

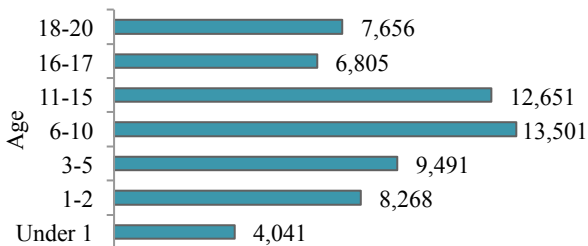


National Center for Youth Law

Data Snapshot of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs of Young Women in Foster Care in California

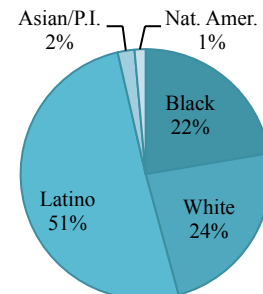
DEMOGRAPHICS

As of July 1, 2015, there were **62,413 youth in California's foster care system**.¹ About half (50.4%) were female.²



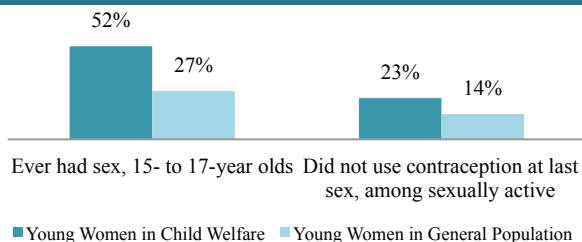
One-fifth (20.2%) of foster youth in California are between the ages of eleven and fifteen, and about 23% are sixteen or older.³

More than half of California's foster youth are Latino. Most of the remaining youth are white or black.⁴



Almost 60% of seventeen-year-olds in foster care in California have lived in a group home.⁵ Of those, more than half have been placed in two or more group homes.⁶

SEXUAL ACTIVITY AND CONTRACEPTION USE

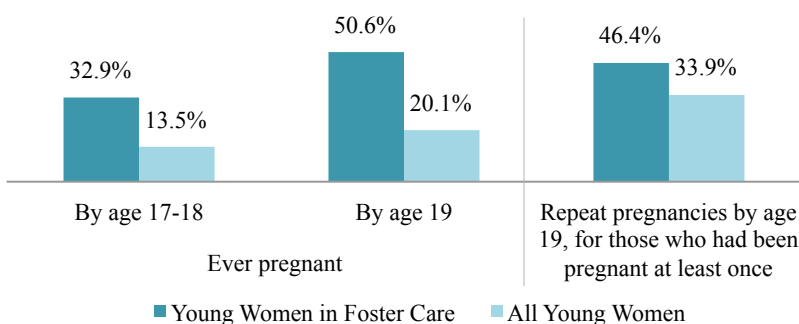


Young women in the foster care system are **almost twice as likely to have engaged in sexual activity** as their same-aged peers in the general population.⁷

They are also **less likely to have used contraception during sexual activity** than their peers who are not in the child welfare system.⁸

About **70% of foster and former foster youth interviewed about their most recent pregnancy did not describe the pregnancy as wanted**, and yet **only 25% were using birth control** at the time of conception.⁹

PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH



Young women in foster care and those who have "aged out" of foster care are **more than twice as likely to have experienced teen pregnancy** than their peers not in care.¹⁰ They are also **more likely to become pregnant more than once**.¹¹

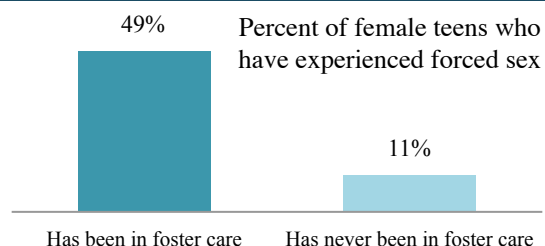
Young women who have been in foster care are **more likely to have unwanted pregnancies** than those not in care: about 70% did not describe their most recent pregnancy at age 21 as wanted, compared to half of their peers not in care.¹²

By age 21, **more than a third of California young women who grew up in foster care are mothers**.¹³ Among seventeen-year-old young women in foster care in California who have been pregnant, **20% reported that they received no prenatal care during their pregnancy**.¹⁴

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Female teens who have been in foster care are **more than four times as likely to have ever experienced forced sex** than those who have never been in foster care.¹⁵

More than 30% of female foster youth in California were raped before they entered care, and about **45% were sexually molested**.¹⁶



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References

- ¹ Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., King, B., Sandoval, A., Yee, H., Mason, F., Benton, C., & Hoerl, C. (2015). *California Child Welfare Indicators Project reports*. Available online at http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare.
- ² *Id.*
- ³ *Id.*
- ⁴ *Id.*
- ⁵ Courtney, M. E., Charles, P., Okpych, N. J., Napolitano, L., & Halsted, K. (2014). *Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH): Conditions of foster youth at age 17*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.
- ⁶ *Id.*
- ⁷ Ng, A. S., & Kaye, K. (2013). *Why It Matters: Teen Childbearing and Child Welfare*. Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.
- ⁸ *Id.*
- ⁹ Courtney, M.E., et al. (2007). *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 21*. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.
- ¹⁰ Dworsky, A. & Courtney, M.E. (2010). *The risk of teenage pregnancy among transitioning foster youth: implications for extending state care beyond age 18*. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(10).
- ¹¹ *Id.*
- ¹² Courtney, M.E., et al., *supra* note 9.
- ¹³ Putnam-Hornstein, E. Cedarbaum, J., King, B., and Needell, B. (2013). *California's Most Vulnerable Parents: When Maltreated Children Have Children*. Agoura Hills, CA: Conrad Hilton Foundation.
- ¹⁴ Courtney, M.E., et al., *supra* note 5.
- ¹⁵ Manlove, J. (2011). *Teen Parents in Foster Care: Risk Factors and Outcomes for Teens and Their Children*, Washington DC: Child Trends, http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Child_Trends-2011_11_01_RB_TeenParentsFC.pdf (citing Perper, K. (unpublished). *Child Trends' original analyses of the Add Health survey Waves I – III*).
- ¹⁶ Courtney, M.E., et al., *supra* note 5.