



Young people leaving care: supporting pathways to adulthood, by Mike Stein

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Young people leaving care: supporting pathways to adulthood, by Mike Stein, London, Jessica Kingsley, 2012, 200 pp., £25.00, ISBN 978-1-84905-244-3

This is a readable book which would be useful to any person who is trying to support a young person leaving care

Part 1, 'Setting the Context' has two chapters:

- 'The Making of Leaving Care Law and Policy 1948–2012', traces changes from 1948, when Children's Departments were formed, through to The Children (*Leaving Care) Act 2001 and the publication in October 2010 of Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (Transitions Guidance) which was an updating of the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Transitions Guidance was implemented by the coalition government in April 2011; unfortunately, this coincided with cuts and planned changes in services.
- 'The Organisation of Leaving Care Services' states that the introduction of specialist care-leaving teams began in the mid-1980s; the organisation of services, and the amount and quality of provision, is very different in different local authorities in different parts of the country. The introduction of Children (Leaving) Care Act 2000 led to the development of the 'corporate parent case model' resulting in more clearly defined structures, and roles and responsibilities within more formalised multi-agency work.

Part 2, 'Pathways to Adulthood' has seven chapters:

- Being in Settled, Safe Accommodation

This section stresses the importance of young people having a choice about when to leave a placement and in the selection of the next accommodation, which should be in a safe neighbourhood and matched to their assessed needs. They must be prepared and supported both practically and emotionally and should be in education, employment or training and receiving adequate financial assistance

- Carers and Accommodation

Here again it is reiterated that young people who stay longer in foster care or in assisted lodgings make a better transition to adulthood. 'Staying put' options are less likely to be available to young people not in education employment or training or who have more complex needs. Positive family and other support relationships can provide both emotional and practical assistance but are often ignored during the pathway planning process.

- Homelessness, Housing Outcomes and Leaving Care Services

Children's services have a duty to accommodate homeless 16- and 17-year-olds under Section 20 of the 1989 Children Act, but about one-third of care leavers move in and out of homelessness over a two-year period. A group of children who are more vulnerable to entrenched problems includes those who leave care early, who move frequently for negative reasons, have mental health problems, have emotional and behavioural problems,

and those who leave secure accommodation. There is a shortage of specialist services and accommodation for these children.

- School Education – Laying the Foundations for Future Careers

There is an attainment gap between looked-after children and those in the general population, and, although there have been some improvements for looked-after children, the gap has not reduced. The reasons for under-achievement are complex. A wide range of initiatives aimed at improving outcomes have been introduced since 1997; these are having a positive effect on young people's educational experience as distinct from demonstrated outcomes. There is a strong case for having a measure of progress as well as outcomes. High-quality placement provision is crucial for young people to achieve their educational potential at school.

- Further and Higher Education, Training and Employment

Care leavers have poorer post-16 education and employment outcomes than young people in the general population. International research has identified the main facilitating factors as including stability, staying put in placements after 18 years of age, action-orientated personal education plans, financial and practical help and support, and encouragement from family friends and carers. Obstacles to success include multiple placements; disrupted schooling and failure to compensate for the gaps; problems with birth families; no emphasis on education or interest in school experience; low self-esteem and lack of aspiration; lack of basic skills, especially literacy; poor conditions for study; and knowing no one with HE experience

- Health and Well-being

Many children enter care with mental health problems, and these need to be addressed. Young people's physical and mental health problems may increase at the time of leaving care and they can be assisted by a more gradual transition, ongoing support from personal advisers and access to mental health and psychological services. Planning ahead involving young people and carers, and a clearly identified lead professional, should help young people to move from child and adolescent mental health services to adult services.

- Young People Needing More Support

This section identifies seven groups of young people who may require additional support on their pathways to adulthood: disabled young people, teenage parents, those from black and ethnic minority groups, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) young people, care leavers in the youth justice system, and those who misuse substances

Part 3, Conclusion, has two chapters:

- 'A Journey of Ideas'

This has five sections:

- (1) Social Inclusion, Universality and Selectivity
- (2) Participation

- (3) Life Course and Outcomes
- (4) Stability in Care and Attachment
- (5) Social Transition

- Promoting Resilience from Care to Adulthood

This short chapter starts with the question ‘What is Resilience?’ and ends with a useful three- column chart with the headings ‘Resilience Promoting Factors’, ‘Selective Services and ‘Universal Services’.

Finally, there are two useful Appendices:

- Needs Assessment and Content of Pathway Plans for Relevant and Former Relevant Children
- Planning for Education, Training and Careers

There are also helpful references and a well-organised subject index and author index.

Mike Stein is well qualified to write on this topic as he has been involved with young people leaving care since 1975 and wrote his first book on the subject (with Kate Carey) in 1986. He is now Research Professor in the Social Policy and Research Unit at York University, having been a social worker, probation officer, senior child care officer and an area manager in a social services department. He is also co-ordinator of Transitions from Care to Adulthood International Research Group (INTRAC).

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The art and science of motivation: a therapists’ guide to working with children, edited by Jenny Ziviani, Anne A. Poulsen and Monica Cuskelly, London, Jessica Kingsley, 2013, 292 pp., £19.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-84905-125-5

For those of us who have tended to approach behaviour in developmental terms, this will be a challenging book to read; all the more reason, then, for doing so. Practitioners will welcome the arrival of a text that not only brings together concepts grounded in motivational research, but builds a theoretical framework around them so that they attain a higher level of utility across the field of therapeutic intervention.

All eight chapters were written by one or more of the three editors in collaboration with others, and this contributes to the impression that there is a genuine coherence to the narrative despite the complexity of the themes under consideration.

The theoretical foundation of the book is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the writers adopt an ecological model, the Synthesis of Child Occupational Performance and Environment (SCOPE-IT), to examine the factors that influence the interaction of each individual with his or her environment. Given the abstract nature of much of what is