

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

- [New York non-profit organizations partner to expand care and services for families](#)

Two of the largest non-profit child welfare organizations in the state of New York announced a strategic alliance on January 17th, 2023 to provide care and programs to over 11,000 families in New York state with an aim to strengthen the children and families within them.

- [Three key moments from hearing on supporting youth aging out of foster care](#)

The news article highlights three key moments from a congressional hearing on supporting youth aging out of foster care in America. It addresses crucial discussions and insights regarding policies and initiatives aimed at providing better support for individuals transitioning from foster care to independence. The article emphasizes key takeaways from the hearing, shedding light on impactful measures for youth in this vulnerable demographic.

- [Kosciusko cares offering free strengthening families program](#)

Kosciusko Cares Youth Services, is providing a free “Strengthening Families Program”, offering support and resources to families in the community aiming to enhance family relationships, communication, and resilience, emphasizing the importance of fostering a positive and supportive environment.

- [Improving residential care for children in England – what can we learn from the Italian experience?](#)

The blog discusses efforts to enhance residential care for children in England by drawing insights from the Italian experience. It explores lessons and practices that can be learned from the Italian approach to improve the quality of care and support provided to children in residential settings in England.

- [A place to call home: ELCA ministry helps provide affordable housing to young people aging out of foster care](#)

The article discusses the challenges faced by young people aging out of the foster care system in California and the efforts of California Lutheran Homes (CLH) to provide affordable housing. CLH collaborates with organizations like Bidly Mason and OC United to offer renovated apartments and programs that facilitate self-sufficiency, addressing issues such as homelessness and unemployment among former foster youth.

- [What we know about LGBTQ+ children & youth in foster care](#)

The article discusses the historical challenges faced by LGBTQ+ youth in child welfare systems, emphasizing discrimination, invisibility, and mistreatment in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Norway. It highlights the importance of developing clear written policies, LGBTQ+-specific staff training, clinical case consultation, and advocacy to address the specific needs of LGBTQ+ youth in child welfare settings. The article also acknowledges progress in LGBTQ+ protections in child welfare but emphasizes the ongoing need for attitudinal changes and competent practices.

- [Congressman Robert Garcia and congresswoman Ilhan Omar introduces bill to provide universal basic income for foster youth aging out of system](#)

The "Guaranteed Income for Foster Youth Act," aims to support a vulnerable demographic during the challenging transition to adulthood, addressing gaps in the federal foster care system, and draws inspiration from successful pilot programs, including a universal basic income initiative in Long Beach, California, under Garcia's leadership as mayor.

- [Gov't trains 12 foster care families to assist in children reintegration process](#)

The Kenyan government is implementing a 10-year Children Reintegration Program under the Care Reform Strategy (2022-2032) to transition vulnerable children from Charitable Children Institutions (CCIs) to foster care families. Twelve foster care families have undergone training for this initiative, aiming to provide a more family-oriented environment for the children. Some stakeholder's express concerns about potential challenges, such as the fate of privately run children's homes and the well-being of children with health complications in the transition process.

ASIA

- [Adoption made easy in Philippines](#)

The article discusses the new adoption law in the Philippines, Republic Act No. 11642, which aims to simplify and expedite domestic adoption proceedings, reducing the process from six years to approximately six months to three years. The article also shares success stories of families who have benefited from the adoption process, encouraging those interested to approach their local Social Welfare and Development Office.

- [Borrowed, not birthed: The foster parents fostering hope for children in need](#)
The news article explores the experiences of foster parents in Singapore, highlighting the challenges and rewards of foster parenting, emphasizing the importance of providing love, stability, and healing to children who have experienced trauma. The narrative captures the bittersweet nature of fostering, acknowledging the inevitable goodbyes while celebrating the positive impact on both the foster parents and the children.
- [Social workers can help children more effectively by assessing the needs of the whole family – study](#)
The article discusses a study emphasizing that social workers can enhance their effectiveness in helping children by assessing the needs of the entire family, rather than focusing solely on the child's individual circumstances. The research underscores the importance of a holistic approach to address family dynamics and contextual factors for more comprehensive and impactful social work interventions.
- [3,883 cases of child rights violations in 2023: KPAI](#)
The news article reports that in 2023, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) recorded 3,883 cases of child rights violations. The violations cover a range of issues affecting children, highlighting the ongoing challenges and concerns related to child welfare in Indonesia.
- [Over 1K C. Visayas children in foster care centres since 2023](#)
The Department of Social Welfare and Development - National Authority for Child Care (DSWD - NACC) reports that 1,116 children in Central Visayas have been under foster care since 2023. Of these, 36 have been placed for administrative adoption, and 58 have been declared legally available for adoption. The NACC is actively promoting the foster care program under Republic Act 11642 in Cebu, encouraging families to open their homes to children in need of adoption or foster care.

INDIA

- [Court upholds mother's right as natural guardian for child adoption](#)
The Punjab and Haryana High Court ruled in favour of recognizing the mother as the sole guardian of an illegitimate child, underscoring the child's best interests and directing the sub-registrar to register the adoption deed without requiring consent from the biological father.
- [Micron Foundation partners with UNICEF and local non-profits to empower underrepresented children in India](#)
Micron Technology, Inc. has announced a partnership between the Micron Foundation and UNICEF India and other NGOs like Udayan Care, Teach for India, SOS children's village India and UN women to promote STEM education for children in rural and low-income communities. The \$408,000 USD grant from the Micron Foundation will support UNICEF programs in Karnataka and Telangana, with a focus on enhancing Atal Tinkering Labs, setting up low-cost makerspaces in schools, and expanding the Passport to Earning platform for marginalized groups.
- [Can Jammu and Kashmir bridge gaps in empowering the specially-abled?](#)
The article commends the Jammu and Kashmir administration for actively seeking applications to hire special educators on World Braille Day. It highlights the need for genuine inclusivity and empowerment for individuals with visual impairments, emphasizing the gaps in disability rights, including the shortage of Braille training institutions and challenges faced in education and employment opportunities.
- [The long, agonizing adoption process In India](#)
The opinion piece addresses the challenges and delays in the adoption process in India, citing the Chief Justice of India's concern over the stalling of adoptions by the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA). It emphasizes the discrepancies in the number of orphaned children and available adoption opportunities, highlighting the need for streamlining the adoption process, ensuring transparency, and addressing legal ambiguities to benefit both adoptive parents and children in need. The piece calls for urgent reforms to prevent children from languishing in shelter homes.
- [Father of orphans: Shankar Baba Papalkar gets Padma Shri, dedicates the award to divyang kids](#)
Shankar Baba Papalkar, known as the "Father of Orphans," has been awarded the Padma Shri, a prestigious civilian honour in India. He dedicates the award to divyang (differently-abled) kids, emphasizing his commitment to their welfare and the well-being of orphans.
- [NHRC seeks reports on orphanage's branches in 4 states after allegations of child abuse](#)
The NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) has taken suo motu cognizance of an orphanage in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, where children aged four to 14 were allegedly subjected to torture, leading to the registration of an FIR. The NHRC has called for reports on the branches of the orphanage in Jodhpur, Surat, Kolkata, and Bengaluru from the concerned state governments, as the matter involves serious violations of human rights.
- [Himachal CM assures rented accommodation for orphans children](#)
Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced a provision in the Mukhyamantri Sukh Ashray Yojna to provide rent for accommodation to orphan children emphasizing the scheme's commitment to ensuring the rights and well-being of orphaned children. He also appealed the wealthier section of the society to adopt children residing in the childcare centres and provide them a safe and bright future. Find out more [here](#).



NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

PUBLICATIONS

- [Pathways to better protection](#)
This analytic report has been published by UNICEF to provide a contextualized analysis of the situation of children in alternative care and adoption in Europe and Central Asia on the basis of Trans Monee data and other sources which can be used for priority-setting and decision-making for international and national child protection policies and programmes and for achieving better outcomes for children, especially socially excluded children.
- [Conversations on Care | Episode 24: Supporting mental wellbeing in children, families and communities - approaches from three continents](#)
This new podcast episode published by *Family for Every Child* discusses the importance of addressing children's mental health at the community level.
- [Supporting children when working with separating parents – part three](#)
This new podcast episode published by *Emerging Minds* discusses the challenges faced by children experiencing parental separation or divorce and emphasizes the importance of practitioners in various fields like family strengthening to have the skills to support both the parents and children during this process.
- [Child welfare and the significance of family](#)
This new book published by *Nordic Open Access Scholarly Publishing*, explores the significance of family in child welfare services, examining family experiences with child welfare workers, the influence of rules and principles on professional interactions, and the impact of social structures on child welfare practices.

- [A Compassion-Focused Therapy group for young people who live in foster, adoptive or kinship care: Initial development, reflections, and ways forward](#)

This new article published by *Adoption & Fostering, Volume 47 Issue 4*, discusses a case study on the development of a Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) group for care-experienced youth, specifically focusing on adolescents who have faced abuse and neglect and do not live with their birth families aimed at building self-confidence.

STUDIES

- [Caregivers' help-seeking for child and adolescent mental health: A look into their journey through the lens of mental health literacy](#)
- The study examines caregivers' help-seeking behaviour for child and adolescent mental health services, focusing on mental health literacy. The findings reveal that caregivers' knowledge and beliefs regarding child/adolescent mental health play a pivotal role in their decision to seek mental health services, highlighting the complexity and barriers in accessing such services.

- [Coming of age in a pandemic era: The interdependence of life spheres through the lens of social integration of care leavers in Quebec during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

The study explores how the COVID-19 pandemic affected care leavers in Quebec, emphasizing their existing vulnerabilities. Findings show that those with more vulnerabilities experienced amplified challenges, but a strong social support network mitigated the impact. The research underscores the importance of interventions reinforcing social support for care leavers during crises.

- [Foster carers' views of the transition from foster care to adulthood for young people with mental health problems from a life-course perspective](#)

The study investigates foster carers' perspectives on the transition from care to adulthood for young individuals with mental health issues in Norway and Sweden. It reveals challenges in providing social support due to the impact of mental health problems, emphasizing the need for timely and adequate support for both young people and foster carers during the care-leaving process.

POLICY BRIEFS

- [Children and Families Specialty Health Plan Policy Paper](#)

The policy paper outlines the design of the Children and Families Specialty Plan (CFSP), a state-wide NC Medicaid Managed Care initiative aimed at providing integrated and coordinated health services to children, youth, and families in the child welfare system. The CFSP, scheduled to launch by December 1, 2024, reflects extensive input from various stakeholders and emphasizes collaboration with social services agencies and community partners in North Carolina's ongoing Medicaid transformation.

- ['Guaranteed Income for Foster Youth Act](#)

This new bill enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress to provide a guaranteed income for older youth who have exited foster care.

TOOLKITS

- [HHS releases guidance to help prevent homelessness for youth who have transitioned out of foster care](#)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), released new guidance to grant recipients regarding the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program. This important guidance will help ensure eligible young adults gain access to the available resources.

- [The Dare to Care guide](#)

Produced by the Youth Justice Legal Centre (YJCL) to support criminal lawyers in representing care-experienced children and young adults to understand the relevant legal framework, reduce unnecessary criminalisation and achieve better outcomes.

- [How to support kinship care – lessons learnt from around the world](#)

This new guideline published by *Family for Every Child*, includes over 40 examples of promising practices from across the world aimed at policymakers and programme managers working to improve the care of children.



YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- [A foster youth's journey towards healing](#)

The article details a personal journey of healing and self-discovery by a foster youth, exploring the impact of trauma, self-realization, and coping mechanisms. It emphasizes the importance of understanding one's past, embracing personal growth, and seeking support while navigating the complexities of life after foster care.

- [Generational foster care in Native American communities](#)

The article discusses the generational impact of foster care in Native American communities, highlighting the loss of cultural identity and traditions experienced by individuals in the system. The author shares personal struggles with cultural genocide, separation from family, and the importance of reclaiming cultural heritage.

- [Beyond introduction: My LIFT fellowship journey](#)

The blog narrates the transformative one-year journey in the LIFT Fellowship, focusing on her efforts to document the challenges faced by specially-abled care leavers in Kashmir. Through emotional, mental, and financial support, the fellowship becomes a catalyst for personal growth, resilience, and empowerment.

- [The emotion of eyes](#)

The blog offers a poignant glimpse into the world of a blind individual, highlighting the beauty and vibrancy experienced through other senses, such as touch, sound, and emotion. It explores the twists and turns of life, transforming challenges into unexpected bursts of colour in the canvas of the author's existence.

- [Care leaver: Pearl enclosed in a shell](#)

The blog passionately encourages readers to reconsider their perceptions of "care leavers" and likens them to precious pearls waiting to be discovered. It advocates for compassion, understanding, and open-hearted acceptance, urging everyone to recognize the innate worth and potential within care leavers rather than perpetuating discrimination or pity.



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

- [9th Conference of the International Society for Child Indicators- 14th to 16th February, 2024](#)
- [Youth Voices Rising Webinar: "Who Am I"- 29th February, 2024](#)
- [Call for Articles: The Scottish journal of residential child care - spring issue, 3rd March 2024](#)
- [15th International Conference on Adoption- 17 & 18 April, 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.