MULTI-SITE EVALUATION OF FOSTER YOUTH PROGRAMS (CHAFEE INDEPENDENT LIVING EVALUATION PROJECT), 2001-2010

NDACAN Dataset Number 161
USER'S GUIDE and CODEBOOK

National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect
Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853-4401
607-255-7799
ndacan@cornell.edu
www.ndacan.cornell.edu

INITIAL RELEASE 03/31/2013
MULTI-SITE EVALUATION OF FOSTER YOUTH PROGRAMS
(CHAFEE INDEPENDENT LIVING EVALUATION PROJECT),
2001-2010

Data Collected by

Mark E. Courtney, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin Madison, WI

Matthew W. Stagner, Ph.D.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Washington, DC

Michael Pergamit, Ph.D.
Urban Institute Washington, DC

Funded by


Distributed by

National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect

User's Guide and Codebook Written by

Holly M. Larrabee, MSHP and Margaret McCarthy
National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect
in collaboration with
Sarah M. Hughes
NORC at the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
PREFACE

The data for *Multi-Site Evaluation of Foster Youth Programs (Chafee Independent Living Evaluation Project), 2001-2010* have been given to the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect for public distribution by Mark E. Courtney, Matthew W. Stagner and Michael Pergamit. Funding for the project was provided by Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation and the Children’s Bureau Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. (Award Number(s): 233-02-0059).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SOURCE

Authors should acknowledge the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect and the original collector of the data when they publish manuscripts that use data provided by the Archive. Users of these data are urged to follow some adaptation of the statement below.

The data used in this publication were made available by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, and have been used with permission. Data from *Multi-Site Evaluation of Foster Youth Programs (Chafee Independent Living Evaluation Project), 2001-2010* were originally collected by: Mark E. Courtney; Matthew W. Stagner; and Michael Pergamit. Funding for the project was provided by Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation and the Children’s Bureau Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Washington, D.C. (Award Number(s): 233-02-0059). The collector(s) of the original data, the funder(s), NDACAN, Cornell University and their agents or employees bear no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

The bibliographic citation for this data collection is:


PUBLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT

In accordance with the terms of the *Data License* for this dataset, users of these data are required to deposit a copy of any published work or report based wholly or in part on these data with the Archive. A copy of any completed manuscript, thesis abstract, or reprint should be sent to ndacan@cornell.edu Such copies will be used to provide funding agencies with essential information about the use of NDACAN resources and to facilitate the exchange of information about research activities among data users and contributors.
ABSTRACT

The Children’s Bureau in the Administration for Children and Families contracted with the Urban Institute and its partners—the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago and the National Opinion Research Center—to conduct an evaluation of selected programs funded through John Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). This evaluation, using a rigorous, random assignment design, was called for in the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. The goal of the evaluation is to determine the effects of Independent Living Programs funded under CFCIP in achieving key outcomes for participating youth including increased educational attainment, higher employment rates and stability, greater interpersonal and relationship skills, reduced non-marital pregnancy and births, and reduced delinquency and crime rates. An initial evaluability assessment was conducted to identify programs that could be rigorously evaluated and to develop an evaluation design that would meet the requirements of the authorizing legislation. Programs participating in the evaluation include an employment services program in Kern County, California; a one-on-one intensive, individualized life skills program in Massachusetts; and, a tutoring/mentoring program and a classroom-based life skills training program, both in Los Angeles County, California. In order to determine the short and long-term effects of Independent Living Programs on key outcomes noted above, youth are assigned to intervention and control groups and surveyed at three points over the course of the evaluation. In-person interviews with youth obtain information on youth characteristics, program interventions and services, moderating factors, and intermediate and longer-term outcomes. In-person interviews are conducted with program administrators, community advocates, and directors of community provider agencies. Focus groups are conducted with youth, independent living program staff, and other agency staff responsible for referring youth to the programs. Child and family demographics, child welfare placement history, physical and mental health status, and delinquency history will be obtained through extracts of state administrative data. This study is being coordinated with other Children’s Bureau-funded efforts designed to meet the evaluation requirements of CFCIP.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

STUDY OVERVIEW ..................................................................................................................1
   Study Identification ............................................................................................................1
   Purpose of the Study .........................................................................................................1
   Study Design .....................................................................................................................1
   Date(s) of Data Collection ...............................................................................................1
   Geographic Area ...............................................................................................................1
   Unit of Observation ...........................................................................................................2
   Sample ..............................................................................................................................2
   Data Collection Procedures .............................................................................................3
   Response Rates ..................................................................................................................3
   Sources of Information ......................................................................................................3
   Type of Data Collected .....................................................................................................3
   Measures ...........................................................................................................................3
   Related Publications & Reports .........................................................................................3
   Analytic Considerations ....................................................................................................8
   Confidentiality Protection ................................................................................................11
  Extent of Collection .........................................................................................................11
   Extent of Processing .........................................................................................................11

DATA FILE INFORMATION .................................................................................................11
   File Specifications .............................................................................................................11
   Data File Notes ...............................................................................................................12
STUDY OVERVIEW

Study Identification

Multi-Site Evaluation of Foster Youth Programs (Chafee Independent Living Evaluation Project), 2001-2010

Principal Investigator(s):
Mark E. Courtney, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin Madison, WI

Matthew W. Stagner, Ph.D.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Washington, DC

Michael Pergamit, Ph.D.
Urban Institute Washington, DC

Funding Agency:

Award Number: 233-02-0059

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate independent living programs for youth in foster care.

Study Design

This evaluation uses an experimental design, whereby some youth are randomly assigned to be referred to the service being evaluated while others are referred to “services as usual,” both of which vary by site. In order to determine the short and long-term effects of independent living programs on key outcomes noted above, youth in both the treatment and control groups were interviewed in person at three points over the course of the evaluation. Treatment and control youth were interviewed shortly after referral and random assignment and follow-up interviews took place approximately one year and two years later. Where required, the questionnaire was adapted to specific program sites.

Date(s) of Data Collection

The award period started on 9/28/2001 and concluded on 09/27/2010. Each site has a different start and end date within that span of time.

Geographic Area

Kern County, California; Massachusetts; and Los Angeles County, California
Unit of Observation

The unit of observation is the youth.

Sample

Site 1

Eligible youth for the Independent Living Life Skills Training (LST) Program in Los Angeles were those 16 years and older in out-of-home placements (including probation). Referrals to the program may come from caseworkers or the court may order services be made available to the youth. Youth who may be ineligible for the program included those with severe learning disabilities or disruptive behavior problems. Hearing-impaired youth were provided an interpreter for the program. For the purposes of the Multi-site Evaluation, eligible youth included all those in care who were able to participate in the program and who (1) reached their 17th birthday during the intake period or (2) entered care during the intake period and were 17 or older on the date of entry to care. The target sample size for this site was 450. The sample was accumulated between September 2003 and June 2004.

Site 2

Eligible youth for the Early Start to Emancipation Preparation Tutoring (ESTEP-Tutoring) program were referred to the program after an assessment of the youths’ reading and math skills was conducted by an emancipation-preparation advisor (EPA) with the ESTEP program. The ESTEP program provided an initial in-home assessment and recruited youth for emancipation preparation workshops provided on 12 community college campuses. Youth aged 14 to 16 and in out-of-home care were eligible for the ESTEP program. The sampling frame for the evaluation was all youth referred for ESTEP-Tutoring during the study period. After assessments were conducted by EPAs, all youth deemed appropriate for tutoring—that is 1 to 3 years behind grade level on reading or math—were randomly assigned to either the treatment or control group. The target sample size for this site was 450. The sample was accumulated between September 2003 and June 2004.

Site 3

Eligible youth for the Kern county IL-ES sample consists of youth in foster care placements under the guardianship of the Kern County Department of Human Services who turned 16 years old between September 2003 and July 2006 or who entered care during that period and were already at least 16 years old. To be in scope for the study, the youth had to be in out-of-home care, eligible for Chafee services, and were placed in Bakersfield or a nearby community. The target sample size for this site was 250. The sample was accumulated between September 2003 and May 2006.

Site 4

Eligible youth for site 4 were youth aged 14 or above in therapeutic foster care in the custody of DSS with a service plan of Independent Living or likely to be IL. The target sample size was 250 youth. Sample was accumulated between September 2004 and February 2007.
Data Collection Procedures

Data collection for the survey was conducted via a computer-assisted personal interview conducted at a location of the respondent's choosing, usually at home. Portions of the survey were conducted via Audio Computer Assisted Personal Interview (ACASI), in which the respondent keyed responses him- or herself while listening to and reading along with questionnaire items appearing on the laptop screen. Sections conducted via ACASI were the following: Substance Abuse, Sexual Behavior, Delinquency and Externalizing Behavior, and Victimization.

Response Rates

The study response rates are as follows:
Baseline total number of completed cases
Site 1: 469
Site 2: 463
Site 3: 263
Site 4: 194

First follow up response rate (% of baseline)
Site 1 Round 2: 429 – 91.47%
Site 2 Round 2: 434 – 93.74%
Site 3 Round 2: 238 – 90.49%
Site 4 Round 2: 181 – 93.30%

Second follow up response rate (% of baseline)
Site 1 Round 3: 413 – 88.06%
Site 2 Round 3: 413 – 89.20%
Site 3 Round 3: 237 – 90.11%
Site 4 Round 3: 179 – 92.27%

Sources of Information

Survey forms administered via face-to-face computer-assisted interviews were used to collect information.

Type of Data Collected

Surveys, interviews, developmental testing, behavioral observations, and physical measurements.

Measures

Achenbach Adult Self-Report (ASR/18-59)

Achenbach Youth Self-Report (YSR)


Composite International Diagnostic Interview Short Form (CIDI-SF)

Only the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) portion of the measure was administered. The measure was modified to omit questions regarding experience in a war zone or region of terror.


Lifetime Experiences Questionnaire

The Lifetime Experiences Questionnaire was administered as questions V0 to V16. Although the measure is unpublished, it was also used in the Midwest study and is contained in Appendix B of the Midwest study's final report, available at http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/CS_97.pdf


MEFYP Attitudes and Expectations [adapted from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth, and the Outcomes of Independent Living Project]


MEFYP Demographics [adapted from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth, and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health)]

MEFYP Economic Wellbeing [adapted from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, the Precarious Families Study and the Current Population Study]


MEFYP Education [adapted from the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth, and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health)]


MEFYP Employment [adapted from the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, the Current Population Survey, and the National Survey of Family Growth]


MEFYP Fertility [adapted from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, the Outcomes of Independent Living Project, and the National Survey of Family Growth]


MEFYP Living Arrangements [adapted from the household roster of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) Household Roster, and the Outcomes of Independent Living Project]


MEFYP Location [adapted from the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth]

MEFYP Mental Health [adapted from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth]


MEFYP Physical Health [adapted from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, the National Health Interview Survey, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the Outcomes of Independent Living Project and the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth]


MEFYP Pro-Social and other Activities [adapted from the NSCAW Protective Factors, the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth, and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health)]


MEFYP Relationships [adapted from the Questions for Children in Out-of-Home Care from the University of California at Berkeley Foster Care Study and the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth]


MEFYP Services [adapted from the NSCAW Independent Living Module and the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth]


MEFYP Sexual Behavior [adapted from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 and the
National Survey of Family Growth Cycle 6 (2002)]


MEFYP Social Support [adapted from the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth and the NSCAW Social Support]

- Sherbourne, C.D., & Stewart, A.L. The MOS social support survey. Social Science & Medicine, 32(6), 705-714. doi: 10.1016/0277-9536(91)90150-B.

MEFYP Substance Abuse [adapted from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 and Monitoring the Future]


MEFYP Victimization [adapted from the NSCAW Victimization, and the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth]


Modified Self Report of Delinquency

Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement (WJ-III)

Youths completed three tests (described below) from the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement III (Mather, Wendling, and Woodcock 2001). The unit of measurement used in these analyses was the age percentile, which indicates youths’ percentile rankings based on a normative sample. Letter-Word Identification consists of items asking youths to pronounce words and simpler items asking them to identify letters. Calculation is a measure of the youth’s ability to perform calculations. The youth completes a workbook with calculation problems of varying degrees of difficulty. Passage Comprehension consists of passages that the respondent reads silently. Each passage has a blank and the youth must complete the sentence. Difficulty varies across items on this test, too, with the simplest items consisting of recognizing words and following verbal instructions.


Related Publications & Reports

*Users are strongly encouraged to obtain study relevant references before doing analyses. To view a complete list of publications, go to [www.ndacan.cornell.edu](http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu), navigate to this dataset’s Page and click on the publications link.*

Analytic Considerations

Data was collected over four sites. The questionnaires differed somewhat by site, as detailed in the accompanying documentation. Some variable names and labels vary by site, requiring recoding prior to combining data across sites.

Youths were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups, with the expectation that (a) youths assigned to the treatment group would receive services consistent with the design of the program and (b) youths in the control group would not receive any services from the program being evaluated, although they might have received similar services from other sources. Consistent with the experimental evaluation design, the primary analytic strategy for assessing the impact of the program is an Intent-to-Treat (ITT) analysis of differences in observed outcomes between the treatment and control groups as they were originally assigned. Intent-to-Treat analyses assume that the treatment provider intends to serve all of the evaluation subjects that are assigned to the treatment group. This strategy assumes that the treatment and control groups do not differ systematically across any characteristics that might be associated with outcomes of interest since the two groups were selected through a random process. Any outcomes that differ between the two groups in a statistically significant way are assumed to be a result of the intervention being evaluated. However, as in other experimental evaluations of social services, there were some violations of the assignment protocol. That is, some members of the control group...
received services (crossovers), while some members of the treatment group did not (no-shows). The crux of the problem presented by crossovers and no-shows (collectively referred to here as violations) is that both can serve to lessen the observed differences in program effects across the groups as originally assigned. For more information on this topic, please consult the final reports.

Youth Questionnaire. The youth questionnaire is the primary data collection tool used in the study. It provides the foundation for the impact study, but also offers critical information about youths’ backgrounds and experiences. The evaluation team designed the youth questionnaire primarily by using questions from existing surveys. The sources were selected to provide questions that had been used frequently and would provide good possibilities to compare with other samples. Four surveys provided the bulk of the questions. The Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth (the “Midwest study”) and the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Wellbeing (NSCAW) provided questions about child welfare and provided comparison samples of foster youths. In particular, the Midwest Study provided a good comparison sample of foster youths aging out of care. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997 cohort (NLSY97), and the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (AddHealth) provided many of the other questions and allowed comparisons with nationally representative samples of adolescents aging into their twenties. Special attention to the questionnaire design and selection of items was made so that the core questionnaire could be used with youths referred to independent living services at each selected site and so that the same questionnaire could be used in each round, with minor variations across rounds.

The majority of measures contained in the youth questionnaire are adapted from multiple sources. In preparing the user’s guide, every effort was made to properly document the questionnaire sources. Users may wish to consult the documentation for the source surveys to ensure that secondary work credits adapted measures. A list of source surveys follows.

**Detailed Source Information**

**Current Population Survey**

**Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth**

**Monitoring the Future**

**National Health Interview Survey**


**National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health**


**National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997**


**National Survey of Child Abuse and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)**


**National Survey of Family Growth**


**Outcomes of Independent Living Project**


**Precarious Families**


**Youth Risk Behavior Survey**


**Confidentiality Protection**

All dates have been set to the 15th of the month. A number of string variables have been removed from the dataset, and as a result, there will be instances where variables will appear in the data dictionaries but are not available in the data files. A listing of variables removed from the dataset has been included as a text file called "deleted variables."

**Extent of Collection**

This collection consists of the User’s Guide, questionnaires, and a codebook corresponding to each site by wave of data collection. NDACAN produced the User’s Guide, and SAS and SPSS native data files.

**Extent of Processing**

A number of string variables have been removed from the dataset. Variable MH117 and YSR117 contain verbatim text responses regarding psychiatric medications the respondent has taken in the past twelve months. References to the specific month and year in which a medication was prescribed or a participant stopped taking the medication were modified to delete reference to the specific month. The variable is named MH117 in all datasets other than Round1site3, in which it is named YSR117. References to the specific month and year in which a medication was prescribed or a participant stopped taking the medication were modified to delete reference to the specific month. The variable is named MH117 in all datasets other than Round1site3, in which it is named YSR117.

**DATA FILE INFORMATION**

**File Specifications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Filename</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Round1_site1_v1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Round1_site2_v1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Round1_site3_v1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Round1_site4_v1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data File Notes

Data files can be merged by "SU_ID"

There may be variables listed in the Codebooks that have been removed from the data files (see “deleted variables”).

Technical support for this dataset is provided by NDACAN. Please send your inquiries to NDACANSUPPORT@cornell.edu