



SUPPORT & RESOURCES

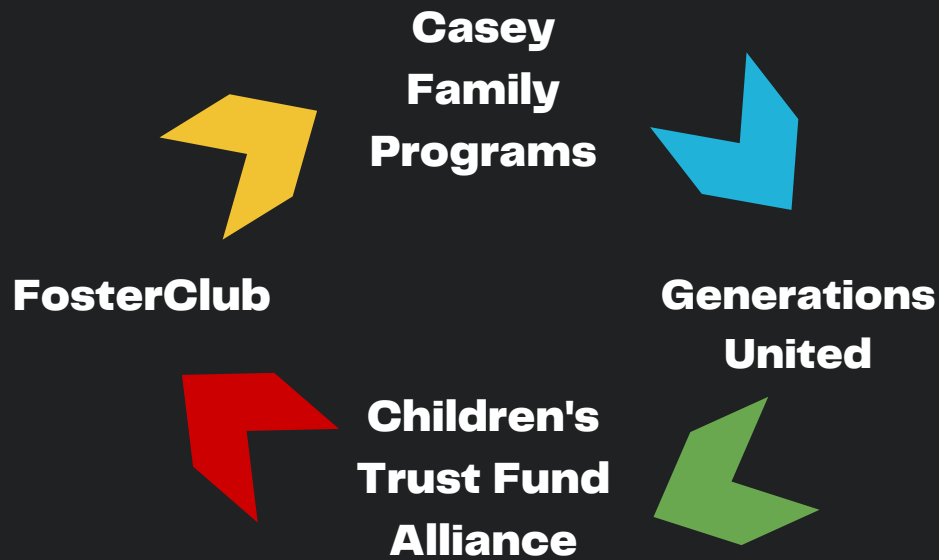
**For Expectant and Parenting
Young People in Foster Care**



FAMILY VOICES UNITED

Framing

Family Voices United is a collaborative project with the Children's Trust Fund Alliance, Generations United, FosterClub, and Casey Family Programs.



Together, we work to elevate the voice and perspective of **young people, birth parents, and kinship/relative caregivers** (known collectively as **constituents**), to stakeholders, partners and organizations who make decisions about the child welfare system.

In order to make informed decisions that benefit children, young people, and families, lived experience voices and expertise must be not only heard, but must be centered in decision making.

Share Your Perspective Campaign

Family Voices United launches regular "Share Your Perspective" questions on timely topics relating to child welfare. Currently, the campaign centers these questions around 5 central themes:



Prevention: Strengthening Families and Averting Crises



Older Youth & Congregate Care



Supporting Relatives Caring for Children



Expectant and Parenting Youth



Race Equity in Child Welfare

November 2021 "Share Your Perspective" Question:



Expectant and Parenting Youth

"What supports should be provided to maintain stable foster care placements for expectant and parenting youth, or to support them in achieving safe reunification with relatives/loved ones?"



Listening to Constituent Voices

On Support & Resources for Expectant and Parenting Young People in Foster Care

"More parent leaders should be involved with families when cases are first open, so that there is assurance that things will be OK. Being placed in the child welfare system is scary and sometimes having someone that can relate to you makes the situation easier to deal with."

-Constituent from Florida

"Expectant and parenting youth in foster care need someone to encourage them and believe in them when things aren't easy. And the truth is we all need that in life."

-Constituent from Maine

"There needs to be more emphasis on ensuring that these individuals feel cared about and seen. Check-ins are needed as well as just a listening ear. Many youth face hard times and just want someone who will listen and simply be there for them."

-Constituent from Virginia

"They should receive priority enrollment for any local/state child care and early learning programs that allow for care during school, work, ILP services, and extracurricular activities. This allows them to have support as a parent to continue to work on their own educational and professional goals."

-Constituent from Oregon

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Themes from Constituent Responses:



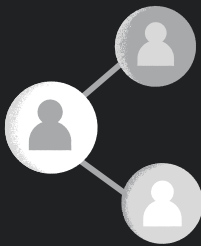
Honor our
Mental
Health



Connect
Us to Our
Peers



Show us the
resources +
support us in
obtaining them



Facilitate
Networks of
Support



Invest in
our futures



Celebrate +
show us love

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Summary of Constituent Responses:



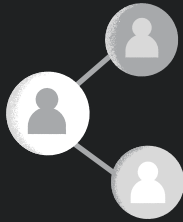
Family Voices United | Support & Resources for Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care

Honor our Mental Health	Connect Us to Our Peers	Show us the resources + support us in obtaining them
Offer tailored therapy/ counseling for all involved in child's life (group and individual)	Involve parent and family peer leaders early in the process	Offer priority enrollment for early learning programs Childcare support is vital Walk-through filling out applications
Support us to identify emotions and express them in healthy ways	Keep connections to peer leaders and groups, even after reunification	Continue post-reunification follow-up and supports Share state and governmental-level support assurances
Teach healthy coping strategies	Connect to peer support groups with young people in similar situations	Connect to pregnancy and parenting education, especially for neurodivergent children and older children
Explore respite services and care	Explore opportunities for mentorship	Provide caseworker trainings with up-to-date information

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Summary of Constituent Responses:



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Facilitate Networks of Support	Invest in our futures	Celebrate + show us love
Facilitate transparent communication for all people involved	Financial supports Wraparound services	Make young people and families feel seen, listened to, and loved Extend empathy
Nurture relationships and visits with birth family foster family, young person, and their child	Life skills education (ex: banking, taxes)	Encourage and believe in young people and families Help further feelings of safety and stability
Find opportunities to collaborate for the best interest of the young person and child	Fee waivers for applications (FAFSA, scholarships)	Offer personal touches (ex: congratulatory new baby cards and accompanying them to appointments)
Set up healthy boundaries and clarification of roles	Housing supports	Respect freedom of decisions

Using this Report



Share with your Networks

The themes and priorities from this report can help others gain further insight into the child welfare system from the perspective of those who have lived experience. It may also help those in your networks to better support constituents in their work.

Elevate to Policymakers

The people making laws and decisions must hear from those who have experience with the systems they impact with their actions. Nothing about us without us.

Highlight to More Constituents

Creating community amongst lived experience leaders starts by sharing stories and identifying common experiences. Please share this report with constituents you work with or others in your networks with lived experience.

Contact Information

Family Voices United | Support & Resources for Expectant
and Parenting Youth in Foster Care



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Thank you to the young people, birth parents,
and kinship caregivers for answering our
"Share your Perspective" question, and thus
for providing their lived experience expertise
to the field of child welfare.

FAMILY VOICES UNITED

www.familyvoicesunited.com
info@familyvoicesunited.com



@family_voices



@familyvoicesunited



@familyvoicesunited