

# 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.

*"AS WE APPROACH THE ARRIVAL OF 2025*

*AMID JOYOUS CELEBRATIONS AND CHERISHED MOMENTS WITH OUR DEAR ONES, WE REFLECT ON THE PRIVILEGE OF COLLABORATING WITH YOU THROUGHOUT THIS YEAR.*

*ALL THE BEST AND HERE'S TO A JOYFUL AND PROSPEROUS 2025!"*

## 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

- [Nearly 5,000 Indian children adopted by foreigners in last decade: Govt](#)  
According to official data, nearly 5,000 Indian children have been adopted by foreigners over the past decade, with the highest numbers in the United States (2,031), Italy (1,029), and Spain (517). The government has not received any complaints regarding the upbringing or exploitation of these children.
- [CWC's shelter home closures spark concern over child welfare](#)  
The Thiruvananthapuram Child Welfare Committee (CWC) has closed 15 shelter homes as part of a UNICEF-promoted deinstitutionalization initiative, aiming to reduce reliance on institutional care for children. This move has raised concerns among child rights activists, who argue that without adequate alternative care systems like kinship foster care, such closures may adversely affect child welfare.
- [Number of children in institutional care declined by 17 per cent in recent years: WCD data](#)  
The number of children in institutional care under India's Mission Vatsalya scheme has declined by 17% in recent years, decreasing from 76,118 in 2021-22 to 62,592 currently, according to the Women and Child Development Ministry. This decline occurred despite an expansion in the network of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) across the country, which increased from 2,245 in 2021-22 to 3,010 in 2024-25.

- [Ensure quality facilities in child care institutions: DC](#)

The Deputy Commissioner of Himachal Pradesh has urged authorities to ensure quality facilities in Child Care Institutions, emphasizing proper infrastructure, hygiene, and comprehensive care for children.

## ASIA

- [Searching for a homeland away from home](#)

The article explores the emotional and legal struggles of Nepali adoptees returning to Nepal after being adopted abroad, seeking to reconnect with their roots. It highlights the challenges they face in a society that doesn't recognize them, both socially and legally.

- [Nepal launches campaign to end practice of child marriage](#)

The article discusses Nepal's efforts to combat child marriage, focusing on a campaign launched by former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. The initiative aims to raise awareness and address the issue through legal and societal reforms.

- [Thailand strives to bring dropouts back to school](#)

Thailand is working to address the growing issue of school dropouts, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, through various initiatives. The government is focusing on outreach programs, targeted interventions, and vocational training to reintegrate children into education. Local authorities are collaborating to provide support and ensure that children return to school, aiming to reduce the long-term social impact of dropping out.

- [Kazakhstan's Year in Review: Prevention of Domestic Abuse, Protection of Women's & Children's Rights](#)

In 2024, Kazakhstan enhanced efforts to combat domestic violence and protect women's and children's rights, issuing 72,000 protection orders and opening 69 crisis centers. The country also enacted stricter laws, including life imprisonment for child rape, and assigned juvenile police officers to schools, resulting in a 6% reduction in juvenile crimes.

- [MSC Far East Delivers Care to Children's Centers in the Philippines](#)

Approximately 30 Military Sealift Command (MSC) civilian mariners from USNS Charles Drew and USNS Rappahannock partnered with local organizations in Olongapo, Philippines, to visit two children's centers. During the community outreach event on December 8, 2024, they interacted with the children and provided donations.

## INTERNATIONAL

- [New scheme to provide Care Leavers with a strong start to adult life](#)

The news highlights a new scheme in Sheffield, UK, aimed at supporting care leavers with housing, financial assistance, and life skills to ease their transition into adulthood. It focuses on providing a strong start for care-experienced individuals.

- [Successful program shows strengthening families starts with meal, good conversation](#)

The article highlights the *Strengthening Families* pilot program in South Dakota, which uses an 11-week curriculum of shared meals and skill-building sessions to strengthen family bonds, improve communication, and foster resilience. Developed by LSS and the South Dakota Department of Corrections, the program is free and accessible to all families.

- [Strengthening families: Seychelles' family minister highlights need for financial support](#)

The article covers Seychelles' Minister for Youth, Sports, and Family, Marie-Celine Zialor's call for increased financial support to promote strong family values and prevent social issues. It highlights the launch of initiatives like the 'Respite' pilot program and a focus on prevention, education, and better community support for families.

- [State could adopt 'kin-first' approach to foster care](#)

The article discusses Illinois lawmakers' efforts to make it easier for children in foster care to live with relatives through the Kinship in Demand (KIND) Act, which aims to provide more support for kinship caregivers. It highlights the benefits of kinship care, including stability and reduced trauma for children, and addresses systemic issues in the foster care system.

- [Harnessing the Power of Community to Combat the Sexual Exploitation of Children](#)

The opinion piece emphasizes the importance of community involvement in combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSE). It highlights Los Angeles County's new strategic plan, which adopts a public health, community-led approach to address CSE by focusing on prevention, supporting families, and tackling underlying issues such as poverty and trauma.



## NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

### PUBLICATIONS

- [Study of Children in Street Situations in India](#)

The study report published by UNICEF, examines the child protection landscape and the lived experiences of Children in Street Situations (CISS) across four Indian cities, focusing on their challenges, resilience, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to inform evidence-based policy and program design. It employs a qualitative, comparative case-study approach to provide insights into their lives and protection needs.

- [Predictors of attachment in early- and late-placed adoptees](#)

The study published in *Adoption & Fostering* journal Volume 48, Issue 3-4, examines how pre-placement factors, such as age of placement, early attachment representations, and childhood experiences, influence adolescent attachment in adoptees. It highlights the predictive role of factors like IQ, avoidance behaviours, and abuse on attachment security and outcomes.

- [Parents' perspectives on the results of mandatory child protection support: A qualitative study](#)

This new study published in *Child & Family Social Work Journal* Volume 29, Issue 4, investigates parents' perceptions of mandatory support provided by Child Protection Services (CPS) in cases of child abuse and neglect. It explores key factors influencing the effectiveness of support, including alignment on problem definitions and the quality of professional interactions.

- [Care-leavers' experiences of how managed opportunities for independence contributed to building resilience](#)

This new research study published in *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, Volume 15 Issue no 4, explores the concept of "managed opportunities for independence" (MOI) and its role in building resilience among young people in care. It examines how MOI activities contribute to their development of independence and the impact on their transition out of care.

- [“Picture this, picture me”: community based peer-to-peer and family support for children impacted by parental imprisonment](#)  
This study published in *Journal of Children's Services, Volume 19 Issue 3*, highlights the value of specialized voluntary sector support groups for children with a parent in prison and challenges the narrow label of "prisoners' children." It explores how these children perceive themselves, their needs, and the role of community-based services in supporting their well-being.

## STUDIES

- [“We all grow up with our mob because it takes all of us”: First Nations collective kinship in Australia](#)  
The study explores the Minintitja Care Model, an innovative First Nations-led kinship care model in rural Australia, aimed at improving outcomes for First Nations children in out-of-home care (OOHC). It advocates for systemic transformation through self-determination, drawing on First Nations knowledge and traditions to redesign OOHC services.
- [A systematic review of intervention programs for school attendance problems](#)  
This study provides a systematic review of programs designed to reduce school attendance problems (SAPs) in children and adolescents, focusing on school refusal and truancy. It evaluates the effectiveness of these interventions and identifies strengths and weaknesses to guide future efforts in improving school attendance.
- [Experiences of children’s formal and lived participation in family law proceedings](#)  
This phenomenological study examines children's participation in family law proceedings, highlighting that formal participation may not align with their lived experiences. It emphasizes the relational complexity and heightened sense of responsibility children feel in the context of familial conflicts and harm exposure.
- [Family inclusion for children in care: How foster and kinship carers make it work](#)  
This study examines how foster and kinship carers promote family inclusion for children in out-of-home care, despite systemic barriers. It highlights the critical role of carers in facilitating connections with parents and family, emphasizing the need for supportive training, relationship-building, and systemic changes.

## POLICY BRIEFS

- [The Role of Taxation in Family Inequality: Possibilities for Reform](#)  
This policy brief discusses the impact of federal tax policies on family well-being, highlighting how certain tax reforms have widened income inequality. It advocates for reforming tax policies to support families across all income levels, promote fairness, and reduce racial and economic disparities.



## YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- [I help care leavers who are constantly failed'](#)  
The blog highlights Jade Barnett's journey from care experience to empowering young people through her social enterprise, Power2Prevail Community, which offers life skills training to support care leavers in transitioning to independence. She advocates for systemic change to better serve vulnerable youth.
- [Met as Care Leavers, Left as Family](#)  
The blog shares a care leaver's transformative journey to the FICE International Congress, highlighting the challenges of fundraising, visas, and self-doubt, while amplifying the need for global recognition, belonging, and equality for care-experienced individuals. It calls for collective action to ensure all care leavers are seen, heard, and valued.
- [I was put into care after coming out as trans. But my loving foster family saw me for who I really was](#)  
The article highlights Evan Amery, who was placed into foster care after coming out as transgender. He shares how finding a supportive foster family and participating in Coram Voice's creative writing competition helped him regain confidence and embrace his identity.
- [Surviving Domestic Violence After Foster Care](#)  
Jessica Castillo, a former foster youth, shares her journey of surviving an abusive marriage and navigating the aftermath of domestic violence. She reflects on the trauma, her time in a shelter, and her ongoing process of healing and self-discovery.



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

- [Panel chairs and advisers conference | 3 March 2025](#)
- [Global Disability Summit | 2 – 3 April, 2025 Berlin](#)
- [Fifth Biennial International Childhood Trauma Conference | 17– 22 August 2025](#)

## 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.