SoC23
Summit on Children 2023

PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

Promoting Educational Resilience Among Youth & Young Adults With Foster Care Experience
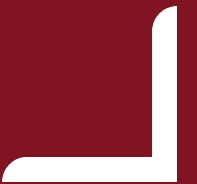
March 17, 2023

Dr. Mauriell Amechi

What You Should Know about Promoting Educational Resilience among Young People with Foster Care Experience

Mauriell H. Amechi, Ph.D.
CEO and Founder, Foster Youth Empowered
@DrMAmechi

ABOUT ME

What are the primary inspirations for this work?

1. Lived experience

2. Serve as a positive example/possibility model to individuals from similar backgrounds

3. Barriers embedded in the foster care system and U.S. education system require dismantling

Access and Equity in Postsecondary Education:

Aims to understand and identify protective factors and policies that facilitate successful transitions to postsecondary education among students impacted by foster care systems

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.

– Nelson Mandela

Former President of South Africa

Agenda

Foster Youth Bill of Rights (School Engagement)

Educational Resilience: What does it mean and why does it matter?

What are the barriers to educational success for youth under state care?

What are the outcomes among college students with foster care experience (FCE)?

What measures can the court and child services system implement to promote educational resilience?

Case Study

Picture this scenario:

At the age of 14, Angel, a young woman, is placed in the Ohio foster care system and is given an APPLA (Alternative Planned Permanent Living Arrangement) case plan.

Despite facing challenges such as being placed in an unsuitable foster home, Precious perseveres and excels academically throughout her high school years. With her sights set on higher education, she remains determined to achieve her goals despite the difficult circumstances.

What are the factors that will determine whether Precious is able to graduate high school within 4 years and matriculate to her in-state flagship university (Ohio State)?

Access to high-quality K-12 schooling experiences remains **elusive** for youth in care

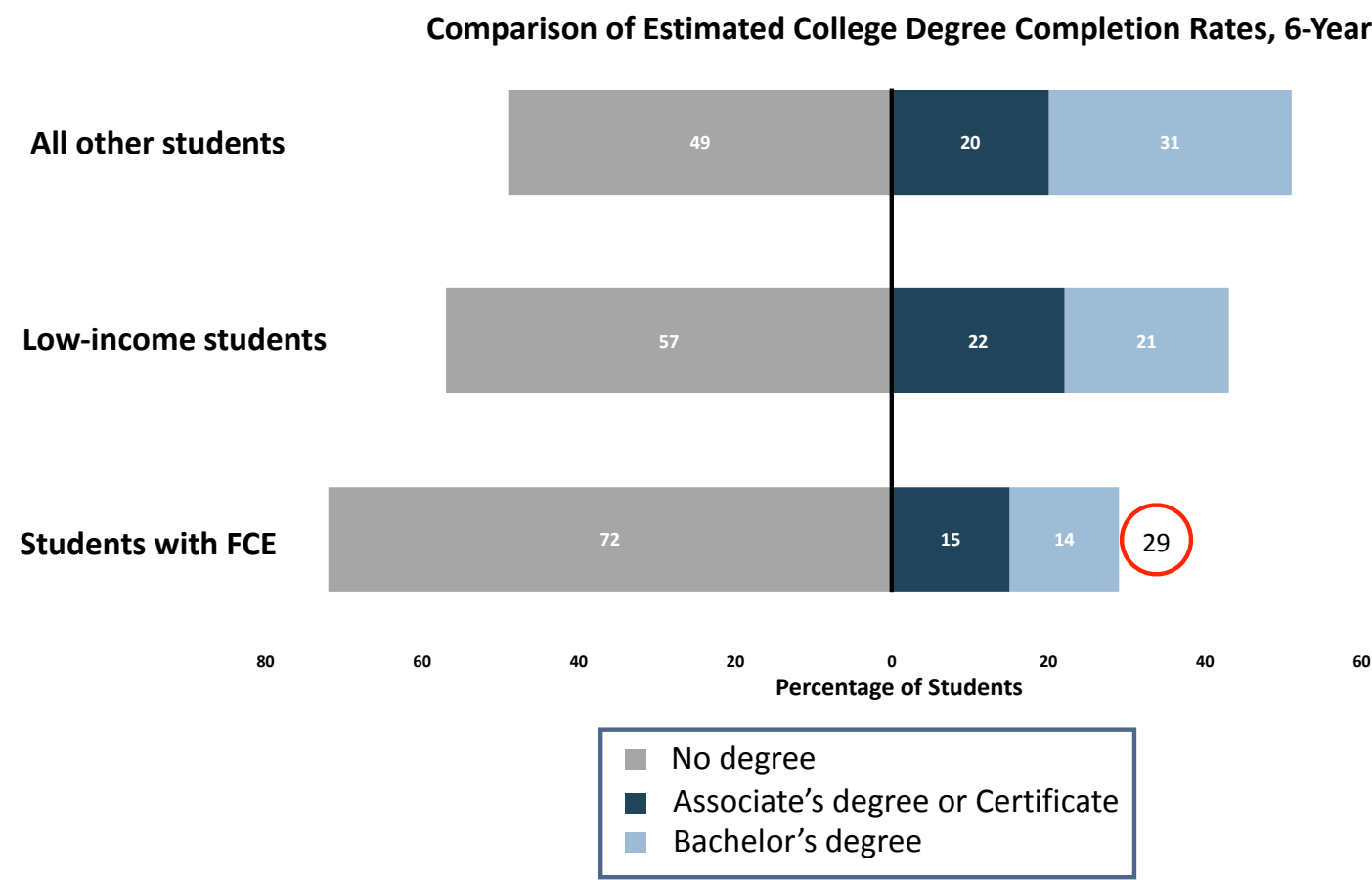|		
16K	**53%**	**2/3+**
Of Ohioan youth in the foster care system (Federal fiscal year 2020)	Of Ohioan youth who undergo two or more foster care placements	Of foster youth who start college do not graduate within six years

COLLEGE COMPLETION OUTCOMES

Comparison of Estimated College Degree Completion Rates, 6-Year

	All other students	Low-income students	Students with FCE
No degree	49	57	72
Associate's degree or Certificate	20	22	15
Bachelor's degree	31	21	14

29

Percentage of Students

80   60   40   20   0   20   40   60

Legend:
- No degree
- Associate's degree or Certificate
- Bachelor's degree

AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

Cheerful teenage friends outdoors

~20,000 youth age out each year

~70% aspire to attend college

More apt to **delay enrollment** than peers

~3 in 10 college-eligible youth enroll

DEFINING EDUCATIONAL RESILIENCE

Foster parents embrace young girl

Educational resilience: increased likelihood of school success despite adverse conditions

1 Foster care placement instability

2 School mobility (disruptions)

3 Youth-caregiver relationships (toxic)

4 Mental health challenges

High school-aged youth in foster care earn a diploma at **lower rates** than their counterparts.

U.S. (86%)

OHIO (60%)

Legend:
- 47% to 63%
- 64% to 69%
- 70% to 74%
- 75% to 81%
- No Data

By 21, many Ohio youth transitioning out of foster care *struggle* to reach key milestones related to self-sufficiency

Bottom 10%		
Self-Sufficiency Indicator	OHIO	U.S.
Those who were enrolled in school	12%	28%
Those who were employed	46%	57%
Those who experienced incarceration	37%	19%
Bottom 20%		
Those who have experienced homelessness	37%	29%

Source: National Youth in Transition Database

JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD

PURPOSE: to support all young people who have experienced foster care between the ages of 14-21 in their transition to adulthood through transitional services

TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

1 Support with earning high school diploma/GED

2 Independent living skills training

3 Career preparation & job placement

4 Health education & risk prevention

5 Postsecondary education or vocational training

6 Housing assistance (Family Unification Program)

7 **Education training vouchers** (Grants up to $5K toward college education expenses up to 5 years)
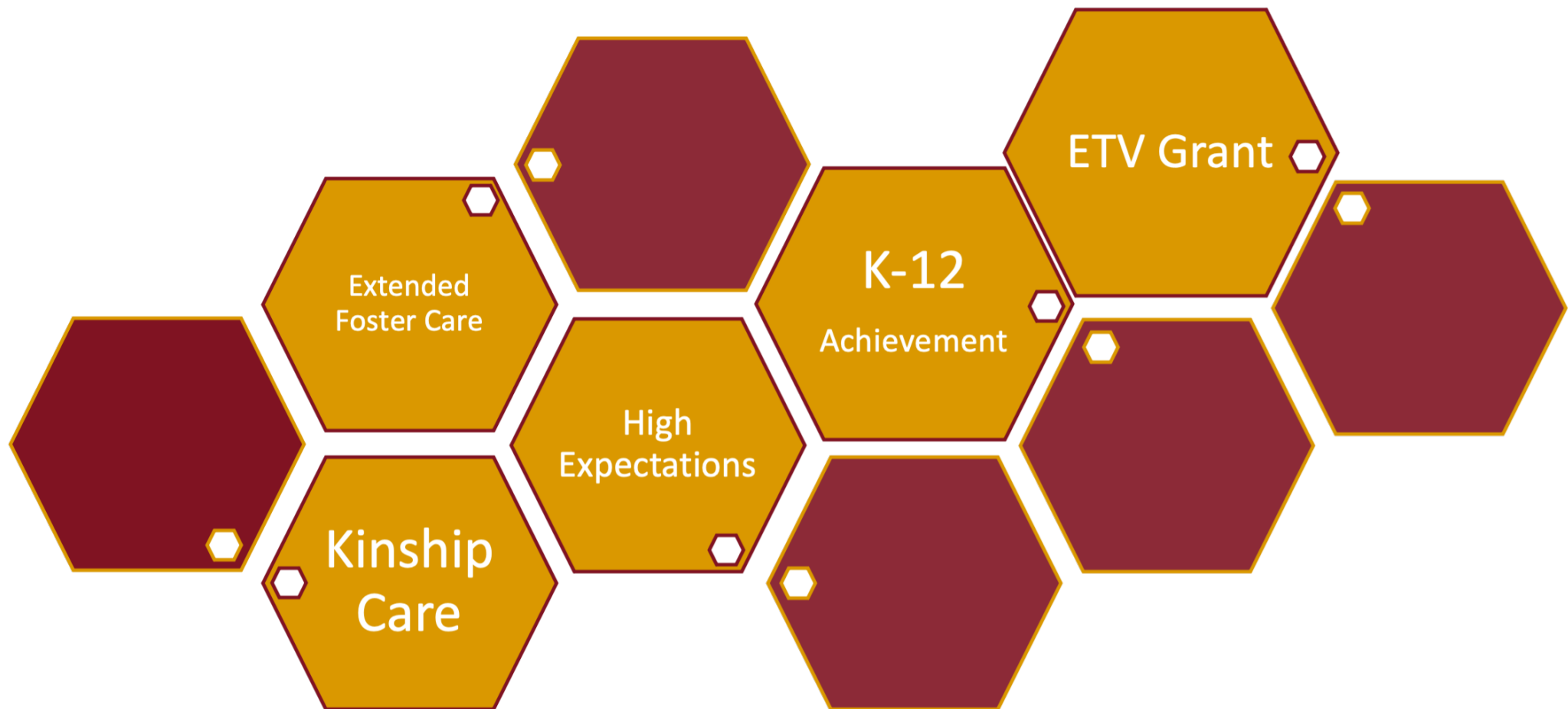
Education & Training Vouchers in Ohio

ETV Program Participation

- 2003-15: **$20+ million** in ETV awarded
- Total ETV vouchers: **5,650**
- Total youth receipt of ETV: **3,021** (avg. 435/year)
- Average ETV award: **$3,617**
- Of all ETV-eligible youth, only **14%** attended college with an ETV

Youth Outcomes

- Young people emancipated from care:
  - Attended college with ETVs at higher rates than those discharged through reunification
  - **60%** received ETV during first-year
  - ETV-receipt correlated with increased college persistence (**75%** completed at least 2 semesters vs **50% college w/o ETV**)
  - ETV receipt correlated with a small increase in college completion rates (**2%** increase in **graduation by age 24**)

Key Predictors of College Degree Completion

AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

Cheerful teenage friends outdoors

~20,000 youth age out each year

~70% aspire to attend college

More apt to **delay enrollment** than peers

~3 in 10 college-eligible youth enroll

WHAT MEASURES CAN COURT/CHILD WELFARE POLICYMAKERS IMPLEMENT TO CULTIVATE EDUCATIONAL RESILIENCE AMONG STUDENTS WITH FOSTER CARE EXPERIENCE?

Practice Implications

1. **Deconstruct** harmful stereotypes and perceptions that youth in foster care unintelligent ("not college material")

2. **Inform** all youth about their rights to a well-rounded education, including involvement in extra-curricular activities (Foster Youth Bill of Rights, introduced in June '21)

3. **Leverage** court hearings as opportunities to build relationships with children and youth by requiring participation and *centering* their voices in the case planning process.

4. **Encourage** participation in the Chafee foster care program, especially between 16-21.

5. **Provide** access to counseling services to help students coping with mental health issues

Panel discussion with Ohio State students formerly in foster care

Sabrina and Dernise

THANK YOU

Mauriell H. Amechi, Ph.D.
CEO and Founder
Foster Youth Empowered

🌐 DrAmechi.com
🐦 @DrMAmechi
✉ FosterYouthEmpowered@gmail.com