

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.

Issue No: 37, Published on 31st May 2024, by Udayan Care



EXCITING CONTRIBUTIONS ALERT!

Got ground-breaking insights, resources, best practices, recent developments or the latest industry news?

Share them with us, and get acknowledged



GENERAL ALTERNATIVE CARE NEWS

INTERNATIONAL

- [Indiana recognized for work to strengthen families with in-home supports, reducing number of children entering foster care](#)
The Indiana Family Preservation Services program has received national recognition for its effectiveness in strengthening families and reducing foster care placements, highlighted for its promising practices and positive impact on child welfare. Deputy Director David Reed testified about the program's success before the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance.
- [Commissioners designate May as foster care month](#)
Columbiana County commissioners designated May as Foster Care Month, recognizing the vital services of kinship and foster caregivers. The proclamation highlighted efforts by the Department of Job and Family Services to provide safe homes for children in need, alongside updates on fraud awareness and other county business matters.
- [ACF approved Nebraska's relative and kinship caregiver plan](#)
Nebraska is among the first states to provide equal financial assistance to kinship caregivers as to non-relative caregivers, thanks to a new regulation by the Administration for Children and Families. This initiative, along with a simplified licensing process for kinship caregivers, underscores Nebraska's commitment to maintaining family connections and supporting child welfare.
- [Unaccompanied minors find homes through foster families](#)
The article discusses the Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area's unaccompanied minor program, which places refugee children separated from their families into foster homes in Northern Virginia. It highlights the experiences of foster parents and children, emphasizing the importance of cultural connections and the transformative impact of fostering unaccompanied minors.
- [How we can prevent children from entering the traditional foster care system](#)
The news article discusses the challenges and proposed solutions for children entering the foster care system in the United States and advocates for kinship care, community support, and strong post-foster care programs to improve outcomes for these children and reduce the reliance on traditional foster care placements.
- [States shift toward kin-first foster care](#)
The news article discusses the increasing recognition and support for kinship caregivers, highlighting efforts by states like Michigan to streamline licensing and provide financial assistance to relatives who care for children otherwise placed in foster care. It also examines the challenges and benefits of kinship care, advocating for policy changes to support these caregivers.

ASIA

- [NACC, 8 LGUs ink agreement to implement, localize foster care program](#)
The National Authority for Child Care (NACC) and eight local government units (LGUs) in Mindanao signed a memorandum of agreement to implement the Philippine Foster Care Program, aiming to strengthen legal frameworks and raise awareness about illegal adoption. The agreement was highlighted at the National Congress on Adoption and Alternative Child Care 2024 in Davao City.

- [Decline in adoption continues: Just 229 children find new homes last year](#)
The news article provides statistics on adoption in South Korea, showing a decline in both domestic and international adoptions for the fourth consecutive year. It also highlights the reasons for putting children up for adoption, with unmarried mothers being the primary factor.
- [Government policies will continue to strengthen role of families](#)
Prime Minister Lawrence Wong emphasized the importance of strong family ties and supportive workplace practices, highlighting that government policies will continue to bolster family roles in Singapore.
- [UNICEF to launch child rights protection programme](#)
In Karachi the Sindh government and UNICEF on Thursday agreed to launch a child protection programme to reduce child rights violations and harmful traditional practices.

INDIA

- [Top 16 adoption agencies in India](#)
The article highlights the top 16 reputable adoption agencies in India, providing detailed information on each to assist prospective parents in the adoption process. It also outlines the eligibility criteria and steps involved in adopting a child in India.
- [Mothers and the labour market: Why India needs to re-imagine child care now](#)
The State of Himachal Pradesh has emphasized the need to address the disproportionate childcare burden on women. The directive calls for a reassessment of childcare leave policies and support for working mothers, highlighting the broader need for improved childcare infrastructure and support systems in India.
- [Fostering an inclusive future](#)
Foster care has emerged as a preferred alternative to orphanages, providing children with the opportunity to grow up in loving family settings. In Kerala, the State Child Protection Society oversees the foster care system, which includes options like kinship and vacation fostering, ensuring a stable environment for 245 children. Recent policy changes also facilitate adoption after two years in foster care, promoting permanency and stability for children and families.
- [Out of 'child care', but pressing EVM not easy](#)
The news article highlights the struggles of care leavers in New Delhi, as they navigate challenges in obtaining identity documents and exercising their right to vote for the first time. It also discusses the broader issues faced by young adults transitioning out of child care institutions and the efforts of the Delhi Care Leavers Association to advocate for their rights in national and local elections.



NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

PUBLICATIONS

- [Supporting older youth in care: The role of caregivers](#)
This new study published in *Adoption & Fostering Volume 48, Issue 1*, examines the impact of caregiver characteristics, attachment, and placement type on mental health and substance use among adolescents in care, using data from the 2016 Ontario Looking After Children project. Findings highlight the significance of caregiver attachment, gender, and school expectations in influencing these outcomes, guiding future child welfare policies and interventions.
- [The future of foster care and child protection in India and Sri Lanka](#)
Published in *Institutionalised Children Exploration and Beyond Volume 11 Issue 1*, examines the shift from institutional care to family-based alternative care for children in India and Sri Lanka, focusing on recent legislative changes and collaborative efforts to implement foster care. It highlights the role of policy reforms in aligning with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- [New global study on online child sexual exploitation and abuse](#)
In the first global study of its kind, new research published by the *Childlight Global Child Safety Initiative*, based at University of Edinburgh, has estimated that more than 300 million children across the world (one in eight) are victims of online sexual exploitation and abuse each year.
- [Adoption Barometer Survey 2024](#)
The *charity Adoption UK* has published the findings of its Adoption Barometer Survey 2024, which reveal that adoptees of all ages are being let down by services across the UK, but teenagers are the worst affected. According to the research in Scotland, although 96% of new adopters agree that training prepared them well, 40% of families are facing severe challenges and only 22% of parents agree that appropriate support is available for teenagers and young adults.

STUDIES

- [The emotional terrain of foster and kinship carers' relationships with parents of children in care: Carers' perspectives](#)
The study explores the emotional dynamics foster and kinship carers experience in their relationships with birth parents, emphasizing both affiliative and threat-based emotions. It highlights the lack of formal support for carers in managing these complex emotions and provides recommendations for improving support to enhance carers' capacity to maintain family connections for children in out-of-home care.
- [Promoting child welfare and supporting families in Europe: Multi-dimensional conceptual and developmental frameworks for national family support systems](#)
The study examines the conceptualization and development of family support policies across Europe amidst socio-economic and health challenges, proposing a multi-dimensional framework for formal family support. It analyses how diverse political contexts influence family policies and highlights the challenges in policy, provision, and practice while promoting participatory approaches.
- [To protect kids, we need more foster care, not less](#)
The study highlights the trauma children face from family separation and foster care, leading to poor health, low education, homelessness, early pregnancy, and criminal involvement. The overreliance on separating families instead of providing support destroys families, especially affecting Black and brown communities.
- [Children without parental care in armed conflict settings: right to family life and alternative care arrangements](#)
The study examines the international legal framework and obligations for providing alternative care to children separated from their families during armed conflict, emphasizing the importance of family-based care and culturally appropriate decision-making.

POLICY BRIEF

- [Ending the placement of children aged 0-6 years in residential care in the Republic of Moldova](#)
The Road Map for ending residential care for children aged 0-6 in Moldova ensures comprehensive child protection through collaboration among various ministries and local authorities. It supports the EU-Moldova Association Agenda's deinstitutionalization goal by implementing policies in social protection, health, and early education. Key actions include the National Child Protection Program 2022-2026, the Early Intervention Services Action Plan 2023-2027, and the Inclusive Education Development Program 2024-2027.
- [Parent-focused interventions to support the behaviours of children with disability](#)
This paper aims to support practitioners who work with children with disability and their families, but may not be specialists in providing disability support, to understand what parent-focused interventions include and the characteristics of effective interventions.

TOOLKITS

- [Understanding and supporting children's mental health](#)
The resources developed by *Emerging Minds*, provide comprehensive information on children's mental health, including signs of mental health in children, factors influencing it, and strategies for nurturing positive mental health. They are designed for parents, educators, health professionals, and other adults to support children's wellbeing and address potential mental health challenges.
- [Adoption by foster carers](#)
This Good Practice Guide examines the complexities and benefits of adoption by foster carers, offering practical advice for practitioners on legislation, preparation, assessment, and support. It provides insights, research findings, and real-life case studies to promote stable and permanent placements for children.
- [Understanding behaviours of concern for children with disability](#)
This practice guide is primarily intended for use by child and family support professionals who may work with children with disability and their families but may not be specialists in providing disability support. It includes some practical principles for working with children with disability and their families.



YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- [I am a foster child. I was lost until one local organization gave me hope](#)
The opinion piece article reflects on the author's tumultuous journey through foster care, highlighting the trauma and challenges faced along the way. Despite enduring abuse and instability, the author finds resilience and support through programs like Promises2Kids, empowering them to pursue higher education and advocate for themselves and others within the foster care system.
- [Former foster kids relived trauma, fought for new program and compelled Kansas lawmakers to act](#)
Former foster kids in Kansas successfully advocated for the SOUL Family program, which allows foster children aged 16 or older to stay with a family member or close friend instead of temporary placements. This new legislation, supported by personal testimonies and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, aims to provide stability and support for foster kids transitioning to adulthood.
- [Call to action from a former foster youth for May, "National Foster Care Awareness Month"](#)
A former foster care youth emphasizes the critical need for familial support and community involvement to prevent children from entering state care and to help those already in the system.
- [Beyond the story: Why I no longer share my care experience](#)
The blog series reflects on the journey and experiences of "Sam," a composite character representing various care experiences, and aims to provide deep insights into the realities of children's social care through personal and professional narratives. It serves as a tribute to the complexities faced by children, social workers, teachers, carers, and parents within the system.
- ["It's about...believing our own words": Bringing together the voices of care experienced people](#)
The blog discusses Rebekah Pierre's anthology "Free Loaves on Fridays," which compiles diverse stories, essays, poems, and letters from 100 care-experienced individuals to shift the narrative of the care system and empower contributors. It emphasizes the importance of diverse voices, a no-rejection policy, and aims to educate the public and inspire future generations.
- [Abdul: A care leavers experience of homelessness](#)
Abdul's story highlights the importance of advocacy for care leavers, ensuring they understand their rights and can access the support they need. His experience underscores how crucial it is for young people to be informed about their entitlements and to have someone to guide them through the system.



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

- [Webinar on "Protecting children and the risk of online sexual abuse: what do we need to know?" - 21st June, 2024](#)
- [8th International Conference on adoption and research \(ICAR8\)- 8th to 12th July, 2024](#)
- [Biennial Together for Families International Virtual Conference- 22nd to 24th October, 2024](#)
- [Call for Papers: Institutionalised Children Exploration and Beyond Bi- Annual Journal \(September 2024 and May 2025 Issues\)](#)
- [Online course on caring for children moving alone: Protecting unaccompanied and separated children- 31st Dec, 2024](#)

THANK YOU FOR READING!

Whether it's new policies, guidelines, schemes, toolkits, or the voices of care leavers, we want to hear from you. Your contributions will be acknowledged in our newsletter as we work together to share knowledge and grow together.