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The Failure of the Foster Care System

Victor Machado Berrios

Nebraska College Preparatory Academy

Grand Island Senior High 2020

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Abstract

On paper, the foster care system is a very noble concept. It is a place where unlucky children can lead better lives than what they had before being taken in. Too bad that is not the case. Involvement in the foster care system often results in children with mental health issues, trauma from abusive foster placements, and no support system in place once they age out of the system. For the sake of these kids, it is important that the government increases its funding for foster care as soon as possible.

Mental Health Disparities		
Mental Illness	% of Foster Care Alumni	% of General Adult Population
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	21.5	4.5
Major Depressive Episode	15.3	10.6
Modified Social Phobia	11.9	8.9
Panic Disorder	11.4	3.6
Generalized Anxiety Disorder	9.4	5.1
Alcohol Dependence	3.7	2.0
Drug Dependence	3.6	0.5
Bulimia	2.9	0.4

Conclusion

Some aspects of the foster care system are horrific, but it does not have to be this way. More can be done to help the families involved, and it all begins with more funding. The system can be improved by increasing the amount of case workers, by making sure it is truly safe for foster kids to go back to their families, or by supporting the adults who grew out of the system. It might be worth looking into how the government plans to go through with fixing the flawed foster care system.

Important Facts

- It is estimated that 143 million children are separated from their birth families.
- There are 556,000 children and adolescents in foster care in the US today, and 46% of them are 11-18 years old.
- Foster kids are almost 30% more likely to develop mental illnesses compared to the average child.
- Due to lack of funding, case workers are forced to take twice the caseload than what is recommended for child safety.



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