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**Children of Our Community: The Concern of Extended Care**



The title should be written four lines down from the top of the title page. It should be centered and typed in bold font. Any major words of the title should be capitalized.

The author, affiliation (institution), course information, instructor, and the paper's due date are all centered below the title of the paper.



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ENG 111: English Composition  
Melanie Johnson  
December 5, 2019

## Abstract

The word  
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This paper seeks to raise awareness in Virginia for reforms needed within the State's foster care system. Extended care is not an isolated event in Virginia; it is a prevalent issue that impacts children, putting into question the ability of local government to properly protect and prepare the next generation of youth. By analyzing the statistics surrounding the Virginian Court of Appeals process, the author seeks to draw attention to the courts inefficiency and inability to provide speedy resolutions for the many foster care cases. This paper also discusses the small amount of foster parents who are willing to take in older children or those with disabilities and how this has led to an influx of children within the system. In turn, the paper argues that even though special cases may find foster homes, once these children grow out of the system, many are trained inadequately for adulthood.

The word  
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*Keywords: Virginia foster care, extended care, Social Services, Community involvement*

The abstract is a brief summary of the paper, allowing readers to quickly review its main points and purpose. It is written in third person, present tense, and it should not repeat the content of the introduction.

Do not indent the first line of the abstract paragraph. All other paragraphs in the paper should be indented. The abstract should have between 150-250 words. Abbreviations and acronyms used in the paper should be defined in the abstract.

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## **Children of Our Community: The Concern of Extended Care**

The *Richmond Times* weekly segment, “Wednesday’s Child,” highlights the children in our community struggling to find their forever homes. There is Talieya, an animal loving 16-year-old who needs an affectionate family to make up for the time she has missed being passed around from foster home to foster home (NBC, 2014). There is Xavier, a 9-year-old who cannot speak and requires a structured home to take him in and love his special needs (NBC, 2016b). There is 12-year-old Hunter who had the fortune of being adopted young but had to be placed back in care after the death of his adopted mother (NBC, 2016a). Each of these stories share a commonality: every child has yet to find a family. Situations like these are beginning to show the recurring pattern of a growing length of stay in foster care. According to information provided by Virginia Performs (2015), Virginia ranks first in states with children aging out of foster care, about 25% (para. 6). That means 1 out of every 4 children in Virginia’s foster care will turn 18 while living in the system. Extended care is not an isolated event in Virginia; it is a prevalent issue that impacts state children, putting into question the ability of local government to properly protect and prepare the next generation of youth.

In-text citations include the author’s last name followed by the publication year. The location of the information (i.e. page number or paragraph number) will always be located after the quoted or paraphrased information.

### **Background**

Although children’s safety remains the primary concern of foster care, there is an ongoing political battle in America as to what identifies as a healthy outcome to an unhealthy situation. In 1980, the Child Welfare Act was passed to attempt to keep families together and to prevent multiple placements of children (Curran, 2004, p. 364). Though this movement partially decreased foster care numbers in America, some believed that the bill was not being carried out effectively, causing the creation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, which encourages permanency by adoption (p. 365).

If you do not mention the author’s name within the sentence, place the author’s last name, the copyright year, and the page number in parentheses after the quoted or paraphrased material.

Permanency is not the only ongoing controversy in foster care. There has also been trouble with how to help children who have never attained permanency.


The Virginia system has recently struggled to fund programs that assist children maturing out of foster care. In 2015, the Virginia House of Representatives failed to pass a \$3 million-dollar plan created to mobilize programs for young adults aging out of care (Ress, 2015, para. 4). Estimated to help 1500 kids, this money was to be matched by the federal government by \$10.1 million dollars (para. 22). With a large amount of political debate centered on this issue, local governments, such as the City of Fredericksburg, must include citizens in the conversation, giving them a realistic picture of the system's shortcomings and providing citizens multiple opportunities to be involved.



### Order in the Court

When a family unit falls apart, a complex process is required to analyze the situation and find solutions. One of the greatest causes of foster care's drawn out timelines is the length of the court's appeals process. Involving a recent controversy surrounding the removal of a young girl from her California foster family, questions were brought to the director of the Los Angeles Social Services, Phillip Browning, about the incident; he stated, "Sometimes the court must make orders that involve resolving competing priorities and interests. Often there are no easy solutions, but when a court makes an order, we must follow it" (NBC Los Angeles, 2016, para. 15). Although this instance was an isolated issue on the west coast, the practice is just as common in Virginia.

Local Supervisor of Spotsylvania Foster Care and Adoption Program, Tiffany Schrader (personal communication March 17, 2016) affirmed that the court is often the main reason for a case being drawn out, because its ruling does not always line up



Personal communications, such as interviews, are cited in-text only. They are not included on the Reference page.

with social services' deadline. With an average of 16.4 months of waiting time, a report done by Virginia Performs (2015) stated that the Virginia system ranks fifth to last of states with the longest timeline of transferring rights away from biological parents (see Appendix A for more information on the Virginia Foster Care wait time) (para. 6). As citizens of this commonwealth, these numbers affect us directly, not only reflecting badly on foster care but the standards of our legal system as well.

### Parental Preferences

Although court rulings are the cause of many extended-care cases, a great concern in the foster community is the inability to find adoptive parents for the large number of young adults and children with disabilities. According to the Administration for Children and Families (2014), children in Virginia from ages 1-5 are adopted at a rate of 42.7 %. The rate decreases to 20.1% for children who are between 11 and 15 years old, and for children 16 and older, the adoption rate dramatically decreases to 6.2% (p. 3). These numbers imply that an extensive amount of partiality is being shown in the local community for certain age groups (See Appendix B for more information pertaining to age and foster care). According to Mrs. Schrader (personal communication, March 17, 2016), many people may be able to look over behavioral issues in "cute" babies but find the same mannerisms harder to look past in an older child. This issue adds a whole new dimension to the need of finding foster parents. Mrs. Schrader (personal communication, March 17, 2016) goes on to say that the Spotsylvania County Department of Social Services must run a heavy recruitment program to find good foster parents for older children. The inability to find a loving home for these young adults is a disappointing reality for Virginia, and one that needs to be addressed by close interaction between the community and Social Services.

When extra content is provided within an appendix/appendices, be sure to reference the appendix in the paper using parentheses.

### Effects of Extended Stay

With a large number of children aging out of foster care, there are many young adults who have not been given the proper tools to be successful in life. Though there are some programs out there to provide shelter and training for these teens, including the Possibilities Project, not every young adult has access to them (Umble, 2015, para. 5). Mrs. Schrader (personal communication, March 17, 2016) stated that in the past couple years, the state has become stricter with the deadline for helping grown foster children; once they turn 18, they only receive \$644 stipend per month for financial support. Mrs. Schrader claimed that this amount is insufficient for many foster children who still require services, many needing to find stable housing. These children also require adults to come and teach them basic life skills like “taking them shopping or teaching them how to create a budget” (personal communication, March 17, 2016). Because of the complexity of federal, state, and local funding, new laws trying to combat this problem have struggled to pass in congressional legislatures.

Currently, an attempt at creating programs to help these youth is making its way through the Virginia General Assembly called Fostering Futures (McClellan, 2016, para. 8). If it passes the legislature, it would provide \$4 million dollars towards increasing the age of the adults being supported in the foster care system from 18 years old to 21 (para. 9). While extended care may be harming foster children as minors, the implications of it could pass on into their adult lives, setting them behind many of their peers because they were not given the opportunity to have a stable foundation.

### Other Arguments

Although the idea that children need a stable environment is universal, many disagree as to how to attain it. Some believe that adoption is a steady solution and that children should spend less time in foster care so they may attain stability; others

Because all research has its limitations, it is important to discuss the limitations of articles under examination.

believe that the purpose of foster care is to reunite families. These proponents believe that decreasing the time required to reunite the biological family is harmful to the family unit. In a study conducted to determine the effectiveness of family therapists in foster care, it was concluded that the time given family therapists to help parents was insufficient and that this should be taken into account by courts in future cases (McWey et al., 2006, p. 209). I agree; in many cases the time required or given to a parent to earn back parental rights may not be sufficient enough to reunite a family. There may even be unique cases concerning the economic stability of a parent. An extended timeline may help the family by providing an opportunity for the parents to improve. However, even though children may be returned to their biological family, this does not necessarily promise a lasting solution. A case study tracking the permanency of reunification claims that even under an outcome of reunification with their parents, children still have high odds of reentering foster care, especially in a setting where parents struggled with drugs or alcohol (Shaw & Webster, 2011, p. 516). While the goal of foster care should be to sustain healthy families, the public needs to be reminded that the child's mental and emotional health is the primary concern, no matter what the individual situation may be.

When using in-text citations for sources with three or more authors, list the first author, and type "et al." to signify that there are other authors for the work.

### Conclusion

Even though the state of Virginia holds guardianship over the children in the foster care system, the community bears the ultimate responsibility of holding government officials accountable. One problem that needs to be addressed is creating a "streamlined" approach of state government in regard to foster care. From funding a child's psychiatrist visit to adoption process, Virginia does not create a conducive environment for exacting change quickly (J. Schrader, personal communication, March 17, 2016). If people begin to show a unified concern for the children who age out of foster care, we could develop a foster care system where the community is the

The conclusion restates the paper's thesis and can offer areas for further research.

guardian of its children, creating a customized and efficient process. To confront the countless amounts of older children and children with disabilities in the system, a large media marketing system is needed to inform the public. Locally, a new method that has already shown much promise is NBC 4's segment "Wednesday's Child" (T. Schrader, personal communication, March 17, 2016). This media tool has helped social services show children placed in foster care living in an everyday way, so average Virginians can see the normal life of these children and relate to them. Though statewide foster care is a large and somewhat overwhelming process of reform, if every person helped one child in some way, we could not only reform our foster care system: we can spread hope.



## References

Start the reference list on a new page, center and bold the title "References," and alphabetize the entries. Double-space all entries and format them with hanging indents.

Administration for Children and Families. (2014) *Age at adoption finalization: October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014* (FY 2014). United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1-3.

[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/%20cb/final\\_age2014.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/%20cb/final_age2014.pdf)

Curran, L. (2004). *Foster care*. (P. Fass, Ed.). Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood: In History and Society, 2, 363-365.

[http://ezgcc.vccs.edu:2048/log%20in?url=http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3402800174&v=2.1&u=viva2\\_gcc&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=fb8686690a803d67049b178b2091e49](http://ezgcc.vccs.edu:2048/log%20in?url=http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3402800174&v=2.1&u=viva2_gcc&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=fb8686690a803d67049b178b2091e49)

McClellan, J. (2016, February 16). McClellan: Fostering futures offers bipartisan help to young Virginians. *Richmond-Times Dispatch*. [http://www.richmond.com/opinion/their-opinion/guest-columnists/article\\_c4914018-d2e8-5e86-ba46-eb5585e0d0f0.html](http://www.richmond.com/opinion/their-opinion/guest-columnists/article_c4914018-d2e8-5e86-ba46-eb5585e0d0f0.html)

[http://www.richmond.com/opinion/their-opinion/guest-columnists/article\\_c4914018-d2e8-5e86-ba46-eb5585e0d0f0.html](http://www.richmond.com/opinion/their-opinion/guest-columnists/article_c4914018-d2e8-5e86-ba46-eb5585e0d0f0.html)

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Only capitalize the first word of the title, the first word of the subtitle, and proper nouns.

For general internet sources, the article title is italicized; the website is not italicized.

NBC Los Angeles. (2016, March 21). *Native American girl, 6, removed from Calif. foster home*. NBC Washington. <https://www.nbcwashington.com/>

NBC Washington (Producer). (2014, April 23). *Wednesday's Child: Talieya* [Video].

[http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/0820-wednesdayschild\\_Washington-DC-272070371.html](http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/0820-wednesdayschild_Washington-DC-272070371.html)

When using two different works from the same author with the same publication year, place a letter after the year. This allows the reader to identify which source is being referenced in the in-text citations.

NBC Washington (Producer). (2016a, February 25). *Wednesday's child: Hunter* [Video].

[http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/Wednesday\\_s-Child -  
Hunter\\_Washington-DC-300005581.html](http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/Wednesday_s-Child_-_Hunter_Washington-DC-300005581.html)

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Ress, D. (2015, February 25). Move to expand services for Virginia foster care kids is

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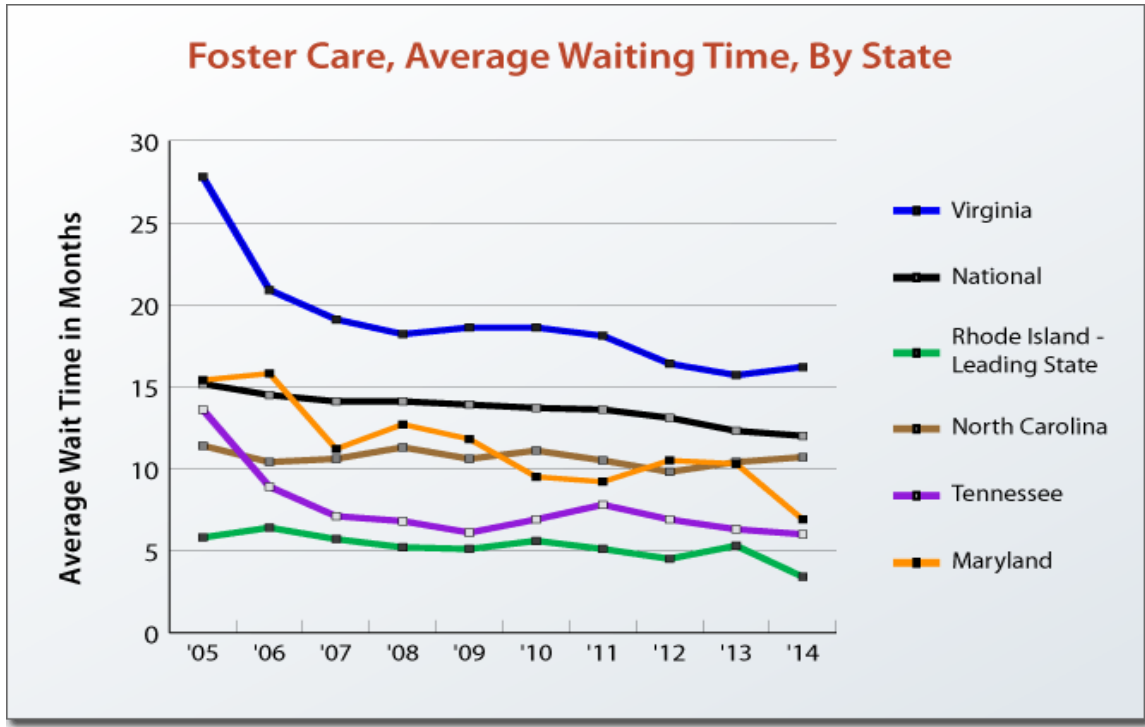
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of/article\\_7b4beccf-5329-5c9d-b5c3-344438067953.html](http://www.fredericksburg.com/news/local/virginia-adoption-agency-hopes-to-help-teens-aging-out-of/article_7b4beccf-5329-5c9d-b5c3-344438067953.html)

Virginia Performs (2015, January 13). *Foster care*. Health and Family. [www.virginia.gov](http://www.virginia.gov)

When citing an online newspaper source, check to see if the newspaper is also in print. If it is, italicize the name of the newspaper, and do not italicize the title of the article.

**Appendix A**

Average Waiting Time of Virginia Foster Care



Begin each appendix on a new page with the word "Appendix" centered at the top. If there is more than one appendix, each one should be labeled with a consecutive uppercase letter: e.g. "Appendix A"; "Appendix B" & so on.

Label tables and figures in the appendix with the letter of the appendix in which it is found followed by the number of the table or figure. Labels should be italicized. For example, *Figure A1* or *Table B1*.

*Figure A1.* Compares the average waiting time of different states to the national average. From "Foster Care Rates, by State, per 1,000 Children, 2005-2014," by Virginia Performs, 2016, *Foster Care, Graphs at a Glance* (<http://www.vaperforms.virginia.gov/indicators/healthFamily/fosterCare-graphs.php>).

**Appendix B**

## Local counties Foster Care Information

The first paragraph of an appendix should be aligned with the left margin, and any subsequent paragraphs should be indented.

This table displays the foster care demographics for several counties in Virginia. The Table below shows the number of children in care along with their ages and average waiting time across specific counties. Although it is interesting to note the wide difference between the actual amounts of foster children in each county, it is important to notice that the percentage of children in the care between the ages of 16-18 are quite similar.

*Table B1*

<b><u>County</u></b>	<b><u>Children in Care</u></b>	<b><u>Age 13-15 (%)</u></b>	<b><u>Age 16-18 (%)</u></b>	<b><u>Average time in care (in months)</u></b>
Fredericksburg	20	5.0	20.0	20.21
Spotsylvania	86	14.0	17.4	16.88
Stafford	27	3.7	18.5	12.97
Caroline	17	23.5	29.4	28.3

*Note.* Gives information of separate county's foster care statistics within various categories. Shows an obvious increase of children within care from 13-15 to 16-18. Also gives county's average time in foster care. From "Foster Care Children Demographic Report for April 2016" by Virginia Department of Social Services, 2016, May 1, *Common Wealth of Virginia* (<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/children/fc.cgi>).

### **Additional Resources**

For further information about the APA style, see the Academic Center for Excellence's handouts [APA Format Guide](#), [APA Formatting in Word 2016](#), and [APA Paper Checklist for College Writers](#).

The APA Citation Style video tutorial and interactive module are also available on Germanna's Academic Center for Excellence's Writing Resources webpage at <https://www.germannna.edu/academic-center-for-excellence/writing-resources/>

Additionally, the Academic Center for Excellence offers informational workshops on APA format on-campus and [online](#). To schedule an on-campus workshop, contact Academic Center for Excellence's Locust Grove center at **(540) 423-9148**, the Fredericksburg center at **(540) 891-3017**, or the Barbara J. Fried Center in Stafford at **(540) 834-1993**.