

Abstract

A qualitative study exploring the effects of multiple placement changes for minors in foster care.

Prior research has demonstrated how detrimental multiple placement changes are to children in foster care, but there is minimal insight from the child's point of view. Nine youth were interviewed to explore multiple placement changes through their lens. Three themes stood out: improved education, internalized responsibility, and recognition of good placements. Implications from this study may help inform social workers of the ramifications and continued trauma that comes with multiple placement changes.

Keywords: foster care, placement stability, youth

Efrain Barboza Jr

May 11, 2022

A qualitative study exploring the effects of multiple placement changes for minors in foster care.

By

Efrain Barboza Jr

A project

Submitted in partial

Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Social Work

In the College of Health and Human Services

California State University, Fresno

May 11, 2022

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my amazing support system for their support during my educational endeavors. Gabriel, you have been my rock and motivation, thank you for being so understanding and patient. I could not have done any of this without you. Josiah, Erik, and Leland thank you for being my inspiration. All of you will never fully understand how much you each mean to me. I hope that I had made you guys proud. To my mom who will always be my hero thank you for believing in me and for always picking up the phone when I need someone to talk to. You have always put your children first and I am the man I am today because of you. To my siblings who I watched grow up, I'm sorry that I have been so busy during the last few years. Thank you for being so understanding. I'm so thankful and fortunate to have been welcomed to Fresno by my mother-in-law, sister-in-law and nephew Bash. Moving three hours away from my family has been difficult, but they have been instrumental in my educational success.

To Ana at New Era Foster Family Agency, I will be forever grateful for your support in this research endeavor. I appreciate all the time and effort that you took in helping secure interviews and being open to recommendations. To the youth that took the time out of their days to speak to a complete stranger about what they have been through while in care, your bravery has not gone unnoticed. Your resiliency is inspiring.

Lastly, a very special thank you to Dr. Marcus Crawford who has helped me through this process. I'm sure he will be happy to not have me emailing him every day wondering what was next. To my reader Estella Saldivar thank you for your support not only as my reader but as a mentor during my time at Fresno State. You're a shining light in the community and I'm so grateful we met that first semester. To Dr. Cheryl Whittle thank you for all you have done for me. You are amazing and Fresno State is so lucky to have you.

Introduction

Children enter foster care for a variety of reasons; once in care children are still susceptible to continued trauma. The child welfare system faces a unique set of challenges in striving to enhance the safety, wellbeing, and permanency of children. During the hold and removal process children are required to be placed in a least restrictive setting available (NCSL, 2019), ranging from least restrictive with birth family to kinship, to more restrictive with foster care, and most restrictive in group or congregate care. A foster care placement is found when no family is available to offer a stable placement. Children in out of home non-kinship care are 1.7 times more likely to be moved into congregate care than children placed in kinship care (Palmer et al., 2020). A congregate care setting is often reserved for youth who require 24-hour supervision, often due to challenging and sometimes dangerous behaviors.

While removing children from their home may sometime be necessary to protect their safety, placement change for youth can come with detrimental consequences as well. Understanding the importance of placement stability is important for professionals working in child welfare settings. The present study examines placement change from the view of the youth to better understand how youth perceive placement changes in foster care.

Placement stability

One in three children experience placement instability (Rubin et al., 2007). Placement breakdowns can occur due to a variety of issues, often occurring after culmination of multiple events (Khoo & Skoog, 2014). Studies show that children who are physically and sexually abused are more withdrawn and exhibit fewer pro-social behaviors, and these difficulties manifest themselves in behavioral problems and aggression towards adults and peers (Dean et al., 1986; Lamphear, 1985, as cited in Crum, 2010; Prino et. al., 1994). These difficulties can

often be too much for care providers to handle particularly if they are not adequately trained on how to manage these behaviors (Pardeck, 1985, as cited in Crum, 2010). Evidence has shown that placement disruption and behavior problems are associated (Crum, 2010; Newton et al., 2000). These behavior problems perpetuate volatile placement histories and thus they experience negative internalized and externalized behaviors (Newton et al., 2000).

Attachment

The moment of initial placement creates a traumatic experience of being uprooted from your home. Stability is gained through developing trust with the primary care provider (Palmer, 1996). The trust that is built during initial placement is necessary and needed for teenagers in care as they express a need for love and a sense of belonging, thus allowing for the young adults to develop a sense of identity (Shuker et al., 2019). The non-parental relationships developed by foster youth and resource parents lead positive outcomes. A youth in foster care's socio-emotional, cognitive, and identity development improve when a bond is formed with a non-parental adult (Ahrens et al., 2011; Duke et al., 2017). These positive attachments are crucial to placement stability. Children are navigating behavioral and emotional problems that stem from issues with attachment and this is crucial for placement stability (Crum, 2010; Newton et al., 2000).

Outcomes

Several outcomes are often associated with placement in out-of-home care and long-term placement instability such as criminal and juvenile justice involvement, educational performance, and attachment difficulty.

Criminal and Juvenile Justice System

Instability for youth in care leads to negative outcomes that follow youth into adulthood. For instance, three or more placement changes puts youth on a multiple placement to prison path (Jonson-Reid & Barth, 2000; Krinsky, 2010). Nine out of ten youth in foster care that have had five or more placement changes encounter the criminal justice system; additionally, the chances that a youth in foster care will come into contact with the criminal justice system significantly increase as their level of care does (Krinsky, 2010). Foster youth who have been placed in group homes or higher levels of care are 2.5 times more likely to have contact with the criminal justice system (Krinsky, 2010; Jonson-Reid & Barth, 2000). This outcome is of a greater concern as teenagers in foster care are often overrepresented in juvenile delinquency cases (Ryan & Testa 2005; Yi & Wildeman 2018).

Educational performance

Children in out-of-home care also face educational challenges. Youth in foster care are disproportionately being held back from advancing grade levels while also being overrepresented in special education courses (Scherr, 2007). While children in foster care are being held back at higher levels than those not in care, they still aspire to higher education with 79% of youth in foster care expressing desire to attend college and 90% of youth in foster care planning to graduate from high school (McMillen et al., 2003). Unfortunately, their aspirations do not match their graduation levels with only 30%-40% of teenagers in foster care graduate before exiting the system and those numbers increase to 54%-64% returning to graduate after leaving the system (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2018; McMillen et al., 2003). Those numbers fall to 2%-26% of youth in care who continue onto college (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2018; McMillen et al., 2003). The continued placement changes for youth who are not adapting well only further hinders the youth's educational progress (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2018; McMillen et al., 2003; Perez, 2011).

Attachment Difficulties

As children age, they develop relationships that allow for continued growth when it comes to relationships and attachments to family members. These relationships with adults could help guide youth into adulthood. The research in this area shows that a correlation between multiple placement changes and attachment difficulties (Palmer, 1996; Ahrens et al., 2011; Krinsky, 2010; Perez, 2011). This trust in adults can be broken multiple times as youth may experience trauma and abuse with their birth parents who they believed were tasked to protect them. Children are then being placed in an out-of-home placements where interactions with foster/resource parents are grounded in the trauma they have experienced in their homes. The trauma that comes with multiple placement changes and the lack of trust in adults manifests itself in problem behaviors that increase the likelihood of placement breakdowns (Palmer, 1996; Khoo et al., 2014). Healthy attachments with positive adult role models result in positive outcomes (Andersson, 2005; Perez, 2011). Graduating high school, having a job, and managing financial situation are associated with healthy attachment and support from important adults (Andersson, 2005; Fernandes-Alcantara, 2018).

Present Study

The purpose of exploring multiple placements as a phenomenon is to explore the effects of placement changes on youth in foster care through their voice and providing the profession with this valuable information. This information can be used to help prevent continued trauma for children while in foster care. The present study explores this by asking “What is the lived experience of teenagers in foster care who have had multiple placement changes?” This research study seeks to improve the knowledge and effects of multiple placement changes on youth in foster care. This information can help social workers make better informed decisions when

placing or moving children who are in out-of-home care. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of California State University, Fresno.

Methods

The qualitative study used a hermeneutical phenomenological research design, chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore the lived experiences of individuals about a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). When exploring any phenomenon, researchers must seek those who have experienced it directly to better understand the experience. Often, the topic of multiple placement changes in foster care has been studied by examining the outcomes associated with it, as cited in the literature above. Exploration of the experience has more often focused on the perspectives of foster parents or social workers, leaving out the youth who experience this phenomenon directly in their lives.

Participants

Participants in this study were teenagers in foster care who were placed in a foster family agency. The sample included four teenagers who were new to care and five teenagers who have been in care for at least a year. Participants in the study ranged from 12 to 17 years old. The participants were recruited through foster family agencies and their resource parents. The resource parents agreed to provide contact information to the researcher through the foster family social worker. The resource parents were able to provide consent with the research approval granted by the agency. The researcher then reached out to resource parents to schedule a time to set up a virtual appointment. Only youth currently placed in a resource family homes were included in the recruitment for the study.

Data Collection

Data were collected through virtual interviews which were recorded. The questions that were asked during the interview explored concepts associated with placement instability and aging while in foster care. A semi-structured interview guide was used for the interviews which included questions on topics such as the youth's experience in foster care and how their education has been impacted by placements in foster care. Participants were asked about their overall experience in foster care, their best and worst placements, and their understanding of their placement changes that had occurred. Additionally, the interview guide consisted of five demographic questions. Follow-up and probing questions were used as needed during the interviews.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Initial coding was conducted by all authors and compared for triangulation during the thematic development (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Because the experience of the primary author and the second author were so similar, triangulation included the third author to gain a new perspective and to check any bias from the first two authors. This is consistent with rigorous qualitative analysis (Padgett, 2016; Patton, 2002). From this, quotes from the youth were highlighted to demonstrate the themes that had been identified. To increase rigor, interviews were continued until saturation had been reached (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Padgett, 2016).

Credibility/Reflexivity Statement

Providing a reflexivity statement that grounds the researcher in the study is one way to enhance rigor and understanding in qualitative research (Aguirre & Bolton, 2014; Berger, 2013; Padgett, 2016). As a resource parent, the first author recognizes his bias in working with teenage youth in foster care in his home. The primary researcher also recognizes his bias as a child

welfare focused social worker. This research is led by the idea that children in out-of-home care have expressed the difficulties they have experienced in moving from home to home. These difficulties have been shared with the researcher both with children in his care and children that he has worked with in child welfare county agencies.

The second author recognizes his position of power as a social work faculty member. He worked for over a decade in the child welfare system and fostered older youth for nearly 8 years. These experiences directly shape his bias regarding placement disruptions by foster parents. Adopting older youth in care has also helped to shape his view, and the experience of his children have helped to shape his view from the perspective of the youth.

The third author recognizes her position of power as a social work faculty member. She has worked for over a decade in the child welfare system as an emergency response and family reunification case manager as well as with non-profit private family services. These experiences directly shape her bias regarding placement disruptions by foster parents. Her experience in having to make recommendations to both remove children in emergency response and reunify children in family reunification/maintenance helps shape her view from the perspective of the youth and families.

Results

Of the nine interviews that were completed five were female and four were male. Their ages ranged between 12 to 17 years old. Kelly (15) and Lisa (12) are siblings who were initially placed with a family member for six months and have lived with their current resource parents for the last six months. Kyle (13) and Whitney (14) are siblings who had been in out-of-home care for six months when they were younger and were reunified are currently back in care for another six months. Gina (17) and Erika (16) had previously been in out-of-home care for six

months and were reunified, they have now been in their current placement for four months. John (12) has been in foster care for about four years and has only been in his current placement during that time. James (17) has been in out-of-home care for four years and has had four placement changes with his most current placement being the longest at two years. Josh (14) has been in out-of-home care between four and five years while having four placement changes with him being in his current placement for two years.

Table 1: Participant demographics

Name	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Time in Foster Care	Time in Current Placement
Kelly	Female	15	Mexican	1 Year	1 Year
Lisa	Female	12	Mexican	1 Year	1 Year
Kyle	Female	13	Hmong	1 Year	6 Months
Gina	Female	17	Hmong	1 Year	4-5 Months
Whitney	Female	14	Asian	1 Year	6 Months
Erika	Female	16	Hmong	1 Year	4-5 Months
John	Male	12	Mexican/American	3-4 Years	3-4 Years
James	Male	17	White	4 Years	2 Years
Josh	Male	14	Hispanic	4-5 Years	2 Years

Through thematic analysis, three themes emerged that related to the research question: 1) Improving Education, 2) Internalized Responsibility, and 3) Perceptions of Placements. The three themes provide a better understanding for the discussion, recommendations, implications, and conclusion.

Improving Education

“To begin with it was like really bad like my grades were horrible but, when I got placed into the home I’m in right now, my grades improved like really good. My foster parents pushed me to do better.” (Josh, 2022)

The youth that participated in the study discussed the way that their grades improved because of the standards of the resource parents they were placed with. Kelly (15) spoke to the change of placement leading to an improvement in her grades:

So, [my grade] wasn't affected it actually went up because my care providers pushed me to do better on school. When I came here, I had all F's and now it's a little bit better because the way my care providers push me to work hard.

In fact, five of the nine participants reported that the change of placement led to an improvement in their grades. Moreso, two of the participants specifically pointed to being allowed to focus on their homework. "Here again like I get better grades, like better, more A's and B's because I have a place I can do my homework and focus and think without any interruptions" (John, 12)

The participants were asked for their thoughts when it came to the possibility of moving homes again and what effect that would have on their education. Josh (14) was concerned when asked what he thought about moving again and what that would look like for his school. John (12) said that he would focus on who he was going to be with and whether he would get along with those people. This would cause him to lose focus on his schooling. John (12) also echoed the same sentiment stating, "If I would have to move then I wouldn't have a place to think because we're always moving." Of the nine participants, four stated that they would be negatively impacted in their education if they were moved from their current homes.

Internalized Responsibilities

"Because, like, if I do something wrong, I'll probably get replaced in this house. And if I don't make good choices then I'll get replaced in this house." (Kelly, 15)

While all nine participants stated that they would maintain a relationship with their resource parents if they were moved, seven of the nine participants felt that they bear the

responsibility of a placement change. The researcher first established that attachment with their care provider early in the interview then ended by asking if there is a connection to their actions and multiple placement changes. In one way or another Kelly (15), Lisa (12), Kyle (13), Gina (17), John (12), James (17) and Josh (14) stated that they believed that their actions and behaviors could lead to them being moved homes.

The overall theme based on the nine interviews was that the children in foster care felt that they must be good at all times, or as Lisa (12) put it, “If we are not good then we can’t live here because our [resource parents] will not want to deal with us.” Two of the seven youth that felt that their actions would lead them to be moved also stated that there could be an outside factor other than their behavior that may lead them to be moved. Gina (17), who was one of the seven that felt that her behavior could cause a placement change, also felt that it would be unfair if she was moved homes if she had nothing to do with it. Kyle (13) not only felt that she was responsible for maintaining her current placement through her behavior, but she also took on the responsibility of her own issues causing trouble for the other youth in the home. Kyle (13) expressed that “if it causes them a lot of trouble and like if they're taking care of other kids that are foster kids, it makes it a lot harder for them.”

Perceptions of Placements

“Where I'm at now. I feel like I can consider them my friends but like still like my parents.” (Josh, 2022)

It was not surprising that the youth with multiple placements would have differing views on the foster care system than those that had recently come into foster care. Of the nine participants the three male participants had been in the foster care system for two years or longer. The six female participants identified as being in foster care from four months to a year. James

(17) and Josh (14) who have been in foster care for two years reported having an easier time identifying what they did like and what they did not like about their current and past placements. They spoke to both the distance and separation they felt from their friends and family members when they had to move out of their hometowns. James (17) was born in a small town in California and moved to a neighboring small town stated that his:

Worst placement was probably in Sanger and best placement is probably where I'm at right now. Because I was just too far from where I used to go to school at and I just didn't like how it was over there.

Josh (14) who was born in a small town in California and moved to a larger neighboring town spoke to the difficulty and separation from his family members when he was placed in out of home care. Josh (14) described his experience in foster care as:

I feel like my first, when I first got placed into foster care that was my worst placement.

The one that I'm at now is my best placement. Here [at this one now] I feel loved and like I'm one of their kids.

Josh (14) and James (17) had three and four placement changes respectively while in foster care.

When asked what they thought about their favorite and least favorite placements all nine of the participants who have had more than one placement change were able to distinguish between a good and bad placement. Kyle (13), Gina (17), Whitney (14) and Erika (16) had previously been in foster care and were reunified with their parents and are back in out-of-home care. A couple years had passed since they were first in care. Gina (17) expressed that:

The first time I was put in foster care is different from now because I'm older. When I was younger. It was more unfair because I couldn't really speak my opinion. But now that

I'm older and I'm in foster care, it's more different because like, if I'm not comfortable with something, I let them know.

The last question during the interview is an open question allowing the participant the chance to talk about placement changes. When the floor was open for her during this question Erika (16) replied, “foster Care is like different homes [that have] different rules and stuff. Like it could either be [stricter] or like, could be like more freedoms. Depends on the home that you go to.”

Discussion

The results reveal that children in foster care can find support in the system that they are unwillingly placed in, while also encountering additional stressors. Practitioners who make placement decisions can benefit from this study by understanding that continued placement changes can alter many aspects of the child’s life. Foster family agencies and county agencies can help empower the children in their care while also becoming aware of the messaging around their placement.

Practitioners should recognize that the children do care about their education and fostering an environment where these positive results can be seen can help stabilize placements. Social workers who can makes decisions regarding a child’s placement should ask questions regarding the family’s educational standards. Despite it being well documented that moving a child into out-of-home care can be devastating (Newton et al., 2000; Pardeck, 1985, as cited in Crum, 2010), the participants in this study recognize that their grades had improved. Once the participants in the current study were provided stability through their current resource parents, they were able to see positive results in their grades.

One of the contributing factors that led to some of the success in the children’s education came with their increased home life stability. Five of the nine participants found that they

benefited from being provided a peaceful place to do their work. Practitioners should use this information to gauge where children in out-of-home care will be placed. Researchers have demonstrated the importance of child welfare professionals recognizing how the children in foster care define their success in their education and help empower the youth (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2018; McMillen et al., 2003). Having a direct line of communication at the time of placement regarding what the resource parent's standards are is crucial to promoting placement stability. While most of the participants are currently excelling in their education, many expressed concerns regarding the possibility of a placement change, especially when it comes to how it would affect their education.

One of the concerning themes that emerged was the sense of responsibility that the children took on to maintain their current placement. Children in out-of-home care experience trauma at the moment of separation, and they continue to experience trauma once they are placed in a setting outside of their home. The goal of the foster care system is to first provide a temporary, safe, and stable environment for children and youth who do not have this in their homes of origin. The agencies and practitioners should do their best to normalize the environment around the youth.

The agencies and practitioners should do their best to promote the wellbeing of the children in foster care, while promoting permanency. With permanency in mind, agencies and practitioners have an opportunity to promote stability by discussing the children's feelings of responsibility when it comes to maintaining their placements. Navigating a conversation with the children allows them to take responsibility for their actions without the idea of an expectation of perfection. The participants expressed their sense of responsibility to behave at all times in fear that they will be moved homes.

This places a large burden on the youth in out-of-home care if the messaging is “behave at all times or you will be moved.” It is well documented that there are times when continued misbehaviors may lead to a placement change, but children should not live day to day thinking they must be perfect at all times. This sort of messaging is itself traumatizing, and both practitioners and resource parents have a responsibility to engage the children in conversations about what happens people make mistakes. Living day to day with the expectations of perfection causes unnecessary stress, especially in an already stressful situation. Research findings indicate that placement changes happen due to a variety of factors (Khoo & Skoog, 2014) and not always due to something done by the child. One way to attempt to eliminate placement changes is to work on eliminating stress that could potentially lead to challenging behaviors.

Youth who have had multiple placement changes had different perceptions of their placements compared to those who had recently come into care. Those who had been in the foster care system for a considerable amount of time found that they have had the experience to distinguish between a positive and negative resource home. Those who have been in care multiple times and or have had multiple placement changes found that they had an easier time identifying what they did and did not like from their past and current placements. Our findings demonstrated how detrimental it can be to move children out of the communities where they were raised. Without the proper support systems children suffer consequences from a system they did not ask to be in.

Practitioners and social workers who are in a position to make placement changes should be aware of the negative experiences associated with moving youth from their home communities. All options should be considered before taking the step of uprooting a child from the community that they know and care about. Our research findings demonstrate an opportunity

for resource parents and youth in foster care to have a dialogue about what they have previously enjoyed and what did not work well. Youth in our study were able to identify things that are positive in their placement and things that make placements challenging. Practitioners and resource parents should engage in this conversation with youth. This can help maintain stability and work off a strengths-based perspective. This open dialogue can help improve placement stability.

Limitations

One of the limitations in this study was the type of sample that participated in this study. Participants were chosen using a convenience sample as it included participants who were most accessible to the researcher through a local foster family agency. By interviewing youth in a foster family agency, none were currently in or had previously experienced higher levels of care such as congregate care settings. Most youth in the study has few placement changes, which also limits our understanding of perspectives from youth who have had many different placement changes. When using this type of sampling, the sample may not be representative of the population. The participants cannot be generalized because of the sample methods and the narrow focus of the study; however, the goal of qualitative research like this is not to create generalizable findings but rather to explore the nature of specific experiences for deeper and richer understanding. Because of the lack of research that explores the lived experiences of children currently in foster care, further research is needed to understand the experiences of multiple placements from youth's perspectives.

Conclusion

This research sought to explore multiple placement changes through the lens of youth currently in foster care. The research appears to indicate that through new expectations and

motivations, the participant's grades improved while in out-of-home care. They report a sense of responsibility to maintain their placements promoting a need to be perfect. The research also found that the youth that had been in care before and or in care longer had an easier time distinguishing between good homes and not so good homes. It is important to note that often the work that resource parents put into the children in their care goes unnoticed. John (12) stated it well: "[Resource parents are] choosing to take care of us. They want us to stay here because..., I don't know. They just want us."

References

- Aguirre, R., & Bolton, K. (2014). Qualitative interpretive meta-synthesis in social work research: Uncharted territory. *Journal of Social Work, 14* (3), 279-294. Doi: 10.1177/1468017313476797
- Ahrens, K. R., DuBois, D. L., Garrison, M., Spencer, R., Richardson, L. P., & Lozano, P. (2011). Qualitative exploration of relationships with important non-parental adults in the lives of youth in foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 33*(6), 1012–1023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.01.006>
- Andersson, G. (2005). Family relations, adjustment and well-being in a longitudinal study of children in care. *Child & Family Social Work, 10*(1), 43–56. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2206.2005.00337.x>
- Berger, R. (2013). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 15* (2), 219-234. Doi: 10.1177/1468794112468475
- Breehl L, Caban O. Physiology, Puberty. [Updated 2021 Apr 21]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2021 Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK534827>
- Brown, J. D., & Bednar, L. M. (2006). Foster parent perceptions of placement breakdown. *Children and Youth Services Review, 28*(12), 1497–1511. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2006.03.004>
- Creswell, J. & Creswell, J.D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 5th Edition*. Sage Publications.

- Crum, Wes. "Foster Parent Parenting Characteristics That Lead to Increased Placement Stability or Disruption." *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 32, no. 2, Elsevier Ltd, 2010, pp. 185–90, doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2009.08.022.
- Duke, T., Farruggia, S. P., & Geramo, G. R. (2017). "I don't know where I would be right now if it wasn't for them": Emancipated foster care youth and their important non-parental adults. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 76, 65–73.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.02.015>
- Fernandes-Alcantara, Adrienne L. *Foster Youth: Higher Education Outcomes and Federal Support*. [Library of Congress public edition], Congressional Research Service, 2018.
- Jonson-Reid, M., & Barth, R. P. (2000). From placement to prison: The path to adolescent incarceration from child welfare supervised foster or group care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22(7), 493-516. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0190-7409\(00\)00100-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0190-7409(00)00100-6)
- Khoo, E., & Skoog, V. (2014). The road to placement breakdown: Foster parents' experiences of the events surrounding the unexpected ending of a child's placement in their care. *Qualitative Social Work*, 13(2), 255–269. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325012474017>
- Krinsky, M.A. (2010), Disrupting the Pathway from Foster Care to the Justice System- A Former Prosecutor's Perspective on Reform. *Family Court Review*, 48, 322-337.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1617.2010.01313.x>
- McCombes, S. (2022). Sampling Methods | Types and Techniques Explained
<https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/sampling-methods/>
- McMillen, C., Auslander, W., Elze, D., White, T., & Thompson, R. (2003). Educational Experiences and Aspirations of Older Youth in Foster Care. *Child Welfare: Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program*, 82(4), 475–495.

- Newton, R. R., Litrownik, A. J., & Landsverk, J. A. (2000). Children and youth in foster care: Disentangling the relationship between problem behaviors and number of placements. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *24*(10), 1363–1374. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(00\)00189-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(00)00189-7)
- Palmer, S. E. (1996). Placement stability and inclusive practice in foster care: An empirical study. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *18*(7), 589–601. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0190-7409\(96\)00025-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0190-7409(96)00025-4)
- Palmer, L., Ahn, E., Traube, D., Prindle, J., & Putnam-Hornstein, E. (2020). Correlates of entry into congregate care among a cohort of California foster youth. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *110*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.104772>
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods, 2nd Edition*. Sage Publications.
- Padgett, D. (2016). *Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research, 3rd Edition*. Sage Publications.
- Perez, L. (2011). Perceptions of social workers on attachment of foster children and youth experiencing multiple placements (Order No. 1499197). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection; Publicly Available Content Database. (889136849). <https://login.hmlproxy.lib.csufresno.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/perceptions-social-workers-on-attachment-foster/docview/889136849/se-2>
- Price, J. M., Chamberlain, P., Landsverk, J., Reid, J. B., Leve, L. D., & Laurent, H. (2008). Effects of a foster parent training intervention on placement changes of children in foster care. *Child Maltreatment*, *13*(1), 64–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559507310612>

- Rubin, David M., Evaline A. Alessandrini, Chris Feudtner, David S. Mandell, A. Russell Localio, and Trevor Hadley. (2004). "Placement Stability and Mental Health Costs for Children in Foster Care." *Pediatrics* 113 (5), 1336–41.
- Ryan, Joseph P., and Mark F. Testa. 2005. "Child Maltreatment and Juvenile Delinquency: Investigating the Role of Placement and Placement Instability." *Children and Youth Services Review* 27 (3), 227–49.
- Scherr, T. G. (2007). Educational experiences of children in foster care: Meta-analyses of special education, retention and discipline rates. *School Psychology International*, 28(4), 419–436. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034307084133>
- Shuker, L., Sebba, J., & Höjer, I. (2019). Teenagers in foster care: Issues, themes, and debates from and for practice and policy. *Child and Family Social Work*, 24(3), 349–353. <https://doi-org.hmlproxy.lib.csufresno.edu/10.1111/cfs.12650>
- Yi, Y., Wildeman, C., (2018). Can Foster Care Interventions Diminish Justice System Inequality? *The Future of Children*, 28(1), 37–58. <https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2018.0002>

Appendix

Consent Form Provided to Adults Consenting to Participant's Participation

Study Title: A qualitative study exploring the effects of multiple placement changes for minors in foster care.

Researcher: Efrain Barboza

Supervisor: Dr. Marcus Crawford

Hello, a minor that is in your care or you are responsible for has been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Efrain Barboza, a California State University, Fresno Master of Social Work Candidate. This study will focus on exploring the effects of multiple placement changes for minors in foster care. Before agreeing to allow the participant to participate in this research please read the following information that will describe the purpose and procedure of the study.

The study seeks to further explore the effects of multiple placement changes in foster care, and the minor on your case load was selected as a possible participant in this study because of their current experience in the foster care system. If you allow the minor to participate in this study the process will consist of a virtual interview held and recorded on zoom due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Participation in this study will consist of an interview that asks questions about demographics, experiences in foster care like placement stability, possible causes of placement instability, educational experiences, attachments experiences and an open forum for the minor to discuss any part of their experience in foster care

There are no major risks or discomforts from their participation in this study. Potential risks may include feelings of sadness when recalling a particular placement when asked questions during the interview. If this occurs the interview will be paused and can be continued later and or the minor can decide if they want to be removed from the study. If additional emotional support is needed resources can be provided.

The information gathered during this study will remain confidential. Only the researcher and his thesis chair will have access to the data and recorded interviews. Once the interviews are transcribed, they will be deleted and will not be stored on any external devices or drives. There will not be any identifying information on interview transcripts. The minors name and any other identifiable information will never be revealed in any publication of the results of this study but I am a mandated reporter. As a mandated reporter I am legally required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. These laws are in place to keep children safe and to end any possible abuse or neglect.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If allowed to participate the participant will be free to withdraw at any moment. If allowed to participate the participant is also free to refuse to answer any question. There will be a \$10 Amazon gift card that will be provided as incentive to the participate. The gift card will be given directly to the Foster Family Agency social worker, and it will be delivered to the youth who have participated in the study.

If you have any questions now or at a later time, please contact me at efrainbarboza@mail.fresnostate.edu or Dr. Marcus Crawford at MarcusCrawford@csufresno.edu, and we will be happy to answer them. If you feel you or the participant have not been treated according to the descriptions on this form, or that yours or the participants rights as a participant in research have not been honored during the course of this project, or you have any questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the researcher, you may contact the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at Fresno State at 559.278.2448 or CPHS Chair (Dr. Jennifer Randles (jrandles@csufresno.edu)).

By signing this form, you are agreeing to allow a minor to participate in this research study. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided and you are granting permission for the researcher Efrain Barboza to Zoom record the interview for the purpose of transcription.

I, _____ (name), have read the above information. I freely agree to allow _____ to voluntarily participate in this study. I understand that the participant is free to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw from the study at any time.

Adult Consenting for the Participant _____

Name of the Minor Participant _____

Date _____

Assent Form Provided to Participants

Study Title: A qualitative study exploring the effects of multiple placement changes for minors in foster care.

Researcher: Efrain Barboza

Supervisor: Dr. Marcus Crawford

Hello, you have been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Efrain Barboza, a California State University, Fresno Master of Social Work Candidate. This study will focus on exploring the effects of multiple placement changes for minors in foster care. Before agreeing to participate in this research please read the following information that will describe the purpose and procedure of the study.

The study seeks to further explore the effects of multiple placement changes in foster care, and you were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your current experience in the foster care system. If you agree to participate in this study the process will consist of a virtual interview held and recorded on zoom due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Participation in this study will consist of an interview that asks questions about demographics like your age and gender, experiences in foster care like placement stability, possible causes of placement instability, educational experiences, attachments experiences and an open forum for you to discuss any part of your experience in foster care.

There are no major risks or discomforts from your participation in this study. Potential risks may include feelings of sadness when recalling a particular placement when asked questions during the interview. If this occurs the interview will be paused and can be continued later and or you can decide if you want to be removed from the study. If additional emotional support is needed resources can be provided.

The information gathered during this study will remain confidential. Only the researcher will have access to the data and recorded interviews. Once the interviews are typed out, they will be deleted and will not be stored on any external devices or drives. There will not be any identifying information on interview transcripts that will be typed out. Your name and any other information like your name will never be revealed in any publication of the results of this study but I am a mandated reporter. As a mandated reporter I am legally required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. These laws are in place to keep children safe and to end any possible abuse or neglect.

Participation in this study is voluntary. There will be a \$10 Amazon gift card that will be provided as incentive to you. The gift card will be given directly to your Foster Family Agency social worker, and it will be delivered to you. As a participant there will be no penalty or judgement and you will be free to withdraw at any moment. You are also free to refuse to answer any question.

If you have any questions now or at a later time, please contact me at efrainbarboza@mail.fresnostate.edu or Dr. Marcus Crawford at

MarcusCrawford@csufresno.edu, and we will be happy to answer them. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions on this form, or that your rights as a participant in research have not been honored during the course of this project, or you have any questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the researcher, you may contact the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at Fresno State at 559.278.2448 or CPHS Chair (Dr. Jennifer Randles (jrandles@csufresno.edu)).

By signing this form, you are agreeing to participate in this research study. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided and you are granting permission for the researcher Efrain Barboza to Zoom record your interview for the purpose of transcription.

I, _____ (name), have read the above information. I freely agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that my responses will be kept confidential.

Participant Signature _____

Date _____

Instruments

Date/Time: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Hometown: _____

Ethnicity(s): _____

Years in foster care: _____

1. What has been your experience in foster care?
2. What has been your experience with your foster parents?
 - a. Could you see yourself staying connected with your foster parents after aging out of foster care?
3. How many placement changes have you had while you have been in foster care?
 - a. How long have you been at your current placement and what has been your longest placement?
4. Can you tell me about your best and worst placement?
5. What did you like or not like from your best and worst placement?
 - a. What did you like from your best placement?
 - b. What did you not like from your worst placement?
6. How has your education been impacted by placement changes?
7. In your view is there a connection to your actions and multiple placements?
8. I would like to leave it open to you is there anything you would like for us to learn about when a placement change occurs?