

# Foster Care

## When Normal Ain't Normal



**All young people need normal experiences.** Opportunities like Driver's Education, team sports, and spending time with peers promote **healthy brain development**. The federal Strengthening Families Act requires states to ensure youth in foster care can be involved in normal activities.

Many young people in foster care are not able to participate in typical activities, making their lives anything but normal. Nearly 500 Iowa youth in AMP or Aftercare responded to a survey about their life while in placement. Here's what they said:



### Social Life



### School Activities



### Milestones

**27%** Of youth in **family foster care** were unable to hang out or sleep over at a friend's home

**16%** Of youth in **relative foster care** could not attend school dances

**74%** Of youth in **group care** were unable to take Driver's Education

**70%** Of youth in **group care** could not go shopping, out to eat, or to the movies with friends

**54%** Of youth in **group care** could not go on school field trips

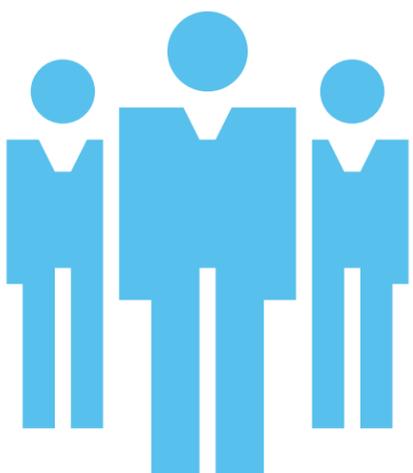
**42%** Of youth in **family foster care** could not earn an allowance

**61%** Of youth in **shelter care** did not have access to social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

**45%** Of youth in **shelter care** were unable to participate in school sports teams, music, etc.

**13%** Of youth in **relative foster care** were unable to hold a part-time job

## Help Make Foster Care More Normal



- 1 Establish in state law a right for youth in care to engage in age appropriate activities regardless of placement type.
- 2 Address barriers to participation, including cost, transportation, permission, and liability issues.
- 3 Require that courts make findings at all review hearings of engagement in normal activities and how barriers are being handled.