



Guidelines for an independent living programme preparing children aging out of foster care

M Shaw

 **orcid.org / 0000-0003-4343-328X**

Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Social Work in Child
Protection at the North-West University

Supervisor: Dr MM Steyn

Co-Supervisor: Dr EJ Simeon

Graduation: July 2019

Student number: 13037773

DECLARATION OF EDITOR

I, Aartia Joubert, accredited member of the South African Translators' Institute, hereby confirm
that I have edited the article

Guidelines for an Independent Living Programme Preparing Children Aging Out of Foster Care
by Mariska Shaw for language correctness.

Signature: 

Date: 07 January 2019

Aartia Joubert

BA, HDE

082 785 5219/aartiajoubert@vodamail.co.za

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to youth in foster care who are ready to age out of foster care into independent living.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the following people:

- ❖ To our Almighty Heavenly Father for his support, courage, strength and guidance to begin and finish this journey.
- ❖ To my supervisor, Dr. Marie Steyn and co-supervisor, Dr. Elzhane Simeon, thank you for your continuous support and guidance throughout my study.
- ❖ To my loving husband, Sebastian Shaw and children Arissa and Arian, for their continuous encouragement, love and financial support, I love you guys very much.
- ❖ To my mediator, Ms. Virginia Senna, for supporting me with identifying the participants.
- ❖ The participants who made my study possible.
- ❖ To my mother, Benneta Smith, who has always believed in my dreams and for supporting and encouraging me always.
- ❖ To my family members who have encouraged me and motivated me to complete the journey.

DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER

I, Mariska Shaw, hereby declare that the manuscript with the title, **Guidelines for an Independent Living Programme Preparing Children Aging out of Foster Care** is my own work

M Shaw

M. Shaw

17/04/2019

Date

PREFACE

This article was chosen in accordance with Regulations A.7.2.3 as stipulated in the yearbook of the North West University, Potchefstroom Campus, 2018 for the Degree Masters in Social Work: Child Protection. The article will comply with the requirements of the journal, Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk.

INSTRUCTION TO THE AUTHORS

SOCIAL WORK/ MAATSKAPLIKE WERK

The journal publishes, brief communications, book reviews and commentary articles already published from the field of Social Work. Contributions may be written in English / Afrikaans. All contributions will be critically reviewed by at least two referees on whose advice contributions will be accepted or rejected by the editorial committee. All refereeing is strictly confidential. Manuscripts may be returned to the authors if extensive revision is required or if the style of presentation does not conform to the practice. Commentary on articles already published in the Journal must be submitted with appropriate captions, the name(s) and address (es) of the author(s) preferably not exceeding 5 pages.

The entire manuscript must be submitted, plus one clear copy as well as a diskette with all the text, preferably in MS Word (Word Perfect) or ACSII. Manuscript must be typed, double spaced on the side of the A4 paper only. Use the APA system for reference. Short reference in the text: When word-for-word quotations, facts or arguments from other sources are cited, the surname(s), year of publication and the page number(s) must appear in parenthesis in the text. More details concerning sources referred to in the text should appear at the end of the manuscript under the caption "Reference". The sources must be arranged alphabetically according to the surnames of the authors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION BY EDITOR	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER.....	iv
PREFACE.....	v
INSTRUCTION TO AUTHORS.....	vi
SUMMARY.....	xii
OPSOMMING.....	xiii
DEFINITIONS.....	xiv

SECTION A: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1. Contextualization and problem statement	1
2. Research aim.....	6
3. Review of literature.....	6
4. Theoretical framework.....	6
4.1. Ecological system perspective.....	7
4.2. Social Constructivist world view.....	9
4.3. Strength perspective.....	9
5. Research Methodology.....	9
5.1. Approach.....	9
5.2. Research Design.....	10
5.3. Population and sampling.....	11
5.4. Participants and the recruitment process.....	12
5.5. Inclusion criteria.....	12
5.6. Exclusion criteria	13

5.7.	Data collection.....	14
5.8.	Data analysis.....	16
5.9.	Trustworthiness.....	17
5.10.	Ethical implication and research procedures.....	19
5.10.1.	Informed consent.....	19
5.10.2.	Avoidance of harm.....	20
5.10.3.	Debriefing participants.....	20
5.10.4.	Benefits of participants.....	21
5.10.5.	Competencies of the researcher	21
5.10.6.	Vulnerability	21
5.10.7.	Confidentiality.....	22
5.10.8.	Incentive and remuneration of participants.....	22
6.	Chapter Division.....	22
7.	References.....	24

SECTION B: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.	Introduction.....	31
2.	The legal process of placing children in alternative care in South Africa.....	33
2.1.	Children in need of care and protection.....	33
2.2.	Alternative care.....	35
2.2.1.	Foster Care.....	35
3.	Comparison of independent living programmes preparing children to age out of care in other countries.....	36
3.1.	America	36
3.2.	Australia.....	37
3.3.	England.....	37

4. Independent living programmes in South Africa	38
4.1. Independent living programme for children leaving residential care	38
4.2. Independent living programme for children leaving foster care.....	40
5. The requirements of Independent living programmes as part of preparation for foster children leaving.....	45
6. Conclusion.....	49
7. References	51

**SECTION C: ARTICLE GUIDELINES FOR AN INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMME
PREPARING CHILDREN AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE**

1. Introduction	56
2. Problem statement	57
3. Aim	60
4. Research Methodology.....	60
4.1. Research design.....	60
4.2. Population and sampling.....	61
4.3. Data collection.....	62
4.4. Data analysis	63
4.5. Ethical aspects.....	63
5. Characteristics and background of participants.....	64
5.1. Background information of participants.....	65
6. Research findings.....	68
6.1. Introduction.....	68
6.2. Theme 1: Looking back at your experience of aging out of foster care what would you describe as most significant to you	70
6.2.1. Sub-theme 1: Loss of social grant: Foster care.....	72

6.2.2. Sub-theme 2: Educational needs.....	73
6.3. Theme 2: Tell me more about your experience since your foster care situation was terminated	73
6.3.1. Sub-theme 1: Relationship with the foster parents.....	74
6.4. Theme 3: What will you identify as the most challenging and how do you handle it	76
6.4.1. Sub-theme 1: Unemployment.....	78
6.4.2. Sub-theme 2: Risky Behaviour	78
6.4.3. Sub-theme 3: Coping.....	79
6.5. Theme 4: To what extent did your foster care placement assist in preparing you for life after foster care.....	80
6.5.1. Sub-theme 1: Involvement of social worker.....	81
6.5.2. Sub-theme 2: Preparation for Independent living.....	81
6.6. Theme 5: Anything else you would like to add to the research theme.....	82
6.6.1. Sub-theme 1:Expectations for social workers.....	83
7. Conclusion	83
8. Recommendations	84
9. References.....	86

SECTION D: SUMMARY, LIMITATION OF STUDY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

1. Introduction.....	91
2. Summary.....	91
2.1. Theme 1: Looking back at your experience of aging out of foster care, what would you describe as most significant to you.....	91

2.2.	Theme 2: Tell me about your experience since your foster care situation was terminated.....	92
2.3.	Theme 3: What will you identify as most challenging and how did you handle it.....	93
2.4.	Theme 4: To what extent do you feel your foster care placement assisted in preparing you for life after foster care.....	93
2.5.	Theme 5: Anything else you would like to add to the research theme.....	93
3.	Limitation of the study.....	93
4.	Recommendation.....	94
4.1.	Recommendations for the development of guidelines for social workers on providing preparations for children aging out of foster care.....	94
4.2.	Recommendation for social workers to be trained in Independent living programmes.....	95
4.3.	Recommendation for the involvement of key stakeholders.....	95
4.4.	Recommendation for services to foster care families.....	95
4.5.	Recommendation for service to foster children.....	96
4.6.	Recommendation for further studies.....	96
5.	Conclusion.....	96
6.	Combined References.....	98

SECTION E: ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: Ethical Approval

Annexure 2: Permission Department of Provincial Social Development

Annexure 3: Permission Letter Provincial Director: Child Care and Protection Unit

Annexure 4: Permission from Ramotshere Moiloa Service Point

Annexure 5: Letter to Department of Social Development

Annexure 6: Letter to Ramotshere Moiloa Service Point

Annexure 7: Written consent and consent form

Annexure 8: Interview Schedule

Annexure 9: Proof of attendance: Basic Health Research Ethics

Annexure 10: Trree Training

Annexure 11: Confirmation letter peer reviewer

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The foster care process in South Africa

Figure 2: Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Stakeholders for ILP

Table 2: Characteristics of previous foster youth

Table 3: Themes and Sub-themes

SUMMARY

TITLE: Guidelines for an Independent Living Programme preparing children aging out of foster care

Keywords: Guidelines, independent living programme, aging out, foster care

Foster youth leaving foster care are seen as the most vulnerable and disadvantaged group in our society. Foster youth are faced with challenges such as homelessness, employment issues, education and unplanned pregnancies when they transition from foster care into adulthood. Studies have shown that youth aging out foster care are ill prepared for successful transition into adulthood. Foster youth are in need of support from foster parents and social workers to provide them with skills such as emotional support, maintaining relationships and life skills to be able to manage their daily task to be successful independent members in society when leaving care. Foster youth in foster care must have a role in the planning of their transition to adulthood.

South Africa's legislation, such as the Children's Act no. 38 of 2005, emphasises a need for an independent living programme for youth aging out of care from a formal setting where alternative care is provided, such as Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCC). The Department of Social Development designed guidelines for the effective management of foster care where they outlined the Independent living programme as a requirement to render foster care supervision service. If an independent living programmes could have been discussed in detailed in the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 our foster youth will have the opportunity to age out care knowing that they received the necessary skills to leave independently in the society. The aim of the study was to explore how previous foster youth perceived their transition from foster care to independent living in order to have guidelines specifically to support foster youth aging out foster care to independent living.

OPSOMMING

Sleutel begrippe : Riglyne , onafhanklike lewensprogram. Veroudering, pleesorg

Pleesorgjeug wat pleesorg verlaat word gesien as die mees kwesbare en benadeelde groep in ons samelewing. Pleesorgjeug word in die gesig gestaar met uitdagings soos haweloosheid, indiensnemingskwessies , opvoedkunde en onbeplande swangerskappe wanneer hulle oorgang vanaf pleesorg na volwasenheid ervaar. Pleesorg jeug het 'n behoefte aan ondersteuning vanaf hulle pleegouers en Maatskaplike werkers om hulle te voorsien met vaardighede soos emosionele ondersteuning, handhawing van verhoudings en lewensvaardighede om hul daaglikse take te kan verrig, sodat hulle suksesvolle onafhanklike lede in die samelewing kan wees wanneer pleesorg verlaat word. Pleesorgjeug in pleesorg moet dus 'n rol speel in die beplanning van hul oorgang na volwassenheid.

Suid- Afrika se wetgewing soos die Kinderwet no. 38 van 2005 beklemtoon 'n behoefte na 'n Onafhanklike Lewensprogram vir kinders wat uit versorging verouder, byvoorbeeld 'n van 'n formele instelling wat alternatiewe sorg voorsien, soos Kinder en Jeugsorsentrums(KJS). Die Department van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling het riglyne ontwerp vir die doeltreffende bestuur van pleesorg, waarin die Onafhanklike lewensprogram as 'n vereiste uiteengesit word vir die lewering van pleesorg toesigdienste .Indien die Onafhanklike Lewensprogram slegs 'n in die Kinderwet no 38 van 2005 as 'n gedetailleerde bespreking kon dien , sou die pleesorgjeug die geleentheid had het om te weet dat hulle die nodige vervaardighede sal kry om uit sorg te kan verouder na 'n onafhanklike lewe in die samelewing.Die doel van die studie was om ondersoek in te stel na hoe vorige pleesorgjeugdige hul oorgang vanaf pleesorg na onafhanklike lewe ervaar het ten einde riglyne te formuleer gefokus op pleesorgjeug wat uit pleesorg verouder na onafhanklike lewe.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms are clarified as for the purpose of this study:

Guidelines

Collins English Dictionary (2016:1) refers to guidelines as principles put forward to set standards or to determine a course of action.

Independent Living programmes

Bosset (2016:3) "Independent Living Programme (ILP) can be describe as completing the various skills modules and working with ILP social worker to have a plan once emancipation occurs". Foster and Gifford (2004:1-2) definition best describe what Independent living Programme is which can be defined as "a set of social skills designed to prepare the young person in advance for adult life where they are taught interpersonal skills aimed at helping them to interact with the world around them and to create structure in their lives.

Aging out

Craft, (2018) refers to "aging out" as children within a state's foster care system who are still in the system when they reach the age of maturity or when they have graduated from high school. This process is characterized by a goal of emancipation or becoming independent after recently leaving care (Mullins-Geiger & Schelbe, 2014:26).

Foster care

According to Section 180 of the Children Act 38 of 2005, as amended, a child may be placed in foster care with (a) a person who is not a family member of the child, (b) with a family member who is not the parent or guardian of the child, or (c) in a registered cluster foster scheme (Bosman-Sadie, Corrie & Swanepoel, 2013:273). Furthermore, Harris and White (2013:17) refer to foster care as fostering (substitute family care) "an arrangement where individuals, approved for the purpose, care for children who cannot live with their own parents".

SECTION A: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1. Contextualization and Problem Statement

Currently, research studies mainly focus on foster care placement successes or the characteristics of good foster carers, based on the opinions of people currently involved in foster care systems, such as foster carers (parents), social workers or children in care (Randle, 2013:3). Furthermore, Randle (2013:5) points out that, for most of these studies, the perspective is the absence of those individuals who had personal experiences of being in foster care but are now adults. International research on youth leaving care has indicated a disturbing pattern of poor outcomes for youths who are no longer in the formal care system (Tanur, 2012:326). Investing in human well-being is clearly important for success during the transition to adulthood, but studies of former foster youth find poor levels of educational attainment. Jones (2011:1919) also states that recently discharged former foster youth have found that these young adults often leave care without a high school diploma. Educational achievement is widely recognised as one of the least successful and most challenging aspects of the care system, which has far reaching consequences for care leavers as they seek employment and housing according to Bond (2018:77) .These studies such as (Berzin,2008; Stott, 2012) also found that this population fares poorly compared to its peers (Kerman, Freundlich & Macluccio, 2009:44).

Several studies such as (Berzin, Rhodes,& Curtis, 2011; Betz, 2010 & Dixon, 2008) shown youth transitioning out of foster care to be worse off than their counterparts who have never lived in foster care (Atkinson, 2008, Stott 2012, . These care leavers are individuals found to have overall poorer outcomes in the domains of housing, employment, education, justice system involvement, mental health, substance use, physical health and early parenting (Mullins-Geiger & Schelbe, 2014:31). As pointed out

by Höjer & Sjöblom, (2010:119) Curry & Abrams, (2015:144) individuals of one domain of aging out of care have particular difficulties to be in a stable relationship and forming relations with their extended family, romantic partners and their parents.

The researcher is of the opinion that foster youth who have reached maturity age between 18 years or 21 years to exit-foster care are not efficiently prepared for the transition into adulthood with direct involvement in their decision making that affects their lives and future. This statement is supported by (Mitchell, Jones & Renema, 2015) for many of these youth major life decision have been made by the welfare system more often without their personal involvement. South Africa's legislation, such as the Children's Act 38 of 2005, emphasises a need for an independent living programme for youth aging out of care from a formal setting.

The formal setting provides alternative care such as Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCC). Bosset (2016:3) "Independent Living Programme (ILP) can be describe as completing the various skills modules and working with ILP social worker to have a plan once emancipation occurs". However, for the aim of this researcher, Foster and Gifford (2004:1-2) definition best describe what Independent living Programme entails which can be defined as "a set of social skills designed to prepare the youth in advance for adult life where they are taught interpersonal skills aimed at helping them to interact with the world around them and to create structure in their lives". According to the Department of Health and Human Services in America (n.d.) an independent living programme (ILP) is (A) federal funded programme which assists current and former youth between the ages of 16 and 21 to achieve self-sufficiency prior to and after exiting the foster care system. They are taught interpersonal skills such as establishing positive relationships and making well informed decisions aimed at helping them to interact with

the world around them and to create structure in their lives. This is even more apparent in circumstances where the young person has limited or no support structure after foster care.

In South Africa, there are the Mamelani Projects programmes available that prepare children leaving residential care however no programmes are founded on children leaving foster care. With regard to aging out of care, this refers to youth who were previously placed in alternative care, other than that of their biological parents. According to section 180 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, a child may be placed in foster care with "(a) a person who is not a family member of the child, (b) with a family member who is not the parent or guardian of the child; or (c) in a registered cluster foster care scheme" (Bosman-Sadie, Corrie & Swanepoel, 2013: 273). The right to appropriate alternative care, based on the principle of consideration of the best interests of the child, is the starting point and real issue when we review and analyse the placement of children in foster care (Breen, 2015:1).

Youth leaving foster care in South Africa are essentially not offered state support when transitioning out of foster care (Stein, 2005:27; Tanur, 2012:330). Tanur (2012:330) also argues that foster children aging out of care are unprepared to deal with vulnerabilities such as securing employment and forming and maintaining positive relationships. In comparison to their peers, care-leavers have to deal with major changes in their lives at a far younger age such as leaving care, setting up home and entering the workforce (Stein, 2005:27). Furthermore, Antle; Johnson; Barbee & Sullivan (2009:309) argues that youth aging out of foster care are usually not given opportunity to transition gradually into adulthood , utilizing the safety net of family if they find themselves unable to cope with the many challenges of adult life . Gelling (2009:14) also adds that young

people who have grown up in care, are more vulnerable due to the fact that if things do not work out as expected, they do not have a stable support structure to rely on. They are likely to experience difficulties when they exit foster care, especially when they have limited resources and support. “Foster youth not only lose state support at emancipation but they may not have support from the families available to non-foster children when they encounter difficulties adjusting to independent living” (Jones, 2011:1919).

The Independent living programmes falls within the scope of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 in terms of Section 191(3) (e) that states in addition to residential care programmes, a Child and Youth Care Centre (CYCC) may also offer programmes either for children in their care or children living at home that include “transitional programmes to assist children leaving the facility after they reach the age of 18”. Furthermore stipulated in Regulations 69 to 71 of the same Act regarding cluster foster schemes states that “the best interests of the children in cluster foster care must be promoted through the provision of prescribed types of services”, specifically services that “assist a young person with the transition when leaving cluster foster care after reaching the age of 18”. In South Africa, youth in alternative care between 18 and 21 years of age are discharged by the Department of Social Development, following recommendations by the social worker responsible for managing the case. Between the age of 18 of 21 years, the young person is considered to be an adult and thus needs to take full responsibility for his/her well-being and needs.

The Children’s Act 38 of 2005 emphasises a need for young people, exiting child and youth care centres (CYCC), to be prepared for life after care through the implementation of independent living programmes by the CYCC’s, however there is no specific

guidelines that entail what is needed to prepare or support the transition of foster youth into independent living. Consequently, the researcher is of the opinion that a similar principle should apply in the case of youth who exit foster care from families, since they are also in a form of alternative care. Given the above, each year, a number of youth are aging out of foster care and sometimes they resort to trying to live on their own without any family support.

The difference is that a youth living with their parents, who reach the age of maturity, can still depend on their parents for support, whereas the foster child who was in the care of the foster parent, who depended on the foster care grant to provide for the needs of the youth is less fortunate, because when the grant is no longer payable to the foster parents, they are not obligated to provide for the needs of the foster child, hence a previous foster child has to try to survive on his/her own. Aging out of care is a legal event that occurs when the Court formally discharges a young person from the custody of the state, based on the youth's chronological age (Unrau, Font & Rawls, 2012:76).

Based on the afore-mentioned discussion, the conclusion was reached that it can be emphasised that an independent living programme is therefore vital to ensure the improved outcomes of youth leaving care, both in preparing youth to exit care and providing support post care (Mallon, 1998:61-78). Pinkerton (2011:2413) suggests that a planned and properly managed preparation process for leaving care is needed for youth leaving a CYCC. He also suggests that the process should be introduced as early on in care as possible, with the direct involvement of the young person in the process (Pinkerton, 2011:2413). As indicated earlier, the same situation applies to foster care children. Based solely upon the literature reviewed thus far on foster care, specifically about youth aging out of care into independent living, one can conclude that not much is

done to prepare foster youth for young adulthood however provision are made for children leaving residential care.

The research question that the study attempted to answer was:

What should be the guidelines for an independent living programme for foster children aging out of foster care in preparation for life after care?

2. Research Aim

The aim of the study is to identify what guidelines should be included in an Independent living programme in preparation for foster children aging out of care.

3. Review of Literature

The purpose of the review of literature is to create an understanding of the phenomena. A review of theoretical and empirical literature is an imperative part of undertaking a qualitative study (Sandelowski, 2010:80). The research review consisted of books, academic articles, journals, online resources and other relevant academic resources. Furthermore, the researcher made use of electronic search engines through the NWU library, EBSCOhost, Research Database and Google Scholar. By means of data verification, the researcher verified the themes, such as coping mechanisms; interpersonal relationships; support structure and sense of worth; to the literature review after she interviewed all the participants. This was to compare the views expressed to those in the literature studied on children leaving residential care.

4. Theoretical Framework

According to De Vos and Strydom (2011:36), one of the functions of a conceptual framework is to explain salient concepts and to reveal the “relationships between concepts”. The researcher’s theoretical framework on the phenomena of Independent

living programmes for foster youth was based on ecological system perspective, social constructivist worldview and the strengths perspective.

4.1. Ecological system theory

The ecological framework “is a broad overarching paradigm or Meta theory, bridging several fields of theory and research and orienting practitioners and researchers to the importance of integrative, multilevel and multi-dimensional approaches to person-environmental relationship Kemp (2010:3).The foster youth who have aged of foster care does not live in isolation but is interacting on a daily basis in their environment. These system include family, friends, work, social services, politics, religion, good and services and educational system (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2012:9). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979; 4) this structure is conceived as “a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like the set of Russian dolls”. Bronfenbrenner ecological system theory remains the pillar of system. The ecological system exists with the following system:

Microsystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979:22) defines the microsystem as “a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics”.. According to Ambrosino, Hefferman, Shuttleworth & Ambrosino (2012:55) this level incorporate “the individual level of functioning, the intellectual and emotional capacities and motivation; the impact of life experiences; and the interaction and connections between that individual and other in immediate environment”. This indicates how the foster youth interacts on a daily basis with other family and friends

Mesosystem

The next level, the Mesosystem, looks beyond single settings and recognises the links that exist between two or more microsystems (Smith & Hamon, 2012:186). This reflects how the connection and cooperation between families, colleagues and the community have which have an impact on their lives.

Exosystem

The ecological environment is conceived as extending far beyond the immediate situation directly affecting the developing person- the object to which he responds or people with whom he interacts on a face- to- face basis (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:7). Examples of exosystem include the neighbourhood, government agencies, the work world, informal social networks, communication and transportation system and the media (Smith & Hamon 2012:186)

Macrosystem

The macrosystem refers to consistencies, in the form of content of lower order system (micro-,meso, and exo-) that exist or could exist at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole , along with any belief system or ideology underlying such consistencies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:26). The macrosystem dictates the governmental law and policies such as Children's Act no 38 of 2005 and many more that has a direct impact on their lives of the foster youth

Chronosystem

The chronosystem indicates that all aspect of time impact on development within the ecological system, and that all the embedded system change over time (Bronfenbrenner in Keenan & Evans, 2001:3).

4.2. Social constructivist worldview

Constructivism is an alternative approach to research and is based on the philosophical doctrines of idealism and humanism (Walliman, 2011:21) The researcher is not observing phenomena from the outside system but is inextricably bound into the human situation which is being study (Walliman, 2011:21) Constructivism worldview is ideal for the study as the researcher will depend on the views of the participants experience with regard to aging out of foster care and how they have experienced it.

4.3. Strengths perspective

The Strengths perspective focuses on how people view themselves with the strengths and the competencies. Zastrow (2010:52) indicates that the Strength perspective is closely related to the concept of empowerment. Furthermore stated in Zastrow (2010:52) the Strength perspective is useful across the life cycle and throughout the assessment, intervention and evaluations stages of the helping process. The Strengths perspective is relevant to this study as the researcher is interested in finding out whether the foster youth when leaving care was empowered to transition successfully into independent living. A strengths perspective requires professionals such as residential social workers, generic social workers and child and youth care workers to focus on the youth strengths and it highlights the importance of allowing the youth to participate in the process of improving his or her circumstances (Early & GlenMaye, 2000:120).

5. Research Methodology

5.1. Approach

To achieve the objective of the study, the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach, with the purpose of exploring experiences of foster youth who have already

aged out of foster care. This approach is described by using the experience and perspectives of previous foster youth in the study. Botma, Greef, Mulaudzi & Wright (2010:182) maintains that qualitative research, rather than quantitative research, aims at providing insight on a phenomenon by understanding “the feelings, behaviours, thoughts, insights and actions” of individuals. In a research study, the choice of the design depends on the research problem and questions (Greeff, 2010:209). The design encapsulates the nature, aims and context within which the research ought to take place (Klopper, 2008:88). An overview of the research design and the research method used in this research follows underneath.

5.2. Research Design

Qualitative research is concerned with the generation of new ideas and insights into previous problems and to enhance knowledge (McLeod, 2011:12). The research was explorative in nature with the use of semi-structured interviews. The purpose of exploratory research is to gain a better understanding of a situation, phenomenon, community and individual (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:95). The researcher gained a better understanding of the experiences of previously fostered youth who have aged out of foster care, without any formal preparation for independent living. The finding of this study provided the researcher with insight on potential guidelines that can be used by social workers in preparation of foster youth aging out of foster care. Specifically, the researcher was able, through this research, to identify experiential factors of post-termination functioning that point to inadequate preparation, adjustment problems and inability to function independently as an adult, signifying unsuccessful transition into adulthood for these individuals. An in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of care leavers in the researcher’s geographical context of work, provided an in-depth perspective of the issues such individuals face. This study was, therefore, retrospective

in nature, relying on the experiences and views of persons that have already left the alternative care situation and is no longer subject to formal care by foster parents.

5.3. Population and sampling

Zeerust is a municipal area situated in the North-West Province. Zeerust is surrounded by 20 wards that are part of the Ngaka Modiri Moleme District. A simple random sample (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:189-199) was drawn from the whole population of previously fostered children who aged out of care between 2010 and 2014 in the North-West Province, in the Ngake Modira Molema District and of which Ramotshere Moiloa Municipality was identified by pulling the required number from a hat. The researcher requested access to participants from Mr Johan Engel, Service Point Manager and a representative of the Department of Social Development, since the files are kept in a secured registry by the Department of Social Development in Zeerust and are accessible only with the permission of this Department.

With the use of systematic sampling (Babbie, 2016:207-209), the sample size not predetermined, but after interviewing 12 participants data saturation was obtain as information began to be repetitive of data. Simon (2011:1) states that data saturation occurs when the researcher is no longer hearing or seeing new information. The researcher was of the opinion that participants were experts in expressing their views and experiences of leaving foster care placements and is thus capable of clearly articulating their experiences regarding their adaptation to independent living. Participants were identified from cases in the registry from areas within the 20 wards within Zeerust. This allowed the researcher to find suitable participants whom could be interviewed to explore their experiences of aging out of foster care.

5.4. Participants and the recruitment process

Purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method (Botma *et al.*, 2010:200201; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:80; Strydom, 2011:232), was used due to the qualitative nature of the study to ensure that only foster youth who have aged out of care, therefore they met the criteria regarding Act 38 of 2005 to leave foster care and was interviewed based on the inclusion criteria. The researcher identified 15 participants from amongst the cases in the registry of youths who have aged out of care. All persons who have aged out of care in the Zeerust Social Development office was put in a hat and 15 names were drawn. Each individual was, therefore, chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population had an equal chance of being included in the sample. The registry is at an office at the Zeerust Social Development office, which contains steel cabinets where the closed service delivery files are being stored. The period since they aged out was at least one year and more, but not longer than five years. The participants were chosen based on basis that they have been for a year without social work support thus leaving care. The process still fresh on their minds and not longer than five years as they might have forgotten how it felt when they were leaving care and experiences vague. If they aged out of care in terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, they were discharged from foster care and the Children's Act was no longer applicable to the child. In terms of this study, the lapsed mandate was an advantage, as this ensured greater independence for the study.

5.5. Inclusion criteria

The participants had to meet the following criteria:

- Have been out of foster care for a period of at least one year and no longer than five years.
- Be able to communicate fluently in English or Afrikaans.

- Be able to communicate freely and verbally to express themselves adequately.
- Willing to take part in a face-to-face interview.
- Give consent for the recording of the interview questionnaire on a voice recorder.
- Had to be previously placed in foster care following a Court order.
- Have aged out of foster care due to reaching maturity (18 or 21 years according to the Children's Act, 38 of 2005).
- Reside within the Zeerust municipality of Social Development.
- Males and females irrespective of their race, culture, ethnicity or creed

5.6. Exclusion criteria

Participants were excluded from the research according to the following:

They were

- Children who were previously under the supervisory care of the researcher and this were done to avoid having conflict of interest amongst the participants.
- Foster children who are in foster care and therefore have not experienced aging out of care and who are still receiving support from the state
- Children who did not reach maturity age at the time of their disengagement from care and went live with their families but not independently.
- Children who did not age out of care from the Department of Social Development, Zeerust, because they are not on the database of the Department of Social Development, Zeerust and would not be possible to identify.
- Children who did not have enough experienced life and its challenges to be able to identify these challenges.

5.7. Data collection

Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are defined as interviews “organised around areas of particular interests” (Greeff, 2011:348). This type of interview involves the implementation of a few predetermined questions and special topics (Berg & Lune, 2014:112). An interview schedule was used (Annexure 8). The interview schedule was developed through the review of literature, with regular supervision by the researcher’s promoter and with guidance from the Ethics committee of both HREC. This form of data collection allowed for flexibility and was more appropriate for issues that are of a complex, controversial and/or personal nature (Botma *et al.*, 2010:208; Greeff, 2011:352). The interviews were conducted by the researcher herself. The reason for this was that the researcher did not have any contact with the participants and never had any prior contacts with them. Even though the researcher worked within a foster care setting, she is located in Brits, which is operating independently and thus have no connection with the area in which the study was conducted.

The interviews were conducted were at participants preferred location such as their residing areas. To capture participants experience and this was done and guided by participant’s permission to be audio recorder. This included the use of observations and probing further where clarity was needed. Data were analysed as described by Kvale (1996) (as cited in Babbie, 2016:313), who points out that following the interviews, and it was the researcher’s responsibility to transcribe, analyse, verify and report the outcome of the study.

The interview lasted between 30-60 minutes. The researcher analysed data by identifying the similarities and differences between aspects that emerged during

interviews. After collecting data, the researcher ensured that all voice recorded information was destroyed upon completion of transcribe, in which case these documents were secured in her password-protected computer. The information on the researcher's computer was immediately destroyed after completion of the study and is currently stored at COMPRES at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, for a period of five years.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted over a period of a week. When conducting the interviews, the researcher made sure that the participants experienced the value of their inputs to the research theme. The semi-structured schedule contained questions such as the following:

1. Looking back at your experience of aging out of foster care, what would you describe as most significant to you?
2. Tell me about your experiences since your foster care situation was terminated?
3. What will you identify as the most challenging, and how did you handle it?
4. To what extent do you feel your foster care placement assisted in preparing you for life after foster care?
5. Anything else you would like to add to the research theme?

In April 2015, the researcher was trained by Prof M. Greeff in a two-day workshop on the ethics involved in research. The researcher delivered proof to the Social Work Division at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus that she can conduct research interviews. In addition the researcher also completed the online Trree training (Training and Resources in Research Ethics Evaluation) to allow for ethical approach in conducting research.

5.8. Data analysis

According to Forrester (2010:88), an interview schedule can be defined as “a list of prepared questions that the researcher anticipates to use during an interview”. In this research, the researcher formulated broad categories of questions within the “aging out of foster care” field. The researcher was guided by the interview schedule that allowed participants to elaborate on the questions asked by the researcher. The ATLAS Ti programme (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:509-515; Monette, Sullivan & De Jong, 2002:535) was used in analysing the qualitative data.

The ATLAS Ti program is a powerful workbench for the qualitative analysis of textual, graphical, audio and video data. The desired information is extracted from the collected data by means of various techniques and analysed for trends and other features. The researcher read transcripts several times in order to get immersed in the details and to gain a sense of the interview as a whole, before coding it into sections. The researcher loaded the transcripts with the interviews of the participants to the Atlas TI programme. The responses of the participants was captured coded into codes which was identified as the themes. After this process was completed the five themes was identified. The data was then further coded into sub- themes. The coding of the data was all done by researcher through the assistance of the Atlas Ti programme. Exploring themes is an active process requiring the researcher to construct the main themes and subthemes of the content (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006:322). The researcher made use of Ms R Lekgothoane a social work supervisor as a peer reviewer (Creswell, 2013: 251-253) to confirm that the results from the research data were dealt with in a trustworthy and credible way. (See attached letter, Addendum 11) All of the data from the schedules and the observation measures were stored in a computerised database. After the dissertation is approved the data will be stored at COMPRES Research Unit for

Psycho-Social Research at the NWU, Potchefstroom Campus for 5 years and then destroyed.

5.9. Trustworthiness

In ensuring trustworthiness, the researcher followed a process as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (cited in Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:419-421); propose the following four alternative constructs that they believe reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm more accurately. The constructs are summarised as follows:

Truth Value (Credibility)

Credibility/ Authenticity is the alternative to internal valid in which the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject has been identified and describe(Botma *et al.*, 2010:233;Shurink *et al.*,2011:419-420).

The researcher ensured that an initial rapport was built with the participants during the semi-structured interview. This motivated participants to communicate honestly and to realise the contribution and importance of this study. The researcher also ensured that data was captured by recording the interviews and also taking field notes. The researcher further ensured that she used skills such as probing and seeking further clarity in order to obtain an in- depth description of the data to get the complexities of variables and interaction.

Consistency

The researcher asks whether the research process is logical, well documented and audited, thus the alternative to reliability in which the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study, as well as changes in the

design, created by increasingly refined understanding of the setting. (Bothma *et al.*, 2010: 233; Shurink *et al.*, 2011: 420). Auditing was made possible by capturing data by means of verbatim voice recordings and field notes. The researcher ensured that the same questions were used during different interviews to ensure consistency

Applicability (Transferability)

Transferability refers to detailed description and quotations used by research participants, thus allowing the readers to draw their own conclusion from the study. The collected data was converted into useful information for use in the guideline. The researcher made use of the Atlas TI programme (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:409-515; Monette *et al.*, 2002:535) to analyse the research data. This was used to obtain fair and independent opinions on the themes and sub – themes that were gathered from the interviews with the participants who, in this study were viewed as experts on the research theme. The researcher collected data till the point of data saturation was reached.

Neutrality (Conformability)

Conformability refers to the question of whether the researcher provides evidence that corroborates the findings and interpretation by means of auditing (Shurink *et al.*, 2011:421). In this study, the data findings, interpretation and recommendations will be internally consistent so that the conclusion may be accepted. Field notes made by the researcher were comprehensive and were made available for auditing. The researcher made use of triangulation to ensure that data analysed was no bias (Babbie & Mouton,2001:275). For this purpose the researcher relied on literature control post analysing for comparing findings to existing literature.

5.10. Ethical Implications and Research Procedures

The researcher is a professional and registered social worker at the Department of Social Development and is bounded by the code of ethics as set out by the South African Council for Service Professions (SACSSP). The researcher attended ethics' training at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus (Annexure 9) and was conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the International Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and the Ethical Guidelines for Research of the National Health Research Ethics Council. The study was approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Science of the North-West University (NWU -00013-17-A1) see Annexure 1.

The ethical protection of participants was ensured through the following research procedure

- The researcher obtained formal consent from the North West Provincial Department of Social Development to conduct research at Ramotshere Moiloa and consent was obtained (Annexure 2)
- The researcher obtained formal consent from Provincial Director for Child Care and Protection to access the closed files and consent was obtain (Annexure 3)
- The researcher obtained formal consent from Service Point Manager of Ramotshere Moiloa to access their closed files and consent was obtain(Annexure 4)

The following ethical aspects as discussed by Strydom (2011:113-29) were taken into consideration within the study:

5.10.1. Informed consent

After obtaining permission to use foster care files, the researcher got files from the registry in the office on those participants that met the inclusion criteria. Permission was

granted from the Provincial Department of Social Development, Ms. R.M Menyatsoe (see Annexure 3). The mediator, Ms. Virginia Senna (Social Work Supervisor), contacted participants by telephone to explain to them the purpose of the study and recruit them for participation. The consent forms were delivered by Ms. Senna, the mediator and she again discussed the informed consent forms and the participants were able to ask questions if necessary. Participants were given a period of four days, in which they would indicate whether they were interested in the study and willing to participate. The signed consent forms were collected by the mediator, Ms. Senna, at the homes of the participants (see Annexure 7).

5.10.2. Avoidance of harm to participants

The ethical risk in the proposed study was of medium nature. The participants were not being exposed to dangerous situations such as physical harm. The researcher did not render any therapeutic intervention. However, the researcher took into consideration the fact that conducting the study may cause the participants to experience painful and emotional memories. The researcher thus arranged for debriefing sessions that would be rendered by the mediator, who has over 10 years' experience in the field of Social Work. When a participant is in need of assistance he/she will immediately be referred to the area social worker for the necessary intervention services. The social workers will conduct home visits for the intervention needed and provide the participants with the services required.

5.10.3. Debriefing participants

The researcher informed the participants that if they became distressed in any way throughout the study, the researcher would provide access to a counsellor. However,

none of the participants contacted the researcher to access these services after the study was conducted or indicated during the interview that debriefing was necessary.

5.10.4. Benefits of participants

There were no direct benefits for participants in the study. Based on the participants' circumstances, a voucher to the value of R50 for use at the local grocery store was given to each participant as a token of appreciation.

5.10.5. Competencies of the researcher

The researcher has nine years' experience in the field of Child Care and Protection Services, as well as generic social work. The researcher is ethically obliged to ensure that everybody involved in the proposed investigation is competent, honest and adequately skilled (Strydom, 2011:123). The research supervisor has been supervising postgraduate students for several years.

5.10.6. Vulnerability

The researcher's project included adults who were in foster care but have aged out of foster care and are therefore currently living independently. The participants were previously placed in foster care in Zeerust and were from the communities within Zeerust. The fact that participants have been previously placed in foster care makes them vulnerable due to the fact that in most instances undesirable circumstances are what led children be placed in foster care. Taking part in the study is likely to bring back memories that they might rather prefer to suppress and it might have significant negative impact on their emotions. In an attempt to minimise possible further vulnerabilities on participants , the researcher ensures that debriefing immediately after

interviews were made available with participants with local welfare social worker and if a need arise for further counselling to take place.

5.10.7. Confidentiality

Confidentiality can be viewed as a continuum of privacy which refers to agreements between persons that limit other access to private information (Strydom, 2011:119). Data was collected through a semi-structured interview schedule, and the data were kept in a lockable cabinet. The researcher used no identifying information in the report that could be directly linked to any of the participants. Padget (2008:67) states that “qualitative researchers cannot offer the anonymity or safety in numbers that quantitative researchers can”. The researcher ensured that the identities of those participants who wished to remain confidential were kept so. The transcribed data was coded with symbols so that no participant’s details were linked with the participant.

5.10.8. Incentive or remuneration of participants

The participants received a token of appreciation for participation in the study. A voucher to the value of R50 was given to each participant to be used at the local grocery store as a token of appreciation.

6. Chapter Division

SECTION A: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

SECTION B: LITERATURE REVIEW

SECTION C: ARTICLE: GUIDELINES FOR AN INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMME
PREPARING CHILDREN AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

SECTION D: SUMMARY, LIMITATION OF STUDY, RECOMMENDATION AND
CONCLUSION

SECTION E: ANNEXURES

7. References

Acts see South Africa

Ambrosino, R., Hefferman, J., Shuttleworth, G. & Ambrosino, R. (2012). *Social work and Social Welfare: An introduction*. (7th ed.) Australia: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

Atkinson, M. (2008). Aging out of foster care: Towards a universal safety net for former foster care youth. *Harvard Civil Rights/Civil Liberties Law Review*, 43, 183-212.

Babbie, E. (2016). *The practice of social research* (14th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.

Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Berg, B.L., & Lune, H. (2014). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (8th ed.). New York: Pearson.

Berzin, S. C. (2008). Difficulties in the transition to adulthood: Using propensity scoring to understand what makes youth vulnerable. *Social Service Review*, 82, 171-196.

Berzin, S.C., Rhodes, A.M., & Curtis, M.A. (2011). Housing experiences of former foster youth: How do they fare in comparison to other youth? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(1), 2119-2126. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.06.018.

Betz, C.L. (2010). Emancipation of youth in foster care: The dilemma (editorial). *Journal of Paediatric Nursing*, 25(4), 241-243. doi:10.1016/j.pedn.2009.11.005

Bond, S. (2018). Care – leaving in South Africa: an international and social justice perspective. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 34(1), 76-90. doi:10.1080/21699763.2017.1413994

Bosman-Sadie, H., Corrie, L. & Swanepoel, E. (2013). *A practical approach to the Children's Act* (2nd ed.). South Africa: LexisNexis.

Bosset, S. (2016) Foster care independent living program and adolescent. San Bernardino: California State University.

Botma, Y., Greeff, M., Mulaudzi, F.M. & Wright, S.C.D. (2010). *Research in Health Science*. Cape Town: Heineman, Pearson Education.

Breen, N. (2015). *Policy brief: Foster care in South Africa: where to from here?* Johannesburg Child Welfare.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Craft, C. (2018). What it means when a foster child ages out. Retrieved from http://www.liveabout.com/what-is-aging-out-adoption_27071

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Collins English Dictionary. (2016). Guideline. Retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/guideline>.

Curry, S.R., & Abrams, L.S. (2015). Housing and social support for youth aging out of foster care: State of the research literature and direction for future inquiry. *Child Adolescent Social Work Journal*,32,143-153. doi10.1007/s10560-014-0346-4

Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.dhss.sacounty.net/CPS/Pages/Independent-living-program/SP-ILP-Extended-foster-care.aspx>

De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delpont, C. S. L. (Ed.), *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed.) (pp. 397-423). Pretoria: Van Schaik

Dixon, J. (2008). Young people leaving care: Health, wellbeing and outcomes. *Child and Family Social Work*,13,207-217.

Early, T. & GlenMaye, L. (2000). Valuing families: Social work practice with families from a strengths perspective. *Social Work*, 45(2):118-130.

Forrester, M. (2010). *Doing qualitative research in psychology: A practical guide*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Foster, E.M., & Gifford, E.J. (2004). *Challenges in the transitions to adulthood for youth*

in foster care, juvenile justice and special education. Network on transitions to adulthood: brief policy, Oct. 15.

Fouché, C. B. & De Vos, A. S. (2011). Formal Formulation. In De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delpont, C. S. L. (Ed.), *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed.) (pp. 89-100) Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Gelling, J. (2009). Supporting young people: leaving care. Contact with residential workers (BA (Hons) thesis). Aberdeen: Robert Gordon University.

Greeff, M. (2010). *A comprehensive community-based HIV stigma reduction and wellness enhancement intervention*. (Research proposal unpublished). Potchefstroom: NWU.

Greeff, M. (2011). Information collection: interviewing. In De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B. & Delpont, C. S. L. (Ed.) *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed.). (pp. 341-375). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Höjer, I., & Sjöblom, Y. (2010). Young people leaving care in Sweden. *Child & Family Social Work*,15,118-127.

Jones, L. (2011). The first three years after foster care: A longitudinal look at adaptation of 16 youth to emerging adulthood. *Child and Youth Review* ,33,1919-1929.

Keenan, T. & Evans, S. (2009). *An introduction to child Development*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Kemp, S.P. (2010). *Ecological framework*. University of Washington. Oxford university press.

Kerman, B., Freundlich, M., & Macluccio, A. (2009). *Achieving permanency for older children & youth in foster care*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Kirst-Ashman, K.K. & Hull, G.H. (2012). *Understanding general practice*. 6th ed.) USA: Brooks/ Cole.

Klopper, H. (2008). The qualitative research proposal. *Curationis*, 31(4), 62-72, 1 Dec. 2018.

Kvale, S. (1996). *An introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage.

Mallon, G. P. (1998). After care, then where? Outcomes of an Independent Living Program. *Child Welfare*, 71(1), 61-78.

McLeod, J. (2011). *Qualitative research in counselling and psychotherapy*. London: Sage.

Monette, R., Sullivan, T. J., & De Jong, C. R. (2002). *Applied social research: a tool for the human services*. Orlando, USA: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Mullins-Geiger, J. & Schelbe, L. A. (2014). *Stopping the cycle of child abuse and neglect: A call to focus on pregnant and parenting youth in and aging out of the foster care system*. Florida State University: Faculty Publications, College of Social Work.

Nieuwenhuis, J. (2007). *Introducing qualitative research: First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Padgett, D. K. (2008). *Qualitative methods in social work research* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Pinkerton, J. (2011). Constructing a global understanding of the social ecology of leaving out of home care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(12), 2412-2416.

Randle, M. (2013). Through the eyes of ex foster children: placement success and the characteristics of good foster carers. *Social Work in Action*, 25(1), 3-19.

Sandelowski, M. (2010). What is in a name? Qualitative description revisited . *Research in nursing health*, 33(1):77-84.

Schurink, W., Fouché, C. B. & De Vos, A. S. (2011). Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (Ed.), *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed.) (pp. 397-423). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Simon, M.K. (2011). *Analysis of quantitative data*. Seattle: LLC.

Smith, S.R., & Hammon, R.R. (2012) *Exploring family theories*. (3rd ed.) New York: Oxford University Press.

South Africa. (2005). *Children's Act 38 of 2005 as amended*. Pretoria: Government

Printer.

Stein, M. (2005). Resilience and young people leaving care overcoming the odds.

York: Joseph Towntree Foundation.

Stott, T. (2012). Transitioning youth: Policies and outcomes. *Children and Youth Services*, 35, 218-227. Retrieved from [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016.j.chilyouth](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth).

Strydom, H. (2011). Ethical aspects of research in the social sciences and human service professions. In De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (Ed.), *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed.) (pp. 113-130). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Tanur, C. (2012). Project Lungisela: supporting young people leaving state care in South Africa. *Child Care Practice*, 18(4), 325-340.

Unrau, Y.A., Font, S.A., & Rawls, G. (2012). Readiness for college engagement among students who have aged out of foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(1), 76-83.

Walliman, N. (2011). *Research Methods the basics*. e-book. London: Routledge.

Zastrow, C. (2010). *Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare*. (10th edition) Brooks/Cole. Cengage Learning.

SECTION B: LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

The literature study focused on current literature of youth aging out of foster care into independent living. The current study was interesting in exploring the views of youth who were in foster care but are now adults. In South Africa, a few studies have been conducted on an independent living programme for foster children aging out of foster care.

The process of young people exiting an alternative care situation due to reaching an age of maturity is referred to as 'care leaving' or 'aging out'. As soon as they are out of care, they are referred to as 'care leavers' (Mmusi, 2013:12). Aging out is often conceptualized as a process starting before the youth reached a certain age such as 18 years old, that is legally regarded as the cut off for foster placement, rather than a specific event. This process is characterized by a goal of emancipation or becoming independent after recently leaving care (Mullins-Geiger & Schelbe, 2014:26). Gardner (2008:3) states that "the adulthood transition for youth who aged out of foster care is burdened with challenges and more specific support and services are required to help them overcome extremely difficult circumstances". Mendes (2009:32) substantiates this by pointing out that in the USA, young people leaving state care are possibly one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society, in that they face challenges in accessing opportunities necessary for this transition and development.

Numerous studies on foster care leavers have been conducted internationally, amongst others by Antle (2009) and Mendes (2009). In South Africa, however, studies conducted by Meyer (2008); Mmusi (2013); Tanur (2012) and Van Breda (2010), were on care leaving focused on young people leaving CYCC. Given the afore-mentioned, there is a

need specifically in South Africa for research to pay attention to young people exiting foster care. To date during literature review, the researcher was able to locate one study conducted by Chiroro, Seedat and Woulough (2009). This study aims to address existing gaps in literature by indicating that majority of these youth who left care were ill prepared and did not have viable transition plans for successful transition into independent living. Chiroro *et al.* (2009) explored the views and perceptions of youth across three provinces in South Africa namely Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal Province.

Theories on care leaving in general, hold the notion that young people aging out of care are usually not given the opportunity to make a gradual transition into adulthood with any substantial support reported by Tanur, 2012; Chiroro, *et al.*, 2009 and Antle, *et al.*, 2009. A report on helping youth transition out of foster placement found that many foster care youths age out without finding stable, affordable, permanent living arrangements. An estimated 14–30 percent of such youth will experience at least one night of homelessness in the first one to three years following the emancipation into adulthood (Richards, 2014:19).

Furthermore, foster placements are changed frequently and, on average, the ratio of placement failure is 3:1. The afore-mentioned statement as pointed out by Richards (2014:19) suggest that therefore likely that when a foster placement reaches maturity and is terminated due to aging out, the placement is ended rather abruptly, leaving the foster youth without a home to return to. Theories such as Mendes, Baidawi and Snow, 2014 may well apply to the situation in South Africa. Therefore, one can argue that the foster care system does not necessarily prepare youth adequately for their transition into independent living, nor does the system itself imply access to and readiness for higher education (Kirk & Day, 2011:1174). Some foster children drop out of school and

therefore do not complete their schooling. The result is that they are being discharged from foster care without being prepared for independent living. Independent living programmes entails skills that is should be taught to foster youth from the age of 15 years old until aging out of care . The gap with the current foster care system is that there is no framework to guide Social Workers with the preparation of foster youth to leave care. Antle *et al.*, (2009:309) suggest that the provision of appropriate services for outcomes of youth aging out of foster care has been an area of growing concerned for the field of child welfare. Independent living skills can take the form of workshops or classroom activities allowing youth to gain employment experience while still in foster care and start to manage their money (Scannapieco, Smith & Blakeney- Strong, 2016:295). Further stated by Antle *et al.*, (2009:310) argue that preparation for foster youth for independent living are often focused more on technical or hard skills than on soft or interpersonal and emotional self-regulation skills Independent living programmes include the following hard skills such as educational / vocational training, cooking, shopping, money management ,and maintaining housing and soft skills such as emotional self- regulation, planning, decision making, communicating, network and relationship building are often not covered in the programmes (Antle *et al.*, 2009:310).

2. The legal process of placing children in Alternative care in South Africa

2.1. Children in Need of Care and Protection

Children are found in need of care and protection in terms of Children's Act 38 of 2005 in terms of Section 150 if they are found: abandoned or orphaned and is without any visible means of support; displayed behaviour which cannot be controlled by the parent or caregiver; lives or works on the street or begged for a living; is addicted to a dependence-producing substance and is without any support to obtain treatment for such dependency; been exploited or lived in circumstances that expose the child to

exploitation; lives in or is exposed to circumstances which may seriously harm that child's physical, mental or social well-being; and may be at risk if returned to the custody of the parent, guardian or caregiver of the child as there is a reason to believe that he or she will live in or be exposed to circumstances which may seriously harm the physical, mental or social well-being of the child and is in a state of physical or mental neglect, maltreated, abused, deliberately neglected or degraded by a parent, a caregiver, a person who has parental responsibilities and rights or family member of the child or by a person under whose control the child is.

The figure below clearly outlines the foster care process in South Africa that needs to be followed:

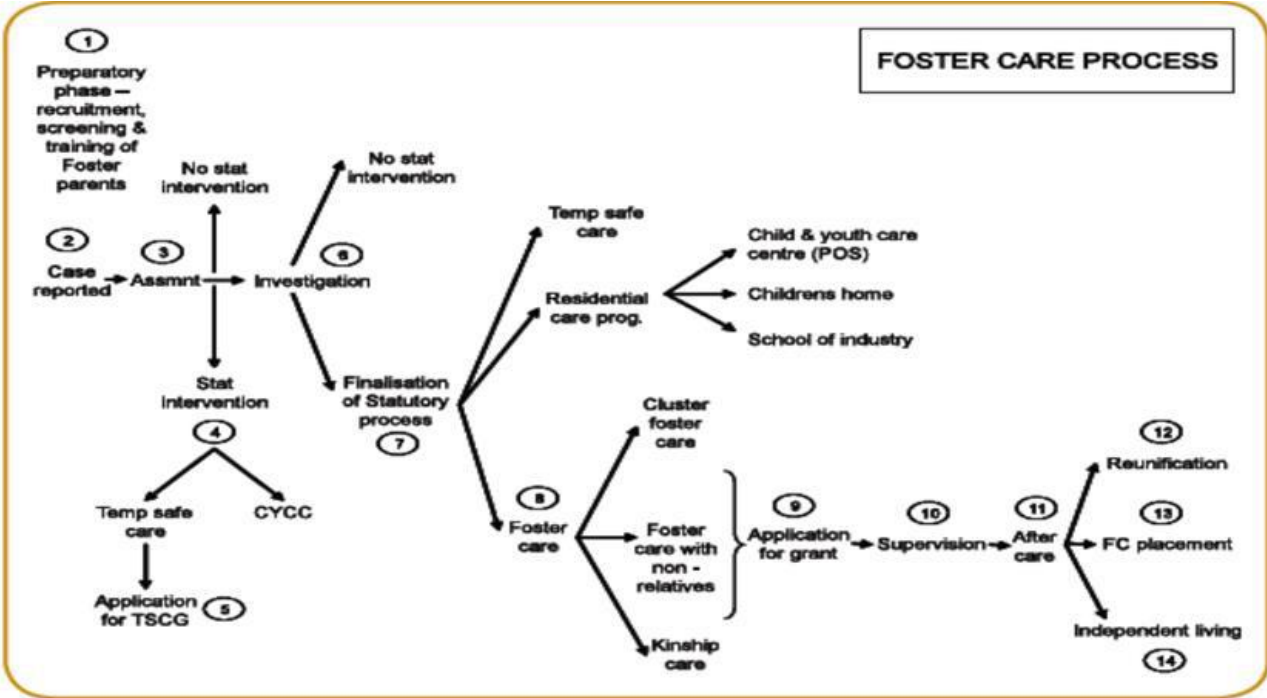


Figure 1: The foster care process in South Africa (Department of Social Development, 2009)

The foster care process entails the following processes that need to be follow and thus can serve as a guideline for social workers to follow.

For the purpose of the study the focus the preparation of Independent living programmes for foster youth who age out of care. Department of Social Development (2009:49) points out independent living programme should include the provision of after care services following the disengagement from the foster care system to ensure that the foster youth are supported through the transitional phase.

2.2. Alternative care

Alternative care was previously known as substitute care under the Child Care Act 74 of 1983, but in terms of Section 167 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 it refers to alternative care as foster care, Child and Youth Care Centre's and temporary safe care. The focus of the study is children leaving foster care therefore the researcher will not elaborate further on the other two forms of alternative care.

2.2.1. Foster care

In terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, a child is in foster care if the child has been placed in the care of a person who is not the parent or guardian of the child as a result of an order of the Children's Court. In South Africa, there are three types of foster care placements, namely Kinship foster (related), non-related foster care and cluster foster care scheme placement. Kinship foster care is provided to the children by extended family members. Kinship does not appear in the Children's Act but it allows for provision for a child to be placed in the care of relatives. Non-related foster care is when the court may decide to place a child in the care of someone who is not a family member of the child. Cluster foster care scheme is relatively new in South Africa. In terms of section 183 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, the scheme must be managed by an organisation operated by a non-profit organisation registered in terms of the Non-Profit Organisation Act 71 of 1997. They should comply with the prescribed requirements.

Foster care is a form of alternative care to ensure that a child in need of care and protection is provided with adequate care, love, support, protection and stability in circumstances where their biological parents, for various reasons, are unable to care for them (Children's Act 38 of 2005 , section 167(1)). The challenge is, through the high demand for the foster care grant, an increase in social work intervention regarding foster care services may be necessary (Department of Social Development, 2009:14). The Presiding Officers in the Children's Court also issue orders until the child turns 18 years old from the initial placement. In view of the circumstances described, one can, therefore, argue that the preparation of foster children for successful aging out of care into independent living as an adult is likely to be inadequate.

3. Comparing Independent Living programmes in other countries

Mendes (2009:35) points out in countries such as United Kingdom, United States and Australia are currently providing a range of employment support programmes to children who have left foster care.

3.1. Independent living Programme in America

According to Gardner (2008:4), the federal legislation has created a framework for assisting youth who are aging out of foster care, which is known as The Chafee Bill: Chafee Foster Care Independent Programme, which was known previously as the Foster Care Independence Act and Independent Living Programme. The bill is put in place to provide youth leaving foster care to achieve self-sufficiency and states that to submit their plans for this programme is provided with the necessary funding. This bill focuses on the following programmes that should be provided to the youth leaving care:

- ❖ The Chafee Education and Training Vouchers Programme (ETV) – This programme provides the youth with financial support to meet post-secondary education and training needs of the youth who have aged out of care and has enrolled in qualified higher education programmes.
- ❖ The Chafee option - This addresses the medical needs of children who are in care but has been extended to the age of 21 years, which includes the Medicaid coverage.
- ❖ Family Unification Programme (FUP) – This programme offers housing assistance to youth who have a transition out of foster care and is only eligible for youth between the ages of 18 and 21 years old.
- ❖ Youth Build- This programme is for youth who are at high risk between the ages of 16 to 24 years old that provides grants on a competitive basis to learn about housing construction job skills and to complete their high school education.

3.2. Independent Living Programme in Australia

The Australian government is facing a crisis of foster youth who have aged out of foster care but is now homeless, unlike the American government that provides a housing voucher for this youth to reside, according to Khurana (2008:488). The government of Australia is yet to pass legislation for funding of independent living programmes, but their Commonwealth recognises the responsibilities towards the homeless youth who age out of care. “The youth who have aged out of care is given \$1000 Transition to Independent Living Allowance” (Khurana, 2008:489).

3.3. Independent Living Programme in the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom, known as Britain, has a Youth Leaving Act that provides support to youth living in and leaving local authority care to improve their life chances. The

Youth Leaving Act serves as a guideline to implement independence pathways for each eligible child through the assistance of a personal advisor. Khurana (2008:496) states that the aim of the Act is to ensure the following services are rendered to children in care:

- ❖ To delay young people's discharge from care until they are prepared and ready to leave.
- ❖ To improve the assessment, preparation and planning for leaving care.
- ❖ To provide better personal support for young people leaving care and
- ❖ To improve financial arrangements for care leavers.

4. Independent Living Programmes in South Africa

4.1. Independent living programmes for children leaving residential care facilities (CYCC)

South Africa 's legislation such as the Children's Act 38 of 2005, emphasises a need for an Independent Living Programme for youth aging out of foster care and other formal care. In South Africa currently there is no research carried into effect on foster youth who participated in independent living programmes when aging out of foster care. However, studies have been conducted on youth leaving residential care facilities who have participated in Independent Living programmes to prepare them for adulthood. Project Lungisela in the Western Cape focuses on Mamelani's youth leaving care programmes that have been focused on developing independent living skills, according to Tanur (2012:327). The skills that Mamelani's youth leaving care programmes focused on to ensure independent living skills are the following, in terms of Tanur (2012:327):

- ❖ Skills building for healthy relationships.

- ❖ Building capacity to access resources from within a resource-poor setting which is tied into the notion of Ubuntu, the African philosophy of realising the personal through the communal.

The programme, according to Tanur (2012:330), has been divided into two phases:

Phase 1: Preparation for transitioning out of care

This programme is for the youth who are still living in a residential facility or children's home. In this phase of the programme, the focus is on skills that are necessary to prepare youth for the transition from care and is a one-year programme that is provided to the child before aging out of care. These sessions are offered in the form of weekly group sessions that focus on experiential learning, but also provide individual sessions that prepare the child emotionally and practically for the transition.

Phase 2: Aftercare support (youth who have transitioned out of care and are still attending school/skills training)

This phase of the training supports youth in transition through one-on-one mentoring and group support, especially with the completion of their education or skills training that will provide them with sustainable livelihoods. This includes the following:

- ❖ Educational support
- ❖ Career guidance
- ❖ Job-seeking support
- ❖ Internship and job placement

The emphasis in this phase is also placed on developing a network of support, accessing employment and on strengthening the youth's ability to offer support to others as well.

There is evidence available in studies conducted in South Africa which includes Mmusi (2013) and Tanur (2012) even though such studies focused on preparation for young people not leaving foster care but leaving CYCC. What is significant is that this study emphasise a need for young people leaving any form of alternative care to undergo some sort of independent living programme. In this programme opportunities can be created for young people to learn skills such as relationship building, study skills, accepting consequences, respect for property and changing environment Mmusi (2013). Which is equally important for young people exiting foster care?

Both the above residential facilities are providing independent living programmes to prepare youth's transition from the centre into adulthood. One can say that youth based in residential care facilities are more easily accessible than those placed in foster care in different areas. Youth living in residential facilities are required to have Individual Developmental Plans or Permanency Plans which include the provision for preparations for independent living. This should be a common practice for children in foster care, but it is not implemented in all instances, as we rely on the fact that most of the children placed in foster care are placed with relatives, therefore IDP and Permanency plans are not executed as required.

4.2. Independent living programme for foster youth leaving foster care

The researcher found a study conducted on youth who have left foster care reported by Chiroro *et al.* (2009) (cited in Lesea, 2017:15), who conducted a research study aimed at exploring the experiences of youth who have aged out of foster care. This study was conducted in three provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. Chiroro *et al.*,(2009)(cited in Lesea, 2017:15) refers their findings as future prospects of foster youth in South Africa which comprises of the following findings:

- **Over 90% come from poor socio-economic backgrounds**

The poverty levels have been found to be the highest among children who do not live with their parents (Stats SA, 2013). The high unemployment rate contributes to youth aging out of foster care, since their only means of support, such as the social grant is stopped when aging out of care. In some families raising orphan children, the foster care grant is their only source of income and the moment it is stopped, the families, including the young adult who ages out of care, struggles. Children that are raised in foster care are in the care of family members who are also unemployed and struggling. Lesea (2017:104) indicates that many relatives who apply for foster care placement of orphans come from a poor socio-economic background. This means that they were often living in poverty and unemployed, lacking the financial means to provide for the basic needs of the orphan. They are mainly dependant on the social grant. According to Jacobs, Shung-King and Smith (2005: 33): "... research shows that increasing numbers of poverty-stricken families who are caring for orphaned children are relying on foster care placements as a way to access the more substantial financial support offered by the foster care grant".

- **Approximately 66% did not receive advance notification of the termination services and support from government**

The research based of Chiroro *et al.* (2009) cited in Lesea 2017: confirmed that 66% of foster children who aged out care felt that their social workers did not prepare them in advance on the termination of services. Supervision and aftercare services can be described as referring to supportive and therapeutic services provided to the foster family, biological parents or family of origin and the child after the statutory placement. "It includes the implementation of an intervention plan, monitoring the foster care placement, management of statutory placement orders, reunification and preparation for

independent living” (Department of Social Development, 2009:43). Given the above, it results in inadequate services in preparing them when they exit foster care. Additional attention is, therefore, necessary to prepare the foster child for aging out of foster care (Tanur, 2012:330).

- **Most of foster youth receive very little skills development before, during and after their transition out of foster care**

Studies based on Atkinson, (2008:195), Stott and Gustavsson (2010:620) indicate that foster care youth in care many experience lack skills necessary for independent living such as money management, lack of social support, coping skills and self-competences that can ameliorate some of the disadvantage that they had. The role of social worker in preparing the foster children to age out care is crucial as this transition plan should be done at least six months before children leave care as it part of foster care plan. Unrau(2006:124) states that foster youth are rarely involved in decisions made about their short- or long term care. In terms of Section 10 of the Children’s Act child participation is crucial when making decision that concern the interest of the foster child.

- **Some of them were at risk of being homeless and or at not meeting their daily basic needs**

Care leavers in South Africa shows similar outcomes in terms of homelessness as the counterparts in other countries Dickens, Van Breda and Marx (2015:13). Looking at our South African situation housing presents a significant challenge as considerable backlogs exists in building of reconstruction and development programme (RDP) housing and many people from necessity live in shacks (Hall:2016).The foster parents who used to receive the social grant to care for them are no longer receiving that

income to provide them with their basic needs therefore some feel the need to leave the home. According to Fowler; Toro & Miles ,2011:336) evidence suggest that aged out youth struggle to secure safe and stable housing. Furthermore stated by Fowler et al.2011:336) some foster youth finds precarious housing temporarily with family or friends due to inability to afford other lodging which is often term as “sofa surfing.”

- **Majority had to drop out of school or tertiary due financial constraints**

Youth in foster care are often at a greater educational disadvantage compared to youth in the general population (Zetlin, Weinberg & Shea, & 2010:245). Children in foster care are more likely to drop out of high school than those who are not in foster care owing to their circumstances. The reality is not having completed grade 12. As a young adult, you can end up in various emotional, social and economic challenges that will hamper your future.

- **Majority had difficulty securing stable , decent employment**

According to Stat SA (2018), 39% of the youth aged between 15-24 years are not employed or attending education or training of which the foster children forms part of the unemployed youth. Literature suggests that most foster care youths may not have acquired the required skills to find a good job before they age out of care (Atkinson, (2008:193); Courtney & Dworsky, 2006:211). Without employment training services, these young people are often forced to search for employment on their own and, consequently, may have difficulty obtaining employment (Lenz-Rashid, 2006:238).

- **Experience hopelessness and distress about their future prospects**

In Chiroro *et al.* (2009) findings found that some of the foster youth who age out of care experienced hopeless and felt distress about their future plans. This feeling of

hopelessness related to their difficulties with education, unemployment, homelessness, mental health some may have experience. Mendes, Moselhuddin and Goddard,(2008:33) is of the opinion that is likely to affect their total functioning and may have long lasting effects which are likely to complicate young care leavers' transition and almost leave them with little or no hope for positive future outcomes.

The finding in Chiroro *et al.* (2009), (cited in Lesea, 2017:15), indicate the challenges young adults face who have aged out of foster care The youth who aged out of foster care were not fully prepared in terms of services that ended abruptly from government without any preparation for termination, lack of skills for independent living and the fact that majority had difficulty securing stability and felt hopeless with regard to their adult life. Studies on Chiroro *et al.* 2009 focus were more based on the challenges that previously foster youth experience while leaving care and not the actual content of how the independent living programme should be. According to Mitchell, Jones and Renema, (2014:291) youth encounter challenges to educational attainment, acquiring sustainable employment and housing, direct involvement in decision-making that affect their lives and future, avoiding high-risk behaviours, maintaining positive and close relationships and obtaining adequate life skills training. For this reason, it can be said that if youth are not prepared with skills and knowledge to transition successfully out of foster care, this can lead to certain barriers influencing their lives as young adults to be independent. Children are the soul of our society, if we fail them, then we have failed the society (Republic of South Africa, 2012:2).

5. The requirements of Independent living programmes as part of preparation for foster children leaving foster care

The Department of Social Development (2009:49) refers to the aim of independent living programmes as to provide foster children, who will not have the support of a family, an opportunity to gain skills that will enable them to lay a foundation for a successful transition from foster care to adulthood. Furthermore, the Department of Social Development (2009) outlined the responsibilities of the following different stakeholders that should contribute to the Independent Living Programme in the table below:

Stakeholders for ILP

Stakeholders	Key responsibilities
Designated social workers, other social service professionals, screen and trained volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To offer these programs to the identified age cohort of foster children. • Promote the preparation for an independent living programme for foster children. • Identify, develop and maintain a database of all the children who qualify to participate in independent living programs. • Maintain the database of programs available within the community. • Link foster children to other relevant programs and monitor their progress. • Recruit volunteers within communities to

	participate.
Foster child age 15 years and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory participation from the age of 15 years • Care plans and permanency plans must be reviewed • Provision should be made for their participation in the independent living program
Designated social worker	<p>Coordinate the implementation of these programs, liaising with relevant service providers within the community to provide comprehensive and inter-sectorial services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate, supervise and monitor the activities of social service professional and other service providers to alleviate duplication of services and facilitate access of services of the foster children. • Identify, develop and maintain a database of all the children who qualify to participate in the independent living programme. • Maintain the database of programs available within the community. • Link foster children to other relevant programs and monitor their progress.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit volunteers within communities to participate in the independent programs as mentors.
Foster family	Support the child and participate in the implementation of the program.
Community	Make them aware of the program and ensure that the program is supported.
Volunteer	Provide mentorship to build extended relations between the foster children and the community.
DSD national and provincial department, other government departments, CPOs, foster	In collaboration, the private sector must develop the framework for independent living.

Table 2: Stakeholders for ILP (Department of Social Development, 2009)

As indicated in the above guideline, it refers to foster children age 15 years old to start being prepared for independent living programmes. A 15-year-old foster child starts to acquire skills for him/her to transition successfully into independent living. The only way preparations for an independent living programme is viable is if the social worker provides a detailed foster care plan or developmental plans of each foster child which outlines their needs and the goals to be achieved. Mitchell *et al.* (2014:292) refer to a transition plan as one of many ways that youth in foster care can become aware of the resources and supports that are available to them as they transition out of foster care and mature into adulthood. The reality presently is that social workers are unable to implement the programme to foster children as they are having a high caseload. Khoza (2012:32) found that social workers did not make use of assessment tools that enable them to identify the needs and challenges of foster children. This programme is crucial

to ensure that the foster child is empowered when leaving care and is able to make own decision, but, most of all, to function independently on their own as young adults. However, the findings of Chiroro *et al.* (2009:8) and Tanur (2012:327) give an indication that social workers are not implementing this programme, nor are youth out of foster care receiving the services outlined in the guidelines to promote the successful transition to adulthood.

Department of Social Development (2009:49) suggest that the following programmes should be utilised to prepare foster youth for the transition into independent living such as:

- Counselling
- Mentorship programmes
- Developmental programmes
- Social life skills
- Vocational training
- Employment opportunities
- Access to bursary schemes and internship programmes
- scholarship programmes

These programmes can be provided to foster youth through making use of the group work method intervention as a way to ensure that foster youth are prepared for life after care. This Independent living programme must be linked with other programmes available to the youth and synergy must be created with relevant governmental departments and civil society in the development of responsive programmes (Department of Social Development, 2009:49)

6. Conclusion

The literature study has provided an overview of how far behind South Africa is with ensuring that foster youth are empowered with Independent Living Programmes to ensure that they are prepared for adulthood. The phenomenon of Independent Living Programmes was explained. Research studies has proven that there is a gap between South Africa progress with regard to the foster care system providing effective independent living programmes to prepare foster children aging out care . Our country has to learn from our counterparts such as USA, England and Australia how they manage to implement their independent living programmes within the foster care system.

Literature review indicates that foster youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood are facing many challenges which is impacting there adult life. Foster youth outcomes and struggle towards successful transition out of foster care is poor compared to foster youth not in care as they have the necessary support from parents to assist them. This indicates the need for foster youth to have access towards a transitional plan development with their direct involvement to make goals for the transitioning into independent living. This transitional plan should at least be developed six months before their transition to independent living, however the foster youth has to be enrolled in an independent living programme by the age 15 years old until the age of transition into adulthood. This will ensure that the foster youth has been well prepared to enter adulthood with the necessary skills.

There is limited research studies based on foster care systems programme for independent living programmes in South Africa although studies on residential care facilities such as child and youth care centres such as Mamelani Projects and Girls and

Boys Town has started to implement independent living programmes based on the fact that it has been mandated in the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 that CYCC needs to provide youth with the necessary skills to age out of foster care. The legislative framework in Children's Act no 38 of 2005 lack the information of the requirement for youth aging out of foster care to be in an independent living programme preparing them for life after foster care. There is a need for further research in this regard and possible guidelines should be offered to assist social workers to prepare children aging out of care.

7. References

Acts see South Africa

Antle, B.F., Johnson, L., Barbee, A., & Sullivan, D. (2009). Fostering interdependent versus independent living in youth aging out of foster care through healthy relationships. *Families: Society Journal of Contemporary Social Service*, 90(3), 309-3011.

Atkinson, M. (2008). Aging out of foster care: Towards a universal safety net for former care youth. *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, 43, 183-212.

Chiroro, P., Seedat, R., & Woolnough, K. (2009). A qualitative study on the experience of youth who age out of the foster child grant in South Africa. In Lesea.T. M. (2017). *Utilising social entrepreneurship to facilitate the successful transition of foster youth to adulthood in South Africa*. (Master of Philosophy). University of Cape Town.

Courtney, M.E., & Dworsky, A. (2006). Early outcomes for young adults transitioning from out-of-home care in the USA. *Child and Family Social Work*, 11, 209-212.

Department of Social Development **see** South Africa.

Dickens, L.F., van Breda, A.D., & Marx, P. (2015). Growth beyond the town: A longitudinal study on youth leaving care:30-month status report. Cape Town: Girls and Boys Town South Africa and University of Johannesburg.

Fowler, P.J., Toro, P.A. & Miles, B.W. (2011) Emerging Adulthood and Leaving foster care: Setting Associated with mental health. *Journal of community psychology*, 47,335-348.

Gardner, G. (2008). *Youth aging out of foster care: Identifying strategies and best practices*. 2007- 2008 Presidential Initiative.

Hall, K. (2016). Children's access to housing. In Delany, A., Jehoma, S., & Lake, L. (Eds.). *South African child gauge, 2016*: pp 129-131. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.

Jacobs, M., Shung-King, M., & Smith, C (Eds.). (2005). *South African Child Gauge*. Cape Town, Children's Institute: University of Cape Town.

Kirk, R., & Day, A. (2011). Increasing college access for youth aging out of foster care: Evaluation of a summer camp program for foster youth transitioning from high school to college. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33, 1173-1180.

Khoza, S. (2012). *Application of a developmental assessment tool by social workers practicing foster care in the far East Rand, Ekurhuleni*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

Khurana, K. (2008). A comparative analysis of aging out programs in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development*. 23(2), Fall issue.

Lenz-Rashid, S., (2006). Employment experiences of homeless young adults: Are they different for youth with a history of foster care? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28, 235-259. DOI: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2005.03.006

Lesea.T. M. (2017). *Utilising social entrepreneurship to facilitate the successful transition of foster youth to adulthood in South Africa*. (Master of Philosophy). University of Cape Town.

Mendes, P. (2009). Young people transition in from state out of home care: Jumping hoops to access employment. *Family Matters*, 83, 32-38.

Mendes,P., Baidawi,S. & Snow, P. (2014). Young people transitioning from out- of – home care: A critical analysis of leave care policy, legislation and housing support in the Australian State of Victoria . *Child Abuse Review*, 23,402-414.

Mendes, P., Moslehuddin, B., & Goddard, C. (2008). Improving the physical and emotional health of young people transitioning from state out of home care. *Developing Practice* (20), 33- 40.

Meyer, I. J. (2008). *The experience of late adolescent state care leavers: A phenomenological study* (Master's thesis). Johannesburg, University of Johannesburg.

Mmusi, F. I. (2013). *Description and assessment of care leavers' application of social skills into independent living* (Master's thesis). Johannesburg, University of Johannesburg.

Mitchell, M. B., Jones, T., & Renema, S. (2014). Will I make it on my own? Voices andvisions of 17-year-old youth in transition. *Social Work Journal* 2015, 32, 291-300.

Mullins-Geiger, J. & Schelbe, L. A. (2014). Stopping the cycle of child abuse and neglect: A call to focus on pregnant and parenting youth in and aging out of the foster care system. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 8(1).

Richards, G. (2014). "Aging Out" gracefully: Housing and helping youth transition smoothly out of the foster care system. *Journal of Housing & Community Development*, July/August, 71(4), pp. 18-21.

Republic of South Africa. (2012). South Gauteng High Court. Johannesburg. Children's court case no 14/1/4-206/10.

Scannapieco, M., Smith, M. & Blakeney- Strong, A. (2016). Transition from foster care to Independent living: Ecological Predictors Associated with outcomes. *Social Work Journal*, 33, 293-302.

South Africa. (2005). *Children's Act 38 of 2005 as amended*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. (2009). Department of Social Development. *Guidelines for effective management of foster care in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Stats SA. (2013). Mid-year population estimates. Pretoria: South Africa.

Stats SA. (2018). *Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 2*. Pretoria: Stats SA.

Stott, T. & Gustavasson, N. (2010). Balancing permanency and stability for youth in foster care. *Children and youth services review*, 31,619-625.

Tanur, C. (2012). Project Lungisela: Supporting young people leaving state care in South Africa. *Child Care Practice*, 18(4), 325-340.

Van Breda, A. D. (2010). Possible selves: Group work with young people in a South African township. *Practice: Social Work in Action*, 222(3), 181-192.

Unrau, Y.A.(2006). Research on placement moves:seeking the perspective of foster children. *Children and youth services review*, 29(1), 122-137.

Zetlin, A. A., Weinberg, L. L., & Shea, N. M. (2010). Caregivers, school liaisons and agency advocates speak out about the educational needs of children and youth in foster care. *Social Work*, 55(3), 245-254.

SECTION C: ARTICLE GUIDELINES FOR AN INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMME PREPARING CHILDREN AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

ABSTRACT

Youth leaving foster care are ill-prepared for life after foster care. They are left to face numerous challenges, such as unemployment, homelessness and lack of interpersonal relationships, which impact their young adult life. The transition into adulthood is a frightening process for any young person, but is most frightening for the child aging out of alternative care, such as foster care, especially if they are orphans and unable to be reunified with biological parents. The South African legislation does make provision for independent living preparation for children aging out of foster care, but there is no guidelines or programmes in place to assist social workers to provide these services to foster children, starting from the age of 15 years old. This qualitative study aimed to explore the views and understanding of previous foster youth who aged out of care. Semi-structured interviews were done with 12 participants. The findings indicated that guidelines for social workers are needed to prepare youth aging out of foster care to provide them with the necessary skills such as vocational skills or interpersonal skills to be empowered as they enter into adulthood.

Key words: Guidelines, Independent living, aging out, foster care

1. Introduction

South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, children are prioritised as one of the most vulnerable groups in society, in need of care and protection (Department of Social Development, 2009:13). This is more so for those children who are found in a situation where they are helpless, such as abandonment, being left orphaned or suffering abuse. Section 28(1) (b) of the Bill of Rights (Constitution of South Africa), states that every child has “the right to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment” (Constitution of South Africa, 1996:1255). A foster care child is a child who is in foster care if the child has been placed in the care of a person who is not the biological parent of the child (Bosman-Sadie *et al.*, 2013:273).

Independent living is a programme that focuses on preparing children who have been placed in formal alternative care. This preparation is implemented when the young person is between the ages of 15 and 18 years, or when the foster child is aging out of care. The independent living programme entails skills programmes such as vocational training, money management, further education and social skills such as decision-making.

In South Africa, the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 mentions the specific service that provides before and after care support once the young people have exited state care (Tanur, 2012:327). An independent living programme is therefore vital to ensure improved outcomes of youth leaving care, both in preparing youth to exit care and providing support post care (Mallon, 1998: 61-78). According to Chiroro *et al* (2009) cited in (Lesea, 2017:15) and Tanur (2012:326) foster youth that exit the foster care system in South Africa are less likely to pursue higher education, more likely to have

experienced economic hardship and more likely to be unprepared and ill-equipped to cope with the demands that comes with transition to adulthood. Pinkerton (2011:2413) suggest that a planned and properly managed preparation process for leaving care is need for children aging out of foster care , with this process as soon as possible with direct involvement of the foster youth.

2. Problem Statement

In 2014, there were approximately 3 million orphans in South Africa (this includes children without a living biological mother, father or both parents), which is equivalent to 16% of all children in South Africa. 46% of all orphans are residents in the poorest 20% of households (Hall, et *al.*, 2014). Furthermore, Hall and Proudlock (2011:3) state that approximately 134 700 youth between the ages of 18 and 21 years exited the foster care system as young people, who have grown up in care. Many of these young people have experienced multiple traumas and have lived on the streets. They lack the skills necessary for independent living, such as time management, money management, grocery shopping, managing a bank account and cooking (Atkinson, 2008:195). Many of these skills have been managed by the foster parents. The outcomes of youth transitioning out of the foster care system to adulthood are characterised by low educational attainment, lack of employment prospects, poor health, homelessness and early parenthood, and often some of these youth get into conflict with the law (Stein & Munro, 2008; Chiroro, Seedat, & Woolnough, 2009 cited in Lesea(2017:15); Osgood, Foster, & Courtney, 2010:210 ; Tanur, 2012; Xie, Sen, & Foster, 2014:30).

According to Goodyer (2011:31), foster care is a statutory service, the structures and regulations of which are prescribed by policy and legal frameworks. South African legislation stipulates that such services should be delivered by social work

professionals. Young people transitioning out of state care require specialised support from the case manager who renders foster care supervision services. Crosson-Tower (2004:324) mentions that these services also include "being responsible for the safety of foster youth, being the target of angry or bewildered biological parents, consoling confused or anxious children and handling the demands and irritation of foster parents and endless reams of paperwork accompany all tasks".

According to Erikson (cited in Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2013:306), adolescents and young adults struggle to develop a sense of what they would like to achieve in life as they are searching for an identity. This implies that from a developmental perspective, at the age of 15 years, the child becomes sensitive about the process of transition to the adult world. Due to the lack of support, as indicated, this study aims to add value and contribute to the understanding of what should be the themes of an independent living programme that aims to prepare, and adequately equip, young people to cope with adapting to adult life when they exit foster care.

Furthermore, Papalia and Feldman (2011:454) state that during early adulthood, individuals are in a process of outgrowing adolescence. This independence includes securing a job as well as a home for themselves. Young people exiting foster care could very likely not have such skills, because most of them have come from dysfunctional circumstances and could have been exposed to such circumstances for a long time prior to entering care. As a result, they may require intensive independent living programmes to help them develop appropriate skills which, in turn, will help them to make it on their own later in life.

Louw and Louw (2014:303) refer to adolescence as the period between transitioning from childhood to adulthood. It can be seen as the developmental bridge between being a child and becoming an adult. Young adults have developmental tasks that they are supposed to perform by themselves, such as self-respect, interpersonal relationships, work and leisure and community respect. These tasks are crucial developmental tasks that influence how the child will deal with the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Young people who have been in foster care are at the crossroads: they are leaving their adolescent years and entering into young adulthood. This can also be a terrifying period in a person's life, especially if they have no access to guidance and preparation for this new stage of their lives.

Berzin; Singer and Hokanson (2014:617) indicates that youth also express optimism and hope for the future as they navigate this transition. Planning for a career is an important aspect of adolescence (Louw & Louw, 2014:374; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2013:425). One of the developmental tasks of adolescence is an expectation that, as they develop into young adults, they should learn to be independent. According to Papalia and Feldman (2011:396), it is a period in a human life cycle characterized by developmental transition into adulthood.

The researcher's practical experience within the Child Protection service in the Department of Social Development has enabled her to observe that in many instances children remain in foster care until they reach the age of maturity, namely 18 years old. Furthermore, no preparation is made for children aging out of care, as they are just discharged. That is due to all social workers managing a high caseload and other contributing factors, such as lack of resources to assist to render services. A study by Alpaslan and Schenck (2012:374-376) found that social workers work in environments

characterised by lack of offices, inadequate office equipment, shortage of vehicles, high caseloads and a shortage of staff. Furthermore stated by Naidoo and Kasiram (2006:119) found that social workers in South Africa generally deal with over 120 cases (compared with a maximum of about 12 cases in the UK).

It is against this background that an empirical study on an independent living programme for children aging out of foster care was carried out to explore the views of ex-foster children regarding the preparations for Independent living and to propose recommendations for possible guidelines to assist Social Workers to prepare children aging out of care.

3. Aims

The aim of the study was to explore the views of previous foster youth who have aged out of foster care into adulthood. The objective of this research study was to conduct a thorough literature study on independent living programmes, preparing foster children to age out of care. In addition, the researcher also wished to make final recommendations for possible guidelines to best regulate and support foster children aging out of foster care.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research design

The research was explorative in nature with the use of semi-structured interviews. The purpose of exploratory research is to gain a better understanding of a situation, phenomenon, community and individual (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:95). The researcher gained a better understanding of the experiences of previously fostered children who have aged out of foster care without any formal preparation for independent living. In

the study, the researcher aimed to gain an insight and understanding of the views of adults who were in foster care, but have aged out of care into adulthood, with or without preparation for independent living. The aim is to deliver better service to children in foster care in order to age out of foster care more effectively into adulthood.

4.2. Population and sampling

The research population, previous foster youth who aged out of foster care from Ramotshere Moiloa Municipality (Zeerust), was identified based on the Department of Social Development's closed foster care cases. This study was not intended to be generalised towards the larger public, but to provide an in-depth view of the experience of children who have aged out of foster care. This allowed the researcher to explore their experiences of aging out of care. The target population and sample were based on the knowledge of the population, its elements and the purpose of the study, which is called purposive sampling (Babbie, 2014:200). The inclusion criteria below ensured that participants have information-rich insight into the phenomenon (Sandelowski, 2000:33 7-338). The inclusion criteria were as follows

The participants had to meet the following criteria:

- Have been out of foster care for a period of at least one year and no longer than five years.
- Be able to communicate fluently in English or Afrikaans.
- Be able to communicate freely and verbally to express them adequately.
- Willing to take part in a face-to-face interview.
- Give consent for the recording of the interview questionnaire on a voice recorder.
- Had to be previously placed in foster care following a Court order.

- Have aged out of foster care due to reaching maturity (18 or 21 years according to the Children's Act, 38 of 2005).
- Reside within the Zeerust municipality of Social Development.
- Males and females irrespective of their race, culture, ethnicity or creed

The sample size was not predetermined but based on data saturation, which was obtained after 12 interviews. Simon (2011:1) states that data saturation occurs when the researcher is no longer hearing or seeing new information coming forward from the interviews.

4.3. Data collection

Data was collected with the use of semi-structured interviews guided by an interview schedule for the opportunity to conduct probing on the questions. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and transcribed verbatim. The researcher identified four pre-selected questions which she thought appropriate for answering the research question and also probing of the questions. The following questions were included in the schedule

1. Looking back at your experience of aging out of foster care, what would you describe as most significant to you?
2. Tell me about your experiences since your foster care situation was terminated?
3. What will you identify as the most challenging, and how did you handle it?
4. To what extent do you feel your foster care placement assisted in preparing you for life after foster care?
5. Anything else you would like to add to the research theme?

4.4. Data analysis

The researcher analysed the transcribed data from the semi-structured interviews and made use of the Atlas.ti programme to code the data. The Atlas.ti programme is a powerful workbench for the qualitative analysis of textual, graphical, audio and video data. The programme identified codes which can be seen as themes Sub-themes were identified. The researcher loaded the textual transcribed data to the program. The responses of the participants was captured in grouped into coded the data into codes. . After this process was completed the five themes was identified. The data was then further coded into sub- themes. The coding of the data was all analysed by researcher through the assistance of the Atlas Ti programme.

4.5. Ethical Aspects

The guidelines such as credibility, transferability and conformability suggested by Lincoln and Guba (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:419-421), were followed to ensure trustworthiness of the study. Babbie (2014:62) states that a person involved in social science research needs to be aware of the general guidelines shared by the researcher about what is proper and improper conduct during scientific inquiries. The researcher adhered to the ethical procedure throughout the study. Approval was obtained from the North West University's Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the Faculty Health Science (NWU00013-17- A1) (Annexure 1). Consent from the Provincial Department of Social Development (Annexure 2 and 3), as well as the local office of Ramotshere Moiloa Service Point (Annexure 4) was obtained. All participants in the study provided written informed consent (Annexure 7) to participate in the study. The participants were informed about the details of the study. Their participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the study at any point. The participants were informed that the information provided will be recorded.

5. Characteristics and background of participants

Table 3: Characteristics of previous children

Participant	Age of participant	Qualification of participant	Employment of participant	Prepared for life after foster care	By whom
Participant 1	20 years old	Grade 12	No	No	None
Participant 2	22 years old	Grade 12	No	No	None
Participant 3	22 years old	Grade 12	No	No	None
Participant 4	21 years old	Grade 12	No	Yes	Foster mother
Participant 5	23 years old	Grade 12	No	No	None
Participant 6	24 years old	Grade 12	No	No	None
Participant 7	24 years old	Grade 9	No	No	None
Participant 8	19 years old	Grade 10	Returned back to school	No	None
Participant 9	21 years old	Grade 12	No	No	None
Participant 10	24 years old	Grade 12 / Basic Ambulance Assistance	Learnership Library	Yes	Foster parent and social worker
Participant 11	21 years old	Grade 12	Returned to School at present grade 12	No	None
Participant 12	23 years old	Grade 10	Yes Contract Road work	Yes	Social worker

5.1. Background information of Participants

The background information below is what the researcher received when getting to know the participants on the day of semi – structured interviews and therefore did not have this information beforehand.

Participant 1

Participant 1 is a 20 years old African female. The participant completed grade 12 and dropped out of her Human Resource degree course to due financial constraints. The participant is unemployed. The participant is residing with her sister mother who was her foster parent. The participant resides in a village in Zeerust. The participant has no children.

Participant 2

Participant 2 is 22 years old African female. The participant completed grade 12. The client is unemployed. The participant is residing with her sister and no longer with her grandmother who was her foster parent. The participant has one child. The participant resides in a village in Zeerust.

Participant 3

Participant 3 is 22 years old African female. The participant completed grade 12. The participant is unemployed and is still living with her grandmother who was the foster parent. The participant has one child and is still residing in a village in Zeerust

Participant 4

Participant 4 is a 21 year old African female. The participant completed grade 12. The participant was busy with her course on Basic Ambulance Assistant. So the participant

is unemployed. The participant at the time of the study was pregnant with her first child. The participant still resides with her sister who was her foster parent in an area in Zeerust.

Participant 5

Participant 5 is a 23 year old African Male. The participant completed grade 12 . The participant was employed for a year on a contract when he complete school however he is now unemployed. The participant still resides at home with his grandmother who was his foster mother. The participant does not have any children. He lives in a village in the area of Zeerust.

Participant 6

Participant 6 is a 24 old African female . She completed grade 12. Participant 6 wanted to go study further but because of financial constrains she is at home still unemployed. The participant is living with her sister and no longer with her grandmother who was her foster mother. The participant still resides in an village in Zeerust. The participant had an one month old baby at the time of study.

Participant 7

Participant 7 is a 24 year old African female. The participant dropped out school in grade 9 because she was pregnant at time. The participant is unemployed and still resides in Zeerust with her grandmother who was the foster mother. The participant reported that she trying to get work as and (Expanded Public Work Project) EPWP.

Participant 8

Participant 8 is 19 year old African male . He dropped out school when he turned 18 years old. He decided he need to have an education and went back to school to complete his grade 10. He is still living with his grandmother who was his foster mother . He still resides in a village in Zeerust.

Participant 9

Participant 9 is a 21 year old African female . She completed grade 12 .The participants is unemployed. The participant is living with her sister who became her foster mother after she was transferred from her brother care. The participant has one child still living in Zeerust.

Participant 10

Participant 10 is a 24 year old African male. He completed his grade 12. He further completed his training in Basic Ambulance Assistance. The participant has just been accepted in to a learnership at the local community library. The participant is living with his grandmother who was his foster mother. The participant has no children. He is still living in the village area in Zeerust.

Participant 11

Participant 11 is a 21-year-old African female. The participant dropped out school and decided to return back to school to complete her grade 12. The participant has one child. The participant is living with her sister and no longer with her foster mother who was her aunt. The participant is still living in the village in Zeerust.

Participant 12

Participant 12 is a 23 year old African male. The participant did not complete grade 12 but dropped out school in grade 10. The participant completed a course in security services. The participant is employed as an EPWP worker that works on the road. The participant lives with his sister and not with his foster mother since he dropped out of school. The participant does not have any children. He is still living in a village in Zeerust.

Twelve participants were interviewed to explore their views of aging out of foster care into an independent living programme. All participants, who took part in the study, lived in Ramotshere Moiloa Municipality that consists of wards and was previously in foster care, under the supervision of the Department of Social Development. The above table's findings can be reported as follows.

6. Research Findings

6.1. Introduction

This explorative research undertaken with ex-foster children resulted in six main themes that emerged from the data. These themes and sub-themes were identified and formulated from analysis and are discussed in the following paragraphs. Twelve participants participated in the research study and the responses are discussed below in the various themes and sub-themes.

The following semi-structured questions were asked to participants and also probing questions were necessary:

1. Looking back at your experience of aging out of foster care, what would you describe as most significant to you?

2. Tell me about your experiences since your foster care situation was terminated.
3. What will you identify as the most challenging, and how did you handle it?
4. To what extent do you feel your foster care placement assisted in preparing you for life after foster care?
5. Anything else you would like to add to the research theme?

From the above questions the following codes / themes and sub- themes emerged:

Table 4: Themes and Sub- themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Theme 1: Looking back at your experience of aging out of foster care, what would you describe as most significant to you?	Sub-theme 1: Loss of Social grant: Foster care grant Sub-theme 2: Educational needs
Theme 2: Tell me more about your experience since your foster care situation was terminated	Sub-theme 1: Relationship with the foster parent
Theme 3: What would you identify as most challenging and how do you handle it?	Sub-theme 1: Unemployment Sub-theme 2: Risky behaviour Sub- theme 3: Coping
Theme 4: To what extent did you feel your foster care placement assisted in preparing for life after foster care?	Sub-theme 1: Involvement of Social Workers Sub-theme 2: Preparation for independent living
Theme 5: Anything else you would like to add to research theme?	Sub-theme 1: Expectation for Social Workers

6.2. Theme 1: Looking back at your experience of aging out of foster care, what you describe as most significant to you?

“The research that exists on outcomes for foster care alumni shows that these youth are at a higher risk for homelessness, unemployment, illness, incarceration, welfare dependency, and sexual and physical victimization than their peers” (Gardner, 2008:4). These are some of the challenges that the foster children are faced with when aging out of foster care. The challenges will be formulated in the next paragraph.

The participants were asked about what has been most significant when they look back at the foster care experiences. The views of the participants are more or less the same. All of the participants’ responses (100%) clearly indicated that loss of the social grant has been difficult for them to deal with when aging out of care. The participants made use of wording such as

“The money I was getting was helping”

Although the focus was on what experience was significant for them when aging out of care, it can be said that the social grant played a significant role in the lives of foster children.

Some examples of verbatim responses also included;

Participant 10: *“The money we get from foster care grant help us a lot because you can do everything even if at home you have shortage or something let me say groceries or what that money will help you even at school.”*

Participant 12: *“It helped me a lot at school, I used that money to buy things for school, maybe they want books I go there and ask for that money and they give me and then I do everything that I need and after I left school the money that left.”*

Participant 6: *“Oraait, (sic, alright) life was better that time because I was still at school, I don't have to ask so many things from family and then I wasn't struggling to find or look for a job so now it's difficult as you heard me that I left home trying.”*

It appears for some aging out of foster care has been struggling with dealing with the loss of the social grant, facing unemployment and not having the opportunity further their education. This challenges that this foster youth faced relates to studies such based on Curry and Abrams (2015:145); Tanur (2012:326); and Mitchell *et al.* (2014:291) that foster youth aging out care encounters many challenges such as educational attainment and unemployment that affects their lives and future. Indicated are some of the verbatim responses below:

Participant 1: *“It's just they were good, mmm but sometimes it was bad.”*

The researcher probed the participant to indicate what has been good and what has been bad by asking the following questions about what was good of foster care? The participant stated that *“the money I was getting to go to school”* and the next question was getting the views of what was bad. “You also said that there were bad things about foster care what were bad?” Participant response that *“I just sometimes that there is no money to go somewhere, like I was doing Human Resource and using that money”*.

Participant 3: *“I suffered a lot because I had to go to college with no money, no one helping me, you see.”*

Every person experienced their aging out of foster care differently, although one can say that foster care grants play a crucial role to what happens in the life of foster children after they have aged out of care. However the social support from family

members also plays a crucial role in the transitioning of foster youth to have that support. When young people leave care they may find themselves without access to support from either parents or from former carers (Höjer & Sjöblom, 2010:119). From the forgoing responses, the following sub-themes emerged from the interviews.

6.2.1. Sub-theme 1: Loss of Social grant: Foster care grant

Independent living needs at the very minimum include paying for food, clothing, housing and transportation, according to Mitchell *et al.* (2014:292.). The benefit of the foster care grant allows the foster child who is still under care, to have access to free education and health services. In some of the foster families, the foster care grant is the only source of income that provides for the family.

Some examples of verbatim responses included were:

Participant 2: *“The money I was getting was helping me.”*

When probed about the money that was helping participant 2 she indicated that the money assisted “to get some toiletries, clothes and anything I wanted”. This is not to say that the participants personally managed the grants themselves, but that their need was always met.

Participant 11: *“I didn’t short anything when I wanted something, I get it.”*

Participant 10: *“Actually she saved money for me for time I went to the college, ya help me a lot.”*

According to Jacobs, Shung-King and Smith (2005:33): “...research shows that increasing numbers of poverty-stricken families who are caring for orphaned children

are relying on foster care placements as a way to access the more substantial financial support offered by the foster care grant.”

6.2.2. Sub-theme 2: Educational needs Youth who have aged out of foster care are left to face additional costs, such as paying for health services and further education. Because of that instability to financially meet these needs, youth who are exiting the foster care find themselves on public assistance more often than youth who are not in foster care (Mitchell *et al.* 2014: 292). The studies of Mitchell *et al.* 2014 relate to youth aging out of foster care. While in foster care, the child is in the care of the state that is responsible for ensuring that the foster child has access to free education and free health and benefits from the foster care grant.

Participant 8: *“I dropped out of school but I came back again.”*

Participant 11: *“I decided to drop school, but I realise that school is important to me, then force go back to school.”*

Participant 9: *“I was struggling with money, mmm.”*

6.3. Theme 2: Tell me more about your experience since your foster care situation was terminated

Tanur (2012:226) argues that the abrupt termination of state support at the age of 18 results in poor outcomes for youth leaving care. They still require a safety net of ongoing financial, social and emotional support and nurturing traditionally offered by families of origin at this time. The participants were asked what they experienced when the foster care was terminated. Each person perceives their termination differently from foster care, but there are certain aspects of their life circumstances that can relate to

each other. Most of the foster children's lives depended on the foster care grant and, for some; they feel lost without that income. Mnisi (2015:99) states that the adolescents would question the usage of the grant and allege that foster parents misused the grant for personal gain or used it for other children in the family.

Some examples of verbatim responses included:

Participant 6: *"Like the time I completed my matric I wanted to go to that university so I tried to register there. I register and register for a whole year for two years but nothing happened, so I was scared nobody was going to pay for studies and I tried to apply for a bursary but still nothing."*

Participant 2: *"I don't get anything that I was getting when I was getting the foster care."*

Participant 9: *"Makes feel very sad because sometime he doesn't have money."*

6.3.1. Sub-theme 1: Relationship with foster parent

Goodyer (2011:109) states that the characteristics of the carer are considered as the key factor in the success of fostering. Foster parents who are able to offer support to foster children in ways that make them feel accepted, enhances stability. Furthermore, Goodyer (2011:14) stated that many "looked after" children would like to maintain relationships with their family of origin. All participants interviewed in the study were in foster care of a relative. Some have had good relationships with their carer, where others' relations may have been not so good. Of the twelve participants interviewed, two stood out with having good or positive relationships or receiving support from the foster parents after leaving care.

Some examples of verbatim responses were:

Participant 9: *“My relationship with her was good.”*

Participant 4: *“No, she is still supporting me.”*

Others have had negative experiences with the foster parents before the placement was terminated. As a result of the foster care grant not being available any longer, some of the relationships may have become strained.

Some examples of verbatim responses included:

Participant 1: *“Just words and she never like support like the she was doing.”*

Participant 6: *“Actually we were not that close we were not that close, cause even if I was receiving that foster care I was living with my mum cousin, ya that where I stayed for long period of time.”*

Participant 11: *“We were fighting because after I got pregnant they don’t treat me well they not same.”*

Some examples of verbatim responses were included.....

Participant 12: *“No it was good, my sister was there for me after they cut my money, my sister was there for me always helping me there and there, but after I started working here he helped me somewhere somehow but the rest I just help myself.”*

According to the Children’s Act 38 of 2005, the purpose of foster care is to “protect and nurture children by providing a safe, healthy environment with positive support; promote

the goals of permanency planning, first towards family reunification, or by connecting children to other safe and nurturing family relationships intended to last a lifetime; and respect the individual and family by demonstrating a respect for cultural, ethnic and community diversity”. However, in reality, the main purpose of the foster care system is to provide financial assistance to the impoverished family member who is looking after orphans (Hall, Woolard, Lake & Smith, 2012:89).

6.4. Theme 3: What would you identify as most challenging and how do you handle it

The reality outside foster care confronts them with a number of challenges and responsibilities that are unique to care leavers compared to other young people of their age group (Mendes, Moslehuddin, & Goddard, 2008: 33). Youth leaving care has a lack of adequate emotional support, social support and financial support. In the end, they struggle to meet the key roles. For example, in this research, the participants link to the views of Mendes *et al* (2008:33). The responses of the participants refer to a lack of emotional support and physical care. One can also further argue that this lack of emotional support and physical care has a bearing on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs where individuals strive to meet their needs.



Figure 5: Maslow Hierarchy of Needs (Mc Leod.2007)

The above figure presents the needs of a person in the hierarchy approach that starts at the bottom and end at the top. That means that the bottom need must be satisfied in order to move up. In this study, participant 9 reported that there are some days that they don't have food. This does not indicate that participant 9 is stagnated on physiological needs to be satisfied but that, in most cases, the participants lack the needs that must be satisfied.

Some examples of verbatim responses were included.....

Participant 2: *“Mmm, the most challenging thing for me I not getting things I was getting before and I don't have and my granny doesn't meet me half way or she doesn't.”*

Participant 5: *“Now my challenge is I don't know where to go. What will get when I get there just staying here thinking about.”*

Participant 9: *“Sometimes at home we don't have the food to eat.”*

Participant 11: *“The challenge is that is that I realised that without education there is no life, so I decided to go back at least make my life better.”*

Studies have found that youth aging out of care in some of the participants' situations of not being able to have access to social grants; this fact has impacted their lives tremendously, as they are facing the reality of living in poverty.

6.4.1. Sub-theme 1: Unemployment

“Longitudinal studies have found lower earnings and higher unemployment rates among aged out youth compared to young people of a similar age range even when controlling for other important factors such as socio economic status prior to age 18” (Curry & Abrams, 2015:145). It appears that unemployment is high amongst the youth who have aged out of care as, out of the 12 that was interviewed, only two are employed and the rest are still unemployed (see table 5 for the characteristics of the unemployed participants). Therefore, one can say that finding employment has been a struggle to some of the foster children who have aged out of care. The same applies to their poverty-stricken situation that has also influenced their circumstances. Tanur (2012:326) found that youth indicated that in addition to the loss of relationship, the most challenging aspect of leaving care was the financial difficulty that they faced,

6.4.2. Sub-theme 2: Risky behaviour

Studies such as (Mitchell *et al.* 2015; Antle *et al.* 2009) have shown that foster youth is susceptible for high risk behaviours such as unplanned pregnancies, substance abuse and even prostitution. One participant indicated that she must have a boyfriend now to support her needs and provide her with the things she needs. Out of nine female that were interviewed it was found that that seven out nine youth had unplanned pregnancies and became parents either while in care or shortly after leaving care. Research study founded by Love, McIntosh, Rost and Tertakian (2005) points out that “Young adults who have aged out of foster care, especially females, are more than twice as likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours as other young adults.” This behaviour of seeking a boyfriend to support financially may end up in unplanned pregnancies, STD or contracting even HIV and AIDS which has a far worse impact on one’s life. The following responses of participants stood and are as follow:

Participant 1: *“But sometimes it is bad now I have to go and be with like find and find a boyfriend just to support me.”*

Participant 3: “Ya (Yes) if someone talks to with me you see like go to the clinic and stuff like that, ya.

Participant 6: “You know it stressed me but I understand because we both fine before but it ended up that he lost his job to maintain the baby and he still looking for that job”

Participant 7: “To look out because I didn’t want a daughter it’s the mistake “

Participant 5: *“To plan something good and not do drugs.”*

A follow-up question was asked to Participant 5 to find out if he did drugs and he responded “No”, which indicates that the participant has set goals not to get involved with drugs.

6.4.3. Sub-theme 3: Coping

Craig (2003:506) sees development in adulthood as marked by influences such as cultural norms, societal expectations, and commitment towards significant others and society at large. With regard to this theory, during this period, a young adult develops coping mechanisms to deal with stressful life events. Tanur (2012:332) also states that the work done by the youth worker and the young person, who works together towards a goal, within the time available, takes account of the developmental capabilities of the young person. Tanur (2012:332) further states that although this is time consuming, but it is essential to increase self-awareness and develop skills for coping beyond care.

Some participants feel they are trying to cope on their own to deal with the challenge they are facing. This is especially true of two participants who stood out with their resilience to be independent and not dependent of the foster parent.

Some examples of verbatim responses were:

Participant 10: *“Is to work hard on my studies, to be independent and to face life.”*

Participant 5: *“I am doing odd jobs.”*

Although most of the participants have found themselves in challenging situation they still manage to try to be determine to make something of their lives to ensure that they are successful.

6.5. Theme 4: To what extent did you feel your foster care placement assisted in preparing you for life after foster care?

Mitchell *et al.* (2014:292) points out that when considering the needs of youth preparing for the transition out of foster care, it is essential that youth are not only equipped with the necessary resources to thrive independently, but are also directly involved in the planning and preparation of their transition plan. Mitchell *et al.* (2014:292) refer to the transition plan as one of many ways that youth in foster care can become aware of the resources and support that are available to them as they transition out of foster care and mature into adulthood. Some participants have been lucky, in that they have received the social worker’s support through aging out and felt somehow prepared for life after foster care. Curry and Abrams (2015:147) argue that support can come from formal sources such as professional social service programmes, or the social worker in this case, as well as informal support, such as friends, family or peers.

Some examples of verbatim responses were included.....

Participant 10: *“Ja, the social worker would keep on visiting us at the clinic looking for our results and ja.”*

Participant 7: *“He said to me go to school and complete matric then money that my grandmother is budget will go to take me.”*

Participant 9: *“At a regular basis.”*

Participant 12: *“Ja it help me a lot cause it teach me that I have to save money for the next future maybe for another five years to come.”*

The following sub-theme emerged from the theme and is reported in the following paragraph.

6.5.1. Sub theme 1: Involvement of the Social Worker

It is crucial for the Social worker to be involved with the transition of foster youth into independent living. Mitchell *et al.* (2014:292) point out that development of a transition plan occurs during a youth-centred, face-to-face meeting where the youth, case manager and supportive adults discuss the options, goals and services that can contribute to a youth’s successful future upon leaving foster care. Almost all the participants have either not been prepared for aging out or have not seen the social worker after the placement was finalised.

6.5.2. Sub-theme 2: Preparations for Independent Living

Studies have shown that the preparation of foster youth is crucial for their transition into adulthood (Scannapieco *et al.*, 2015:294; Mitchell *et al.*, 2015:292). The Social workers

role is to be involved with the preparation of the foster youth to transition successfully into adulthood by provide the young adult with the necessary skills such as vocational skills to ensure that they will be able to manage an income , get housing but most importantly be able to build relationships with other and to be able to make informed decisions about their life. In the study some participants felt that they were adequately prepared for life after care through the help of the foster parent and social worker. Out of the twelve participants three felt they were prepared for life after care , whereas the remainder nine felt unprepared for life after leaving care .

Participant 10's reaction to the question was:

“Ja I appreciate a lot to have her in my life cause she was always supporting me and if I have obstacles at she school she was always guiding and assisting me”

Participant 9 responded that the social worker “encouraged her“.

The nine of the participants however felt that they did not get the necessary support from their social worker to prepare them with applicable skills to be empowered as they transition into independent living. Höjer and Sjöblom, (2010:119-120) stated: “good support from the social services helped young people in the transitional phase from leaving care to independent living”. This implies that the participants in this research felt that they were not equipped enough for the challenges they had to face.

6.6. Theme 5: Anything else you would like to add to the research?

Participants indicated that they have expectations for the social worker and added that if their expectations were maybe addressed, they would not have been in these challenging circumstances.

6.6.1. Sub theme1: Expectation for social workers

Some examples of verbatim responses included:

Participant 4: *“They must come and give us the advice on what we should do about our life.”*

Participant 6: *“She would have helped granny to save so that we can be able to go to school even my sister she is struggling she still want to go school but now.”*

Participant 9: *“Social workers should encourage the children that they should study hard and then get good marks and go to university or college after matric.”*

Participant 3: *“Ya, if someone had to talk with me you see like to clinic and stuff like that ya.”*

The participants identified that role of the social worker as important during preparation to age out of care. Somehow, they feel that if there was just some little involvement with the social workers, their circumstances in life could have been different.

7. Conclusion

Based on the expression from previous foster youth and their experiences, one can concluded that most of them felt unprepared for life after foster care. The youth is especially struggling with the loss of the social grant which previously provided for their basic needs such as food, clothes and toiletries , thus making some of them desperate to look for life partners to provide for their needs making them at risk for unplanned pregnancies as well as contracting HIV or Aids and even and STD.

Most of them also are also faced with challenges of not having the opportunity to further the studies because of no support from family to assist them. Some even faces the challenges of dropping out of school .Most of them affected based on the fact that they are unemployed and in most cases most of them has not worked to provide for their basic needs and some dependent on their children social grant of r 420-00 per month to survive.

Some of the participants have also felt that their relationship with their foster parents has changed since they have aged out of foster care, questioning whether the social grant was more important than them. A few participants felt that they were prepared for aging out of foster care and is still receiving support from their foster parents , however most of them felt that their life's could have been different if their social worker's provided them with the necessary skills for independent living.

This study provided a meaningful understanding of the experiences of ex-foster children with regard to aging out of foster care and what the expectations are for social worker to do in the future for other children in foster care. From the above, the following recommendations can be made:

8. Recommendation

In summary, it can be recommended that guidelines for independent living preparing foster children aging out of foster care should be formulated. These guidelines should define the importance of an Independent Living Programme that will enable foster children to age out successfully into adulthood. The following suggestion can be considered.

- The Department of Social Development should start developing the guidelines that they have introduced and encourage Social Workers to be trained on the policies that address the independent living programme.
- It would be in the best interest of the foster children that, in the preparation phase, the canalisation is present to ensure that before the discharge of any foster children who reach the age majority, they have been part of the preparation programme for independent living.
- Preparation of children to age out of foster care is not an instant and simple process. Social workers are to be trained in independent living programmes and to start to implement the programme to foster youth aged between 15 years and upwards. In that way, these children will be provided so that they adapt to the idea of leaving care and accept that they should provide for themselves.
- Social workers should also start conducting more than just case work alone, but also engage in a group work function, to deal with preparing foster children to age out of care.
- The involvement of other key stakeholders is crucial to enhance the delivery of service to children in foster care and to start making use of the Child Protection system as a whole.
- Independent living programmes based on foster care children aging out of care still need further investigations.

9. References

Acts see South Africa

Alpaslan, N. & Schenck, C. 2012. Challenges related to working conditions by social workers practising in rural areas. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 48(4):367-386.

Atkinson, M. (2008). Aging out of foster care: Towards a universal safety net for former care youth. *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, 43, 183-212.

Babbie, E. (2014). *The basic of social research* (6th ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Berzin, S.C., Singer, E., & Hokanson, K. (2014). Ermeging vervus emancipating :The adulthood for youth in foster care. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 29(5), 616-638.

Bosman-Sadie, H., Corrie, L., & Swanepoel, E. (2013). *A practical approach to the Children's Act* (2nd ed.). South Africa: Lexis-Nexis.

Chiroro, P., Seedat, R., & Woolnough, K. (2009). A qualitative study on the experience of youth who age out of the foster child grant in South Africa. In Lesea, T. M. (2017) *.Utilising social entrepreneurship to facilitate the successful transition of foster youth to adulthood in South Africa*. (Master of Philosophy). University of CapeTown.

Craig, G. J. (2003). *Human development*. New Jersey: Upper Saddle River. Crosson-Tower, C. (2004). *Exploring child welfare: A practice perspective* (3rd ed.). USA: Pearson Education.

Constitution see South Africa

Curry,S.R.,& Abrams,L.S. (2015). Housing and social support for youth aging out of foster care:State of the research literature and direction for future inquiry.*Child Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 32,143-153.doi 10.1007/s10560-014-0346-4

Department of Social Development See South Africa.

Gardner, G. (2008). *Youth aging out of foster care: Identifying strategies and best practices*. 2007- 2008 Presidential Initiative.

Goodyer, A. (2011). *Child-centred foster care: A rights-based model for practice*. London: Kingsley.

Fouché, C. B. & De Vos, A. S. (2011). Formal Formulation. In De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (Ed). *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed.) (pp. 89-100). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Hall, K., Meintjes, H., & Sambu, W. (2014). *Demography of South Africa's children*. *South African Child Gauge*, 90-93.

Hall, K. & Proudlock, P. (2011). *Orphaning and the foster child grant: A return to the care or cash debate*. *Children count brief*. Cape Town, Children's Institute: University of Cape Town.

Hall, K., Woolard, I., Lake, L., Smith, C. (Eds.). (2012). *South African Child Gauge*.Cape Town, Children's Institute: University of Cape Town.

Höjer,I., & Sjöblom.(2010). Young people leaving care in Sweden.*Child & Family Social Work*,15,118-127.

Jacobs, M., Shung-King, M., & Smith, C. (Eds.). (2005). *South African Child Gauge*. Cape Town, Children's Institute: University of Cape Town.

Louw, D. A. & Louw, A. E. (2014). *Die ontwikkeling van die kind en adolessent* (2nd ed.). Bloemfontein: Psychology Publication.

Love, L. T., McIntosh, J., Rost, M., & Tertzakian, K. (2005). *Fostering hope: Preventing teen pregnancy among youth in foster care*. Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

Mallon, G.P. (1998). Aftercare, then where? Outcomes of an Independent Living Program. *Child Welfare*, 71(1), 61-78.

McLeod, S. (2007). *Maslow hierarchy of needs*. Retrieved from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>.

Mendes, P., Moslehuddin, B., & Goddard, C. (2008). Improving the physical and emotional health of young people transitioning from state out of home care. *Developing Practice* (20), 33- 40.

Minisi, R. M. (2015). *Factors contributing to breakdown of foster care placements: Foster parents and adolescent perspective* (Master's thesis). Pretoria: UNISA.

Mitchell, M. B., Jones, T., & Renema, S. (2014). Will I make it on my own? Voices and visions of 17-year-old youth in transition. *Social Work Journal* 2015, 32, 291-300.

Osgood, W., Foster, M., & Courtney, M. (2010). Vulnerable population and the transition to adulthood. *The Future of Children*, 20(1), 209-229.

Naidoo S. & Kasiram, M. 2006. Experiences of South African social workers in the United Kingdom. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 42(2):117-126.

Papalia, D. E. & Feldman, R. (2011). *A child's world infancy through adolescence*. (12th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pinkerton, J. (2011). Constructing a global understanding of the social ecology of leaving out of home care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(12), 2412-2416.

Scannapieco, M., Smith, M. & Blakeney-Strong, A. (2016). Transition from foster care to Independent living: Ecological Predictors Associated with outcomes. *Social Work Journal*, 33, 293-302.

Sandelowski, M. (2000). Focus on research methods whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research in Nursing and Health*, 23(4), 334-340.

Schurink, W., Fouché, C. B., & De Vos, A. S. (2011). Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (Ed), *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed.). (pp. 397-423). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Simon, M.K. (2011). Analysis of quantitative data. Seattle, LLC. South Africa. (1996). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. (2005). *Children's Act 38 of 2005 as amended*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. (2009). Department of Social Development. *Guidelines for effective management of foster care in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Stein, M. & Munro, E.R. (2008). The transition to adulthood for young people leaving public care : International comparisons and perspectives. Loughborough university.

Tanur, C. (2012). Project Lungisela: Supporting young people leaving state care in South Africa. *Childcare Practice*, 18(4), 325-340.

Xie, R., Sen , B.P., & Foster , E.M. (2013).Vulnerable youth and transitions to adulthood. *New direction and adult and continuing education* 143, 23-38.

Zastrow, C. H. & Kirst-Ashman, K. K. (2013). *Understanding human behaviour and the social environment* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

SECTION D: SUMMARY, LIMITATION OF STUDY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

1. Introduction

This section will provide a summary of the research study, the research design, and methods of data collection, data analysis procedures and the trustworthiness of the findings the components discussed. This section reflects on the researcher's experience during the research process. Limitation of the study is identified and recommendation for future research and guidelines are provided.

2. Summary

The aim of this study was to gather experiences of former foster care youth regarding their transition into independent living. The research questions were:

What should be guidelines for an independent living programme for foster children aging out of foster care to prepare them for life after foster care?

In the context of the study the following themes are discussed in view of an evaluation and summary of the findings:

2.1. Theme 1: Looking back at your experience of aging out of foster care , what would you describe as most significant to you

The loss of the social grant has significantly influenced the lives of these participants, as they felt they were not prepared for this and is struggling to survive. Foster care grants contributed to the household income and their needs were met, but now they have to be satisfied with what they can get or not get and have to accept it. Foster youth also

struggle with instability in their finances to meet their needs to further their studies without the support of the social grant and support from family members.

2.2. Theme 2: Tell me about your experience since your foster care situation was terminated

Foster children are also burdened with how their relationships are now with the previous foster parents although they are related. As some has felt that since the placement has been terminated, the foster parent's behaviour and attitude have changed towards them, they are not being supported or helped by the foster parents. They have struggled on their own. .

2.3. Theme 3: What will you identify as most challenging and how did you handle it

Foster children who have aged out of care are unprepared and are faced with countless challenges. The participants in the study mostly have been struggling financially without the support of the grant. They have been living in poverty and feel bad that they still have to depend on someone to provide for their needs. Some foster youth end up being exposed to risky behaviours as one participant indicated that she needs a boyfriend to support her financially to be able to meet her needs Some have found ways to cope with their situations but are not truly satisfied with the way their lives have turned out. They are trying to accept and make peace with their living situations. Some, however, still have hopes to reach their goals of studying further and making something of their lives.

2.4. Theme 4: To what extent do you feel your foster care placement assisted in preparing you for life after foster care

Children aging out of foster care are not prepared for life after foster care. Social Workers are not implementing the Independent living programme to prepare these children who left after foster care. This has created a huge gap between the transitions from adolescence to adulthood as some foster youth who have left care feels unprepared. Support from social workers is still lacking to foster children aging out of foster care. The preparations for independent living are crucial for the foster youth to be able to live independently in the society.

2.5. Theme 5: Anything else you would like to add to the research theme

Foster children's expectation of social workers is for them to be involved in their lives to provide them with guidance and support. They expect from social workers to always advise them and provide them with the necessary information or skills to make well-informed decisions about their lives.

3. Limitation of the Study

The study only included former foster children who have aged out of foster care, not less than one year and no longer than five years of taking part in the study. However, other foster children have been identified who have been out of foster care for more than five years, but could not participate owing to the exclusion criteria of participation.

Some participants identified for the study met the requirement as a former foster child. However, owing to the fact that they were no longer residing in the area of jurisdiction of the study they could not be identified.

The on-going service delivery strike in Ramotshere Moiloa Service was a difficult challenge for the researcher when she had to travel to all the participants' homes to conduct interviews. Some areas were very far from each other and required traveling time.

The sample size and number of participants that took part in the study were small and can be regarded as limited. The data obtained cannot be viewed as a representative of all former youth who have aged out of care into independent living and thus cannot, be generalised.

The case managers, such as social workers, were not part of the study. Thus it was impossible to gain their insight on the preparations for children aging out of foster care. Therefore, the data collected is focused on the views expressed by former foster children.

4. Recommendations

In light of the research, the following recommendations are made regarding guidelines for an independent living programme preparing foster children aging out of foster care and recommendations are made for further studies on independent living for foster children.

4.1. Recommendations for the development of guidelines for social workers on providing preparations for children aging out of foster care.

- Consult the necessary legislation in the Children's Act 38 of 2005 as amended.
- Emphasise the foster care process outlined in the guidelines for effective management of foster care.

- Develop guidelines for social workers, indicating the importance of preparing foster youth for independent living.

4.2. Recommendation for social workers to be trained in Independent living programmes

- Social worker to be trained on the necessary policy with regard to Independent Living Programmes to be able to prepare foster youth with the necessary skills for independent living.
- The social worker should be encouraged to use their resources to assist them in learning more of independent living programmes.

4.3. Recommendation for the involvement of key stakeholders

- To identify key stakeholders in the Child Protection System to work collaborate together to ensure that foster children are equipped with the necessary skills to age out of care.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities when it comes to preparing children to age out of foster care.

4.4. Recommendation for services to foster care families

The areas that are on-going services/support to foster families

- Educate foster family on preparations for independent living program and how to assist the foster child.
- Link the foster family with support networks.
- Link the foster family with the necessary resources in the community.

4.5. Recommendation for service to foster children

The areas that are on-going services/support to foster children:

- Identify children between ages 15 to aging out ages for preparation for independent living programmes.
- Develop individual development plans for each child.
- Develop a foster care transition plan for each child.
- Link foster child with necessary resources.
- Continue to support child and provide aftercare services after the transition.
- Conduct group work and provide foster children with necessary life skills.

4.6. Recommendation for further studies

The following recommendation for further studies should be considered

- A study focusing on social workers knowledge or experiences pertaining to Independent Living Programmes for foster youth in foster care.
- Further research on independent living programmes is needed, with a larger sample size in order to establish the extent of what the preparations should be when preparing foster children aging out of care.

5. Conclusion

The study provided a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of ex-foster children who have aged out of foster care. Their views were explored with the aim of making recommendations towards guidelines to best regulate the preparation for foster children aging out of foster care into independent living. A qualitative approach was followed by making use of semi-structured interviews and the sample size of 12 participants.

Foster children are aging out of foster care haphazardly, without being prepared for life after leaving care. This puts them at risk for a life of poverty, being unemployed, homeless or becoming young parents who have no means of support. Social workers' involvement in the preparation of young adults for independent living is crucial to ensure the successful transition into independent living. There is a need for guidelines to be followed for social workers to prepare foster children to age out of foster care into independent living.

6. Combined References

Acts see South Africa

Alpaslan, N. & Schenck, C. 2012. Challenges related to working conditions by social workers practising in rural areas. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 48(4):367-386.

Ambrosino, R., Hefferman, J., Shuttleworth, G. & Ambrosino, R. (2012). *Social work and Social Welfare: An introduction*. (7th ed.) Australia: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

Antle B.F., Johnson, L., Barbee, A., & Sullivan, D. (2009). Fostering interdependent versus independent living in youth aging out of foster care through healthy relationships. *Families: Society Journal of Contemporary Social Service*, 90(3), 309-3011.

Atkinson, M. (2008). Aging out of foster care: Towards a universal safety net for former foster care youth. *Harvard Civil Rights/Civil Liberties Law Review*, 43, 183-212.

Babbie, E. (2014). *The basic of social research* (6th ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Babbie, E. (2016). *The practice of social research* (14th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.

Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Berg, B.L., & Lune, H. (2014). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (8th ed.). New York: Pearson.

Berzin, S.C. (2008). Difficulties in the transition to adulthood: Using propensity scoring to understand what makes youth vulnerable. *Social Service Review*, 82, 171-196.

Berzin, S.C., Rhodes, A.M., & Curtis, M.A. (2011). Housing experiences of former foster youth: How do they fare in comparison to other youth? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(1), 2119-2126. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.06.018.

Berzin, S.C., Singer, E., & Hokanson, K. (2014) Emerging versus emancipating :The adulthood for youth in foster care. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 29(5), 616-638.

Betz, C.L. (2010). Emancipation of youth in foster care: The dilemma (editorial). *Journal of Paediatric Nursing*, 25(4), 241-243. doi:10.1016/j.pedn.2009.11.005

Bond, S. (2018). Care – leaving in South Africa: an international and social justice perspective. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 34(1), 76-90. doi:10.1080/21699763.2017.1413994.

Bosman-Sadie, H., Corrie, L. & Swanepoel, E. (2013). *A practical approach to the Children's Act* (2nd ed.). South Africa: LexisNexis.

Bosset, S. (2016.) Foster care independent living program and adolescent. San Bernardino: California State University.

Botma, Y., Greeff, M., Mulaudzi, F.M. & Wright, S.C.D. (2010). *Research in Health Science*. Cape Town: Heineman, Pearson Education.

Breen, N. (2015). *Policy brief: Foster care in South Africa: where to from here?* Johannesburg Child Welfare.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chiroro, P., Seedat, R., & Woolnough, K. (2009). A qualitative study on the experience of youth who age out of the foster child grant in South Africa. In Lesea, T. M. (2017). *Utilising social entrepreneurship to facilitate the successful transition of foster youth to adulthood in South Africa*. (Master of Philosophy). University of Cape Town.

Collins English Dictionary. (2016). Guideline. Retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/guideline>.

Courtney, M.E., & Dworsky, A. (2006). Early outcomes for young adults transitioning from out-of-home care in the USA. *Child and Family Social Work*, 11, 209-212.

Craft, C. (2018). What it means when a foster child ages out. Retrieved from http://www.liveabout.com/what-is-aging-out-adoption_27071

Craig, G. J. (2003). *Human development*. New Jersey: Upper Saddle River.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five*

approaches (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Constitution see South Africa

Crosson-Tower, C. (2004). *Exploring child welfare: A practice perspective* (3rd ed.). USA: Pearson Education.

Curry, S.R. & Abrams, L.S. (2015). Housing and social support for youth aging out of foster care: State of the research literature and direction for future inquiry. *Child Adolescent Social Work Journal* ,32,143-153.doi 10.1007/s10560-014-0346-4

Department of Social Development **see** South Africa.

Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.dhss.sacounty.net/CPS/Pages/Independent-living-program/SP-ILP-Extended-foster-care.aspx>

De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (Ed.), (2011). *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed.) (pp. 397-423). Pretoria: Van Schaik

Dickens, L.F., van Breda, A.D., & Marx, P. (2015). Growth beyond the town: A longitudinal study on youth leaving care:30-month status report. Cape Town: Girls and Boys Town South Africa and University of Johannesburg.

Dixon, J.(2008).Young people leaving care :Health, wellbeing and outcomes.Child and Family Social Work,13,207-217.

Early, T. & GlenMaye, L. (2000). Valuing families: Social work practice with families from a strengths perspective. *Social Work*, 45(2):118-130.

Forrester, M. (2010). *Doing qualitative research in psychology: A practical guide*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Foster, E.M., & Gifford, E.J. (2004). *Challenges in the transitions to adulthood for youth in foster care, juvenile justice and special education*. Network on transitions to adulthood: brief policy, Oct. 15.

Fouché, C. B. & De Vos, A. S. (2011). Formal Formulation. In De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (Ed.), *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed.) (pp. 89-100) Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Fowler, P.J., Toro, P.A. & Miles, B.W. (2011) Emerging Adulthood and Leaving foster care: Setting Associated with mental health. *Journal of community psychology*, 47,335-348.

Gardner, G. (2008). *Youth aging out of foster care: Identifying strategies and best practices*. 2007- 2008 Presidential Initiative.

Gelling, J. (2009). Supporting young people: leaving care. Contact with residential workers (BA (Hons) thesis). Aberdeen: Robert Gordon University.

Goodyer, A. (2011). *Child-centred foster care: A rights-based model for practice*. London: Kingsley.

Greeff, M. (2010). *A comprehensive community-based HIV stigma reduction and wellness enhancement intervention*. (Research proposal unpublished). Potchefstroom: NWU.

Greeff, M. (2011). Information collection: interviewing. In De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B. & Delpont, C.S. L. (Ed.) *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed.). (pp. 341-375). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Hall, K. (2016). Children's access to housing. In Delany, A., Jehoma, S., & Lake, L.(Eds.). *South African child gauge, 2016*,(pp 129-131). Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.

Hall, K., Meintjes, H., & Sambu, W. (2014). *Demography of South Africa's children*. *South African Child Gauge*, 90-93.

Hall, K. & Proudlock, P. (2011). *Orphaning and the foster child grant: A return to the care or cash debate*. *Children count brief*. Cape Town, Children's Institute: University of Cape Town.

Hall, K., Woolard, I., Lake, L., Smith, C. (Eds.). (2012). *South African Child Gauge*. Cape Town, Children's Institute: University of Cape Town.

Höjer, I., & Sjöblom, Y. (2010). Young people leaving care in Sweden. *Child & Family Social Work*, 15, 118-127.

Jacobs, M., Shung-King, M., & Smith, C (Eds.). (2005). *South African Child Gauge*. Cape Town, Children's Institute: University of Cape Town.

Jones, (2011). The first three years after foster care: A longitudinal look at adaptation of 16 youth to emerging adulthood. *Child and Youth Review* ,33,1919-1929.

Keenan, T. & Evans, S. (2009). *An introduction to child Development*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Kemp, S.P. (2010). *Ecological framework*. University of Washington. Oxford university press.

Kerman, B., Freundlich, M., & Macluccio, A. (2009). *Achieving permanency for older children & youth in foster care*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Khoza, S. (2012). *Application of a developmental assessment tool by social workers practicing foster care in the far East Rand, Ekurhuleni*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

Khurana, K. (2008). A comparative analysis of aging out programs in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development*. 23(2), Fall issue.

Kirk, R., & Day, A. (2011). Increasing college access for youth aging out of foster care: Evaluation of a summer camp program for foster youth transitioning from high school to college. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33, 1173-1180.

Kirst- Ashman, K.K & Hull, G.H.(2012). Understanding general practice. (6th ed.) USA: Brooks/ Cole.

Klopper, H. (2008). The qualitative research proposal. *Curationis*, 31(4), 62-72, 1 Dec. 2018.

Kvale, S. (1996). *An introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage.

Lenz-Rashid, S., (2006). Employment experiences of homeless young adults: Are they different for youth with a history of foster care? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28, 235-259. DOI: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2005.03.006

Lesea.T. M. (2017). *Utilising social entrepreneurship to facilitate the successful transition of foster youth to adulthood in South Africa*. (Master of Philosophy). University of Cape Town.

Louw, D. A. & Louw, A. E. (2014). *Die ontwikkeling van die kind en adolessent* (2nd ed.). Bloemfontein: Psychology Publication.

Love, L. T., McIntosh, J., Rost, M., & Tertzakian, K. (2005). *Fostering hope: Preventing teen pregnancy among youth in foster care*. Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

Mallon, G. P. (1998). After care, then where? Outcomes of an Independent Living Program. *Child Welfare*, 71(1), 61-78.

McLeod, J. (2011). *Qualitative research in counselling and psychotherapy*. London: Sage.

McLeod, S. (2007). *Maslow hierarchy of needs*. Retrieved from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>.

Mendes, P. (2009). Young people transition in from state out of home care: Jumping hoops to access employment. *Family Matters*, 83, 32-38.

Mendes, P., Baidawi, S. & Snow, P. (2014). Young people transitioning from out- of – home care: A critical analysis of leave care policy, legislation and housing support in the Australian State of Victoria. *Child Abuse Review*, 23,402-414.

Mendes, P., Moslehuddin, B., & Goddard, C. (2008). Improving the physical and emotional health of young people transitioning from state out of home care. *Developing Practice* (20), 33- 40.

Meyer, I. J. (2008). *The experience of late adolescent state care leavers: A phenomenological study* (Master's thesis). Johannesburg, University of Johannesburg.

Minisi, R. M. (2015). *Factors contributing to breakdown of foster care placements: Foster parents and adolescent perspective* (Master's thesis). Pretoria: UNISA.

Mitchell, M. B., Jones, T., & Renema, S. (2014). Will I make it on my own? Voices and visions of 17-year-old youth in transition. *Social Work Journal* 2015, 32, 291-300.

Mmusi, F. I. (2013). *Description and assessment of care leavers' application of social skills into independent living* (Master's thesis). Johannesburg, University of Johannesburg.

Monette, R., Sullivan, T. J., & De Jong, C. R. (2002). *Applied social research: a tool for the human services*. Orlando, USA: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Mullins-Geiger, J. & Schelbe, L. A. (2014). *Stopping the cycle of child abuse and neglect: A call to focus on pregnant and parenting youth in and aging out of the foster care system*. Florida State University: Faculty Publications, College of Social Work.

Naidoo S. & Kasiram, M. 2006. Experiences of South African social workers in the United Kingdom. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 42(2):117-126

Nieuwenhuis, J. (2007). *Introducing qualitative research: First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik

Osgood, W., Foster, M., & Courtney, M. (2010). Vulnerable population and the transition to adulthood. *The Future of Children*, 20(1), 209-229.

Padgett, D. K. (2008). *Qualitative methods in social work research* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Papalia, D. E. & Feldman, R. (2011). *A child's world infancy through adolescence*. (12thed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pinkerton, J. (2011). Constructing a global understanding of the social ecology of leaving out of home care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(12), 2412-2416.

Randle, M. (2013). Through the eyes of ex foster children: placement success and the characteristics of good foster carers. *Social Work in Action*, 25(1), 3-19.

Republic of South Africa. (2012). South Gauteng High Court. Johannesburg. Children's court case no 14/1/4-206/10.

Richards, G. (2014). "Aging Out" gracefully: Housing and helping youth transition smoothly out of the foster care system. *Journal of Housing & Community Development*, July/August, 71(4), pp. 18-21.

Sandelowski, M. (2010). What is in a name? Qualitative description revisited . *Research in nursing health*, 33(1):77-84.

Scannapieco, M., Smith, M. & Blakeney- Strong, A. (2016). Transition from foster care to Independent living: Ecological Predictors Associated with outcomes. *Social Work Journal*, 33, 293-302.

Schurink, W., Fouché, C. B. & De Vos, A. S. (2011). Qualitative data analysis and

interpretation. In De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delpont, C. S. L. (Ed.), *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed.) (pp. 397-423). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Simon, M.K. (2011). *Analysis of quantitative data*. Seattle: LLC.

Smith, S.R., & Hammon, R.R. (2012) *Exploring family theories*.(3rd ed.) New York: Oxford University Press.

South Africa. (2005). *Children's Act 38 of 2005 as amended*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. (1996). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. (2009). Department of Social Development. *Guidelines for effective management of foster care in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Stein, M. (2005). *Resilience and young people leaving care overcoming the odds*. York: Joseph Towntree Foundation.

Stein, M. & Munro, E.R. (2008). *The transition to adulthood for young people leaving public care: International comparisons and perspectives*. Loughborough university .

Stats SA. (2013). *Mid-year population estimates*. Pretoria: South Africa.

Stats SA. (2018). *Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 2*. Pretoria: Stats SA.

Stott, T. (2012). Transitioning youth: Policies and outcomes. *Children and Youth Services*, 35, 218-227. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth>.

Stott, T. & Gustavasson, N. (2010). Balancing permanency and stability for youth in foster care. *Children and youth services review*, 31, 619-625.

Strydom, H. (2011). Ethical aspects of research in the social sciences and human service professions. In De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (Ed.), *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions* (4th ed.) (pp. 113-130). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Tanur, C. (2012). Project Lungisela: supporting young people leaving state care in South Africa. *Child Care Practice*, 18(4), 325-340.

Unrau, Y.A. (2006). Research on placement moves: seeking the perspective of foster children. *Children and youth services review*, 29(1), 122-137.

Unrau, Y.A., Font, S.A., & Rawls, G. (2012). Readiness for college engagement among students who have aged out of foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(1), 76-83.

Van Breda, A. D. (2010). Possible selves: Group work with young people in a South African township. *Practice: Social Work in Action*, 22(3), 181-192.

Walliman,N.(2011).Research Methods the basics.e-book.London:Routledge.

Xie,R., Sen , B.P., & Foster , E.M. (2013).Vulnerable youth and transitions to adulthood.
New direction and adult and conituning education 143, 23-38.

Zastrow, C.(2010). Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare. (10th edition)
Brooks/Cole.Cengage Learning.

Zastrow, C. H. & Kirst-Ashman, K. K. (2013). *Understanding human behavior and the
social environment* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

Zetlin, A. A., Weinberg, L. L., & Shea, N. M. (2010). Caregivers, school liasons and
agency advocates speak out about the educational needs of children and youth in foster
care. *Social Work*, 55(3), 245-254.

SECTION E: ANNEXURE

Annexure 1: Ethical Approval



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom,
South Africa, 2520

Tel: (018) 299-4900
Faks: (018) 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Research Ethics Regulatory Committee

Tel: +27 18 299 4849

Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF STUDY

Based on approval by **Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC)** on **26/09/2017**, the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-RERC) hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-RERC grants its permission that provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Guidelines for an independent living programme preparing children aging out of foster care																																														
Study Leader/Supervisor: Dr MM Steyn																																														
Student: M Shaw-13037773																																														
Ethics number:	<table border="1"><tr><td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>7</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Institution</td><td colspan="5">Study Number</td><td colspan="2">Year</td><td colspan="5">Status</td></tr><tr><td colspan="15"><small>Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation</small></td></tr></table>	N	W	U	-	0	0	0	1	3	-	1	7	-	A	1	Institution			Study Number					Year		Status					<small>Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation</small>														
N	W	U	-	0	0	0	1	3	-	1	7	-	A	1																																
Institution			Study Number					Year		Status																																				
<small>Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation</small>																																														
Application Type: Single study	Risk: <table border="1"><tr><td>Medium</td></tr></table>	Medium																																												
Medium																																														
Commencement date: 26/09/2017																																														
Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.																																														

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- Researchers will have to submit the final semi-structured interview schedule for review and approval by the HREC before implementing it in the study

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The study leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-RERC via HREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, and upon completion of the study
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any changes to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader must apply for approval of these amendments at the HREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-RERC and HREC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the HREC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required amendments, annual (or otherwise stipulated) report and reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- HREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via Ethics-HRECAppl@nwu.ac.za or 018 299 1206.

The RERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the RERC or HREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof Refilwe Phaswana-Mafuya

Chair NWU Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (RERC)

Annexure 2: Permission of Provincial Department of Social Development



social development

D

North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CHIEF DIRECTORATE: DISTRICTS & INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT MANAGEMENT

Private Bag X 6 • Mmabatho, 2735 • Provident House Building, University Drive • MMABATHO
Tel: +27 (18) 388 - 5719/16 • Fax: +27 (18) 384 - 5967 • E-mail: kkgobe@nrwpc.gov.za

TO : MS MARISKA SHAW
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

FROM : MR I.K KGOBE
ACTING CHIEF DIRECTOR: DISTRICTS AND
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT MANAGEMENT

DATE : 05 OCTOBER 2016

SUBJECT : REQUEST PERMISSION TO UTILIZE THE CLOSED FOSTER CARE
FILES IN RAMOTSHERE-MOILLOA SERVICE POINT

Your letter request dated 06 September 2016 regarding the above-mentioned refers.

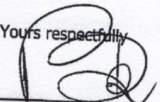
The Department has considered your request and the Head of Department has granted you permission to utilize closed Foster Care files of Ramotshere-Moilloa Service Point.

You are however advised of the following conditions in utilising the files referred to herein:-

1. The files are not to be removed from the Office for confidentiality and security reasons,
2. The files are solely to be used for your research purposes as requested.
3. The Service Point will assign an official who will assist you with access to the files as and when they are needed. Proper arrangements must be made with the Service Point Manager.
4. All access control and security measures in the Service Point will be adhered to.
5. The research report is to be shared with the Department for improvement purposes.

The Department wishes you all the best in your research Project.

Yours respectfully


MR I.K KGOBE
ACTING CHIEF DIRECTOR
DISTRICTS AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT MANAGEMENT

2016 1 05
DATE



Annexure 3: Permission Letter Provincial Director: Child Care and Protection Unit



social development

Department:
Social Development
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



CHIEF DIRECTORATE: SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

Private Bag X 6 ■ Mmabatho, 2735 ■ Provident House Building, University Drive ■ MMABATHO
Tel: +27 (18) 388 – 5605/5606 ■ Fax: +27 86 260 4079/81 ■ E-mail: mmalaka@nwpg.gov.za

Enq : Ms T. Koena
E-mail : tkoena@nwpg.gov.za
Tel : 018-388 2021

TO : MS MARISKA SHAW
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

FROM : MS T. KOENA
DIRECTOR : CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION SERVICES

DATE : 18 MAY 2017

SUBJECT : REQUEST PERMISSION TO UTILIZE THE CLOSED FOSTER CARE FILES IN RAMOTSHERE-MOILLOA SERVICE POINT

The above matter refers.

In line with the permission granted by the Head of Department and the Acting Chief Director : Districts and Institutional Support Management dated 5 October 2016, the Director Child Care and Protection Services duly grant you permission to conduct the research on Foster Care files in Ramotshere-Moilloa Service Point.

Regards

.....
MS T. KOENA
DIRECTOR : CHILD CARE & PROTECTION SERVICES

19-05-2017
.....
DATE

Annexure 4: Permission Ramotshere Moiloa Service Point



social development

Department:
Social Development
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



RAMOTSHERE MOILOA SERVIC

P.O.BOX 826 ■ Zeerust, 2865 ■ 60 Queen Street ■ Zeerust
Tel: +27 (18) 6422 911 ■ Fax: +27 (18) 642 1031

TO: DR Marie Steyn

North West University

Potchefstroom Campus

FROM: Ruby Menyatsoe (Ms)

Acting Service Point Manager

DATE: 05/06/2017

ATTENTION: Mariska Shaw

**SUBJECT: REQUEST PERMISSION TO UTILISE THE CLOSED FOSTER CARE
FILES IN RAMOTSHERE MOILOA SERVICE POINT**

In response to a letter to a letter dated 06 September 2016 regarding the above-stated matter.

The Service Point has considered your request and therefore agreed in principle that Mariska Shaw be granted permission go forth with the research project.

Hope you find this in order.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours in Service

R.M Menyatsoe (Ms)

Annexure 5: Letter to Provincial Department of Social Development



ENQ: Mariska Shaw

Tel: 072 5161 265/ 082 046 5301

Email: MariekaS@nwpg.gov.za

TO: CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION DIRECTORATE

ATTENTION: MS. TEMENG KOENA

ACTING DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

DATE: 15 AUGUST 2016

**SUBJECT: REQUEST PERMISSION TO UTILISED THE CLOSED FOSTER CARE FILES OF
RAMOTSHERE MOILOA SERVICE POINT**

I Mariska Shaw employed at Madibeng Service Point as a Social Worker Grade 1 is presently enrolled in a Masters in Child Protection at North West University at Potchefstroom campus. I am busy with my final year and therefore busy with my dissertation. I have been working in the field of Child Protection services for the past seven years rendering foster care services and realised that the preparation of the foster children for independent living is not done. Foster children are being discharged from care without being prepared for their life after care, hence I realised the need to conduct my research on this focus area in order to provide case managers with guidelines that can be used to prepare these foster children for independent living.

The aim of my study is to conduct research with ex foster children who have left foster care a year or more ago to get their views on leaving care and of what they would have liked to be prepared with before they left care. Therefore I request to make use of Ramotshere Moilola's closed foster care files for my studies. My request does not have any financial implications for the department but with the information gained through my research would assist the

Department with the goal of rendering effective foster care services to children in alternative care. I will be supervised by Dr. Marie Steyn who is a lecturer from North West University.

Your assistance is highly appreciated. Please be assured of my loyalty to the Department of Social Development.

Ms. M. Shaw

SOCIAL WORKER

Annexure 6: Letter to Ramotshere Moiloa Service Point



ENQ: Mariska Shaw

Cell: 072 51 61 265/ 082 046 5301

Email: MariekaS@nwpg.gov.za

To: Ramotshere Moiloa Service Point

Mr. Johan Engel

Service Point Manager

Date: 20 February 2017

Subject: Request for service point to identify closed files requested for research

This letter serves that the Head of the Department as given approval for me to conduct research at Ramotshere Moiloa Service Point. I, therefore, am requesting that your office please identify the files for me and also make a list of the participant's information (at least 24 names) including contact details. The participants must at least meet the following criteria to be included in the research studies:

- Out of foster care for a period between at least one (1) year, but not more than five (5) years.
- Able to understand English or Afrikaans.
- Able to communicate freely and to express themselves adequately.
- Give consent for the recording of the interview on a voice recorder.
- Placed previously under foster care following a court order.
- A child who has completed or not completed school but has reached the age of majority to be discharged from foster care.
- Discharged out of foster care due to reaching the age of majority (either 18 or 21 years old) within the Zeerust District of Social Development.
- Either male or Female
- All races to be included

I have also appointed Ms Virginia Senna as my mediator during the studies that will be link between me and the participants. I would appreciate it if you would prepare the list of participant's information while I await my ethical approval from the North West University – Potchefstroom campus.

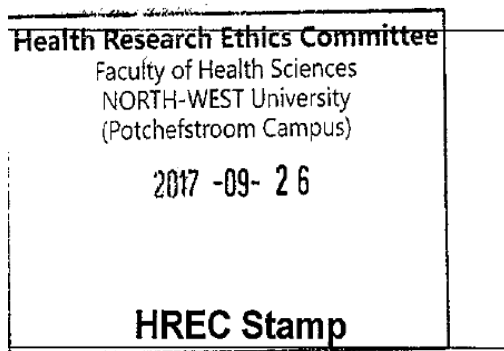
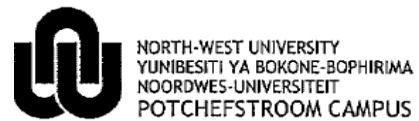
I hope you find this in order.



Mariska Shaw

Student no 13037773

Annexure 7: Written Consent and Consent Form



INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE AGED OUT OF FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: GUIDELINES FOR AN INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMME PREPARING CHILDREN AGING OUT OF FOSTER

ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: NWU-00013-17-SI

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: MARISKA SHAW

POST GRADUATE STUDENT: SAME AS ABOVE

ADDRESS: UNIT 75 EINTRACHT , STOFFBERG STREET , BRITS

CONTACT NUMBER: 072 5161 265 OR 082 046 5301

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of my **Master in Child Protection at North West University, Potchefstroom campus**. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU-00013-17-SI)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

What is this research study all about?

This is a research study conducted by Mariska Shaw through the Department of Social Development and North West University (Potchefstroom Campus). I am inviting you to participate in this research study as you have been identified as adult who was a child in foster care. The person handling this consent process is ms Virginia Senna, social worker at Department Social Development.

The purpose of this research study is to explore your experiences as foster child when you left your foster care placement when you reach the age of majority. Young people who transitions out of state care require specialized support from the case manager who renders foster care supervision services. The aim of the study is to gather your experiences from transitioning from foster care into independent living and also to broaden the knowledge of social workers by providing them with a guideline for an independent living programme that prepares foster children to age out of foster care.

Why have you been invited to participate?

You have been invited to the participate in the research study because you were previously in foster care and age out of care into adulthood with or without the planning and support of the case manager. I view you as an expert regarding the aging out of foster care process and I could learn from you to improve the preparation of future aging out of foster care processes. You can be included in this study if the following is applicable to you situation: have been out of foster care for a period of at least one year and no longer than five years; be able to communicate fluently in English or Afrikaans; be able to express them adequately; willing to take part in an interview; willing to give consent for the recording of the interview questionnaire on a voice recorder; had to be previously placed in foster care following a Court order; have aged out of foster care due to reaching maturity (18 or 21 years according to Children's Act); and reside within the Zeerust municipality of Social Development.

What will be expected of you?

You will be expected to:

Participate in an interview, where I will ask you questions on your experiences of leaving your foster care placement when you reached your age of majority. The interview will take place at the Department of Social Development known as Ramotshere Moiloa Service Point which is situated in 60 Queen Street, Zeerust or at a venue where you feel comfortable.

The research study includes the interviews to be recorded by audio recorder. The audio recordings are way of recording your exact information that you have given, so that the researcher may remember what has been said and use in the research. This information will be kept confidential.

The interview may be up to 60 minutes and only one interview session will be necessary. You will have a body break during the interview.

Will you gain anything from taking part in this research?

There will be no direct gain for you regarding the outcome of this study. The gains of the study however is that your participation will assist other foster children in South Africa with aging out of foster care into independent living fully prepared. You also get the opportunity to express your experiences or feelings with regard to leaving foster care.

The other gain for you if you take part in this study will be to receive a token of appreciation in the form of R 50-00 to use at a local store. Your transport cost also will be refunded.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in the research study titled: **Guidelines for an Independent Living programme preparing children aging out of foster care.**

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Signature of witness

Declaration by person obtaining consent

I (*name*) declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to
.....
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of person obtaining consent

.....
Signature of witness

Annexure 8: Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE OF STUDY

SCHEDULE: FOSTER CHILDREN WHO HAVE AGED OUT FOSTER CARE

PARTICIPANT: _____

DATE: _____

CURRENT AGE	
QUALIFICATIONS	
EMPLOYMENT	
TYPE OF FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT	
AGE THAT YOU LEFT CARE (AGED OUT OF CARE	

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS:

1. Looking back at your experiences of aging out foster care, what would you describe as most significant to you.
2. Tell me more about your experience since your foster care situation was terminated?
3. What will you identify as the most challenging and how did you handled it?
4. To what extend do you feel your foster placement assisted in preparing you for life after foster care?
5. Anything else you would like to add to the research theme?

The researcher will also make use of probing questions during the answers of the participant to ensure that she understands clearly what the participant is trying to convey.

Annexure 9: Proof of attendance: Basic Health Research Ethics



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

**Health Sciences Ethics Office for Research,
Training and Support**
Tel: 018 299 2092
Fax: 018 299 2088
Email: minrie.greeff@nwu.ac.za

9 June 2015

Dear Mrs Mariska Shaw

PROOF OF ATTENDANCE

This letter certifies that you have attended and successfully completed the 2 day ethics training, entitled:

The Basics of Health Research Ethics

Presented by Prof Minrie Greeff (Head of the Health Sciences Ethics Office for Research, training and Support)
on the 3rd and 4th of March 2015.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Minrie Greeff', written over a horizontal line.

Prof Minrie Greeff
Head of Health Sciences Ethics
Office for Research, Training and Support

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Awie Kotze', written over a horizontal line.

Prof Awie Kotze
Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences

Annexure 10: Trree Training



Zertifikat
Certificat

Certificado
Certificate

Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants



Certificat de formation - Training Certificate

Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that

Mariska Shaw

a complété avec succès - has successfully completed

Adolescent Involvement in HIV Prevention Trials

du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation

August 17, 2016
CID : 2016/AR/04

Professeur Dominique Sprumont
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator



Ce programme est soutenu par - This program is supported by :

European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) (www.edctp.org) - Swiss National Science Foundation (www.snf.ch) - Canadian Institutes of Health Research (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/2011.html>) - Swiss Academy of Medical Science (SANKOASS/SANW) (www.sanw.ch) - Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (www.krpe.ch)

[RUV : 20140128]

ANNEXURE 11: CONFIRMATION LETTER OF PEER REVIEWER

Enq: Ms. R. Lekgothoane

Contact no: 012 252 2521

Date: 17 April 2019

Subject : Confirmation of peer reviewer letter

This letter serves to inform you that I have peer review the findings of Ms. Mariska Shaw , student number 13037773 findings with the title : Guidelines for an independent living programme preparing children aging out of foster care . I confirmed that the findings are valid and reliable.

Hope you find this in order

Ms. R. Lekgothoane

Social Work Supervisor Grade 1