

# Foster Youth in Transition

Age 17 and Moving to Adulthood

Foster Youth transitioning to adulthood in Washington State face challenges as they prepare to live on their own. Bonding with foster parents or other adults, or being in school or having a job can make all a difference during the transition.

## In School or Working

*Preparing for Life*



**9 in 10** attend school or work

The youth engaged in school or work report better life experience and fewer risk factors

## Foster Parent Bond

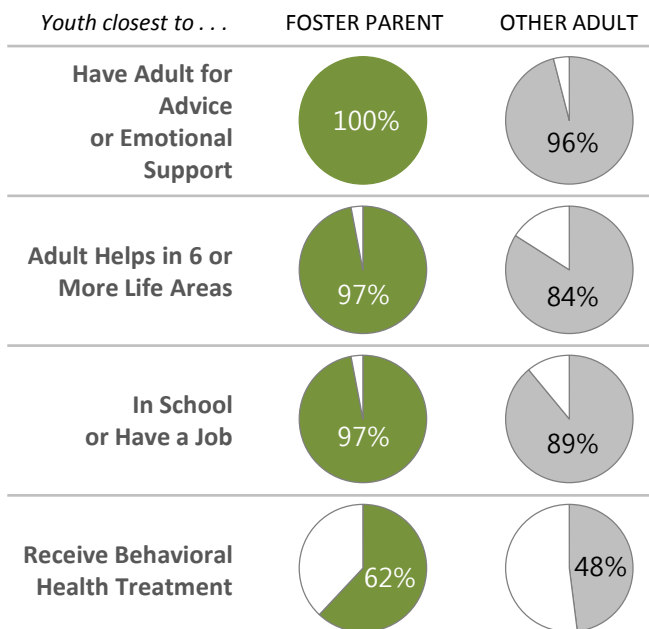
*Unconditional Relationship*



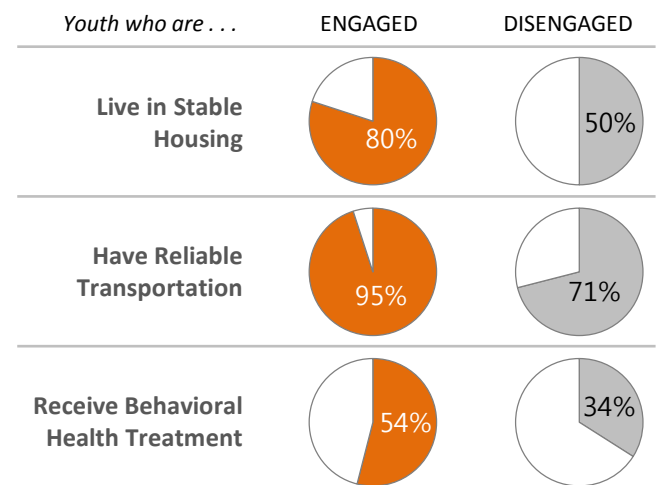
**1 in 4** formed trusting, unconditional relationship with their foster parents

These youth reported better life experiences and fewer risk factors

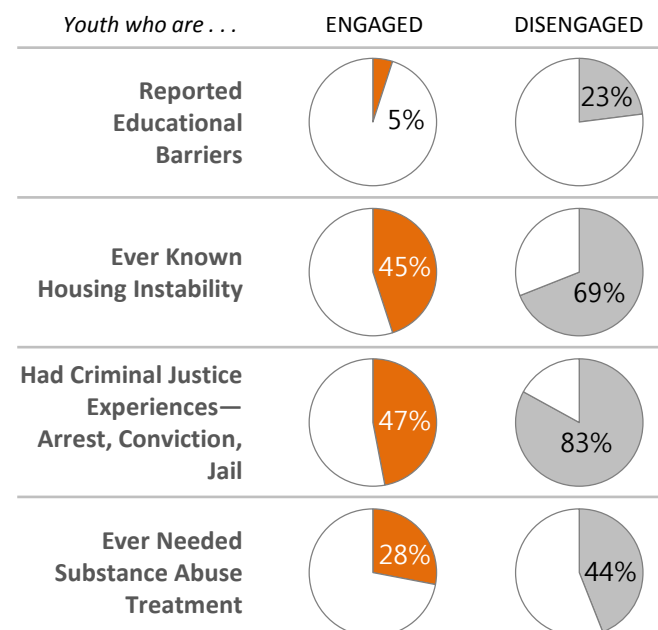
### GREATER STABILITY



### GREATER STABILITY



### FEWER RISKS



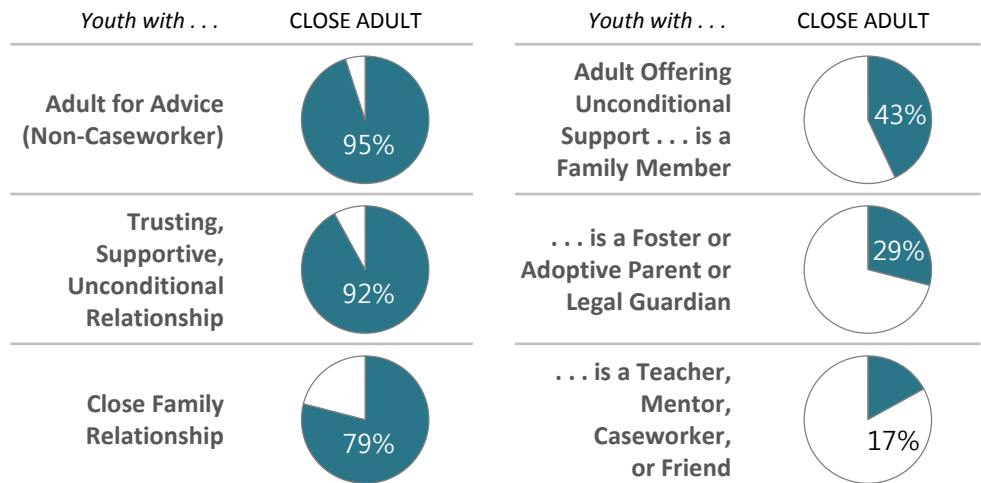
# Close, Helpful Adults

## Offering Personal Support



Nearly **ALL** youth had a trusted adult they felt close to

Youth with stronger, more supportive relationships reported better life experiences and fewer risk factors



“It is critical for the future success of our foster youth that they have an adult in their lives on whom they can rely. Not only can a trusted adult provide needed advice on the youth’s transition to adulthood, but that adult can also support the youth through the inevitable bumps and barriers to that transition.”

— Jennifer Strus, Assistant Secretary  
DSHS Children’s Administration

**Transition to Adulthood: Washington State Foster Youth at Age 17**  
Findings from the 2014 NYTD Survey

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In collaboration with the DSHS Children’s Administration, Sarah Furlow, LICSW, and being co-lead by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Research and Data Analysis.

**Key Findings**

1. **More foster youth attended school or had a job.** These youth reported better life experiences and fewer risk factors than the disadvantaged youth. Stable housing, reliable transportation to school or work, help with mental health, educational materials, and foster parents and connections to biological family substantially increased the likelihood of youth engagement in school or job. Teen parenthood and criminal justice system experience were the principal barriers to engagement.
2. **Stronger, more supportive relationships with adults matter.** The youth with very supportive adults in their lives were significantly more likely to be in school or have a job, live in stable housing, and have health insurance than the youth with less supportive adults. They also reported less involvement in the criminal justice system and fewer risky behaviors.
3. **Close relationships with foster parents matter.** The youth who were very close to their foster parents were significantly more likely to attend school or have a job than the youth whose closest adult was someone other than a foster parent. They reported significantly fewer barriers and more stability in their lives and were significantly more likely to receive behavioral health treatment.
4. **The 2014 cohort reported similar or better life experiences than the 2011 cohort.** The more recently transitioning youth were significantly more likely to attend regular high school, live in stable housing, and court- or jail-free than the 2011 cohort. They evaluated 1200 efforts to help the youth strengthen their relationship with their closest adults, very positively.

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### ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

The DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division has based these findings on the results of the 2014 National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Survey for Washington State conducted from October 2013 through November 2014. Of the total 418 eligible youth, 90 percent (378 youth) participated in the survey. The youth were contacted by the DSHS survey team within 45 days of their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>.

Participants	378	White Non-Hispanic	45%	American Indian	22%
Females	55%	Any Minority	55%	Asian/Other Pacific Islander	3%
Males	45%	African American	18%	Hispanic	18%

This research was conducted by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Research and Data Analysis Division in collaboration with the DSHS Children’s Administration.

Sharkova • Luceno • Felver

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VISIT US AT: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/SESA/research-and-data-analysis>