



# Ohio Fostering Connections

Supporting Ohio Foster Youth Through Age 21

## Presentation to PFOF

February 19, 2015

Mark Mecum



# Learning Objectives



1. Learn about outcomes of youth aging out of foster care in Ohio and nationally
2. Learn about Ohio Fostering Connections activities
3. Learn about the pending state legislation
4. Consider how implementation of the program could be successful in your community

# Overview of Presentation



- I. The Social Problem
- II. About Ohio Fostering Connections
- III. Overview of the Ohio Fostering Connections Act
- IV. Key Questions about Implementation
- V. How to Get Involved

# I. The Social Problem



*A homeless youth living under a bridge in Cincinnati, OH  
© Cincinnati Enquirer. 2014*

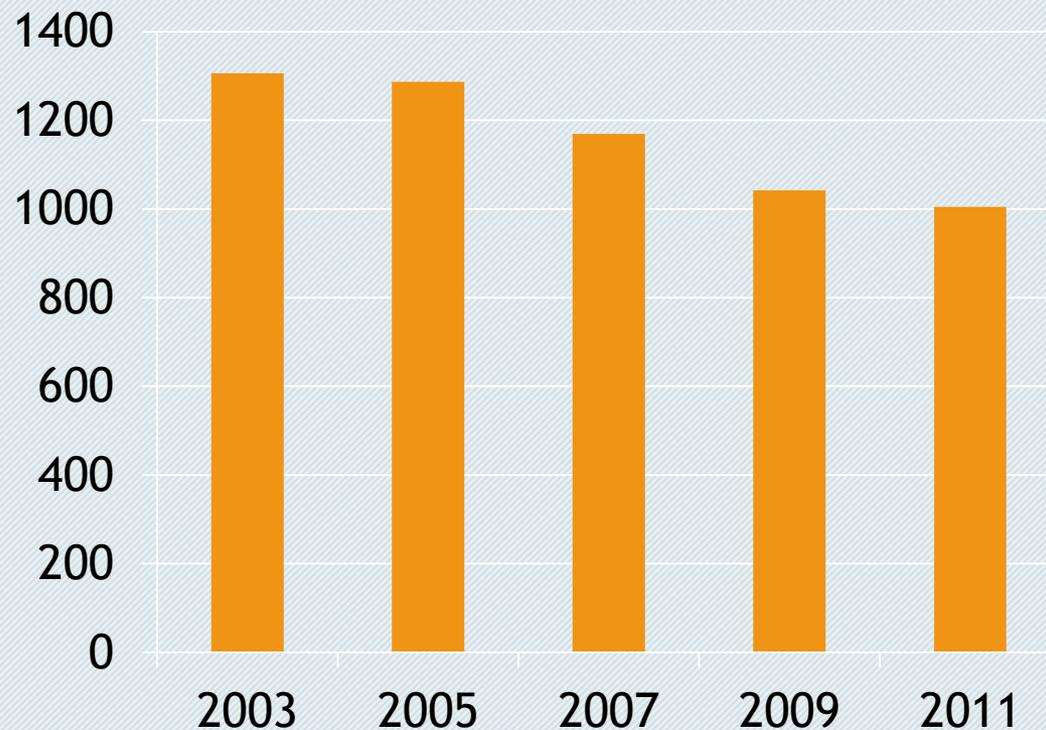
# Ohio Emancipation Data



2011: **1,005**  
2009: **1,042**  
2007: **1,169**  
2005: **1,287**  
2003: **1,306**

Estimated amount  
of 18, 19, 20 year  
olds in Ohio who  
emancipated out  
of care at 18: **3,000**

## Ohio Foster Youth Emancipations By Year



# Outcomes: USA



## National Statistics of Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

- More than 1 in 5 will experience homelessness after age 18
- 58% will graduate high school by age 19 (compared to 87% of all 19 year olds)
- 71% of young women are pregnant by 21
- At the age of 24, only half are employed
- Fewer than 3% will earn a college degree by age 25 (compared to 28% of all 25 year olds)
- 1 in 4 will be involved in the criminal justice system within two years of aging out

# Outcomes: Ohio



## 19 Years Olds Who Aged Out of Foster Care

### Demographics

- 5% were still in custody; 95% were emancipated
- 54% male, 45% female
- 60% white, 44% black, 0.7% Hispanic

### Public Assistance

- 3% were receiving aftercare services
- 5% received public financial assistance
- 35% received public food assistance
- 6% received public housing assistance



Source: National Youth in Transition Database, ODJFS, 2014. Data reflects demographic and outcomes information on young people in the State's follow-up population sample who turned age 19 during 2013.

# Outcomes: Ohio



## 19 Years Olds Who Aged Out of Foster Care

### Education

- 47% lacked a high school diploma/GED
- 47% were enrolled in school

### High Risk Behaviors

- 12% referred to substance abuse treatment
- 31% experienced incarceration
- 11% had children

### Homelessness

- 27% experienced homelessness



# Outcomes: Ohio



## 19 Years Olds Who Aged Out of Foster Care

### Medicaid

- 65% enrolled on Medicaid
- 10% enrolled on other type of insurance

### Employment

- 12% were working full time
- 24% were working part time



# Outcomes: Ohio vs USA



Comparison of 19 year old Ohio youth who “aged out” with 19 year old youth nationally who remained in child welfare custody and/or were served by their state Fostering Connections programs

Outcome	Ohio w/out IV-E	National w/ IV-E	Difference
Enrolled in school	47%	70%	+ 23% ★
Earned Diploma/GED	53%	60%	+ 7%
Adult Connections	85%	92%	+ 7%
Homelessness	27%	10%	- 17% ★
Incarcerated	31%	13%	- 18% ★
Had a child	11%	9%	- 2%
Medicaid	66%	85%	+ 19% ★

# Outcomes: Human Trafficking



## Prevalence of Human Trafficking Victimization

“ The largest group at risk of becoming victims are runaway, throwaway, or homeless young people, who are vulnerable and need to acquire food, shelter and clothing to survive... These youth are the most vulnerable for human trafficking, being approached by a trafficker or recruiter within 24 – 48 hours of being on the street.”

Source: “Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force” Ohio Attorney General. 18 Feb. 2014.  
<http://humantrafficking.ohio.gov/Campaign>

# Outcomes: Human Trafficking



- 67% of likely sex trafficking victims were in the care of social services or foster care when they ran.

Source: The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

[http://www.missingkids.com/KeyFacts?utm\\_source=Nebraska+Appleseed+List&utm\\_campaign=aa02ab6e05-FCRU\\_07\\_01\\_2014&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8f1f19ea9e-aa02ab6e05-288153197](http://www.missingkids.com/KeyFacts?utm_source=Nebraska+Appleseed+List&utm_campaign=aa02ab6e05-FCRU_07_01_2014&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8f1f19ea9e-aa02ab6e05-288153197)

- Nationally, of the 1.7 million foster care youth who run away a year...
  - An estimated 1.3 million return; however, 6,300 youth do not return at all.
  - 14,900 children were sexually assaulted or someone attempted to sexually assault them during their time away.
  - 1,700 children engaged in sexual activity in exchange for money, drugs, food or shelter during the episode.

Source: Reported by The Second National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMAART).

# Federal Act



- Congress responded to this social problem by passing the Federal Fostering Connections and Increasing Adoptions Act
- The Act gives states the option to access Title IV-E to fund services to emancipated foster youth until age 19, 20, or 21
- Offers the same federal matching rate, with less regulations
- Title IV-E funding can support case management, housing, and administration services



# States That Passed Legislation to Extend IV-E to 21



- Alabama
- Arkansas
- California
- Connecticut
- District of Columbia
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- New York
- North Dakota
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Washington
- West Virginia

Source: Mainspring Consulting

# II. About Ohio Fostering Connections



*Participants at a Ohio Fostering Connections community event in Cleveland, 2014*

# Background



- A coalition of Ohio foster youth advocates whose mission is to organize Ohio's efforts to extend supports to foster youth through age 21
- Initiative launched in January 2014
- OACCA provides staff and consultant support to the initiative
- It is organized under a diverse volunteer Task Force, chaired by Mark Mecum
- Generous support of Ohio Fostering Connections is provided by:



# Endorsers



- Agape for Youth, Inc
- Beech Brook
- Catholic Charities Corporation
- CHOICES, Inc.
- Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
- COVA – Center of Vocational Alternatives
- Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services
- Focus on Youth, Inc
- Foster Care Alumni of America – Ohio Chapter
- Harmony Project Justice for Children Project, Moritz College of Law
- Lighthouse Youth Services
- Lowery Training Associates
- Marjory Curry and Associates
- Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition
- Montgomery County Office of Family and Children First
- National Youth Advocate Program
- Nationwide Children's Hospital
- Necco
- Oesterlen Services for Youth – Springfield
- Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies
- Ohio Family Care Association
- O.H.I.O Youth Advisory Board
- Pressley Ridge
- ProKids
- Safely Home Inc – Bedford
- Schubert Center for Child Studies at Case Western Reserve University
- Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth (SAFY)
- St. Joseph Orphanage
- The Buckeye Ranch
- UMCH Family Services
- ViaQuest Clinical Services
- Voices for Ohio's Children
- YWCA of Cleveland

*Sign up as an endorser on*  
[www.ohiofosteringconnections.org](http://www.ohiofosteringconnections.org)

# Petition



- Petition calls on Ohio lawmakers to pass legislation to extend Title IV-E eligibility to age 21
- 4,100 supporters, and counting

[change.org](https://www.change.org)

# Quotes from Petitioners



“I am a former foster youth who experienced neglect and homelessness after leaving foster care at 18. I had a rough patch with healthy relationships and self worth. If I can help prevent this in any other foster youth then its my duty to try.” – Krystal Quick, Amherst, OH

“I am a foster parent and I see the damage that is caused by letting these kids go at 18. Some of them haven't even finished high school yet. 21 is a much better idea and gives them the time they need to mature and get into a good career!” – Norita Dean, Brunswick, OH

[change.org](https://www.change.org)

# 2014 Activities



## **1. Educated decision-makers and the public about the need to extend supports to youth aging out of foster care.**

- Held three policy-briefing events on the costs and benefits of extending support to foster youth and an overview of how other states support foster youth beyond age 18.
- Disseminated information about youth aging out of foster care.
- Partnered with organizations to hold regional educational events.
- Hosted a focus group with young adults, who aged out of foster care, to inform Ohio Fostering Connections recommendations.
- Convened a series of five community events to inform the public about Ohio Fostering Connections and to gather feedback about how Ohio could expand services to youth aging out of foster care.

# 2014 Policy Briefing



## Speakers:

- Dr. Mark Courtney, University of Chicago
- Gary Stangler, Executive Director, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
- Foster Youth
- State Rep. Zack Milkovich
- Mark Mecum, Ohio Fostering Connections



March 4, 2014, Riffe Center,  
Columbus, Ohio

# 2014 Media Coverage



# 2014 Media Coverage



Columbus, Ohio • Jan 27, 2014 • 10° Partly Cloudy

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### EDITORIAL

# Some foster kids need more time

Monday January 13, 2014 5:54 AM

Comments: 0 Tweet

For years, advocates for Ohio's kids in foster care have warned that those who "age out" — whose birth families never come back together, and who find themselves on their own and unprepared at 18 — are at high risk of becoming homeless, getting (or getting someone) pregnant, falling in with criminals and otherwise seeing their lives derailed before they begin.

Dispatch editorials express the view of the Dispatch editorial board, which is made up of the publisher, the president of The Dispatch, the editor and the editorial-writing staff. As is the traditional newspaper

Columbus, Ohio • Jan 27, 2014 • 10° Partly Cloudy

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# Foster care until age 21 has backers

By Rita Price

The Columbus Dispatch • Monday January 6, 2014 5:46 AM

cleveland.com Northeast Ohio

NEWS LOCAL NEWS BUSINESS SPORTS H.S.SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT

## Ohio should extend the foster-care age to 21: editorial

child-welfare advocates is launching a campaign to get n the growing number of states that extend foster care to

000 and 1,300 Ohio foster youths age out of the system when they turn 18, and too many exit to a bleak landscape resources and support, said Mark Mecum, executive director Association of Child Caring Agencies.

Editorial Cartoon

Browns have coach, credibility

Opinion Features

Read letters editor



# 2014 Activities



## **2. Through original research, determine the cost-benefit to the State of Ohio of extending supports.**

- Released independent research on projected costs and benefits to Ohio that determined a dollar-for-dollar return on investment.

## **3. Identified practice models used in other states**

- Produced independent research on state implementation models.
- Obtained information from the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative about implementation methods.

# 2014 Activities



- 4. Developed a practice model to guide implementation of extended supports to youth aging out of foster care.**
- Convened a workgroup of experts from the Ohio Fostering Connections Task Force to create and design an implementation strategy.
  - Produced a report of recommendations for state government officials.

# 2015 Goals



## 1. Educate policymakers, stakeholders and the public about Ohio Fostering Connections

- Distribute report, outlining Ohio Fostering Connections recommendations, to Ohio legislators, state officials, major media outlets, and stakeholders
- Meet with key legislators and Kasich administration officials to discuss key findings
- Partner with advocacy organizations to create and distribute policy briefs and reports

# 2015 Goals



## 2. Seek passage of HB 50, Ohio Fostering Connections Act

- Recruit legislators to champion the Act (15)
- Identify additional lobbyists and influential advocates to assist in advocating for its passage
- Issue timely calls to action
- Organize group testimony during legislative hearings

# 2015 Goals



## **3. Assemble key stakeholders in support of HB 50**

- Hold Statehouse press conference on February 18
- Hold Statehouse advocacy event on March 26
- Provide stakeholders with clear calls to action for supporting Ohio Fostering Connections legislation

# 2015 Goals



## **4. Deploy a media campaign strategy, designed to educate and engage decision-makers and the public**

- Organize specific stories to be published in major papers or local news
- Coordinate letter to editor campaign
- Issue press releases around legislative testimony
- March 26 Statehouse Advocacy Day event
- Engage thousands of Ohio Fostering Connections supporters through Facebook, Twitter and Change.org

## **5. Develop a robust system of support for implementation**

- Convene regional meetings to facilitate capacity building of programs to support youth aging out of foster care

# Research



Independent research was conducted by Dr. Alvin Mares of the Ohio State University College of Social Work. His research includes:

- Literature review of studies of foster youth outcomes
- State implementation models and policy methods
- Costs of implementing the Act in Ohio
- Financial benefits to Ohio based on anticipated improvement in outcomes

# Cost-Benefit Study



## Cost Assumptions

- Average length of stay: 18 months
- Cost per participant: \$1,472 per month
- Participation rate: 33%
  - 350 participants per annual emancipation cohort
  - 1,050 participants in total (18, 19, 20 year olds)
- Profile categories of participants:
  - 36% accelerated
  - 21% emerging
  - 25% struggling parents
  - 18% troubled and troubling

# Cost-Benefit Study



## Cost Assumptions (continued)

- Cost of administrative case management: \$775,816 annually
- Cost of administrative case review: \$1,200 per participant
- Cost of extended adoption assistance: \$200,351 annually

# Cost-Benefit Study



## Benefit Assumptions

- Benefits to Ohio will be realized in the form of:
  - increased sales and income tax derived from increased earnings resulting from increased educational attainment,
  - cost savings derived from decreased parenthood among females and decreased incarceration among males

## Implementation Assumptions

- Ohio will phase the program in over three years
  - (In the first year, only 18 year olds who emancipate will be eligible)
  - It is not yet determined if HB 50 will be phased in

# Cost-Benefit Study



## Key Findings

- Over a ten year period, Ohio will benefit dollar-for-dollar by providing supportive services to young people who age out of foster care and to those who were adopted from foster care at age 16 or later.
- By year six of the program's statewide implementation, Ohio will benefit \$1.06 for every \$1.00 spent.
- By year 10, the benefit will rise to \$1.81 for every \$1.00 spent, surpassing net costs

# Cost-Benefit Study



	Yr-1	Yr-2	Yr-3	Yr-4	Yr-5	Yr-6	Yr-7	Yr-8	Yr-9	Yr-10	Total
<b>Costs (in millions)</b>											
Housing	3.1	6.1	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	82.6
Case Management	0.8	1.5	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	20.7
Administrative Review	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	3.7
Extended Adoption	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>112.5</b>							
Federal Match (60%)	2.5	5.0	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	67.5
Ohio Share (40%)	1.7	3.3	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	45.0
<b>Benefits (in millions)</b>											
Increased Education	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	2.5	3.7	5.0	6.2	6.2	6.2	31.1
Decreased Parenthood	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.8	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4	7.0
Decreased Incarceration	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>45.1</b>
<b>Benefit-Cost Ratio (Ohio)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>1.45</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>1.00</b>

# Cost-Benefit Study



## Estimated State GRF Cost During SFY 16-17 Biennium

### SFY 16: Planning Year

- \$0.3 million

### SFY 17: First Year of Implementation

- \$1.7 million (if phased in), **OR**
- \$5 million (if not phased in)

### Total Cost During SFY 16-17

- \$2.7 million (if phased in), **OR**
- \$6 million



# Program Design



Extensive research was conducted to identify how Ohio could implement the Ohio Fostering Connections Act in the most successful way possible

- Reviewed Title IV-E plans from other states
- Consulted with national experts
- Conducted focus group of foster youth and alumni
- Gathered input from stakeholders at community forum events held in Toledo, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, and Dayton
- Formed ‘Practice Model’ workgroup
- Facilitated discussion with the Ohio Fostering Connections Task Force

# Program Design: Core Recommendations



## Who would be eligible?

*Follow the eligibility standards included in the federal Act*

- Youth age 18 through their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday who aged out of foster care and who meet any one of the following criteria:
  1. Completing high school/GED
  2. Enrolled part-time or full-time in: 1) an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education; 2) a university or college, or 3) a vocational or trade school;
  3. Participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to employment;
  4. Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
  5. Incapable of doing any of the previously described educational or employment activities due to a documented medical condition

# Program Design: Core Recommendations



## Who would administer the program?

*ODJFS, and carried out by local public and private agencies*

- ODJFS would centrally administer the program, maintain regulations, and appropriate funding to local agencies
- Local agencies include any public or private agency certified by ODJFS to operate a Fostering Connections program
  - Could include PCSA, JFS, Housing Authority, private foster care agencies, private supportive housing agencies, other private entities
  - Would not include: landlords, housing developers, individual families
- Client enrollment is voluntary and may re-enroll

# Program Design: Core Recommendations



What type of programs should be available?

*Diverse programs that are appropriate to varying levels of support, supervision, and readiness for independence*

- Traditional out-of-home care programs
- Host homes
- Supportive housing programs
- Campus-based living settings
- Cash housing stipends



# Program Design: Recommendations



Additional recommendations are available in the following report:

Download it at:

[www.ohiofosteringconnections.org](http://www.ohiofosteringconnections.org)

December 2014

## Ohio Fostering Connections: *Expanding supports for foster youth through age 21*



### Key Facts

- 1,000 Ohio youth "age out" of foster care each year at age 18
- As many as 3,000 former foster youth in Ohio could be eligible for extended support under the Ohio Fostering Connections Act
- Independent research shows that supporting Ohio foster youth through age 21 will: 1) improve educational attainment and earnings outcomes and 2) produce a net economic gain to Ohio taxpayers

Generous support of Ohio Fostering Connections is provided by:



**THE GEORGE GUND FOUNDATION**

# III. Overview of the Ohio Fostering Connections Act



# Legislative History



## **January 30, 2014**

- HB 423 introduced by State Reps. Lynn Wachtmann and Zack Milkovich

## **April 23, 2014**

- House Health and Aging Committee holds hearing on bill

## **February 10, 2015**

- HB 50 introduced; assigned to House Community and Family Advancement Committee

# Overview of Draft Bill



- ODJFS pays Title IV-E match including the extended adoption assistance match; prohibits PCSAs from doing so
- Youth enrollment in the program is voluntary
- Individuals have ability to dis-enroll and re-enroll in the program
- Program eligibility is individuals ages 18 through their 21st birthday who are Title IV-E eligible and were in custody of a PCSA when they were age 18 (but not restricted to just those who emancipated)
- Client eligibility based on federal standards
- Adoption assistance extended to families who adopted foster youth at age 16 or older; eligibility for funding subject to same client eligibility
- Include appropriation to ODJFS for SFY 16-17

# Overview of Draft Bill



- ODJFS required to promulgate rules to implement the program
  - Rules to allow individuals to maintain eligibility while they are transitioning into or out of qualified employment or education situations
  - Rules to require 30 day written notice of termination to clients that are determined to be ineligible
  - Formation of an advisory council to provide evaluation and to make recommendations for statewide implementation
- Enrolled clients must sign a Voluntary Placement Agreement
- ODJFS issues IV-E Plan Amendment by May 1, 2016

# Possible Timeline



February 2015: Bill introduced

June 30, 2015: Bill enacted into law

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016: ODJFS initiates planning process with stakeholders

May 1, 2016 – ODJFS Issues IV-E Amendment

July 1, 2016: Enrollment begins

# Possible Implementation Scenario



January 2016: ODJFS creates new 'certified function' called "to provide Ohio Fostering Connections Act services"

February 2016: ODJFS releases RFP for agencies to deliver Ohio Fostering Connections Act services in 13 regions (largest metro counties are own regions)

April 2016: ODJFS issues awards to agencies in the 13 regions; some awardees are collaboratives of multiple agencies

July 2016: Clients enroll in certified programs



# IV. Key Questions about Implementation



# V. How to Get Involved



# Get Connected



www.ohiofosteringconnections.org

**Ohio Fostering Connections**  
Organizing Ohio's efforts to extend foster care to age 21

Home About Resources Get Involved

## Ohio Fostering Connections

The mission of Ohio Fostering Connections is to organize Ohio's efforts to extend foster care to age 21. Use this website to learn more and get involved. You can also sign the Change.org petition now!

### Columbus Dispatch Calls on Ohio To Support Foster Youth Through Age 21

January 13, 2014  
The Columbus Dispatch

Connect With Us

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9 people like Ohio Fostering Connections.



change.org

# Advocacy Day: March 26



Join us at the Ohio Fostering Connections Advocacy Day on March 26 at the Ohio Statehouse around noon –  
*details to follow*



# Resources



- Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative – Success Beyond 18 Resources

<http://jimcaseyyouth.org/success-beyond-18/campaign-resources>

- Midwest Study on the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth Reports

<http://www.chapinhall.org/research/report/midwest-evaluation-adult-functioning-former-foster-youth>

- Program Instruction on Fostering Connections from Federal Government

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/pi1011>

# Contact



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**Ohio Fostering Connections**

Supporting Ohio Foster Youth Through Age 21

[www.ohiofosteringconnections.org](http://www.ohiofosteringconnections.org)