

*On Their Own: What happens To Kids When They Age Out Of The Foster Care System*

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Foster care is designed to provide for children up until the age of 18, but what happens after that? Shirk and Stangler note in the introduction to their study that in today's society, young people don't tend to reach full maturity until their mid-twenties, and most children leaving foster care aren't even equipped with the basic tools (a high-school diploma, a driver's license or state ID, work experience) the average 18-year-old possesses. Shirk and Stangler examined several individual cases in various states to see how well the children fared. One chapter examines three brothers whose fates diverged: one is currently in jail for armed robbery, another died in a car crash, and the third is happily married with a new business. One young woman makes it through a series of foster homes and high schools to earn a hard-won college degree and a position as a teacher, while one young man yearns for a family but keeps running afoul of the law. Jimmy Carter provides the forward for this important and often heart-wrenching book. *Kristine Huntley Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved*