

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

- [Digital crime against children: The Pocs0 Act in online realm](#)
The article highlights the growing risks children face in the digital world, including cybercrimes like sexual abuse, cyberbullying, and grooming, and examines India's legal frameworks, especially the POCSO Act, in addressing these threats.
- [Economic disparity still confronts the future of children of Maharashtra with their needs unaddressed, rights unrealized and potential thwarted](#)
The article covers UNICEF's extensive efforts in Maharashtra to improve child survival, nutrition, education, and protection, particularly focusing on marginalized communities in urban slums and tribal areas. It highlights programs addressing health, sanitation, and early childhood development to combat disparities in child outcomes across the state.
- [How the Supreme Court ruling empowers children against early marriage](#)
The Supreme Court of India has mandated that state governments enforce the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act more effectively, urging legislative updates and stronger measures to protect children's rights. Key steps include appointing dedicated officers, empowering local authorities, and establishing fast-track courts to combat child marriages.
- [Govt to launch revamped Vatsalya Mission portal for integrated child protection services: official](#)
The Ministry of Women and Child Development plans to launch a unified portal under the Vatsalya Mission, integrating child protection services for faster, coordinated responses in emergencies. Additionally, the ministry is enhancing support for children with disabilities and providing mental health training for government officers.
- [Government expands adoption pool for children in CCIs, prioritising those with unfit guardians & no family visitation](#)
The news article highlights that the Government of India has initiated the process of verifying and including in the foster care and adoption pool those children above six years of age living in Child Care Institutions who have not been visited by anyone within a stipulated period and whose caregivers are unfit to care for them due to mental or terminal illness.

- [‘We want them to know they’re never alone’: How a Bengaluru initiative is changing young lives](#)
The article highlight *WeLive Foundation*, a Bengaluru-based initiative that supports young adults aging out of childcare institutions (CCIs). It highlights the challenges faced by these youth, such as lack of marketable skills and emotional trauma, as they transition to adulthood at 18.
- [SCPS and Oil India Ltd. Collaborate to Distribute Water Purifiers to 11 Child Care Institutions in A&N Islands](#)
The State Child Protection Society, in collaboration with Oil India Ltd., distributed water purifiers and essential resources to 11 Child Care Institutions to improve living conditions for vulnerable children. The event included a cultural program by children and highlighted the impact of corporate support on child welfare initiatives.

ASIA

- [Boosting female labour participation: Professionalising care providers industry can help build more resilient child care ecosystem](#)
The article discusses strategies to strengthen the child care ecosystem by increasing female labour participation and professionalizing care providers. These measures aim to enhance the quality of child care services and create a more resilient workforce.
- [Sharjah Consultative Council Committee reaffirms strengthening family and child welfare](#)
The Family Affairs Committee of the Sharjah Consultative Council held its first meeting to review strategies focused on family and community well-being, aligned with Sharjah’s vision for social stability. Chaired by Saeed Al-Tunaiji, the committee discussed initiatives to address family challenges and enhance support services.
- [Poor child protection leaves millions at risk of family separation, says study](#)
The article highlights a report by SOS Children’s Villages, revealing that inadequate child protection systems globally leave millions of children vulnerable to family separation, often due to poverty, violence, or lack of institutional support. The study, which includes data from eight countries (such as Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya and Denmark), emphasizes the need for preventive investments in family support and anti-violence programs.
- [New resources to help young children in Singapore protect themselves against sexual abuse](#)
This article discusses a new set of educational resources called the *Garden of Safety Resource Kit*, launched by Pave and partners, to teach children body safety and protective behaviours against sexual abuse. The initiative includes videos, a mobile game, and an e-learning course aimed at children, parents, and educators in Singapore.
- [Central Asian countries promote positive language around mental health, addressing deep rooted stigma for children and adolescent](#)
This article covers a conference in Astana, Kazakhstan, where Central Asian countries and Belarus reaffirmed their commitment to reducing mental health stigma and promoting supportive language for children and adolescents. The event, organized by UNICEF, WHO, and Kazakhstan’s Health and Education Ministries, focused on improving mental health access and fostering inclusivity across the region.

INTERNATIONAL

- [Empowering care leavers: how ASDAN’s Moving On programme equips young people for independence](#)
ASDAN’s *Moving On* course supports England’s care leavers by offering practical, flexible modules that build essential skills for independent living, addressing the critical need for structured support. The course empowers young people with personalized, real-life learning to help bridge the gap in education and life skills.
- [Most English councils ‘not willing to act as guarantors for care leavers’](#)
The article reveals that a majority of English councils are unwilling to act as guarantors for care leavers, making it difficult for these young individuals to secure stable housing. This reluctance stems from concerns about financial liability and the complexities involved in supporting care leavers.
- [Money is tight, but ambition is greater](#)
The article emphasizes the importance of supporting care leavers despite public finance challenges, urging councils and organizations to create more career and life opportunities. The new Ambitious Together Foundation aims to raise funds and establish mentoring networks to empower disadvantaged young adults.
- [Budget to include £44m for kinship and foster care](#)
The UK government will allocate £44m in the upcoming Budget to support kinship and foster care, including testing kinship allowances and expanding fostering recruitment hubs to all local authorities. These initiatives aim to enhance stability for children in care and reduce reliance on residential placements.
- [We must ensure kinship care is properly valued so more children can stay within families](#)
The article advocates for legislation to ensure kinship care is properly valued, emphasizing its importance in keeping children within their families. It highlights the need for better support and recognition of kinship caregivers to enhance the welfare of children in these arrangements.
- [Separated by conflict: UNICEF reunites families](#)
The article highlights UNICEF’s efforts to reunite families separated by crises like war, displacement, and natural disasters. Through child-friendly spaces, identity tools, and inter-agency partnerships, UNICEF supports children’s well-being and family reunification.
- [Huge rise in number of young care leavers facing homelessness](#)
New government data reveals a 54% rise in homelessness among young care leavers in England over five years, with over 4,000 affected by April 2024. Charities and officials emphasize urgent reforms, with the government pledging measures to address the housing crisis impacting vulnerable youth.



NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

PUBLICATIONS

- [Kinship Care Disruptions and Child Institutionalisation in Bali, Indonesia: A Qualitative Study](#)
This new study published in *Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond, Volume 11 Issue 2*, investigates the factors leading to the disruption of kinship care and the institutionalization of children in Bali, Indonesia, focusing on economic hardships and changing perceptions of institutional care. It emphasizes the need for enhanced family support systems and community-based alternatives to promote family-based care over institutionalization.
- [Global Report on Children's Care and Protection: Understanding and Preventing the Separation of Children from their Families \(Executive summary\)](#)
The recent publication by *SOS Children's Village* provides a comprehensive analysis of factors contributing to family separation, highlighting the research gap caused by the predominance of higher-income countries in existing literature. It combines insights from a global literature review with new data from diverse countries to improve understanding and strategies for preventing child-family separations.
- [2024 State of the Social Service Workforce Report: The Social Service Workforce and Family Care for Children](#)
This recent report by *Global Social Service Workforce Alliance*, highlights key trends in the social service workforce and underscores its vital role in ensuring safe and stable family care for children, including family-based alternatives when needed.
- [Good Practices of Foster Care for Children with Complex Needs: Findings from a Rapid Review of the Literature to Inform Programming in Moldova](#)
This new report, by *Changing The Way We Care*, outlines international best practices in specialized foster care and offers insights and recommendations to develop and expand specialized foster care services in Moldova.

STUDIES

- [The Interpersonal-Psychological theory of suicide in the context of \(leaving\) care: An empirical exploration of suicidal ideation among care-experienced young adults](#)
This study applies the Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicide (IPTS) to understand the higher risk of suicidal ideation among care-experienced young adults, focusing on perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness. The findings aim to inform suicide prevention strategies within care systems in England and Germany.
- [Exploring parenting behaviours, stress, and closeness among foster parents](#)
This mixed methods study investigates the impact of parenting styles among foster parents, focusing on their childcare management, support perceptions, and educational opportunities. It reveals that authoritative parenting is associated with greater closeness to foster children, while both authoritative and authoritarian styles correlate with higher stress levels.
- [An exploration of a Theraplay® informed group as an intervention for adoptive families](#)
This study examines the implementation and effectiveness of Theraplay® as a support intervention for adoptive families within a Regional Adoption Agency. Through interviews and focus groups, it identifies key themes related to support, intervention processes, and the impact on meeting adoptive parents' needs, while discussing implications for practice and future research.
- [Foster care adoption recruitment methods: A review of the literature amid calls for reform in the United States](#)
This scoping literature review investigates the limited research on foster care adoption recruitment methods, identifying only 15 studies focused on this area. It emphasizes the need for further evaluation of recruitment strategies to improve outcomes for children in the child welfare system while advocating for systemic changes to prioritize family preservation and reunification.

POLICY BRIEFS

- [UNICEF COP29 Policy Briefing](#)
This policy brief addresses the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children, highlighting their unique vulnerabilities and the lifelong consequences on their development, health, and education. It provides recommendations for integrating children's specific needs into key outcomes for COP29 and future Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans.
- [Policy Brief: Ending Child, Early and Forced Marriages and Unions in Colombia](#)
This policy brief advocates for Colombia's Bill PL 155/2023C, which seeks to raise the minimum marriage age to 18 without exceptions to combat child marriage and its harmful consequences. It emphasizes the need for legislative reforms and comprehensive policies to protect children's rights, particularly girls, and fulfil Colombia's international human rights obligations.

TOOLKIT

- [Supporting care experienced students: A handbook for professionals working in higher education](#)
This handbook offers guidance for higher education professionals to support care-experienced students by addressing their unique challenges and enhancing inclusivity. It incorporates recommendations directly from care-experienced young people, covering aspects like financial aid, social integration, and career development.



YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- [Whispers of a Lonely Heart](#)
Dev, a Care Leaver from Visakhapatnam shares his heartfelt journey of loss, loneliness, and the search for healing and self-acceptance, exploring how early hardships and trauma shaped one's struggle for love and belonging. It's a story of resilience, hope, and the desire to reclaim one's life and identity.

- [When Help Hurts: Foster Care v. My Mom](#)
Jose Perez, a foster youth from New York, express the detrimental effects of the foster care system, which often exacerbates trauma rather than providing safety and support for children. It also highlights the complex relationship between parental incarceration and foster care, illustrating how systemic failures can lead to a cycle of pain and loss within families.
- [Finding My Way Back to My Native Identity](#)
Jessica Smith, from Minnesota reflects on her experiences as an Indigenous child adopted into a non-Native family, resulting in cultural identity confusion and lack of support from the child welfare system in understanding her heritage. She emphasizes the need for guidelines to ensure that adopted Native children are rooted in their culture and have access to resources that help them understand their identity.
- [Care leavers like me need support to dream big](#)
Darren Paffey, from United Kingdom who grew up in care reflects on the unique challenges faced by care-experienced youth and stresses the need for better support to help them achieve their full potential. Emphasizing resilience, he calls for action to close the "aspiration gap" through improved mentoring, housing, and educational opportunities.
- [The Protected Characteristic Campaign for Care Experience: Are the recommendations suggesting we break Human Rights Laws?](#)
The author critiques a campaign advocating for care experience to become a protected characteristic, raising concerns about inadequate consultation, the risks to privacy, and the lack of consideration for alternative solutions. They emphasize the need for thoughtful, evidence-based action that respects care-experienced people's diverse perspectives and right to privacy.



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

- [Call for Papers: Institutionalised Children Exploration and Beyond Bi- Annual Journal \(May and September, 2025 Issues\)](#)
- [First Global Ministerial Conference On Ending Violence Against Children- 7 Nov, 2024](#)
- [BICON Roundtable: Driving Care Reform and Celebrating Progress Across Asia- 12 Nov, 2024](#)
- [Call for Proposals for Funding Civil Society Organisations Tackling Violence Against Children- 14 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.