

**What Employers
NEED TO KNOW
to Best Support
Youth with
Experience in
Foster Care**

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Results

- An understanding of foster care and how this experience may impact how an employee engages in the workplace
- Best ways to support employees with experience in foster care to reach their full potential in the workplace
- How you can use an asset-based approach to support youth with experience in foster care on the job and within teams

Poll!

Who is in the room?

Why are you here?

What do you already know?

Person
First
Language

“Student with experience in foster care” vs. foster youth

Our young people provide expertise on the lived experience of foster care

What is Foster Care?

Foster care is the state-run program that provides out-of-home placement and supervision of children after an alleged and then substantiated case of abuse and/or neglect that has been investigated by Children's Protective Services (DCFS in IL).

Children are placed in foster care because it has been determined that there is an immediate risk for further harm if staying in that family home. They are placed with a court order and under the care of Department of Children and Families and may be placed in a:

- Foster home
- With a relative
- In a residential facility
- Independent living placement.

All children/youth who enter foster care are assigned a permanency goal. This goal is reviewed on a regular basis and may change over time, depending on the success of the family as they work on their treatment plan and goals. Permanency goals are reunification, adoption, guardianship, permanent placement with a relative, or emancipation.

Aging Out of Foster Care

Young person who reaches the age of adulthood while still in the foster care system.

Extended foster care until the age of 21 in Illinois: Continued financial support while residing in a foster home, group care, or independent living setting.

Required to be working toward high school completion, postsecondary degree, or working.

Education Outcomes

High School Outcomes

Illinois High School
Graduation Rate: 50% in a
compared to over 80% of
general population.

Illinois State Board of
Education, 2023

Postsecondary Outcomes

College Access and
Success: 84% aspire to
go to college, 20%
attend, 3-11% graduate
with a degree without
support.

Wolanin, 2005

- The child welfare system is focused on health, safety and permanence, NOT on education or career development. .
- Children in foster care have frequent moves, which lead to high education mobility. This leads to:
 - Falling academically behind
 - Loss of credits
 - Delayed graduation
 - Delayed eligibility for special education programming and services
- Residual effects of trauma and experiencing time in foster care
- Unseen population
- College and vocational systems are not set up to meet the needs of youth who have experienced foster care.
- Youth need supportive adults to help them navigate college and career success.
- Keep in mind these young people are involved with various systems they must navigate for survival.

The Foster Care Experience

**Challenges and
Obstacles for
Youth with
Experience in
Foster Care**

Homelessness
Food Insecurity
Mental Health
Underemployment
Lack of social/network connections
Transportation
Trauma
Life Skills Gaps

Family Privilege

Family privilege is defined as the benefits, often invisible and unacknowledged, that one receives by belonging to family systems long upheld in society as superior to all others. It serves to advantage certain family forms over others and is typically bestowed upon White, traditional nuclear families.

Family Privilege: In ACTION

- Getting a bank account
- Balancing a checkbook
- Getting a driver's license
- Having good credit
- Buying and maintaining a vehicle
- Meal planning/food preparation and storage
- Asking for help
- Communicating with those in authority

FAILING SAFELY!!

Can you identify examples of family privilege that helped you get where you are today?



**FOSTERING
SUCCESS
MICHIGAN**

An initiative of Educate Tomorrow

In 2012, Fostering Success Michigan (FSM) was established to increase access and success in the education to career pipeline for Michigan students from foster care

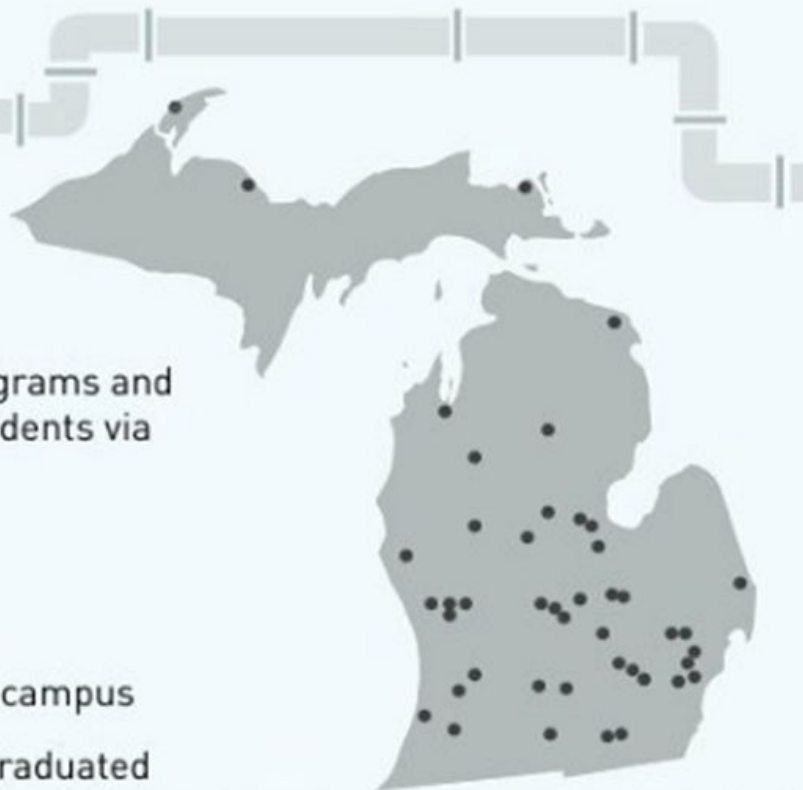
FSM provides resources, support, and networking opportunities for professionals, supportive adults, and youth with experience in care



Within the FSM Network, **30** campus based support programs and champions across the state provide support to these students via tuition assistance, coaching, and more



Since 2013, **2,452** students have been supported by campus based programs in Michigan, and **319** students have graduated



Building Postsecondary Support



30 Campus Support Programs & Champions

FosteringSuccessMichigan.com



NEW Donate Today! Contribute to providing opportunities for young adults who have experienced foster care. >

FOSTERING SUCCESS MICHIGAN
An Initiative of Educate Tomorrow


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Fostering Success Michigan provides resources and inspiration for youth and alumni of foster care. Get started by searching our library and network below.

What are you looking for? **GO >**

Middle School High School College Post-College and Career Supportive Adults Professional


Education Housing Health Relationships Identity Life Skills Finance & Employment



Campus Support Programs

There are many campus-based support programs across the state of Michigan with support and resources for students from foster care.


[View](#)



Financial Aid Toolkit

Wondering how to pay for college? FSM's Financial Aid Toolkit walks you, step-by-step through the financial aid process.


[View](#)



College Application Toolkit

This toolkit will walk you through everything you need to know about the college application process.

[View](#)



Child Welfare for Educators Toolkit

Educators and Educational staff can use this toolkit to learn about child welfare and what they can do for the children they work with.

[View](#)



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Coach Resource: Coaching Students Through Mandatory Vaccines on Campuses

Join us to learn more about how to 'coach' students through mandatory vaccination...

[Read](#) 1

2021 Michigan Teen Conference Resources for Life Toolkit

This easy to use toolkit contains links to resources in Michigan for youth with experience...

[Read](#) 1

FSM Podcast: National Foster Care Month 2021

National Foster Care Month 2021: Reflections from the FSM Ambassadors

Featured [View All](#)

Child Welfare for Educators Toolkit

Students with experience in foster care have unique needs and challenges, and no two people...

[Read](#) 1

What FSM Region am I in?

This document will help you figure out what FSM Region you are located in!

[Read](#) 1

CFS Webinar: Uncharted Territory: Foster Youth Navigating Mental Health Services

CFS Webinar: Uncharted Territory: Foster Youth Navigating Mental Health Services as They...

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RESILIENT VOICES & BEYOND



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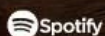
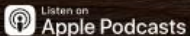
Allegheny County Educational Liaison, National Foster Youth Advocate, Jim & Annie E. Casey ACOMM Member, Contracted Federal Consultant, NYTD Reviewer



NYTD Conversation with Lived Experience Professionals



PODCAST



Presented By MDDTSpeaks

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Podcast
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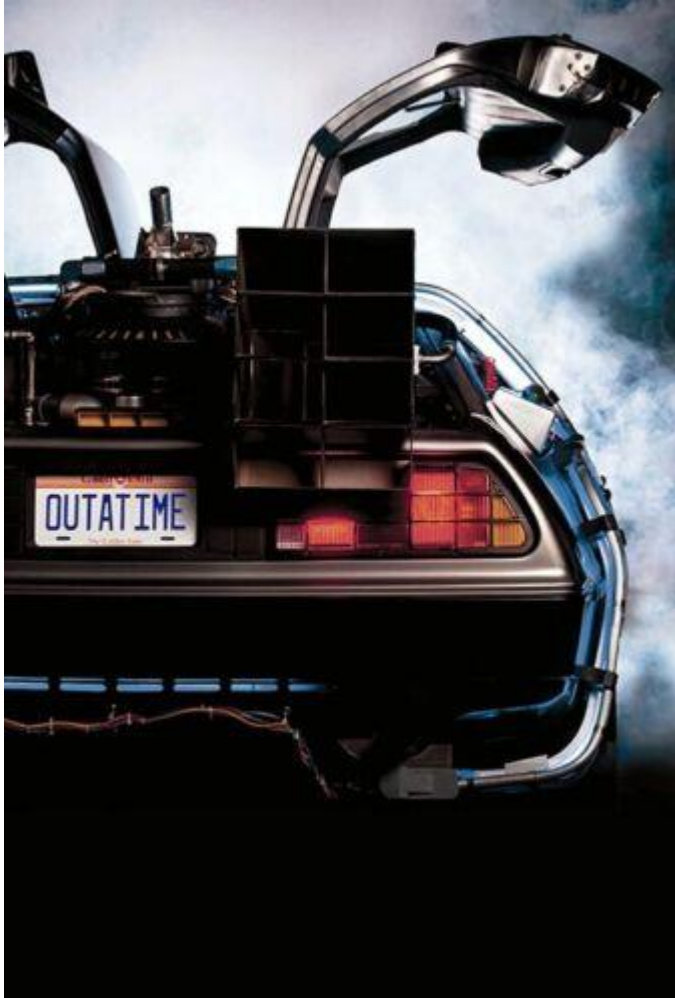
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Take a TRIP back in time...



What was your first job?

Did anyone help you get that job?

How did you know how to go about finding a job?

Filling out a job application? Preparing for an interview?

Who helped you prepare for your first day at work?

What was that like? Did you make a lot of mistakes?

Was your supervisor demanding? Supportive?

Exhausted?

What did you learn from this experience?



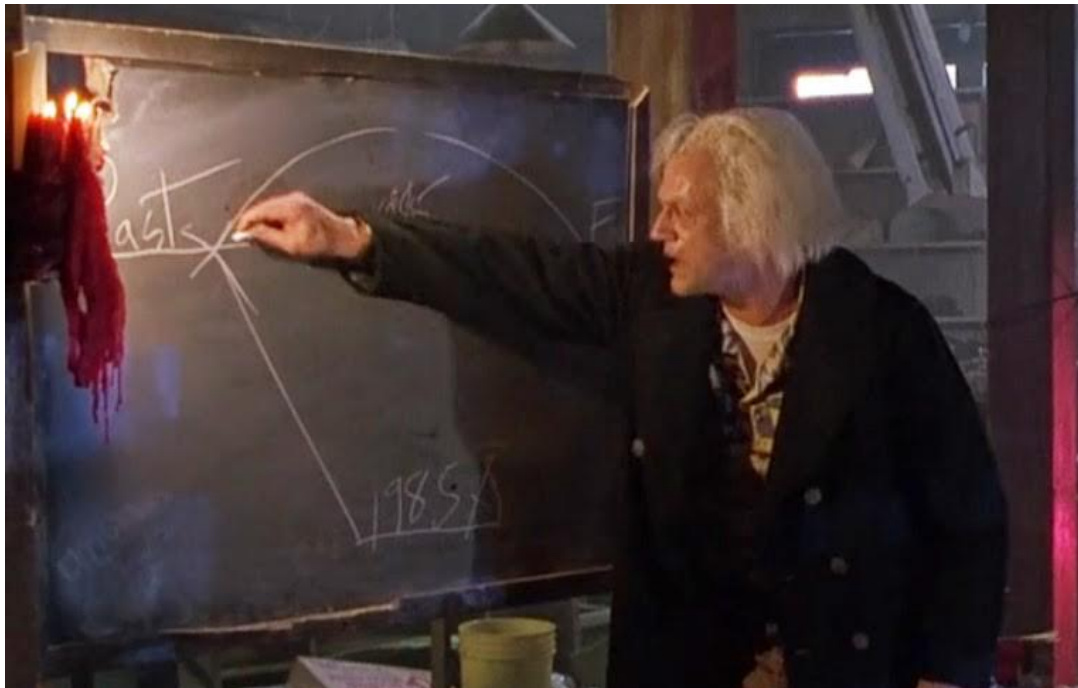
Think about your ASSETS

- What kind of role models did you have growing up related to work and career?
- Was it assumed that you would graduate high school and/or go to college?
- Did anyone talk to you about your future?
- Was a successful career valued in your home?
- Once you got your first check, who helped you figure out how to manage your money?



SUPPORTING YOUTH IN THE WORKPLACE

- Be a supportive adult: You don't need to be a social worker!
- Know your role: They need a COACH; not someone to save them
- Know your resources: Folks in business are often the most connected in the community! Who do you know that could help with housing, food, transportation?
- Create an environment of learning in the workplace: what skills does this young person need to develop to be successful in work and career?



REACHING FULL POTENTIAL

- Talk to them about their future: You might be the only person who ever asked them about it!
- Look beyond school records and figure out what they are passionate about: The lived experience of foster care leaves very little room for dreaming. How can you help?
- Be a leader and role model in life skills: SHOW THEM how to interact appropriately with supervisors and coworkers.
- Don't make assumptions: Ask questions about the support they may need



AN ASSET BASED APPROACH

- Reorient your narrative! How are your assumptions or frustrations impacting your interactions in guiding and leading this employee toward growth?
- What is working RIGHT with this employee?
- What strengths do you see? TELL THEM and encourage growth!
- How can you empower them to work more effectively and creatively?
- How can your organization INVEST in this employee to advance your mission and goals?



THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

Youth with experience in foster care need a supportive adult who will have their back. They need to be able to fail safely, because everyone fails sometimes. They need a **COACH** who will challenge them to think about their future, but also one who understands the myriad of obstacles that stand in their way. They need patience, guidance, understanding, and authenticity. They need someone who actually cares about them, and not the bottom line.

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