

The Center for Fostering Success

Best Practice, Best Fit

Webinar Series

**Discovery Driven Solutions Related
to Educational Attainment for
Students from Foster Care**



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Welcome!

Nathanael Okpych, MSW, MA



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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

DEFINING PROBLEMS. SHAPING SOLUTIONS.

Promoting Access to College for Older Youth in Foster Care: Receipt of Education Independent Living Services and the Role of Social Support in College Entry

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**School of Social Service Administration
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My purpose today

- How many foster youth receive independent living services (Chafee IL services)?
 - Nationally and in Michigan
- What types of social support predict entry into college for foster youth?
 - Data from CalYOUTH Study (17 year-olds in CA foster care)
 - Look at other predictors of college entry as well

PART 1:

*Independent Living
Services*



Chafee IL Services

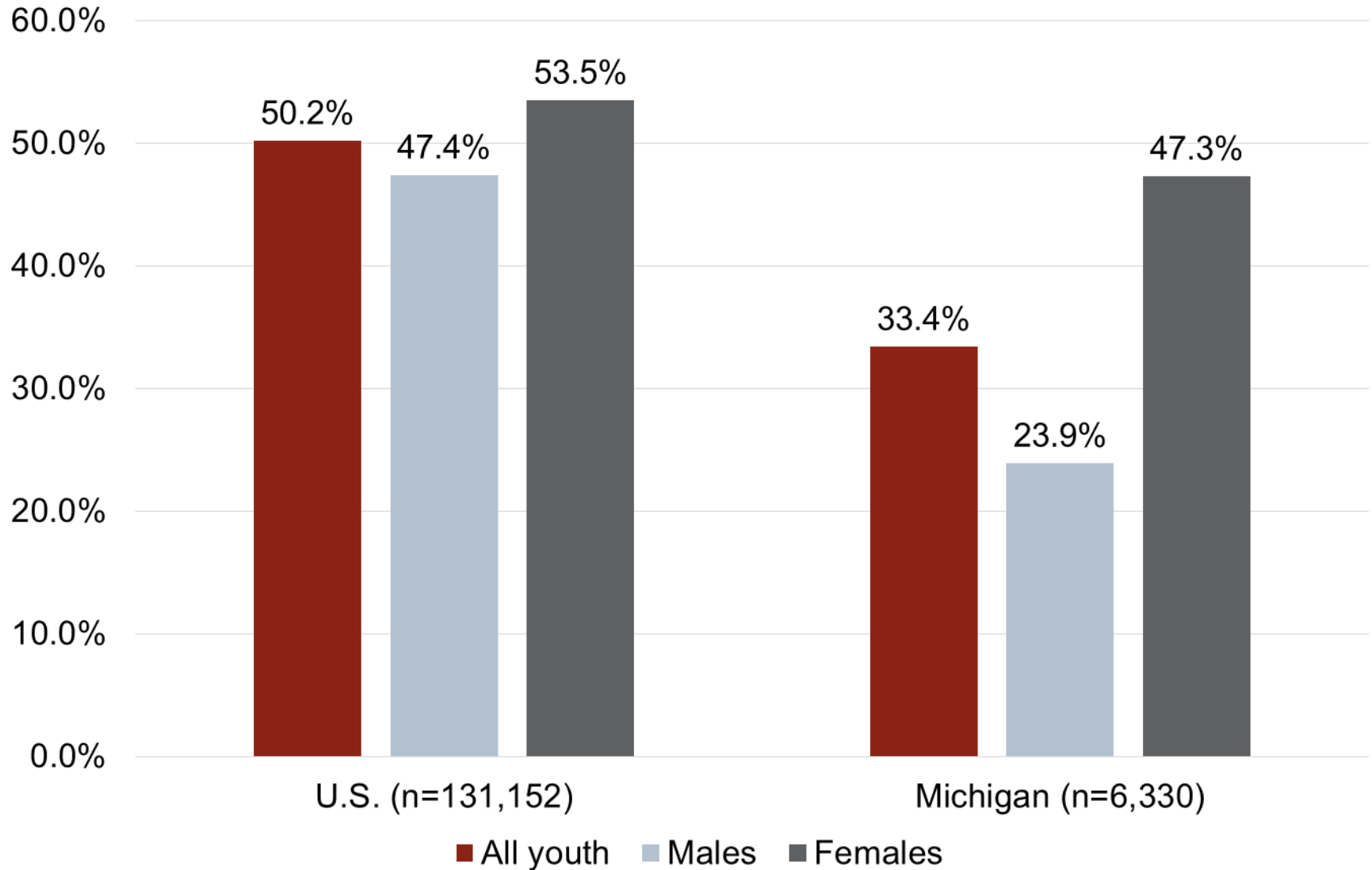
- Foster Care Independence Act of 2001
 - \$140M set aside each year for IL services
 - Education and Training Vouchers added in 2003
 - Required creation of NYTD
 - 13 different service areas: secondary education, postsecondary education, employment, daily living skills, financial literacy, housing, etc.
 - All states required to report youth who received Chafee funded services
 - First data collected in 2010
 - Good: national picture
 - Not so good: no specific standardized measures of IL Services

Analysis of Chafee Services

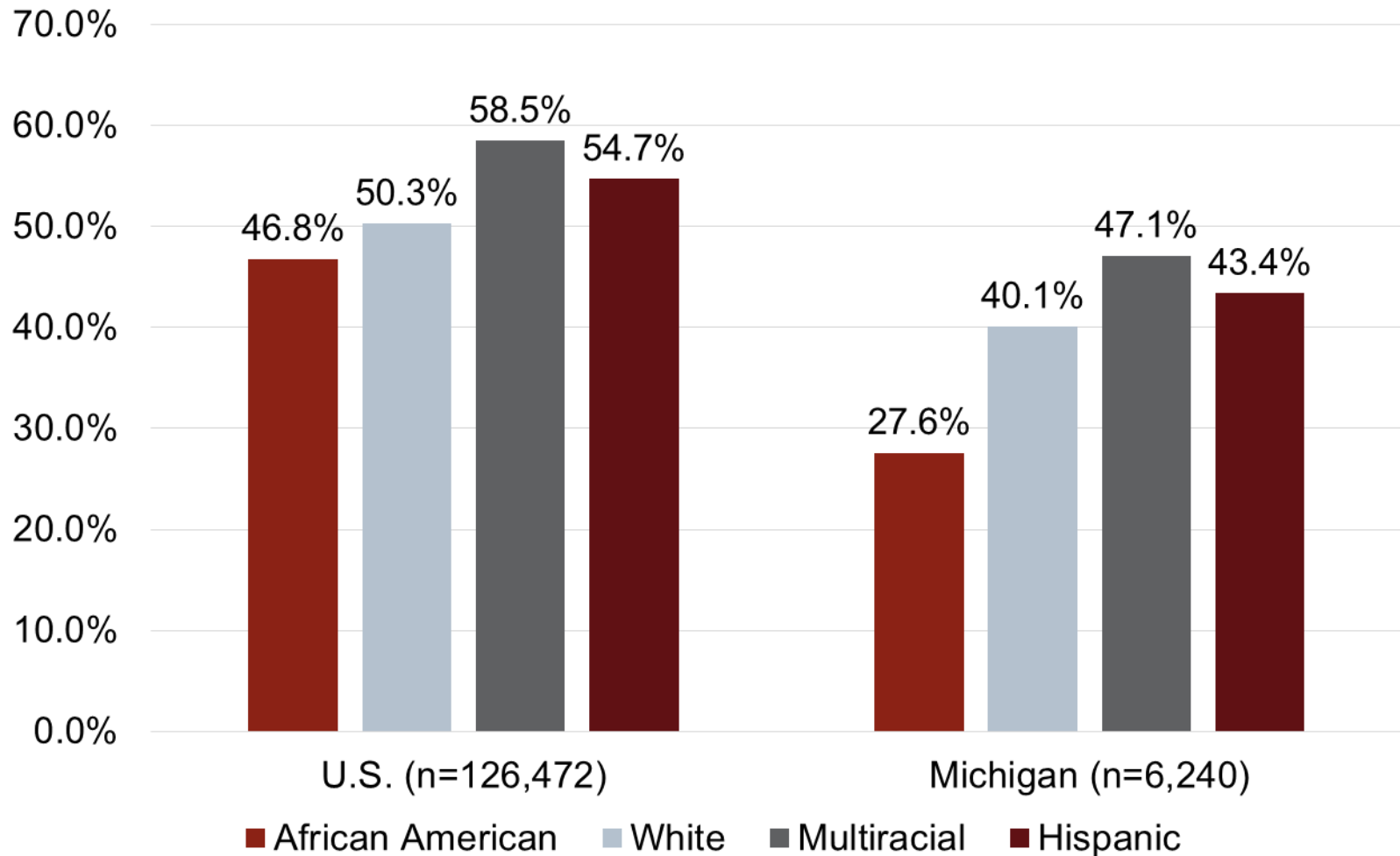
- Identified FC youth in AFCARS
 - In US foster care between Oct 2010 and Sept 2012
 - Ages 16 to 21
 - In care for at least 3 months
 - All 50 states and D.C., except for NY and PA
 - N=131,204
- Linked these youth to NYTD Services file
 - Includes youth who received at least 1 IL service provided/funded by State agency that administers Chafee IL program
 - Broken into 6-month periods of service receipt

GOAL: estimate proportions of FC youth receiving services, and examine differences by youth characteristics

Received Any IL Service (ages 16-21)

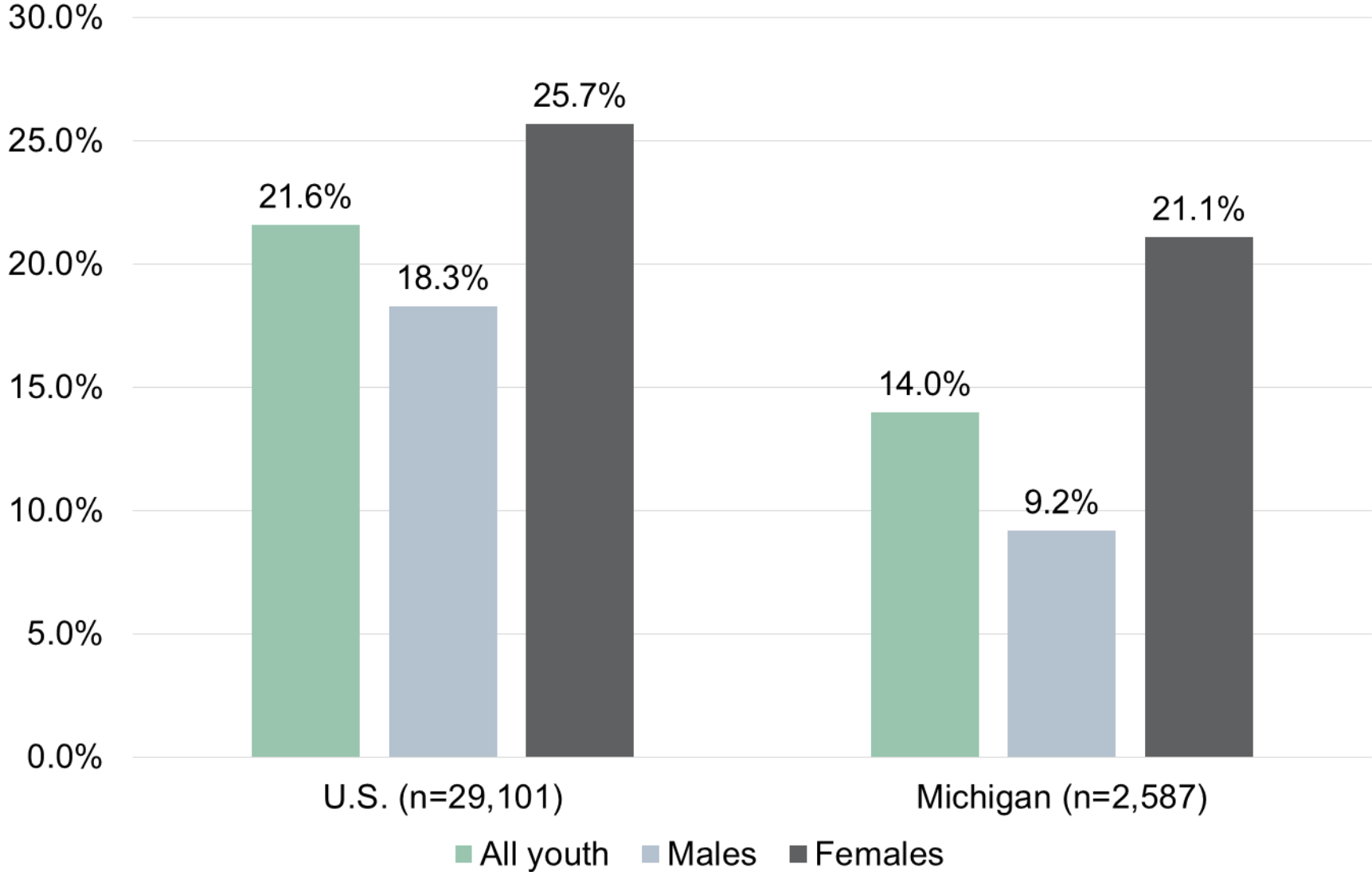


Received Any IL Service (ages 16-21) by Race/Ethnicity¹

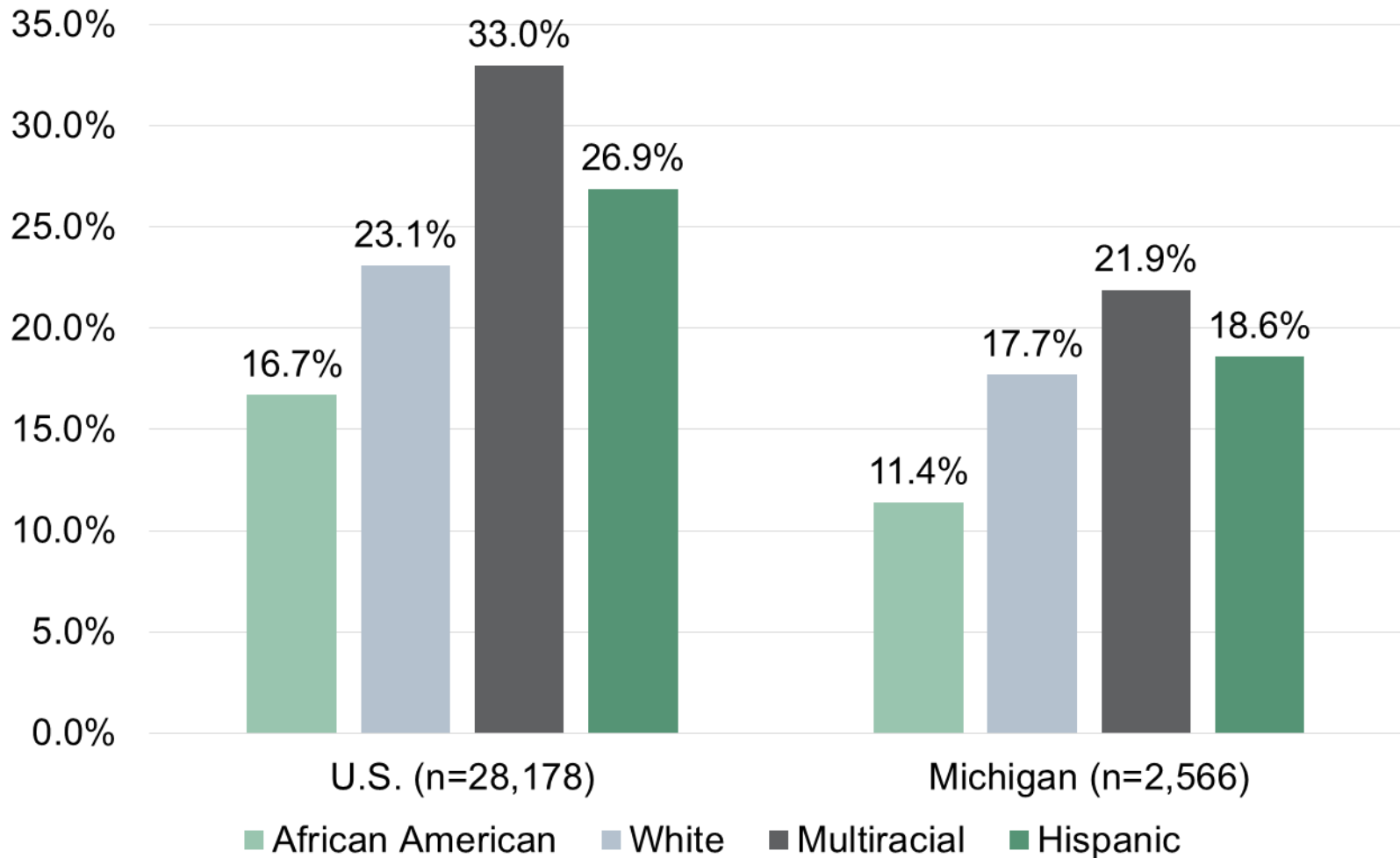


¹ Omitted Asian, Native American/AK Native, and HI/PI due to small sample sizes in Michigan

Received Postsecondary Ed. IL Service (ages 18-21)



Received Postsecondary Ed. IL Service (ages 18-21) by Race/Ethnicity¹



¹ Omitted Asian, Native American/AK Native, and HI/PI due to small sample sizes in Michigan

IL Service Summary

- **Across the U.S.**
 - 1 in 2 FC youth receive any service
 - 1 in 5 receive postsecondary ed service
- **In Michigan**
 - Receipt of IL services lower than national averages
- **In U.S and Michigan**
 - Females more likely to receive services than males
 - African American youth less likely to receive services than most other groups

LIMITATIONS

- Postsecondary Ed IL – service receipt related to college entry
- No standard measures for IL service
- Early in NYTD data collection
- Analysis points to differences, but does not answer why differences exist

PART 2:

*Social support and
college entry*



Social Support and College Entry

- Access to skilled, willing adults to help navigate college entry especially important for students underrepresented on college campuses (Dika & Singh, 2002; Perna, 2006)
- **Institutional agents** (Stanton-Salazar, 1997. 2011)
 - Information/guidance
 - Technical assistance
 - Encouragement
 - Advocacy
 - Normative expectations
 - Identity development
- FC youth may have additional barriers to developing relationships with institutional agents
 - E.g., less opportunity to develop long lasting relationships (e.g., placement and school mobility)
 - E.g., some less willing to utilize existing support

Research Questions

- Does social support predict entry into college?
- If so, what types of support are particularly important?
- CalYOUTH Study, asked FC youth about 3 types of social support (emotional, tangible, advice/guidance) in 3 ways:
 - Size of support networks
 - Adequacy of emotional, tangible, advice/guidance (“none”, “a little”, “a lot”)
 - Nominate specific individuals who provide support
 - Up to 3 people for each support type (0 to 9 distinct individuals in total)
 - Relationship to this person
- Also: amount of encouragement to continue education beyond high school from relatives, FC personnel, and school personnel

What kinds of social support matter?

Main Hypotheses:

H1: Having supportive relationships with individuals who could serve as institutional agents will predict college access

H2: Encouragement from school personnel will **amplify** effect of institutional agents

Also tested several alternative measures of social support

- E.g., Encouragement from other sources, size of social support network

Data and Sample

- CalYOUTH Study (PI: Mark Courtney)
 - Representative sample of CA foster care youth
 - Sample: aged 16.75 – 17.75 in 2013, in care for 6+ months
 - 95% response rate at baseline (n=727)
 - Baseline interview collected data on wide variety of domains
 - Present analysis includes youth who granted permission to access administrative data (n=713)
- Linked to National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data
 - National data on college enrollment and completion
 - High coverage rate (over 95% of US postsecondary ed. institutions)

Measures of college entry and social support

- Outcome: college enrollment (~age 19.2)
 - Had ever enrolled in 2yr or 4yr college by February 2015
- Main Predictor: Social Support (age 17)
 - **Institutional agents**
 - Count of individuals who provided support to youth and have college degree (e.g., teacher, school counselor, caseworker)
 - Data from Social Support Network Questionnaire (Gee & Rhodes, 2007)
 - **School encouragement** (age 17)
 - Binary measure if youth received “a lot” of encouragement to continue education beyond HS from personnel at their school

Control variables

- Controlled for 20+ factors
 - Demographic characteristics
 - Personality traits
 - Characteristics of foster care history/experience
 - Factors that may hinder likelihood of enrollment
 - Measures of academic performance and work experience
 - Measures of school difficulties
 - Measures of educational outlook

Data Analysis

- Logistic regression of log odds of enrollment on predictors
- Entered blocks of covariates in stepwise approach
- Weights used to account for sampling design and nonresponse, and to expand to CA population
- Multiple imputation to address missing data

Highlights: Youth Characteristics

- Less than half reading at 9th grade level or above
- 61% reported changing schools 4+ times
- 33% repeated a grade
- 28% expelled from school
- 34% in special education
- 81% aspired to earn a college degree

Social Support

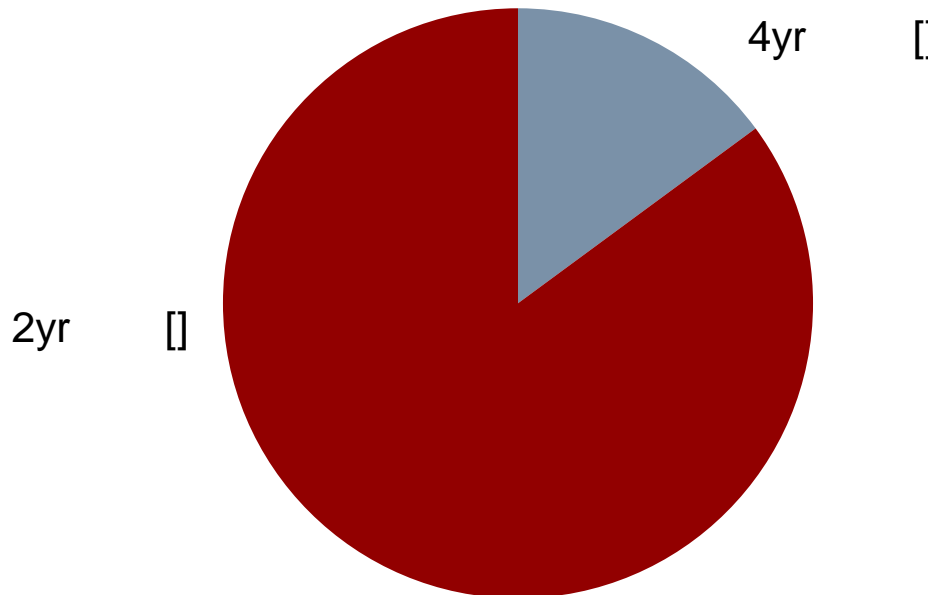
Institutional Agents	
Nominated at least 1 Institutional Agent	52.6%
Mean (SD)	0.80 (0.97)
% of Youth Who Nominated:	
Non-relative Foster Parent	29.4%
Caseworker	10.9%
Teacher or School Counselor	8.4%
Therapist/Counselor	7.6%
Other Professional	6.3%
Mentor	5.6%

School Encouragement	
A lot	63.1%
Some/None	36.9%

Descriptive Statistics: College Enrollment

- 41.6% ever enrolled in college by February 2015
 - Females (46.5%) more likely to enroll than males (34.3%) ($p=.004$)
 - No differences by race/ethnicity

Enrollment by Institution Level

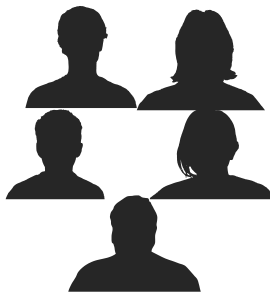


Findings: Predictors of College Entry

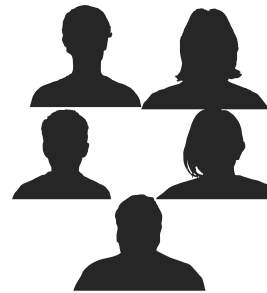
- Most types of social support did not predict college access (bivariate or multiple regression)
- Number of institutional agents did

Full model with all control variables (controls not shown)

	Odds Ratio	p-value
Number of institutional agents	1.22	.061



Say youth with certain constellation of characteristics and **ZERO IA** have **33%** enrolling in college



Other youth with same characteristics and **1 IA** have **37.5%** of enrolling in college

Findings: Predictors of College Entry

- School encouragement alone does not predict college entry
- But for youth who have at least 1 institutional agent, encouragement from school personnel magnifies the effect of institutional agents

	Odds Ratio	p-value
Institutional agents	0.83	.343
School encouragement	0.70	.225
Institutional agents * School encouragement	1.76	.015

Highlights: Other Predictors of College Entry

Other factors that increased likelihood of entering college

- HS grades
- Reading grade level
- Educational aspirations

Other factors that decreased likelihood of entering college

- Alcohol problems
- Had a child by age 17

Social Support Summary

- Once other factors are taken into account, many types of social support not predict college access
 - E.g., size of support network
 - E.g., youth's perception of having enough support
 - E.g., encouragement to pursue postsecondary education (from relatives, FC personnel, or school personnel)
- However, institutional agents may promote college entry
 - People with experience and concrete skills to get into college
 - IMPORTANT: these were specific people that youth voluntarily nominated as people they thought of as supports
 - May be youth IAs in youth's lives, but if they're not utilized then what good?
- When youth have at least 1 institutional agent, receiving encouragement from school personnel magnifies

Limitations

- NSC data— cannot distinguish between enrollment in remedial only vs. credit courses
- College entrance measured at early age
- Do not directly observe support provided by institutional agents
 - But W2 youth survey asks about how much support they received with college application...IAs should predict this
- Unable to detail source of school encouragement (e.g., one vs. several personnel, individual encouragement vs. school culture)
- Generalizability of findings to other states

Implications

- Foster youth need specific individuals in their corner equipped to help navigate college entry
- Some ingredients of good relationships
 - Genuinely caring about the youth
 - First finding out youth's interests and goals
 - Patience, time, and consistency
 - Pulling through for them when they're in a pinch
 - Gifts without strings
- Cultivate good relationships between youth and professionals at their school
 - E.g., troubleshoot disagreements with teachers
 - E.g., collaborate with guidance counselors

Thank you.



Thank you for attending!

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- Visit www.fosteringuccessmichigan.com for more information about upcoming webinars or to access a recording of today's webinar.
- If you have a research study that you are interested in presenting via this series, please contact Dr. Yvonne Unrau, Director of the Center for Fostering Success at Yvonne.Unrau@wmich.edu with your ideas.
- For questions about our webinar series, contact karie.j.ward@wmich.edu.



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