

California Child Welfare Education Data Research Projects
September 2010

To increase understanding about the educational experiences of California’s children and youth in foster care, the Stuart Foundation invested in two innovative research projects entitled *Documenting the Education Outcomes of California’s K-12 Students in Foster Care* and *Investigating California Foster Youth High School & College Education Outcomes*. Below are the key elements of these two exciting projects, which together offer compelling information about how California’s foster children and youth are faring in school. Both reports are scheduled for release in January of 2012.

	Documenting the Education Outcomes of California’s K-12 Students in Foster Care	Investigating California Foster Youth High School & College Education Outcomes
Project Purpose	To document a comprehensive, statewide picture of the educational attainment of California’s K-12 students in foster care	To study high school and college educational outcomes and factors/characteristics that support or impede these outcomes for California foster youth
Research Questions	<p>Research will analyze elementary, middle and high school outcomes. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the demographic profile of students in foster care and where do they attend school? ▪ What types of schools do they attend? ▪ Compared to the general population, how well are they doing academically – on standardized tests? On exit exams? In college prep courses? 	<p>Research will analyze high school and college outcomes and college transitions. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does foster care affect student outcomes (using pre-care data as a baseline)? ▪ How do foster youth fair in the transition from high school to college compared to similar students? ▪ How do experiences associated with foster care impact educational outcomes? (i.e. length of stay, placement changes, exit type)
Population	K-12 students in foster care during a specific academic year	All foster youth from 1998-present who match The California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS) data
Research Method	Point in time snapshot of K-12 students in foster care compared to the general population on key education variables	Examine student outcomes for a group of foster youth over time compared to similar students who are not served in foster care
Reporting Intent	State and district level findings	State and group-specific (e.g., English language learner) findings

Data and Technical Details

Data Source	Education data from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) and other education data sources for K-12 students in foster care as identified through the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS)	Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) data managed by UC, Berkeley (1998- present) is linked to education data from all K-12 and college Cal-PASS members.
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Security & Privacy	Data set is anonymous and Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) compliant. Strict data access and use agreements control how the data are used and by whom meeting all agency requirements. Resulting reports will be shared with all participating and interested education institutions.	Data set is anonymous and Federal Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) compliant. Strict data access and use agreements control how the data are used and by whom meeting all agency requirements. Resulting reports will be shared with all participating and interested education institutions.
Permissions Required	MOU between California department of Social Services and California Department of Education	Institutional Review Boards (IRB) from the State of California and UC Berkeley reviewed and approved the project plan. CDSS agreed to include CWS/CMS data in the study. Participating Cal-PASS school districts also agreed to participate in the study.
Replication and Use	A data sharing template will be developed that can be used for periodic replications/updates.	The data set may be used to examine future questions of interest, and the data linking process may be repeated to add more data. Examples of future investigations may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is AVID participation related to foster youth success in high school and college? ▪ What is the cumulative impact of school and residential changes on academic outcomes?

Study Partners and Contact Information

Research Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning ▪ WestEd ▪ The California Department of Education ▪ The California Department of Social Services ▪ The Center for Social Services Research, UC Berkeley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS) ▪ The Center for Social Services Research, UC Berkeley ▪ The California Department of Social Services
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