

Juvenile Justice Fact Sheet Series: Crossover Youth

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Counsel

Girls

Crossover
Youth

African-
American
Youth

Latino Youth

LGBTI
Youth

Mental
Health/Substance
Abuse

Specialty
Courts

School to
Prison
Pipeline

Overview:

Youth who are involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are often referred to as crossover youth. Unfortunately, there is often a lack of collaboration and understanding among the agencies that serve these youth. In some places, there is no interaction between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and in others, there is simply no acknowledgment that joint cases even exist. The lack of communication is compounded when there is a lack of coordination and continuity among the various attorneys representing the youth and the judges who hear their cases.

National Statistics:

Crossover youth are disproportionately low income, female, and youth of color that typically have high rates of truancy and school drop-out, unidentified special education issues, and family histories of mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, and criminal behavior. A recent study in Illinois identified that 10% of all youth who leave juvenile detention facilities enter the foster care system after their release. Research shows that abused and neglected youth are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. Also, youth who lack safe schools, adequate health care, and supportive and continuous relationships are more likely to cross over from the child welfare system to juvenile justice (and vice versa). Up to 30% of youth aged ten or older in the care of child welfare are subsequently arrested. It is estimated that up to 29% of children involved in the child welfare system also have cases in the juvenile justice system.

Research and Programming:

In hopes of achieving permanency for crossover youth and bridging system-wide gaps, The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University created the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM), an evidence-based template for jurisdictions serving crossover youth. The CYPM provides agencies direction to identify crossover youth, engage parents, youth, and community groups, and develop coordinated case plans with judicial oversight. A central feature of CYPM is to encourage multi-agency collaboration across the child welfare and juvenile justice systems to lessen the instability that youth experience as they are “bounced” back and forth between systems. CYPM is currently used in 73 jurisdictions across the country. Data from several CYPM sites show promising results: crossover youth in the CYPM sites have an increased involvement in extracurricular activities and saw a 10% decrease in new arrests.

Ohio Data:

Based on the Supreme Court of Ohio’s yearly report, Ohio’s juvenile justice system adjudicated 101,653 delinquency and unruly cases in 2013. In 2014, approximately 413 youth resided in an Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) facility. In 2013, there were 11,717 Ohio youth in foster care. Ohio’s foster youth demographics mirror national data showing disproportionate representation of minorities in the foster care system. While the general Ohio youth population is 14.5% African American and 75.9% White, 33% of the youth in foster care self-identified as African American, and 54% self-identified as White.

Ohio’s Approach:

Since 2011, a partnership between Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), the Center for Justice Reform at Georgetown University and DHS has brought the CYPM to 12 Ohio counties: Hamilton, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Stark, Summit, Carroll, Clark, Ross, and Trumbull. In addition to conference calls, site visits, and webinars, the collaboration is supported by ongoing evaluation conducted by consultants for the Georgetown’s Center for Justice Reform. Early Ohio CYPM data indicate that crossover youth

in Ohio follow the national statistics and are more likely to be female and African American than their non-crossover counterparts in the general population and the child welfare system.

Mahoning County has had particular success implementing the CYPM. The success of the CYPM in Mahoning County began with bringing together all agencies and entities involved in the child welfare and delinquency dockets as well as outside service providers. Once all necessary partners understood the approach, a “gap analysis” was conducted reviewing all protocol and services provided to crossover youth in the community. The Mahoning County approach emerged over time through collaboration, cooperation, and sharing of information. Youth are identified through a structured information sharing process between the intake departments of the court and children’s services agency. Once identified, all entities involved with youth (including the youth’s family) are brought together, usually within five days, and develop a holistic plan to address the underlying issues causing the youth to be on either the child welfare or delinquency docket. The plan is provided to the magistrates presiding over both dockets prior to the next hearing. The plans help to ensure that the needs of the crossover youth in Mahoning County are being addressed in an expedient and efficient manner.

Mahoning County court officials emphasize that the creation and success of the CYPM required a significant philosophical shift in the mindset of all partners. Dedicated leadership and the initial approach of seeking commitment from every relevant entity were crucial. The court also made structural changes: it created specialized dockets for two magistrates so that one hears all crossover youth abuse/neglect/dependency cases and the other hears all crossover youth delinquency matters; and it recently hired an independent facilitator. Early data indicates that 250 crossover youth have been served by the program from May 1, 2013 – February 4, 2015 and that overall detention population, as well as average length of stay, has decreased.

DYS does not currently have data on the numbers of crossover youth in their custody, nor does DYS currently offer any services or programming specifically for crossover youth in a correctional facility.

Conclusion:

The complex challenges and needs of crossover youth are often difficult for the child welfare or juvenile justice system to address alone. For each system to work best, they must be able to identify crossover youth and work together to find reasonable solutions to prevent crossover youth from re-entering the child welfare or juvenile justice systems or going on to commit more serious offenses. Instead, research suggests that a collaborative, integrated approach is the ideal path for Ohio to follow.

Resources:

Bilchik, Shay (2010). *Addressing the Needs of Youth Known to Both the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice systems*. National Center for State Courts. Available: <http://cdm16501.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/famct/id/305>

Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Georgetown University. *Crossover Youth Practice Model*. (June 2014). Available: <http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/pm/practicemodel.html>

Goldstein, Brian (2012). “Crossover Youth”: *The Intersection of Child Welfare & Juvenile Justice*. Juvenile Justice Information Exchange. Available: <http://jjiie.org/crossover-youth-intersection-of-child-welfare-juvenile-justice/>

Herz, Denise, et al. (2012). *Addressing the Needs of Multi-System Youth: Strengthening the Connection between Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice*. Available: <http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/pdfs/msy/AddressingtheNeedsofMultiSystemYouth.pdf>

Justice, Jennifer. *A Message from OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice – August 2, 2011*. Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, Office of Families and Children. Available: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/PFOF/PDF/August-2013.stm>

Kids Count Data Center. (2014). *Children in Foster Care by Race and Hispanic Origin*. Available: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables>

National Training and Technical Assistance Center. (2013). *Crossover Youth Practice Model: Results from the First Year of Implementation*. Available: https://www.ntac.org/media/trainingCenter/53/Multi-System%20Youth%20Webinar%204_12913_508c_2_8_13.pdf

Ohio Governor’s Office of Health Transformation (2015). *Department of Youth Services Trauma Screening*. Available: http://www.healthtransformation.ohio.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=fDA3Iom_2I0%3d&tabid=120

Sudol, Teija (2009). *Information Packet: Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare*. National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning. Available: http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/Sudol_Info%20Pack_JuvenileJustice_June09.pdf

Supreme Court of Ohio, (2013). *Ohio Court Statistical Report*. Available: <http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/Publications/annrep/13OCS/2013OCS.pdf>

US Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). *Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data*. Available: <http://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data/overview>

This fact sheet is one of a fact sheet series about Ohio’s juvenile justice system by the Ohio Juvenile Justice Association.

If you have any questions, please visit OJJA’s website or contact Erin Davies with the Juvenile Justice Coalition at edavies@johio.org or 614-400-5548.