



**YOUTH
EXPERIENCE
SURVEY**

MAY 2020

NYC Children

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I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACS is pleased to acknowledge the many individuals who contributed to the third annual Foster Care Youth Experience Survey.

We thank New York City Council Member Donovan Richards who introduced and sponsored Local law 146 of 2016 that led to the creation and administration of the annual survey.

We are grateful to the youth who completed the survey and shared their insights on their experiences in foster care. We are also thankful to the foster care provider agencies for their partnership and work and to ensure that the voices of young people were heard.

I want to thank my team at ACS, including Deputy Commissioner for Family Permanency Services, Julie Farber, and Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Planning, and Measurement, Andrew White, for driving improvements to the foster care system and for their leadership on this survey. Special thanks to the many other ACS staff that contributed to the survey development, dissemination, analysis, and writing of this report including Allon Yaroni, Fouad Yared, Randi Rosenblum, Ina Mendez, Myra Soto-Aponte, Karamoko Andrews, Esther Ting, Lorna Guthrie, Kareem Forbes, Polly Mygatt, Neil Freedman, Sabine Chery, Sophonie Taylor, Virginia Johnson-Conway, Eric Brettschneider, Stephanie Gendell, and staff of the Office of Shared Response, the Senior Practice Consultants, and the APPLA Monitoring Unit. I also want to thank the ACS marketing and design team that designed this report, including John Taylor.

Thank you to Mayor Bill de Blasio for his continued support of ACS' work to improve the experiences and opportunities for children and youth in foster care. We are utilizing the findings from this report and working with our partners to continue to strengthen the foster care system and improve outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Lastly, the COVID-19 crisis has created additional and unprecedented challenges for foster youth since this survey was completed. I want to acknowledge the courage and resourcefulness of foster parents and staff at ACS and our provider agencies who are working hard to ensure that youth are safe and stable during this time.



David A. Hansell
Commissioner, NYC Administration for Children's Services



A few staff members behind the work at the Administration for Children's Services

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS), in partnership with our foster care provider agencies, conducted the third annual Foster Care Youth Experience Survey in accordance with Local law 146 of 2016. The legislation, which was introduced by City Council Member Donovan Richards, requires the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to provide to all youth in foster care, age 13 and older, an annual survey regarding their experiences in foster care. The purpose of the survey is to better understand the experiences of youth while in foster care, pertaining to their safety, permanency, and well-being.

The survey questions focused on youths' experiences pertaining to education, employment, health care, connections to family and friends and permanency planning while in foster care. The responses reflect youth's perception of their needs and the support they receive in a variety of areas.

The survey had a response rate of 40%; 953 out of 2,394 eligible youth completed the survey. This is a strong response rate for a survey of this type, which typically have a response rate of 30% - 40%.¹ Youth in 24-hour foster care² for at least 90 days between the ages of 13-20 were eligible to complete the survey. Of those responding, 61% were female; 58% were between the ages of 17-20; 44% identified as Hispanic, Latino or of Spanish origin; and 61% identified as Black, African American or African.

At the time they were surveyed, the majority of respondents resided in family foster care (79%), with 23% in kinship foster homes and 56% in non-kinship foster homes. Just under half of respondents had spent fewer than three years in foster care, including 13% having spent less than a year in foster care. Fifty-one percent had spent three or more years in foster care. For 72% of respondents, their current placement was their first time in foster care.

The survey was voluntary and confidential. However, it was not anonymous; ACS staff could identify the youth completing each survey in order to follow up on any health or safety concern. Youth were informed that such follow-up would be conducted if their responses indicated a concern. ACS staff monitored responses on a daily basis and contacted individual youth and/or foster care agencies to address any critical issues or basic needs that youth reported as unmet.

As with all surveys, the findings are subject to nonresponse bias that stems from youth choosing not to complete the survey. Findings are also subject to response bias from those who may over report "socially desirable" answers and underreport or over report negative feedback, which may lead to a deviation of answers from their true value.

EDUCATION:

The majority (73%) of the youth who completed the survey were in school or a vocational program. Among this group of 693 youth, 73% were in high school, 13% were in middle school, 7% were in college, and the remaining 7% were in a TASC/GED or vocational program. Among the 260 youth not currently enrolled in school, half had completed at least one high school grade but had not received a high school diploma. Thirty-five percent did have a high school diploma or equivalency degree, and 8% had completed some college. Almost half of the youth reported having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

1 Hart, N., Dykema, J., Schaeffer, N., & Stevenson, J., University of Wisconsin Survey Center. Survey Fundamentals: A Guide to Designing and Implementing Surveys. 2010.

2 Twenty-four hour foster care means the youth is residing in a foster care placement; they are not on trial discharge, hospitalized, incarcerated, or otherwise temporarily out of placement.

Youth were interested in continuing their education and were receiving academic and other support. Among youth in high school or who left high school without graduating, 91% plan to finish high school. More than 84% of youth who have started college or a vocational school plan to finish their degree. Tutoring, help applying for school, and preparation for the TASC or Regents exams were the educational services that respondents most frequently said they need. Approximately three quarters of the youth who needed these services also reported receiving them. For youth in middle school, help with the high school application process was the most common need, and 84% of youth who needed it were receiving it.

EMPLOYMENT:

The majority of youth in foster care want to work. Sixty-four percent of respondents reported interest in obtaining employment. Nearly 40% of youth ages 18-20 were already working, as were a quarter of youth ages 16-17. More than half of youth ages 16 and older had participated in the Summer Youth Employment Program. Many unemployed youth reported that they were receiving help to find a job; most frequently received supports were help with getting dependable transportation (73%) or work attire (74%) and help with emotional/behavioral issues (82%). While the majority of youth reported that their employment-related needs were met, the most common unmet needs for youth seeking employment were help with finding places that are hiring (48%), learning which jobs to apply for (43%), and learning interview skills (36%).

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:

The vast majority of youth (90%) reported that they feel very supported or somewhat supported by their foster parents or residential facility staff. When asked how often they have someone who makes them feel wanted, listens to them and helps them solve problems, approximately two thirds of respondents said they had people who supported them in these ways “most of the time.” A very small group of youth (3%) responded “never” to all three emotional support questions. ACS followed up with these youth and contacted their foster care agencies as necessary to follow up on their emotional well-being.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS:

The majority of youth reported using social media, spending time with friends, and engaging in outdoor activities as their primary activities during their free time. Youth were also asked if anything held them back from participating in activities they were interested in. While 60% said that nothing held them back, 27% cited lack of money as a barrier. Most youth reported having access to cell phones and the internet (84% and 77%, respectively).

HEALTHCARE AND BASIC FOOD/CLOTHING NEEDS:

At least 90% of youth reported that their needs for health care, food and clothing were met. Among all survey respondents, 90% - 93% reported having their needs met as related to physical health care, and for their mental/

emotional health. About one fifth of respondents stated that they need care for alcohol or drug use, and 91% of those said that their needs were met. Half of respondents stated that they need care for sexual health/family planning, and 93% of those had their needs met as well. Youth were also asked if they had three meals a day, appropriate clothing and shoes that fit. At least 90% of respondents answered yes to each of these questions. For every youth who answered no to any of these questions or who reported an unmet health need, ACS conducted outreach to address the concerns.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND PERMANENCY PLANNING:

Youth were asked whether they receive various types of support from their foster care agencies, and over 70% said they got help in all areas: education, permanency planning, independent living, housing, employment, connecting with attorneys and social activities. Education (89%) and permanency planning (84%) were the most frequent types of support received. When asked about their participation in permanency planning, 71% of respondents reported being involved, and 41% of those said they led the creation of their permanency plan. Youth were supported to engage in permanency planning, most frequently by their foster care case worker (78%), foster parent (67%), and residential program staff (61%).

ACS INITIATIVES SUPPORTING YOUTH

ACS is currently implementing a range of programs and initiatives to improve youth experiences, outcomes and well-being through the Foster Care Strategic Blueprint and the work of the Interagency Foster Care Task Force (see Section V of this report for a detailed description of these initiatives).

ACS's Youth Leadership Council, launched in March 2019, brings youth and adult leaders together to work in partnership on key areas of policy and practice. The Youth Council includes youth currently and previously in foster care. The goals of the Council are to develop youths' leadership skills, increase youth voice in foster care system improvement efforts and help youth build a positive social network.

In December 2019, ACS launched the Fair Futures Initiative, which aims to improve outcomes for foster care youth ages 11-21 in the areas of education, employment, housing, and permanency. Fair Futures is the result of a partnership among the Mayor's Office, City Council, ACS, the City's 26 contracted foster care agencies, and the Fair Futures Coalition (a consortium of foster care agencies, foundations, advocates, and others). As part of the \$12 million citywide effort, foster care agencies are hiring coaches, tutors and other staff; expanding programming to support youth in building life skills; setting academic and career goals; and planning for successful transitions from foster care.

ACS is implementing several strategies through our No Time to Wait initiative to improve reunification, adoption, and kinship guardianship outcomes for children and youth in foster care. ACS is also increasing placement with kin and enhancing foster parent recruitment and support. Through our Home Away from Home initiative, ACS and foster care providers are implementing targeted approaches to increase the foster parent pool and provide enhanced support for foster parents serving teens. There are multiple initiatives underway to improve education and employment outcomes for young people, in partnership with the New York City Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Youth and

Community Development (DYCD), CUNY, Columbia University, the philanthropic community and other partners. Finally, ACS is working in close partnership with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and other partners to deliver new programs to improve health and mental health outcomes for young people.

The third annual Youth Experience Survey provides valuable information regarding the experiences of youth between the ages of 13 - 20 in foster care. The results highlight strengths in the work to support youth in foster care and areas in which more must be done. As briefly highlighted above and described in detail in Section V of this report, multiple initiatives are underway through the [ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint](#) and the [Interagency Agency Task Force](#) that are specifically targeted towards improving the safety, permanency and well-being of older youth in foster care. As ACS and its partners continue to prioritize this work, we will look to the Youth Leadership Council and the results from this and future surveys to guide our efforts and ensure that the voices of youth in foster care advance the critical objective of improving outcomes for children, youth, and families.

III. INTRODUCTION

A. Background and Purpose of the Survey

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) disseminated and analyzed the responses from the third annual Foster Care Experience Survey to comply with Local Law 146 of 2016. The law requires ACS to provide to all youth in foster care, ages 13 and older an annual survey regarding their experiences in foster care. The purpose of the survey is to better understand the experiences of youth while in foster care, especially as it pertains to their safety, permanency, and well-being. The law requires that the survey cover the following topics:

- Access to food and clothing;
- Religious practices;
- Social connectedness (i.e., relationships with foster families, biological families, and friends);
- Personal allowances (i.e., money received on a regular basis from the caregiver, or stipends for participating in agency program);
- Access to technology (i.e., internet and phone);
- Educational needs and progress; and
- Participation in extracurricular activities.

ACS collaborated with its contracted foster care agencies to disseminate the survey to all eligible youth residing in 24-hour foster care status, in all types of foster care placements (foster homes, group homes and residential treatment programs).³ All eligible youth were sent a letter with instructions on how to access the survey, and ACS worked closely with foster care agencies to implement a range of strategies to ensure that youth were aware of the survey and encouraged to complete it. Youth who completed the survey received a \$10 gift card. The survey launched on November 5, 2019 and remained open for eleven weeks. The overall response rate was 40%.

B. Survey Methodology

Survey development and analysis

For this third annual survey conducted in FY20, ACS used the same survey tool as the fiscal year 2018 and 2019 Youth Experience Surveys with some minor modifications in order to obtain more comprehensive and robust information. This included adding new questions regarding bank accounts, self care and Summer Youth Employment; updating response options based on responses to the previous year's survey; and refining some questions to better ascertain if youths' needs are being met. The FY20 survey tool is included in Appendix A. ACS programmed the online survey questions and conducted tests to ensure that skip patterns were accurate.

³ This does not include Close to Home juvenile justice placements.

Survey dissemination

ACS launched the online survey on November 5, 2019. ACS mailed letters to all eligible youth and sent an electronic notification of the survey to those for whom an email address was available. The letters explained the purpose of the survey and included instructions for youth to access the survey. ACS also sent the relevant information to each provider agency, including the youth names and their unique PINs⁴ to help support further engagement of youth to complete the survey. All communications included ACS contact information in case the youth had any questions. To encourage survey participation, youth received a \$10 gift card upon completion of the survey.

ACS and the provider agencies used a wide range of strategies to follow up with non-respondents. For example, ACS provided weekly updates to the agencies showing overall response rates, along with a list of youth who had not yet completed the survey. ACS staff worked with foster care agencies to identify and resolve any completion barriers and reiterate the importance of completing the survey. Additionally, ACS responded to any questions from youth and foster care agencies through a survey help desk and offered translation services for youth who requested to complete the survey in another language.

Survey population and response rates

The survey population was comprised of all youth aged 13 or older who had been in foster care for at least 90 days as of October 18, 2019. At the time of survey dissemination, there were 2,599 youth identified as eligible to participate. During data collection, provider agencies reported 205 youth who were no longer eligible for the survey due to being discharged from care, absent from care, incarcerated, or having serious developmental delays. After removing these youth from the sample, 2,394 youth were eligible to complete the survey.⁵

Of the 2,394 youth eligible for the survey, 953 completed it, for a response rate of 40%. This is a good response rate for online surveys, which typically have a response rate of 30% – 40%.⁶

C. Survey Respondent Placement Types & Demographics

This section provides an overview of the demographic characteristics and placement types of the youth responding to the survey and the total population of foster care youth eligible to participate in the survey, based on ACS administrative data.⁷

4 Each eligible young person was given a unique identification number (PIN) with which to access the survey.

5 The cohort of potentially eligible youth changes daily as young people enter and exit foster care. To administer the survey, it is necessary to define the survey population as of a specific date. ACS pulled data on 10/18/2019, shortly before the start of the survey period, and used this to create the FY20 eligibility list.

6 Hart, N., Dykema, J., Schaeffer, N., & Stevenson, J., University of Wisconsin Survey Center. *Survey Fundamentals: A Guide to Designing and Implementing Surveys*. 2010.

7 Youth were eligible to participate in the survey if they were age 13 or older and had spent at least 90 days in foster care.

Placement Type

Of the 953 youth responding to the survey, 79% were living either in foster homes or in kinship foster homes (Table 1). Slightly more than half (56%) reside in non-relative foster homes and 23% were placed in kinship family homes. The remaining 21% were placed in residential treatment centers or group homes.

Length of time in foster care. Based on information available in ACS administrative records, slightly less than half of the survey respondents had been in care for fewer than three years, including 13% in care for less than one year at the time of the survey distribution and 36% in care for one to under three years. Fifty-one percent were in care for three years or more.

Number of foster care spells (placement episodes). Consistent with the population of youth age 13 or older in foster care overall, nearly three quarters (72%) of the survey respondents were experiencing foster care placement for the first time, or their first spell. An additional 21% of respondents were in their second spell of foster care, meaning they had previously been discharged from care and then reentered care. The remaining 7% had been placed into foster care three or more times.

Table 1. Indicators of placement in foster care: Survey respondents and population eligible to respond to the survey

Placement indicator	Foster care youth responding to survey		Foster care youth in population eligible to participate in survey	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
All youth	40%	953	100%	2394
Current placement type				
Foster home	56%	534	50%	1186
Kinship family home	23%	220	28%	667
Residential treatment center/Group home	21%	198	22%	530
Unknown	0%	*	1%	11
Length of time in foster care				
Under 1 year	13%	122	15%	363
1 to under 3 years	36%	341	38%	909
3 to under 5 years	25%	240	21%	509
5 to under 8 years	14%	129	14%	333
8 or more years	13%	120	12%	279
Missing Data	0%	*	0%	*
Number of foster care spells				
One	72%	688	71%	1688
Two	21%	197	22%	523
Three or more	7%	68	8%	183

NOTE: Findings in which the N is between 1 and 5 are not reported, these are represented by an asterisk (*).

SOURCES: Youth Experience Survey FY20 and ACS Administrative Records

Demographics

Information on the gender and age of respondents was analyzed from ACS administrative records.⁸ Of the 953 youth responding to the survey, 61% were female and 39% were male (Table 2). The majority of respondents (60%) were 15 to 18 years old, with 17% under age 15 and 24% over age 18.

Table 2. Gender and age of survey respondents and population eligible to respond to the survey

Demographic indicator	Foster care youth responding to survey		Foster care youth in population eligible to participate in survey	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
All youth	40%	953	100%	2,394
Gender				
Male	39%	369	42%	1,008
Female	61%	584	58%	1,386
Age				
13 to 14 years	17%	159	22%	531
15 to 16 years	26%	246	27%	653
17 to 18 years	34%	324	30%	718
19 to 20 years	24%	224	21%	492

SOURCES: Youth Experience Survey FY20 and ACS Administrative Records

The survey gathered information on the race and ethnicity of youth in foster care (Table 3).⁹ Ethnicity is reported separately from race. Youth who identified themselves as Hispanic, Latino or of Spanish Origin accounted for a substantial share of the youth responding to the survey (44%), while 5% identified as Middle Eastern or North African. The remaining 51% said they were none of the aforementioned options or preferred not to answer.

Regarding their race, the largest group of youth self-identified as Black, African American or African (61%). Ten percent reported their race as White. Small percentages of youth self-identified as Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (Table 3). The rest did not report their race.

It was not possible to compare the racial or ethnic background of survey respondents with the total eligible population of youth in foster care because the survey requested that the information be reported in a different format than that used in ACS' administrative records.

⁸ Gender information was pulled from the New York State CONNECTIONS system, which only includes "male" and "female" as options. This data does not reflect youth's self-reported gender identities. The survey did not ask youth to identify their gender.

⁹ ACS' administrative records do not distinguish between race and ethnicity (Hispanic is reported as a race in New York State CONNECTIONS, the system of record, so data are not available, for example, about the number of youth in care who are Black/African-American and Hispanic).

Table 3. Race/ethnicity of survey respondents

Demographic indicator	Youth responding to the survey	
Ethnicity	Percent	Number
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	44%	420
Middle Eastern or North African	5%	43
None of the above	42%	403
Prefer not to answer	9%	84
Total	100%	950
Race	Percent	Number
Black, African American, or African	61%	585
White	10%	93
Asian	3%	32
American Indian or Alaska Native	3%	33
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%	23
Not ascertained (I don't identify)	11%	101
Prefer not to answer	16%	152

NOTE: For race, the sum of percentages is greater than 100% because youth could select more than one race. They could only select one ethnicity. Three youth did not indicate their ethnicity, and eleven did not indicate their race.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

Data processing and analysis

Analysis of the survey was completed utilizing the same methodology as the previous year's survey, allowing for a comparison of the findings. This report highlights any areas where the finding from this year's survey was 10 percentage points above or below last year's finding. For some of the questions, a comparative analysis could not be completed due to the question being revised with new or updated response options. These instances are noted in the applicable sections of this report.

D. Limitations of the Survey

This survey was disseminated to a NYC population of youth ages 13 and older who had been in foster care for at least 90 days as of October 18, 2019. The survey was confidential; and no individual youth are identified in this report or in any survey data analysis shared with provider agencies. However, the survey was not anonymous; ACS followed up with the youth, or foster care provider if necessary, if there were concerns about a youth's health, safety or overall well-being. As with all surveys, the findings are subject to nonresponse bias that stems from youth choosing not to complete the survey. Findings are also subject to response bias from those who may over report "socially desirable" answers and underreport or over report negative feedback, which may lead to a deviation of answers from their true value.

IV. Survey Findings

A. Help with Education

A.1 What is the educational background of youth in foster care?

Most of the survey respondents (693 youth, 73%) were enrolled in school or a training program (Table 4). Of those enrolled, 13% were in middle school, nearly three quarters were in high school, 6% were in a TASC/GED program, 1% were in vocational school, and 7% were in college.

Of the 260 youth not currently enrolled in school or a training program, 6% reported their highest level of education was middle school (6th, 7th or 8th grade), half stated that their highest level of education completed was a high school grade level, 9% had completed a high school equivalency program, 27% had earned a high school diploma, and 8% had attended some college. This question was structured differently in the FY19 and FY20 surveys, precluding a year-to-year comparison.

Table 4. Current school enrollment status of youth in foster care

<i>Question: Are you currently in school or a Vocational School / Allied Health Program/ Technology Institute?</i>		
Response	Number	% of Total
Yes, I am in school or a Vocational School / Allied Health Program / Technology Institute	693	73%
No, I am not in school or a Vocational School / Allied Health Program / Technology Institute	260	27%
Total	953	100%

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

Figure 1. Level of education for youth currently enrolled in school or a training program (N=693)

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

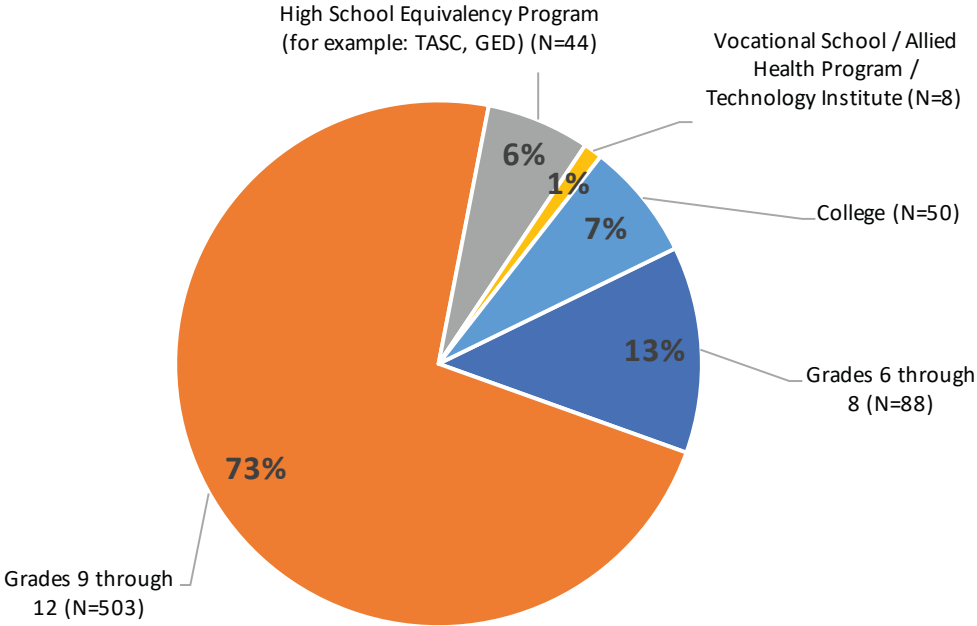
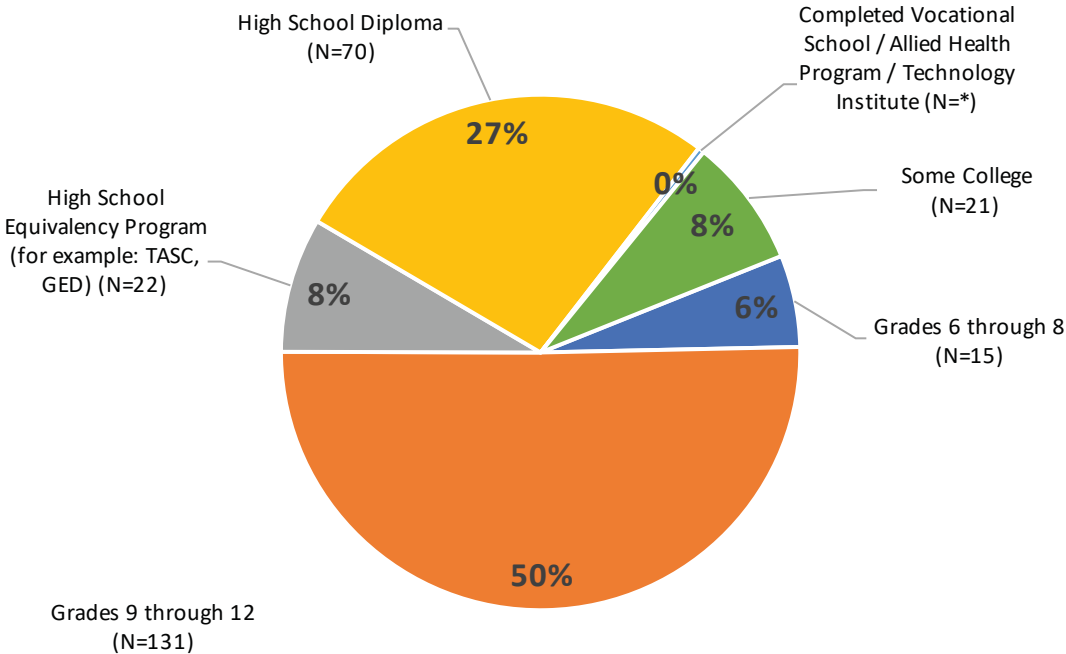


Figure 2. Highest level of education completed by youth not currently enrolled in school or a training program (N=260)

NOTE: Findings in which the N is between 1 and 5 are not reported, these are represented by an asterisk (*).

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20



If youth reported that they were not currently in school and their highest completed grade was 6 – 12 (in other words, they had not received a high school diploma or GED/TASC), they were asked the reason(s) why they were not in school. The largest group, 21%, selected “I did not feel that I belonged there.” This was followed by “I needed to work” (17%), “I had no encouragement to continue with school” (16%), and “I failed too many classes” (16%). See Table 5 for additional details.¹⁰

Table 5. Reported reasons why youth are not currently in school (N=146¹¹)

<i>Question: Please state the reason(s) you are not in school.</i>		
Response	Number	% of Total
I did not feel that I belonged there	30	21%
I needed to work	25	17%
I had no encouragement to continue with school	24	16%
I failed too many classes	24	16%
I was unable to get there	13	9%
I was kicked out / expelled for bad behavior	13	9%
I am expecting a child	9	6%
I had to provide child care and/or care for an adult	6	4%

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

Close to half (48%) of the youth reported having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) (Table 6). The proportion of youth with IEPs was very similar between middle and high school.

Table 6. Whether youth have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), by grade level

	Youth in grades 6 through 8 (N=103)	Youth in grades 9 and above (N=849)	Total number of youth (N=952)
Yes	49%	48%	48%
No	40%	40%	40%
Don't know/ not sure	12%	12%	12%

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

10 In FY19, this question was asked only of youth who had reported in a previous question that they “dropped out of high school.” In FY20, it was asked of any youth who were not currently enrolled in school and whose last grade completed was 6 – 12 (with no high school diploma or high school equivalency). A year-over-year comparison is not possible due to the expansion of the audience for this question.

11 One hundred forty-six youth were asked this question. Respondents could select more than one answer choice.

A.2 What support do youth need to continue with their education?

The survey asked youth in grades 9 and above whether they plan to continue with their education and the type of support needed. Response options were tailored to the youth based on their answers to previous questions. For example, those indicating they were currently in grades 9 – 12 were shown the option, “I plan on finishing high school,” while those stating that they were in a vocational school or college had the option to select, “I plan on finishing my degree.” Because the response options for this question were modified from last year, a comparative analysis between the results from FY19 and FY20 findings could not be completed.

Youth shared the following regarding their desires to continue their education:

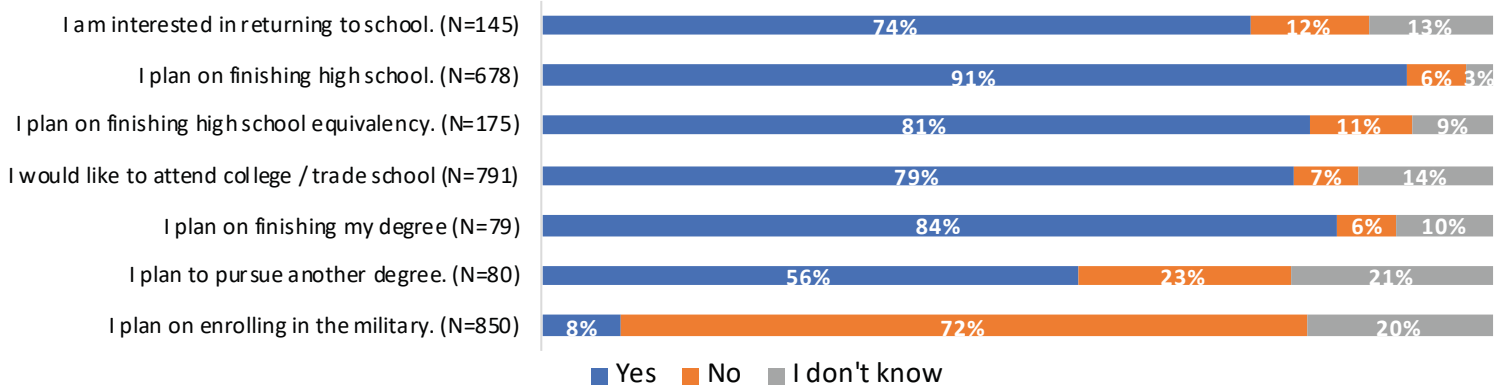
- 91% of youth in high school or who left high school without graduating plan to finish high school
- 81% of youth currently in a HSE program or who left high school without graduating plan to finish a high school equivalency program
- 79% of youth in high school or a HSE program, or whose highest level of education completed is at least 9th grade, would like to attend college/trade school
- 84% of youth who have started college or a vocational school plan to finish their degree

There were 146 youth reporting that they were not currently enrolled in school, nor had they graduated from high school or earned a HSE diploma. Among this group, 74% said they were interested in returning to school. ACS’ Office of Education and Employment Initiatives regularly shares information with foster care agencies to ensure that they are offering support and resources for all youth who want to advance their education. See Section V for additional details.

Slightly over half of youth who had started or completed college or a vocational program said they plan to pursue another degree or professional license in the future. Eight percent of respondents said they plan to enroll in the military. Figure 3 shows detailed findings for each of these answer choices.

Figure 3. Whether youth in grades 9 and above plan to continue with education

Education Plans – Grades 9 and Above



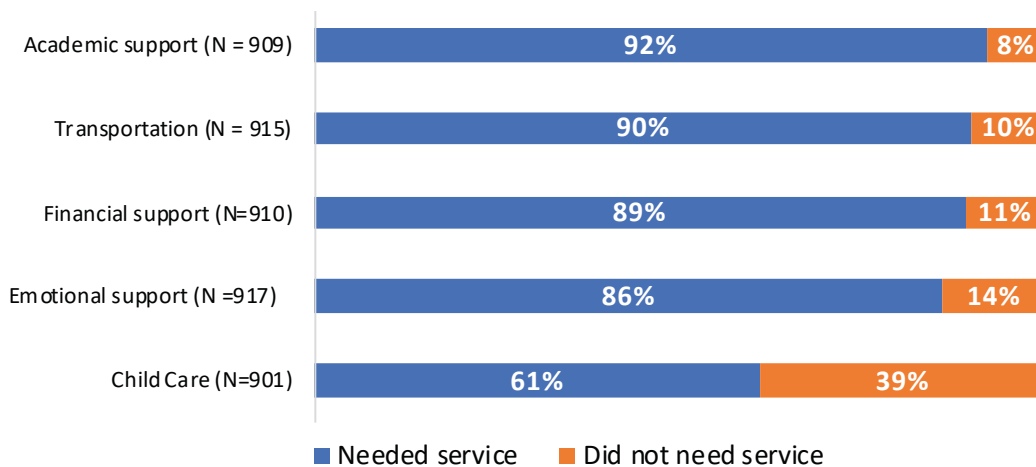
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

NOTE: Response options were shown based on youth's answers to previous questions, so Ns differ. E.g., the group of youth in high school was larger than the group in college or vocational school, so the N for "I plan to finish high school" is larger than the N for "I plan on finishing my degree." Also, some youth left parts of the question blank. For example, 146 youth were asked about returning to school, but 145 answered and are reflected in the chart.

Youth were also asked what types of support they need to continue their education. Nearly all youth said they need academic support, transportation, financial and emotional support (Figure 4). Of those reporting that they needed support, the vast majority said they receive it (Figure 5). This ranged from 81% reporting that they receive financial support to 90% reporting that they receive emotional support.

Figure 4. Support needed for youth to continue their education

Types of Support Needed to Continue Your Education

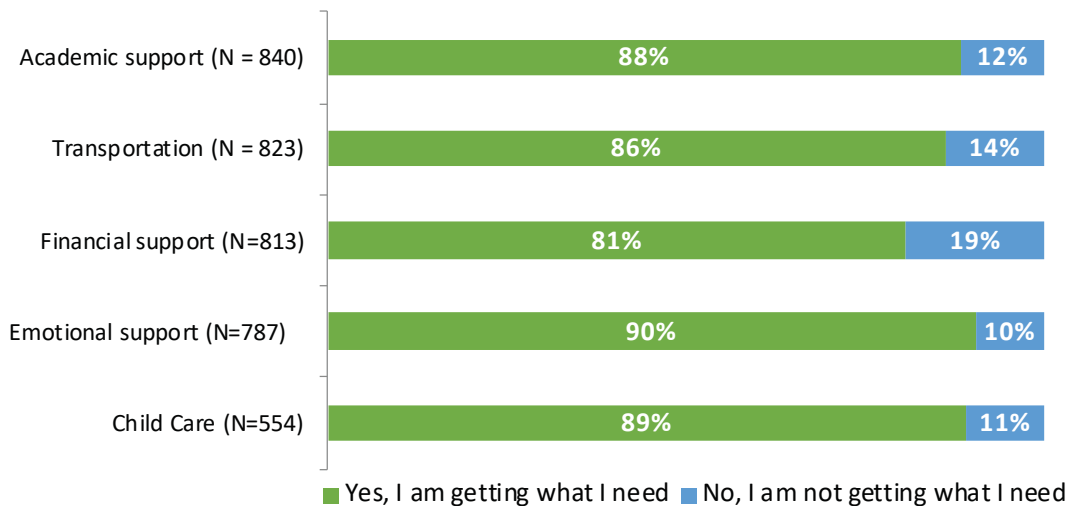


SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

NOTE: A total of 933 youth were asked this question. Ns in the chart reflect the number responding to each part of the question (some youth left parts blank).

Figure 5. Support received for youth to continue their education

Are You Getting the Support You Need to Continue Your Education?



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

NOTE: Ns on this chart are the number of youth reporting that they need each type of support. Thus, full bars in Figure 5 correspond to the number of youth who “needed service” (blue bars) in Figure 4.

A.3 What education services did the youth need and receive?

The survey asked youth in grades 9 and above whether they needed and received each of six types of education services in the past year. Youth in grades 6 through 8 were asked whether they needed and received each of three types of education services. The findings in this section are not comparable to the findings in last year’s survey due to changes in the response options.¹²

Education services needed and received: Grades 9 and above

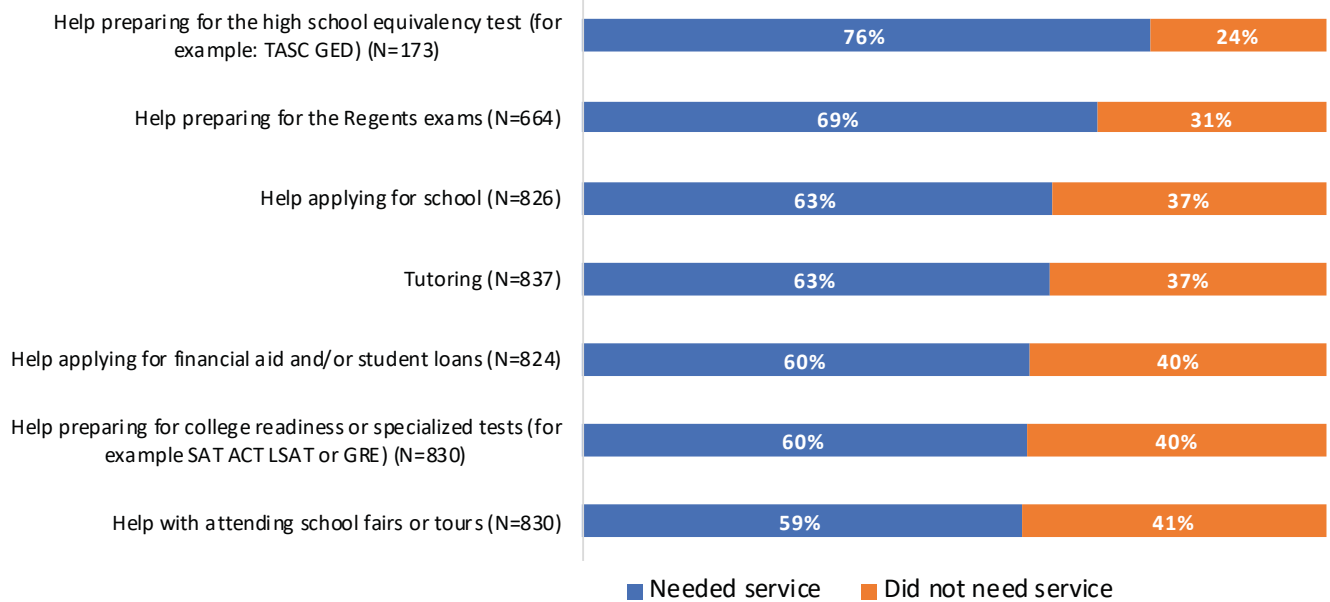
To explore whether current educational needs were met, youth in grades 9 and above were asked whether they needed and received each of the following services: tutoring, help preparing for the high school equivalency test, help preparing for the Regents exams, help preparing for college readiness or specialized tests, help applying for school, help applying for financial aid and/or student loans, and help with attending school fairs or tours.

12 In FY19, respondents were asked two questions regarding educational services: first, “do you need” the service; and second, “have you received” the service in the past year. In FY20, to streamline the survey for youth, these were combined into one question with the following answer choices: “Yes, I am getting what I need,” “No, I am not getting what I need,” or “I don’t need this.” In the analysis, ACS counted both “Yes, I am getting what I need” and “No, I am not getting what I need” as indicating a need for the service. Among these, the “Yes” responses also indicated that the need was met (i.e. service was received); “no” indicated it was unmet (i.e. service was not received).

Need for services: Among youth in grades 9 and above, the most frequently cited needs were tutoring and help applying for school, with more than 500 youth selecting each of these options. Over two-thirds of respondents said they need help preparing for Regents exams (69% of 664 youth who were asked this question based on their current education level). Approximately 60% of youth also said they needed help applying for financial aid and/or student loans, preparing for college readiness or specialized tests, and attending school fairs or tours. Of the youth enrolled in a GED/TASC program or those who are not currently in school and their last grade completed was in high school, 76% needed help with preparing for the high school equivalency test. A total of 175 youth were asked about the high school equivalency test, 678 youth were asked about the Regents exam, and 850 youth were asked the remaining items.

Figure 6. Youth in grades 9 and above reporting education services needed

Education Services Needed – Grades 9 and Above

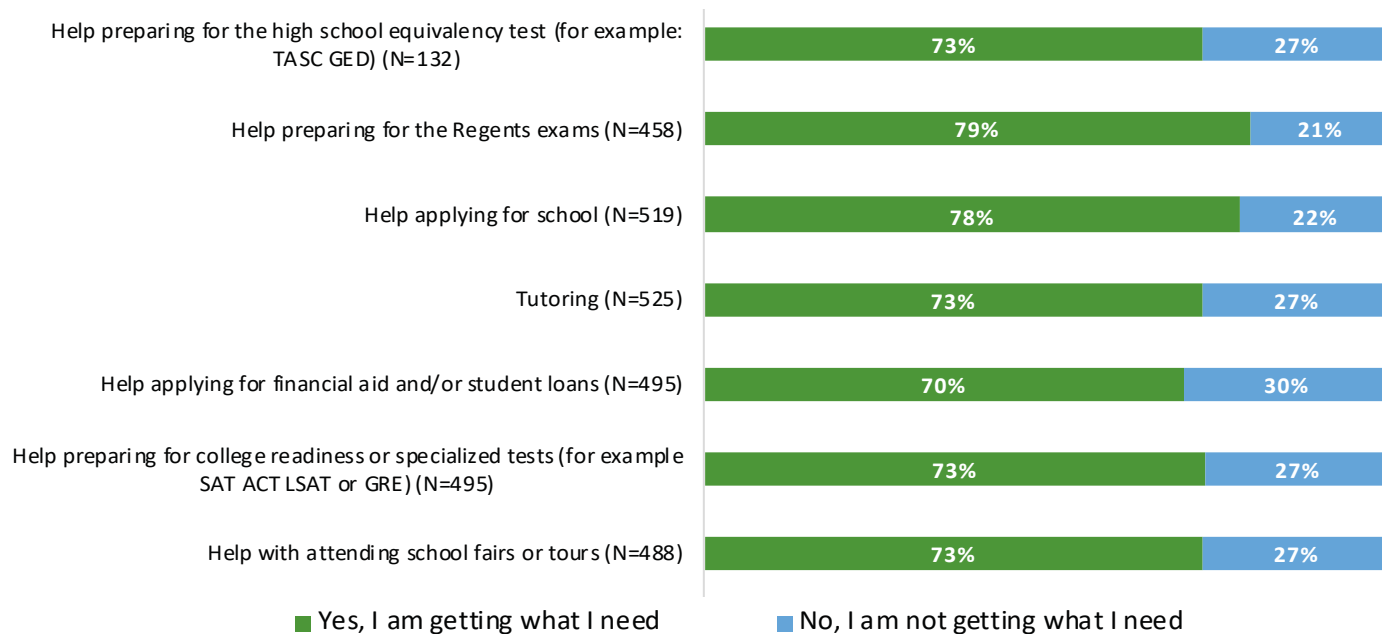


SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

Extent to which needs were met: The information presented in Figure 7 reflects the extent to which a youth’s need for specific education services were met or unmet.

Figure 7. Youth in grades 9 and above reporting they received the education services needed

Education Services Received – Grades 9 and Above



NOTE: Ns for this chart are slightly lower than the total number of youth asked. This is because a small number of youth left the question blank. Blanks were excluded from the chart.
 SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

Specifically, the following results indicate the extent to which the needs of youth in grades 9 and above were met for each of the six services examined from the survey.

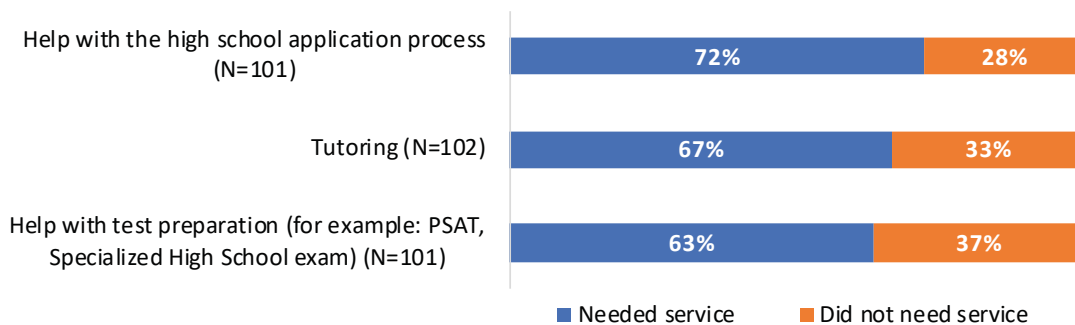
- **Preparing for high school equivalency test:** Of the 132 students in a GED/TASC program who needed help preparing for the high school equivalency test, 73% received it (i.e., the need was met), while 27% did not receive the service (i.e., the need was unmet).
- **Help preparing for the Regents exams:** 79% of the 458 youth who needed help preparing for Regents exams received it, while 21% did not.
- **Help applying for school:** 78% of the 519 youth who needed this education service reported that they received it, while 22% did not.
- **Tutoring:** Of the 525 youth who reported the need for tutoring, 73% received it, while 27% did not.
- **Help applying for financial aid/student loans:** While 70% of the 495 youth who needed this educational service reported receiving it, 30% did not.
- **Preparing for college readiness/specialized tests:** Of the 495 youth who reported needing help with preparing for tests, 73% received this service, while 27% did not.
- **Help with attending school fairs or tours:** While 73% of the 488 youth who needed this assistance reported that they received it, 27% did not.

Educational services needed and received: Grades 6 through 8

Youth in grades 6 through 8 reported whether they needed and received each of three services over the past year: tutoring, high school application process, and test preparation (PSAT, specialized high school exam). These questions applied to 103 young people.¹³ As with the high school questions, response options for these questions were structured differently in the FY19 and FY20 surveys, precluding a comparison.

Need for services. Approximately three-quarters (72%) of middle school youth said they need help with the high school application process. Two-thirds (67%) reported that they need tutoring, and 63% said they need help with test preparation (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Youth in grades 6 through 8 reporting education service needed



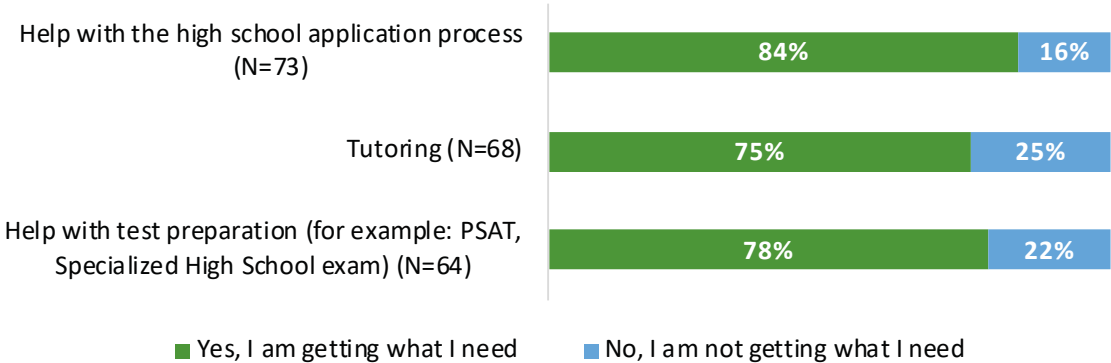
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

Extent to which needs were met. Figure 9 reflects the extent to which youth's needs for specific education services were met or unmet. Overall, most education service needs were met as reported by youth in grades 6 through 8.

- **Help with the high school application process:** Of the 73 youth who responded that they needed this service, 84% had received it while the remaining 16% had not.
- **Tutoring:** 68 students noted that they needed tutoring; of these, 75% received it and 25% did not.
- **Test preparation:** Of the 64 students who needed this education service, 78% reported they have received it and the other 22% stated that they did not.

¹³ Occasionally, respondents leave a question blank, resulting in Ns for specific findings that differ slightly from this total number.

Figure 9. Youth in grades 6 through 8 reporting they received the education service they needed



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

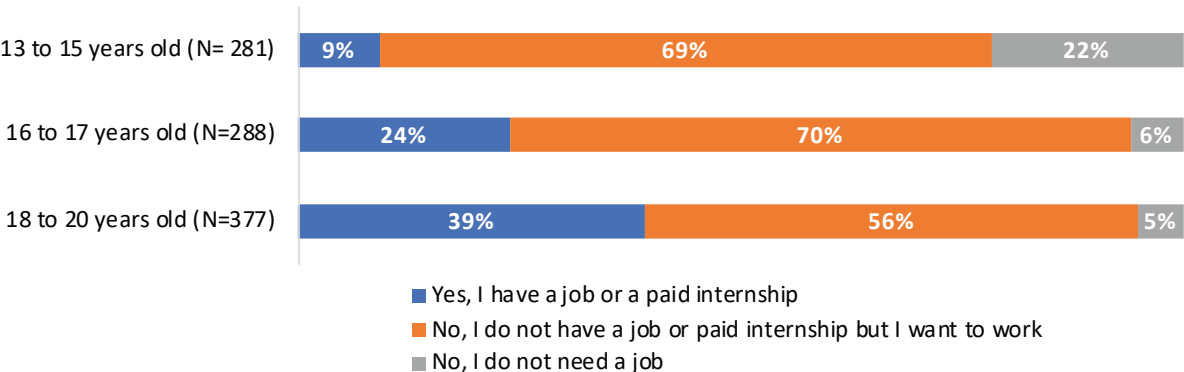
B. Help with Employment

B.1 What is the employment status of youth in foster care?

Figure 10 shows the distribution of youth in foster care who are actively employed or would like to be employed. A total of 243 youth (26%) reported that they have a job or paid internship. An additional 606 youth (64%) said they did not have a job or paid internship but wanted to work. The remaining 97 youth (10%) said they did not need a job. Among youth ages 16 – 20, the overwhelming majority (95%) said they are actively employed or want to work. Figure 10 shows these findings in detail by age group.

Figure 10. Employment status of youth in foster care, by age group

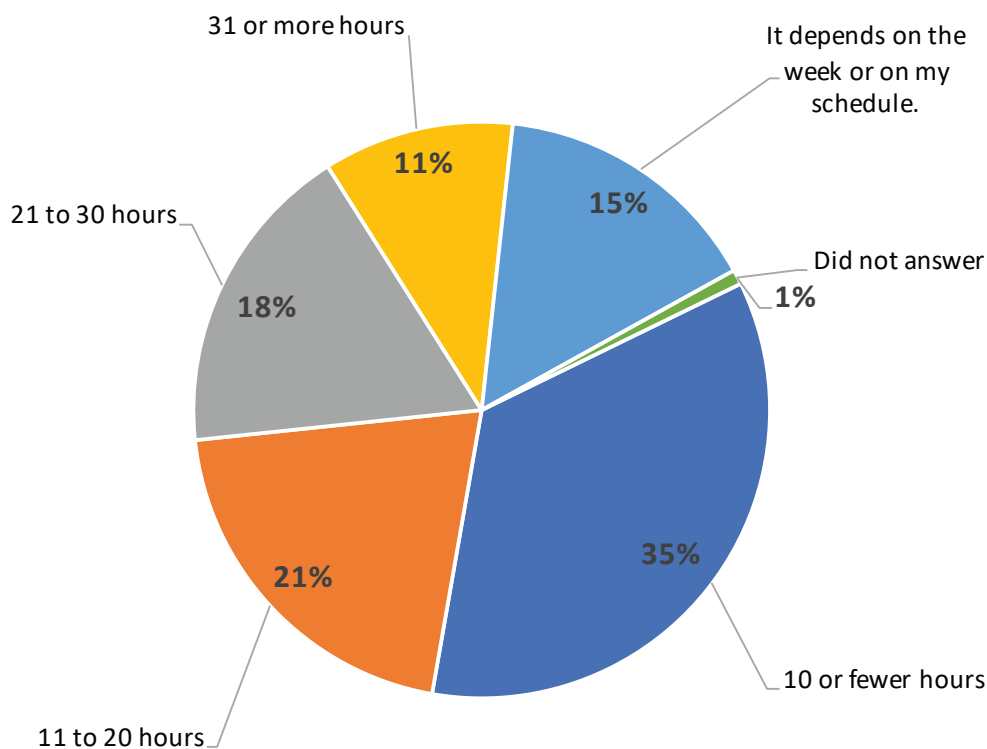
Do You Have a Paid Job or Paid Internship?



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

The survey asked youth who were employed to indicate the number of hours worked per week (Figure 11). Of the 243 youth actively working, about one third worked 10 hours or less per week, 21% worked 11 to 20 hours per week and 18% worked 21 to 30 hours. Only 11% reported working more than 31 hours weekly, while 15% stated that the number of hours they work depends on the week or on their work schedule.

Figure 11. Youth reporting the number of hours worked per week (N = 243)

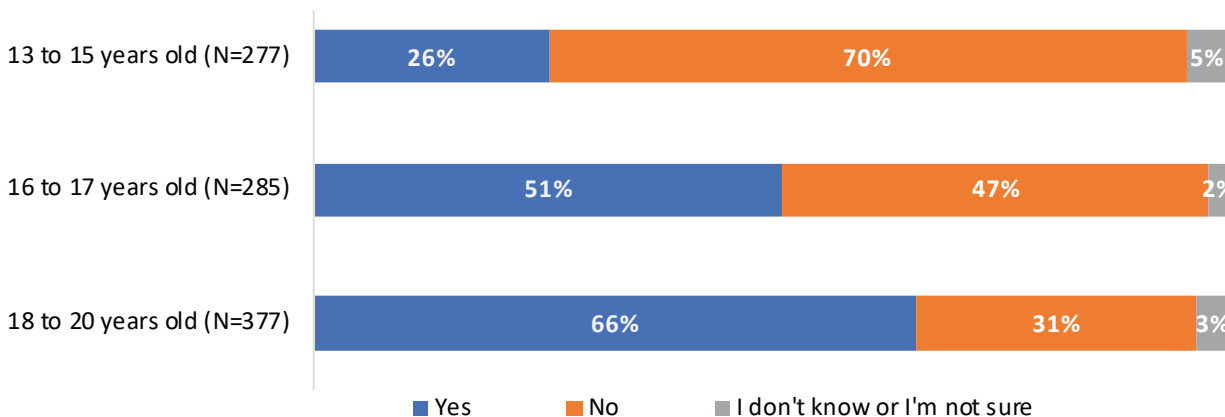


NOTE: Data in this figure are based on the number of youth who reported they had a job. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

The survey included a new question this year to explore utilization of the Summer Youth Employment Program. When asked if they had ever participated in the Summer Youth Employment Program, half of all respondents said yes, 47% said no, and 3% were not sure. Figure 12 shows these findings by age. Older youth were more likely to have participated in the program.

Figure 12. Youth involvement in the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) (N=939 ¹⁴)

Have You Ever Participated in Summer Youth Employment?



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

B.2 What help did youth need and receive to find a job?

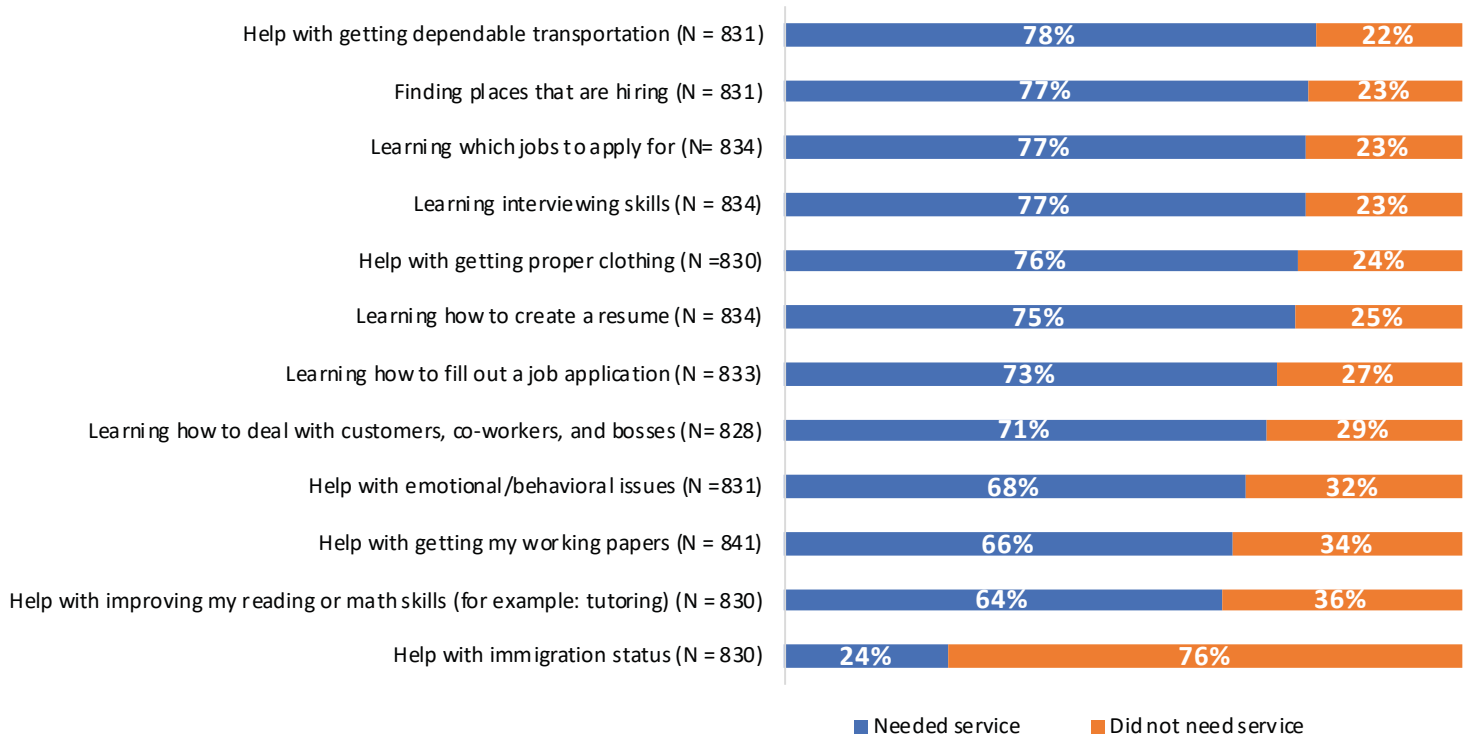
Help needed in finding a job. The top five employment-related needs were: help with getting dependable transportation (78%), finding places that are hiring (77%), learning what jobs to apply for (77%), learning interviewing skills (77%), and help with getting proper clothing (76%). About three quarters of respondents also said they needed assistance to learn how to create a resume and/or fill out a job application. The majority of youth also needed help with interpersonal aspects of work, emotional/behavioral issues, getting working papers, and/or improving reading or math skills. Approximately one in four respondents said they need help with immigration status. See Figure 13 for details. ACS’s Office of Immigrant Services and Language Affairs (ISLA) is dedicated to assisting all youth in foster care who have immigration needs, including those eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. Through the Immigration Services for Youth in Care Program, ISLA oversees and coordinates collaboration between foster care providers, approved immigration legal services providers, and ACS divisions to identify immigrant youth in ACS care and assist them to obtain immigration relief.

While the FY19 survey only asked these questions of unemployed youth who wanted to work, the FY20 survey also include employed youth to explore what support they needed. The framing of the questions was also adjusted to streamline the survey.¹⁵ Given these changes, the FY20 results cannot be compared to the previous survey’s findings.

¹⁴ All 953 youth were asked this question; 939 answered it and are reflected in the chart.

¹⁵ As with education services, in FY19, respondents were asked two questions regarding help with employment: first, “do you need” the assistance; and second, “have you received” it. In FY20, to streamline the survey for youth, these were combined into one question with the following answer choices: “Yes, I am getting what I need,” “No, I am not getting what I need,” or “I don’t need this.” In the analysis, ACS counted both “Yes, I am getting what I need” and “No, I am not getting what I need” as indicating a need for help. Among these, the “Yes” responses also indicated that the need was met (i.e. youth received help); “no” indicated it was unmet (i.e. youth did not receive help).

Figure 13. Youth reporting the help they needed to find a job

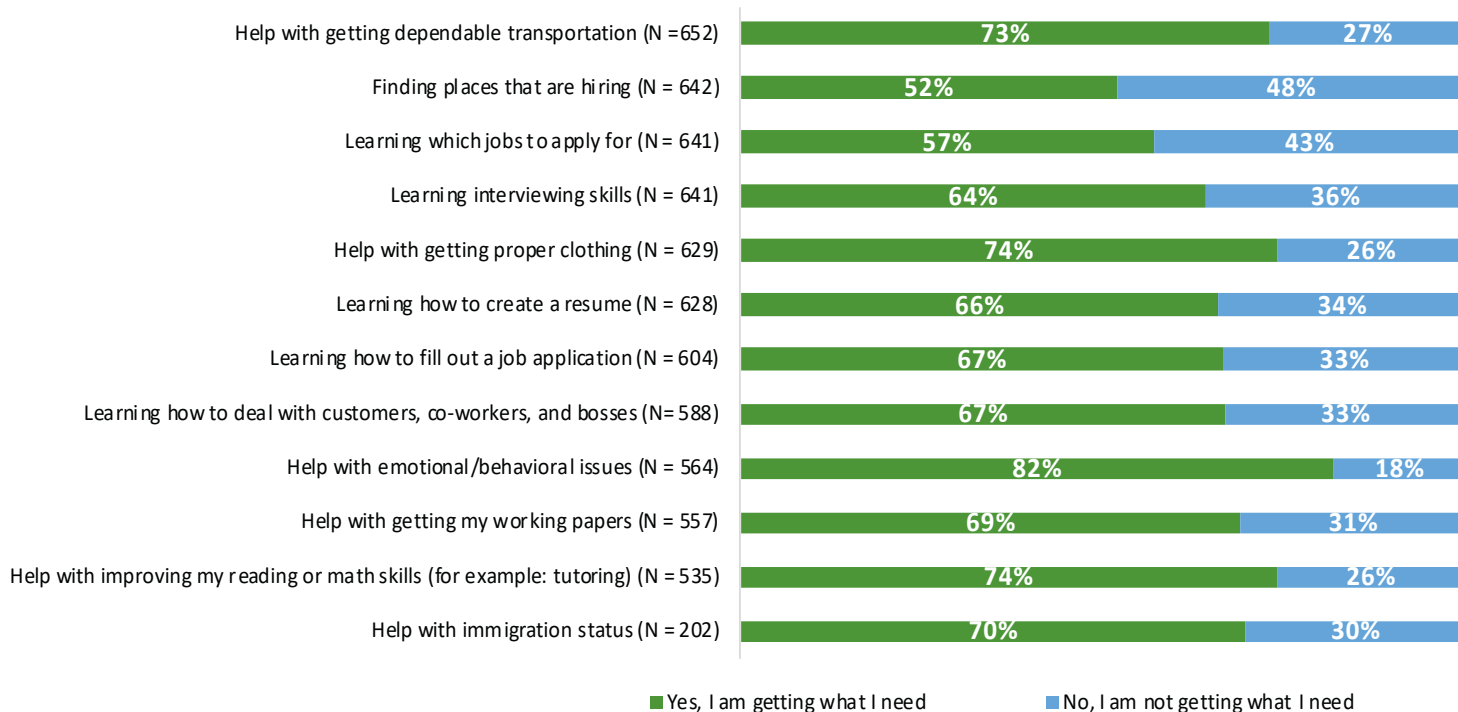


NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Youth reported they need help finding proper clothing for work, not help getting clothing in general. The total N for this question was 849; Ns for each response choice are slightly lower because some youth left those parts of the question blank.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

Help received in finding a job. For every type of job support, the majority of youth saying they needed it also reported receiving it (Figure 14). By percentage, the best met need was for help with emotional/behavioral issues; 82% of youth said they were getting their needs met in this area. This was followed by help getting proper clothing (74%), help improving reading or math skills (74%) and help getting dependable transportation (73%). The areas where the largest percentage of youth reporting unmet needs were: help finding places that are hiring (52% received, 48% unmet need) and help learning which jobs to apply for (57% received, 43% unmet need).

Figure 14. Youth reporting the help they received to find a job



NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
 SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

B.3 How much weekly allowance do youth receive? Do youth ages 18 and older have bank accounts?

The survey asked youth about the allowance they receive weekly. Table 7 shows the amount of allowance for all youth, youth reporting they had a job or paid internship, and those without a job or paid internship.

Table 7. Weekly allowance by employment status of youth in foster care

Allowance (\$)	All youth (N=948)	Youth with a job or paid internship (N = 243)	Youth without a job or paid internship (N = 703)
\$0 or nothing	22%	18%	23%
\$1 to \$15	27%	30%	26%
\$16 to \$30	24%	23%	25%
More than \$30	27%	30%	26%

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
 SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

Among the 948¹⁶ youth who provided information on the amount of weekly allowance they received, the data showed fairly even distribution, with approximately one-fourth (25%) in each category: \$0, \$1–\$15, \$16–\$30, and more than \$30 (Table 7).¹⁷ This remained true among the subset of unemployed youth. Employed youth were slightly more likely to receive allowance: 18% received none, while 30% received \$1–\$15, 23% received \$16–\$30, and 30% received more than \$30 per week.

The FY20 survey included a new question specifically for youth ages 18 and older to ask if they had a bank account. Just over half (53%) said yes (Table 8).

Table 8. Youth ages 18 and older reporting that they have a bank account

<i>Do you have a bank account? (N=380)</i>		
	Percent	Total
Yes	53%	200
No	45%	170
I'm not sure or I don't know	3%	10

NOTE: A total of 404 youth were asked this question; 380 responded and 24 left it blank. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

C. Support from Family and Friends

C1. To what extent do youth feel supported by foster/kinship parents and residential facility staff?

The survey asked youth to indicate which individuals in their lives to whom they could turn to when they needed help. Specifically, youth in foster or kinship homes were asked if they felt supported by their foster parents. Of the 748 youth responding, two thirds (66%) said they felt “very supported,” and another 25% felt “somewhat supported.” Youth in residential care were asked if they felt supported by program staff, and the majority said yes; 46% felt “very supported” and 39% felt “somewhat supported.” The remaining 15% of youth in residential care did not feel supported by staff (Table 9).

Table 9. Youth reporting the extent to which they feel supported by foster parents or residential facility staff

<i>In general, do you feel supported by your foster parents or residential facility staff?</i>		
	Foster or Kinship Home (N=748)	Residential (N=199)
Yes, very supported	66%	46%
Yes, somewhat supported	25%	39%
No, not very supported	5%	9%
No, not supported at all	3%	6%

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

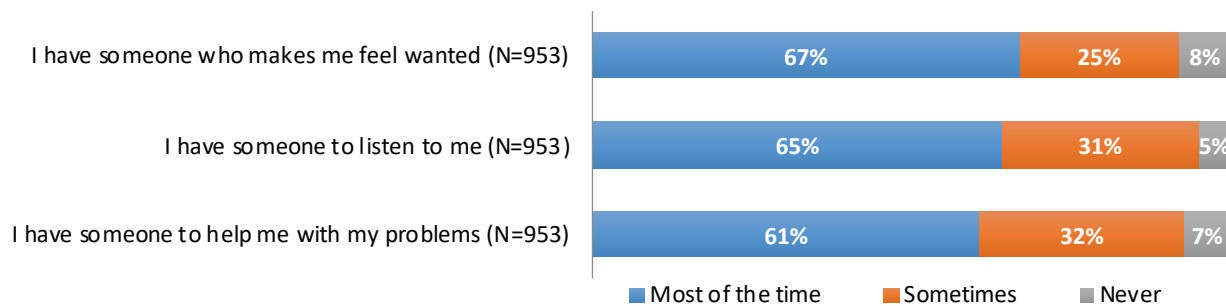
16 All 953 youth were asked about allowance; 948 responded and 5 left this question blank.

17 Youth in foster care who are over the age of 16 are encouraged to participate in workshops that focus on developing independent living skills, including preparing for employment. Youth receive a stipend for participation, which may have been received or perceived as an allowance by some youth.

C.2 To what extent do youth receive emotional support?

Overall, about two thirds of the youth responding had someone to help them with problems, listen to them, and make them feel wanted, most of the time (Figure 15). For example, 67% of youth reported that they had someone who makes them feel wanted most of the time, while another 25% had someone to provide this support some of the time. ACS followed up with the youth who reported they do not feel supported at all to see what additional support and resources they needed. ACS contacted their foster care agencies as necessary to follow up on the emotional well-being of these youth.

Figure 15. Youth reporting various situations that are true for them (N = 953)



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

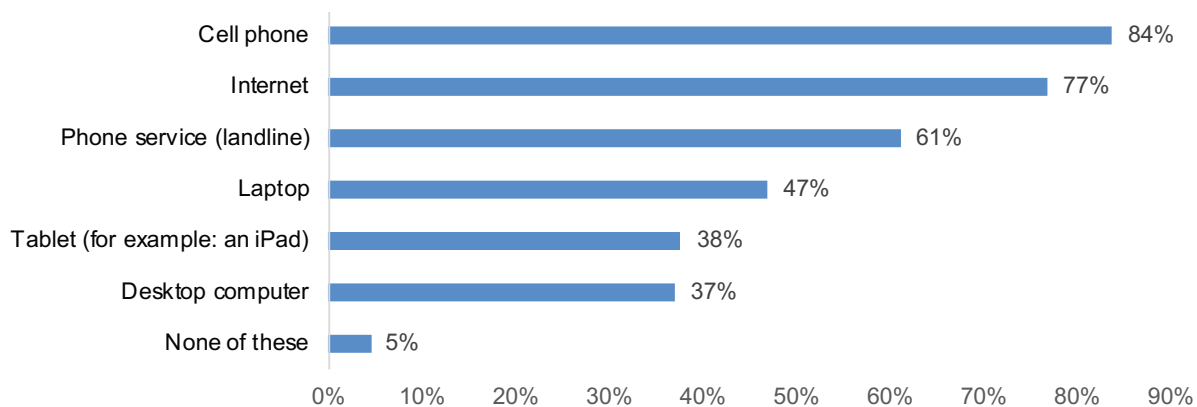
D. Social Interaction and Communication

D.1 Do youth have access to communication technologies?

Most foster care youth reported they have access to cell phones and the Internet (84% and 77%, respectively) (Figure 16). In addition, most of the youth reported they have access to landline phone services (61%). Fewer youth, though still more than one third, reported having access to laptops, desktops and tablets.

Figure 16. Youth access to communication technology (N=948)

Are you able to use the following where you live (check all that apply)? N=948



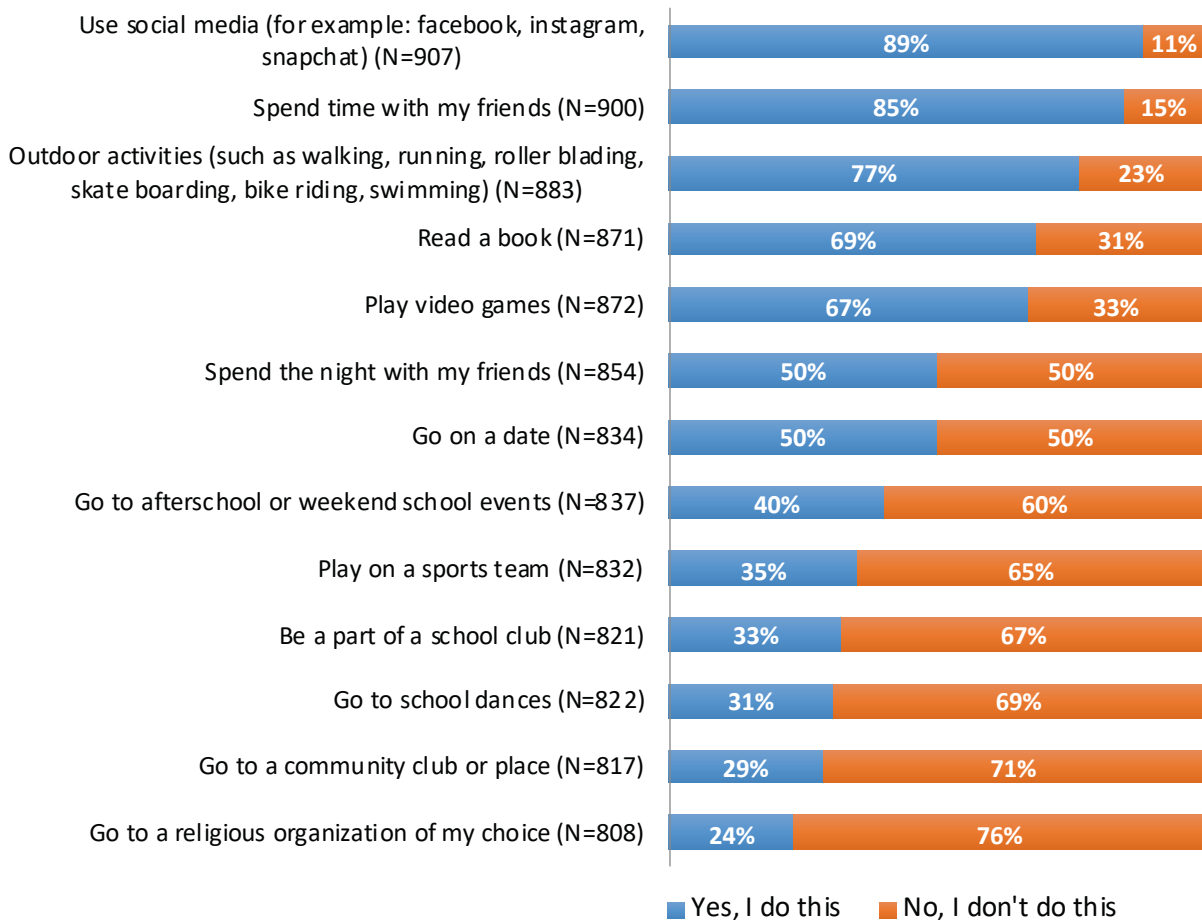
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

NOTE: All 953 youth were asked this question, and 948 responded.

D.2 Do youth engage in various social activities?

Using social media and spending time with friends were the two most popular activities identified by the respondents (Figure 17). Other activities youth frequently reported participating in were outdoor activities, reading books and playing video games.¹⁸ Half of the youth stated that they spend the night with friends or go on dates. The least common activity was going to a religious organization, though one quarter of the youth did report doing this. Figure 17 shows additional details regarding the activities that youth engage in during their free time.

Figure 17. Youth reporting the activities in which they participated during their free time



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

NOTE: All 953 youth were asked this question; Ns in the chart reflect the number that responded to each part of the question.

¹⁸ Response options were modified from FY19 to FY20. Instead of “Go swimming or bike riding” (which received relatively few positive responses in FY19), this year’s survey listed “Outdoor activities (such as walking, running, roller blading, skate boarding, bike riding, swimming).” In addition, the “read a book” answer choice was added in FY20.

D.3 What is holding youth back from doing things outside of school or work?

For 60% of the respondents, nothing stops them from doing anything outside of school or work (Table 10). Financial difficulties were the most commonly reported barrier stopping youth from participating in activities outside of school or work; 27% percent of the youth reported they did not have enough money. Eleven percent of the youth also reported that they had no transportation.

Table 10. Youth reporting what is holding them back from doing things outside of school or work

<i>Is anything stopping you from doing things outside of school or work? (Check all that apply.)</i>		
Difficulty	Percentage	Total
Nothing stops me from doing things outside of school or work	60%	953
I do not have the money	27%	953
I am not allowed by the rules in the program where I live [^]	19%	200
I do not have transportation	11%	953
I am not allowed by my foster parent*	6%	753
I have to look after a child	4%	953

[^]Data based on the 200 youth in residential treatment centers or group homes who responded to the survey question.

*Data based on the 753 youth in foster or kinship homes who responded to the survey question

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

E. Access to Healthcare, Hygiene Information, Basic Needs and Religious Practices

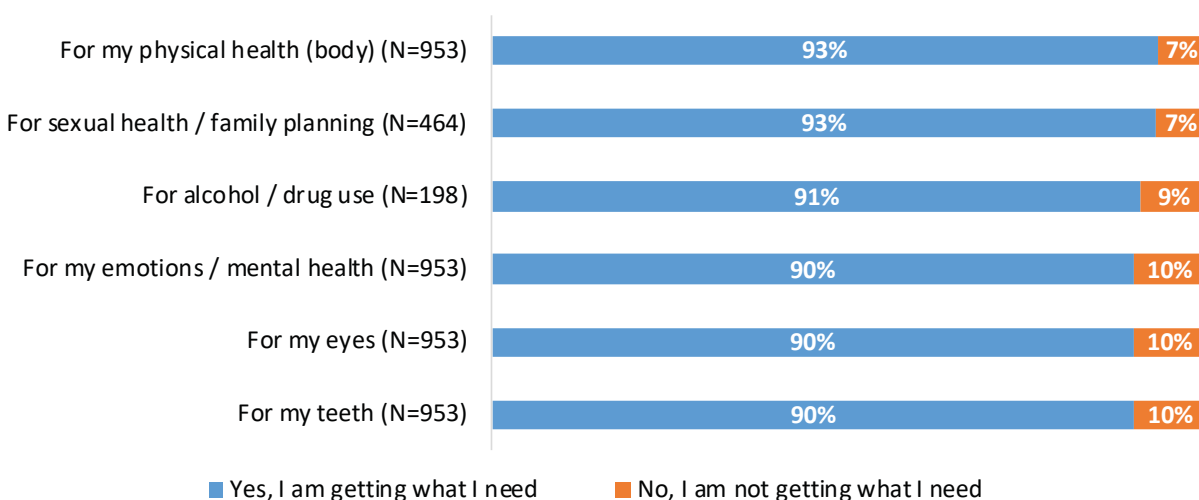
E.1 What healthcare services do youth need and receive?

The survey asked youth whether they are getting the healthcare they need for physical, dental, emotional, vision, sexual health, and alcohol or drug use. For each of the healthcare services examined, responses from the youth were used to create two indicators: whether the youth needed the service and whether they received what they needed.

The information presented in Figure 18 reflects the extent to which health care services were received in six health areas. Almost all youth (93%) reported having their physical health care needs met. Ninety percent reported having their needs met regarding mental health, eye and dental care.¹⁹ (Mental health was described in the survey as care “for my emotions/mental health.”) Of the 464 youth who said they needed care for sexual health/family planning, 93% reported receiving this care. From FY19 to FY20, there was a ten percentage point drop in the number of youth reporting that they needed care for alcohol/drug use. Of the 198 youth stating that they needed this care in FY20, 91% said their needs were met. ACS followed up with youth, and with foster care agencies as appropriate to ensure that a plan was in place to address any unmet health needs.

19 In the FY20 survey, all youth were assumed to need physical health care, mental health care, eye and dental care. Youth were asked if they needed care for sexual health/family planning and for alcohol/drug use.

Figure 18. Youth in foster care reporting whether they received various types of health care



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

E.2 Do youth need more information regarding self care and hygiene?

Based on the advice of ACS Youth Council members, the FY20 survey included a new question: “Currently, do you receive support in learning about self-care (for example, putting on deodorant, using feminine products, health and wellness)?” Youth reported the following:

Table 11. Youth responses regarding information on self care and hygiene

Response	Percent	Total
Yes, I am getting what I need	72%	690
No, I am not getting what I need	4%	39
I don't need this	24%	224
Total	100%	953

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

For the 39 youth who reported an unmet need, the survey asked if they would like ACS to contact them regarding information on self care and hygiene. Fifteen youth said yes and were contacted; 24 youth said no.

E.3 Can youth practice their religion where they live?

To assess if youth are able to stay connected to their faith traditions, the survey asked if youth can practice their religion where they live. Fifty-three percent responded yes; 4% responded no; and 43% said that they do not have a religion (Table 12). For the FY20 survey, ACS added a text question to better understand why someone was not able to practice their religion while in care. Of the 39 youth who said “no” and thus were asked to explain, 15 noted a barrier to practicing their religion. ACS contacted each of those youth to address their concerns.²⁰

²⁰ The remaining responses did not suggest a barrier to religious practice. For example, some youth reported that they did not want to practice their religion or that they had no religion.

Table 12. Youth responses regarding ability to practice their religion where they live right now (N=953)

Response	Percent	Total
Yes	53%	503
No	4%	39
I do not have a religion	43%	411
Total	100%	953

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

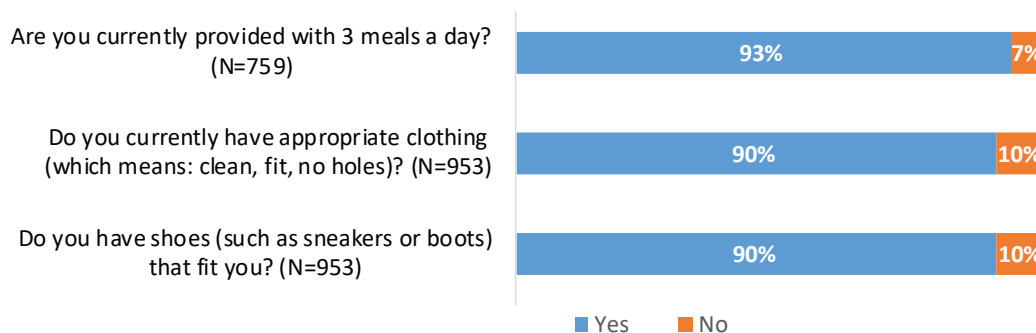
E.4 Are basic needs for food and clothes being met?

The survey included questions regarding basic needs for food, clothing and shoes. ACS monitored youth’s responses to these questions daily during data collection. When a youth reported that any of these basic needs was unmet, ACS immediately contacted the youth to assess well-being and any necessary action steps. Additional follow up was conducted with foster care agencies, youth and foster parents as appropriate.

Ninety-three percent²¹ of youth reported they were provided with three meals per day; 90% stated that they have appropriate clothing (which means the clothing is clean, fits and has no holes), and 90% reported they have shoes that fit. Youth who stated that they received inadequate food were asked a follow-up question to clarify the reason for this. Among the 53 youth reporting that they had fewer than three meals per day, the most commonly reported reasons were: their foster parent does not provide enough food (20); they do not like the food (15); they have to cook their own meals (14), or they skip a meal due to lack of time or interest (14). Youth could select multiple reasons.

In-depth followup was conducted in each case where a basic need was reported as unmet. ACS senior-level staff spoke to youth directly and/or to provider agency staff. For 31% of the identified needs related to food and clothing, the follow-up conversations indicated that the need had already been met. For 46% of the identified needs, ACS ensured that the foster care agency was in the process of addressing the concern. For the remaining 23%, discussions indicated that youth had necessary food and clothing but wanted more or a particular type; the issue had occurred in a prior placement; or youth had misunderstood the question or just filled out the survey quickly and did not have a concern.

Figure 19. Youth reporting provision of basic needs



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

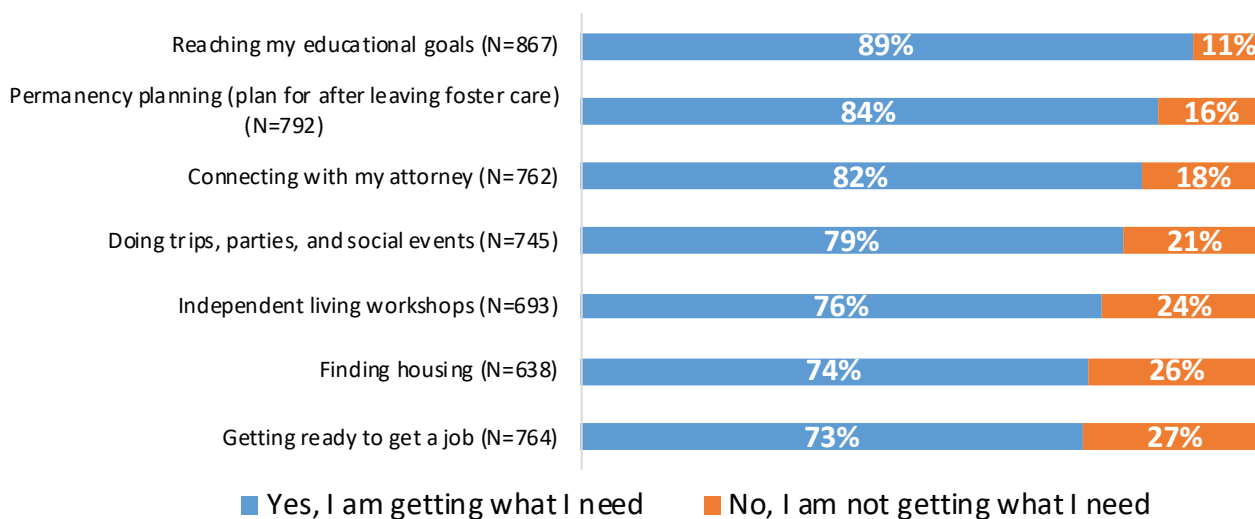
21 In FY20, the survey did not include this question for youth in residential care.

F. Support from Foster Care Agencies

F.1 What support services do youth need and receive from foster care agencies?

Youth were asked what types of support they receive from their foster care agencies. Among those who said they needed each type of support, Figure 20 shows how many reported receiving it. (The N shown in the figure is the number of youth stating that they need this type of support.) The most desired and most often received type of support was to help youth reach educational goals; of 867 youth stating they needed this, 89% received it. The next most commonly received support was with permanency planning, followed by help connecting with attorneys. The least well met need was for support finding housing; of 638 youth who needed this, 74% received it.

Figure 20. Youth reporting types of support they receive from foster care agencies

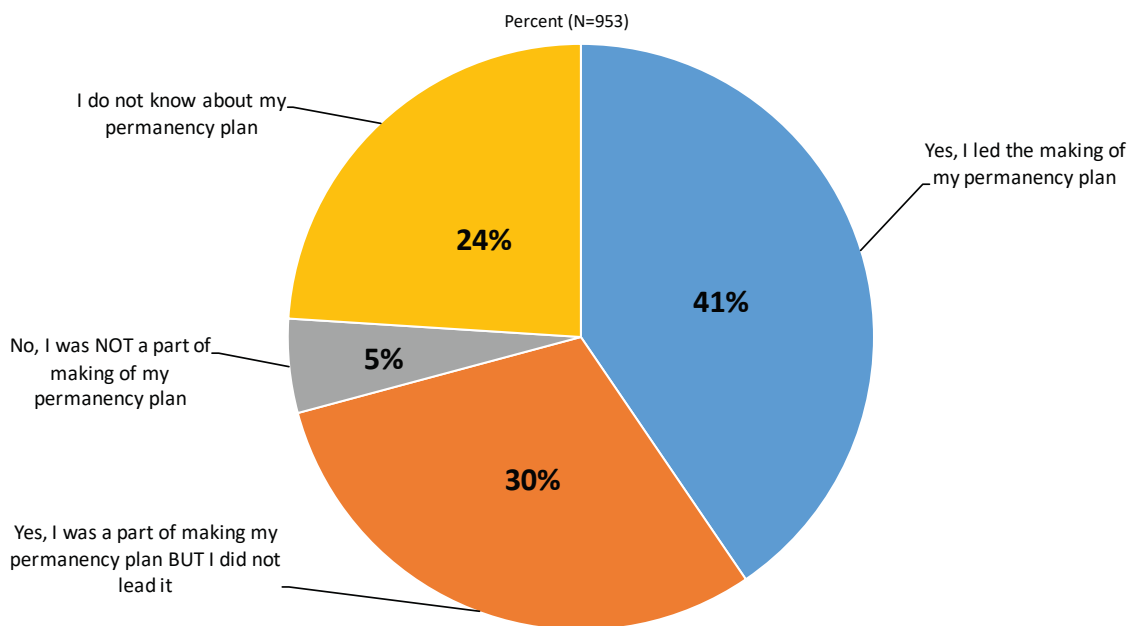


SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

F.2 To what extent are youth involved in permanency planning?

Figure 21 shows the distribution for various levels of youth involvement in their permanency planning. The largest group of youth, 41%, reported that they led the making of their permanency plan. Another 30% were involved in planning. However, 29% said they did not know about their permanency plan or had not been a part of creating it.

Figure 21. Youth reporting on their involvement in their permanency plan



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

F.3 Who supports the youth in their permanency planning?

Youth who were involved in the making of their permanency plans also noted who specifically supported them in permanency planning. The most frequent supporters were foster care case workers, followed by foster parents and residential staff. Support from attorneys decreased somewhat from FY19 (58%) to FY20 (48%). Table 13 shows the detailed findings.

Table 13. Youth reporting whether various individuals supported them in their permanency planning

Individual	Percentage	N
Case worker at my foster care agency	78%	719
Foster parent	67%	556
Residential staff	61%	163
My lawyer	48%	719
Parent	31%	719
Friend	22%	719
Teacher	9%	719
No one supports me in my permanency planning	5%	719

NOTE: Table 13 does not include youth who reported “I do not know about my permanency plan.”

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY20

V. ACS Initiatives Supporting Older Youth

ACS is currently implementing a range of programs and initiatives to improve youth experiences, outcomes and well-being through the Foster Care Strategic Blueprint and the Interagency Foster Care Task Force. The results of this survey are informing this work.

Youth Voice

To further engage youth and ensure their voices inform practice change, ACS formed a **Youth Leadership Council to bring youth and adult leaders together to work in partnership on youth-related areas of policy and practice.** The ACS Youth Leadership Council launched in March 2019. Members include youth currently and previously in foster care and youth with experience in the juvenile justice system. The goals of the Youth Council are to develop the leadership skills of youth, advocate for changes and improvements in policies and areas of mutual concern, establish a youth voice in the foster care community, and build a positive social network.

Improving Permanency Outcomes

ACS continues to work aggressively to improve permanency outcomes for youth in foster care. **As of January 31, 2020, the number of New York City children in foster care reached a historic low of 7,671, down from 9,865 in January of 2016 and 16,972 in January of 2007.²²** Length of stay in foster care has also decreased; the number of children in care for two years or more dropped by 22% from FY 2017 to FY 2019. As outlined in the [Foster Care Strategic Blueprint Three Year Progress Report: FY2017-FY2019](#), ACS is implementing several initiatives to improve reunification, adoption, and kinship guardianship outcomes for children and youth in foster care. These include use of the evidence-based Wendy's Wonderful Kids model and increased resources for Family Time (a.k.a. visiting) and to support kinship care, among other initiatives. ACS also continues to leverage the amended NYS KinGAP legislation to achieve permanency for youth in foster care. This includes exploring KinGAP as an option for families and youth who may meet the criteria for the program based on the expanded definition of "relative" – now included are adults who have a positive relationship with youth prior to their entry into care, such as a godparent or teacher; and, offering the kinship program subsidy as financial support to guardians up until the youth is age 21, regardless of their age when guardianship was granted.

High Quality Placements for Youth

ACS's Home Away from Home (HAFH) initiative has been highly successful in increasing foster home recruitment while simultaneously improving kinship placement and support for caregivers. This citywide effort emphasizes effective recruitment practices and strong customer service to support kinship and foster families so that children are safe and receive the highest quality of care. From FY 2017 to FY 2019, ACS and its foster care agency partners increased the proportion of children in foster care placed with kin from 31% to 39%. In the same two-year timeframe, ACS increased the number of newly certified foster homes by 50%, turning around a previous six-year decline in the number of new foster homes recruited. In addition to significant ACS resources, this initiative has received major support from the Conrad N.

²² Sources: ACS Flash Reports: December 2007, December 2016 and March 2020.

Hilton Foundation as well as Casey Family Programs and a collaborative of five foundations – New York Community Trust, Redlich Horwitz Foundation, Ira W. DeCamp Foundation, Joseph Leroy & Ann C. Warner Fund and Tiger Foundation.

Health Services for Youth

The NY State Office of Mental Health (OMH) has agreed to grant ACS access to PSYCKES, a web-based application designed to support quality improvement, care planning, and clinical decision making for the Medicaid Behavioral Health population. PSYCKES includes information such as diagnosis, medications, medical and behavioral health outpatient and inpatient services and health home care coordination for children on Medicaid, including children in foster care. ACS anticipates that the data exchange process between OMH and ACS, which has been approved by the state Office of Children and Family Services, will be able to begin in Summer 2020

The High Fidelity Wraparound (HFW) Pilot offers services for youth with significant social, emotional or behavioral needs. Since September 2018, DOHMH has partnered with City and State stakeholders to implement a HFW demonstration project in the Bronx and Brooklyn for NYC children and youth with serious social, emotional, or behavioral concerns who are involved in multiple child service systems (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, special education). HFW is an evidence-based model of care coordination that uses a highly structured, team-based, family/child centered management approach. HFW involves intensive, individualized planning for children and youth, with the goals of empowering youth and families to develop family driven plans, connecting youth and families to community-based services and improving mental health outcomes. Referral of youth in foster care began in 2019.

DOHMH and ACS have collaborated to facilitate access to the Nurse-Family Partnership: DOHMH and ACS are implementing strategies to increase the utilization of the Nurse-Family Partnership Program by children and families involved in the child welfare systems. These include partnering to conduct outreach and provide marketing materials to all ACS Divisions, Foster Care and Preventive agencies to increase awareness of the Nurse-Family Partnership; sharing data to track youth in foster care being referred and enrolled with Nurse-Family Partnership; and ongoing meetings to identify trends and opportunities for additional outreach.

Education and Employment Initiatives

In December 2019, ACS launched the Fair Futures Initiative, aimed at enhancing and improving outcomes for foster care youth ages 11-21 in the areas of education, employment, housing, and permanency. Fair Futures is the result of a partnership among the Mayor's Office, City Council, ACS, the City's 26 contracted foster care agencies, and the Fair Futures Coalition (a consortium of foster care agencies, foundations, advocates, and others). As part of the \$12 million citywide effort (including \$2 million contributed by foundation partners), coaches are being hired to provide youth in care with social and emotional support to build life skills, set academic and career goals, and plan for successful transitions from foster care. Foster care agencies are likewise expanding programs and hiring additional staff to support successful transitions to adulthood for their clients, including education, housing, and employment specialists, as well as tutors and case aides.

The proportion of middle school students in foster care enrolled in DYCD programs has increased from 14% to 20% since ACS and DYCD signed a data-sharing MOU in March 2018. The goal of the MOU is to increase access for children in foster care to DYCD afterschool and enrichment programs. As a result of the MOU, ACS and DYCD conduct a semiannual data match to determine participation levels and connect youth in foster care to available DYCD-funded programs.

In the 2018-19 school year, all DOE 7th graders, including those in foster care, participated in Middle School College Access for All, which supports their post-secondary planning trajectory through college visits, student workshops, caregiver events, and staff professional development. This initiative continues to provide college access opportunities for 7th graders across NYC.

In consultation with ACS, DOE is providing additional supports for youth in foster care. DOE has hired approximately 100 school-based Community Coordinators to connect highly mobile youth, including students in foster care, to a range of supportive services (Summer 2019). In December 2019, ACS provided training to this staff on the academic and social service needs of child welfare-involved youth, and the agencies will continue to collaborate on trainings as necessary. Through the Community Schools initiative, the DOE is also piloting efforts to link foster care youth to Success Mentors, caring adults who identify the underlying causes of chronic student absenteeism and address barriers to attendance to ensure that students reach their academic potential. To date, Success Mentors have worked with 81 students who are in foster care.

DOE has also enhanced service coordination and oversight to support students in foster care. DOE has released comprehensive guidance on the rights of students in foster care and has begun to train borough and school-based staff on its contents. In addition, DOE's Office of Safety and Youth Development has added a webpage on foster care to the online resource hub and has begun to incorporate foster care information in training for Borough Office staff and school-based Designated Liaisons.

The First Star College of Staten Island (CSI) Academy, in partnership with ACS, is a long-term college-prep program for high school youth in foster care. It includes four immersive residential summer programs on a university campus and monthly weekend sessions during the school year. During the residential sessions, youth are supported by professional and staff and youth coaches who were foster care involved. Throughout all four years, Academy staff provide long-term case management to the youth and their families to assist youth in focusing on academics, life skills and engagement. During the summer, students live on the college campus and after the summer, students visit the CSI campus one Saturday a month during the academic year. The First Star Academy is a collaborative that includes ACS, the College of Staten Island and First Star, Inc. The program is supported by ACS, CUNY, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, and New Yorkers for Children. The program serves 25 youth in foster care.

Launched in 2016, the **Fostering College Success Initiative (FCSI,** also known as the "Dorm Project") is a partnership among ACS, the City University of New York (CUNY) and New York Foundling. FCSI participants receive full tuition, room, and board, including year-round housing at dorm sites affiliated with Queens College, City College, and John Jay College. Students also receive dorm-based support services at each of these locations, including support from academic tutors and full-time college success coaches. The Dorm Project has grown from serving 50 students in FY17 to over 120 students in FY19.

ACS continues to host our **Annual Spring College Tours** for high school students to expose them to college life and help them choose the most appropriate school. This year, student visited SUNY, CUNY and private college campuses and participate in college access workshops. The Spring College tour is a week-long experience for foster care youth where each day youth visit college campuses to learn about their admission process, available financial aid, academic studies and campus life. The program also provides information that helps students plan and apply for college.

ACS continues to implement key strategies to improve employment outcomes for youth. ACS first established an office dedicated to improving employment outcomes for youth in foster care in 2016. Today, the **Office of Education and Employment Initiatives** develops services, initiatives and partnerships that build capacity within the foster care system to connect youth to college support and workforce development programs throughout NYC. Opportunities made available by the Office include paid internships, career readiness programming, mentoring, vocational training and employment. The Office's initiatives support youth development for educational and career planning, mentoring, work-based learning, employment and career advancement.

ACS is partnering with New Yorkers for Children (NYFC) and Youth Villages (YV) to pilot LifeSet, an evidence-based program for young adults ages 17-22 who have been involved in the foster care, juvenile justice and/or mental health systems as young adults. The LifeSet model uses specialists to provide youth with intensive community-based support comprised of both clinical and skill-building interventions. The goals of LifeSet are to support youth to maintain stable and suitable housing, participate in educational/vocational programs, find and sustain employment, remain free from Court involvement, develop healthy relationships, build a strong and permanent support system, engage with youth's families and social supports, strengthen mental health stability, and develop fundamental life skills. First launched in NYC in April 2018, the program will serve 350 young people over three years with the goals of improving education, employment and housing outcomes. To date, 126 youth have been served in collaboration with Children's Aid and The New York Foundling. In addition, SCO Family of Services recently signed on to offer LifeSet to their youth in foster care as part of Fair Futures.

ACS has expanded its partnership with **The Workplace Center at Columbia University** to provide technical assistance to a total of 12 foster care provider agencies via the **Young Adult Work Opportunities for Rewarding Careers (YA WORC)** curriculum. YA WORC is an evidenced informed career readiness program that trains foster care agency staff to provide comprehensive, developmentally appropriate career readiness programming to youth in foster care ages 14 – 21. The agencies receive technical assistance and training to develop an on-site career club that provides peer-to-peer experiential learning and instruction on how to develop educational and career plans, resumes and cover letters, and decisions based on labor market information. YA WORC builds the capacity of agency staff to use different age-appropriate strategies to prepare youth in foster care for meaningful careers. In 2019, 20 additional foster care agency staff were trained in the YA WORC curriculum, bringing the total to 68 foster staff across 12 foster care agencies and programs. An additional 41 youth were engaged in the Career Club in 2019, bringing the total number of youth engaged to over 200.

ACS has partnered with DYCD to administer a revamped paid internship program for young adults. **The Advance & Earn Plus program** is a new career pathway approach to delivering education and workforce services to foster care opportunity youth. The program will offer young adults ages 16-24 who are not in school and not working a continuum of education and employment services from literacy instruction through advanced training and job placement or college enrollment supported by comprehensive trauma-informed support services tailored to individual needs. Advance & Earn Plus benefits from the best practices of Young Adult Internship Program Plus (YAIP+) a paid internship program designed by DYCD in partnership with ACS to help reengage foster care youth who might have fallen off track in their education and vocational goals. For the past three years, YAIP+ has provided internship opportunities to youth with child welfare history who are not currently working or enrolled in school. Through an innovative career pathways approach, Advance & Earn Plus aims to accommodate opportunity youth at different stages of skill development and provide them with positive short-term outcomes as well as the skills and tools necessary to achieve long-term career success. The new program model will offer a continuum of services including literacy and math instruction, HSE test preparation, work readiness training, college and career exploration, paid work experience, advanced occupational training and industry credential attainment supported by case management and wrap-around services. The program launched in February 2020 and will serve 60 youth in foster care.

During the summer, ACS provides two paid summer internships programs, the **Emerging Leaders: Leaders for Tomorrow Program** (formerly known as the Vulnerable Youth Summer Youth Employment Program, or VY SYEP) and the **College Internship Program (CIP)**. Both programs provide paid internship experiences to high school and college students ages 14 to 24 years old. The programs offer a one-to-one supervisory approach with assignments based on youths' interests or college course work. The Emerging Leaders program is a six-week program through which youth earn \$15 per hour for six weeks. The CIP is an eight-week program that operates for 35 hours per week; undergraduate students earn \$15 per hour and graduate students earn \$23 per hour. For the Emerging Leaders program, ACS partners with DYCD to ensure that hundreds of youth in care are connected to a public or private sector employer. Last year, ACS served more than 900 youth through the Emerging Leaders program and CIP program and developed over 255 worksites.

ACS continues to partner with the **Pinkerton Foundation** to support a **Mentored-Internship Program (MIP)** across twelve foster care agencies. The MIP program provides technical assistance and training through the Workforce Professional Training Institute (WPTI) to agency staff. Through the community-based styled trainings, staff learn to develop on-site internships within the infrastructure of their agencies. With supervision and mentoring provided by agency leadership and staff, youth participate in paid internships that offer 10 hours of work per week over a six-month period during the academic year. The program targets youth in foster care between the ages of 16 - 21 years old. In 2018, 155 youth completed the MIP program, and an additional 66 youth were served in 2019.

VI. Conclusion

As previously noted, ACS has multiple initiatives specifically geared towards improving the safety, permanency and well-being of foster care youth that align closely with the ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint. The Foster Care Strategic Blueprint consists of the following critical system priorities:

1. **Improving Permanency Outcomes**
2. **Improving Foster Care Placements to Enhance the Well-Being of children**
3. **Improving Health and Mental Health Services for Children and Youth in Foster Care**
4. **Improving Outcomes for Youth**
5. **Building Systematic Capacity**
6. **Partnering with Youth**

In addition to the Foster Care Strategic Blueprint, ACS recently released the [Interagency Foster Care Task Force Final Report](#). The report reflects significant progress made over the past two years including, but not limited to expanding education, employment and other supportive services programs for youth.

The FY20 ACS Youth Experience Survey provides valuable information regarding the experiences of youth between the ages of 13 - 21 in foster care. The findings from this survey will be used to inform ongoing ACS' service planning and programming for older youth in the areas of permanency, education, employment, emotional supports, child welfare staff training and other key identified areas.

ACS is reviewing the results with the Youth Leadership Council to identify and prioritize approaches for supporting older youth. ACS will also be reviewing the findings with provider agency leaders and other key stakeholders in order to strategically align efforts that support the well-being of older youth.

VII. Appendix A

Youth Experience Survey 2020

ACS is conducting a survey of youth in foster care so that we can learn more—directly from you—about your experiences in foster care. The information that you provide will help us improve foster care placements and the services and supports that you receive. Your input is critically important and we thank you for taking a few minutes to complete this survey.

If you would like to complete the survey in Spanish, French Creole, Mandarin, or Cantonese, either call 212-341-3500 or email FPS.SurveyHelp@acs.nyc.gov.

Youth PIN _____

ACS may follow up with you and/or your agency if your answers lead us to think that there are safety or health issues.

If you have any safety concerns or general questions, please call 212-341-3500.

After submitting your completed survey, please see your case planner for your gift card.

[Note: The survey used skip logic so that youth were asked the questions relevant to them based on their responses to previous questions. The skip logic is explained in brackets.]

About You

1. Where do you live? (Check one answer.) [SORTING/SCREENING QUESTION]

- Kinship Family Foster Home (with relative or family friend)
- Foster Home
- Residential Treatment Center
- Group Home
- Children's Center
- Youth Reception Center

2. How old are you? (Check one answer.) [SORTING/SCREENING QUESTION]

- 13 years old
- 14 years old
- 15 years old
- 16 years old
- 17 years old
- 18 years old
- 19 years old
- 20 years old
- 21 years old

Help with Your Education

3. Are you currently in school or a Vocational School / Allied Health Program / Technology Institute? [SORTING/
SCREENING QUESTION]

- Yes, I am in school or a Vocational School / Allied Health Program / Technology Institute
- No, I am not in school or a Vocational School / Allied Health Program / Technology Institute

4a. What grade are you currently in? (Check one answer.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q3, ASK QUESTION OF: Yes, I am in school]

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School Equivalency Program (for example: TASC, GED) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational School / Allied Health Program / Technology Institute | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College | |

4b. What is the highest level of education you completed? (Check one answer.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q3, ASK QUESTION OF: No, I am not in school]

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School Equivalency Program (for example: TASC, GED) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some Vocational School / Allied Health Program / Technology Institute | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completed Vocational School / Allied Health Program / Technology Institute | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some College | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completed College | |

5. Please state the reason(s) you are not in school. (Check all that apply.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q4b, ASK QUESTION OF: Grades 5-12]

- I failed too many classes
- I was kicked out / expelled for bad behavior
- I did not feel that I belonged there
- I had no encouragement to continue with school
- I needed to work
- I was unable to get there
- I am expecting a child
- I had to provide child care and/or care for an adult

6. Do you have plans to continue with your education? (Check all that apply.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q4a and Q4b:

- “I am interested in returning to school” appears for youth not in school (4b) whose last grade completed was grades 5-12.
- “I plan on finishing high school” appears for youth currently in school (4a) in grades 9-12 or a high school equivalency program and youth not in school (4b) whose last grade completed was grades 9-12.
- “I plan on finishing my high school equivalency program” appears for youth currently in (4a) a high school equivalency program and youth not in school (4b) whose last grade completed was grades 9-12.
- “I would like to attend college/trade school” appears for youth currently in school (4a) in grades 9-12 or a high school equivalency program and youth not in school (4b) whose last grade completed was grades 9-12, have gotten their high school diploma or their high school equivalency, or completed some vocational school or college.
- “I plan on finishing my degree” appears for youth currently in (4a) vocational school or college and youth not in school (4b) who completed some vocational school or some college.
- “I plan to pursue another degree or professional license” appears for youth currently in vocational school or college (4a) and youth not in school (4b) who completed some or all vocational school coursework or some or all college coursework.
- “I plan on enrolling in the military” appears for youth currently in (4a) grades 9-12, a high school equivalency program, vocational school, or college; and youth not in school (4b) who completed grades 9-12, a high school diploma or high school equivalency, and those who completed some or all vocational school coursework or some or all college coursework.]



	Yes	No	I don't know or I'm not sure
I am interested in returning to school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I plan on finishing high school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I plan on finishing my high school equivalency program (for example: TASC, GED).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to attend college / trade school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I plan on finishing my degree.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I plan to pursue another degree or professional license.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I plan on enrolling in the military.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Are you getting the support you need to continue your education? (Check one answer in each row.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q6, ASK QUESTION OF: Selected at least one "Yes" or "I don't know" for one of the non-military items.]

	Yes, I am getting what I need	No, I am not getting what I need	I don't need this
Emotional support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Currently, are you getting the services you need to help with your education? (Check one answer in each row.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q4a and Q4b:

- “Help preparing for the high school equivalency test.” appears for youth currently (4a) in a high school equivalency program and youth not in school (4b) who last completed grades 9-12.
- “Help preparing for the Regents exam” appears for youth currently (4a) in grades 9-12 or a high school equivalency program and youth not in school (4b) who last completed grades 9-12.
- All other items appear for youth currently in (4a) grades 9-12, a high school equivalency program, vocational school, or college; and youth not in school (4b) who completed grades 9-12, a high school diploma or high school equivalency, and those who completed some or all vocational school coursework or some or all college coursework.]

	Yes, I am getting what I need	No, I am not getting what I need	I don't need this
Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help preparing for the high school equivalency test) (for example: TASC, GED	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help preparing for the Regents exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help preparing for college readiness or specialized tests (for example, SAT, ACT, LSAT, or GRE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help applying for school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help applying for financial aid and/or student loans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with attending school fairs or tours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Currently, are you getting the services you need to help with your education? (Check one answer in each row.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q4a and Q4b: Appears for youth currently (4a) in grades 5-8 and youth not in school (4b) who last completed grades 5-8.]

	Yes, I am getting what I need	No, I am not getting what I need	I don't need this
Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with the high school application process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with test preparation (for example: PSAT, Specialized High School exam)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Did you ever have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or receive special education services? (Check one answer.)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/not sure

Help with Finding a Job

11. Have you ever participated in Summer Youth Employment (SYEP)? (Check one answer.)

- Yes
- No
- I don't know or I'm not sure

12. Do you have a paid job or paid internship? (Check one answer.)

- Yes, I have a job or a paid internship
- No, I do not have a job or paid internship but I want to work
- No, I do not need a job

13. How many hours a week do you work? (Check one answer.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q12: Appears for youth who selected "Yes, I have a job or a paid internship."]

- Less than 6 hours
- 6 to 10 hours
- 11 to 15 hours
- 16 to 20 hours
- 21 to 25 hours
- 26 to 30 hours
- 31 or more hours
- It depends on the week or on my schedule.

14. Currently, are you getting the help you need to find a job? (Check one answer in each row.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q12: Appears for youth who selected “Yes, I have a job or a paid internship,” or “No, I don’t have a job or paid internship.”]

	Yes, I am getting what I need	No, I am not getting what I need	I don’t need this
Help with getting my working papers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with immigration status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding places that are hiring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning which jobs to apply for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning how to fill out a job application	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning how to create a resume	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning interviewing skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with getting proper clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with getting dependable transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning how to deal with customers, co-workers, and bosses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with emotional/behavioral issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with improving my reading or math) skills (for example: tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Getting Support from the People Around You

15. Are there people in your life that you can turn to for help when you need it? (Check all that apply) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q1:

- “Foster parent (or former foster parent)” appears for youth who currently live in a kinship or foster home
- “Residential staff” appears for youth who currently live in a residential setting, group home, Children’s Center, or Youth Reception Center
- All other items appear for everyone]

Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>
Father	<input type="checkbox"/>
Step-parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grandparent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aunt / Uncle	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brother / Sister	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cousin	<input type="checkbox"/>
Godparent / Family Friend	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster parent (or former foster parent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residential staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher / Coach / School staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current or previous case worker or social worker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Therapist / Case Aide / Socio-therapist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentor (like a Big Brother/Big Sister)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone from church, temple, or mosque	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent of a friend	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friend / Boyfriend / Girlfriend / Partner	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. In general, do you feel supported by your foster parents or residential facility staff? (Check one answer.)

- Yes, very supported
- Yes, somewhat supported
- No, not very supported
- No, not supported at all

17. Which of these are true for you? (Check one answer in each row.)

	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
I have someone to help me with my problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have someone to listen to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have someone who makes me feel wanted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Are you able to use the following where you live? (Check all that apply.)

- Phone service (landline)
- Cell phone
- Internet
- Desktop computer
- Laptop
- Tablet (for example: an iPad)
- None of these

19. What do you do in your free time? (Check one answer in each row.)

	Yes, I do this	No, I don't do this
Use social media (for example: Facebook, Instagram, snapchat)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play video games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read a book	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go on a date	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to school dances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be a part of a school club	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play on a sports team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to afterschool or weekend school events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to a community club or place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to a religious organization of my choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend time with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend the night with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outdoor activities (such as walking, running, roller blading, skate boarding, bike riding, swimming)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. Is anything stopping you from doing things outside of school or work? (Check all that apply.)

[ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q1:

- “I am not allowed by my foster parent” appears for youth who currently live in a kinship or foster home
- “I am not allowed by the rules in the program where I live” appears for youth who currently live in a residential setting, group home, Children’s Center, or Youth Reception Center
- All other items appear for everyone]

- I do not have transportation
- I do not have the money
- I have to look after a child
- I am not allowed by my foster parent
- I am not allowed by the rules in the program where I live
- Nothing stops me from doing things outside of school or work

Your Health and Experiences in Care

21. Currently, are you getting the health care you need? (Check one answer in each row.)

	Yes, I am getting what I need	No, I am not getting what I need	
For my physical health (body)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
For my emotions / mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
For my eyes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
For my teeth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Yes, I am getting what I need	No, I am not getting what I need	I don't need this
For alcohol / drug use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For sexual health / family planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21A. Here is a list of the type(s) of health care you said you are not getting.

Please explain how you are not getting the type(s) of health care you need. [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q21: Appears if at least one “No, I am not getting what I need” is selected.]

22. Currently, do you receive support in learning about self-care (for example, putting on deodorant, using feminine products, health and wellness)? (Check one answer.)

- Yes, I am getting what I need
- No, I am not getting what I need
- I don't need this

23. Would you like ACS to contact you to learn more about self-care (for example, putting on deodorant, using feminine products, health and wellness)? (Check one answer.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q22: Appears if “No, I am not getting what I need” is selected.]

- Yes
- No

24. How much allowance do you get each week? (Check one answer.)

- \$0 or nothing
- \$1 - \$9
- \$10 - \$15
- \$16 - \$20
- \$21 - \$25
- \$26 - \$30
- More than \$30

25. Do you have a bank account? (Check one answer.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q2: Appears if youth selects 18-21 years old.]

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure or I don't know

26. My foster agency supports me with: (Check one answer in each row.)

	Yes, I am getting what I need	No, I am not getting what I need	I don't need this
Reaching my educational goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doing trips, parties, and social events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting ready to get a job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permanency planning (plan for after leaving foster care)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independent living workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connecting with my attorney	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. Were you a part of making your permanency plan (plan for after leaving foster care)? (Check one answer.)

- Yes, I led the making of my permanency plan
- Yes, I was a part of making my permanency plan BUT I did not lead it
- No, I was NOT a part of making of my permanency plan
- I do not know about my permanency plan

28. Who supports you in your permanency planning? (Check all that apply.) [Question appears if answer choice in Q27 is one of the following: “Yes, I led the making of my permanency plan,” “Yes, I was part of making my permanency plan BUT I did not lead it,” “No, I was not a part of making my permanency plan.”]

- “Foster parent” appears for youth who currently live (Q1) in a kinship or foster home
- “Residential staff” appears for youth who currently live (Q1) in a residential setting, a group home, Children’s Center, or Youth Reception Center]

- Parent
- Foster parent
- Residential staff
- Case worker at my foster care agency
- My lawyer
- Teacher
- Friend
- No one supports me in my permanency planning

About You

29. How do you describe yourself? (Check all that apply.)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black, African American, or African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- I don’t identify
- Prefer not to answer

30. What is your ethnicity? (Check one answer.)

- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Middle Eastern or North African
- None of the above
- Prefer not to answer

31. Can you practice your religion where you live right now?

- Yes
- No
- I do not have a religion

31A. Please explain how you cannot practice your religion where you live right now. [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q31: Appears if youth selects “No” (cannot practice their religion where they live).]

32. Check one answer in each row. (Check one in each row.) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q1. “Are you currently provided with 3 meals a day?” appears for youth who currently live in a kinship or foster home, Children’s Center, or Youth Reception Center.]

	Yes	No
Are you currently provided with 3 meals a day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you currently have appropriate clothing (which means: clean, fit, no holes)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have shoes (such as sneakers or boots) that fit you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



32A. I am not provided 3 meals a day because (Choose all that apply) [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q32: Appears for youth who select “No” (not provided 3 meals a day).]

- I don't like the food
- I have to cook my own meals
- I make it home after curfew when food is no longer being served
- I skip a meal because I do not have time or interest (for example, I skip breakfast)
- I eat more than 3 meals a day (for example, I eat a snack after school)
- My foster parent doesn't provide enough food
- There is a lock on the refrigerator or cupboards
- Other, please specify _____

33. Please provide your phone number [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q17, Q21, Q22, Q32, Q32A. Youth are asked for contact information if they selected “Never” to all three items in Q17, selected “No, I am not getting what I need” for at least one item in Q21 or Q22, selected “No” to Q32 regarding clothing or shoes, or selected at least one of the last three items in Q32A.]

33. Please provide your email address [ADD SKIP PATTERN BASED ON Q17, Q21, Q22, Q32, Q32A. Youth are asked for contact information if they selected “Never” to all three items in Q17, selected “No, I am not getting what I need” for at least one item in Q21 or Q22, selected “No” to Q32 regarding clothing or shoes, or selected at least one of the last three items in Q32A.]

34. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

(What are your positive experiences in foster care? How can ACS better serve youth in care?)
