



Transition to Independent Living: What Works?

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Presenters

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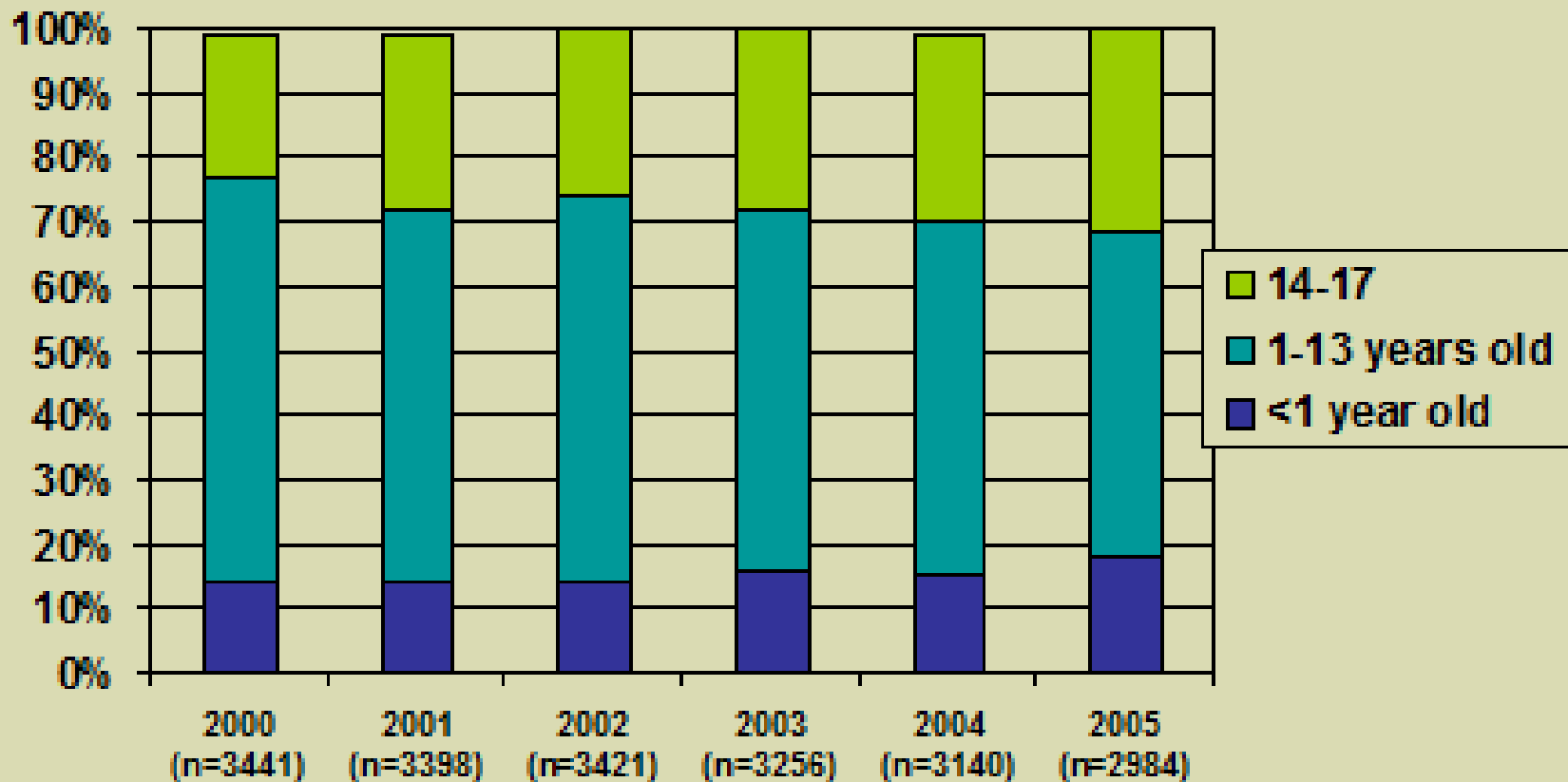
Agenda

- When youth exit care to live on their own, how well do they succeed?
- What do we know about “what interventions work” to help them make successful transitions to adulthood?
- What services are available for youth in Maryland?

What do we know about youth in Maryland?

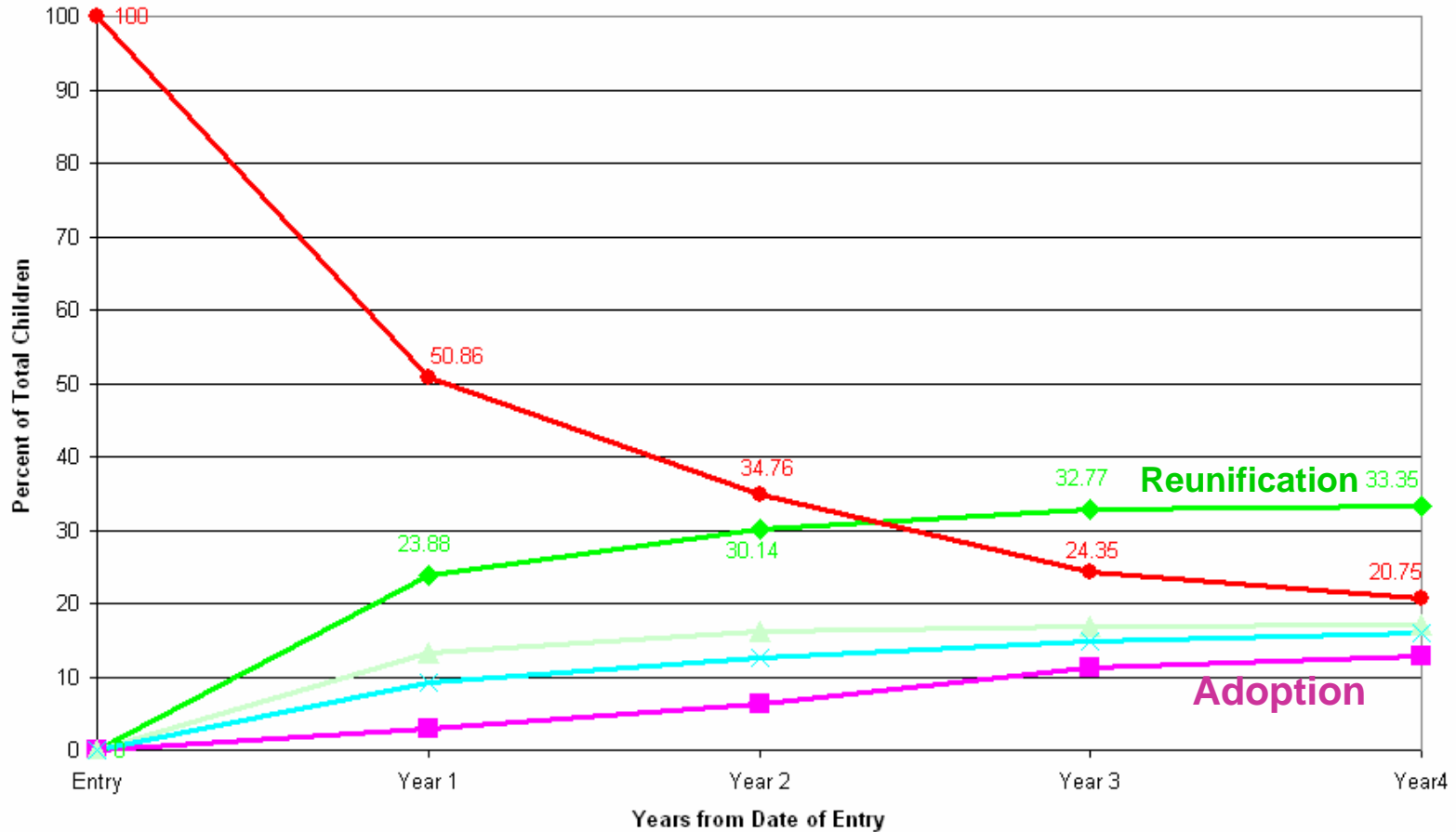


Entry into Care By Age 2000-2005

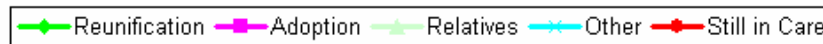


How do children in Maryland exit care? (for Children Entering in 2002)

2002 Entry Cohort - Exits over time



Developed by Terry Shaw





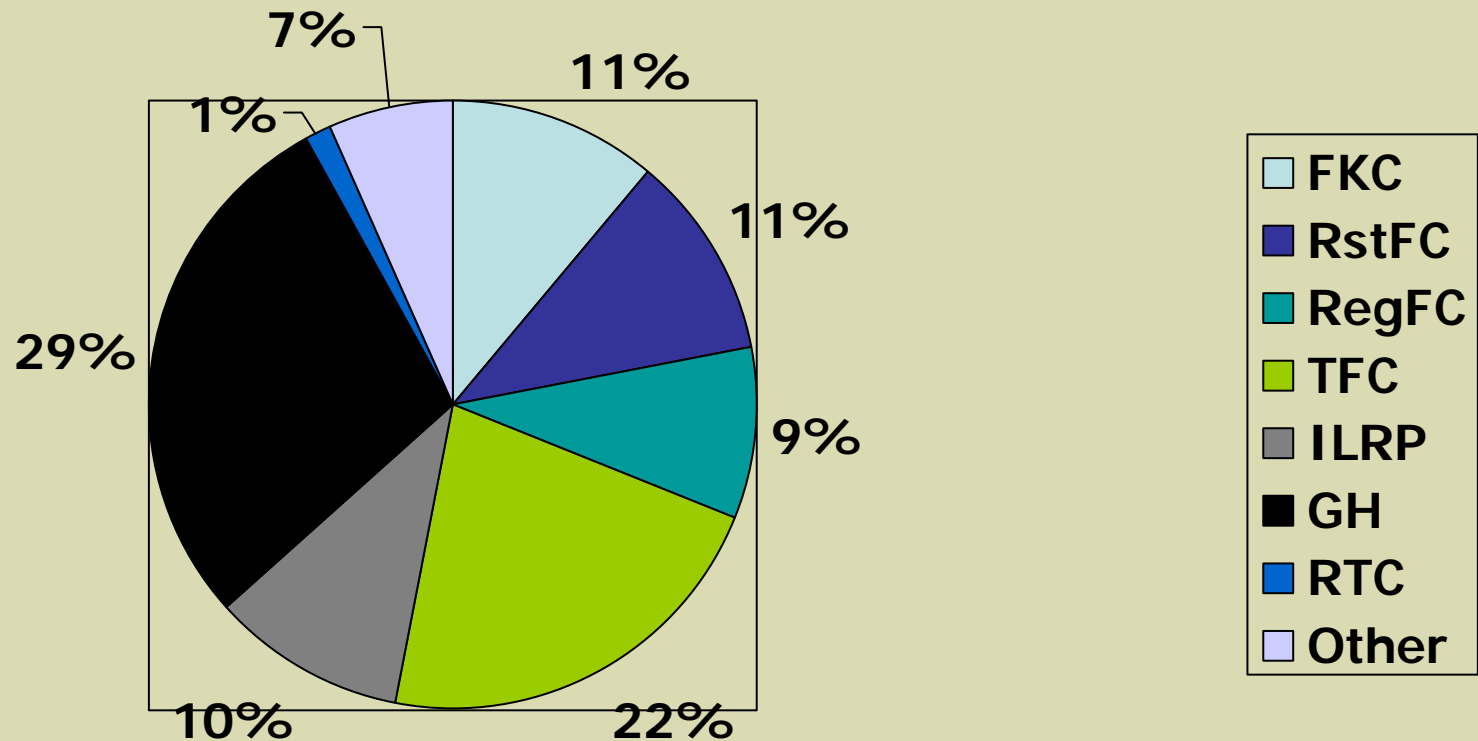
Maryland John H. Chafee Independent Living Services-

4,698 Youth 14-20 in Care

As of 09/09/08

14 yrs	15 yrs	16 yrs	17 yrs	18 yrs	19 yrs	20 yrs
571	671	805	857	805	551	438

Placement Type for Youth 18 & over – July 2008



Total in care: 1,489

Why is this important?

- In general, the available research suggests that many youth who age out of foster care or other out-of-home care settings are not fully prepared to live independently when they exit care.

Research* has found that youth exiting from care:

- Lack high school diplomas
- Suffer difficulties with employment
- Live below the poverty threshold
- Rely on public assistance
- Endure spells of homelessness
- Engage in criminal behavior
- Experience problems with health care
- Face young parenthood
- Experience mental health problems & post traumatic stress disorder

*Adapted from a review by Johanna K. P. Greeson – UNC-Chapel Hill, School of Social Work

Research in Baltimore

Follow-up Study with 100 Youth Exiting Care

- 82% participating in or completed H.S.
- 52% currently employed
- 75% avoided homelessness
- 67% reported no criminal history
- 47% had never used drugs
- 41% avoided early parenthood
- 59% parented a child
 - 2 (3.4%) were married at time of first child's birth
 - Mean age at first child's birth = 18.63 ($SD=2.09$)

Research in Baltimore

Follow-up Study with 100 Youth Exiting Care

- **Main effect of gender**
 - Females in sample were more resilient than males
- **Main effect of age at time of exit from care**
 - Older youth at time of exit from care had higher resilience scores
- **Main effect of global life stress**
 - Lower levels of perceived global life stress related to higher levels of resilience
- **Main effect of supports for full sample**
 - Youth who reported higher levels of social support from friends and family demonstrated higher resilience, as did youth who reported greater spiritual support

What outcomes should result from our combined efforts?

- Health
- Emotional well-being
- Educational achievement
- Social skill development
- Positive self-esteem
- Interpersonal connections (social support)
- Life skills
- Employment
- Self-sufficiency
- Stable housing
- Other?

What programs are most successful to help youth successfully transition?

- Research is limited
 - Of 10 programs reviewed for the California Evidence-Based Practice Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, all were ranked “Effectiveness Unknown”
 - There is no clinical or [empirical](#) evidence or theoretical basis indicating that the practice constitutes a substantial risk of harm to those receiving it, compared to its likely benefits.
 - The practice has a book, manual, and/or other available writings that specifies the components of the practice protocol and describes how to administer it.
 - The practice is generally accepted in clinical practice as appropriate for use with children receiving services from child welfare or related systems and their parents/caregivers.
 - The practice lacks adequate published, peer-reviewed research to empirically determine [efficacy](#).

Possible Promising Practices

- Multi-Modal Individualized Intervention:
 - Providing housing, life-skills training, case management, mental health counseling, and other support services to youth nearing adulthood may result in better outcomes compared to life skills training alone.

Mech, Ludy-Dobson, & Hulseman (1994).

Possible Promising Practices

- Life Skills Training
 - Training in 5 core areas of budgeting, obtaining credit, consumer skills, education, and employment significantly increased the likelihood of performing well in these areas, as well as the likelihood of accessing health care, being very satisfied with life, and overall self-sufficiency.

Cook, 1994

Future research is pending by the Urban League, the Chapin Hall Center for Children, and the National Opinion Research Center – Due for release in 2010.

Possible Promising Practices*

- Supervised Independent Living Residences
 - Individual studies suggest that these programs may promote self-sufficiency however research is limited.

Colca & Colca, (1996); Furrh, (1983); Mallon, (1998) Mech & Che-Man Fung, (1999).

*Contributed by Johanna Greeson

Possible Promising Practices

- Caregivers as Teachers
 - Closeness and identification with the foster parent while the youth was in care was significantly related to greater social and academic progress and improvement in emotional and behavioral problems.

Possible Promising Practices

- **Developing Community Connections**
 - Are helpful in replacing youth's reliance on the agency for help, and connections and relationships with individuals in the community can help youth address and resolve feelings of grief, loss, and rejection – an important task for youth to accomplish prior to living on their own.

Possible Promising Practices*

- Mentoring (formal and informal)
 - The presence of at least one caring non-parental adult who provides social support has been identified with positive outcomes for youth in transition.

Aherns, DuBois, Richardson, Fan, & Lozano (2008); Brittner, Blacazar, Blechman, Blinn-Pike, & Larose (2006); Munson & McMillen (2006); Rhodes, Haight, & Briggs (1998)

*Contributed by Johanna Greeson

What services exist in Maryland?

- Currently 14 licensed apartment based Independent Living Providers, licensed by DHR
- 255 youth, aged 17+, placed with these providers
- Other youth 17 and over are placed among foster homes, kin homes, and group homes
- Youth 14+ must receive Life Skills classes

Policy Context

- Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 expands resources and enhanced flexibility for states to provide older youth with transitional and independent living services:
 - Access to health care, educational opportunities, job training, housing assistance, counseling, and other support services.

Legislation

- Required all states to comply with provider services to age 21
- Many states do not have the option of maintaining custody beyond 18
- Chafee Independent Living Legislation
- Passed in 1999
- Requires states to provide IL preparation services to youth from 14 to 21

Benefits Available to Youth

- Maryland passed Tuition Waiver
- Federal Education and Training Vouchers
- Combination of these two benefits is a real opportunity for youth in custody of the State

Ready by 21

- Children's Cabinet initiative
- DHR Secretary Brenda Donald is the lead
- Strategic Plan to guide statewide policy and principles around youth development
- Available on GOC website



Ready by 21 Goals

Goal 1: Making the Case

**Goal 2: Support of Capable, Competent,
Caring Adult**

Goal 3: Housing

Goal 4: Health and Well - Being

Goal 5: Pathways to Education

Goal 6: Equal Justice

Goal 7: Accountability

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