

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

- [Children in non-institutional care rise fourfold between 2021-2024: shows Govt. data](#)
The article highlights a significant increase in the number of children in non-institutional care in India, doubling from 62,675 in 2022-23 to 1.2 lakh in 2023-24, according to government data. This surge reflects a growing preference for family-based care over institutional settings, indicating a significant shift in child welfare practices.
- [IYDF Joins Hands with Indian Enterprises to Provide Humanitarian Aid to Orphanage Children](#)
International Youth Development Foundation (IYDF) partners with Indian enterprises to deliver humanitarian aid to children in orphanages. The collaboration aimed to provide essential supplies and support to improve the well-being of the children.
- [Death of 5 Orphans In MP Reveals How The Govt Punishes But Does Not Help Child Care Institutions](#)
The article exposes the dire consequences of government neglect towards child care institutions in Madhya Pradesh, highlighted by the tragic deaths of five orphans. It critiques the state's punitive approach, which fails to provide essential support and resources, exacerbating the vulnerabilities of these institutions and the children they serve.
- [HC Orders CWC to Hand Over 3 Children to Their Adoptive Parents Despite No Valid Adoption](#)
The article reports on a High Court order directing the Child Welfare Committee to hand over three children to their adoptive parents despite the absence of valid adoption paperwork. The decision underscores the court's emphasis on the children's best interests over procedural formalities.
- [30,850 'Out Of School Children' In State, Kids Falling Behind In Basic Education, Suggests Data](#)
The article highlights a concerning educational crisis in Madhya Pradesh, where data reveals that 30,850 children are out of school, indicating a growing gap in basic education. This situation underscores systemic issues in the state's education system, revealing challenges in school enrolment, retention, and educational quality that need targeted intervention and reform.

ASIA

- [Finding the courage to refuse child marriage in Bangladesh](#)
The article highlights the story of a young girl from Rohingya refugee camps, who, despite facing societal pressure, courageously resisted child marriage. Her refusal to enter into marriage showcases her determination to pursue education and a better future, and underscores the broader efforts to combat child marriage in the region.
- [Youth moving from foster care to independent living to be given more support: MSF, Singapore](#)
The article discusses the challenges faced by foster children in Singapore as they age out of the system at 21 and highlights a new support scheme by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) to provide financial assistance, career guidance, and mentorship to help these youth transition to independent living.
- [Bridging opportunities for underprivileged children in Pakistan](#)
The opinion piece examines the barriers faced by underprivileged children in Pakistan, arguing that systemic inequalities hinder their access to education and essential resources. It underscores the necessity of targeted interventions and policy reforms to address these disparities, ensuring that all children have equal opportunities to succeed and contribute to a more equitable society.
- [Adolescent girls can achieve anything when given the space, skills and opportunities in Pakistan](#)
The blog explores the impact of empowering adolescent girls through space, skills, and opportunities in Pakistan. It presents evidence that such support leads to significant improvements in their education, self-confidence, and future prospects, ultimately contributing to community development and gender equality.
- [ALIT Indonesia empowers marginalized children to improve their standard of living](#)
The article details ALIT Indonesia's efforts to uplift marginalized children by implementing programs that focus on education, healthcare, and essential services. It highlights how these initiatives are designed to address systemic inequalities and improve the overall standard of living for these children, aiming to create sustainable long-term benefits and opportunities.
- [Driving Change in Far-East Asia's Child Protection Systems: Impactful Collaborative Efforts](#)
This 90-minute session highlights a unique opportunity to hear directly from the leaders of 6 pivotal organizations representing countries in Far-East Asia that have developed cutting edge approaches to child protection systems.

INTERNATIONAL

- [New law aims to curb racial disparities in child welfare system, keep families together](#)
The news article discusses a new Minnesota law aimed at reducing racial disparities in the child welfare system. The legislation focuses on keeping families together by emphasizing family preservation and providing additional support to prevent children from entering foster care.
- [Foster care fosters a stronger nation](#)
This opinion piece emphasizes the importance of foster care in providing a nurturing family environment for children separated from their biological families due to neglect or abuse. It highlights the need for more licensed foster parents in the Philippines and discusses the efforts of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the National Authority for Child Care (NACC) in promoting and facilitating foster care and adoption.
- [Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Adapting to Kinship Care](#)
The article explores the growing trend of grandparents raising their grandchildren, highlighting both the challenges and benefits of such grand families. It underscores the emotional stability and continuity that grandparental kinship can offer to children, despite the financial and physical strains it may place on grandparents. The piece also discusses the varying levels of support available to these families across different states.
- [A Foster Youth 'Bill of Rights' Now Being Drafted in Minnesota](#)
A team in Minnesota is developing a tailor-made bill of rights for foster youth, incorporating feedback from various stakeholders to ensure comprehensive legal protections and support. This initiative aims to clearly define and advocate for the rights of foster children, with plans to propose the legislation in January, 2025.
- [Care experience recognised as protected characteristic by Thurrock Council](#)
Thurrock Council has approved a motion to recognize 'care experience' as a locally protected characteristic, aligning with the Equality Act 2010. This initiative aims to address the unique challenges faced by care experienced young people by ensuring equal opportunities and support in their personal and professional lives.



NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

PUBLICATIONS

- [National Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in Nigeria](#)
UNICEF and SOS Children's Village, funded by the European Union, supported the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs in developing and publishing the National Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in Nigeria. These guidelines provide a regulatory framework to standardize care for vulnerable children, addressing risks like exploitation, abuse, and neglect.
- [Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity: A U.S. Government Strategy for Children to Thrive 2024–2029](#)
The new publication is a whole-of-government, multisectoral strategy published by USAID. It aims to build strong beginnings for children, help families thrive, and prevent violence against children, incorporating updated evidence on children in adversity, their needs, and the impact of global events like COVID-19 and climate change.
- [Right to Education for Children and Youth Without Parental Care in India: Challenges and Recommendations](#)
Udayan Care contributed a chapter in the latest volume of United Nation Book Series Behavioral Science in the Global Arena "Children Around the World: The Future of our Earth". The article highlights the latest insights and transformative recommendations to improve educational access for vulnerable children in India.
- [Accessing Records in Scotland Report](#)
A report published by Social Work Scotland and entitled: Accessing Records in Scotland: What people with care experience tell us about the Right of Access, provides information on what people with care experience in Scotland have experienced regarding their right of access to records from the time they were in care and recommendations to improve practice.

STUDIES

- [Beyond family: Patterns of kin and fictive kin caregivers among children in the child welfare system](#)
The study examines the social support networks of children in foster care, identifying distinct patterns in how kin and fictive kin provide support. It reveals that children experience varying levels of support, highlighting the roles of cousins, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and fictive kin.
- [Disruption and adaptation: The school mobility experience of young people in residential care](#)
This study explores the impact of school changes on youth in residential care, based on biographical interviews with 35 young people aged 14 to 18 in Quebec, Canada. It highlights the disruptions to their education and identifies factors that can aid in school continuity and adaptation.
- [Navigating foster care: how parental drug use and caregiver attitudes shape children's mentalization processes—an exploratory longitudinal follow-up study: study protocol](#)
This study investigates the affective and cognitive abilities of the caregiver-child dyad in children aged 6-12 living in institutional or family-centered foster care, aiming to address deficits with psychotherapeutic strategies. It involves a 5-month group intervention and assesses outcomes through both quantitative and qualitative analyses.
- [Investigating the impact of Out-of-Home Care on early childhood development](#)
The study investigates the impact of removing children exposed to substantiated maltreatment from their homes and placing them in foster/kinship care on their developmental vulnerabilities at school commencement. It found that such placements reduced risks in physical health, communication, and cognitive domains but increased vulnerabilities in social competence and emotional maturity.

POLICY BRIEF

- [Cambodia launches revised alternative care policy for children](#)
Cambodia has launched a revised Alternative Care Policy for Children, prioritizing family-based care over institutional care, developed with UNICEF support to align with international standards. The policy aims to ensure children deprived of parental care grow up in stable family environments.

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.
- [Understanding behaviours of concern for children with disability](#)
This practice guide published by Australian Institute of Family Studies, primarily intended for use by child and family support professionals who may work with children with disability and their families but may not be specialists in providing disability support. It includes some practical principles for working with children with disabilities and their families.
- [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014 part 11 - continuing care: guidance](#)
This updated guidance published by Scottish Government for local authorities on continuing care reflects developments in policy and practice, addressing implementation gaps to provide clarity for support services. It reinforces legal and ethical responsibilities, outlines the duties of local authorities, and promotes a rights-based, person-centered approach for care experienced young people transitioning to independent living.



YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- [We Need to Prevent Homelessness Before it Happens](#)
The article addresses the pervasive issue of homelessness, particularly among youth and young adults transitioning out of care in the U.S. It highlights the emotional impact of homelessness and the need for effective outreach, supportive housing, and aftercare programs to prevent and address homelessness drawing from personal experience to advocate for strategic planning and support systems that can help individuals transition to stable housing and independence.
- ['No longer passive subjects'. Care-leavers tell their stories](#)
The article discusses the "Free Loaves on Fridays" anthology, which shares stories from over 100 individuals with experiences in the UK care system. The anthology aims to shift the narrative from negative stereotypes to empowering care-leavers by highlighting their diverse experiences and advocating for systemic change. It also seeks to influence public policy and social work practices by giving a voice to those often overlooked.
- [From Orphanage to Inspiration: Tribal Girl Hajra Bano's Unyielding Spirit](#)
The article details Hajra Bano's remarkable transformation from a life in an orphanage to becoming an inspirational figure, emphasizing her determination to overcome social and economic barriers and highlighting the broader implications of her success for the empowerment of tribal communities.
- [What It Takes to Keep a Foster Youth in School](#)
A former foster youth recounts their journey through multiple challenges in higher education, emphasizing the need for better support systems for transitional-aged foster youth. Despite numerous hardships, they highlight the importance of perseverance and community support in achieving their goals.
- [Whispers of the Mind](#)
The blog shares a deeply personal account of struggling with severe mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia, and the profound impact of support from true friends and loved ones during this challenging time. It emphasizes the importance of empathy and understanding in navigating such intense internal battles.
- [I Want Everyone, Regardless of Their Differences to Feel a True Sense of Belonging](#)
In an Instagram live session, a care leaver, Learning in Lift Fellowship Together (LIFT), Udayan Care candidly shared her journey as an HIV+ care leaver and how she overcame life's challenges to establish her own social organization aimed at fighting the stigma around HIV. In another session, a care leaver, a LIFT fellow, Udayan Care shared her journey from being a disabled care leaver to becoming a rising author, turning her challenges into a compelling narrative that resonates with many.



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](#)
- [First Global Ministerial Conference On Ending Violence Against Children- 7 Nov, 2024](#)
- [Online Course on Caring for Children Moving Alone: Protecting Unaccompanied and Separated Children- 31 Dec, 2024](#)



HEAR FROM OUR READERS

"Thank you for sharing these resources. They are incredibly useful and bridges perspective."

Mr. Saquib Abbasi, Director, Aftercare, Make a Difference.

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.