

# New study finds that everyday activities empower young people in care

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Simply going shopping, playing in the park or reading are the kind of everyday activities that give young people in care a better sense of value and well-being.

That's the finding of a [new study](#) published today (30 October) from the University of Leicester into the participation experiences of [young people](#) growing up in care.

It calls on those who provide care to take better account of the value of the [everyday activities](#) young people engage with in their free time, such as, shopping, playing with pets, darts, board games, socialising, playing in the park, reading, crafting, swimming, singing, and membership based activities such as Girl Guides.

Lead author Dr Lisanne Gibson, from the University of Leicester, states: "It is already understood that participating in facilitated cultural and social activities has positive effects on children's and young people's wellbeing, personal development, aspiration and thus improves their life chances.

"Our research has also found that everyday participation is an important domain through which young people learn about the social world, their place in it, and is a domain in which they feel empowered to express themselves."

The research involved ethnographic work by and with young women

living in foster care, focus group discussions with foster carers and independent visitors, and workshop discussions with professionals involved in delivering social and cultural services to young people in care.

For cultural and leisure institutions the research clearly demonstrated the potential for supporting young people in care through facilitating participation which connects with and values young people's everyday participation.

The researchers state: "What young people choose to do in their free time can be of great importance to how they see themselves and are the lived experiences from which they can and will construct their identities now, and in the future. This is a fundamental value of facilitated and everyday participation.

"Current social policy and practice is focused on enabling care experienced young people to create positive narratives and memories about the self, the importance of which is recognised in the focus on life story work. Cultural institutions such as museums and galleries, with their expertise in memory and identity work are currently underutilised as tools for the facilitation of participation amongst young people in care.

"We suggest that the responsibility to facilitate the participation of young people in care lies not only with those directly looking after children and young people and social services, but also with the organisations and venues funded by the corporate parent."

Dr Delyth Edwards, from the University of Leicester added: "This report is exciting because it speaks to, and is intended to be useful to, professionals working in social and health services, cultural practitioners, charities and the education sector, along with families, carers and foster

carers."

Provided by University of Leicester

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