



## Foster Children Turned into Breeders? – CPS Seizes Half of All Babies Born to Teen Moms in Foster Care

By Terri LaPoint, Health Impact News | November 4, 2019



Chelsea was still legally in foster care when her baby was born February 26, 2018. He was taken from her at just over 24 hours. He is still not home. See her story [here](#).

According to a [recent study](#) published in June 2018, 1 out of 4 newborns born to mothers who are in foster care themselves are seized by Child Protective Services (CPS) within their first week of life. According to American Academy of Pediatrics, by the time the babies reach 2-years-old, almost half of them, 48.8%, are taken from their mothers.

At *Health Impact News*, we have seen a clear pattern of CPS involvement with parents who were in foster care themselves, whether their babies were born while they were in foster care or after they aged out.

Many such parents have reported that they feel targeted by CPS. Some have had children taken by the same social workers who took them from their families when they were younger, and some even appear before the same judge as both child and parent.

This is the first study that looks at the numbers of children taken from mothers in foster care, and the results are shocking. They reveal massive failure on the part of the foster care system to help the children with whom it is charged with protecting.

According to [the study](#):

The biggest differences were seen for children taken into care within 7 days. ... those in care at the birth of their child (regardless of whether they were in care at conception) had more than 11 times the odds of having their child placed in care.

## **Foster Children Are Not More Sexually Active than Non-Foster Children**

Interestingly, the authors of the study noted that teens in foster care were not engaging in sexual behavior any more than teens who are not in foster care. However, they are twice as likely to become pregnant:

Although adolescents who are in and out of care of child protection services (CPS), such as foster care, have similar patterns of sexual intercourse (ie, age of initiation, number of partners), those in the care of CPS are more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as unprotected sex or inconsistent contraceptive use. This results in young women in foster care being more than twice as likely to have an adolescent pregnancy.

Thirty percent of the mothers in the study were not in foster care when they became pregnant:

Of the 576 mothers in care at the birth of their child, 403 mothers (70%) were in care at conception, and of the 5,366 mothers not in care at the birth of their child, 83 mothers (1.6%) were in care at conception.

## **AAP – Two Companion Articles, Vastly Different Conclusions**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) posted a [summary of the study on their website](#), entitled, “Half of Children Born to Mothers in Child Protective Custody Also Taken Into Care by Age 2.”

The summary links to the [study entitled](#), “The Cycle of Child Protection Services Involvement: A Cohort Study of Adolescent Mothers,” which examined data from the Population Data Research Repository at Canada’s Manitoba Centre for Health Policy.

At the bottom of the AAP summary, the editor adds that they asked for commentary on the study:

*Editor’s Note: The solicited commentary, “[Understanding the Intergenerational Cycle of ChildProtective Service Involvement](#),” accompanies this study.*

The study lists Elizabeth Wall-Wieler as the first author of the team of authors, who are primarily PhDs involved with the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. The conclusions they reach are vastly different from those reached by the authors of the commentary piece solicited by AAP.



Avyonna was taken from her mother, a former foster child, at 2-days-old. Her older brother and sister were born while her mother was in foster care. The system kept them. After a long battle, and public exposure of their story, Avyonna is home. Photo provided by Prince family. See [story](#).

The commentary article is written by the Deputy Director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services in Pittsburgh, [Erin Dalton](#), as well as two Child Abuse Specialist doctors, Dr. [Rachel P. Berger](#), Director of Child Abuse Research at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, and Dr. [Kristine A. Campbell](#), Child Abuse Specialist at Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City.

The [study authors](#) write:

The high rate of children of adolescent mothers in care being taken into care has been attributed to higher surveillance of these mothers and western middle-class values among social workers.

Young mothers who themselves are in care often feel as if they are under constant scrutiny by their social workers and are constantly needing to prove to everyone that they are able to parent.

Receiving expectant parent services from CPS can also lead to more scrutiny; we saw that 42% of adolescents who were in care received these services, compared with 27% of mothers who were not in care.

From many case workers' perspectives, the cycle starts with adolescent motherhood (which is deemed as bad), and the only way to "break" the cycle is to take that child into care. This is different from the view of adolescent mothers who often see the removal of their child as a continuation of the cycle of trauma in their lives.

These statements are consistent with what we have seen at *Health Impact News*.

See:

### **Is Foster Care "In the Best Interest of the Child"?**

One mother told us that her social worker told her that CPS would follow up on her daughter when she grows up and has children, even though she was adopted out after CPS medically kidnapped her. The mother grew up in foster care herself, and was devastated to learn that CPS intended to scrutinize her and her family until the end of time.

She saw no hope of any of her children ever getting out from under the strong arm of CPS control.

Her story is certainly not unique, unfortunately.



Tanaieah's mother is a former foster child. Tanaieah was taken from her mother at 6-weeks-old and adopted out to people who wanted a baby girl. The multi-generational cycle continues. Photo provided by the Maney family.

The study authors acknowledge the immense importance of the mother-child bond:

Whenever possible, mothers and children should be placed together. Dual placement provides the opportunity for secure infant attachment; providing parenting supports, such as

the Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up program or the Circle of Security program, could enhance mother-child bonding.

The study concludes:

Adolescent mothers in the care of CPS are much more likely to have their child taken into CPS care. By separating a quarter of young mothers from their infant within the first week of life, and almost half before the child turns 2, the cycle continues. For adolescents in CPS care who give birth, more and better services are required to support these mothers and to keep mothers and children together wherever possible.

We agree that parents and children need to be kept together as much as possible, but we believe that the extended family, community, and churches should play a much larger role than any government agencies or programs.

### **Child Abuse Specialists – “Foster Care May Be Best Outcome”**

While the authors of the study seem to be coming from a perspective of examining what is good for families overall, the authors of the commentary piece appear to believe that separating parents and children is a desirable outcome, as evidenced by this statement in their article:

The outcome measure selected for this study (placement of the infant into foster care) is not the most important outcome for children and young mothers. Avoiding unnecessary foster care placement is a worthy goal, but placement of an infant, a young child, or an adolescent mother in foster care is not a bad outcome per se.

Here is their conclusion, one which is decidedly at odds with the conclusions of the study, as well as with the views of the families whose stories we cover and supporters of family rights:

Placing the infant of an adolescent mother in foster care into foster care may not be a negative outcome, but rather the best outcome of all: safety and support for the adolescent mother, safety of her child, and an end to the intergenerational cycle of child protective services involvement.

See:

**[The U.S. Foster Care System: Modern Day Slavery and Child Trafficking](#)**

Sources:

[The Cycle of Child Protection Services Involvement: A Cohort Study of Adolescent Mothers](#)  
[Half of Children Born to Mothers in Child Protective Custody Also Taken Into Care by Age 2](#)