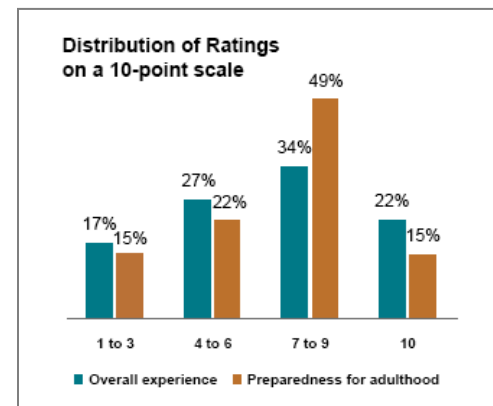


Youth Rate Foster Care a 6.6 on a 10-Point Scale

Des Moines, Iowa – March 20, 2017 – Young people attending the AMP “Plugged In and Charging” conference on February 17, 2017, were given the opportunity to share their perceptions of Iowa’s foster care system. Results of a short survey, developed by the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa (YPII), provides a snapshot of young people’s satisfaction with the system.

Forty-one youth at the conference completed the short survey, which asked youth to rate their overall experience in foster care on a 10-point scale, with “10” being the best. The average rating given by the youth was 6.6. Fewer than half of the youth surveyed (43.9%) rated their experience in foster care an 8 or higher, while 30% gave their experience a rating of 5 or less.

In response to a question regarding how well the foster care system has helped them prepare for adult responsibilities, youth gave an average rating of 6.8 on a similar 10-point scale. Both questions elicited a range of responses, with the end-result being a somewhat mediocre rating of the system.



The survey also asked youth to share what they would change about the foster care system if they could. Their recommendations clustered around four important themes:

- A desire to have more contact with biological parents and siblings while in care;
- A desire to be listened to and have a greater voice in the decisions about their lives;
- The importance of having ordinary experiences, especially ones that help them prepare for college and living on their own; and
- A need for more high-quality foster families.

Approximately 80 young people ages 13 to 24 who have been in foster care attended this year’s “Plugged In and Charging” conference at Indian Hills Community College in Ottumwa. AMP sponsors the annual event to give youth who have been involved in the foster care system the opportunity to experience being on a college campus, explore career and academic options, and plan for their futures.

“The conference was a great opportunity to get feedback on how well the child welfare system is performing from those most directly affected by it,” stated Courtney Clement, Research Associate with YPII. “From a customer service perspective, the results show that youth have a range of experiences with the system and suggest that there is considerable room for improvement.”

[About AMP](#)

AMP (Achieving Maximum Potential) serves as Iowa’s State Foster Care Youth Council. With several local Councils across the state, AMP provides opportunities for youth who have been involved in Iowa’s foster care system to participate in state and local leadership development, advocacy, service, skill development and social activities.