



**YOUTH
EXPERIENCE
SURVEY
2022**

NYC Children

Table of Contents

I.	Acknowledgments.....	3
II.	Executive Summary	4
III.	Introduction	7
A.	Background and Purpose of the Survey	7
B.	Survey Methodology	8
C.	Survey Respondent Placement Types and Demographics	9
D.	Limitations of the Survey	14
IV.	Survey Findings	14
A.	Help with Education	14
B.	Help with Employment.....	25
C.	Support from Family and Friends.....	29
D.	Youth Reporting of Feeling Down, Depressed, or Hopeless	31
E.	Social Interaction and Communication	34
F.	Impact from Covid-19	36
G.	Access to Healthcare, Hygiene Information, Basic Needs, and Religious Practices	37
H.	Support from Foster Care Agencies	41
V.	ACS Initiatives Supporting Older Youth.....	43
VI.	Conclusion.....	50

I. Acknowledgments

ACS is pleased to acknowledge the many individuals who contributed to the fifth annual Foster Care Youth Experience Survey.

We are grateful to the youth who completed the survey and shared their insights on their experiences in foster care. We are also thankful to the foster care provider agencies for their partnership and work and to ensure that the voices of young people were heard.

I want to thank my team at ACS, including Deputy Commissioner for Family Permanency Services, Julie Farber, and Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Planning, and Measurement, Andrew White, for driving improvements to the foster care system and for their leadership on this survey. Special thanks to the many other ACS staff that contributed to the survey development, dissemination, analysis, and writing of this report including the ACS Youth Advisory Council, Allon Yaroni, Fouad Yared, Randi Rosenblum, Ina Mendez, Wesley Santos, Lorna Guthrie, Kareem Forbes, Myra Soto-Aponte, Lucy Antoine, Neil Freedman, Sabine Chery, Yuri Pawluk, Raymond Singleton, Christopher Tan, Sonia Gonzalez, Stephanie Gendell, and staff of the Office of Shared Response, the Senior Practice Consultants, and the APPLA Monitoring Unit. I also want to thank the ACS marketing and design team that designed this report, including John Taylor.

Thank you to Mayor Adams for his commitment to bettering the lives of New York City's children and families and support of ACS's work to improve the experiences and opportunities for children and youth in foster care, including his dedication to ensuring they have the support and opportunity they need and deserve after foster care. We are utilizing the findings from this report and working with our partners to continue to strengthen the foster care system and improve outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Lastly, the COVID-19 crisis created additional and unprecedented challenges for youth in foster care. I want to acknowledge the courage and resourcefulness of youth, parents, foster parents and staff at ACS and our provider agencies who have worked hard to ensure that youth are safe and stable during this time.

Jess Dannhauser
Commissioner, NYC Administration for Children's Services

II. Executive Summary

The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS), in partnership with our foster care provider agencies, conducted the fifth annual Foster Care Youth Experience Survey in accordance with Local law 146. The legislation requires ACS to conduct an annual survey of all youth in foster care age 13 and older. The purpose of the survey is to better understand the experiences of youth in care and identify any unmet needs that may impact their safety, permanency, and well-being.

The survey questions focused on youths' experiences related to their education, employment, health care, connections to family and friends, and permanency planning. This year's survey also continued to cover these additional topic areas: the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on youth, experiences with depression, and sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE). While young people were asked specific questions related to how COVID-19 has impacted their lives, the impact from the pandemic is far reaching and presumably has affected all responses to this survey. Across the survey themes, responses reflect youth's perception of their needs and the support they receive in a variety of areas.

Youth in 24-hour foster care¹ for at least 90 days between the ages of 13-20 were eligible to complete the survey. All eligible youth were invited to participate in the online survey during the period between December 13, 2021, to February 8, 2022. The response rate for the FY 2022 survey was 46.2%; 954 out of 2,064 eligible youth completed the survey. This is a very strong response rate for surveys of this type, which typically have a response rate of 30% - 40%.² Of those who responded, 56% were female; 68.7% were age 16 years or older; 40% identified as Hispanic, Latino or of Spanish origin; 65% identified as Black, African American, or African and 8% identified as White.

At the time they were surveyed, most respondents resided in family foster care (76.5%), with 26.2% in kinship foster homes and 50.3% in non-kinship foster homes. Just under half of respondents (45.2%) had spent fewer than three years in foster care, including 13% having spent less than a year in foster care. Over fifty percent (55%) had spent three or more years in foster care. For 70% of respondents, their current placement was their first time in foster care.

The survey was voluntary and confidential. However, it was not anonymous; ACS staff could identify the youth completing each survey in order to follow up on any health or safety concern. Youth were informed that such follow-up would be conducted if their responses indicated a concern. ACS staff monitored responses on a daily basis and contacted individual youth and/or foster care agencies to address any critical issues or basic needs that youth reported as unmet.

As with all surveys, the findings are subject to nonresponse bias that stems from youth choosing not to complete the survey. Findings are also subject to response bias from those who may over-report

¹ Twenty-four-hour foster care means the youth is residing in a foster care placement; they are not on trial discharge, hospitalized, incarcerated, AWOC, or otherwise temporarily out of placement.

² Hart, N., Dykema, J., Schaeffer, N., & Stevenson, J., University of Wisconsin Survey Center. Survey Fundamentals: A Guide to Designing and Implementing Surveys. 2010.

“socially desirable” answers and underreport or over-report negative feedback, which may lead to a deviation of answers from their true value.

EDUCATION:

The majority (81%) of the youth who completed the survey were in school or a vocational program.

Among this group of 954 youth, 71% were in high school, 14% were in middle school, 9% were in college, and 5% were in a TASC/GED. Among the 186 youth not currently enrolled in school, 26% had completed at least one high school grade but had not received a high school diploma. Sixty-one percent had a high school diploma or equivalency degree, and 11% had completed some college. Nine percent of youth in high school and college and youth currently not in school were enrolled in a vocational program and 4% were enrolled in a job training or certification program. Forty-three percent of the youth reported having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Youth were interested in continuing their education and were receiving academic and other support.

Among youth in high school or who left high school without graduating, 90% plan to finish high school and 91% of youth who have started college or a vocational school plan to finish their degree.

Respondents most frequently mentioned needing help paying for school supplies or activities, applying for school, applying to college programs available to youth in care, and obtaining tutoring. At least three quarters of the youth who needed these services also reported receiving them.

For youth in middle school, guidance/mental health counseling was the most common need, and 94% of youth who reported the need were receiving it.

EMPLOYMENT:

The majority of youth in foster care want to work. Sixty percent of respondents reported interest in obtaining employment and 24% of youth currently have a job/paid internship. Many unemployed youths reported that they were receiving help to find a job. Most frequently received supports were help with improving reading or math skills (80%), help with getting proper clothing and creating a career goal/plan (76%), and help with dependable transportation (73%). Forty-three percent of youth reported that their need for finding job openings to apply for was unmet, and 35% reported that their need for learning interview skills was unmet.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:

The vast majority of youth (89%) reported that they feel very supported or somewhat supported by their foster parents or residential facility staff. When asked how often they have someone who makes them feel wanted, listens to them, and helps them solve problems, two thirds of respondents said they had people who supported them in these ways “most of the time.” ACS followed up with youth who responded “never” to all three emotional support questions, including contacting their foster care agencies as necessary to follow up on their emotional well-being.

DEPRESSION:

Youth were asked to report frequency of feeling down, depressed, or hopeless within the last two weeks. Thirty percent of male youth and 40% of female youth reported that they felt down, depressed, or hopeless “sometimes” (1-5 days in the past two weeks).

When compared by age, 30% of youth ages 13-15, 39% of youth ages 16-17, and 37% of youth ages 18-20 reported that they felt down, depressed or hopeless “sometimes.”

Thirty-one percent of youth who identify as heterosexual reported that they felt down, depressed, or hopeless “sometimes,” compared to 46% of youth who identify as bisexual, gay, or lesbian.

Youth who indicated feeling down, depressed, or hopeless were asked a follow up question if they would like someone from ACS to follow up with them. All youth who indicated that they would like someone to follow up with them were contacted by ACS staff. In addition, ACS staff automatically contacted all youth who had indicated feeling depressed every day.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION

Youth were asked about their gender identity and 51% of youth identified as a girl/woman while 41% identified as a boy/man. Two percent of youth checked the option “use another word for my gender.” The remaining respondents indicated that they identified as trans or transgender, did not know, did not understand the question, did not want to answer this question, or left this question blank.

Youth were also asked a question about their sexual identity, 63% see themselves as straight or heterosexual. Fifteen percent of respondents identify as bisexual, 3% see themselves as lesbian and 2% identify as gay. Two percent of youth stated that they did not know while another 4% stated that they use another word to describe their sexuality. The remaining respondents either selected that they did not want to answer this question, did not understand this question, or left this question blank.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS:

The majority of youth reported using social media, spending time with friends, and engaging in outdoor activities as their primary activities during their free time. Social media use during free time was the number one reported answer by youth at 84%, followed by spending time with friends at 79%, and outdoor activities at 75%. Most youth reported having access to cell phones and the internet (87%, respectively).

HEALTHCARE AND BASIC FOOD/CLOTHING NEEDS:

About 90% of youth reported that their needs for health care, food and clothing were met. For every youth who reported an unmet health, food or clothing need, ACS conducted outreach to address the concerns. Among all survey respondents, 93% reported having their needs met as related to physical health care, and 91% for their mental/emotional health. Respondents reported receiving needed vision (90%) and dental (87%) care. About one fifth of respondents stated that they need care for alcohol or drug use, and 93% of those said that their needs were met. Forty-two percent of respondents stated that they need care for sexual health/family planning, and 94% of those had their needs met as well. Youth were also asked if they had three meals a day, appropriate clothing and shoes that fit. Ninety-five percent of youth stated they are currently getting three meals a day, 94% have appropriate clothing, and 92% have shoes that fit.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND PERMANENCY PLANNING:

When asked whether they receive various types of support from their foster care agencies, more than two-thirds of youth said they got help in each of the following areas: education, job readiness, independent living workshops, housing support, and connecting with attorneys. Education (92%) and connecting to attorneys (82%) were the most frequent types of support youth reported receiving. When asked about their participation in permanency planning, 65% of respondents reported being involved, and 34% of those said they led the creation of their permanency plan. Youth were supported to engage in permanency planning, most frequently by their foster care case worker (80%), foster parent (70%), and residential program staff (67%).

COVID-19 IMPACT ON YOUTH IN CARE:

When youth were asked which areas of their lives were impacted by Covid-19, almost half of youth reported having difficulty with school and/or education (42%). Twenty-six percent of youth indicated that they have not been able to see their friends due to COVID. Twenty-four percent of youth responded that the pandemic negatively impacted their physical and/or mental health. Notably, 16 percent of youth reported the loss of a loved one due to Covid-19. Eleven percent of youth reported employment issues such as not being able to work or losing a job.

III. Introduction

A. Background and Purpose of the Survey

The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) disseminated and analyzed the responses from the FY22 Foster Care Experience Survey to comply with Local Law 146 of 2016. The law requires ACS to provide to all youth in foster care, ages 13 and older an annual survey regarding their experiences in foster care. The purpose of the survey is to better understand the experiences of youth while in foster care, especially as it pertains to their safety, permanency, and well-being. The law requires that the survey cover the following topics:

- Access to food and clothing
- Religious practices
- Social connectedness (i.e., relationships with foster families, biological families, and friends)
- Personal allowances (i.e., money received on a regular basis from the caregiver, or stipends for participating in agency program)
- Access to technology (i.e., internet and phone)
- Educational needs and progress
- Participation in extracurricular activities

ACS collaborated with its contracted foster care agencies to disseminate the survey to all eligible youth residing in 24-hour foster care status, in all types of foster care placements (foster homes, group homes

and residential treatment programs).³ All eligible youth were sent a letter with instructions on how to access the survey, and ACS worked closely with foster care agencies to implement a range of strategies to ensure that youth were aware of the survey and encouraged to complete it. Youth who completed the survey received a \$15 gift card. The survey launched on December 13, 2021, and remained open for seven weeks. The overall response rate was 46.2%.

B. Survey Methodology

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT AND ANALYSIS

For the annual survey conducted in FY22, ACS used the same survey tool as the prior fiscal year 2021 Youth Experience Survey with some minor modifications. Three additional questions were added to the FY22 survey around educational planning, enrollment in vocational and/or job training programs, and participation in after-school or weekend special education services. From past survey feedback, youth indicated that the survey was too long and too time consuming. ACS streamlined this survey by removing questions where responses could be obtained from various sources and reframing questions to make them more precise, clear, and less redundant.

SURVEY DISSEMINATION

ACS launched the online survey on December 13, 2021. Foster care provider agencies were instructed to enter email addresses for all older youth in care into the New York State database, Connections. ACS sent an electronic notification of the survey to all eligible youth with an email address available in Connections. The notice explained the purpose of the survey and included instructions for youth to access the survey. ACS also sent the relevant information to each provider agency, including the youth names and their unique PINs⁴ to help support further engagement of youth to complete the survey. All communications included ACS staff contact information in case the youth had any questions. To encourage survey participation, youth received an electronic \$15 gift card upon completion of the survey.

ACS and the provider agencies used a wide range of strategies to follow up with non-respondents. ACS staff worked with foster care agencies to identify and resolve any completion barriers and reiterate the importance of completing the survey. Additionally, ACS responded to any questions from youth and foster care agencies through a survey help desk and offered translation services for youth who requested to complete the survey in another language. One youth completed the survey in Spanish. The remaining 953 youth completed the survey in English.

SURVEY POPULATION AND RESPONSE RATES

The survey population was comprised of all youth aged 13 or older who had been in 24-hour foster care for at least 90 days as of December 10, 2021. Of the 2,064 youth eligible for the survey, 954 completed it, for a response rate of 46.2%. The response rate slightly decreased from 52% responding in FY21 to

³ This does not include Close to Home juvenile justice placements.

⁴ Each eligible young person was given a unique identification number (PIN) with which to access the survey.

46.2% responding in FY22. Despite the decrease, this is a strong response rate for online surveys, which typically have a response rate of 30% - 40%.⁵

C. Survey Respondent Placement Types & Demographics

This section provides an overview of the demographic characteristics and placement types of the youth responding to the survey and the total population of foster care youth eligible to participate in the survey, based on ACS administrative data.⁶

PLACEMENT TYPE

Of the 954 youth who responded to the survey, 76.5% were living either in foster homes or in kinship foster homes (Table 1). Half (50.3%) reside in non-relative foster homes and 26.2% were placed in kinship family homes. Twenty-four percent of youth were living in a congregate residential setting, and between 1 and 5 of the responding youth were in a youth reception center (a pre-placement program for teens and young adults).

The overall NYC foster care population in active status as of December 2021 comprised 7,111 children and youth. This includes youth who were eligible and ineligible to take the survey. Eighty-eight percent of these youth lived in either non-relative foster homes (45%) or kinship foster homes (43%). Nine percent lived in a congregate residential setting, and the remaining 3% live in a special medical placement setting.

Length of time in foster care. Based on information available in ACS administrative records, nearly half of the survey respondents had been in care for fewer than three years, including 13% in care for less than one year at the time of the survey distribution and 32.2% in care for one to under three years. Slightly more than half were in care for three years or more.

Number of foster care spells (placement episodes). Consistent with the population of youth age 13 or older in foster care overall, 70% of the survey respondents were experiencing foster care placement for the first time, or their first spell. An additional 21.2% of respondents were in their second spell of foster care, meaning they had previously been discharged from care and then reentered care. The remaining 8.8% had been placed into foster care three or more times.

⁵ Hart, N., Dykema, J., Schaeffer, N., & Stevenson, J., University of Wisconsin Survey Center. Survey Fundamentals: A Guide to Designing and Implementing Surveys. 2010.

⁶ Youth were eligible to participate in the survey if they were age 13 or older and had spent at least 90 days in foster care.

TABLE 1: INDICATORS OF PLACEMENT IN FOSTER CARE: SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND POPULATION ELIGIBLE TO RESPOND TO THE SURVEY.

Placement Indicator	Foster Care Youth Responding to Survey		Foster Care Youth in Population Eligible to Participate in Survey	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
All Youth	100%	954	100%	2,064
Current Placement Type				
(FBH) Foster Home	50.3%	480	45.5%	940
(Kinship) Kinship Family Home	26.2%	250	30.9%	637
(Residential/ Group Home) Residential Treatment Center/ Group Home	23.5%	224	23.5%	485
Other / Unknown	0.0%	0	0.1%	*
Length of Time in Foster Care				
Under 1 year	13.0%	124	13.8%	285
Between 1 and 3 years	32.2%	307	34.2%	706
Between 3 and 5 years	24.4%	233	24.8%	511
Between 5 and 8 years	16.7%	159	15.7%	325
Over 8 years	13.7%	131	11.5%	237
Number of Foster Care Spells				
One Spell	70.0%	668	72.6%	1,499
Two Spells	21.2%	202	19.7%	406
Three or More Spells	8.8%	84	7.7%	159

NOTE: Findings in which the N is between 1 and 5 are not reported, these are represented by an asterisk (*).

SOURCES: Youth Experience Survey FY22 and ACS Administrative Records

DEMOGRAPHICS

Information on the gender and age of respondents was analyzed from ACS administrative records.⁷ Of the 954 youth responding to the survey, 56% were female and 44% were male (Table 2). The majority of respondents (69%) were 16 to 20 years old, with nearly one-third under age 16 (31%).

⁷ Gender information was pulled from the New York State CONNECTIONS system. This data does not reflect youth's self-reported gender identities.

TABLE 2: GENDER AND AGE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND POPULATION ELIGIBLE TO RESPOND TO THE SURVEY.

Demographic Indicator	Foster Care Youth Responding to Survey		Foster Care Youth in Population Eligible to Participate in Survey	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
All Youth	100%	954	100%	2,064
Gender				
Female	56%	535	56%	1,163
Male	44%	419	44%	901
Age				
13 to 15 years	31%	298	35%	713
16 to 17 years	29%	279	27%	565
18 to 20 years	40%	377	38%	786

SOURCES: Youth Experience Survey FY22 and ACS Administrative Records

The survey gathered information on the race and ethnicity of youth in foster care (Table 3).⁸ Ethnicity is reported separately from race. Youth who identified themselves as Hispanic, Latino or of Spanish Origin accounted for a substantial share of the youth responding to the survey (40%), while 5% identified as Middle Eastern or North African. Forty-three percent said they were neither Hispanic nor Middle Eastern. Ten percent preferred not to answer the question.

Regarding their race, the largest group of youth self-identified as Black, African American, or African (60%). Nine percent reported their race as White. Small percentages of youth self-identified as Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. The rest did not report their race.

It was not possible to compare the racial or ethnic background of survey respondents with the total eligible population of youth in foster care because the survey requested that the information be reported in a different format than that used in ACS's administrative records.

⁸ ACS's administrative records do not distinguish between race and ethnicity (Hispanic is reported as a race in New York State CONNECTIONS, the system of record, so data are not available, for example, about the number of youth in care who are Black/African American and Hispanic).

TABLE 3: RACE/ETHNICITY OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Demographic indicator	Youth responding to the survey	
	Percent	Number
Ethnicity		
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	40%	383
Middle Eastern or North African	5%	47
None of the above	43%	409
Prefer not to answer	12%	111
Did not answer	*	*
Total	100%	954
Race	Percent	Number
Black, African American, or African	65%	624
White	8%	80
Asian	4%	42
American Indian or Alaska Native	3%	30
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	12
I don't identify	6%	61
Prefer not to answer	16%	156

NOTE: For race, the sum of percentages is greater than 100% because youth could select more than one race. They could only select one ethnicity. Twenty-two youth did not indicate their race and twelve did not indicate their ethnicity in FY22.

NOTE: Findings in which the N is between 1 and 5 are not reported, these are represented by an asterisk (*).

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY/ EXPRESSION

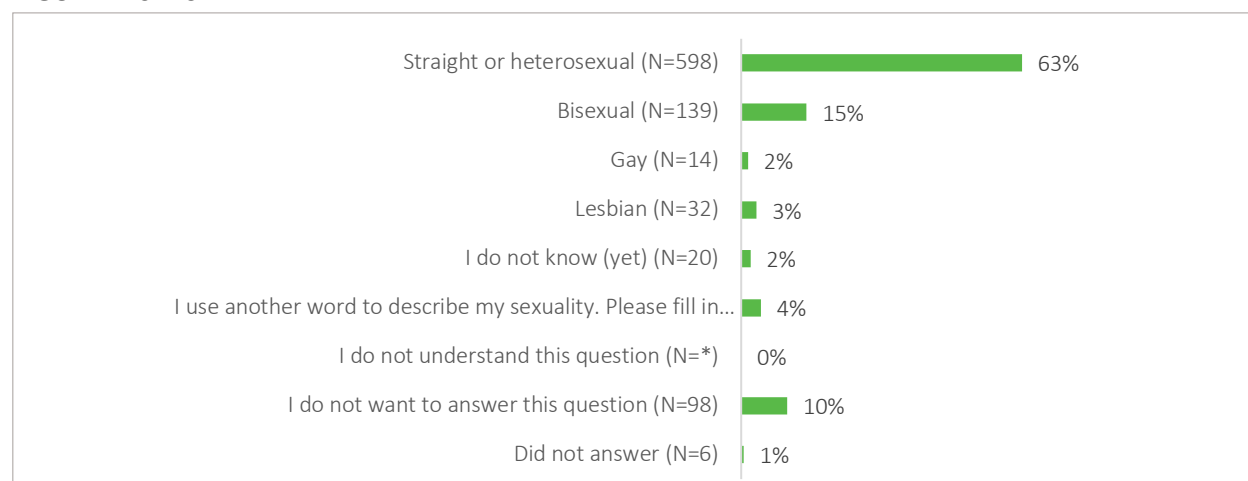
The LGBTQAI+ Action Plan⁹ reflects ACS's renewed commitment to identifying and addressing the unique needs of youth whose sexual orientations differ from cisgender or "gender conforming" that refer to roles and behaviors reflecting "binary" or "male/female" norms.

Of the 954 youth who responded to the question regarding sexuality, the majority of youth (63%) see themselves as straight or heterosexual. Fifteen percent of respondents identify as bisexual, 3% see themselves as lesbian and 2% identify as gay (Figure 1). Two percent of youth stated that they did not know while another 4% stated that they use another word to describe their sexuality. The remaining

⁹ ACS LGBTQAI+ Action Plan can be found at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/about/2020/LGBTQActionPlan.pdf>

11% of youth did not understand this question, preferred not to answer, or did not respond to this question.

FIGURE 1: SEXUAL IDENTITY

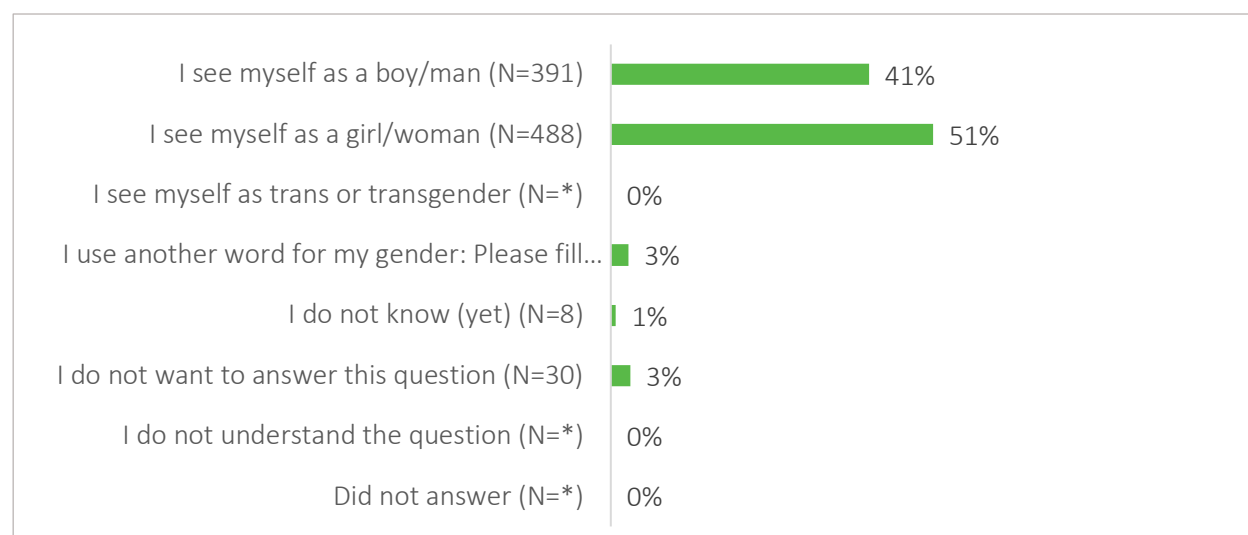


NOTE: Findings in which the N is between 1 and 5 are not reported, these are represented by an asterisk (*) and 0% in this chart.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

All eligible youth were asked “When you think about yourself, do you see yourself as a boy/man or girl/woman? Or do you use another word to identify your gender?”. Of the 954 youth who responded to this survey, 41% identified as a boy/man, 51% identified as a girl/woman (Figure 2). One percent stated that they did not know (yet). Another three percent responded that they use another word for their gender, while the remaining 3% of youth stated that they did not want to answer this question.

FIGURE 2: GENDER IDENTITY



NOTE: Findings in which the N is between 1 and 5 are not reported, these are represented by an asterisk (*) and 0% in this chart.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of the survey was completed utilizing the same methodology as the previous year's survey, allowing for a comparison of the findings. This report highlights any areas where the finding from this year's survey was 10 percentage points above or below last year's finding. For some of the questions, a comparative analysis could not be completed due to the question being revised with new or updated response options. These instances are noted in the applicable sections of this report.

D. Limitations of the Survey

This survey was disseminated to a NYC population of youth ages 13 and older who had been in 24-hour foster care for at least 90 days as of December 10, 2021. The survey was confidential; and no individual youth are identified in this report or in any survey data analysis shared with provider agencies. However, the survey was not anonymous; ACS followed up with the youth, and/or foster care provider if necessary, if there were concerns about a youth's health, safety, or overall well-being. As with all surveys, the findings are subject to nonresponse and response bias. The nonresponse bias stems from youth choosing not to complete the survey; the response bias is from those who may over report "socially desirable" answers and underreport or over report negative feedback, which may lead to a deviation of answers from their true value.

IV. Survey Findings

A. Help with Education

A.1 WHAT IS THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE?

The majority of respondents were in school (81%) and ages 13-17 years (Table 4). Of those enrolled, 14% were in middle school, 71% were in high school, 5% were in a high school equivalency program, and 9% were in college (Figure 3).

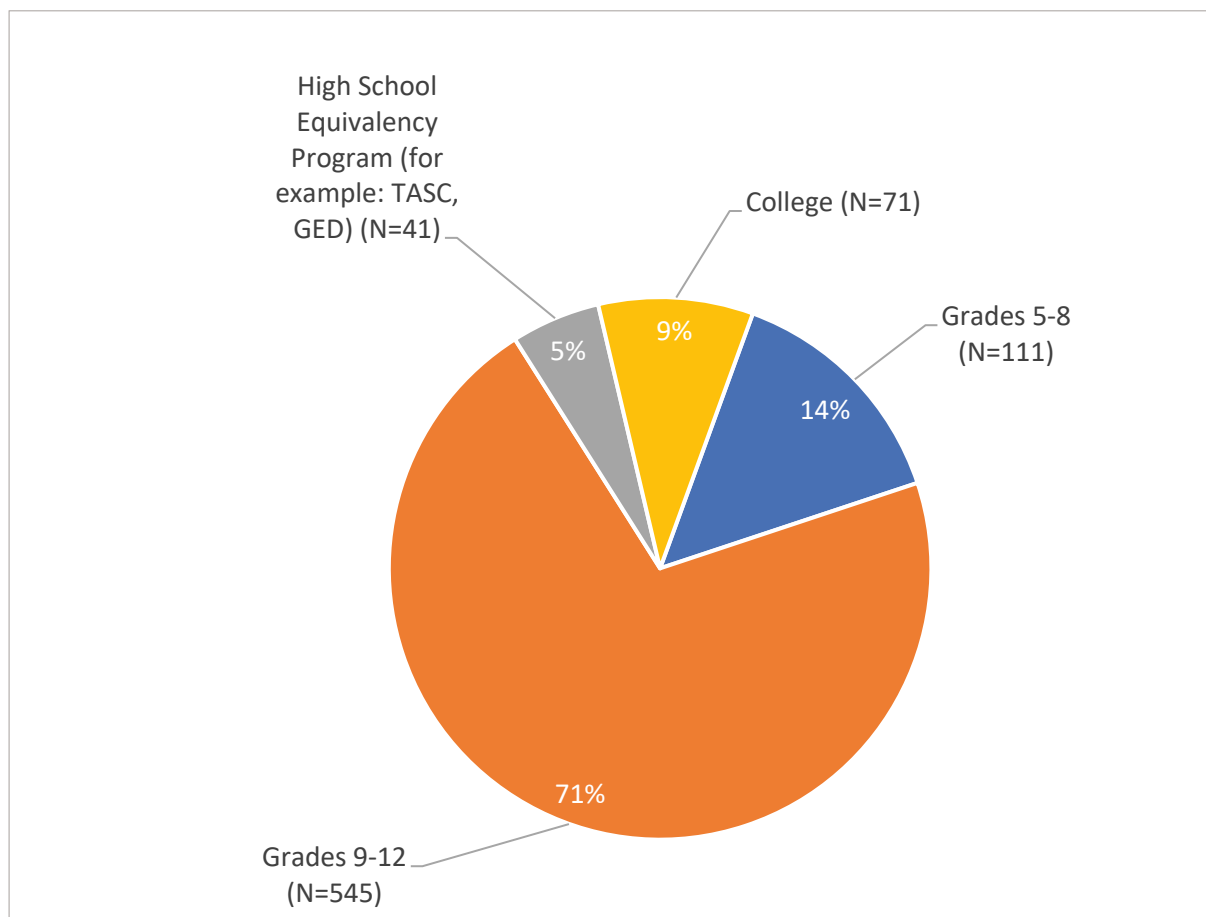
TABLE 4: CURRENT SCHOOL ENROLLMENT STATUS OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

	Yes, I am in school or in a remote learning, hybrid, or in-person program.	No, I am not in school or in a remote learning, hybrid, or in person program.
Age	% of Total	% of Total
13 to 15 years (N = 298)	98%	2%
16 to 17 years (N = 279)	96%	4%
18 to 20 years (N = 377)	55%	45%
Total (N = 954)	81%	20%

This question was mandatory, so all 954 youth answered it.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

FIGURE 3: LEVEL OF EDUCATION FOR YOUTH CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN SCHOOL (N=768)

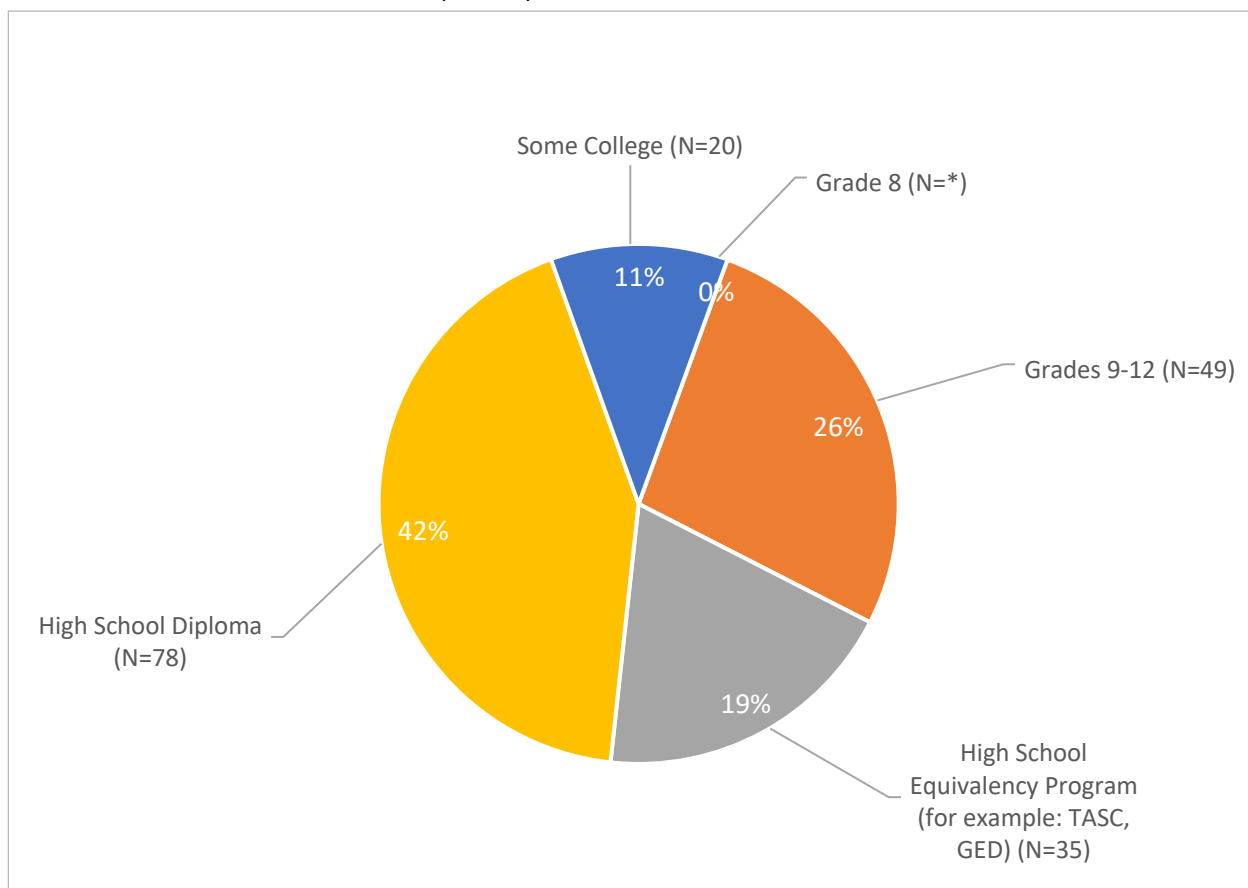


NOTE: This question was mandatory, so all 768 youth currently enrolled in school answered it.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

Of the 186 youth not currently enrolled in school, 42% reported receiving a high school diploma, 26% stated that their highest level of education completed was a high school grade level, 19% had completed a high school equivalency program, and 11% had attended some college (Figure 4).

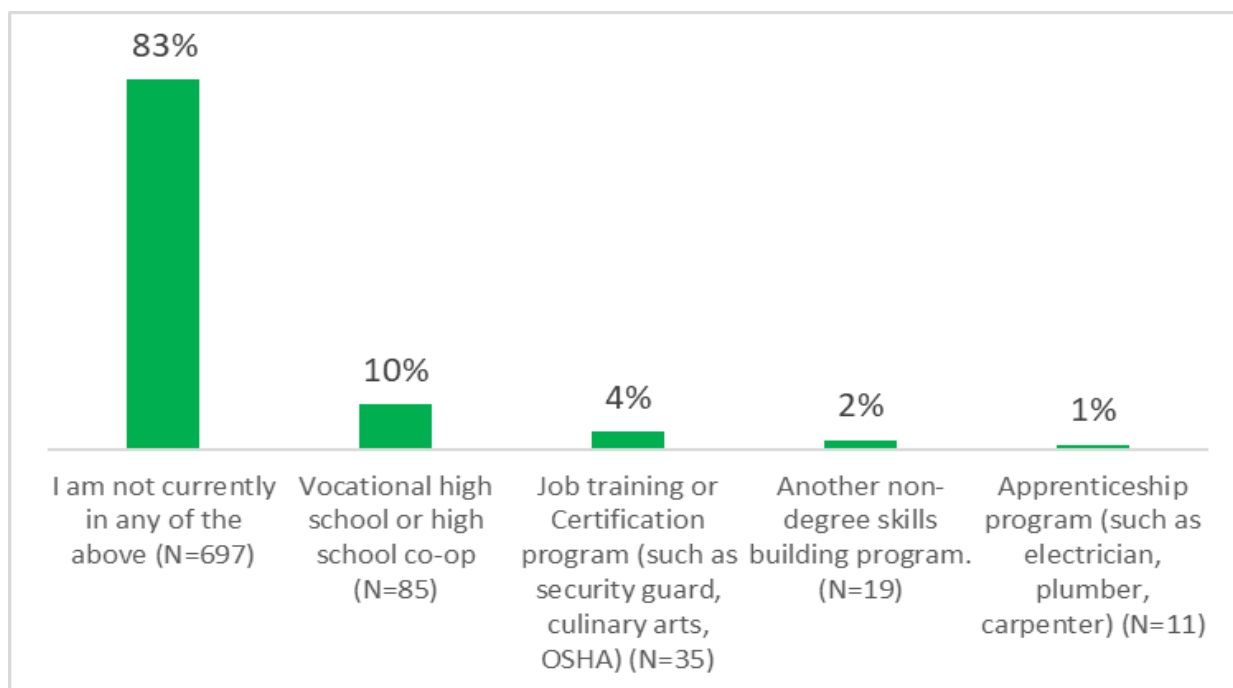
FIGURE 4: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED BY YOUTH NOT CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN SCHOOL OR A TRAINING PROGRAM (N=186)



NOTE: Findings in which the N is between 1 and 5 are not reported, these are represented by an asterisk (*) and 0% in this chart.
Note: This question was mandatory, all 186 youth not currently enrolled in school answered it.
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

Youth enrolled in high school, a high school equivalency program, in college, and not enrolled in school were also asked if they were enrolled in a vocational high school or high school coop, job training or certification program, another non-degree skills building program, or apprenticeship program (Figure 5). The majority of respondents (83%) indicated they were not in any of these programs or trainings.

FIGURE 5: WHETHER YOUTH ARE ENROLLED IN A VOCATIONAL SCHOOL OR JOB TRAINING PROGRAM



Note: There are a total of 847 responses to this question, as youth could select multiple answer choices

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

Nearly half of all respondents (45%) reported having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Over 50% of youth in grades 5-8 reported having an IEP, while 44% of youth in grades 9 and above reported having an IEP (Table 5). Youth who reported having an IEP were asked if they attend after-school or weekend special education services. Twenty-four percent reported that they do; 69% report that they do not attend after-school or weekend special education services, 5% do not know or are unsure, and 1% did not answer (Figure 6).

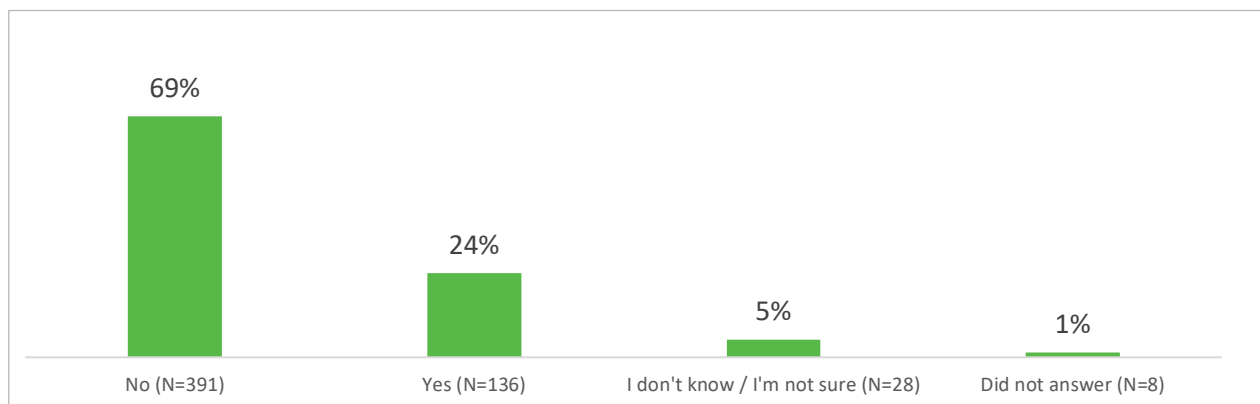
TABLE 5: WHETHER YOUTH HAVE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS (IEPS), BY GRADE LEVEL.

	Youth in grades 5 through 8 (N = 111)	Youth in grades 9 and above (N = 657)	Total Number of youth (N = 768)
Yes	52%	44%	45%
No	28%	41%	39%
I don't know/ I'm not sure	20%	15%	16%

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

FIGURE 6: WHETHER YOUTH WITH AN IEP ATTEND AFTER-SCHOOL OR WEEKEND SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES.

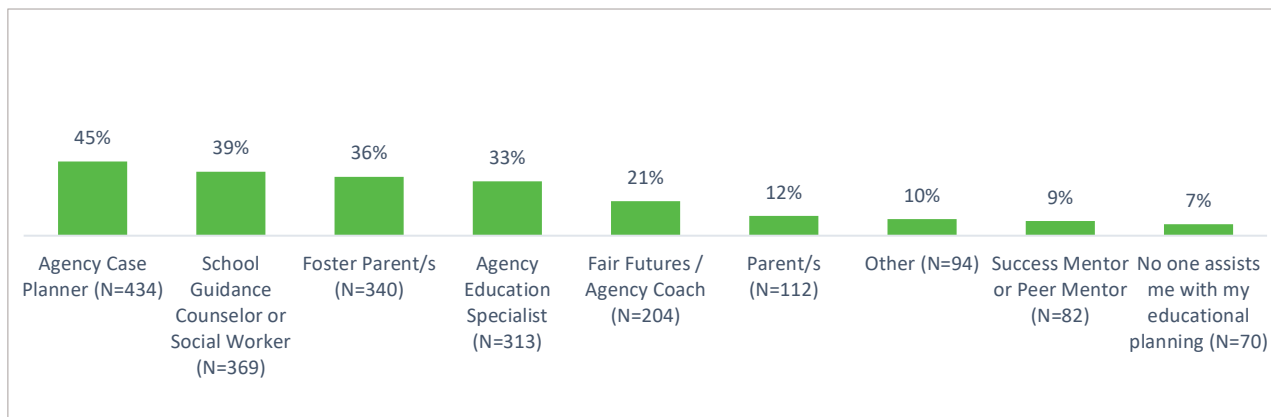


Source: Youth Experience Survey FY22

A.2 WHAT SUPPORT DO YOUTH NEED TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR EDUCATION?

Youth were asked who assists them with their educational planning. Nearly half of the respondents (45%) indicated their agency case planner helped them with their educational planning, followed by their school guidance counselor or social worker (39%), foster parent (36%), agency education specialist (33%), and Fair Futures/Agency Coach (21%) (Figure 7). A small percent of youth indicated their parent(s) (12%), others (10%), and a success mentor or peer mentor (9%) assisted them with their educational planning. Seven percent of youth report that no one assisted them.

FIGURE 7: WHO ASSISTS YOUTH WITH EDUCATIONAL PLANNING?



Source: Youth Experience Survey FY22

The survey asked youth in grades 9 and above whether they plan to continue with their education and the type of support needed. Response options were tailored to the youth based on their answers to previous questions. For example, those indicating they were currently in grades 9 – 12 were shown the option, “I plan on finishing high school,” while those stating that they were in a vocational school or college had the option to select, “I plan on finishing my degree.”

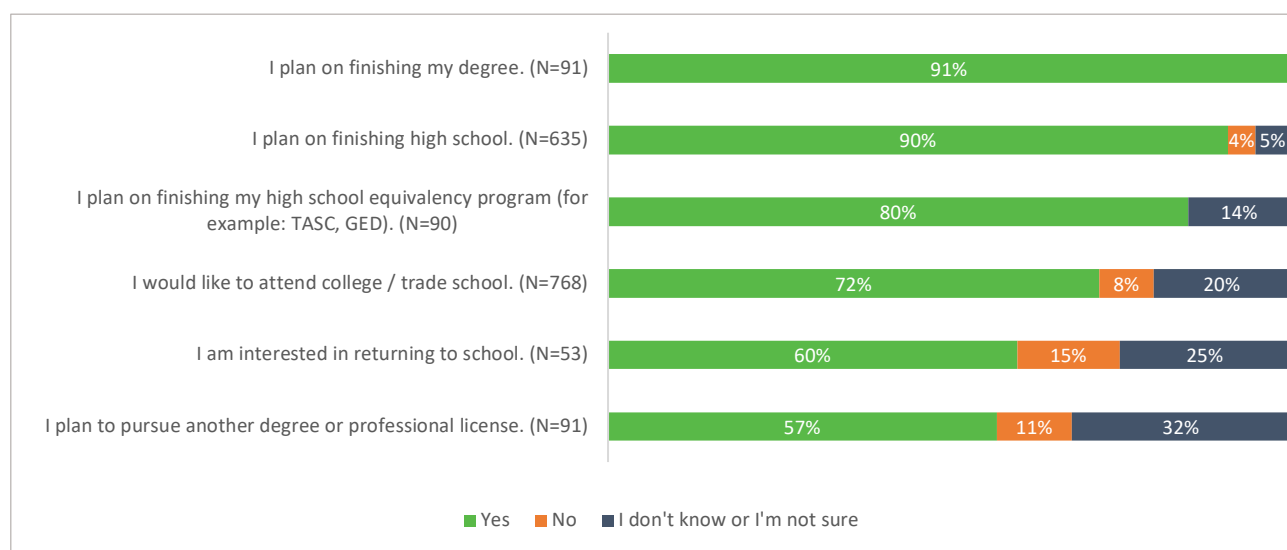
Youth shared the following regarding their desires to continue their education:

- 91% of youth who have started college or a vocational school plan to finish their degree.
- 90% of youth in high school or who left high school without graduating plan to finish high school.
- 80% of youth currently in a high school equivalency (HSE) program or who left high school without graduating, plan to finish a high school equivalency program.
- 72% of youth in high school or a HSE program, or whose highest level of education completed is at least 9th grade, would like to attend college/trade school.
- 60% of youth not currently enrolled in school said they were interested in returning to school.
- 57% of youth in college or vocational school plan to pursue another degree or professional license.

Figure 8 shows detailed findings for each of these answer choices.

ACS’s Office of Education and Employment Initiatives provides information and technical assistance to foster care agencies to ensure that they are providing support and resources to help all youth advance their education. See Section V for additional details.

FIGURE 8: WHETHER YOUTH IN GRADES 9 AND ABOVE PLAN TO CONTINUE WITH EDUCATION



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

NOTE: Response options were shown based on youth’s answers to previous questions, so Ns differ. E.g., the group of youth in high school was larger than the group in college or vocational school, so the N for “I plan to finish high school” is larger than the N for “I plan on finishing my degree.”

NOTE: Findings in which the N is between 1 and 5 are not reported, these are represented by 0% in this chart.

A.3 WHAT EDUCATION SERVICES DID THE YOUTH NEED AND RECEIVE?

The survey asked youth in grades 9 and above whether they needed and received each of thirteen types of education services in the past year. Youth in grades 5 through 8 were asked whether they needed and received each of six types of education services.

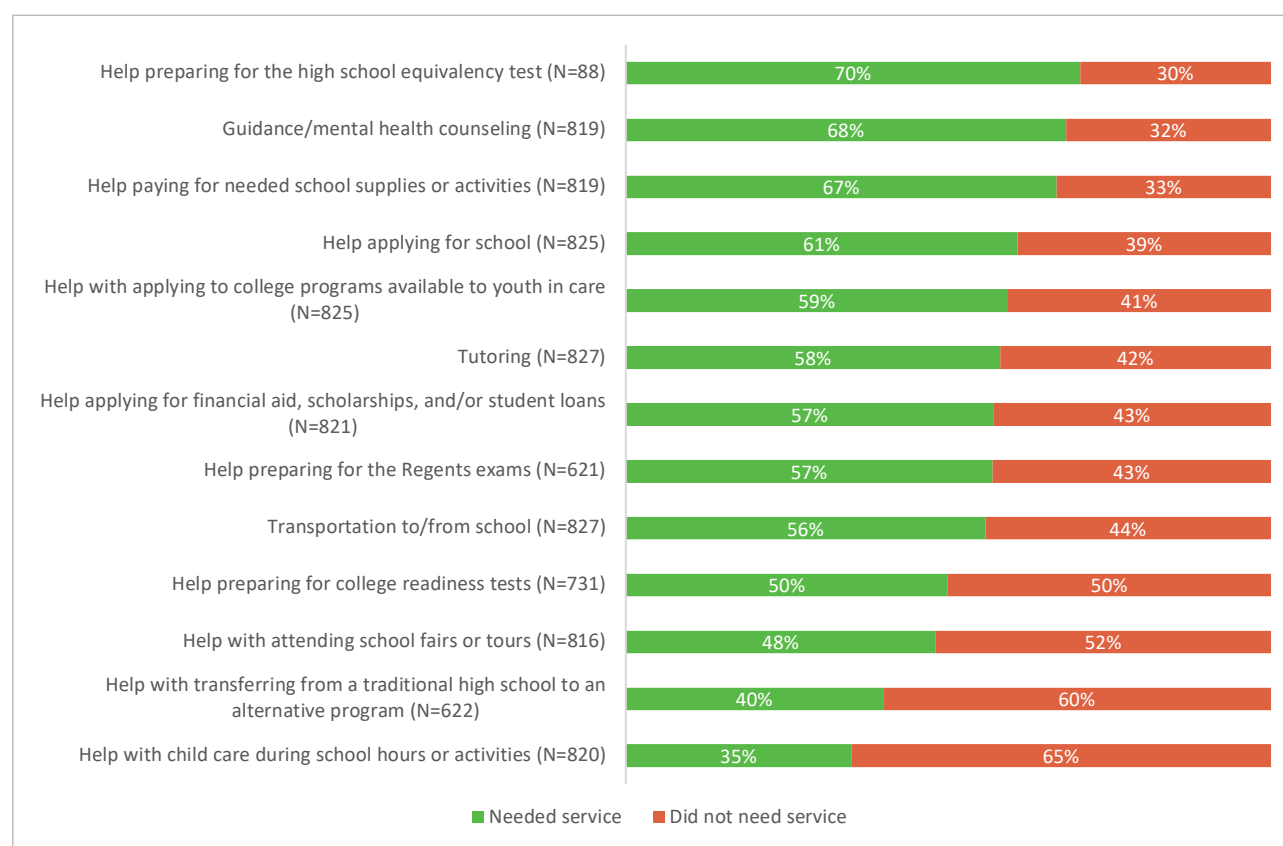
Education services needed and received: Grades 9 and above

To explore whether current educational needs were met, youth in grades 9 and above were asked whether they needed and received each of the following services: help preparing for the high school equivalency test, guidance/mental health counseling, help paying for needed school supplies or activities, tutoring, help applying for school, help with applying to college programs available to youth in care, help preparing for Regents exams, transportation to/from school, help applying for financial aid and/or student loans, help preparing for college readiness tests, help attending school fairs or tours, help with transferring from a traditional high school to an alternative program, and help with children during school hours or activities.

Need for services: Among youth in grades 9 and above, the most frequently reported needs were guidance/mental health counseling (68%), paying for needed school supplies or activities (67%), help applying for schools (61%), help applying to college programs available to youth in care (59%), and tutoring (58%) (Figure 9). Youth also reported needing help applying for financial aid and/or student loans and help with the Regents exams (57%, respectively). Of the youth enrolled in a GED/TASC program or those who are not currently in school and their last grade completed was in high school 70% needed help with preparing for the high school equivalency test.

Figure 9 shows detailed findings for each of these answer choices.

FIGURE 9: YOUTH IN GRADES 9 AND ABOVE REPORTING EDUCATION SERVICES NEEDED



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

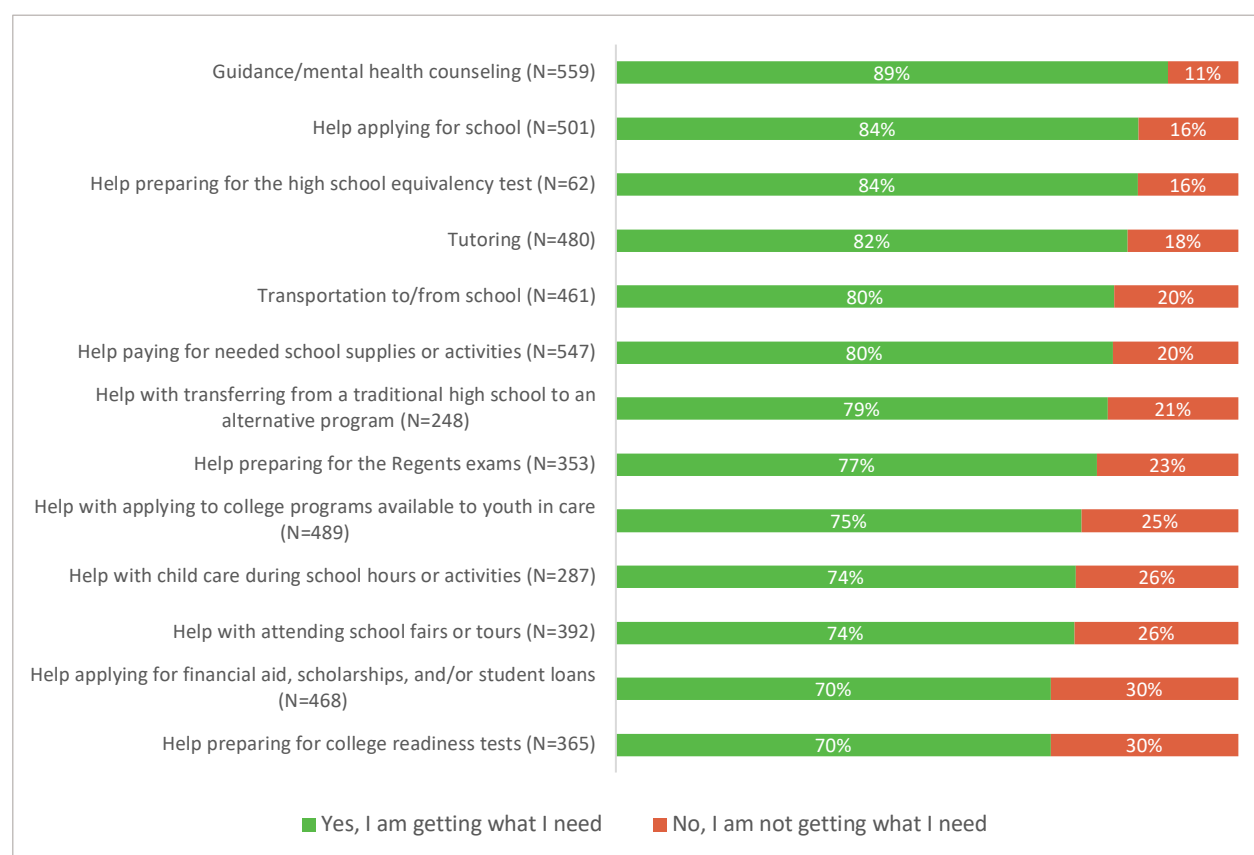
Extent to which needs were met: The information presented in Figure 10 reflects the extent to which a youth's need for specific education services were met or unmet. "Needed Service" was calculated as the sum of youth who said "Yes, I am getting what I need" or "No, I am not getting what I need" over youth who said "Yes, I am getting what I need," "No, I am not getting what I need," and "I don't need this." The number of youth who did not answer a particular item ranged from 1 to 16. Blanks were not included in this calculation.

The following results indicate the extent to which the needs of youth in grades 9 and above were met for each of the thirteen services examined from the survey.

- **Guidance/mental health counseling:** 89% of the 559 youth who reported needing this support received it (i.e., the need was met), while 11% did not (i.e., the need was unmet).
- **Help applying for school:** 84% of the 501 youth who needed this education service reported that they received it, while 16% did not.
- **Preparing for high school equivalency test:** 84% of the 62 students in a GED/TASC program who needed help preparing for the high school equivalency test received it, while 16% did not. The percent of youth receiving this service increased by 10 percentage points, compared to 74% in FY21.
- **Tutoring:** 82% of the 480 youth who reported needing tutoring received it, while 18% did not.

- **Transportation to/from school:** 80% of the 461 youth who needed help with transportation received it, while 20% did not.
- **Help paying for needed school supplies and activities:** 80% of the 547 youth who needed help paying for needed school supplies and activities received it, while 20% did not.
- **Help with transferring from a traditional high school to another:** 79% of the 248 youth who needed help transferring schools received it, while 21% did not.
- **Help preparing for the Regents exams:** 77% of the 353 youth who needed help preparing for Regents exams received it, while 23% did not.
- **Help with applying to college programs available to youth in care:** 75% of the 489 youth who needed help with applying to college programs received it, while 25% did not.
- **Help with childcare during school hours or activities:** 74% of the 287 youth who needed assistance with childcare received it, while 26% did not.
- **Help with attending school fairs or tours:** 74% of the 392 youth who needed assistance with attending school fairs or tours received it, while 26% did not.
- **Help applying for financial aid/student loans:** 70% of the 468 youth who needed this educational service reported receiving it, while 30% did not.
- **Preparing for college readiness/specialized tests:** 70% of the 365 youth who reported needing help with preparing for tests received it, while 30% did not.

FIGURE 10: YOUTH IN GRADES 9 AND ABOVE REPORTING THEY RECEIVED THE EDUCATION SERVICES NEEDED



NOTE: Ns for this chart are slightly lower than the total number of youth asked. This is because a small number of youth left the question blank. “Received service” was calculated as youth who said “Yes, I am getting what I need” divided by the sum of youth who said either “Yes, I am getting what I need” or “No, I am not getting what I need.” Blanks were not included in this calculation.
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

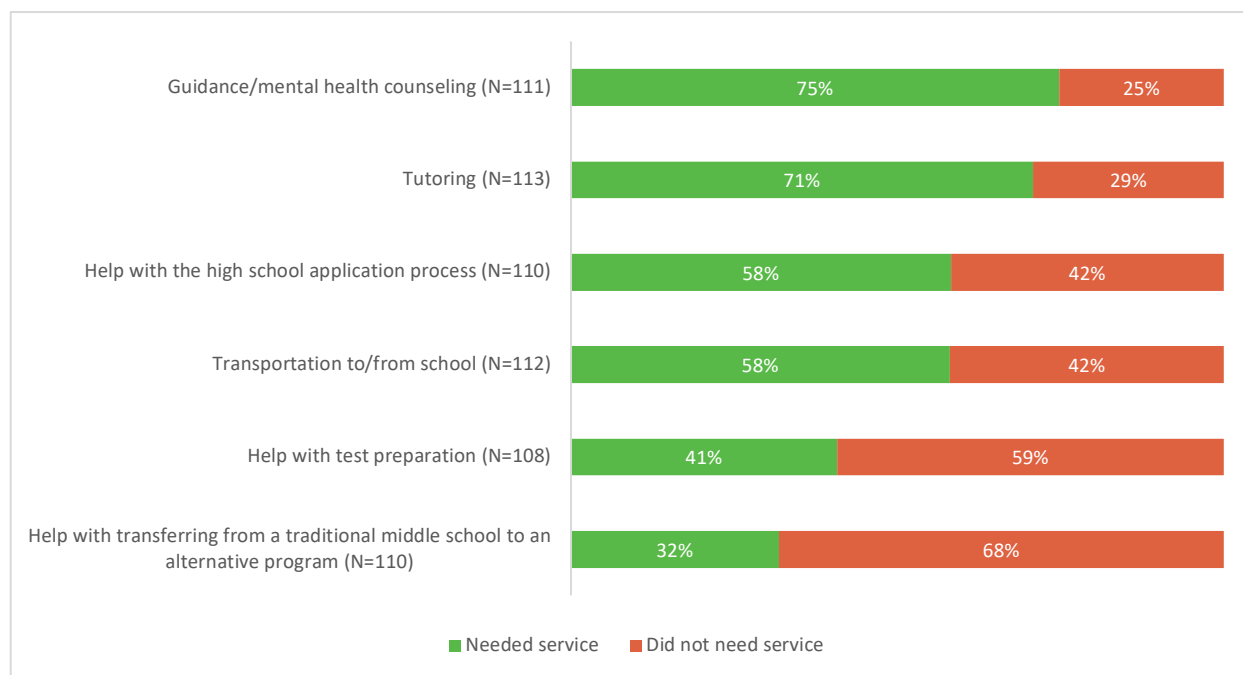
Educational services needed and received: Grades 5 through 8

Youth in grades 5 through 8 reported whether they needed and received each of six services over the past year: guidance/mental health counseling, tutoring, help with the high school application process, transportation to/from school, test preparation (PSAT, specialized high school exam), and help with transferring from a traditional middle school to an alternative program. These questions applied to 111 young people¹⁰

Need for Services. Seventy-five percent of middle school youth responded that they need guidance/mental health counseling (Figure 11). Seventy-one percent of youth reported needing tutoring services. Fifty-eight percent of middle school youth reported needing help with the high school application process and transportation to/from school, respectively. Less than half of middle school respondents reported needing help with test preparation (41%) and transferring from a traditional middle school to an alternative program (32%).

¹⁰ Occasionally, respondents leave a question blank, resulting in Ns for specific findings that differ slightly from this total number.

FIGURE 11: YOUTH IN GRADES 5 THROUGH 8 REPORTING EDUCATION SERVICE NEEDED



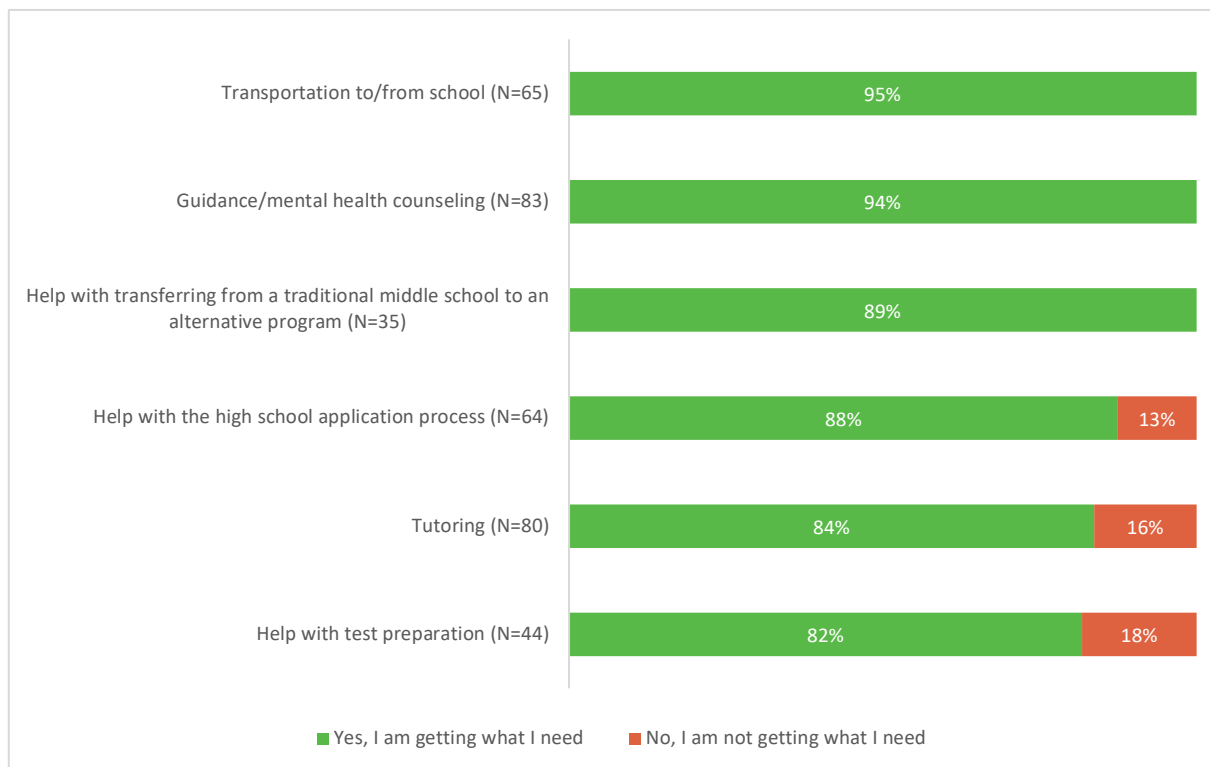
Note: “Needed Service” was calculated as the sum of youth who said “Yes, I am getting what I need” or “no, I am not getting what I need” over youth who said “Yes, I am getting what I need,” “No, I am not getting what I need,” and “I don’t need this.” The number of youth who did not answer a particular item ranged from 1 to 16

Note: The N for services needed also includes youth not in school who reported their highest grade completed as grade 5-8.
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

Extent to which needs were met. Figure 12 reflects the extent to which youth’s needs for specific education services were met or unmet. Overall, most education service needs were met as reported by youth in grades 5 through 8.

- **Transportation:** 95% of the 65 youth who reported needing transportation to and from school received it (services were met).
- **Guidance/Mental Health Counseling:** 94% of the 83 of the youth who reported needing guidance/mental health counseling received it.
- **Help with transferring from a traditional middle school to an alternative program:** 89% of the 35 youth who reported needing this service received it.
- **Help with the high school application process:** 89% of the 64 youth who needed help with the high school application process received it, while 13% had not (services were unmet).
- **Tutoring:** 84% of the 80 youth who needed tutoring services received it, while 16% had not.
- **Test preparation:** 82% of the 44 students who needed test preparation services received it, while 18% did not.

FIGURE 12: YOUTH IN GRADES 5 THROUGH 8 REPORTING THEY RECEIVED THE EDUCATION SERVICE THEY NEEDED



Note: “Received service” was calculated as youth who say “Yes, I am getting what I need” divided by the sum of youth who said either “Yes, I am getting what I need” or “No, I am not getting what I need.”

NOTE: Findings in which the N is between 1 and 5 are not reported, these are represented by 0% in this chart.

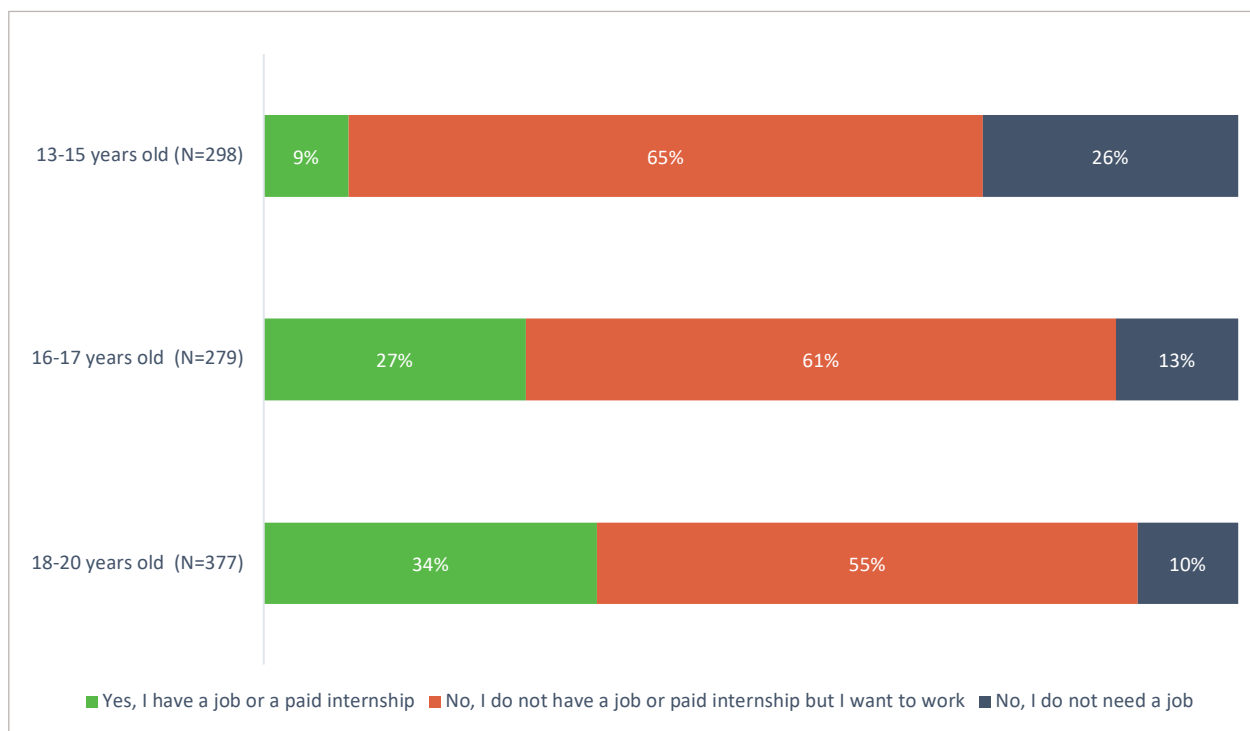
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

B. Help with Employment

B.1 WHAT IS THE EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE?

Figure 13 shows the distribution of youth in foster care by age group who are actively employed or would like to be employed. The majority of youth across all age groups did not have a job or paid internship but would like to work. Thirty-four percent of youth ages 18-20 years, 27% of youth ages 16-17 years, and 9% of youth ages 13-15 years reported having a job or paid internship. Ten percent of youth ages 18-20 years, 13% of youth ages 16-17 years, and 26% of youth ages 13-15 years reported that they do not need a job.

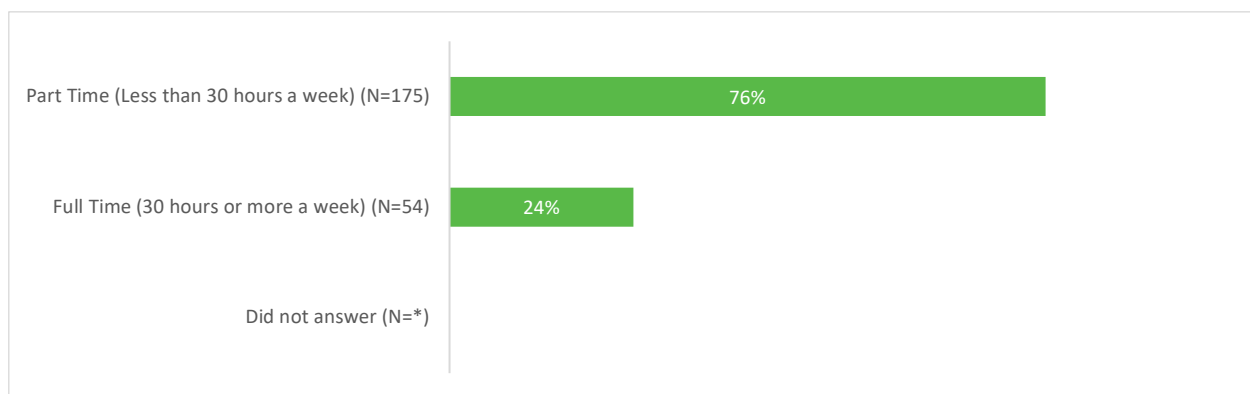
FIGURE 13: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE, BY AGE GROUP



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

The survey asked youth who were employed to indicate the number of hours worked per week (Figure 14). Of the 230 youth actively working, 76% worked part time (less than 30 hours a week) and 24% worked full time (30 hour or more a week).

FIGURE 14: YOUTH REPORTING WHETHER THEIR JOB OR INTERNSHIP IS FULL TIME OR PART TIME WEEK (N = 230)



NOTE: Data in this figure are based on the number of youth who reported they had a job. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

NOTE: Findings in which the N is between 1 and 5 are not reported, these are represented by an asterisk (*) and 0% in this chart.

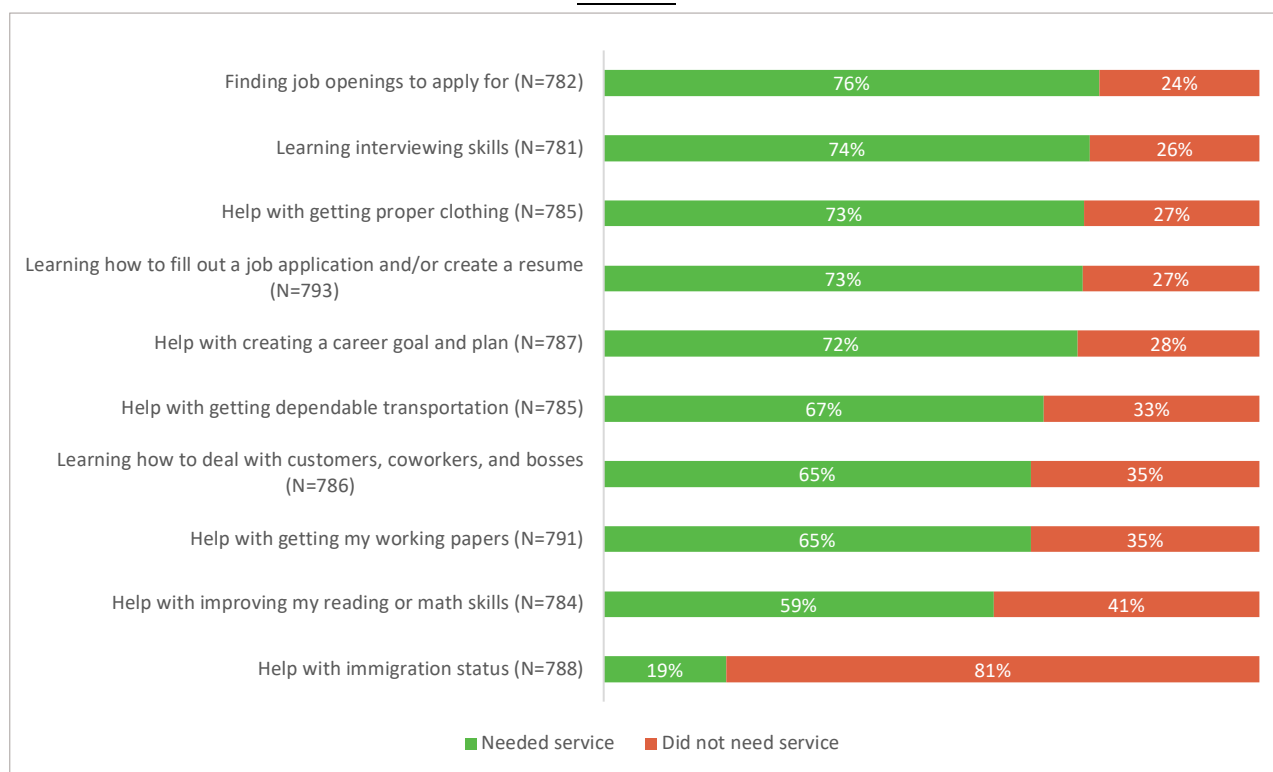
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

B.2 WHAT HELP DID YOUTH NEED AND RECEIVE TO FIND A JOB?

Help needed in finding a job. The top five employment-related needs were: finding job openings to apply for (76%), learning interviewing skills (74%), learning how to fill out a job application and/or create a resume (73%), help with getting proper clothing (73%), and help with creating a career goal and plan (72%). Sixty-seven percent of youth reported that they need help with transportation. Youth also reported needing help with learning how to deal with customers, coworkers, and bosses and getting their working papers (65%, respectively). Nineteen percent of youth reported needing help with their immigration status. See Figure 15 for details.

ACS's Office of Immigrant Services and Language Affairs (ISLA) is dedicated to assisting all youth in foster care who have immigration needs. Please see Section V for more information.

FIGURE 15: YOUTH REPORTING THE HELP THEY NEEDED TO FIND A JOB



NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

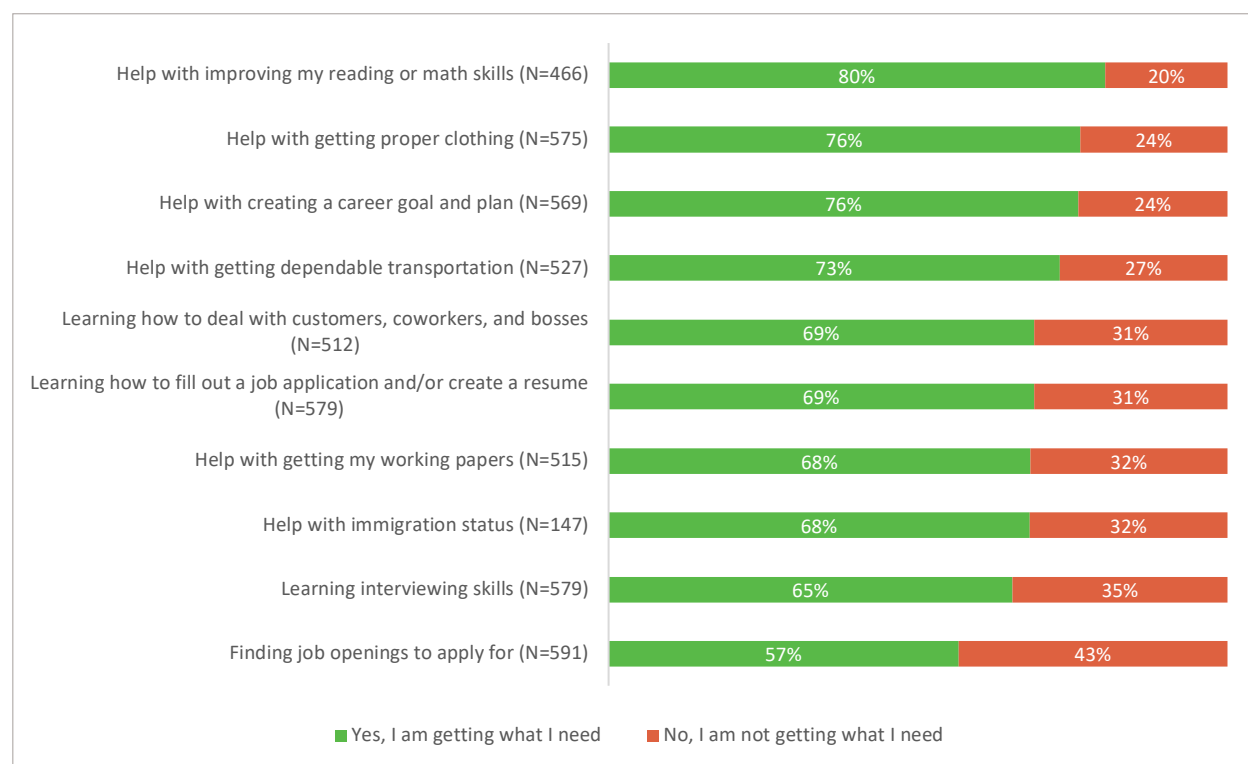
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

Help received in finding a job. For every type of job support, the majority of youth who needed a specific job support received it (Figure 16). By percentage, the best-met need was for help with improving reading or math skills; 80% of youth said they were getting their needs met in this area. This was followed by help getting proper clothing (76%) and help creating a career goal and plan (76%). Seventy three percent of youth who needed help with dependable transportation received it. Sixty-nine percent of youth who needed help with learning how to deal with customers, coworkers, and bosses, received it. Sixty-nine percent of youth also reported they received help with learning how to fill out a job application/create a resume. The areas with the largest unmet needs were help to find job openings

(57% had their need met, 43% unmet need) and help to learn interviewing skills (65% had their need met, 35% unmet need).

Compared to the responses from last year, youth receiving help with learning how to deal with customers, coworkers, and bosses increased 12 percentage points (from 57% in FY21 to 69% in FY22); and getting working papers increased 11 percentage points (from 57% in FY21 to 68% in FY22).

FIGURE 16: YOUTH REPORTING THE HELP THEY RECEIVED TO FIND A JOB



NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

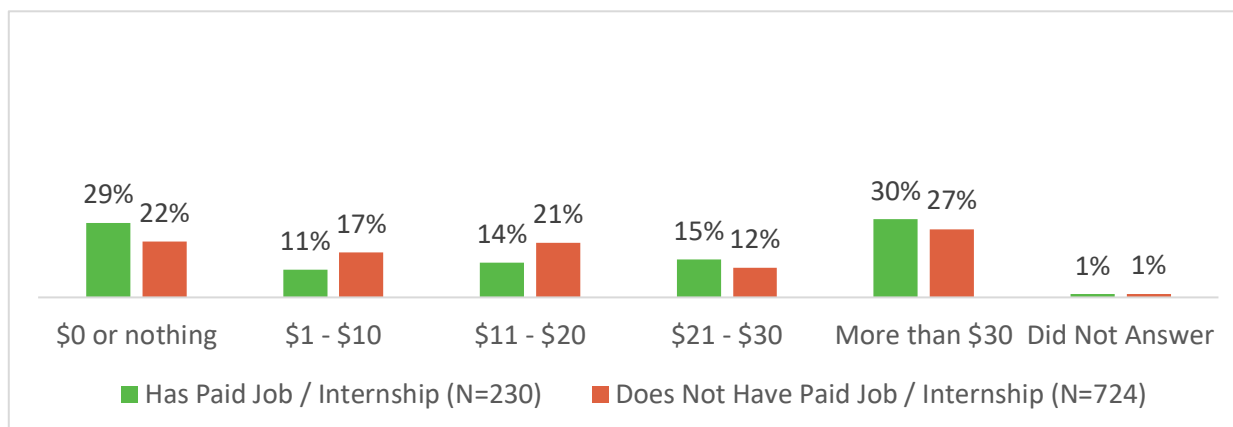
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

B.3 HOW MUCH WEEKLY ALLOWANCE DO YOUTH RECEIVE? DO YOUTH HAVE BANK ACCOUNTS?

The survey asked youth about the allowance they receive weekly. Approximately 75% of youth reported receiving an allowance. Figure 17 shows the amount of allowance for all youth by employment status, youth with a job or paid internship and those without a job or paid internship.

Nealy one-third of youth with a paid job or paid internship (30%) receive a weekly allowance of more than \$30; 15% receive \$21-\$30; 14% receive \$11-\$20; 11% receive \$1-\$10; and 29% do not receive an allowance. Of those without a paid job or paid internship, slightly over a quarter (27%) reported they receive an allowance of more than \$30; 12% receive \$21-\$30; 21% receive \$11-\$20; 17% receive \$1-\$10; and less than a quarter (22%) do not receive an allowance.

FIGURE 17: WEEKLY ALLOWANCE BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE



NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

The FY22 survey asked youth to indicate if they have a bank account. Reflected in Table 6 are youth responses broken down by age. More than half of youth ages 18 and older (58%) stated that they have a bank account, while only 23% of youth between the ages of 16-17 and 17% of youth between the ages of 13-15 stated that they have a bank account.

TABLE 6: YOUTH REPORTING THAT THEY HAVE A BANK ACCOUNT

Do you have a bank account?	Yes	No	I'm not sure or I don't know	Did not answer
13-15 (N=298)	17%	70%	12%	1%
16-17 (N=279)	23%	74%	4%	0%
18-20 (N=377)	58%	40%	1%	1%

NOTE: A total of 954 youth were asked this question; Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

C. Support from Family and Friends

C1. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOUTH FEEL SUPPORTED BY FOSTER/KINSHIP PARENTS AND RESIDENTIAL FACILITY STAFF?

The survey asked youth to indicate which individuals in their lives they could turn to when they needed help (Table 7). Specifically, youth in foster or kinship homes were asked if they felt supported by their foster parents. Of the 722 youth who responded, over two thirds (67%) said they felt “very supported,” and another 23% felt “somewhat supported.”

Youth in residential care and group homes were asked if they felt supported by program staff, and the majority said yes; 52% felt “very supported” and 35% felt “somewhat supported.” The remaining 12% of youth in residential care did not feel supported by staff.

TABLE 7: YOUTH REPORTING THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY FEEL SUPPORTED BY FOSTER PARENTS OR RESIDENTIAL FACILITY STAFF

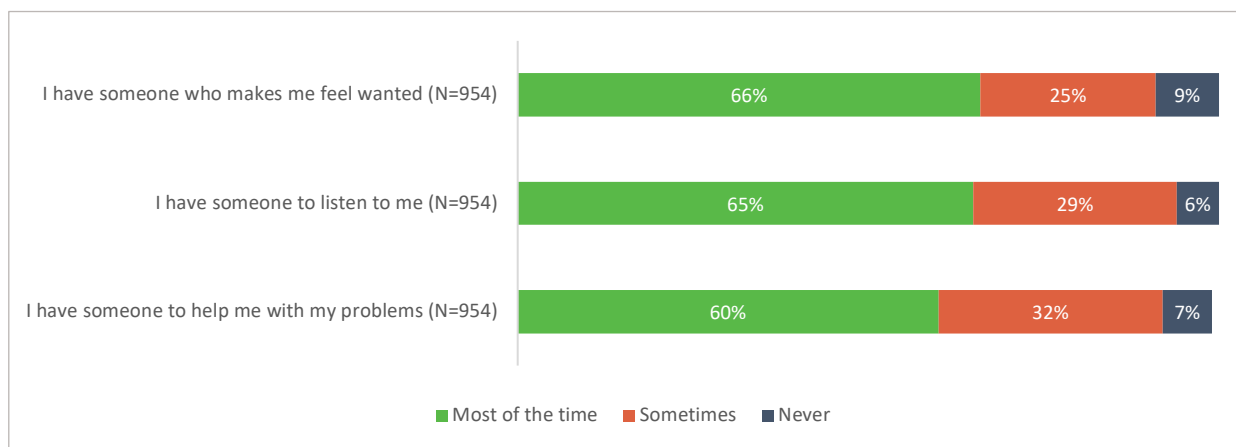
In general, do you feel supported by your foster parents or residential facility staff? (Total N = 954)		
	Foster Parent (N=722)	Residential Staff (N=232)
Yes, very supported	67%	52%
Yes, somewhat supported	23%	35%
No, not very supported	5%	7%
No, not supported at all	4%	5%
Did not answer	1%	0%

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

C.2 TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOUTH RECEIVE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT?

Two thirds of the youth responding had someone who makes them feel wanted “most of the time” (66%), 25% of youth felt that they had someone who makes them feel wanted “some of the time”, and 9% reported that they have someone who makes them feel wanted “never.” Sixty-five percent of youth felt that they had someone to listen to them and 60% of youth indicated that they have someone to help them with their problems most of the time (Figure 18). ACS followed up with the youth who reported “Never” for all three items to see what additional support and resources they needed.

FIGURE 18: YOUTH REPORTING VARIOUS SITUATIONS THAT ARE TRUE FOR THEM (N = 954)



NOTE: This question was mandatory; all 954 youth answered it.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

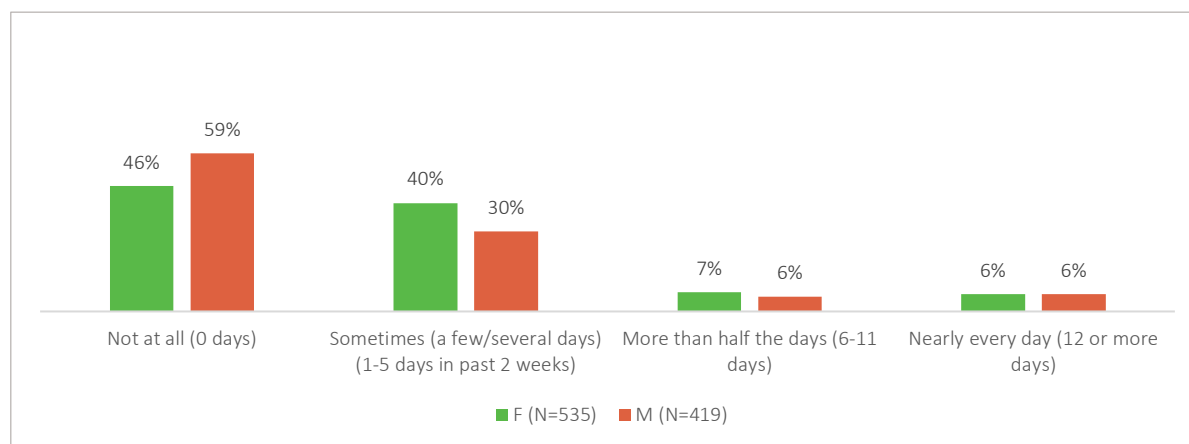
D. Youth Reporting of Feeling Down, Depressed, or Hopeless

The findings from the question “How often have you been bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless over the past two weeks” has been disaggregated by sex, age, and sexuality and is included in Figures 19, 20, and 21. This question was mandatory; all 954 youth answered it.

Male and female youth reported the following frequency of feeling down, depressed, or hopeless within the last two weeks (Figure 19):

- 59% of male youth and 46% of female youth reported “Not at all” (0 days)
- 40% of females and 30% of males reported “Sometimes” (1-5 days)
- 7% of females and 6% of males report “More than half of the days” (6-11 days)
- 6% of males and females, respectively, reported “Nearly every day” (12 or more days)

FIGURE 19: YOUTH REPORTING FEELING DOWN, DEPRESSED, OR HOPELESS OVER THE LAST 2 WEEKS BY SEX

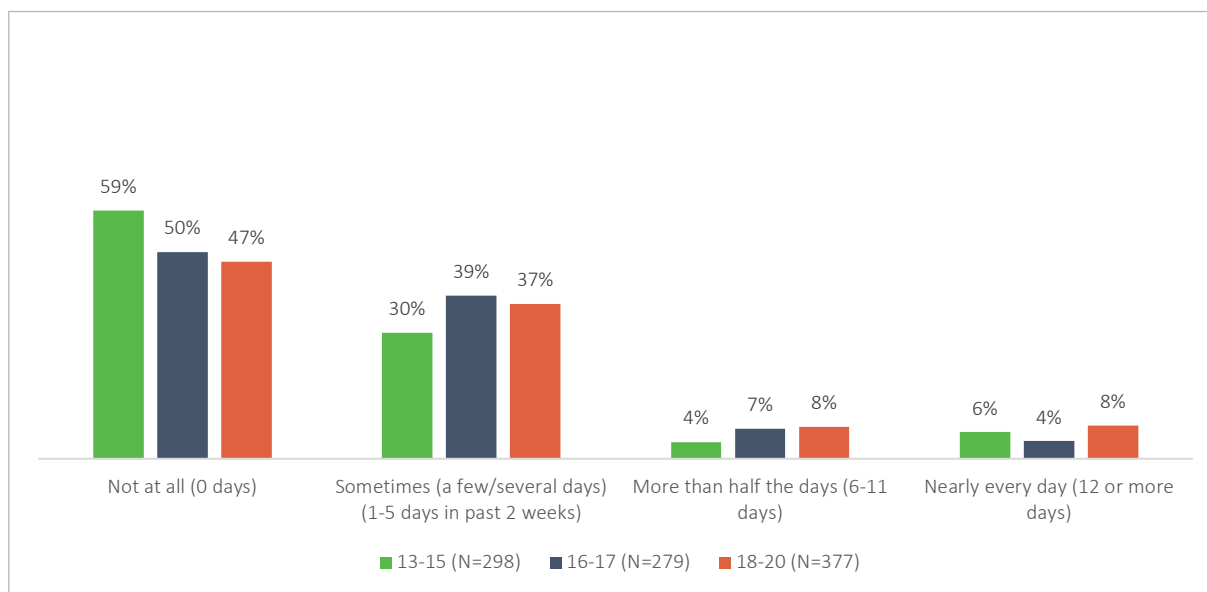


SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

The findings by age group indicated the following frequency of feeling down, depressed, or hopeless within the last two weeks (Figure 20):

- 59% of youth ages 13-15 years, 50% of youth ages 16-17 years, and 47% of youth ages 18-20 years reported “Not at all” (0 days)
- 30% of youth ages 13-15 years, 39% of youth ages 16-17 years, and 37% of youth ages 18-20 years reported “Sometimes” (1-5 days)
- 4% of youth 13-15 years, 7% of youth ages 16-17 years, and 8% of youth ages 18-20 years reported “More than half of the days” (6-11 days)
- 6% of youth ages 13-15 years, 4% of youth ages 16-17 years, and 8% of youth ages 18-20 years reported “Nearly every day” (12 or more days)

FIGURE 20: YOUTH REPORTING FEELING DOWN, DEPRESSED, OR HOPELESS OVER THE LAST 2 WEEKS BY AGE GROUP

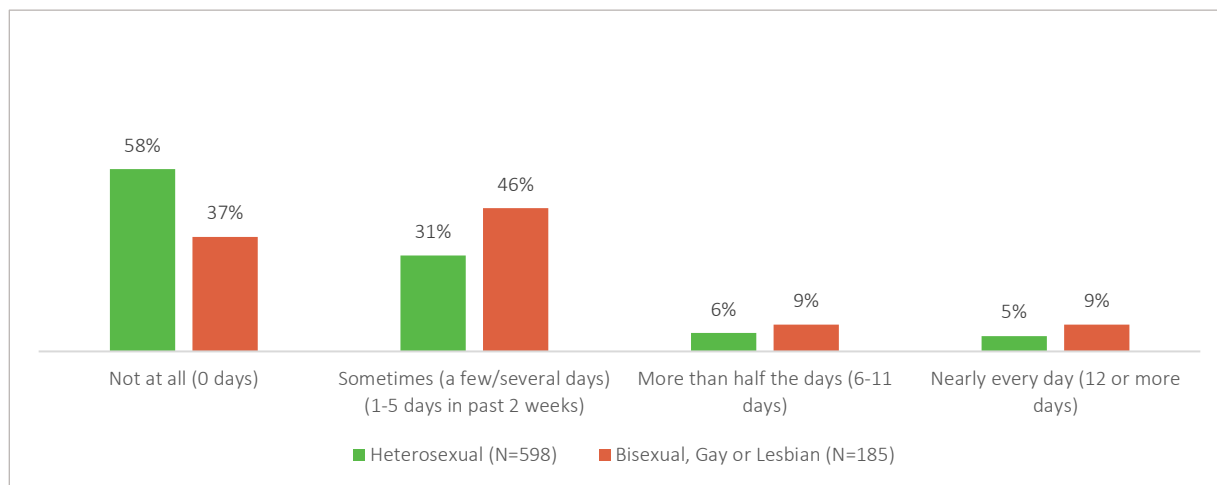


SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

The findings by sexuality indicated the following frequency of feeling down, depressed, or hopeless within the last two weeks (Figure 21):

- 58% of youth who identify as heterosexual and 37% of youth who identify as bisexual, gay, or lesbian reported “Not at all” (0 days).
- 31% of heterosexual youth and 46% of bisexual, gay, or lesbian youth reported “Sometimes” (1-5 days).
- 6% of heterosexual youth and 9% of bisexual, gay, or lesbian youth reported “More than half of the days” (6-11 days).
- 5% of heterosexual youth and 9% of bisexual, gay, or lesbian youth reported “Nearly every day” (12 or more days).

FIGURE 21: YOUTH REPORTING FEELING DOWN, DEPRESSED, OR HOPELESS OVER THE LAST 2 WEEKS BY SEXUALITY



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

All youth who responded feeling down nearly every day were contacted by ACS for a follow up. For youth who checked “sometimes” or “more than half the days”, an automatic follow up question was prompted asking if youth would like someone from ACS to reach out.

There were 115 distinct youth who were contacted by ACS senior staff for depression-related follow-up. Results of the follow up are such:

- 42% were already getting their needs met
- 41% indicated their provider agency is now addressing the concern
- 6% don’t have any concerns
- 10% other outcomes ¹¹
- 1% was already discharged from care

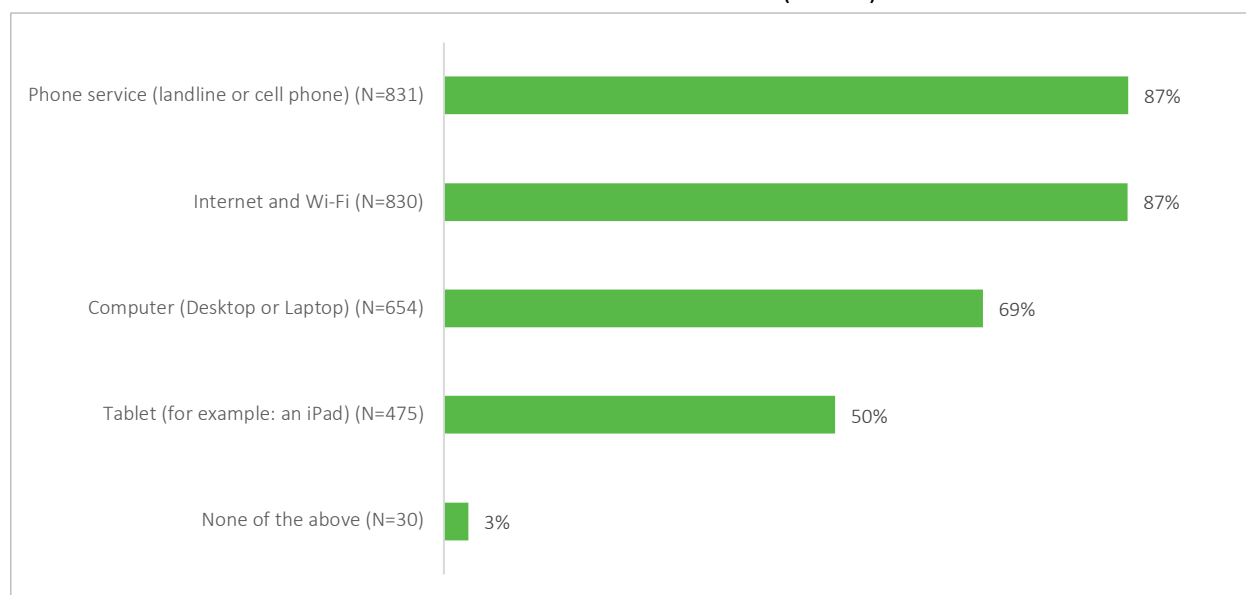
¹¹ Other outcomes include: refusal for follow-up, discharge from care, temporarily felt depressed but no longer feeling depressed, receiving mental health services but wanting additional support, and youth declining mental health services.

E. Social Interaction and Communication

E.1 DO YOUTH HAVE ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY?

Most youth in foster care reported they have access to internet and phone service (87%, respectively) (Figure 22). In addition, most youth (69%) reported they have access to a computer (desktop or laptop), and half of youth (50%) indicated that they have access to a tablet.

FIGURE 22: YOUTH ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (N=954)

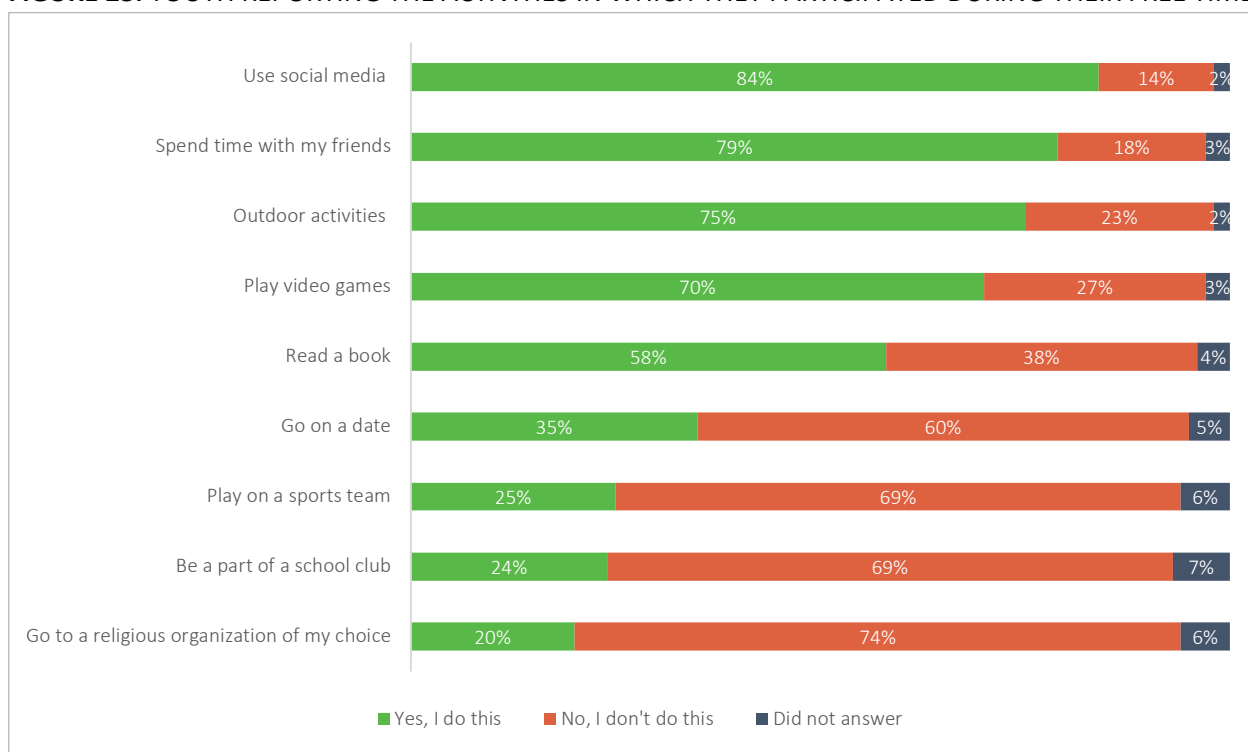


SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

E.2 WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR FREE TIME?

Using social media and spending time with friends were the two most popular activities identified by the respondents (Figure 23). Other activities youth frequently reported participating in were outdoor activities, playing video games, and reading books. Thirty-five percent of the youth stated that they go on dates. The least common activities were playing on a sports team (25%), being part of a school club (24%), and going to a religious organization (20%).

FIGURE 23: YOUTH REPORTING THE ACTIVITIES IN WHICH THEY PARTICIPATED DURING THEIR FREE TIME



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

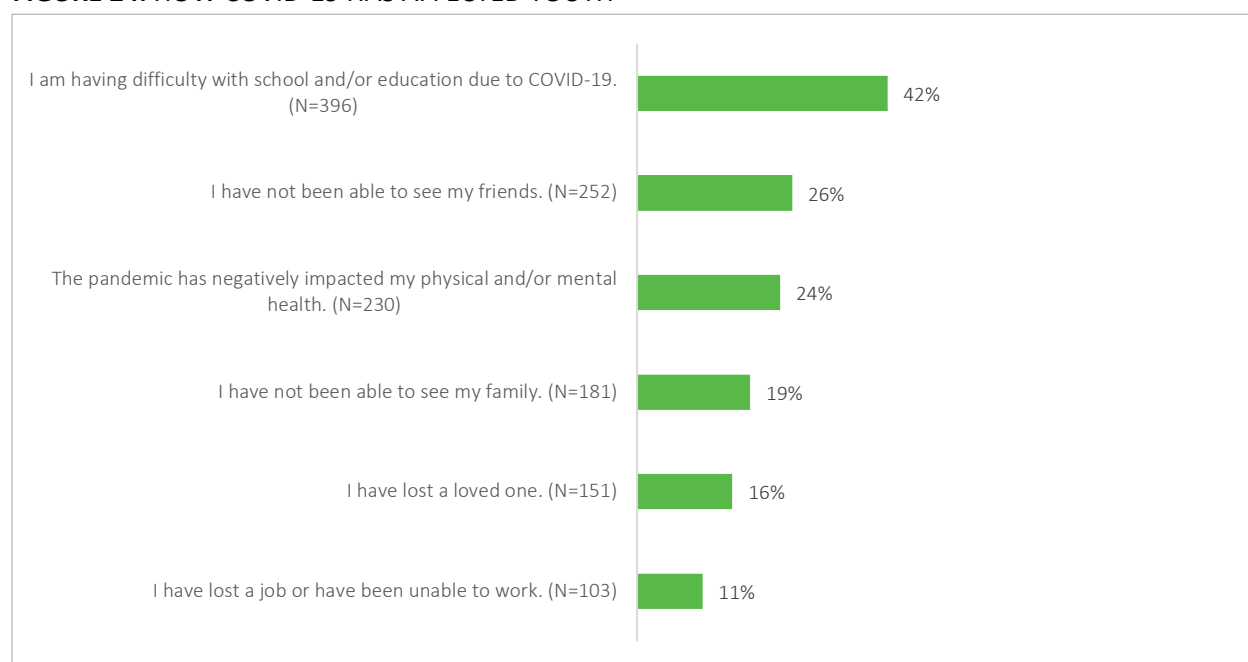
NOTE: All 954 youth were asked this question; percentages may not add to 100%, as some youth did not respond

F. Impact from Covid-19

The survey included a question around the impact of Covid-19. While young people were asked specific questions related to how COVID-19 has impacted their lives, the impact from the pandemic is far reaching and presumably has affected all responses to this survey.

Youth were asked to check all applicable areas of their lives that were affected by Covid-19. Forty-two percent of youth stated that they are having difficulty with school and/or education due to Covid-19 (Figure 24). Twenty-six percent of youth reported not being able to see friends – a 17 percentage point decrease from 43% in FY21. Twenty-four percent of youth reported that the pandemic has negatively impacted their physical and/or mental health. Nineteen percent of youth reported that they have been unable to see their family (immediate and/or extended). ACS had issued and continually updated visiting guidance to foster care agencies during the pandemic with the goal of ensuring frequent parent child contact in person whenever possible and safe, and otherwise virtually. Sixteen percent of youth have lost a loved one due to Covid-19. Eleven percent of youth have lost a job or have been unable to work due to the pandemic.

FIGURE 24: HOW COVID-19 HAS AFFECTED YOUTH



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

G. Access to Healthcare, Hygiene Information, Basic Needs, and Religious Practices

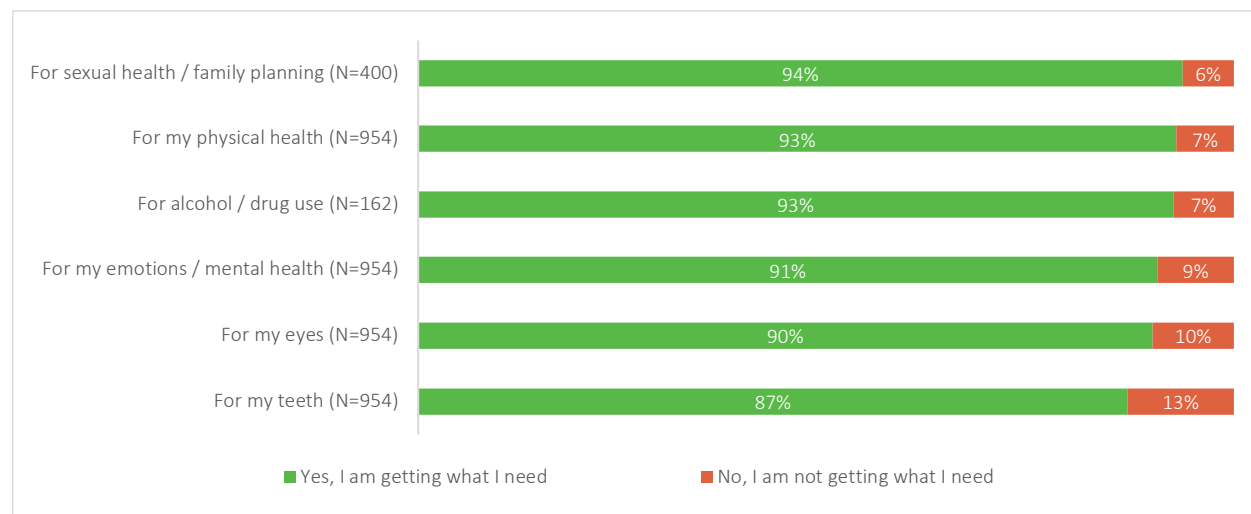
G.1 WHAT HEALTHCARE SERVICES DO YOUTH NEED AND RECEIVE?

The survey asked youth whether they are getting the healthcare they need for physical, dental, emotional, vision, sexual health, and alcohol or drug use. For each of the healthcare services examined, responses from the youth were used to create two indicators: whether the youth needed the service and whether they received what they needed.

The information presented in Figure 25 reflects the extent to which health care services were received in six health areas. Almost all youth (94%) reported having their sexual health/family planning needs met. Ninety-three percent of youth reported having their health care needs met for their physical health and alcohol/drug use, respectively. Ninety-one percent of youth reported have their emotional/mental health needs met. Ninety percent of youth reported that their eye care needs have been met and 87% report their dental care needs have been met.

In-depth follow-up was conducted in each case where a basic need was reported as unmet. ACS senior-level staff spoke to youth directly and/or to provider agency staff. For the 436 follow-up items related to Health Care (Emotion/Mental Health, Vision, Physical, Sexual Health, Dental, and Alcohol/Drug Use), the follow-up conversations indicated that the need had already been met for 37% of the youth contacted. Thirty-eight percent of the youth contacted reported their provider agency is now addressing the concern; 8% of the youth reported no concerns; 16% reported other reasons¹²; and 1% were already discharged from care.

FIGURE 25: YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE REPORTING WHETHER THEY RECEIVED VARIOUS TYPES OF HEALTH CARE



This question was mandatory, all 954 youth answered it. SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

¹²Other reasons include incorrectly answered the question, youth declined follow up, youth missed scheduled appointments, appointments have been scheduled, unable to reach the youth

G.2 DO YOUTH NEED MORE INFORMATION REGARDING SELF-CARE AND HYGIENE?

The question: “Currently, do you receive support in learning about self-care (for example, putting on deodorant, using feminine products, health and wellness)?” was included based on the advice of the ACS Youth Advisory Council, who reviewed the survey questions and provided feedback. Table 8 provides the details of youth responses.

TABLE 8: YOUTH RESPONSES REGARDING INFORMATION ON SELF-CARE AND HYGIENE

Response	Percent	Total
Yes, I am getting what I need	72%	685
No, I am not getting what I need	3%	30
I don't need this	25%	239
Total	100%	954

NOTE: This question was mandatory; all 954 youth answered it.

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

For the 30 youth who reported an unmet need, the survey asked if they would like ACS to contact them regarding information on self-care and hygiene. Twelve youth said yes and were contacted; 18 youth said no. Results from the follow up with the 12 youth who were contacted:

- 3 youth: indicated their needs were already met
- 7 youth: ACS/provider agency is now addressing the concern
- 2 youth: reported “other” (e.g., misunderstanding the question)

G.3 CAN YOUTH PRACTICE THEIR RELIGION WHERE THEY LIVE?

To assess if youth are able to stay connected to their faith traditions, the survey asked if youth could practice their religion where they live. Forty percent responded yes; 3% responded no; 19% stated that they have a religion but do not practice; and 38% said that they do not have a religion (Table 9). Youth who answered that they were not able to practice their religion where they lived were asked if they would like someone from ACS to follow up with them. Twenty percent of youth stated that they would like someone to follow up with them and 80% responded “No.” There were 6 youth who ACS conducted follow-up with regarding their responses to the religion question. Responses to follow up for the 6 youth were as such:

- 2 youth: indicated their needs are already being met
- 1 youth: provider agency now addressing this concern
- 2 youth: reported no concern
- 1 youth: reported other (e.g., didn’t understand the question)

TABLE 9: YOUTH RESPONSES REGARDING ABILITY TO PRACTICE THEIR RELIGION WHERE THEY LIVE RIGHT NOW (N=954)

Response	Percent	Total
Yes	40%	381
No	3%	30
I have a religion, but I do not practice	19%	183
I do not have a religion	38%	360
Total	100%	954

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

G.4 ARE BASIC NEEDS FOR FOOD AND CLOTHES BEING MET?

The survey included questions regarding basic needs for food, clothing, and shoes. ACS monitored youth’s responses to these questions daily during data collection. When a youth reported that any of these basic needs was unmet, ACS immediately contacted the youth to assess well-being and any necessary action steps. Additional follow up was conducted with foster care agencies, youth, and foster parents as appropriate.

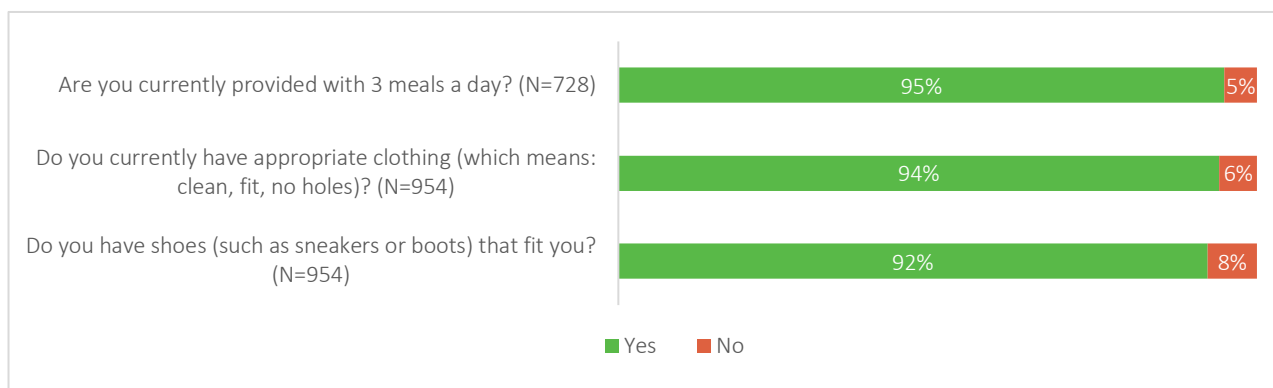
Ninety-five percent¹³ of youth in foster homes reported they were provided with three meals per day, 94% stated that they have appropriate clothing (which means the clothing is clean, fits, and has no holes), and 92% reported they have shoes that fit (Figure 26). ACS followed up with all the youth reporting that they had fewer than three meals per day, did not have appropriate clothing and did not have shoes that fit.

¹³ In FY22, the survey did not include this question for youth in residential care.

Below are the results from the follow-up with the youth:

- Meals: 21 youth indicated concerns about receiving 3 meals a day, the follow up conversations indicated:
 - 19% of youth already had their needs met
 - 19% of youth; their provider agency is addressing the concern
 - 41% of youth indicated no concerns
 - 19% other¹⁴
- Clothing: 56 youth indicated concerns around clothing, the follow up conversations indicated:
 - 21% of youth stated that needs already met
 - 32% of youth; their provider agency is addressing the concern
 - 38% of youth indicated no concerns
 - 9% other
- Shoes: 73 youth indicated concerns around shoes, the follow up conversations indicated:
 - 26% of youth already had their needs met
 - 32% of youth; their provider agency is addressing the concern
 - 29% of youth indicated no concern
 - 1% of youth were discharged from care
 - 12% other

FIGURE 26: YOUTH REPORTING PROVISION OF BASIC NEEDS



This question was mandatory; all 954 youth answered it.
SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

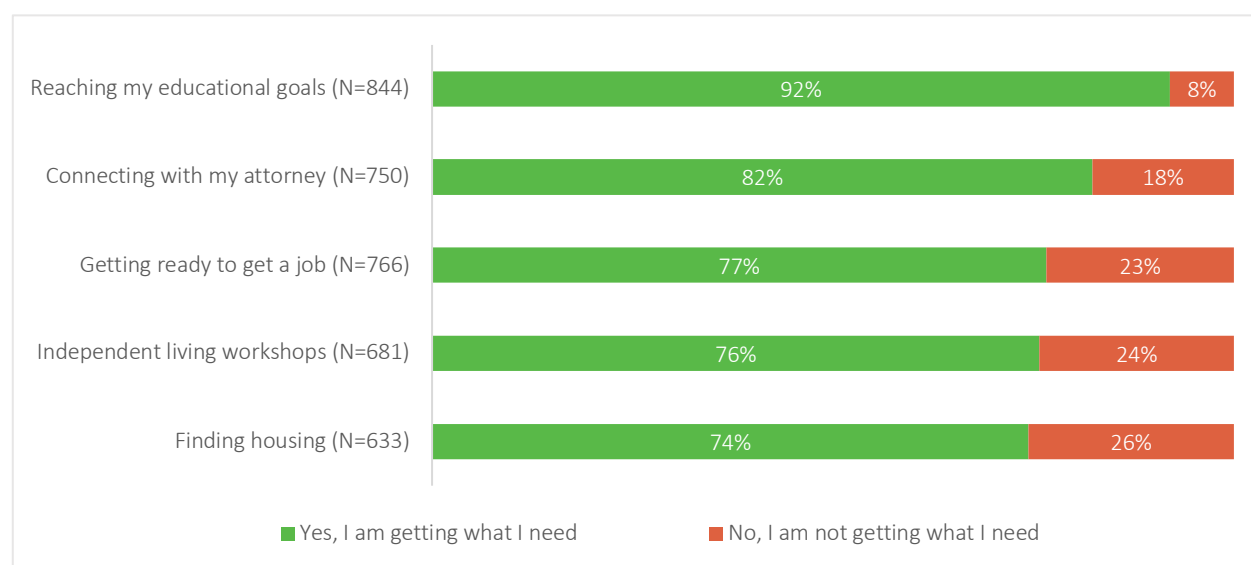
¹⁴ Examples of “other” for the questions related to meals, clothing, and shoes include: misunderstanding the question, youth declining follow up, youth could not be reached due to unrelated hospitalizations and clothes/shoes that were ill-fitting.

H. Support from Foster Care Agencies

H.1 WHAT SUPPORT SERVICES DO YOUTH NEED AND RECEIVE FROM FOSTER CARE AGENCIES?

Youth were asked what types of support they receive from their foster care agencies. Among those who said they needed each type of support, Figure 27 shows how many reported receiving it (The N shown in the figure is the number of youth stating that they need this type of support). The most needed and most often received type of support was help to reach educational goals; of the 844 youth stating they needed this, 92% reported receiving help from their foster care agency. Eighty-two percent of youth who reported needing support to connect with their attorney received it and 77% of youth who needed support with getting ready to get a job received it. Seventy-six percent of youth reported receiving independent living workshops and 74% reported receiving support to find housing.

FIGURE 27: YOUTH REPORTING TYPES OF SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE FROM FOSTER CARE AGENCIES

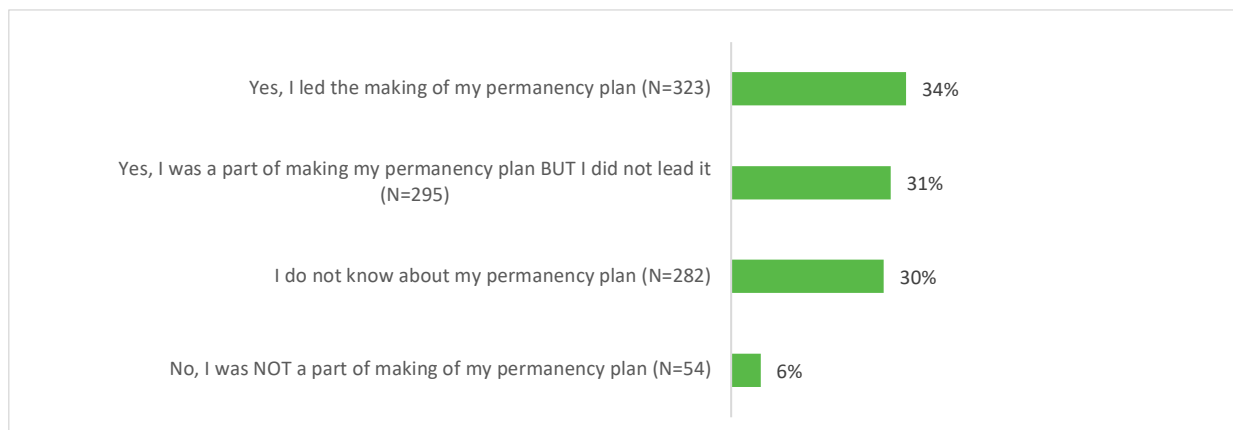


Source: Youth Experience Survey FY22

H.2 TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOUTH INVOLVED IN PERMANENCY PLANNING?

Figure 28 shows the distribution for various levels of youth involvement in their permanency planning. Thirty-four percent of youth reported that they led the making of their permanency plan. Another 31% were involved in planning. However, 30% said they did not know about their permanency plan and 6% of youth had not been a part of creating it.

FIGURE 28: YOUTH REPORTING ON THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR PERMANENCY PLAN



SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

H.3 WHO SUPPORTS THE YOUTH IN THEIR PERMANENCY PLANNING?

The 618 youth who were involved in the making of their permanency plans also noted who specifically supported them in permanency planning. The most frequent supporters were foster care case workers, followed by foster parents and residential staff. Table 10 shows the detailed findings.

TABLE 10: YOUTH REPORTING WHETHER VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED THEM IN THEIR PERMANENCY PLANNING

Response	Percent	Total
Case worker at my foster care agency	80%	496
Foster parent	70%	302
Residential staff	67%	123
My lawyer	52%	321
Parent	31%	194
Friend	18%	114
Teacher	7%	43
No one supports me in my permanency planning	2%	15

NOTE: The total N (number of people asked) was 618 for most items, 434 for foster parents, and 184 for residential staff). Table 10 does not include youth who reported "I do not know about my permanency plan."

SOURCE: Youth Experience Survey FY22

V. ACS Initiatives Supporting Older Youth

ACS is currently implementing a range of programs and initiatives to improve youth experiences, outcomes, and well-being through the Foster Care Strategic Blueprint and new foster care contracts. While the survey reflects that many youth are progressing well in terms of their educational achievements and social connections, more work has to be done to support the mental health, school and work readiness, and other ongoing needs of youth in care.

YOUTH VOICE

To further engage youth and ensure their voices inform practice change, ACS formed a **Youth Leadership Council to bring youth and adult leaders together to work in partnership on youth-related areas of policy and practice**. The ACS Youth Leadership Council launched in March 2019. Members include youth currently and previously in foster care and/or the juvenile justice system. The goals of the Youth Leadership Council are to develop the leadership skills of youth, advocate for changes and improvements in policies and areas of mutual concern, establish a youth voice in the foster care community, and build a positive social network.

FOSTER CARE CONTRACTS

ACS released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the spring of 2021 for family based foster care and residential care services. **Contracted foster care providers will receive funding to support ongoing efforts and best practices in key priorities and strategies for improving case practice and results across the foster care continuum - from family reunification to kinship placement, adoption and supporting older youth in care**. The new contracts are an opportunity for ACS to build on the success of existing services for children and families, including the new ACS Prevention Services contracts that launched in July 2020. ACS is implementing a shared framework across prevention and foster care services that aims to shorten stays in foster care when such care is necessary, and to provide greater support and stability to families during the often-challenging period of reunification following foster care.

The new foster care contracts seek to achieve the following goals:

- Improve safety, well-being and permanency outcomes for children in foster care
- Safely reduce time to permanency (reunification, adoption and kinship guardianship)
- Implement services that are fully informed by the experiences and perspectives of youth and parents and which are designed to maximize youth and parent engagement
- Scale the workforce of parent advocates with lived experience across all contracted foster care providers, in order to enable every parent with a child in foster care with a goal of reunification to have a parent advocate assigned
- Reduce the use of the Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) goal and the numbers and proportion of youth who exit foster care to independence
- Increase placement with kinship caregivers
- Implement best practices and innovative approaches to recruiting, training and supporting kinship and foster parents

- Reduce utilization of residential care settings; reducing lengths of stay in residential settings and increasing the pace of step-downs to family-based care
- Improve health, mental health and educational outcomes of children in foster care
- Effectively coordinate foster care and prevention services and leveraging other community-based services to provide seamless services, greater stability, and improved outcomes for children and families
- Provide the resources necessary to support a well-prepared and stable workforce that delivers high-quality services to meet families' and children's needs

To achieve these goals, the following significant changes and investment in new resources from the existing foster care continuum will include:

- Increased therapeutic resources and services in both family foster care settings, responding to the increased acute needs of children in foster care
- A new Enhanced Family Foster Care (EFFC) program replaces the current, separately contracted Family Foster Care (FFC) and Therapeutic Family Foster Care (TFFC) programs. EFFC allows for greater flexibility of services based on the changing needs of the child and family
- Expand resources and scaling of proven practices in the following key areas of foster care case practice:
 - Reunification supports including:
 - ◆ Family time (also known as family visiting)
 - ◆ Parent supports and services to stabilize and strengthen families
 - ◆ Parent advocates as credible messengers assigned to support all families with a goal of reunification
 - Foster parents' role in supporting parents to improve reunification outcomes
 - Utilization of ACS Prevention and other community-based services before, during and after reunification in order to support families and help prevent re-entry into foster care
- Best practices and innovative approaches to identifying kinship resources
- Best practices and innovative approaches to recruiting, training and supporting kinship and foster parents to improve children's experience while in foster care placement and permanency outcomes
- Adoption and KinGAP practice including therapeutic work with youth, parents, and foster/adoptive parents to facilitate permanency, including open adoption where appropriate
- Strategies for reducing the use of APPLA and achieving legal permanency for older youth
- Education and employment services to improve well-being outcomes for children and youth
- Continued low caseworker caseloads and enhanced training and professional development for the child welfare workforce
- New performance-based fiscal structures that maintain provider fiscal and organizational health, including the costs necessary to maintain adequate staffing and infrastructure to support a high-quality foster care system

The new foster care contracts will go into effect in FY24. In support of strengthening the foster care continuum and to begin shifting practice to align with the new foster care contracts, additional funding and enhancements have been made available to existing foster care contracts for use in FY23.

IMPROVING PERMANENCY OUTCOMES

ACS continues to work aggressively to improve permanency outcomes for youth in foster care. [As outlined in the Foster Care Strategic Blueprint Progress Report FY 2021](#), ACS is implementing several initiatives to improve reunification, adoption, and kinship guardianship outcomes for children and youth in foster care. These include the new Enhanced Family Foster Care (EFFC) program, increased therapeutic resources, partnership with Parent Advocates with lived experience and increased resources for Family Time (a.k.a. visiting), and increased resources to support kinship care, among other initiatives. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted permanency outcomes for young people in foster care. ACS continues to work closely with the Family Court to address the backlog of cases and expedite Reunification, Adoption, and Kinship Guardianship.

HIGH QUALITY PLACEMENTS FOR YOUTH

[ACS's Home Away from Home \(HAFH\) initiative has been highly successful in increasing foster home recruitment while simultaneously improving kinship placement and support for caregivers.](#) This citywide effort emphasizes effective recruitment practices and strong customer service to support kinship and foster families so that children are safe and receive the highest quality of care. From FY 2017 to FY 2021, ACS and its foster care agency partners increased the proportion of children in foster care placed with kin from 31% to 42%. From FY17 to FY19, ACS increased the number of newly certified foster homes by 50%, turning around a previous six-year decline in the number of new foster homes recruited. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to significantly impact foster home recruitment, there was an increase in the number of recruited homes in FY21 as compared to FY20 (612 in FY21 vs. 493 in FY20). In addition to significant ACS resources, this initiative has received major support from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation as well as Casey Family Programs and a collaborative of five foundations -- New York Community Trust, Redlich Horwitz Foundation, Ira W. DeCamp Foundation, Joseph Leroy & Ann C. Warner Fund and Tiger Foundation.

SUPPORTING THE WELL BEING OF LGBTQAI+ YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

In January of 2021, ACS began to implement its LGBTQAI+ Action Plan. The goal of the plan is to improve the experiences and outcomes of LGBTQAI+ youth in foster care. Key parts of the plan include:

- A new version of the ACS LGBTQAI+ staff training, *Include, Empower, Affirm: Policy, Best Practices, and Guidance for Serving LGBTQAI+ Children and Youth Involved in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice System*, was launched in late 2021. This learning program prepares learners to apply the policies and best practices that promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of LGBTQAI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Asexual, Intersex, and many more) youths involved with ACS and contracted providers. During this course, learners practice creating affirming environments where all are respected regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.
- ACS will continue to provide a LGBTQAI+ mandated training to foster parents. With the support of Planned Parenthood of Greater NY, foster care agencies will roll out a new version of this training in the summer of 2022.
- ACS funds the Ackerman Institute and The LGBTQ Center to train clinicians that work with ACS involved families on best practices for engaging LGBTQAI+ families. Also, with support from the

Annie E. Casey Foundation, ACS is partnering with the Ackerman Institute for the Family to measure the changes in attitude and behaviors of parents, guardians, and caregivers of young people in foster care who are LGBTQAI+.

- ACS is also working with five foster care agencies to expand foster parent recruitment and training that is focused on serving LGBTQAI+ youth. As part of this work, foster care agencies will partner with LGBTQ organizations to engage the LGBTQAI+ community as potential foster parents.

HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUTH

Health Care. ACS partners with foster care providers to ensure that children and youth in foster care have access to the full array of health care services. This includes Health Homes and Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver services. Health Homes are a service that help support the child/youth and their family. A Health Home Care Manager works as a team with the child/youth, their family and service providers to help a child/youth receive coordinated care and services. All children in foster care with chronic health, medical, and/or mental health conditions requiring a doctor's care are eligible for Health Homes. HCBS services are designed to offer support and services to children/youth in non-institutionalized settings that enable them to remain at home and in the community or for children/youth being discharged from an institutional setting who require these services to safely return to their home and community. HCBS services assist children/youth to succeed in a home/community environment to avoid higher levels of care and out-of-home placements.

Mental Health Services. ACS is working closely with its contracted foster care providers to ensure that children and youth in foster care have access to the full array of mental health services. This includes accessing all mental health and other services available through Medicaid programs, including Child and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS). Children and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS) are standalone mental health and substance use services that support children/families. CFTSS services can be provided at home or in the community. CFTSS services include:

- Other Licensed Practitioner (OLP)
- Crisis intervention
- Community Psychiatric Supports and Treatment (CPST)
- Psychosocial rehabilitation
- Family peer support services
- Youth peer support

The NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS), the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), and the New York State Office for Children and Family Services (OCFS) announced in February 2021, and officially rolled out in April 2021, a new collaborative approach called **CANOPY (CreAtiNg OPportunities for Youth)**. The goal of CANOPY is to improve outcomes for New York City youth ages 14+ in foster care who have the most complex needs, including youth who have been involved in multiple systems, youth with mental health and behavioral health issues, and youth who also have experience in the juvenile or criminal justice systems. The four agency Commissioners have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that

establishes a cross-agency team, as well as protocols for implementing this initiative. CANOPY builds on young people's strengths and provide needed services that will:

- Improve their safety, well-being, education and employment outcomes
- Reduce the need for residential services and help youth return home safely to their families or achieve a permanent family through adoption or kinship guardianship; and
- Reduce risk of incarceration and other poor outcomes.

ACS has partnered with the [NY State Office of Mental Health \(OMH\)](#) to obtain an ACS Access View for [PSYCKES](#), a web-based application designed to support quality improvement, care planning, and clinical decision making for the Medicaid Behavioral Health population. ACS clients are automatically linked to this access view, through which designated ACS staff are able to access information including diagnosis, medications, medical and behavioral health outpatient and inpatient services and home health care coordination. These designated ACS staff are able to run certain reports through the PSYCKES system (currently related to concurrent review criteria) and are working with OMH to expand reporting capabilities in the near future.

[DOHMH and ACS have collaborated to facilitate access to the Nurse-Family Partnership.](#) DOHMH and ACS have implemented strategies to increase the utilization of the Nurse-Family Partnership Program for expectant and parenting youth, children and families involved in the child welfare systems. These included partnering to conduct virtual outreach and provide marketing materials to all ACS Divisions, Foster Care and Preventive agencies to increase awareness of the Nurse-Family Partnership; sharing data to track pregnant youth in foster care being referred and enrolled with Nurse-Family Partnership; and ongoing meetings to identify trends and opportunities for additional outreach. Nurse-Family Partnership has adapted their practices to virtual tele-health due to the challenges of the pandemic.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

[The Fair Futures Initiative aims to enhance and improve outcomes for youth in foster care ages 11-21 in the areas of education, employment, housing, and permanency.](#) Launched in 2019, Fair Futures is the result of a partnership among the Mayor's Office, City Council, ACS, the City's 26 contracted foster care agencies, and the Fair Futures Coalition (a consortium of foster care agencies, foundations, advocates, and others). In FY22, the funding amount for Fair Futures was increased from \$12 million to \$20 million. For FY 23, the Mayor's Executive Budget has proposed further increasing funding to \$30.7 million, which will expand the reach of Fair Futures to serve youth ages 21-26. Through Fair Futures, foster care agencies have hired coaches, tutors, and other staff who have supported thousands of youth in building life skills, setting academic and career goals, and planning for successful transitions from foster care.

[DOE has announced the creation of a new unit focused on meeting the education-related needs of children in foster care.](#) The unit will tackle policy development, data/info management, building the capacity of DOE staff and other city partners to provide helpful services, and supporting school-based interventions in collaboration with community partners. It will be housed alongside the Students in Temporary Housing Team at the DOE.

[Through data-sharing arrangements with DOE and DYCD, ACS continues to identify students in foster care in need of school program placements.](#) Every year, ACS coordinates with the DOE Office of Student

Enrollment to identify 5th and 8th grade students who have yet to be assigned to middle and high schools and then coordinates with foster care agencies to ensure that applications for these students are submitted as needed.

ACS partnered with DYCD during the spring of 2021 to identify students in need of Summer Rising program assignments and facilitate their registration in coordination with foster care agency staff.

The First Star Academy, in partnership with ACS, is a long-term college-prep program for high school youth in foster care. It includes four immersive residential summer programs on a university campus and monthly weekend sessions during the school year. During the residential sessions, youth are supported by professional staff and youth coaches who were foster care involved. Throughout all four years, Academy staff provide long-term case management to the youth and their families to assist youth in focusing on academics, life skills, and engagement. During the summer, students live on the college campus and after the summer, students visit the university campus one Saturday a month during the academic year. The First Star Academy is a collaborative that includes ACS, a University partner, and First Star, Inc. The program is supported by ACS, CUNY, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, and New Yorkers for Children. The program served 25 youth in foster care. 90% of participants graduated high school, 85% entered college and the remaining 15% joined the military and or the workforce.

Launched in 2016, the Fostering College Success Initiative (FCSI, also known as the “Dorm Project”) is a partnership among ACS, the City University of New York (CUNY) and New York Foundling. FCSI participants, who attend CUNY and other colleges in New York State, benefit from tutoring, coaching, career advising, and related support services. The Fostering College Success Stipend Program (FCS), also launched in 2016, offers financial assistance to youth in foster care who are attending CUNY, SUNY, and private colleges. This program provides a \$31 per-day stipend to participants full-time enrolled in college who reside on-campus or in approved off-campus housing. In exceptional cases, this program also allows students who wish to study abroad in other countries to fulfill their course load while receiving these funds. Participants can use stipend funds for education and personal expenses.

ACS continues to implement key strategies to improve employment outcomes for youth. ACS first established an office dedicated to improving employment outcomes for youth in foster care in 2016. Today, the Office of Education and Employment Initiatives develops services, initiatives and partnerships that build capacity within the foster care system to connect youth to college support and workforce development programs throughout NYC. Opportunities made available by the Office include paid internships, career readiness programming, mentoring, vocational training, and employment. The Office’s initiatives support youth development for educational and career planning, mentoring, work-based learning, employment, and career advancement.

ACS is partnering with New Yorkers for Children (NYFC) and Youth Villages (YV) to pilot LifeSet, an evidence-based program for young adults ages 17-22 who have been involved in the foster care, juvenile justice and/or mental health systems as young adults. The LifeSet model uses specialists to provide youth with intensive community-based support consisting of both clinical and skill-building interventions. The goals of LifeSet are to support youth to maintain stable and suitable housing, participate in educational/vocational programs, find and sustain employment, remain free from Court involvement, develop healthy relationships, build a strong and permanent support system, engage with

youth's families and social supports, strengthen mental health stability, and develop fundamental life skills. First launched in NYC in April 2018, the program is expected to serve more than 350 young people over three years with the goals of improving education, employment, and housing outcomes. In 2021, 226 youth were served in collaboration with Children's Aid, New York Foundling, SCO Family of Services, and Good Shepherd Services.

ACS continues its partnership with The Workplace Center at Columbia University to provide technical assistance to a total of 10 foster care provider agencies via the [Young Adult Work Opportunities for Rewarding Careers](#) (YA WORC) curriculum. YA WORC is an evidenced informed career readiness program that provides professional development training to foster care agency staff to provide comprehensive, developmentally appropriate career readiness programming to youth in foster care ages 14 – 21. In addition, the agencies receive technical assistance and training to develop an on-site career club that provides peer-to-peer experiential learning and instruction on how to develop educational and career plans, resumes and cover letters, and decisions based on labor market information. YA WORC builds the capacity of agency staff to use different age-appropriate strategies to prepare youth in foster care for meaningful careers. Since the program's inception in FY17, ACS has served over 600 youth and trained 200 staff through YA WORC.

ACS has partnered with DYCD to administer a revamped paid internship program for young adults ages 16-24 with foster care experience who are not in school and not working. Called [Advance and Earn Plus](#) and building on the former YAIP+ initiative, the new program's career pathways approach offers a continuum of education and employment services, aiming to accommodate youth at different stages of skill development and provide them with positive short-term outcomes as well as the skills and tools necessary to achieve long-term career success. Services and supports that are offered include literacy and math instruction, HSE test preparation, work readiness training, college and career exploration, paid work experience, advanced occupational training and industry credential attainment supported by case management and wrap-around services. The program and its predecessor have served 316 youth in foster care.

ACS partners with DYCD to support the City's [Summer Youth Employment Program](#) (SYEP). During summer 2021, ACS and foster care agencies referred more than 1000 youth to SYEP, enabling them to participate in virtual and in-person career exploration and skill-building activities while receiving a stipend.

ACS also recently received funding from the Kellogg Foundation to launch the [V-CRED initiative](#), a new vocational training and apprenticeship program that will provide professional opportunities to youth, ages 16 to 24, in foster care and with juvenile justice experience. As part of the program, youth will participate in training for professional certification through courses offered by Kingsborough Community College, participate in paid internships/apprenticeships, and have opportunities for employment with the employer hosting the internship. V-CRED will focus on five career pathways: 1) Information Technology, 2) Electrician's Helper, 3) Allied Health (e.g. Certified Nursing Assistants, EKG Technician), 4) Pharmacy Technicians, and 5) Building Trades.

ACS continues to partner with the Pinkerton Foundation to support a [Mentored-Internship Program](#) (MIP) across twelve foster care agencies. The MIP program provides technical assistance and training to

foster care agency staff through the Workforce Professional Training Institute (WPTI) to agency staff. Through the community-based styled training, staff learn to develop on-site internships within the infrastructure of their agencies. With supervision and mentoring provided by agency leadership and staff, youth participate in paid internships that offer 10 hours of work per week over a six-month period during the academic year. The program targets youth in foster care between the ages of 16 - 21 years old. Since FY18, MIP has provided funding to train over 200 foster care staff who coordinated paid internships for over 500 youth.

In FY20, ACS, in collaboration with Google, Hopeland, and New Yorkers For Children--launched [TechLink](#). TechLink is a program offering high school youth in foster care exposure to tech activities including coding, design, and tech leadership training. The program is supported with additional career readiness activities focused on career and college planning, coaching, and mentoring. TechLink participants are a part of Google's Code Next community of over 150 youth engaged in tech programming.

Over the past 18 months, ACS has held a series of [Virtual Career Fairs and smaller recruiting events](#). The purpose of the fairs and events is to offer youth an opportunity to connect to jobs with career pathways and a safe, supportive work environment. In total, 300 youth have benefitted from the fairs and events.

IMMIGRATION SERVICES

[ACS's Office of Immigrant Services and Language Affairs \(ISLA\)](#) is dedicated to assisting all youth in foster care who have immigration needs, including those eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. Through the Immigration Services for Youth in Care Program, ISLA oversees and coordinates collaboration between foster care providers, approved immigration legal services providers, and ACS divisions to identify immigrant youth in ACS care and assist them to obtain immigration relief.

VI. Conclusion

As noted, ACS has multiple initiatives specifically geared towards improving the safety, permanency, and well-being of youth in foster care.

The FY22 ACS Youth Experience Survey provides valuable information regarding the experiences of youth between the ages of 13 - 21 in foster care. The findings from this survey continue to be used to inform ongoing ACS's service planning and programming for older youth in the areas of permanency, education, employment, emotional supports, child welfare staff training and other key identified areas.

ACS is reviewing the results with the Youth Leadership Council and other key stakeholders to identify and prioritize approaches for supporting older youth. As in past years, ACS will also provide agency specific reports with de-identified responses to each foster care provider to support targeted strategy as well as system level findings. These findings are reviewed with provider agency leaders and other stakeholders to strategically align efforts that support the well-being of older youth.