

# Family Strengthening & Alternative Care

A GLOBAL MONTHLY NEWS WRAP-UP & RESOURCES

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This comprehensive newsletter is designed to keep you informed about the latest developments in the areas of family strengthening and alternative care. In this issue, we have meticulously segmented the content to ensure easy navigation. We cover General Alternative Care News, categorized by India, Asia, and International regions. Additionally, we include New Resources in the Alternative Care Space, encompassing publications, studies, policy briefs, and toolkits. You'll also find inspiring narratives under Young Voices in the Media, as well as Opportunities and Events featuring calls for papers, conferences, and more. We hope you find this information useful in your day-to-day work on research, writing, and practice in child and youth care.

## EXCITING CONTRIBUTIONS ALERT!



Got groundbreaking insights, resources, best practices, or recent developments in the latest industry news?

Reach out to us and share your knowledge with the world of practitioners. Your contributions could be featured in the next issue of our monthly news wrap-up on alternative care and family strengthening.



## GENERAL ALTERNATIVE CARE NEWS

### INDIA

- [Government lifts restriction, allows single individuals to foster children, adopt after 2 years](#)  
The article discusses revised guidelines by India's Women and Child Development Ministry, allowing single individuals aged 35-60 to foster and eventually adopt children. The changes also include new criteria for foster care eligibility and streamline the adoption process.
- [India has a new set of foster care guidelines: How it will affect couples, singles](#)  
The article discusses India's updated foster care guidelines, which now allow single individuals and set new requirements for married couples. Key opinions include Leena Prasad from Udayan Care, who supports the inclusivity of single individuals in fostering, and Kusum Mohapatra from the Miracle Foundation, who highlights the need for further consideration of LGBTQIA+ rights in foster care.
- [Challenges and Progress in Adoption of Children with Special Needs in India](#)  
The article discusses the low adoption rates of children with special needs in India, despite a rise in their availability. It highlights challenges such as broad categorization of special needs and parental reluctance, while noting a gradual shift in attitudes towards adopting these children.
- [Understanding the Definition of a Child Under the Juvenile Justice Act of 2015: Legal Framework and Challenges in India](#)  
The opinion piece discusses the definition of a child under the Juvenile Justice Act of 2015 and the challenges in addressing underage crime in India. It highlights the shift towards reformatory justice, emphasizing the need for special care rather than harsh punishment for juveniles, while also pointing out issues with the Act's implementation and its impact on juvenile crime rates.
- [Bridging the gap between policy and practice is essential to improve the lives of vulnerable children](#)  
The article features Vishwajeet Ghoshal, a Child Rights Activist and COO of Children Unbound Foundation, discussing the challenges and achievements in child rights advocacy in India. He emphasizes the importance of bridging policy and practice, improving education and healthcare for vulnerable children, and the ongoing fight against child labour and exploitation.

- [Major breakthrough in restoring minor to families as special drive result in 200% rise](#)  
The news article highlights a significant increase in recovering missing children and restoring back to the families by anti-human trafficking unit of Shahdara district.
- [Those hoping to adopt kids orphaned by Wayanad landslides may not have their wish granted](#)  
The article discusses the challenges and uncertainties surrounding the adoption of children orphaned by the Wayanad landslides in Kerala. Due to legal and procedural hurdles, prospective adopters may face difficulties in fulfilling their wish to adopt these children.
- [Building Bridges from Care to Career](#)  
This article highlights the transformative journey of young adults, known as Care Leavers, who, with the support of UNICEF and Udayan Care, have overcome challenging circumstances to gain education, skills, and employment, enabling them to lead independent and fulfilling lives. The initiative has empowered 139 individuals to pursue their aspirations and break free from the vulnerabilities associated with growing up in Child Care Institutions.

## ASIA

- [Number of pending adoption requests of children from Asia](#)  
As per Statista Research Department, 394 Italian adoption requests of children born in India were pending at the end of the year. India was the most frequent country of origin of children from Asia whose adoption was pending in Italy. Moreover, 155 infants were born in Vietnam and 135 originated from China.
- [Central Asia must work to keep children out of Alternative Care](#)  
About 60,000 children in Central Asia remain in institutional care despite the known harms of separation and institutionalization. The article stresses the need for increased investment in family support services and the closure of institutions to prevent unnecessary placements, particularly for children with disabilities.
- [Japanese war orphan expresses gratitude to Chinese foster parent, advocates for peace, reconciliation](#)  
The article highlights the story of Saburo Yokoyama, a Japanese war orphan raised by a Chinese foster father after World War II. Yokoyama expresses deep gratitude for the care he received, advocates for peace, and works to foster better relations between China and Japan.
- [The orphans from Nepal setting out to fight human trafficking](#)  
Two Nepalese orphans, who were raised by the anti-slavery organization Maiti Nepal, are now studying to gain skills to combat human trafficking. They were deeply influenced by the experiences of survivors they grew up with and aim to address the severe human trafficking issues in Nepal.
- [Why the way you talk to your child matters](#)  
The article by UNICEF ROSA emphasizes the impact of positive and kind communication on children's development and self-esteem. It advocates for using supportive language, positive discipline, and active listening to foster a child's confidence, emotional intelligence, and trust.

## INTERNATIONAL

- [Couple spend life savings on home for vulnerable kids](#)  
Kevin and Daniel Oversby, experienced foster carers, have used their life savings to establish Adamas House, a residential home in Gloucestershire designed to support vulnerable children and help them transition to loving families. The not-for-profit home, approved by Ofsted, aims to remove the stigma attached to children in care by providing a nurturing and inclusive environment.
- [Strengthening families for a better future in Ghana](#)  
The article highlights the SOS Children's Villages Ghana Family Strengthening Program, which supports 3,400 families by providing education, healthcare, and employment guidance to help them become self-reliant. The program aims to empower parents and caregivers to care for their children and prevent abandonment.
- [Carter's adoption support: Empowering families, strengthening workplaces](#)  
The article discusses Carters, a children's clothing company, supports adoption by providing resources and benefits to adoptive families. This initiative aims to empower families while also fostering a supportive workplace environment for employees who are going through the adoption process.
- [Statement by Secretary Xavier Becerra - Kinship Care Month](#)  
The article features a statement by Secretary Xavier Becerra recognizing Kinship Care Month, highlighting the importance of kinship caregivers—relatives or close family friends who care for children when their parents are unable to do so. It emphasizes the need to support these caregivers and acknowledges their critical role in providing stability and love to children.
- [California Lawmakers Approve Stricter Protections for Youth in Residential Programs](#)  
The article reports on Senate Bill 1043 in California, which aims to enhance oversight and transparency in residential treatment centers for youth by increasing public access to data on restraints and seclusions. With broad bipartisan support and backing from high-profile advocates like Paris Hilton, the bill seeks to improve accountability and ensure safer conditions for vulnerable youth in these facilities.
- [Everything You Need To Know When Undergoing A Fostering Assessment](#)  
The article provides a comprehensive guide to the fostering assessment process in the UK. It covers the key steps, what to expect during the assessment, and how to prepare for it, ensuring potential foster carers are well-informed and ready for the journey.



## NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

### PUBLICATIONS

- [Better Care Network: June - July 2024 Newsletter](#)  
The *BCN newsletter* highlights updates on recent initiatives and achievements on the impact of residential care on child development; a report by the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism with recommendations on improving the daily challenges and life experiences of children with albinism in the context of the right to a family life; a series of publications on infant institutionalization and the effects of early deprivation & much more.

- [A systematic review of social support interventions for youth in foster care](#)  
This new study published in *Children and Youth Services Review*, Vol 163, examines interventions aimed at enhancing social support for youth in foster care, identifying methods such as family engagement, skills training, and peer support. It highlights variability in intervention approaches and assessment methods, pointing to gaps and suggesting areas for future research.
- [Evidence-Based Practices in an Early Intervention service in Spain: the voice of families](#)  
This study explores families' perceptions and roles in early childhood intervention at Centro de Atención Temprana y Escuela Infantil L'Alqueria. It assesses how families view the intervention's impact on child development, family life, and their own empowerment, finding positive effects on development and quality of life, and emphasizing the importance of evidence-based practices in Early Intervention.

## STUDIES

- [Family Matters: Growing up in Family-Based Care Makes a World of a Difference](#)  
The study emphasizes that transitioning to family-based care, supported by appropriate policies, is crucial for improving outcomes for children and youth.
- [Socioeconomic and psychosocial outcomes of parents with children in out-of-home care: A scoping review](#)  
The study reviews the impact of child placement in out-of-home care on parents, finding that it often leads to worsening psychosocial and socioeconomic conditions. It calls for further research and tailored support for affected families.
- [An exploration of a Theraplay® informed group as an intervention for adoptive families](#)  
This study explores the use of Theraplay®—a relationship-focused intervention based on attachment theory—in supporting adoptive families. By analysing feedback from adoptive parents and professionals, the research examines the reasons for choosing Theraplay®, its implementation within a Regional Adoption Agency, and its perceived effectiveness, highlighting themes such as support, intervention process, impact, and meeting adoptive parents' needs.
- [\(Dis\)connected parenting: Context control and information management in single adoptive parents' social media practice](#)  
This study examines how single adoptive parents in the UK use digital media to manage and curate their online support networks, balancing privacy and connection. It explores their strategies for compartmentalizing, selectively sharing, and disengaging from social networks to maintain family safety and wellbeing.
- [Cultural Imperatives on Indigenous Kinship Care among the Poumai Naga Tribe in Manipur, India\\*](#)  
This study investigates the challenges faced by care providers in India, particularly within the Poumai Naga tribe, due to socio-political issues impacting early childhood care. It emphasizes the role of relational bonds over institutional care and explores the dilemmas and stigma associated with kinship care in the context of limited resources and social adversity.
- [Foster Care in India from 2010 to 2024—Policy and Humanity Lens](#)  
The study analyzes the evolution of foster care in India from 2010 to 2024, comparing the 2016 model guidelines with the newly released 2024 guidelines. It emphasizes the need for a child-centred approach, cultural sensitivity, and robust support systems in foster care implementation.

## POLICY BRIEF

- [Keeping families together in Central Asia](#)  
The UNICEF policy brief "Keeping Families Together in Central Asia" discusses strategies to prevent family separation and promote family-based care for children. It highlights the importance of social protection systems, community-based services, and policy reforms to support vulnerable families and ensure children's well-being within a family environment.

## TOOLKITS

- [Adoption by foster carers](#)  
This Good Practice Guide published by Coram Baaf, examines the complexities and benefits of adoption by foster carers, offering practical advice for practitioners on legislation, preparation, assessment, and support. It provides insights, research findings, and real-life case studies to promote stable and permanent placements for children.
- [Positive Parenting Manual](#)  
The Positive Parenting Manual by UNICEF Sri Lanka provides guidance on nurturing children's development through supportive and constructive parenting practices. It offers practical strategies for fostering healthy emotional, social, and cognitive growth, emphasizing the importance of positive interactions and effective communication between parents and children.
- [Mindful Parenting book](#)  
The Mindful Parenting Book by Australian Childhood Foundation offers parents strategies to do things with their child without having their attention drawn away from what is happening between the two of them right then and there.
- [Divestment of Residential Care Services: Guidelines and Recommendations for Donors Supporting Residential Care Services](#)  
These guidelines have been written to guide donors and partners through the process of gathering information, making the decision to divest, securing buy-in internally for divestment, engaging with partners and stakeholders, developing a divestment plan, communicating that plan, and addressing any child safety concerns.



## YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- ['I was thrown in a children's home and cast aside'](#)  
The article shares Jules Brown's personal journey through the care system, detailing the challenges he faced, including homelessness and abuse, and his efforts to advocate for better support for care leavers. Now 23, Jules works to empower other care leavers, emphasizing the need for systemic change and increased support.
- [Finding Sisterhood Beyond Blood](#)  
This piece reflects on the Surja's journey of finding true sisterhood not through blood ties but through deep bonds formed with fellow girls in a child care home, offering mutual support, understanding, and love that transcends biological connections.

- [How to Choose the Family You Keep](#)  
The opinion piece by Sade Bess emphasizes the importance of choosing positive, supportive relationships, especially for former foster youth who may have experienced neglect or mistreatment. It advocates for setting boundaries, avoiding harmful dynamics, and surrounding oneself with individuals who uplift and value you, likening this to selecting the best fruit.
- [Formerly Incarcerated, Currently Rehabilitating](#)  
The opinion piece by Mariah Nikole Corder details her journey from losing her dream job at 17 to facing addiction, incarceration, and struggles with reintegration after release. It reflects on the profound challenges and personal growth she experienced, highlighting the need for better support systems and early intervention for youth facing similar crises.



## **OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS (JOBS, CONFERENCE ALERTS, CALL FOR ABSTRACTS)**

- [Call for Papers: Institutionalised Children Exploration and Beyond Bi- Annual Journal \(September 2024 and May 2025 Issues\)](#)
- [Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2024- "One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Common Wealth"- 21 Oct 2024](#)
- [Biennial Together for Families International Virtual Conference- 22 to 24 October, 2024](#)
- [Global Report on Children's Care and Protection: Understanding and preventing the separation of children from their family– launch event, Oct 29, 2024](#)
- [First Global Ministerial Conference On Ending Violence Against Children- 7 Nov, 2024](#)
- [IDA Online Course on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 31 Dec, 2024](#)
- [Online Course on Caring for Children Moving Alone: Protecting Unaccompanied and Separated Children- 31 Dec, 2024](#)

THANK YOU FOR READING!

Whether it's new policies, guidelines, schemes, toolkits, or the voices of care leavers, we want to hear from you. Your contributions will be acknowledged in our newsletter as we work together to share knowledge and grow together.