

BOLD Ideas, ESSENTIAL Reading

Climbing a Broken Ladder

Understanding Contributors of College Success for Youth in Foster Care

NATHANAEL J. OKPYCH

"Few studies have used long-term data on former foster youth to illuminate the challenges faced on the path toward college completion in such a balanced and confident way as *Climbing a Broken Ladder*. Okpych's work straddles both social work and educational studies while greatly advancing both fields."

—Jacob Paul Gross, University of Louisville

"*Climbing a Broken Ladder* provides a rigorous collection of observational studies that outline the key challenges foster alumni face in their post-secondary education journeys and speaks to critical solutions that child welfare and higher education authorities should heed. This is a wonderful example of a cross-disciplinary study that yields equal importance to the social work and educational fields."

—Angelique Day, University of Washington, Seattle, Co-Founder, National Research Collaborative on Foster Alumni in Higher Education (NRC-FAHE)

Although foster youth have college aspirations similar to their peers, fewer than one in ten ultimately complete a two-year or four-year college degree. What are the major factors that influence their chances of succeeding? *Climbing a Broken Ladder* advances our knowledge of what can be done to improve college outcomes for a student group that has largely remained invisible in higher education. Drawing on data from one of the most extensive studies of young people in foster care, Nathanael J. Okpych examines a wide range of factors that contribute to the chances that foster youth enroll in college, persist in college, and ultimately complete a degree. Okpych also investigates how early trauma affects later college outcomes, as well as the impact of a significant child welfare policy that extends the age limit of foster care. The book concludes with data-driven and concrete recommendations for policy and practice to get more foster youth into and through college.

NATHANAEL J. OKPYCH is an assistant professor in the school of social work at the University of Connecticut in Hartford.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part I: Background

Introduction

- 1 Framework for the Book
- 2 Description of the Midwest Study

Part II: Findings

- 3 Exploring College Outcomes
- 4 College Enrollment Patterns
- 5 Predictors of College Enrollment
- 6 Predictors of College Persistence
- 7 Predictors of Degree Completion
- 8 Role of Avoidant Attachment on Persistence and Degree Completion
- 9 Impact of Extended Foster Care on College Outcomes

Part III: Recommendations

- 10 Policy and Practice Steps to Increase College Enrollment and Completion

Appendix A: Statistics in Plain Language

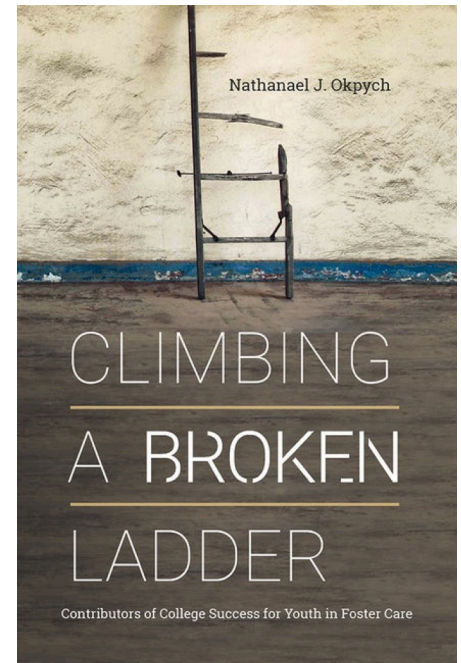
Appendix B: Making Sense of Odds Ratios

Appendix C: What is Multivariable Regression and Why Do We Need It?

Appendix D: Description of Study Predictors

Acknowledgments

Notes



258 pp
9781978809161 paper \$34.95 **\$24.46**
9781978809178 cloth \$120.00 **\$84.00**
January 2021
Ebook available directly

30% OFF + free shipping

rutgersuniversitypress.org or 1 800 621 2736
US orders only • Code: RFLR19

In Canada:

20% OFF • Code: RUTGERS20
Free shipping online with orders over \$40
ubcpres.ca/rutgers or 1 800 565 9523

In UK / Europe and the rest of the world:

20% OFF • Code: RutFriendsFamily
Free shipping worldwide
eurospanbookstore.com or
UK: 0845 474 4572
International: +44 (0)20 3286 2420
info@eurospanbookstore.com

Prices are in local currencies.

Examination and desk copies:

rutgersuniversitypress.org/educators

Join our mailing list for news and special offers:

rutgersuniversitypress.org/specials