

Family Strengthening & Alternative Care

A GLOBAL MONTHLY NEWS WRAP-UP & RESOURCES

This monthly wrap-up is intended to serve as a compendium of the latest developments in the area of family strengthening and alternative care. We hope you will find it useful and be able to use it in your day-to-day work on research, writing, and practice on child and youth care.

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GENERAL ALTERNATIVE CARE NEWS

INTERNATIONAL

- [Riedel Foundation funds Faith Bridge, helping teens aging out of foster care](#)
The news article discusses the George H. Riedel Foundation's funding of Faith Bridge to support teens aging out of foster care through their Carry On Program aiming to provide essential items and support to empower young adults transitioning into independence, aiming to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty often faced by former foster youth.
- [As adoptive and foster parents, we believe our child welfare system needs repair](#)
The news article delves into the challenges and flaws of the child welfare system in the United States, particularly focusing on foster care. It discusses the trauma experienced by children removed from their birth families and proposes reforms to improve the system, advocating for better support for biological parents and kinship guardianship status for long-term foster parents.
- [Why we're opting in to invest in supporting families](#)
The opinion piece highlights the challenges faced by families within the child welfare system Kentucky, advocating for a shift towards a prevention-oriented approach that addresses families' needs for support and assistance rather than solely focusing on child removal. It emphasizes the importance of reimagining the system to better serve vulnerable children and families, moving away from punitive interventions towards a more expansive and humane vision.
- [Two foster care bills head to Gov. Little for signatures](#)
The news article discusses two bills, SB 1379 and SB 1380, aimed at improving Idaho's foster care system by addressing concerns such as short-term rentals for foster youth and creating an independent ombudsman office for reviewing complaints. These bills have advanced through the Legislature and are now headed to the Idaho governor's desk for consideration.
- [Families, foster parents and supporters hold rally for legislative changes for foster children](#)
A peaceful rally to support legislative changes to the Keeping Families Together Act took place at the Washington state Capitol in Olympia.

ASIA

- [Humility and broad scale collaboration to help every child reach their God-given potential](#)
The 2024 World Without Orphans (WWO) global conference in Thailand featured plenary sessions focusing on prevention, broad scale collaboration, and intervention in addressing the needs of vulnerable children worldwide. Speakers highlighted initiatives, shared personal testimonies, and emphasized the importance of collaboration, spiritual renewal, and holistic care to create a world without orphans.
- [Creating a community for adoptees and foster care students](#)
The article discusses the experiences of Kaila Garton-Miller and Nicole Wilkes, both adopted from China, and their efforts to create an adopted student organization to provide support and community for foster care and adoptees. They aim to educate about the adoption process and foster inclusivity on campus.
- [Girl cricketers who successfully campaigned to end child marriage play in first provincial tournament](#)
Girl cricket teams in Nepal, supported by Save the Children and Sabal Nepal, are campaigning against child marriage through sports and community activism, resulting in decreased rates of child marriage in two municipalities and empowerment of adolescent girls.
- [Samar & Leyte youth call for a safer, inclusive and child-friendly society](#)
UNICEF Philippines and local legislators empower youth in Samar and Leyte to strengthen child protection systems, focusing on online safety and abuse prevention. Through workshops, youth advocate for inclusive measures, highlighting the urgency to address rising online vulnerabilities.
- [Call for steps to enrol out-of-school children](#)
The news article discusses the concerns raised by Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain, Central President of APPSCA, regarding the significant number of out-of-school children in Pakistan and emphasizes the role of both the government and the private education sector in addressing this issue for the country's educational and socio-economic advancement.

INDIA

- [Hindustan Unilever Limited introduces Foster and Kinship Caregiver Leave Policy](#)
The news article discusses Hindustan Unilever Ltd's introduction of a foster/kinship caregiver leave policy, offering up to four weeks of leave to employees involved in pre-adoption foster care or legal guardianship, marking a first initiative of its kind in corporate India. This policy recognizes diverse familial arrangements and extends family caregiving support beyond immediate relatives.
- [Udayan Care convened 2nd Annual Round Table on Family Strengthening and Evidence Based Generation](#)
On World Social Work Day, March 19, 2024, *Udayan Care* hosted its 2nd Annual Round Table on "Strengthening and Empowering Families: Advancing Evidence-Based Practices in Alternative Care for Stronger Communities." The event, held in hybrid mode, brought together over 60 in-person participants and 40 virtual attendees including children, families, care leavers, practitioners, social workers, researchers, academia, and partners. Discussions focused on community-led approaches to supporting families in India and the role of evidence in driving positive and sustainable change. Click [here](#) to find out how *Navjagran Live* highlights Udayan Care's dedication in making young lives shine.
- [Adopted Child's Rights Cannot Be Left Marooned: Karnataka HC Directs CARA To Consider Granting NOC For Cross Border Adoption By Indian Couple](#)
The Karnataka High Court directed CARA to consider an Indian couple's representation for NOC regarding the cross-border adoption of a child in Uganda, where the High Court had granted them legal parental rights, emphasizing the need to recognize the adoption under Indian regulations.
- [Shelter home kids not visited by kin to be added to adoption](#)
The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) has communicated to state governments, advising them to simplify and expedite the adoption process in India. This initiative aims to streamline procedures, especially for adopting children with special needs, by reducing bureaucratic hurdles and making the process more accessible to prospective parents.
- [Is India embracing gender equality in adoption? Here's what Hindu Adoption Act data reveals](#)
The article discusses a shift in adoption trends in India, particularly towards adopting more girl children, contrary to traditional preferences for boys. Data under the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) reveals Punjab and Chandigarh leading this change, prompting reflections on gender equality in adoption practices.
- [11,546 children identified for adoption in 27 states, UTs: Centre tells SC](#)
The Supreme Court has given states another chance to comply with its order on adoption reforms, as the Centre identifies over 11,000 children for adoption, aiming to expedite the adoption process and address delays in placement.
- [Supreme Court takes strong note of non-setting of specialised adoption agency in 370 districts](#)
The Supreme Court expresses dissatisfaction over the failure to establish Specialised Adoption Agencies (SAAs) in 370 districts across India, warning of coercive action for non-compliance. The court seeks updated data from states and union territories by April 7 regarding the establishment of SAAs and adoption numbers.
- [A support system for 'care leavers'](#)
A new residential bridge program by Kantar India Foundation and WeLive Foundation in Chennai supports young women leaving orphanages, offering skill training, counselling, and job placement assistance, aiming to foster their independence and future prospects. The program targets care leavers aged 18, providing educational support and job placement opportunities for beneficiaries from diverse backgrounds across India.
- [Two children ran away. It took them 13 years to get home again](#)
Two Indian sibling, reunite with their mother after being separated for over 13 years due to leaving home on a hot summer day in 2010. With the help of a child rights activist, and a series of fortunate events, they finally find their family, bringing tears of joy and relief. The emotional reunion highlights the enduring bond of family and the power of perseverance in overcoming challenges and separation.
- [Rescuing Hope: The Unseen Crisis Of Missing Children In India](#)
The news article sheds light on the pervasive crisis of missing children in India, featuring heart-breaking stories of grieving parents, and highlighting the alarming statistics and underlying causes of child trafficking and abduction. It also discusses government initiatives, NGO efforts, and grassroots campaigns aimed at combating child crimes and ensuring the safety and well-being of children across the nation.



NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

PUBLICATIONS

- [Thematic Brief: Residential Care Service Transition](#)
This brief published by *Transforming Children's Care Collaborative* contains high-level guidance and recommendations for policy and decision-makers and development partners to consider in designing frameworks to scale up, coordinate and support the transition of individual residential care services.
- [Supporting Kinship Care in Zimbabwe](#)
This case study published by *UNICEF and Changing The Way We Care* explore how the government of Zimbabwe and local civil society organisations (CSOs) are working together to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of kinship care based on interviews with 12 individuals which included policy makers, practitioners, kinship carers and children in kinship care.
- [Care Conversation: ICB podcast](#)
On the jubilant occasion of completing 10 years, *Udayan Care's* journal *Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond* is releasing a series of 5 podcasts featuring distinguished global personalities with expertise & experience in the fields of family strengthening and alternative care releasing one episode every Thursday starting from 21st March onwards. The journal has also published its Volume 11 issue 1 on 19th March. Dive into the journal [here](#) covering a range of paper on children in institutional and alternative care.
- [What is Meaningful Participation?](#)
Martin James Foundation published a new March month blog on 'Meaningful Participation' that features Udayan Care's work on participatory methodologies and explores the concept of participation in the context of child welfare and alternative care, emphasizing the importance of listening to and incorporating the perspectives of individuals with lived experience.
- [New resources for working with fathers](#)
Developed by the *Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)*, this suite of resources provides insights into how practitioners and services can support fathers to engage positively with their children, including warmth and responsiveness, and play.

STUDIES

- [Young people's experiences of informal kinship care in Luwero, Uganda](#)
This research examines the significance of informal kinship care as a culturally ingrained and essential form of childcare in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly focusing on Uganda. It delves into the challenges faced by informal kinship care networks within the context of colonial legacies, socio-political factors, and economic conditions, while highlighting the experiences of young people in these caregiving arrangements.
- [Children's participation in everyday life: An international overview](#)
The study examines children's participation in everyday life across family, school, and community contexts in 32 countries, exploring variations and correlations with the quality of their relationships with adults. It aims to understand the scope of children's participation and its cross-national differences, shedding light on factors influencing their involvement in decision-making processes.
- [Strive to enhance supervised family time visits for children in foster care: Outcomes from a pilot study with randomization](#)
The study evaluates the impact of the Strive Supervised Family Time Program on parental engagement, parenting skills, and visit quality among families involved with the child welfare system in Washington State. Results suggest that Strive enhances parent-child visit experiences and may offer valuable support for maintaining family bonds during child welfare interventions.
- ["Being in the system is really difficult and...I wouldn't wish it on anybody." Trauma and the public sector system of care for youth](#)
The study examines the experiences of youth with lived experience in public sector services, focusing on trauma in various forms such as substance use, mental health issues, juvenile justice, foster care, or homelessness. Results reveal that these youths face trauma both before and due to their involvement with the public sector system of care, with system involvement exacerbating existing trauma and introducing new forms of trauma.
- ["She has saved my life on many occasions": Care-experienced young women's reflections on the significance of pets and the impact of loss](#)
The study explores the importance of pets for young women with care experience and examines how disruptions to these relationships during care transitions impact their well-being. It highlights how pets serve as sources of comfort and stability, supporting transitions to independent living and mental health.

TOOLKITS

- [Thoughtful parenting](#)
This kit developed by *Australian Childhood Foundation* contains 9 chapters designed to be used in groups for discussion and application offering a comprehensive guide for parents to cultivate reflection and mindfulness in their parenting approach, enhancing their ability to attune to their children's needs while nurturing their own well-being.
- [Supporting Integration of children on the move](#)
The 'Supporting Integration' toolkit developed by *Family For Every Child* provides guidance for practitioners working with child migrants, developed through a three-year project focused on children moving from the Middle East to Europe. It emphasizes a holistic approach to integration, structured around six dimensions, offering key actions, practitioner toolbox, and tips based on input from children on the move.
- [Recognising and strengthening the stories of children in care](#)
This practice paper published by *Emerging Minds* is for practitioners who are working with children in out-of-home care. It examines the importance of identity and history on the mental health of children in care. It provides examples of practices that have supported identity and story development for children who are living in out-of-home care.



YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- [My complex relationship with family separation in the foster care system](#)
The opinion piece delves into the trauma and complexities surrounding family separation in the foster care system, highlighting the lasting effects on children and advocating for a more nuanced approach to the issue. It discusses the need to balance child safety with the potential harm caused by separating families, drawing from personal experience to emphasize the profound impact of separation on individuals.
- [From foster care to college: Bridging the gap between isolation and inclusion](#)
The challenges faced by a foster youth transitioning into college, including feelings of isolation, difficulty forming peer relationships, and navigating college life without traditional family support. It also highlights the importance of increasing accessibility to college for foster youth and creating community networks to support their success.
- [Care leaver reveals how social worker changed his life](#)
The news article highlights the positive impact of a social worker, John, on the life of Sam, a care leaver from Kirklees, who fled Afghanistan at a young age. Sam credits John's support and guidance for helping him overcome challenges, access therapy, pursue education, and build a successful life, emphasizing the transformative role of social workers in vulnerable children's lives.



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

- [Transition Connection Event- 16th to 18th April, 2024](#)
- [15th International Conference on Adoption- 17th & 18th April, 2024](#)
- [2024 ECA Reconciliation Symposium- 3rd & 4th May, 2024](#)
- [2024 Annual Meeting for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 4th & 5th June, 2024](#)
- [8th International Conference on adoption and research \(ICAR8\)- 8th to 12th July, 2024](#)
- [Biennial Together for Families International Virtual Conference- 22nd to 24th October, 2024](#)

THANK YOU FOR READING!

Write to us at icbjournal@udayancare.org for suggestions, feedback or content to be included.