

# 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

- [Family First: What foster care needs to succeed in India](#)  
The article discusses the challenges facing India's child protection system, focusing on the lack of traction for foster care as an alternative to institutionalisation for children. It also highlights the 2024 Model Guidelines for Foster Care, which aim to make the system more accessible while addressing gaps such as public awareness, post-placement support, and the need for family strengthening to ensure the well-being of children in need.
- [Ministry of External Affairs making efforts to push for early return of child in foster care in Germany: Thane MP](#)  
External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has assured that the Indian government is working to expedite the legal processes for the return of three-year-old Ariha Shah from German foster care. Her parents can now visit her twice a month while efforts continue to secure her permanent return to India.
- [Government to bring 126 children into mainstream schooling in Panaji](#)  
Govt. has identified 126 out-of-school children and is looking to get them into the state's mainstream education system during the current academic year. It has assessed that 97 of these children require special training for 12 months to help them integrate with the schooling system through National Institute Open School.
- [Is child care leave in India gender sensitive?](#)  
The article analyses India's Child Care Leave (CCL) policies, critiquing their lack of gender sensitivity by focusing on mothers and neglecting equal caregiving roles for fathers or non-binary parents. It questions the assumptions and gaps in the current framework.
- ['One State, One Digital Card': Telangana to issue single-family card for ration, health, welfare schemes](#)  
The Telangana government plans to introduce a "One State, One Digital Card" system to streamline access to ration, health, and welfare schemes through a single family card. A pilot project will be launched in select urban and rural areas across the state.

- [Meet IAS Mohammad Ali Shibab, who lived in orphanage 10 years, worked as a clerk, and cracked UPSC at a young age of...](#)  
The article shares the inspiring journey of IAS Mohammad Ali Shibab, who overcame a challenging childhood spent in an orphanage to achieve his dream of becoming an Indian Administrative Service officer. His perseverance through hardships and multiple attempts at government examinations exemplifies that dreams can come true with dedication and resilience, even when starting from difficult circumstances.
- [The midwives who stopped murdering girls and started saving them](#)  
The article follows a 30-year investigation into the practice of female infanticide by midwives in rural India, focusing on the efforts of social workers and midwives who began saving new-born girls and the lives of those rescued. It reflects on the lasting impact of this history and the ongoing challenges of gender prejudice and abandonment of baby girls.
- [Addressing the issue of school dropouts in India: causes and solutions](#)  
The blog on CRY addresses the issue of school dropouts in India, exploring the causes such as child labor, gender disparity, and poor infrastructure. It highlights the importance of community involvement, government initiatives, and NGO efforts in reducing dropout rates and ensuring quality education for all children.
- [SBI Foundation announces Asha Scholarship programme 2024](#)  
The State Bank of India (SBI) has launched the third edition of its Asha Scholarship program, aiming to support 10,000 deserving students from underprivileged backgrounds across India. Since its inception in 2022, the program has provided ₹3.91 crore in financial support to nearly 3,200 students

## ASIA

- [Greater investment in social services needed to build resilient communities and end family separation and institutionalisation of children in Central Asia](#)  
Government officials and child rights organizations in Central Asia called for greater investment in social services to prevent family separation and support vulnerable populations. They emphasized the need for strengthening family-based care systems and reducing reliance on residential care for children.
- [Police rescue 402 minors in care homes after abuse claims in Malaysia](#)  
Malaysian police have rescued 402 children and teenagers that they suspect were physically and sexually abused across 20 care homes.
- [Adoption fraud separated generations of Korean families finally reunited](#)  
The article highlights the heart-wrenching stories of adoptees, who, after decades of separation, are reuniting with their birth families in South Korea, only to discover that their adoptions were rooted in deception and fraud. These reunions reveal the painful truths of a system that prioritized supply for international adoption over the welfare of children and their families.
- [When nations clash, children suffer: Unpacking China's adoption ban](#)  
China's Ministry of Civil Affairs has halted foreign adoptions, impacting numerous American families who had already been matched with children. The U.S. government is seeking clarification, with calls for diplomatic efforts to allow families to complete their adoptions despite China's decision.
- [USAID's ASHA grants provides USD 881,393 to Hospital and Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children](#)  
A grant of USD 881,393 awarded by USAID's ASHA program to Nepal's Hospital and Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children (HRDC). The funds will enhance HRDC's capabilities by providing new surgical equipment, expanding physiotherapy services, improving ward facilities, and advancing eco-friendly waste management technologies.

## INTERNATIONAL

- [Kinship care: New allowance will support hundreds of Sheffield families looking after children](#)  
Sheffield City Council has introduced a new financial allowance system to support kinship carers, who look after children from their extended families. The payments are based on the child's age and aim to standardize financial support for the 930 kinship care cases in the city, ensuring consistency and helping families provide stable home environments.
- [Amplifying foster carers' voices to truly hear the children in their care](#)  
The blog shares insights from a foster carer on the importance of family contact for children in care, highlighting how each child's needs and family dynamics differ. It emphasizes that fostering relationships with birth families, when safe, helps children understand their identity and can break cycles of trauma.
- [Families Act now moves to Senate](#)  
The article discusses the bipartisan "Protecting America's Children by Strengthening Families Act," which aims to enhance Title IV-B of the Social Security Act to support family preservation, reduce foster care placements, and strengthen kinship care. It also emphasizes funding for programs that maintain foster children's relationships with incarcerated parents, improve mental health and trauma-responsive child welfare systems, and bolster tribal participation and oversight under the Indian Child Welfare Act.
- [Families to be formally heard](#)  
The article announces the formation of a new Lived Experience Group in South Australia, aimed at incorporating the voices of families affected by the child protection system into policy and practice development. Established by the State Government and Life Without Barriers, the group seeks to enhance support for families and improve outcomes for children in care through shared insights and experiences.
- [Foster and adoption support will become even stronger in the Permian Basin with two non-profits combining resources](#)  
Two non-profits in the Permian Basin, North America are merging resources to enhance support for foster care and adoption services in the region, aiming to provide stronger assistance to children and families in need.
- [Children's home society places more foster care youth with permanent families through child-focused recruitment](#)  
The article highlights how Children's Home Society of NC (CHS) uses the Child-Focused Recruitment (CFR) program to connect children in foster care, especially long-waiting youth, with adoptive families. A national study showed that children served through this program are three times more likely to be adopted. The program is part of a public-private initiative with funding from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.



## NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

### PUBLICATIONS

- [How to support Kinship Care: Lessons learnt across the world](#)  
This new study published in *Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond, Volume 11 Issue 2*, examines the importance of kinship care as a primary alternative to parental care for children and highlights the need for better support systems in place globally. It identifies key principles for effective kinship care, including active participation, recognition of diversity, and access to necessary services, while emphasizing that formalization of kinship arrangements is not always required for effective support.
- [Who shapes global out-of-home childcare? Transnational public and hybrid public-private agency for child \(de-\)institutionalization](#)  
The research published in *Children and Youth Services Review, volume 164*, explores the role of transnational and hybrid public-private actors in shaping global child institutionalization, examining their relationships and the impact of their diverse, often conflicting policies on children without parental care. The study analyses the complexities of these actors' influence and the ambiguous effects on child welfare.
- [Reflections on effective delivery of family strengthening interventions in Kenya](#)  
The Kenya Learning Brief published by *Changing the Way We Care*, reflects on effective interventions, workforce capacity building, and lessons learned from implementing family support services to prevent child separation and promote safe, nurturing family environments.
- [Evaluation of the lifelong links trial in Scotland](#)  
The *CELCIS* report evaluates the Lifelong Links programme, highlighting its ability to empower children in care by connecting them with family members and supporting their sense of identity. It also explores challenges in social work practices and stresses the importance of having an independent coordinator to improve outcomes.
- [Report on what makes a good residential child care home for children](#)  
The report series "A Place To Call Home" published by *Action for Children*, examines the quality of care homes for children in the UK, focusing on the need for well-matched, high-quality homes that meet individual needs. It highlights challenges in care systems, including insufficient supply of appropriate homes, and stresses the importance of defining and delivering consistent quality across foster and residential care.
- [Summary of key provisions of the model guidelines on Foster Care, 2024 in comparison with the 2016 Guidelines](#)  
The document published by *Catalyst For Social Action*, provides a summary and comparison of the key provisions of the 2024 Model Guidelines on Foster Care with the 2016 version, highlighting changes made in line with amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act and related regulations. It serves as a reference for understanding the updates and simplifications in the revised foster care guidelines.

### STUDIES

- ["Suffering in silence": How social workers in child welfare practice experience and manage burnout](#)  
The study examines how child welfare social workers experience burnout due to tensions from competing demands in their work and explores the self-care strategies they use to manage. It also offers recommendations for improving support systems within child welfare agencies.
- ["Who is going to help us?": A qualitative study on young care leaver's experiences in Iran](#)  
The study explores the lived experiences of young care leavers in Iran transitioning from residential care to independent living. It highlights the challenges they face, including feelings of abandonment, stigma, loneliness, and a lack of preparation for independent life. The research calls for personalized transition plans, community engagement, and efforts to combat societal discrimination against care leavers.
- [Is foster caring associated with an earlier transition to adulthood for caregivers' own children? ONS Longitudinal Study](#)  
This study examines whether children in fostering households transition to key adult roles, such as finishing school and becoming financially independent, differently than children in non-caregiving households. The study suggests that older children or females in fostering households may cope better and recommends supporting foster parents in managing their children's transition to adulthood as part of social workers' roles.
- [Making sense of adoption disruption: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the lived experiences of adoptive parents](#)  
The study explores the experiences of adoptive parents who faced adoption disruption, focusing on the challenges of raising children with developmental trauma. It identifies themes around adoptive family identity, struggles in parenting, and the journey toward acceptance, calling for better support to break cycles of trauma.
- [Legal protections for sexual and gender minority youth in foster care: A review of Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act \(Normalcy Standards\)](#)  
The study investigates legal protections for sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth within the U.S. foster care system, focusing on the impact of federal laws like the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. It highlights the higher identification of SGM youth in foster care and their worse outcomes, analysing state-level legislation and policies to determine how effectively they support SGM youth's rights and normalcy efforts, while calling for more research on the effectiveness of these legal protections.
- [Instruments evaluating child outcomes used in evidence-based family support programs: A scoping review](#)  
The scoping review identifies measurement instruments for assessing child outcomes in evidence-based family support programs and analyzes variations in Cronbach's alpha across different participant types (community, clinical, at-risk). It highlights the need for better reporting of psychometric properties to facilitate comparison of studies and calls for further investigation into the inconsistencies in reporting Cronbach's alpha, particularly in clinical and at-risk samples.

### 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.
- [Vital role of kinship and foster carers recognised in Australian new charter](#)  
The statement announces the launch of the Charter for Carers by the ACT Government, recognizing the vital role of carers in child protection. It outlines shared responsibilities to promote positive partnerships between carers, families, and child protection services.

## TOOLKITS

- [Family network meetings in adoption](#)  
This practical guide by *Corram Baaf*, explores the implementation and benefits of family network meetings in adoption practice, highlighting their role in enhancing support for children and families. It provides social workers and managers with comprehensive advice, best practices, and case studies to effectively organize and conduct these meetings.
- [Transition monitoring tool](#)  
This new tool by *Better Care Network* and *Transforming Children's Care*, is for the practitioners to closely track and monitor the progress of residential care services transitions they are involved in. It can be used as a work plan to guide the implementation of a transition strategy, allowing practitioners to identify relevant transition activities, set progress-related goals, and monitor progress against those goals.
- [Engaging vulnerable young people – the Aotearoa New Zealand context](#)  
The guidance papers by *Family For Every Child*, examine how three organizations in Aotearoa New Zealand engage with vulnerable children and youth, helping them build confidence, advocate for themselves, and drive change in the childcare system. These papers focus on supporting those impacted by family violence, incarceration, and foster or residential care experiences.



## YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- [A care leaver's journey to belonging in a digital world](#)  
The blog shares a care leaver's personal journey of finding belonging in a digital world, highlighting the challenges faced in accessing technology and digital tools after leaving a supportive environment. It emphasizes the resilience of care leavers and calls for equitable access to resources, mentorship, and training to thrive in a digital landscape, ultimately advocating for inclusion and support for young people from care backgrounds.
- [#CareForCareLeavers: Empathy starts with understanding](#)  
In the Udayan Care #CareForCareLeavers campaign, Vikram shares his inspiring journey from a childcare institution to becoming a successful multicuisine chef, thanks to the support from Udayan Care's Aftercare Outreach Program. He emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive workplaces for care leavers, calling for action to foster empathy and understanding, so that young people like him can thrive.
- ["From woe to whoa", Foster youth advocating for change](#)  
The podcast features two foster care advocates, discussing how their lived experiences drive system reform and how engaging foster youth in research and advocacy can improve outcomes. It explores prioritizing basic needs and fostering active youth participation in reform efforts.
- [Independent Living Program \(ILP\) services need to extend the age for older foster youth](#)  
The piece discusses the challenges faced as they transition out of support services at 21, highlighting feelings of imposter syndrome and the pressure to have everything figured out. It advocates for extending the Independent Living Program's support until age 26 to allow youth more time to heal, explore their paths, and navigate life's complexities without the added pressure of an arbitrary age limit.
- [My life as a foster youth includes dreams of college](#)  
The piece reflects on the challenges faced by a former foster youth navigating multiple homes and schools, highlighting the lack of stability and support. It emphasizes the importance of community organizations like First Star in providing guidance and mentorship for foster youth aspiring to pursue higher education and overcome systemic barriers.
- [Coping with mental health struggles as a child living in care: Rachel's Story](#)  
The article shares Rachel's story, a young ambassador who grew up in care, detailing her mental health struggles, including depression and suicidal thoughts. With the support of an Action for Children advocate, she reconnected with her siblings and found her voice, using her experience to advocate for other children in care.
- [We can do anything we put our minds to - care leaver](#)  
The article shares Mollieanne's perspective as a care leaver, who passionately advocates for young people in the care system to know they can achieve anything they set their minds to. Hosting a conference in Liverpool, she calls for more opportunities, an end to stigma, and the creation of a supportive community for care leavers as they navigate the challenges of life after care.



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

- [Call for Papers: Institutionalised Children Exploration and Beyond Bi- Annual Journal \(May and September, 2025 Issues\)](#)
- [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.