

Crossover Youth in Johnson County, Kansas

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About United Community Services of Johnson County

For more than 40 years UCS has spearheaded efforts to make vital human services available to individuals and families in Johnson County, especially those facing challenges. This neutral, nonprofit organization brings together human service providers, policymakers, funders and community leaders to address issues impacting the well-being of residents. These partnerships ensure that the collective human service impact in Johnson County is far greater than the accomplishments individual organizations can achieve working alone. In addition to providing leadership for community-based planning, UCS provides information and trend analysis while playing a vital role in securing funding for the area's human service organizations. UCS is United Way of Greater Kansas City's Planning Partner in Johnson County.

Questions about the *Literature Review of Research on Crossover Youth* and this report should be directed to UCS Community Initiatives Director Marya Schott, maryas@ucsjoco.org.

Introduction

Children and youth involved in the child welfare system all too often become involved in the juvenile system, or vice-versa, children in the juvenile system end-up in the child welfare system. Collectively referred to as crossover youth, this population requires a more intense array of services and supports than youth known to the child welfare and juvenile justice systems individually.

United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS) was awarded a 10th Judicial District Court Domestic Violence Special Program Fee Grant to assist members of a committee of the Juvenile Detentions Alternatives Initiative as they developed a plan to address crossover youth. The committee's work was the next step in considering the recommendations that resulted from UCS' literature review of crossover youth in 2014.

This report is provided to the Johnson County Criminal Justice Coordinator, the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) Collaborative and the Johnson County Criminal Justice Advisory Council (CJAC) to inform decision-making about a commitment to move forward policies and practices that involve multiple systems beyond just child welfare and juvenile justice, in the effort to help crossover children and youth to succeed.

Background

Two national think-tanks focus on crossover youth: 1) John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation which established the Models for Change: Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice, and the Models for Change Resource Center Partnership; and, 2) Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR), within Georgetown University, which partners with the Casey Foundation and developed the Crossover Youth Practice Model.

According to the CJJR, there is no research related to the effectiveness of programs with crossover youth specifically. Both the Youth Crossover Practice Model and the Models for Change emphasize the necessity of a multi-system collaboration to comprehensively address the risks and needs of crossover youth. At a minimum, such efforts require the use of coordinated case assignment between child welfare and juvenile justice, joint assessment, coordinated case plans, and coordinated case supervision. Further, the integration of best practices and evidence-based programs as they relate to child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, substance abuse and education, is key.

Process and Timeline

The process for this work on crossover youth included an examination of data and information sharing among participants. In February, 2015, the JDAI Alternatives Committee reviewed system maps of the child welfare (Child in Need of Care) and juvenile offenders systems, in order to identify barriers, gaps and opportunities.

In March of 2015, under the leadership of the Johnson County Criminal Justice Coordinator, a small workgroup was formed, independent of the JDAI Alternatives Committee. In order to share specific

client information, the workgroup was granted status by the District Court as a multi-disciplinary team. The workgroup's objective was to determine if there is a need for intentional and deliberate coordination between multiple local and state systems to address the Johnson County crossover population and those youth who are at risk of crossing over.

In addition to the Criminal Justice Coordinator and UCS, the workgroup included representatives from Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF), Johnson County Mental Health Center (JoCo MHC), Johnson County District Attorney's Office, Olathe School District, the 10th Judicial District Court, KVC Behavioral Healthcare, Department of Corrections, the faith-based community, and a guardian-ad-litem for foster children. The workgroup met three times between March and November.

Through an analysis of 114 Johnson County youth who had been in the custody of the Secretary of Corrections during fiscal year 2014, and who were placed in out-of-home placement (all placements types), the group was able to identify which youth were in child welfare and/or the County's mental health systems before they came to attention of the Department of Corrections, and the characteristics of those youth whom had crossed over from child welfare to juvenile corrections.

In December 2015, the Johnson County Criminal Justice Coordinator and UCS staff presented the findings from the workgroup, as well as the barriers and gaps identified by the JDAI Alternatives Committee, to the JDAI Collaborative. The JDAI Collaborative agreed with the workgroup's assessment that there is a need for coordination and collaboration across multiple systems.

Data Analysis of Crossover Youth

- During calendar years 2011 through 2013, 3,769 Johnson County youth had juvenile offender charges; of those 385 (10%) had prior involvement with the court as a Child in Need of Care (CINC).
- During January 2015, there were 46 admissions to the Juvenile Detention Center and 17 of those had prior CINC filing (37%).
- In February 2015, 71 youth were in custody of the Secretary of Corrections-Juvenile Services; 21 (30%) had a prior CINC filing.
- The crossover workgroup examined available data on the 114 youth who were in custody of Secretary of Corrections, and already in placement or removed from the home between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014 (fiscal year 2014). Of those, 32 (28%) youth had a CINC case filed in Johnson County at some point in their lives.
- The 114 youth in custody:
 - 80% of the 114 youth, or a member of the youth's family, had contact with DCF.
 - The average age of youth was 17 years-old.
 - The average number of placements during 12-month period was three, and the range was from one to 13 placements.

- The subset of 32 youth who had a CINC case filed in Johnson County at some point in their lives:
 - For 22% the first reported point of contact with law enforcement was as a runaway, and for another 22% first contact was the result of investigation of possible abuse.
 - 53% (17 youth) were white males; 28% (9) were female.
 - The average age was 17 years-old.
 - The average age of first contact with law enforcement was 11 years-old.
 - The average age of their first juvenile offender adjudication was 14 ½ years-old.
 - The average number of arrests was 10 (ranging from four to 20).
 - History of alcohol/drug use was gathered on 29 of the 32 youth. The average age of first substance use was 11 ½ years-old.
- Because of challenges associated with gathering data from multiple systems (DCF, JoCo MHC and Corrections) on 114 youth, an analysis was made on the “top 10” youth (defined as those who cost the most based upon daily rates of placement; see Cost Analysis section below).
 - Of the 10 youth, eight had gone through intake at Johnson County Mental Health Center at least one time, one youth had been in and out of services at JoCo Mental Health seven times. Anecdotally these youth were described as having large family systems issues; mental health services were not successful, youth were put back in a home environment which had not changed. Further, it appeared that these families did not seek help when children were young.
 - Five of the 10 youth had been in the CINC system.

Cost Analysis

(Source: Daily rates of placement – Kansas Department of Corrections; analysis by Johnson County Criminal Justice Coordinator)

- During FY 2014, the total daily rate placement cost for all 114 youth was \$1.7 million. *The daily rate cost is the state general fund purchase of service cost, or provider contract rates. It does not factor in officer time, transport costs, county general fund costs, costs incurred before July 1, 2013, or after June 30, 2014, or costs for secure placement in Juvenile Correctional Facilities.*
- During FY 2014, the average CINC cost was \$20,822/youth; the average juvenile offender cost was \$14,996/youth.
- The top 10 youth cost a total of \$411,285 (daily rate total, FY 2014; approximately 24% of \$1.7 million).

Conclusion from Analysis

A small number of youth who engage multiple systems consume significant resources. Crossover youth consume more resources than youth who come in contact with only one system.

Reflections from Participants

During the course of meetings, participants discussed issues and challenges among systems, including the following:

- Parents do not report children when they break the law (fear of what will happen and stigma).
- There are not enough programs to address truancy.
- Lack of payer source for mental health services.
- Lack early identification of children at-risk (both age and incident).
- Scarce resources/supports for children/families in need.
- Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (JIAC) usually does not know if DCF is involved with youth who are brought in by law enforcement.
- Cost is barrier to access of substance abuse intensive outpatient treatment services.
- Family Preservation is not provided to children/families in Family Focus.
- Family Preservation is not long enough for many families.
- Lack of education/help for parents. Child receives mental health services, behavior gets better, but child returns to home where little has changed (family has same stressors, systemic problems and issues).
- Kansas has not taken full advantage of the Title IV-E Waiver, which would bring federal dollars into the community for implementation of promising practices/evidence based programs which help to prevent out-of-home placements.

Observations about Systems

- Obtaining data about youth was challenging, especially for DCF and JoCo Mental Health Center.
- Little information is shared about youth who are known concurrently to multiple systems.
- Leadership of the systems need to grant permission for shared communication and working together.
- As children/families come to attention of schools as in need of supportive services, there are challenges involved with connecting them to services provided by other “systems,” and sometimes there are barriers to the services, such as lack of capacity or access/cost of services.

Workgroup’s Conclusion

There is a need for intentional and deliberate coordination between multiple local and state systems to address the crossover population, and those youth who are at risk of crossing over. Prevention is critical and there are few dedicated resources to the prevention of youth from crossing over from one system to another.

Recommendations for on-going work

1. Create protocols that specify how client information databases can be searched to identify crossover youth at the point crossover occurs.*
2. Create memorandum of agreement that describes the ability of child welfare (DCF and its contractors) and juvenile justice to share information about youth and families involved in both systems. These agreements may also include sharing of educational and behavioral health information, as well as information learned from assessments used by each system.*
3. Consider best practices for joint case planning and coordination. Put protocols and processes in place at each level of the systems.
4. Create an integrated case plan (or planning process) between juvenile justice and child welfare.*
5. Use resources available through Center for Juvenile Justice Reform within Georgetown which partners with Casey Foundation and developed Crossover Youth Practice Model.
6. Examine what is working in Sedgwick County and the 5th Judicial District.
 - a. Sedgwick County has CINC/juvenile offender staffings and joint recommendations are made to the judge. (An administrative order allows child welfare and juvenile offender staff to share data). In the 10th Judicial District, consider if there should be an evaluation on a case-by-case basis to determine whether a CINC case should be dropped when a juvenile offender charge is filed.
 - b. Consider the “Home Court” problem solving model.
7. Promote the use of Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (JIAC) as a resource for families (somewhere to go for help before youth comes to attention of child welfare or juvenile justice). JIAC accepts walk-ins and will make appointments, and wants to be more widely known as a resource.
8. Provide resources to children with high risk factors – such as lack of school achievement, early aggressive behavior or other behavioral issues. School staff may need cognitive behavioral training, and additional resources that help address the emotional health of children. Early intervention can make a difference.
9. Provide Family Preservation to families who are in JoCo Mental Health Center’s Family Focus program; coordinate/collaborate on services to those families.
10. Explore more opportunities for diversion:
 - Consider offering the Minor-In-Possession (MIP) diversion program for youth who have a minor prior offense (do not limit MIP to only those with no offense).
 - Consider what type of case might be appropriate for victim-offender mediation.
11. In order to prevent youth from getting deeper into the juvenile justice system, examine the reasons why many youth are failing probation within the first 30 days, and if anything could be done to prevent their failure.

**Elements recommended in the Crossover Youth Practice Model, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform.*

12. Advocate for Kansas (DCF) to apply for additional support through the Title IV-E Waiver. In SFY 2012, the State of Kansas had one of the lowest Title IV-E foster care penetration rates in the country by only receiving foster care reimbursements on 24% of the children in out-of-home placement. (Source: *Federal, State, and Local Spending to Address Child Abuse and Neglect in SFY 2012*, Child Trends publication #2014-47).

Opportunities and What is Next

Opportunities

Casey Family Programs is interested in bringing the Home Court Program to Johnson County. Casey Family Programs is the nation's largest operating foundation focused on safely reducing the need for foster care and building Communities of Hope for children and families across America. The 5th Judicial District's Home Court program uses the problem solving court model as the framework for their program. The goals of Home Court are to safely maintain youth in the home, increase family protective factors while reducing risk factors, reduce criminal recidivism, substantially reduce or eliminate substance abuse, and increase a youth's success in obtaining their personal goals. These goals are accomplished by empowering parents through education, accountability and evidence-based programming (e.g., Functional Family Therapy, cognitive behavioral programs and Parent Management Training – Oregon Model); identifying mental health issues and addressing them with the most appropriate response; dealing with parental substance abuse, chronic unemployment and legal issues; identifying educational concerns and collaborating with the school in order to come up with individualized responses to each youth's behavioral issue; and by intervening much sooner in a young person's life in order to bring about behavioral change and by increasing their parent's capacity to protect.

What is Next?

Members of the JDAI Collaborative and other stakeholders in the work of crossover youth will meet with representatives from the 5th Judicial District to learn more about Home Court.

The JDAI Collaborative endorsed continued work on crossover youth, through a process independent of the JDAI Collaborative. The work will include an analysis of more data in order to increase the understanding among system leadership of why this is important, and why no single entity can accomplish it alone. Work will also include review of the recommendations in this report, and a plan for implementation based upon that review.

In January 2016, the Criminal Justice Advisory Council will be asked to endorse the continuation of work on crossover youth. The Criminal Justice Coordinator recommends the process be similar to what was done on Mental Health and Criminal Justice, with the formation of both a leadership team and a work team.