

The Harm of Removal: What Children & Youth Have to Say

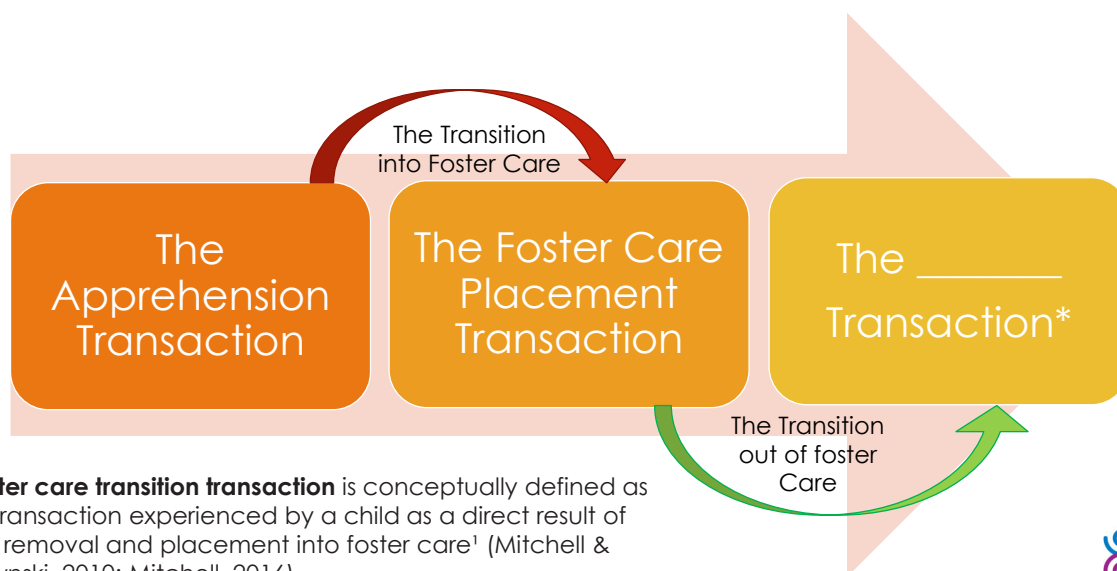
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foster care transition transactions



A **foster care transition transaction** is conceptually defined as any transaction experienced by a child as a direct result of child removal and placement into foster care¹ (Mitchell & Kuczynski, 2010; Mitchell, 2016)



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ambiguity, loss, and trauma: the impact of entry into foster care

Structural ambiguity: a lack of clarity about the meaning of foster care^{1,2}

Placement reason ambiguity: a lack of clarity about the reason for being placed into foster care^{1,2}

Placement context ambiguity: a lack of clarity about the context of the foster care placement^{1,2}

Relationship ambiguity: a lack of clarity about the people with whom they will be placed^{1,2}

Role ambiguity: a lack of clarity about one's role in familial contexts^{1,2}

Temporal ambiguity: a lack of clarity about the duration of the foster care placement^{1,2}

Ambiguous loss: a lack of clarity about the psychological and/or physical presence of members in the psychological family³

1. Mitchell, M. B. (2016). *The neglected transition: Building a relational home for children entering foster care*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press.

2. Mitchell, M. B. & Kuczynski, L. (2010). Does anyone know what is going on? Examining children's lived experience of the transition into foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32, 437-444.

3. Boss, P. (1999). *Ambiguous loss. Learning to live with unresolved grief*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.



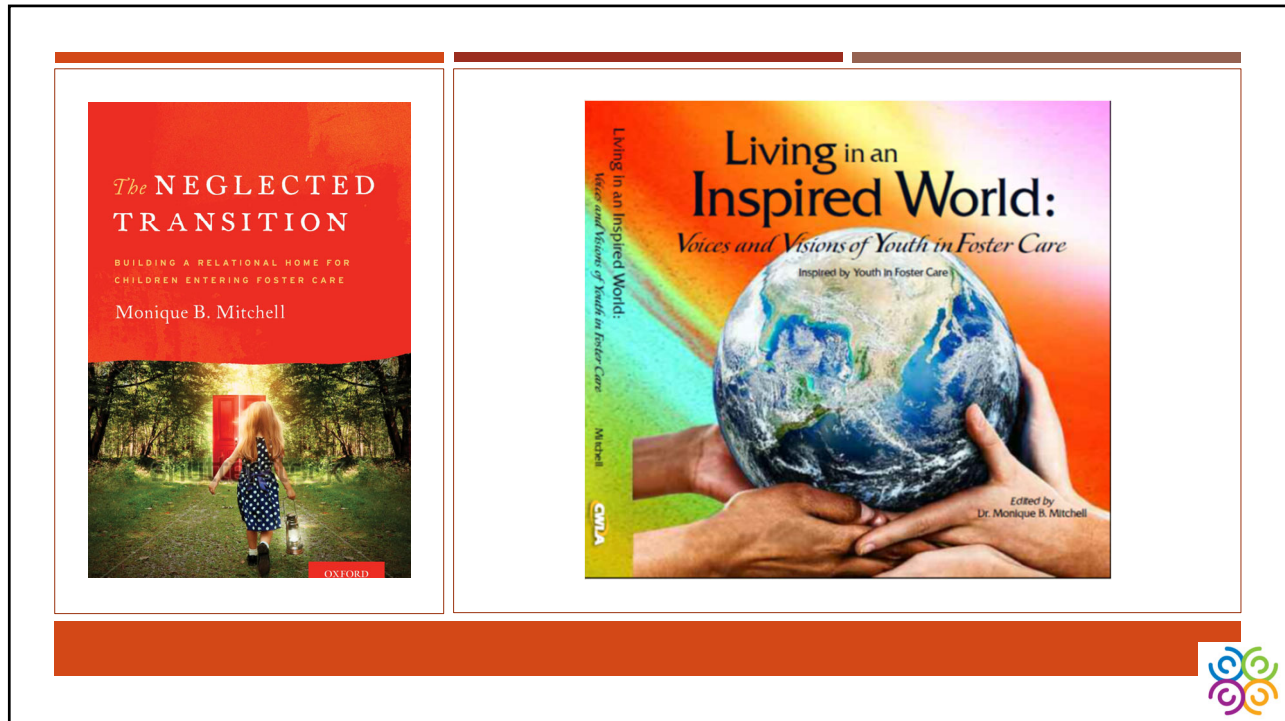
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Recommendations

- Ensure that children are only removed from their families when it is absolutely necessary
- Ensure that information is provided directly to children during removals and the home transfer to mitigate ambiguity
- Ensure that state policies and practices exist to effectively address the ambiguity and trauma experienced by children during the apprehension transaction and foster care placement transaction
- Ensure that all law enforcement officials and child protection staff who are involved in child removals receive trauma-informed, grief-informed, and child-centered foster care removal and transfer training



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