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# It's Been a Decade: How is Extended Foster Care Working in California?

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# Overview of the CalYOUTH Study

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## Evaluation of the impact of CA Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB 12)

1. What impact does EFC have on youth well-being outcomes?
2. What factors influence supports that youth receive through EFC?
3. How do living arrangements and other supports mediate the the relationships between EFC and outcomes?

## CalYOUTH Study includes:

- **Longitudinal study** of young people in CA foster care making the transition to adulthood (n = 727)
- Periodic **surveys of caseworkers** serving young people in CA foster care
- Analysis of government program **administrative data**
  - Child welfare: sample of 113k youths in care age 16+ b/w 2006 to 2019
  - Link to other administrative data sources (e.g., public benefits, unemployment insurance & wage data, National Student Clearinghouse)

# CaYOUTH Study

## Funders and Partners

- **Support** the research
- **Provide** guidance and feedback
- **Host** CaYOUTH Study section with results on website  
[co-invest.org/resources](https://co-invest.org/resources)
- **Promote** via presentations and media outreach

### California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership

California Department of Social Services

County Welfare Directors Association of California

The Judicial Council of California

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation\*

Walter S. Johnson Foundation\*

Zellerbach Family Foundation\*

Reissa Foundation\*

California Wellness Foundation\*

Casey Family Programs\*

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Stuart Foundation

William T Grant Foundation

*\*Co-investment Partnership members*

# Longitudinal Youth Study

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**Purpose:** Obtain information about a broad range of life experiences & young adult outcomes

- E.g., Foster care placement, Service utilization & preparation, Education & employment, Health & development, Social support

**Sample:** Youths age 16.75-17.75 in CA foster care for 6+ months as of December 2012

- Stratified random sample by county groups

Interview wave	Date	Age of youths	# Participants	Response Rate
Wave 1	2013	17	727	95%
Wave 2	2015	19	611	80%
Wave 3	2017	21	616	81%
Wave 4	2019	23	622	82%

# Focus of Today's Presentation

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- Trends in youth outcomes between 17 and 23 years of age
- Relationships between extended foster care and youth outcomes at age 23
- Summary of CalYOUTH findings on the importance of county context for youth outcomes
- Summary of CalYOUTH findings on the differences between THP-NMD providers in outcomes experienced by the youth they serve
- Next steps for CalYOUTH

*Disclaimer: The findings reported herein were performed with the permission of the California Department of Social Services. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the authors and should not be considered as representing the policy of the collaborating agency or any agency of the California government.*

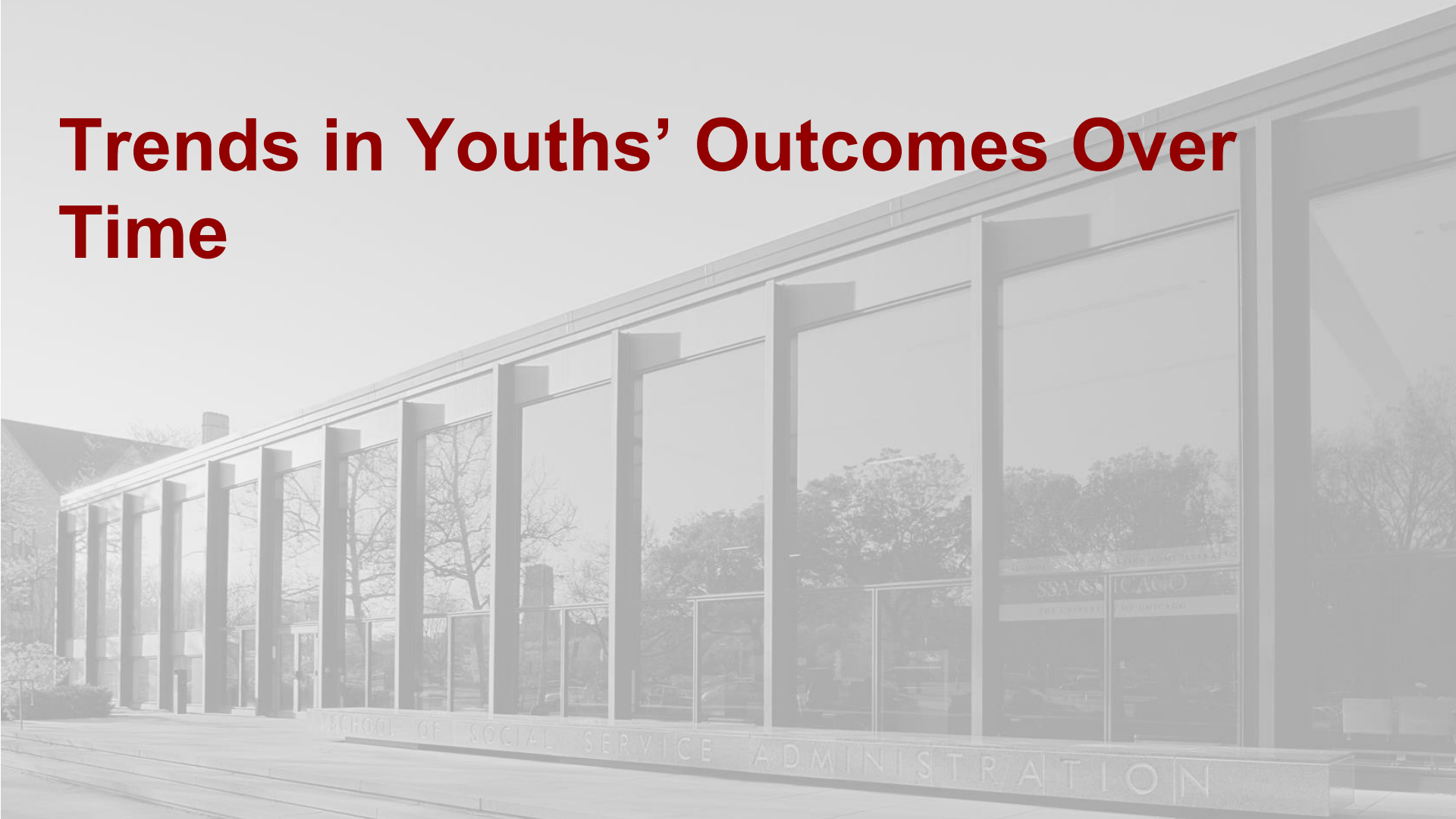


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# Trends in Youths' Outcomes Over Time

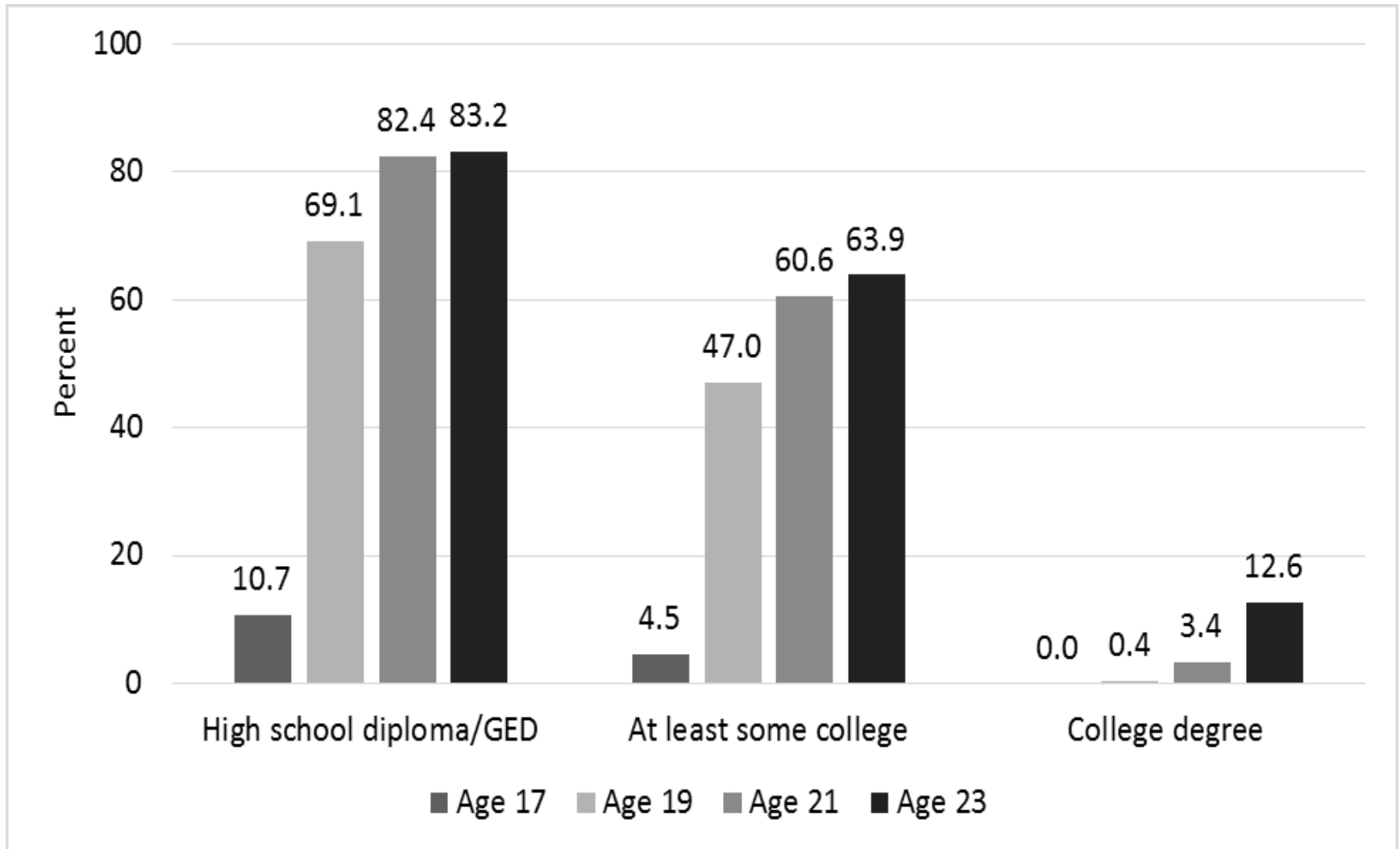


# Methods

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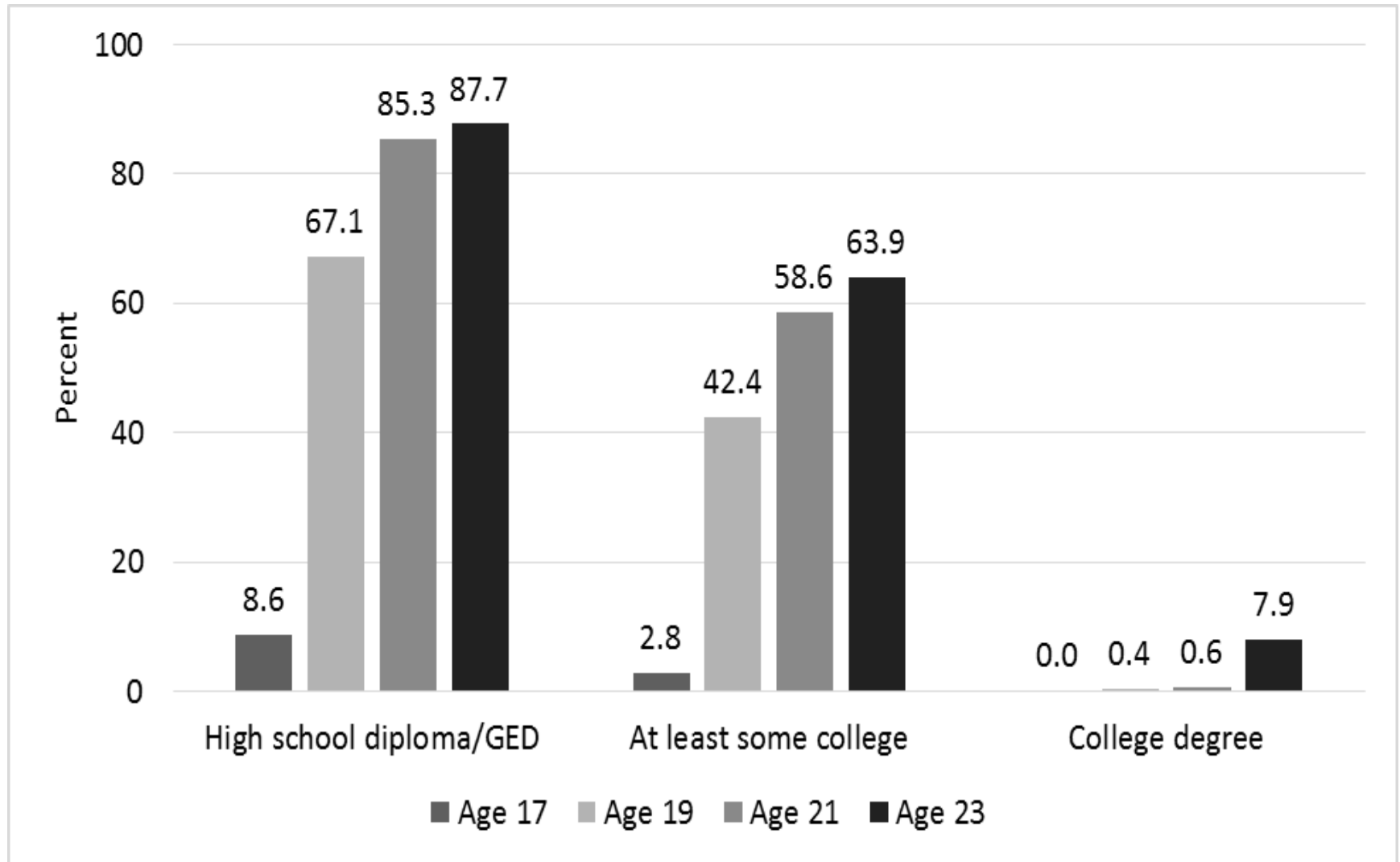
- This part of the presentation draws on data collected over the six-year course of the study from interviews with youths at ages 17, 19, 21, and 23
- Trends in the outcomes are displayed separately for males and females. The full report describes statistically-significant differences in outcomes by race and ethnicity
- All of the youth who participated in each interview wave were used to calculate the percentages displayed in the figures for that interview wave

# Trends in Young Women's Educational Attainment

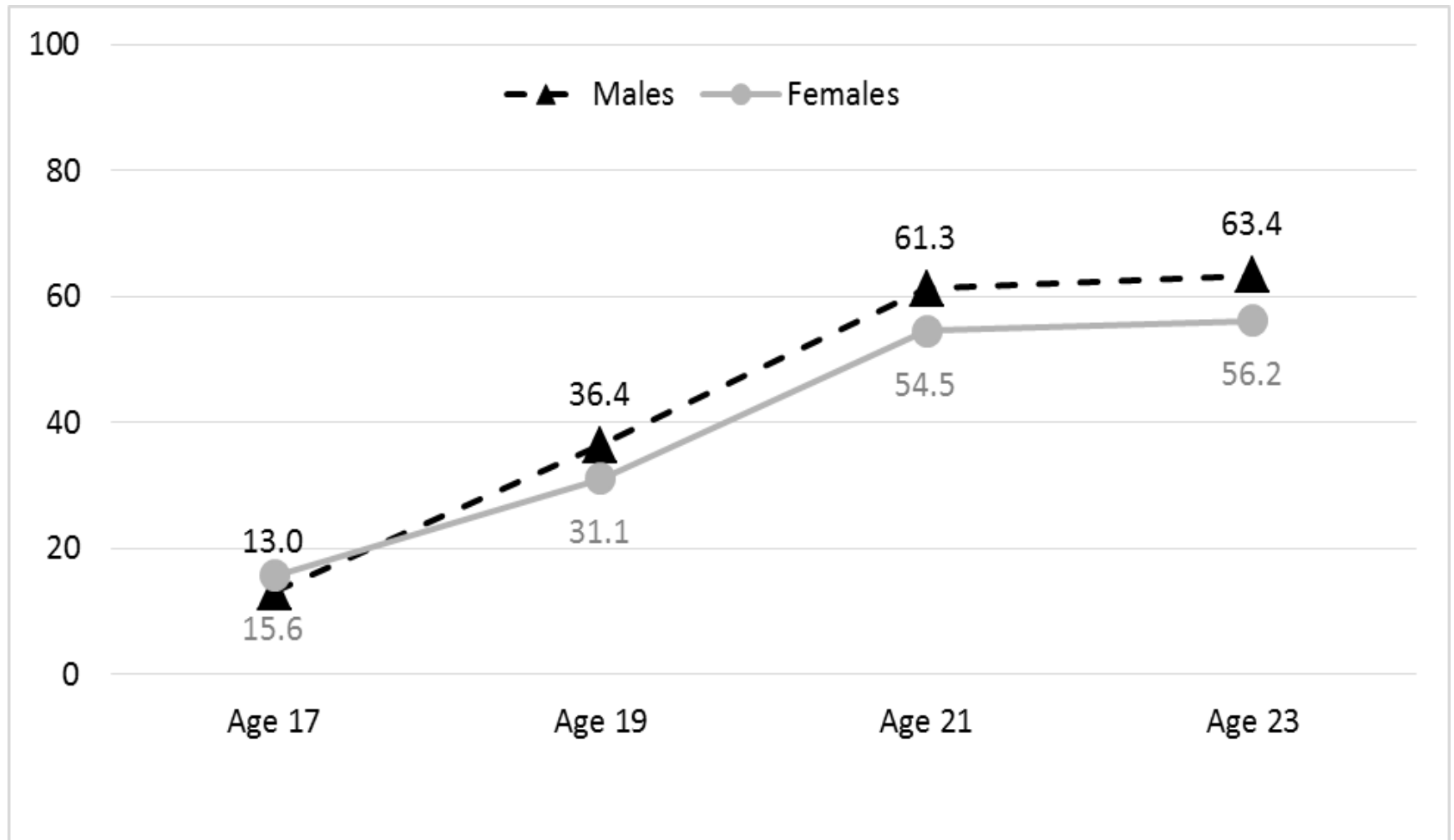




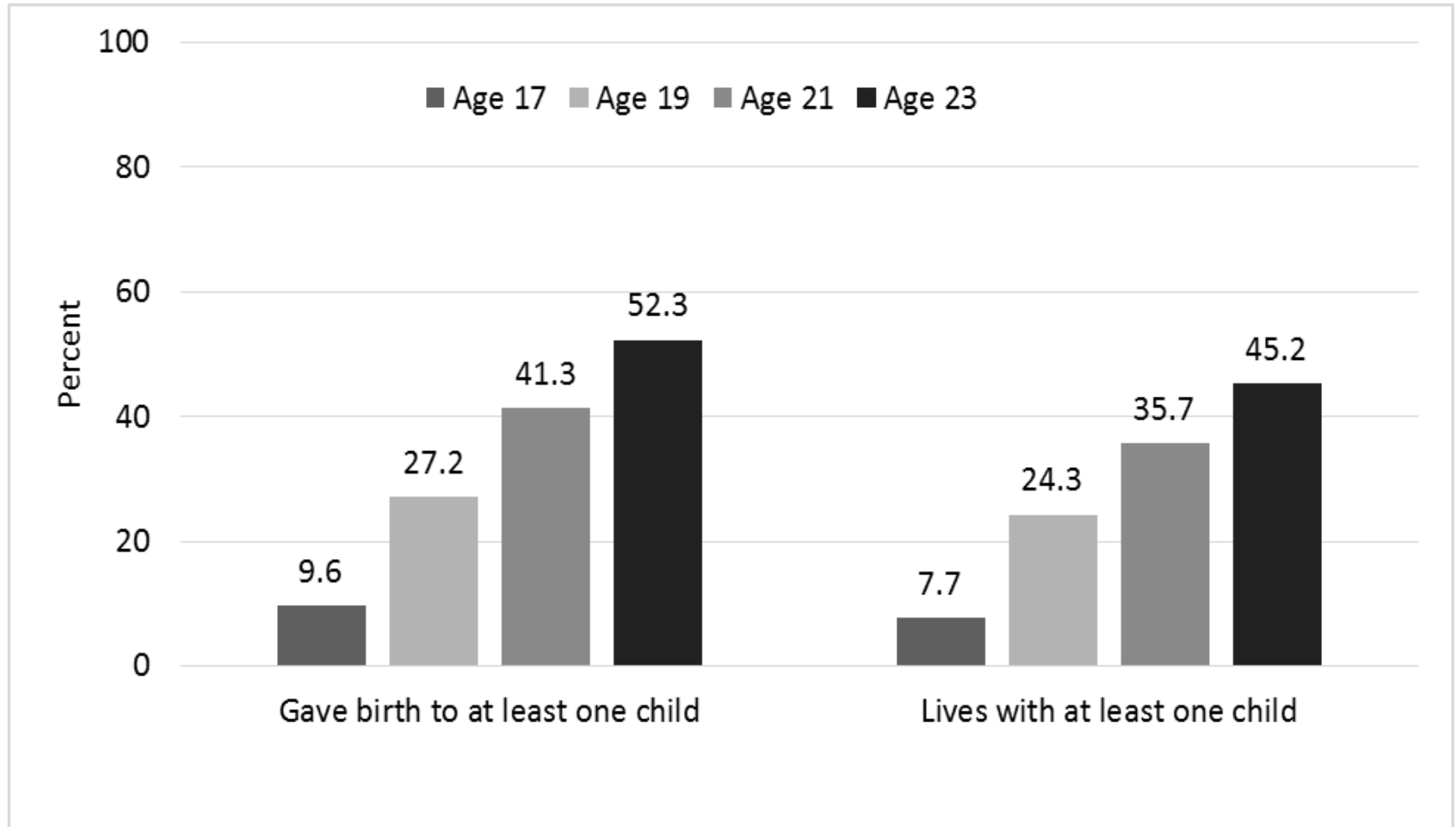
# Trends in Young Men's Educational Attainment



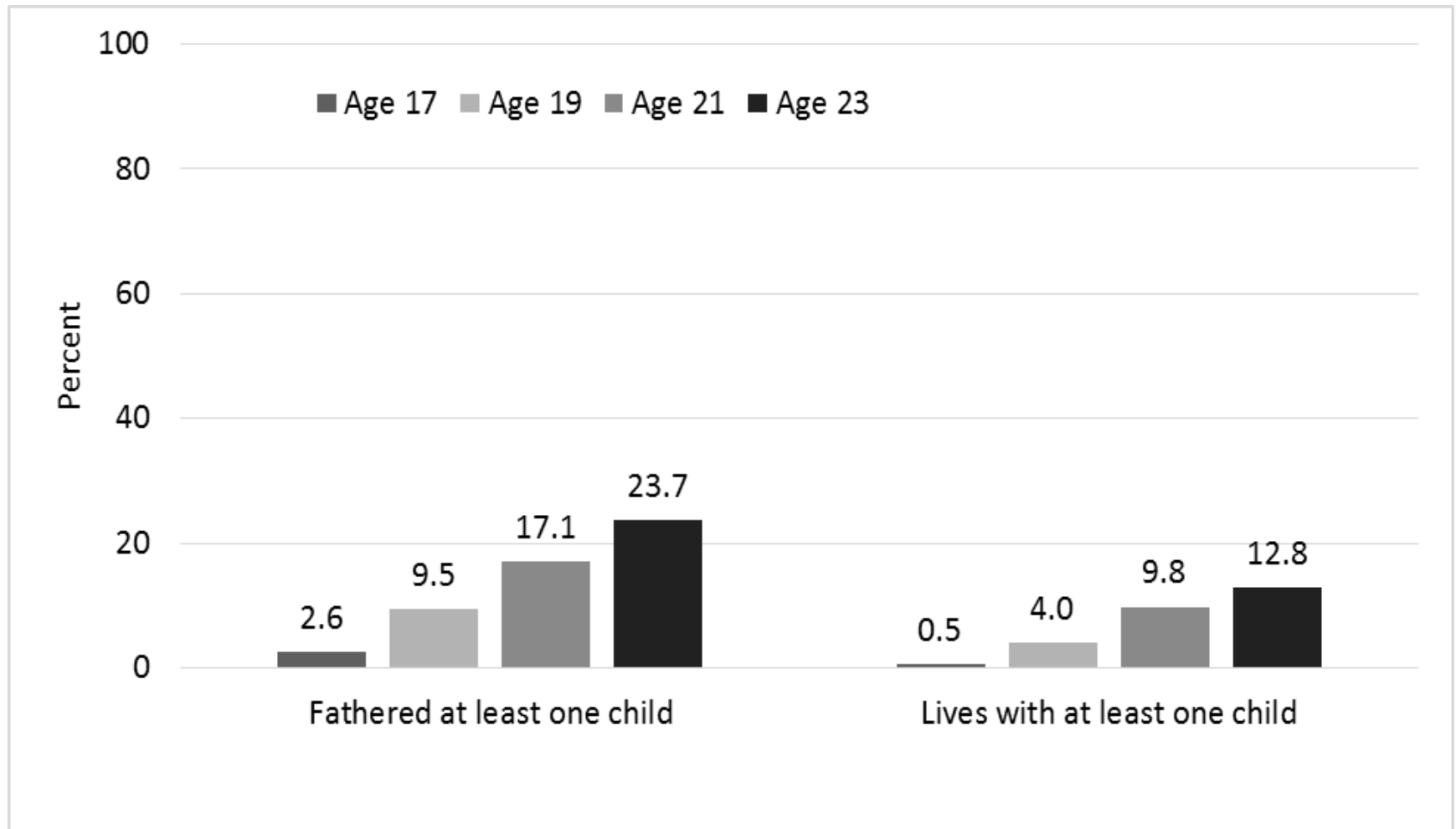
# Trends in Current Employment by Gender



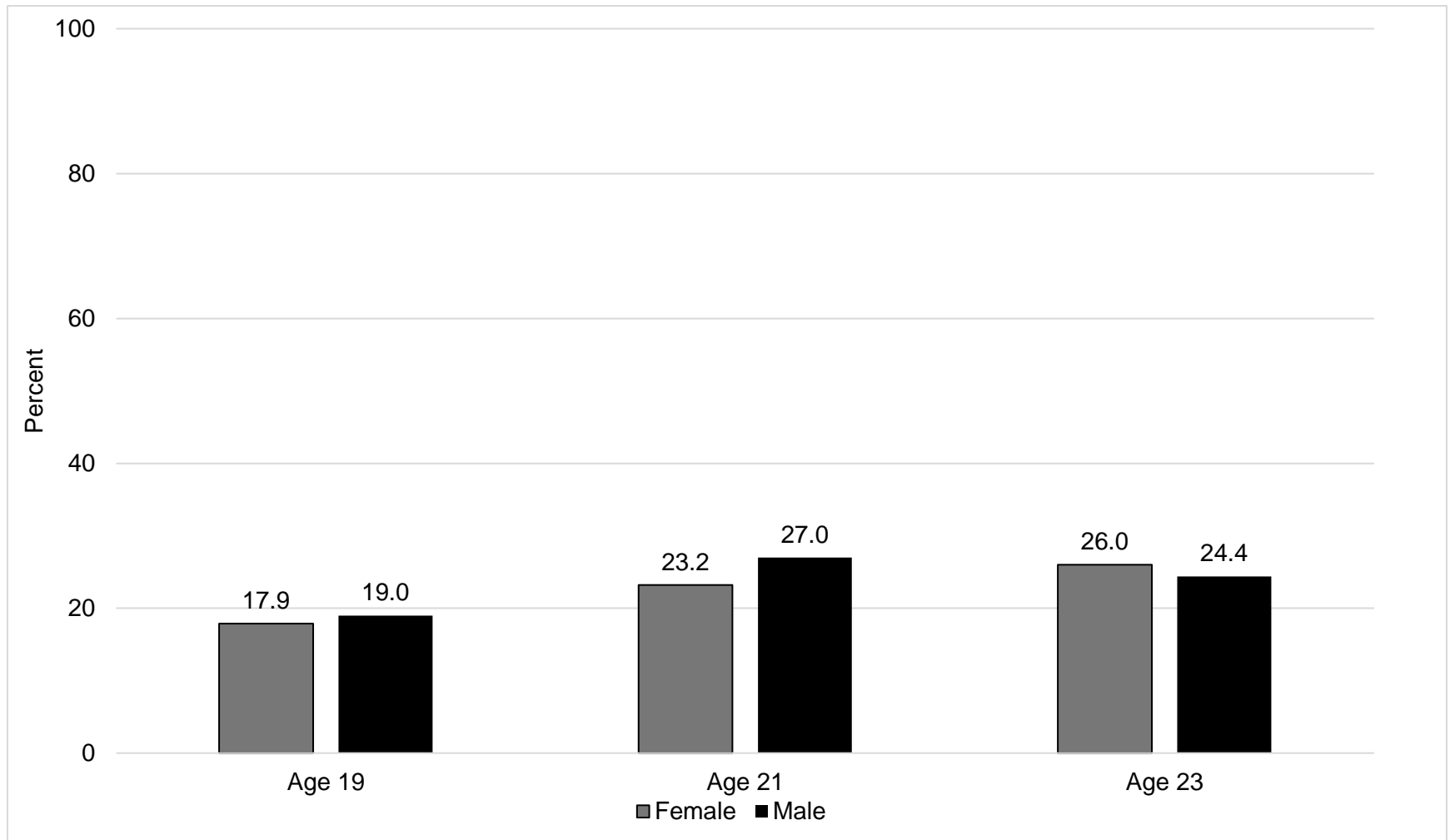
# Trends in Parenthood Among Females



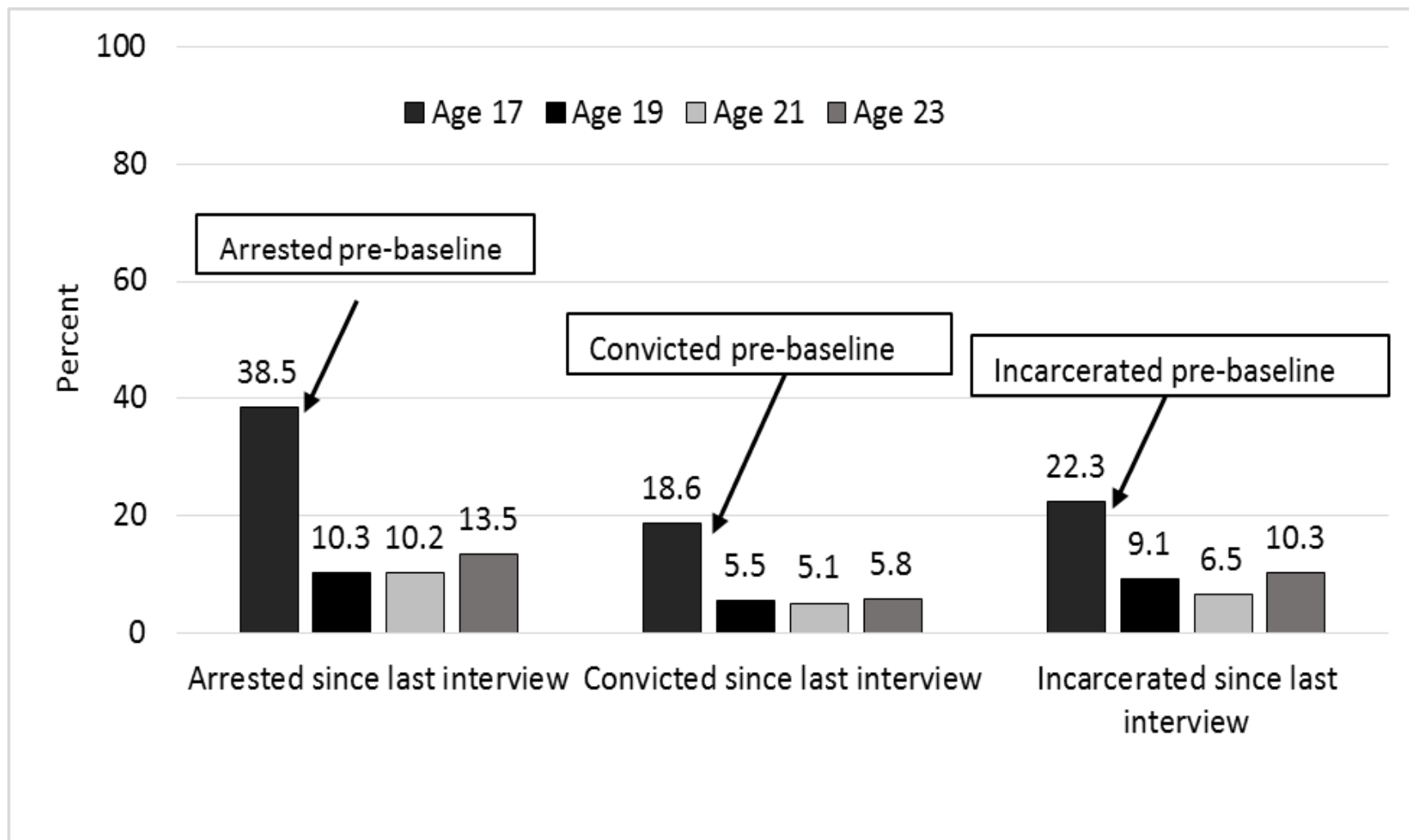
# Trends in Parenthood Among Males



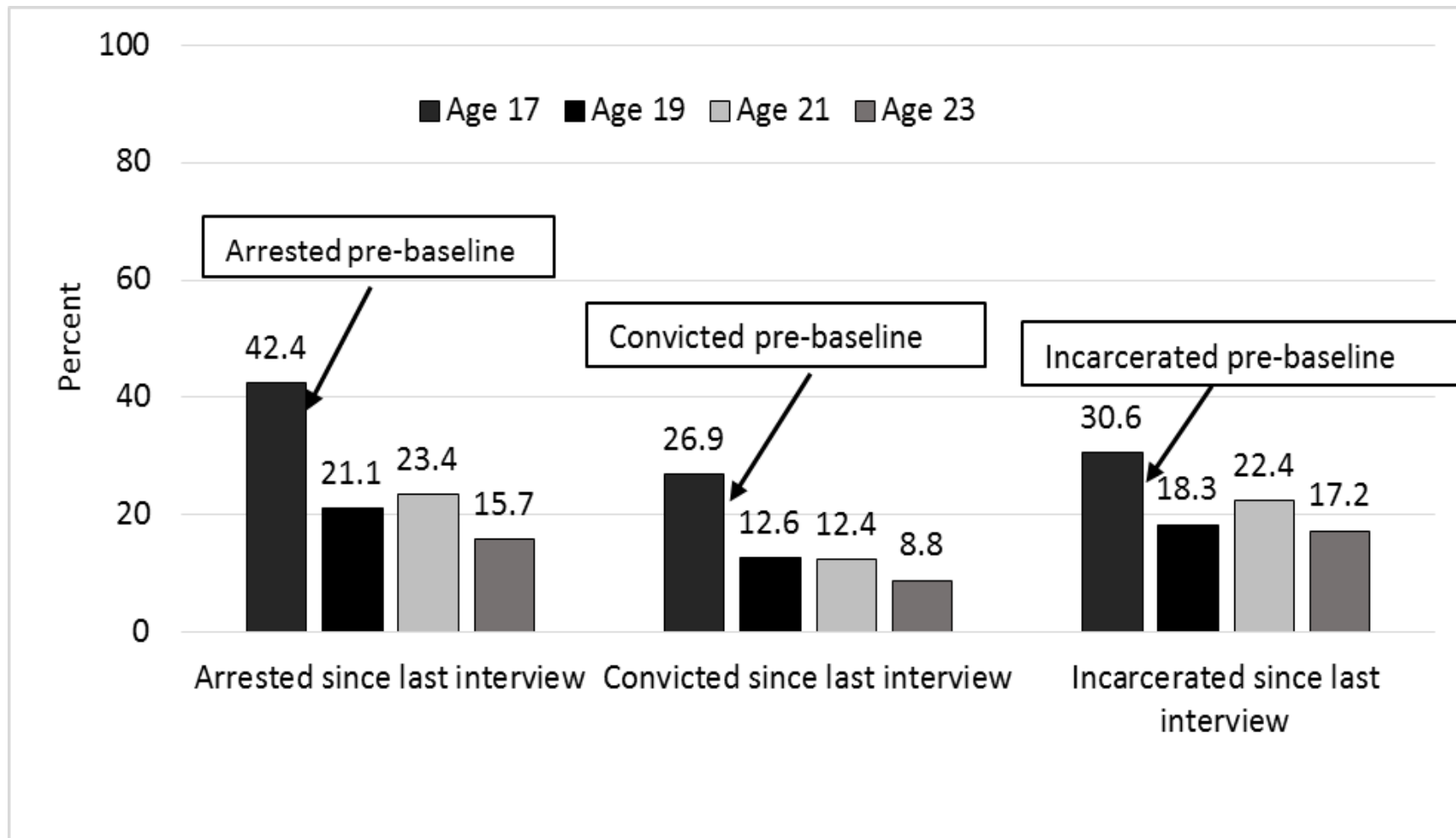
# Trends in Homelessness by Gender



# Trends in Criminal Justice System Involvement Among Females



# Trends in Criminal Justice System Involvement Among Males



# Summary of Findings on Trends in Outcomes

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- Declining enrollment in school, but significant number of youths are enrolled in college at 23
- Increasing employment, stabilizing at about two-fifths employed at a point in time between 21 and 23
- Increasing percentage of youths are parents of children, but males are much more likely than females to be noncustodial parents
- Troubling levels of involvement with the criminal justice system, but at lower rates than those found in earlier studies
- Over two-thirds of youths are connected to either school or work as young adults





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# Relationships between Extended Foster Care and Youths' Outcomes at Age 23



# Background

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- Extended foster care (EFC) is intended to promote human capital acquisition, positive social connections, and general well-being as youth in foster care transition to adulthood
- Previous CalYOUTH Study research has found more time in EFC is significantly associated with outcomes at age 21:
  - Education (secondary school completion & college enrollment)
  - Employment (more time employed)
  - Savings (greater amount in savings)
  - Social support (more connections to professionals)
  - Hardships (lower public food assistance, fewer economic hardships, less homelessness/couch-surfing)
  - Family formation (decreased pregnancy)
  - Criminal justice (lower arrest & conviction)

# Research Questions

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Purpose of the current study is to examine the associations between EFC and youth outcomes at age 23, about 2 years after EFC age limit

Is more time in EFC associated with age-23 outcomes?

- About 2 dozen outcomes evaluated
- Span many developmental domains (e.g., education and employment, hardships, family formation, physical and behavioral health, criminal justice system involvement)

# Study Methods

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## **Sample**

CalYOUTH participants (n = 622) completed interviews at age 23 in 2019/2020

## **Outcomes**

- Created from Wave 4 interview questions
- Supplemental analyses: college outcomes constructed from National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data obtained in May 2019 and employment outcomes using Unemployment Insurance data through Q1 2020 (i.e., pre-COVID)

## **Main predictor**

Number of years youth spent in foster care between their 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays (calculated from CDSS's CWS/CMS data)

## **Statistical Analyses**

Estimated the influence that a year in extended care had on each of the outcomes

- Several types of statistical models used (based on measure of outcome)
- Controlled for a wide range of youth- and county-level characteristics

# Control Variables Measured at Wave 1 (age 17)

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Sex  
Race/ethnicity  
Ages at Wave 1 and Wave 4  
Number of years since last completed interview

## FOSTER CARE HISTORY

History of neglect  
History of physically abuse  
History of sexually abuse  
History of other abuse  
Age first entered FC  
Total number episodes before age 18  
Total number of placements before age 18  
Placement change rate before age 18  
Ever in congregate care  
Ever in kinship care  
Satisfied with FC experience

## COUNTY CHARACTERISTICS

Size/urbanicity (4 groups)  
Fair market housing rent quintiles  
Youth unemployment rate quintiles

## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Highest completed grade  
Ever repeated graded  
Ever in special education classroom  
Reading proficiency standardized score (WRAT)  
Ever worked for pay

## PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Self-rated health  
Any mental health disorder  
Any alcohol/substance use disorder (MINI-Kid)  
Ever been pregnant/impregnated female  
Has any living children  
Number of nominated social supports

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND VICTIMIZATION

Average delinquency score  
Ever spent a night in jail  
Physically assaulted in past 12 months  
Had gun/knife pulled/used on them in past 12 months  
Ever sexually abused/molested before entering FC

# Results: Descriptive Statistics on Outcomes at Age 23

Domain	Outcome	N	% or Mean(SD)
Education	Completed high school diploma, GED, other credential (%)	529	83.6
	Ever enrolled in college (%) <sup>a</sup>	619	63.9
	Enrolled in college between last interview and W4 (%) <sup>b</sup>	620	35.0
	Completed a 2-year or 4-year college degree by W4 (%) <sup>c</sup>	619	10.9
Employment	Worked in last 12 months before W4 at a job that lasted 3 or more months & worked at least 20 hours per week (%)	577	82.3
	Amount of income from employment in 12 months before W4 (Mean/[SD])	606	\$14,761 (\$18,019)
Assets	Current balance of all checking, savings, and money market accounts (Mean [SD])	601	\$1,704 (\$5,749)

<sup>a</sup>NSC estimate: 60.8% enrolled in college prior to May 2019

<sup>b</sup>NSC estimate: 31.6% enrolled in college between 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and May 2019

<sup>c</sup>NSC estimate: 4.0% completed 2yr/4yr college degree before May 2019

# Results: Descriptive Statistics on Outcomes at Age 23

(con't)

Domain	Outcome	N	% or Mean(SD)
Hardships	Number of economic hardships in past year before Wave 4 (scale of 0–6; Mean [SD])	609	1.2 (1.6)
Food insecurity	USDA Food Insecurity Measure at Wave 4 (%)	620	28.2
Homelessness	Ever homeless or couch surfed since last completed interview (%)	622	36 .0
	Number of times homeless since last completed interview (0–5 or more; Mean (SD))	617	0.7 (1.4)
	Total number of days homeless since last completed interview (0–365; Mean [SD])	616	30.0 (81.3)
Public assistance	Amount of CalFresh benefits received in 12 months before W4; Mean [SD])	614	\$850 (\$1,495)

## Results: Descriptive Statistics on Outcomes at Age 23 (con't)

Domain	Outcome	N	% or Mean(SD)
General health	General health rating (%)		
	Poor/Fair	620	24.3
	Good		33.5
	Very good		22.8
	Excellent		19.5
Behavioral health	Any mental health disorder <sup>1</sup>	597	28.8
	Any alcohol/substance use disorder	617	15.3
Social support	Total number of nominated supports (maximum of 9; Mean(SD))	621	2.8 (1.4)
	Total number of nominated professionals (maximum of 3; Mean(SD))	620	0.18 (0.49)
	Adequacy of social support (scale of 0 to 6; Mean(SD))	620	4.63 (1.61)

<sup>1</sup>Includes any of the following: major depressive episode (current and recurrent), manic episode, hypomanic episode, panic disorder, social phobia, obsessive compulsive disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, antisocial personality disorder, anorexia, or bulimia.



# Results: Descriptive Statistics on Outcomes at Age 23

(con't)


Domain	Outcome	N	% or Mean(SD)
Pregnancy and parenthood	Became pregnant/impregnated female since last completed interview <sup>a</sup> (%)	601	33.2
	Had a child since last completed interview <sup>b</sup> (%)	600	17.1
Criminal justice system involvement	Arrested since last completed interview (%)	596	14.4
	Convicted of a crime since last completed interview (%)	594	6.9
Victimization	Physically assaulted in 12 months prior to Wave 4 (%)	618	5.9
	Weapon pulled or used on respondent in 12 months prior to Wave 4 (%)	597	8.1
	Sexual victimization since last completed interview (%)	590	11.2

<sup>a</sup>41.6% of females became pregnant and 18.8% of males impregnated a female

<sup>b</sup>20.7% of females had a child and 10.9% of males had a child

# Relationships between EFC and Age 23 Outcomes

(only statistically significant associations shown, control variables not shown)



Domain	Each additional year in extended foster care:	Outcome unit	Estimate	P-value
Education	Increased the expected probability that youth completed a high school credential by about 8 percentage points.	Percentage points	8.0	<.001
	Increased their expected probability of ever enrolling in college by about 10-12 percentage points <sup>a</sup>	Percentage points	11.7	<.001
	Increased their expected probability of enrolling in college since last completed interview by about 7 percentage points <sup>b</sup>	Percentage points	6.5	<.001
	Increased their expected probability of completing a 2-yr or 4-yr college degree by about 3 percentage points <sup>c</sup>	Percentage points	3.2	.002
Employment	Increased their expected probability of working in past year for 3+ months, 20+hrs/week by about 5 percentage points.	Percentage points	4.6	.005
	Increased amount of money youth had in bank accounts by about \$640	Dollars	\$642	.002

<sup>a</sup>NSC estimate: Increased probability of ever enrolling in college by May 2019 by 9.6 percentage points.

<sup>b</sup>NSC estimate: Increased probability of ever enrolling in college between 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and May 2019 by 6.8 per. points

<sup>c</sup>NSC estimate: Not significantly associated with completing 2yr/4yr college degree before May 2019 (-0.1, p=.533)

# Relationships between EFC and Age 23 Outcomes

(only statistically significant associations shown, control variables not shown) (con't)

Domain	Each additional year in extended foster care:	Outcome unit	Estimate	P-value
Public food assistance	Decreased receipt of need-based public food assistance by about \$140 in past year	Dollars	-\$143	.024
Food insecurity	Decreased odds of being food insecure in past year by about 21%	Odds ratio	0.79	.012
Homelessness	Decreased odds of being homeless or couch-surfing since their last interview by about 19%	Odds ratio	0.81	.025
	Decreased risk of additional time homeless by 23%	Relative risk ratio	0.77	<.001
	Decreased expected number of days homeless since last interview by about 10 days	Days	-9.5	.004
Criminal Justice	Decreased odds that youth had been arrested since last interview by about 28%	Odds ratio	0.72	.010
Social Support	Increased the likelihood of youth feeling like they have adequate support by about 25%	Relative risk ratio	1.25	.005

# Age 23 Outcomes Where Statistically Significant Impacts Were Not Found

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Outcomes not found to be significantly associated with the number of years in extended care:

- Earnings from employment in past year
- Number of economic hardships in past year
- Physical and behavioral health
- Number of nominated supports and professionals
- New pregnancies and childbirths since last interview
- Conviction of crime since last interview
- Victimization in past year

# Administrative Data: Study Methods

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## **Sample**

Youth in care least 6 months sometime after 16th birthday (between 2006-2017)

- Includes youths in pre-AB12 era and post-AB12 era
- N = 47,666 for postsecondary education analyses
- N = 50,762 for employment analyses

## **Outcomes**

CWS/CMS data linked to:

- Data on postsecondary education outcomes from the National Student Clearinghouse
- Data on employment and earnings from the Unemployment Insurance system
- Looked at outcomes through age 23 and between ages 21 and 23

## **Main predictor**

Number of years youth spent in foster care between their 18th and 21st birthdays (calculated from CDSS's CWS/CMS data)

## **Statistical Analyses**

Estimated impact a year in EFC had on each outcome

- Used Ordinary Least Squares regression, and more rigorous Instrumental Variable regression to test sensitivity of findings
- Controlled for youth- and county-level characteristics available in CWS/CMS data

# Administrative Data: Relationships between EFC and Age 23 Outcomes

(only statistically significant associations shown, control variables not shown)

Domain	Each additional year in extended foster care:	Outcome unit	Estimate	P-value	P-value (IV model)
Education	Increased the estimated odds that a youth enrolled in college since age 21 by about 23 percent	Odds ratio	1.23	<.001	n.s.
	Increased the estimated odds that a youth ever enrolled in college by age 23 by about 40 percent	Odds ratio	1.40	<.001	<.006
	Increased the estimated odds that a youth earned a certificate or a 2yr/4yr/graduate degree by age 23 by about 9 percent	Odds ratio	1.09	<.001	n.s.
	Increased the estimated odds of completing a 2-yr or 4-yr college degree by age 23 by about 11 percent	Percentage points	1.11	.003	n.s.
Employment	Increased the estimated number of quarters a youth was employed between 21 and 23 by about two weeks	Quarters employed	.39	<.001	<.001
	Increased a youth's estimated earnings between 21 and 23 by about \$1,300	Dollars	\$1,309	<.001	<.001

# Administrative Data: Age 23 Outcomes Where Statistically Significant Impacts Were Not Found

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Outcomes not found to be significantly associated with the number of years in extended care:

- Persistence through the first two college semesters between 21 and 23
- Number of college semesters/quarters completed between 21 and 23

Findings on the positive relationships between extended care and enrolling in college between 21 and 23, and overall credential and degree completion, should be viewed with caution.

# Limitations

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- Data limitations
  - E.g., self-report data may not be accurate
  - NSC data did not capture college graduations occurring in May/June 2019
- Longitudinal survey analysis only includes post-AB12 youth
  - May be differences between youth who spent more/less time in EFC that are not accounted for in statistical models
  - Some outcomes are related to EFC eligibility requirements (chicken-and-egg problem)
- Analyses use generic sets of control variables, and key control variables may not have been included
- The study period includes early years when EFC was still very much a work in progress



# Conclusions

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- Findings from present analysis reinforce many findings from earlier analyses of outcomes at ages 19 and 21
- Findings thus far are encouraging
  - EFC appears to positively influence a wide range of outcomes, including education, employment, savings, food insecurity, criminal justice system involvement, and social support
  - We have found no evidence of harm associated with time in EFC

# Implications of CalYOUTH Findings on County Context

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Not surprisingly, county context influences the services youth receive (e.g., EFC) and crucial outcomes they experience during their transition to adulthood

Policymakers and program managers should consider how county contexts may create disparities in EFC participation and education and employment outcomes

County child welfare agencies are in a better position to influence some aspects of the county context than others

- They have limited ability to influence labor and housing markets, but they are responsible for helping youth achieve education and employment outcomes that are powerfully influenced by those social forces
- As the providers of many social and health services, counties are in a position to influence the availability of services and coordination between service systems and providers

# Summary of CalYOUTH findings on the influence of THP-NMD providers on youths' postsecondary education and employment outcomes

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- More than 80% of the youth were served by one-third of the total THP-NMD providers, and around 10 providers serve over three-fifths of all youth served
- Outcomes of youth vary depending on which provider they stayed with:
  - Youth background characteristics appear to explain some of the differences between providers in average outcomes experienced by the youths they serve
  - Average provider-level outcomes are also strongly associated with the mix of counties they serve

# Next steps for CaYOUTH...

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- CaYOUTH MOU with CDSS extended through 12/31/2022
- Continued analysis of our survey and administrative data to answer our core research questions:
  - Influence of EFC on *additional outcomes* (e.g., justice system involvement; parenting; community college credit accumulation)
  - Deepening understanding of *mechanisms through which EFC influences outcomes* (e.g., county contexts; placement type; services and supports)
- Explore possibilities of using existing CaYOUTH administrative data on youth outcomes to help support efforts to improve policy and services for TAY:
  - Ongoing monitoring of statewide and county-level outcomes for young people currently or formerly in foster care
  - Providing aggregate-level data to service providers on outcomes experienced by the youth they serve



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<https://www.chapinhall.org/research/cal youth/>

<https://co-invest.org/resources/california-youth-transitions-adulthood/>

