

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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AS WE APPROACH THE ARRIVAL OF 2024 AMID JOYOUS CELEBRATIONS AND CHERISHED MOMENTS WITH OUR DEAR ONES, WE REFLECT ON THE PRIVILEGE OF COLLABORATING WITH YOU THROUGHOUT THIS YEAR. AS WE EMBARK ON THE NEW YEAR, WE WARMLY INVITE OUR READERS TO SHARE THEIR VALUABLE TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR TOPICS. YOUR INPUT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED. ALL THE BEST AND HERE'S TO A JOYFUL AND PROSPEROUS 2024!



GENERAL ALTERNATIVE CARE NEWS

INTERNATIONAL

- [Number of Youth in Formal Foster Care Continues to Decline, Imprint Survey Finds](#)
The report by The Imprint, detailing their "Who Cares" project, underscores the downward trend in the number of youngsters in foster care and licensed foster residences throughout the United States from 2022 to 2023. It also explores the upsurge in kinship placements, the decrease in foster homes without family connections, the reduction in congregate care providers, and the prevalence of Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs) in different states.
- [These twins are taking steps for foster kids – big steps. They're walking across America](#)
The news article follows the inspiring journey of Davon and Tavon Woods, twin brothers who are walking and talking for kids who can't speak for themselves by traversing states to raise awareness about the shortcomings of the foster care system.
- [Georgia faces critical shortage of foster care parents](#)
Georgia is facing a crucial deficit in foster care parents, with a considerable decrease in potential foster parent's post-pandemic despite an unchanged number of children needing care. The article underscores the pressing need for additional families to provide homes for foster children amid this shortage.
- [Northumberland care leavers to have 'place to call home' with new supported accommodation service](#)
The article highlights Northumberland's new initiative aiding youths transitioning out of care system in finding stable homes through supported lodgings, stressing the need for hosts to provide both safety and vital life skills.
- [England's first ever kinship care strategy launches](#)
The launch of England's inaugural Kinship Care Strategy, aimed at providing support and recognition for kinship carers who step in to care for children when parents cannot. This strategy acknowledges the vital role kinship carers play and outlines plans to offer better guidance, financial support, and services for these families.

ASIA

- [Ties that bind: Unravelling child adoption in Pakistan](#)
The news article explores the complexities and challenges surrounding child adoption in Pakistan, shedding light on the legal, cultural, and societal factors influencing the process. It discusses the difficulties faced by prospective adoptive parents, the bureaucratic hurdles, and the need for reforms to streamline and improve adoption procedures in the country.
- [Welfare organization delegation from Pakistan meets with IG Punjab to an orphanage in Lahore](#)
The Holistic Foster Care team met with Punjab's IG, Dr. Usman Anwar, to plan "Tahaffuz Manzil," an orphanage in Lahore with a goal to aid homeless, orphaned, and abandoned children by partnering with Punjab Police and volunteer foster mothers.

- [Direct Aid Program for the Philippines: Children, Women, Environment](#)
The Australian Embassy in the Philippines has opened applications for its Direct Aid Program (DAP) offering grants up to PhP1 million per project for the 2023-24 period. Emphasizing support for vulnerable groups, the program aims to aid marginalized children, promote sustainability, tackle climate change, and align with joint Australian-Philippine development goals.
- [Eighth Army continues tradition of putting smiles on orphans' faces](#)
Eighth Army officials and personnel continued a longstanding practice by visiting Namsan-won Orphanage in Seoul, South Korea, to deliver more than 150 Christmas presents to the children.

INDIA

- [Need for more awareness of foster care in Bengal](#) The news article sheds light on Bengal's nascent foster care program, highlighting its progress and challenges. It emphasizes the need for greater awareness to encourage more families to foster children, detailing the criteria, procedures, and responsibilities associated with foster care in the state.
- [What after an orphan turns 18? States urged to provide vocational training](#)
The Ministry of Women and Child Development has advocated states to offer vocational training and aid for orphans upon turning 18. The emphasis is on helping these youths gain skills for self-sufficiency and finding jobs after leaving institutional care. Additionally, the article captures insights from Udayan Care's founder and their study "*Beyond 18*" concerning aftercare and its influence on the strategy for care reform.
- [Andhra Pradesh High Court asks government to submit report on conditions in Child Care Institutions](#)
The Andhra Pradesh High Court has demanded a government report regarding the state of child care institutions in response to a filed Public Interest Litigation (PIL) concerning the welfare of children in these facilities.
- [6 years+ kids rarely find adoptive parents](#)
Authorities informed the supreme court about the challenges older children encounter in the adoption process, emphasizing the limited interest from prospective adoptive families for children in this age group.



NEW RESOURCES IN THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SPACE

PUBLICATIONS

- [\(Re\)defining family: A systematic review and meta-synthesis of foster children's views of family in non-kinship foster care](#)
This study published in the *Children and Youth Services Review, Volume 155*, systematically reviews foster children's views on family, exploring their definitions of family, the groups they consider as family, and distinct research approaches used.
- [A Compassion-Focused Therapy group for young people who live in foster, adoptive or kinship care: Initial development, reflections, and ways forward](#)
This new study published in the journal *Adoption & Fostering, Volume 47 Issue 4*, introduces a Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) group specifically designed for youths with a history of abuse and neglect, living in foster, adoptive, or kinship care.
- [What is family?](#)
Read this new report published by *Australian Institute of Family Studies* to understand a wide range of views when it comes to defining a family and what makes a family.
- [Social workers perspective on barriers to family reunification](#)
This new study published by *California State University, San Bernardino CSUSB Scholar Works* investigates the obstacles faced by social workers in reuniting families within a child welfare agency in Central California examining challenges like scarce partnerships, conflicting policies, heavy workloads, and financial constraints impacting their effectiveness in family reunification.
- [Children's Vision for Human Rights](#)
This new report published by *United Nations Human Rights* to mark the milestone of 75th anniversary compiles of around 4000 children's opinion on Human Rights.
- [Privacy and Protection: A children's rights approach to encryption](#)
This report, co-published by *CRIN and defenddigitalme* aims to capture the full complexity of how encryption affects children's lives. It sets out principles for an approach to encryption that recognises and respects the full range of their rights.
- [Mentor's competence model used to build a relationship with a child living in a residential care institution](#)
The article published by *Baltija publishing* proposes a new competence-based training model, offering recommendations for enhancing mentoring programs to aid the social integration and independent living of orphaned and parentless children in Ukraine.

STUDIES

- [Transitional support interventions for care leavers: A scoping review](#)
The scoping review delves into various transitional support interventions designed to aid care leavers in transitioning to independent living. It emphasizes the significance of relationship-based practices and highlights the effectiveness of a comprehensive approach involving extended care, supportive relationships, family ties, and education/employment support for a successful transition.
- [Making a Way Out of No Way: The Importance of Improving Financial Instability Among African American Kinship Care Families](#)
This research study focuses on financial struggles among African American families offering informal kinship care to vulnerable children. It uncovers challenges in meeting basic needs despite limited awareness of available support, highlighting the role of family support in coping with financial instability.
- [Inequitable access to relative caregiving: Implications of foster care regulations in Finland, New Zealand, and the United States](#)
The study examines foster care regulations in Finland, New Zealand, and Wisconsin, focusing on how policy decisions affect eligibility for relative caregivers and impact placement options for children in out-of-home care. It reveals differences in policy implementation and their effects on child and family well-being, highlighting challenges in licensing relative caregivers and advocating for revisions to prioritize equitable access and culturally appropriate placement options for children.

POLICY BRIEF

- [Colorado Child Welfare System Legislative Interim Committee](#)

The legislative committees in Colorado reviewed various issues and proposed numerous bills for introduction in 2024. The Child Welfare System Interim Study Committee proposed bills concerning kinship foster care, a comprehensive children's behavioural health system, accessibility to welfare services, and enhancements to child welfare tools.

TOOLKITS

- [PLANEA Independent Life Skills Scale for young people in residential care](#)

The PLANEA Independent Life Skills Scale is a reliable assessment tool for evaluating independent living skills in youth, particularly those in residential care. It comprises three key factors and demonstrates strong reliability and validity.

- [Supporting Integration](#)

This toolkit for practitioners working with children and young people on the move focuses on offering guidance and best practices for practitioners working with child migrants, encompassing their care, protection, and integration in various countries, regardless of their legal status



YOUNG VOICES THAT APPEAR IN THE MEDIA

- ['If it wasn't for my foster carer I'd be in prison,' says Swindon man](#)

The news article emphasizes the impact of foster care on individuals like Peter Davies, who credits his foster carer for averting a troubled path. Davies urges more individuals in Swindon to consider fostering, highlighting the transformative potential in nurturing vulnerable children, urging for respect and understanding in their care.

- [We Are Grieving](#)

The article depicts an adoptee's emotional struggles after discovering their adoption and the lack of support received. Stressing the need for continuous emotional support and open communication for adoptees, it underscores the importance of understanding and patience during their journey of self-discovery.

- [Care leavers find it much harder to get a job – but any company would be lucky to have us](#)

The article chronicles personal experiences navigating employment challenges as a care leaver. It sheds light on the struggles faced during job applications, highlighting the initiatives taken by companies to hire care-experienced individuals. The author advocates for greater recognition of the skills and resilience of care leavers while addressing societal stigmas surrounding their experiences.



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

- [Join and register for "Fire Side Chat with Care Leavers" happening every Wednesday, 4-5 pm](#)
- [9th Conference of the International Society for Child Indicators- 14th to 16th February, 2024](#)
- [3rd Global Forum for a World Without Orphans- 29th February to 3rd March, 2024](#)
- [ICAR-8: International Conference on Adoption Research- 8th to 12th July, 2024](#)
- [ISPCAN Congress Sweden, 18th - 21th August, 2024](#)

THANK YOU FOR READING!

We welcome your contribution for the next issue of our e-bulletin/ news wrap up, so please send any development/progress in your country/organisation, or any relevant resource (150 words with photos) to us at icbjournal@udayancare.org.