trauma-informed practice in Australia. It reveals that while workers integrate some elements of trauma-informed care, they feel insufficiently trained to support positive behaviour changes and engagement with trauma-affected young people, highlighting areas for improvement in practical application and training.
- [Barriers and enablers to care-leavers engagement with multi-agency support: A scoping review](#)
The study explores barriers and enablers to engagement with multi-agency support services for care-leavers, aiming to improve their transition to independent living. Through a scoping review and thematic synthesis, it identifies factors such as trust, support, and accessibility, culminating in a logic model to inform the development of a practice model and toolkit for professionals.
- [“They told me that you can be with whomever you want, be who you are”: Perceptions of LGBTQ+ youth in residential care regarding the social support provided by child welfare professionals](#)
The study explores how LGBTQ+ youth in residential care settings in Spain develop resilience through supportive relationships with child welfare professionals. Through narrative interviews, it reveals that feelings of safety and acceptance fostered by professionals contribute to resilience by providing identity support, encouraging authenticity, and offering emotional and practical assistance, thus countering the negative impacts of discrimination and violence targeting marginalized identities.
- [Reconsidering the best interests of the child construct](#)
The study critically examines the implementation of the "best interests of the child" construct in modern child protection systems, tracing its origins from seminal articles in the 1960s and 1970s. It highlights limitations in how this construct has been applied and calls for a re-evaluation, suggesting a need to consider factors like poverty, social disadvantage, and the holistic interests of children and their families in addressing child abuse and neglect.

POLICY BRIEF

- [The influence of peer relationships in the middle years on mental health](#)
This new policy and practice paper highlights the significance of positive peer relationships in the social and emotional development of young people aged 8-14. It emphasizes the impact of these relationships on various aspects of their well-being and academic performance, and suggests strategies for practitioners to support and promote positive peer interactions.

TOOLKITS

- [Supporting Integration of children on the move](#)
This new toolkit published by *Family For Every Child* provides guidance for practitioners working with child migrants, aiming to enhance integration support and services offering a holistic model with six dimensions to consider, along with key actions, practitioner tools, and tips from children on the move, currently available in multiple languages.
- [How to support kinship care: Lessons learnt from around the world on supporting kinship care](#)
The Kinship Care Guide offers practitioner-informed guidance on supporting kinship care, aimed at policymakers and program managers worldwide. It emphasizes the importance of kinship care, provides principles of good practice, and includes examples of promising practices from around the globe.
- [Words Matter](#)
The resource guide emphasizes the importance of using trauma-sensitive language when interacting with children and young people who have experienced trauma. It aims to guide adults in reframing their language to positively interpret the needs of children and suggest ways to better connect with them, ultimately fostering positive interactions and a sense of safety and belonging.
- [Manual on children’s participation, including practical toolkit](#)
This toolkit offers comprehensive resources to promote and facilitate children's participation, covering foundational concepts, rationale, practical guidance for implementation, and strategies for effective institutional integration. It aims to empower stakeholders with the knowledge and tools necessary to support and enhance children's meaningful engagement in various contexts.



YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- [A new beginning](#)
The news article showcases the success stories of five young adults who aged out of foster care but found support and empowerment through the LifeSet program by Youth Villages. It emphasizes their achievements, challenges, and the critical role of LifeSet specialists in providing comprehensive services to help them transition successfully into adulthood.
- [The Youth Keep the Score](#)
The youth highlight the systemic failures and injustices within the child welfare and foster care system in America expressing the burden placed on young people to both endure and advocate for change within a system that often fails to meet their needs and protect their rights. Through personal experiences and observations, they call for accountability, equity, and sustainable reforms to ensure the safety and well-being of current and future generations of youth in care.
- [My story is not unique](#)
The article highlights the testimony of a care leaver, who shared her harrowing experiences of abuse and homelessness after being in a children's home.
- [Addressing challenges](#)
The post highlights the experiences of a care leaver from Bihar, shedding light on the challenges faced by care leavers in navigating adulthood and finding stable employment. It calls for collaborative efforts to create empowering initiatives and provide support for care leavers to thrive.
- [Self-care: A care leavers journey](#)
A care leaver, emphasizes the importance of self-care for mental health, sharing personal experiences and practical tips to incorporate self-care into daily life. It underscores the transformative impact of self-care practices in building self-esteem, confidence, and overall well-being.



OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS (JOBS, CONFERENCE ALERTS, CALL FOR ABSTRACTS)

- [Staf Summit 2024- Improving health and wellbeing for Scotland's care experienced young people- 13th March, 2024](#)
- [Webinar on Child-centred approaches to supporting children in out-of-home care- 28th March, 2024](#)
- [15th International Conference on Adoption- 17th & 18th April, 2024](#)
- [2024 Annual Meeting for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 4th & 5th June, 2024](#)
- [8th International Conference on adoption and research \(ICAR8\)- 8th to 12th July, 2024](#)

THANK YOU FOR READING!

Write to us at icbjournal@udayancare.org for suggestions, feedback or content to be included.