

Foster care higher education

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Jackson, S & Ajayi, S 2007, ' Foster care and higher education', Adoption & Fostering, vol. 31, no pp62-72. In this paper by Jackson and Ajayi, they drew on the study entitled By Degrees commissioned by the Frank Buttle Trust and financed by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) alongside some charities. To implement the study, they contacted England and Wales authorities to inform them of youth who were in foster care and are now pursuing college-level courses. Unfortunately, response to these calls was very low but the continued connection to the participants in By Degrees study was pivotal in executing this study. The foster care children in this study were identified between those living under residential units under care who were expected to leave once they turn 16 and also those who are living under foster families.

Primarily, the study was a look at the experiences of students in university who were in care by authorities until their age of emancipation. The focus was on how foster care can be a good motivation and exposure for the youth in foster care to aim at achieving tertiary education. This was to show that foster care under the guidance of caring families, when properly employed, could be a great way to encourage college degree completion for otherwise misdirected teens. Nevertheless, the limitation on the number of participants and the length of the study must be noted considering that the participants are diverse, ranging from those who had finished school to those who haven't.

The study involved youth who had been offered the opportunity to attain higher education in what was identified as “ cohorts of university or college entrants were tracked through their university careers” divided into three groups. One group was followed a year after their graduation, the second

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was for up to two years, and the final one for only their first year. The interviews were conducted face-to-face for their first meeting and for another two or three other successive interviews, including through phone. These kinds of research are important especially in the United Kingdom where studies of a similar kind are not as vast and extensive as those in the United States. Further, after care higher education for these children are significantly lower than in the US. Improvements in the foster care system needs revamp in the UK especially in their wards' educational exposure. By Degrees was the most far-reaching study of its kind in the UK at its time. Those involved through the By Degrees program mostly showed better results than others. The subjects living in residential units had limited opportunities to further their education. Most of them reveal that they had little opportunity to study because of their less than conducive environment. While those with longer foster placement experience found a foster family's support as important to their aspiration to finish post-secondary education. This study is vital for foster care experts to evolve a system that allows these youth to aim for higher educational attainment. The low statistics of tertiary academic success of those formerly under foster care in the UK only shows that imperative action must be taken. This is also noteworthy for future research that could build on the subject of foster care that could perhaps explore multi-national comparison of foster care education in the future between countries.