

A black and white photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, the backs of several students' heads and shoulders are visible. They are all raising their right hands, indicating they want to answer a question or participate. In the background, a chalkboard is filled with faint, illegible mathematical equations and diagrams. The overall scene conveys an active and engaged learning environment.

Improving Education Outcomes for Students in Foster Care

September 27, 2011

Session Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- ***Explain*** the summit purpose and goals
- ***Relate*** the education provisions in the federal Fostering Connections Act to their own work
- ***Identify*** the educational challenges and outcomes for foster care students
- ***Identify*** the benefits of partnering with child welfare to improve school stability for students in foster care
- ***Speak*** confidently with child welfare colleagues and others about educating students in foster care

National Meeting Purpose

A call to action for Child Welfare, Education and Judicial System leaders to begin to develop Local, State, and National strategies to improve the educational well-being of students in foster care.

National Meeting Goals

Bringing together multi-system leadership teams to address:

- The education provisions of Fostering Connections
- Meaningful collaborative initiatives and programs between education, child welfare and the courts
- The function and purpose of each system and the opportunities to contribute
- Youth perspective on foster care and the importance of education
- Expectations for State action plans

QUESTIONS?

Educators on the Front Lines

The three most common report sources:

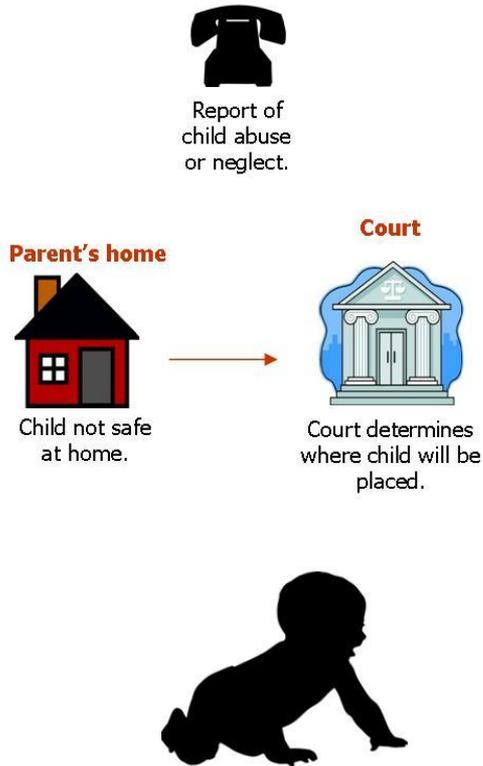
- Teachers (16.5%),
- Law enforcement and legal personnel (16.4%), and
- Social services staff (11.4%).

2009 Child Abuse and Neglect Report Statistics

An estimated 3.3 million referrals, involving the alleged maltreatment of approximately 6 million children, were received by CPS agencies:

- 61.9% were screened in for a response
- 22.1% substantiated, 1.3% indicated, and 0.5% were alternative response victims

Child's Journey Through Foster Care



Foster home



Court sends child to foster home with services.

or

Relative's home



Court sends child to a relative's home with services.

or

Parent's home



Court sends child home with or without services.

Court



Court reviews progress and determines if:

- the child will return home,
- parental rights will be terminated so the child is free for adoption,
- the child will live permanently with a relative, or
- the child will stay in foster care longer.

Foster home



Child remains in foster care while options for permanent family are explored.

or

Permanent home



Parental rights terminated. Child adopted or custody given to another caregiver.

or

Parent's home



Family completes reunification plan. Child returns home.

A Majority of Children in Foster Care are School Aged

Number of children and youth in foster care on September 30, 2009*	423,773	
<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Young children (age 0-4)	129,753	31
School age children and youth (age 5-17)	286,895	67.7
Young Adults (age 18-21)	18,333	5

Questions?

THE RESEARCH

More Likely to Have Repeated a Grade

- **83% held back by the 3rd grade** – *Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles*
- **Nearly 45% of youth in care in the New York State study reported being retained at least once in school** - *Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.*
- **Chicago Public School students in out-of-home care were almost twice as likely as other students to be at least a year older for their grade.** - *Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago*

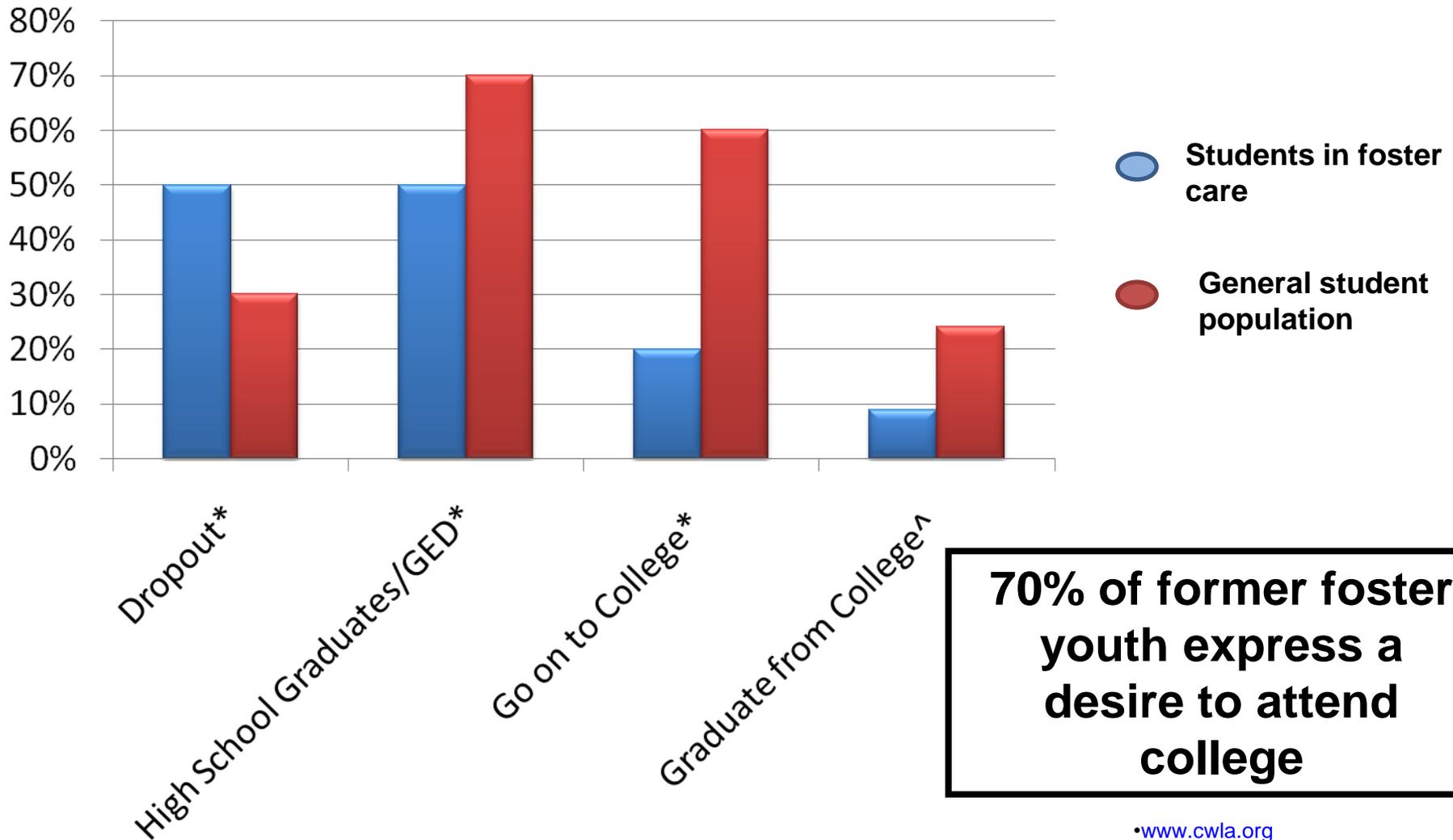
High Rates of School Mobility

- **Children and youth have an average of one to two home placement changes per year while in out-of-home care.** - *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*
- **A study of 479 alumni of foster care in Oregon and Washington found that 65% experienced seven or more school changes from elementary through high school.**
- *Improving Family Foster Care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study*
- **In an ongoing three-state study of youth aging out of care, over a third of young adults reported having had five or more school changes.**
- *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Conditions of Youth Preparing to Leave State Care*

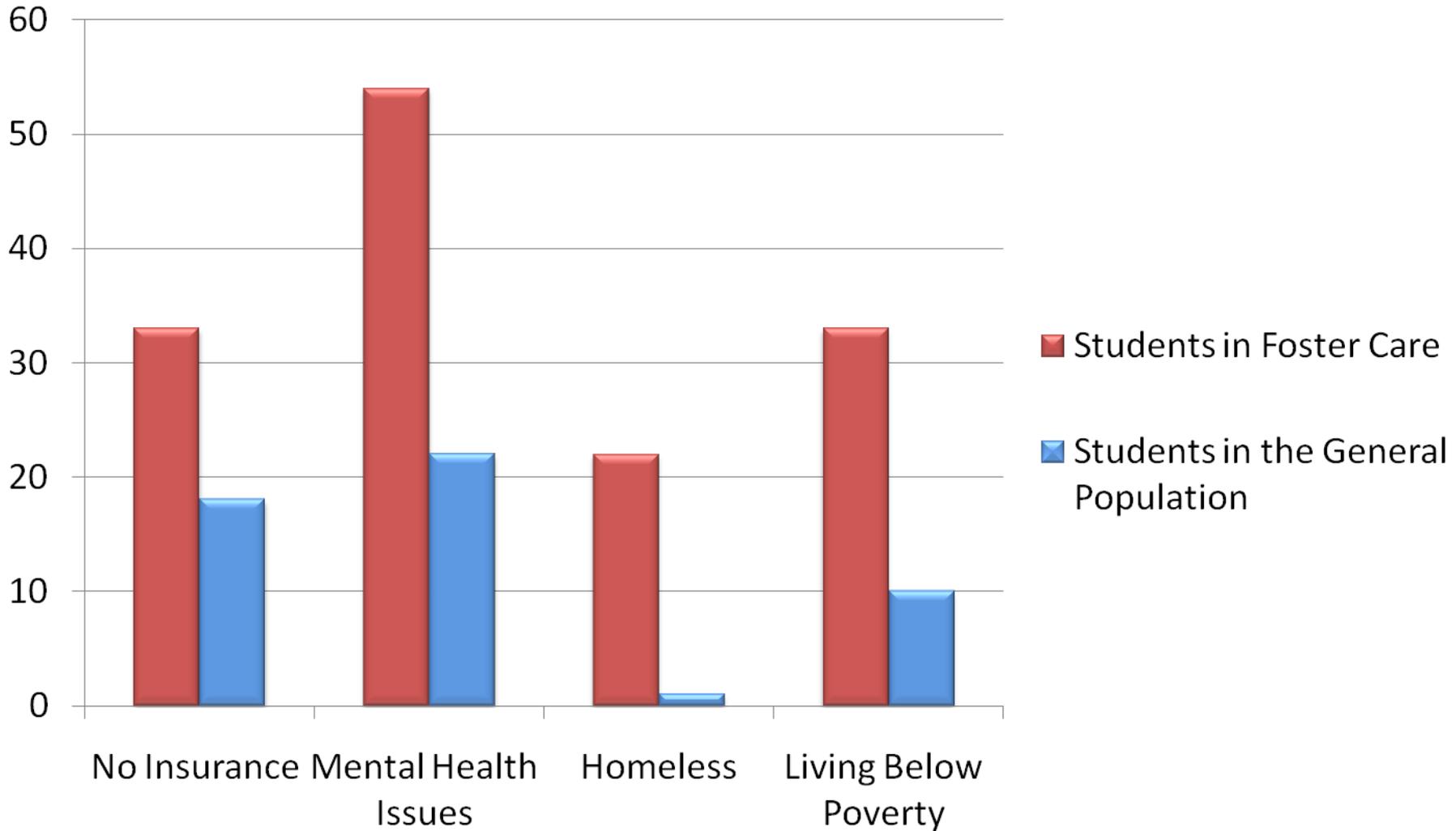
Overrepresented in Educational Achievement Gaps

- **Children in foster care are more likely to attend a low achieving school than other children (78% vs. 43%)**
-2004 Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago
- **Score 16 to 20 % below non-foster youth in statewide standardized tests**-*Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2001 Report on the Educational Attainment of Foster Youth*
- **After completing 10th or 11th grade, on average read at only a seventh grade level. Only approximately 44% read at high school level or higher.**
- Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Conditions of youth preparing to leave state care (2004)

Foster Care Alumni Studies: Education Outcomes



Adult Outcomes



Why is School Stability Important ?

- Close to 60% of children placed in out of home care return to their parents and their communities within a year of placement
- Students returning home from foster care placement often return to their schools of origin with significant academic delays
- Can be a positive counterweight to abuse, neglect, separation, and impermanence

Questions?

Benefits of Partnership

Focus on our most vulnerable student groups is essential if we are to:

- realize the goal of equity in education for all students
- Improve graduation rates and decrease dropout rates
- Increase college and career readiness
- Turn around our lowest performing schools
- Shrink the achievement gap

Shared Strategies

- Address data and information sharing issues
 - Longitudinal cohort study
 - Child welfare/ education data sharing
- Develop education policy, practices, and procedures
 - i.e. school stability, transition planning, and universal screening
- Empower youth, families, and communities
 - School based and youth centered foster care recruitment strategies
- Intersystem collaboration
 - Common vision/ shared purpose
 - Cross training
 - Shared planning