
https://www.opressrc.org/content/toward-better-future-evidence-improving-employment-outcomes-disadvantaged-youth-united

This report reviewed trends in youth unemployment and the evidence base for employment-related programs for in-school (secondary or postsecondary) and out-of-school youth. The review included national programs such as Service and Conservation Corps, YouthBuild, Job Corps, and National Guard Youth ChalleNGe. It described each program model’s main features, analyzed its cost-effectiveness, and measured the level of employer engagement achieved. For in-school programs, linking students’ education to on-the-job training and sectoral employment opportunities produced promising results. Many programs serving out-of-school youth produced only short-term, unsustainable effects. However, certain program features appeared promising for improving labor market outcomes, such as incorporating paid work opportunities, using financial incentives, continuing support post-job placement, and using a sector-based approach that links education and training with the job market. The authors emphasized that private sector employer engagement is a critical component of all employment-related programs for youth, and they described the limited evidence on effective employer engagement strategies.


https://www.opressrc.org/content/childhood-poverty-and-transition-adulthood

Using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, the authors examined differences between low-income and higher-income youth as they transition to adulthood. Recent studies of young adults have found delays in adulthood markers such as financial independence and marriage; this study analyzed whether the delays were equally evident for low- and high-income youth. On average, youth from low-income families began establishing financial independence sooner and became parents sooner. They also took on adult roles within their natal families earlier than their more affluent counterparts. The authors recommended that policies aimed at youth from poor backgrounds take earlier adult transitions into account. For instance, financial literacy programs should be available to younger adolescents, and programs aimed at increasing educational attainment should take into consideration that youth may need to support their families.
This report examined employment for teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 in the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas. Looking at unemployment rates and data from several national surveys, including monthly Current Population Surveys and American Community Surveys, the authors found that employment prospects for teens and young adults have dropped significantly in the last decade. Specifically, they found evidence of plummeting employment rates, underutilization in the labor force, and year-round joblessness. The authors recommended several strategies to reduce youth joblessness, including integrating work-based learning opportunities into high schools, expanding apprenticeships, linking high school to post-secondary educational credentials, and providing youth who have dropped out with credentialing opportunities.

In this OPRE issue brief, the authors described features of promising occupations for at-risk youth as part of a successful transition to adulthood. The authors noted that many programs aim to help youth increase their life skills or connect to college-bound interventions, but at-risk youth often must be employed and self-sufficient immediately upon reaching the age of majority without investing in costly education or training. Relying on four key criteria (median earnings level, education and training prerequisites, projected labor-market demand growth, and advancement potential), the authors identified 13 promising occupations in the health care industry (e.g., dental assistants, sonographers) and 14 promising occupations in the construction industry (e.g., carpenters, boilermakers).

Based on a comprehensive literature review, this OPRE report offered a conceptual framework for programs looking to improve outcomes for at-risk youth. The authors used risk and resilience theory from the child development field and capital development theory from sociology to formulate their framework; they concluded that self-sufficiency programs for youth should (a) take the risk and protective factors of the populations they are serving into account; (b) earn youths’ trust by addressing their basic needs before pushing them towards self-sufficiency; (c) engage youth in the ongoing planning process; (d) promote the resilience of youth; (e) increase youths’ human capital; and (f) monitor short- and long-term effectiveness of the program.


This paper reviewed trends in employment outcomes for young people who were disconnected from school and the labor market around the Great Recession, and it summarized evaluation evidence that supported specific programs or initiatives. Based on their findings, the authors suggested a range of policy changes to improve employment outcomes for this population, including: (a) scaling up programs and curricula that offer a combination of skills development and paid work experience for at-risk youth; (b) expanding the Earned-Income Tax Credit for childless adults; and (c) loosening restrictions on employment opportunities for ex-offenders.

https://www.opressrc.org/content/economic-value-opportunity-youth

Using several large data sets, including the American Community Survey and the Current Population Survey, the authors of this report examined the status of American youth who are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the job market. About 6.7 million young people (17%) between the ages of 16 and 24 were disconnected from work and school, and disconnected youth were disproportionately male and from minority groups. About 3.4 million of these youth were chronically disconnected and approximately 3.3 million were under-attached (having at some point been connected to school or work). The authors followed disconnected youth as they moved into adulthood and calculated lost earnings, lower economic growth, and lower tax revenues. They calculated that each disconnected youth imposes, on average, an immediate taxpayer burden of $13,900 per year and an immediate social burden of $37,450 per year.


https://www.opressrc.org/content/opportunity-road-promise-and-challenge-americas-forgotten-youth

This policy report outlined findings from a national survey of young people who were disconnected from school and employment. Young people from 23 diverse locations across the United States were interviewed to learn about their personal histories, current situations, and opportunities to reconnect them to school or work. The youth generally: (a) were confident or hopeful about achieving their career and educational goals; (b) did not grow up in households with a parent who graduated college; (c) accepted responsibility for their futures; (d) were actively looking for full-time employment; and (e) had insufficient work experiences to get the kinds of jobs they wanted.


https://www.opressrc.org/content/vulnerable-youth-employment-and-job-training-programs

This report detailed the purpose, structure, populations served, budget, and performance of five Federal employment and job training programs for at-risk youth that were authorized under the Workforce Investment Act: Youth Activities Formula Grant Program, Job Corps, YouthBuild, Reintegration of Ex-Offenders, and Youth Opportunity Grants. The report also included a brief review of historical job programs for youth.

In this article, the authors critiqued public systems and policies affecting vulnerable youths’ transition into adulthood. They found four areas of concern: (a) eligibility criteria that exclude youth from services that might benefit them; (b) inadequate funding for transition services; (c) inadequate coordination among various services available; and (d) lack of staff training on the developmental issues many of these youth experience. The authors offered several recommendations to improve services and supports for transitioning youth, including: (a) better curricula and support services at community colleges; (b) universal health care; (c) a higher minimum wage; (d) the extension of certain programs so that youth are eligible for the services into young adulthood; (e) the creation of one integrated system of care; and (f) a systematic increase of family involvement in services and programs for youth.


This study used child welfare, unemployment insurance, and public assistance data from three states to examine whether foster youth catch up or continue to experience less employment and significantly lower earnings than their peers into their mid-twenties. Youth who aged out of foster care continued to experience poor employment outcomes at age 24 and tended to follow one of several employment trajectories as they transitioned to adulthood (i.e., consistently connected to employment, later connected, or never connected). Based on their findings, the authors recommended that employment services and supports should be provided to foster youth past the age of 21. They also noted that the period between ages 16 and 18 is critically important for first job experiences and establishment of strong, lasting connections to the job market.