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Mairan Rodriguez

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How does the Foster System Connect to Juvenile Delinquency?

Mairan Rodriguez

Nebraska College Preparatory Academy
Omaha South High Magnet School 2022



Abstract

Juvenile maltreatment in homes is a large factor in today's incarcerated youth. Victims of child abuse and neglect are predominant in the foster care system. This issue has grown to where "1/4 of foster care alumni will become involved with the criminal justice system within two years of leaving care." (Anspach, 2018). These children who experience certain maltreatment while in foster care are at an increased risk of engaging in delinquent behavior. They often move out of the welfare system into the criminal justice system.

Key Points

- Children with a number of foster home placements are in need of special services and policies that provide the necessary resources for these foster children must be developed.
- Children who experience maltreatment are at an increased risk of delinquency in comparison to those who experience no maltreatment.
- Research shows that anywhere from 9% -29% of maltreated children engage in delinquent behavior (Ryan & Testa. 2004).
- Being incarcerated as a juvenile, increases foster youth's risk for continued involvement.

Graphics



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Conclusion

Today's young victims of child abuse and neglect are growing most likely to take part in criminal activity, tunneling a path from the child welfare system to the criminal justice system. These studies help us understand why the two go hand in hand and explain to us the way in which they connect. The foster care system is supposed to help provide our youth with a home in which they can be cared for and can strive in, rather than fall into a devastating path. There are many changes that need to be made to fix this broken system to not only help kids succeed, but also avoid any more emotional, behavior, and/or developmental problems. Changes like proper staff training, prioritizing placements with kin, caseworker retention and support for not only children's behavioral health needs but also for foster caregivers to better address the children's needs.