

# 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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## 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

- [West Virginia's Foster Care System Faces Legal Reckoning Amid Crisis](#)  
West Virginia's foster care system is under intense scrutiny as the state confronts a legal battle over its handling of children in need. Allegations of systemic failures and inadequate support have sparked calls for comprehensive reforms to protect vulnerable children and improve the state's child welfare services.
- [States in The USA Adopt 'Kin-First' Approach in Foster Care Reforms](#)  
Across The USA, states are increasingly adopting a 'kin-first' approach to foster care, prioritizing the placement of children with relatives over non-family caregivers. This shift aims to provide more stable and familiar environments for children, improving their overall well-being and maintaining family connections.
- [Chard Charity 'Spark Sisterhood' Supports Female Care Leavers in Transition](#)  
This article talks about how The Chard-based charity 'Spark Sisterhood' is making a significant impact by aiding young women as they transition out of the care system. Through mentorship, resources, and community support, the organization empowers female care leavers to build successful, independent lives.
- [Project for Adults with Learning Disabilities Expanded to Include Care Leavers](#)  
Shared Lives Plus, a project originally designed to support adults with learning disabilities is now being extended to assist care leavers across the UK. This expansion aims to provide tailored support and resources to young people transitioning out of care, ensuring they receive the help they need to thrive in adulthood.
- [New Fund Launched to Support Business Ventures for Care Leavers at THUD Yorkshire](#)  
This article discusses a groundbreaking new fund that has been introduced by Hull City Council in the UK to assist care leavers in launching their own businesses. This initiative aims to provide financial backing, mentorship, and resources to young entrepreneurs, helping them achieve economic independence and success in their ventures.
- [Enhanced Financial Support for Foster Parents in Indianapolis from July 1](#)  
Starting July 1, foster parents in Indiana will receive increased financial assistance to help cover the costs of caring for children. This enhanced support aims to alleviate some of the financial burdens faced by foster families, ensuring they can provide a stable and nurturing environment for children in their care.
- [ACT passes law to support care leavers until 21](#)  
The ACT has passed a new law extending support for care leavers until the age of 21. This legislation aims to provide continued assistance and resources to young people transitioning out of foster care, helping them achieve better outcomes in adulthood. The law includes provisions for housing, education, and employment support.

## ASIA

- [Ensuring Every Child Has Legal Status: A Vital Human Right](#)  
UNICEF Thailand highlights the critical importance of providing legal status to every child. Without legal recognition, children face numerous challenges, including limited access to education, healthcare, and protection, undermining their rights and opportunities for a better future.
- [Supporting Sexually Abused Children and Youth: Guidance for Families and Communities](#)  
The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) Singapore explores effective ways to support children and youth who have experienced sexual abuse, along with their families. Emphasizing a compassionate and informed approach, the article offers insights into available resources, counselling, and the importance of creating a supportive environment for healing and recovery.
- [Educational opportunities provided for orphans in Takhar](#)  
A Turkish charity has established an orphanage in Taloqan, Takhar, providing education and training to 35 orphaned children. The initiative includes meals, religious studies, and supervision, with plans to support more orphans and provide separate facilities for orphaned girls.
- [Unseen inheritance: Trauma of transnational adoption 'trickles down' to adoptees' children](#)  
The article discusses the intergenerational trauma experienced by the children of South Korean adoptees, highlighting how their parents' adoption experiences impact their identity and lives. It also emphasizes the growing community and collective voice of these descendants who seek clarity on their rights and heritage.

## INDIA

- [Uncovering the Dark Side of Child Adoption in Telangana](#)  
This article sheds light on the troubling aspects of child adoption in Telangana, revealing issues such as illegal practices, exploitation, and bureaucratic hurdles. The article calls for urgent reforms to ensure ethical adoption processes and protect the rights and welfare of children.
- [Step-by-step guide to adoption process for NRIs, OCI cardholders and foreign nationals](#)  
The Economic Times provides a comprehensive guide to adoption procedures for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders, and foreign nationals. The article details the legal framework, eligibility criteria, and steps involved in adopting a child from India, aiming to clarify the process for prospective adoptive parents residing abroad.
- [Care and Kinship Celebrated: SOS Children's Village in Shillong Marks 60th SOS Day](#)  
The Shillong Times covers the commemoration of the 60th SOS Day at SOS Children's Village, highlighting the organization's dedication to providing care and support to children in need. The event underscores the importance of family-based care and community support in nurturing children's well-being and development.
- [High Court Judge Inspects Child Care Homes in Srinagar](#)  
Justice Tashi Rabstan, accompanied by officials from the J&K Legal Services Authority, visited "Palaash" and "Pareesha" children's homes to review improvements. He interacted with the children, noting enhanced facilities and expressing satisfaction with the care provided. The visit highlighted the commitment to child welfare and development in institutional care.
- [Odisha Sets Deadline for Aadhaar Enrolment of Children in Child Care Institutions](#)  
The Odisha government has mandated a 15-day deadline for district collectors to complete Aadhaar enrolment for children in childcare institutions (CCIs). With 329 registered CCIs in the state, many children lack necessary documents to enrol. This initiative aims to ensure these children can access various government schemes and improve tracking for their safety.



## NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

### PUBLICATIONS

- [Family strengthening approach towards ensuring reintegration of children restored back to their families from institutional care settings in India](#)  
This paper published in the *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care Volume 23 Issue 1* discusses Udayan Care's Families Together (FiT) project during Covid-19, emphasizing family-strengthening to support children in India's juvenile justice system. It aims to prevent institutionalization, promote family retention, and ensure children's well-being through systematic interventions and gatekeeping measures.
- [Free Loaves on Fridays](#)  
Published by *Unbound*, this collection challenges stereotypes and offers a diverse perspective on foster care, adoption, and other forms of care, aiming to reshape the narrative and highlight often-overlooked voices.
- [Kafaalah: Enhancing Care Systems for Vulnerable Children](#)  
Published by *Changing the Way We Care*, this brief talks about the 'Kafaalah' initiative which outlines strategies to improve care systems for vulnerable children. Focusing on legal guardianship and support mechanisms, Kafaalah aims to strengthen protections and ensure better outcomes for children in challenging circumstances.
- [Care Leavers Share Their Stories to Reform the System](#)  
In this article from *Positive News*, care leavers recount their personal experiences to advocate for improvements in the care system. By sharing their stories, they aim to foster understanding and bring about meaningful change in policies and support for individuals transitioning from care.
- [Cultural Attitudes towards Adoption: Insights from Xhosa Communities in Mthatha, South Africa](#)  
This research published in *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk Volume 60, Issue 2* explores cultural attitudes towards adoption in Mthatha, Eastern Cape province, South Africa. Utilizing a quantitative approach and paper-based questionnaires, the research highlights a predominantly positive outlook on adoption within the Xhosa community, despite cultural values emphasizing familial relationships and limited legal adoption procedures.

## STUDIES

- [Guide to Fostering Assessment in England](#)  
This comprehensive study assists social workers in completing evidence-based assessments of prospective foster carers using CoramBAAF's Form F. It includes trigger questions, analysis tips, and practical tools like worksheets and checklists, making it an essential resource for new and experienced assessors alike.
- [Validating the Caregiving Experiences Questionnaire in Turkish Context](#)  
This study explores the Turkish validity of the Caregiving Experiences Questionnaire (CEQ), designed to assess self-reported caregiving experiences of parents with young children within the attachment system. Administered to 339 Turkish mothers, the CEQ was confirmed as a relevant construct through Confirmatory Factor Analysis, resulting in a reliable 34-item questionnaire.
- [Barriers and Pathways to Resource Utilization Among Homeless Families](#)  
This study investigates how families with young children experiencing homelessness learn about and utilize community resources (CR) and social safety nets (SN). Interviews with sixteen parents in a homeless shelter revealed a reliance on self-sourced information rather than professional assistance.
- [“On an Island”: Foster parent experiences of support during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)  
The study explores foster parents' experiences of social support during the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying challenges such as isolation and lack of respect, while highlighting the importance of adapted support systems and extended family.

## TOOLKITS

- [Managing uncertainty in professional practice](#)  
Practitioners who work with children and families often experience uncertainty in their role. This practice guide outlines the factors that can contribute to uncertainty and provides strategies for how practitioners can manage the uncertainties.
- [Comprehensive Guide to Child Adoption in India](#)  
This guide from Vakilssearch provides an in-depth look at the child adoption process in India. It covers the legal framework, eligibility criteria, necessary documentation, and the step-by-step procedure for prospective adoptive parents. It also navigates the legal, emotional, and practical aspects, aiding prospective parents in their journey alongside exploring the historical roots of adoption in India.
- [Undertaking a fostering assessment in England](#)  
This guide is designed to help social workers to manage and complete a comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of prospective applicants who want to foster a child or children. It is to be used by assessing social workers to complete a Prospective Foster Carer's Report using the CoramBAAF Form F (for England).
- [Undertaking checks and references in fostering and adoption assessments](#)  
Discover the mandatory and advisable checks for assessing prospective foster carers and adopters in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. This guide outlines the crucial checks required for both fostering and adoption assessments, highlighting which checks yield the most useful information for social workers.



## YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- [Should care experience be a protected characteristic? Care leavers speak out on status debate](#)  
The article discusses the debate around making "care experience" a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. It highlights the challenges faced by those with care experience, such as stigma, discrimination, and systemic issues. Campaigners, including Terry Galloway, argue that legal protection would ensure better support and outcomes for care-experienced individuals. The Liberal Democrats have included this in their manifesto, but opinions vary on whether this change would effectively address the root causes of discrimination.
- [Miracle - a care-leaver's perspective of fostering](#)  
The blog shares the personal story of Miracle, a care leaver, who details her journey through foster care, the challenges faced, and the positive impact her foster carer had on her life. It also provides advice and insights for foster carers to help them better support children in their care.
- [Adopting a new narrative when it comes to adoption](#)  
Through this short film the writer is aiming to change the narrative around the adoption process alongside tackling themes of love, loss, resilience and the redefinition of family. He hopes that the film will help to create a more positive narrative surrounding children in care and spark more conversations about the benefits of fostering and adoption, encouraging others to embrace it not just as an alternative but as a choice when it comes to their own family.
- [Staying on the Educational Path Despite the Odds](#)  
Follow the resilient journey of a young woman navigating foster care while balancing pregnancy, trauma, and educational setbacks. From unstable placements to finding support at Andover High School, discover her determination to graduate and pursue higher education despite formidable odds.
- [Aleesha German: Finishing School While Homeless is No Easy Feat](#)  
Follow the courageous journey of a former foster care youth through the complexities of foster care, homelessness, and navigating the education system. From initial confusion and instability to finding determination to graduate high school and pursue college, discover their resilience in overcoming barriers and advocating for change in foster care policies.
- [Aaron Toleafoa: “What does tending the flames of your fire look like?”](#)  
Through this opinion piece article, the writer wants to emphasize the delicate balance of managing high expectations, avoiding burnout, and prioritizing self-care amidst the pressures of community expectations and personal healing journeys. Discover strategies for fostering a supportive environment where vulnerability is embraced, allowing these advocates to sustain their passion and resilience in driving meaningful change.



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

- [A series of online networking events by Making Connection: Care Leavers' Exchange Forum Initiative- July 2, 2024](#)
- [Webinar on “Driving Change in Far-East Asia's Child Protection Systems”- July 10, 2024](#)
- [UN High-Level Political Forum 2024! SDG16: Accelerating Progress to Achieve Justice for Children- July 10, 2024](#)
- [8th International Conference on adoption and research \(ICAR8\)- 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2024](#)
- [Biennial Together for Families International Virtual Conference- 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> 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- 31<sup>st</sup> 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.