Strengthening Outcomes for Cross-over Youth Transitioning into Adulthood: Lessons Learned from Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice
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Webinar Description

Based on the recommendations as identified in a white paper: Supporting Youth in Transition to Adulthood: Lessons Learned from Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice

Sponsored by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University; primary author is Dr David Altschuler of Johns Hopkins Institute of Policy Studies and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.
Webinar Objectives

Participants will learn:

• Definition of population
  • Child Welfare
  • Juvenile Justice
  • Transition Age Youth
• Issues related to this population
• Strategies and Policy Implications for Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice
Polling Question #1
Webinar Structure

Submit questions via the chat function

Questions will be posed to participants at the end of the presentation

Phones will be open at the end of the presentation to participants for peer learning
Overview of Child Welfare

- Prevention
- Relative Placement
- Foster Care
- Reunification
- Adoption
- Independent Living
Child Welfare Statistics

Half a million children in the US live in foster care

One in five will become homeless after age 18

60% will finish high school (compared to 87%)

By age 25, less than 3% will earn a college degree (compared to 28%)

Higher risks of incarceration, early pregnancy and unemployment
  • (Courtney et al, 2001)
Effect of Abuse and Neglect

Early abuse and neglect

- may cause adverse alterations to brain development which can have long term cognitive, emotional and behavioral consequences (Wily & Karr-Morse, 1999)

Early abuse is strongly correlated with:

- Low academic achievement
- Substance abuse
- Unsuccessful social adaptation
  - (Kendall-Tackett & Eckenrode, 1996; Widom, DuMont, & Czaja, 2007)
Maltreated youth
Cross-over into Juvenile Justice

Child abuse & neglect ↑ risk of juvenile arrests by 55 % and violent crime by 96 % (Widom, 1989)

Persistent maltreatment from an early age and during adolescence are correlated with ↑ risk of juvenile delinquency & criminality (Thornberry, 2008)
Overview of Juvenile Justice

Secure Care

Probation Services

Under the care and custody of delinquency court

Involvement in delinquent act
Juvenile Justice Statistics

Disproportionately male, poor and youth of color

30 to 70% educational disabilities

Up to 70% have mental health disorders

20% severe ability to function
Juvenile Justice Statistics

- Approximately 23% adjudicated delinquent youth in residential placement
- 51% of youth in placement are 16 or 17 years of age
- 9 out of 10 youth confined have experienced at least one traumatic incident
Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice
Common factors

Trauma
- Leads to adverse brain development
- Results in physical & emotional immaturity

Out of home placement
- Leads to lack of social and family networks and supports
- Results in disconnections to society and pro-social activities

Involvement in more than one system
- Leads to lack of coordinated services
- Results in gaps in services and/or inappropriate treatment plans
Transition Age Youth

Between 14 – 25 years of age

Journey from dependency to independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal adjustment</td>
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<td>Community life</td>
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Definition of Cross-over Youth

Penetrate both the CW and JJ systems

3 Pathways:

While under the care/custody of CW commits a delinquent act and enters JJ

Previous CW involvement then commits a delinquent act and enters JJ

While under the care/custody of JJ is referred to CW for abuse/neglect
Outlook for cross-over youth of transition age

Transition aged, Cross-over youth, higher risk for:

- UNEMPLOYMENT
- HOMELESSNESS
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
- CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR
- EARLY PREGNANCY
- LACK OF EDUCATION
Connected by 25

Current yardstick applied to young adults who will “make it” to independence by age 25

Populations in danger of being DISCONNECTED:

- High school drop outs
- Teen parents
- Youth aging out of foster care
- Youth involved in the juvenile justice system
Connected by 25 Needs of Cross-over Youth

- Stable Housing
- Strong, permanent relationships
- Occupational and employment skills
- Contribute to the well-being of others
- Health Care
- Effective Mental Health Services
- School Success

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Collaboration

“The success of youth who are neglected, delinquent or at risk relies on effective systems.”
(Leone, Quinn, and Osher, 2002)
Stages of Collaboration:

- Coexistence
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Coordination
- Coalition
- True collaboration
Importance of Collaboration

Collaboration is a prerequisite to the sustainability of interagency programs
(Perkins, 2002)
Benefits of Collaboration

Families and youth benefit when systems collaborate

- improved access to services
- less disruption and fragmentation
- increased information sharing

Program sustainability is strengthened

System relationships improve

Increased community ownership for its children
Barriers to Collaboration

Staff resistance barriers

Philosophical barriers

Language and communication barriers

Structural barriers
What we know.....

....better outcomes will be achieved when youth live and develop in functional families, are empowered to make decisions about their futures, and are provided with meaningful incentives and opportunities to succeed.
Recommendations
Recommendations: Supporting Transition Age cross-over Youth

- Use Federal funding to create programs for older youth and track their outcomes
Using Federal Funding and Track Their Outcomes

- Expand services
- Bridge age-oriented funding relationships
- Alter state plans to include transition aged youth
- Seek foundation dollars
- Maximize mandates and existing funding
- Other funding

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Using Federal Funding and Track Their Outcomes

Policy Implications

• Create inter-agency parent and youth councils
• Mandate family and cross-over youth representation
• Provide fiscal incentives to serve cross-over youth
• Alter Medicaid, IV-E Title V, JJDPA and NCLB
Polling Question #2
Recommendations: Supporting Transition Age Cross-Over Youth

- Strengthen collaboration between the JJ and CW systems to efficiently target service provision and improve outcomes for crossover youth
Strengthening Collaboration Between the JJ and CW and Improve Outcomes for Crossover Youth

**Strategies**

- Create information sharing mechanisms to identify crossover youth
- Allow CW to retain jurisdiction for dually adjudicated youth
- Cross train staff (JJ/CW) and meet regularly
- Align JJ and CW mandates of public safety and child safety
- Dedicate resources to collaboration and strategic planning between JJ and CW
Strengthening Collaboration Between the JJ and CW and Improve Outcomes for Crossover Youth

Policy Implications

- Require integrated reporting
- Direct cross-agency action to target local delivery of services
- Co-locate staff and programs
- Identify existing structures to identify crossover youth
Polling Question #3
Recommendations: Supporting Transition Age cross-over Youth

• Engaging youth to work with their case managers in formulating a plan that includes the goals they wish to achieve by age 25.
Engaging Youth in their Case Plan

**Strategies**

- Actively involve youth in case plan design
- Create strategies to address challenges
- Expand or create effective services
- Link youth with role models/mentors
- Create/support youth organizations
- Provide access to needed services after they age out
Engaging Youth in their Case Plan

Policy Implications

• Require all programs, policies and practice models become youth and family centered
• Create frequent and regular opportunities for youth and families to provide feedback about cross-over needs
• Assure that cross-over youth have one case plan that is coordinated across all systems
• Provide training to agency staff on youth engagement
Polling Question #4
Recommendations: Supporting Transition Age cross-over Youth

- Engaging with the community to create broader support systems for transitioning youth
Engaging with the community to create broader support systems

Strategies

- Develop community resources
- Create connections with older youth, families and community stakeholders
- Work with existing natural supports and work toward addressing the unique needs of each community
Engaging with the community to create broader support systems

Policy Implications

• Regularly share data with community agencies
• Establish interagency structures to support cross-agency/cross-program collaboration
• Contract with community agencies to support cross-over youth
• Co-locate agency staff at community based service organizations who serve cross-over youth
Polling Question #5
Recommendations: Supporting Transition Age cross-over Youth

• Promoting policies and practices that address family relationships and permanency
Policies and Practice for Family Relationships and Permanency

Strategies

Targeted assessment to evaluate the strengths and stability of family relationships

Individualized service provision for youth and their families

Connecting families to community-based support systems

Services and supports built around the protective factors that exist in the family and with the crossover transitioning young adult
Policies and Practice for Family Relationships and Permanency

Policy Implications

• Issue proclamations promoting family and youth involvement in policy and practice issues
• Require meaningful parent and youth impact assessments and statements for legislative and regulatory proposals
• Establish/strengthen parent and youth advisory to child-serving agencies and the Governor/Mayor
• Create ombudsman focus on cross-over youth
• Provide training for family members on court/education proceedings, case planning and placement decisions
Polling Question #6
Recommendations: Supporting Transition Age cross-over Youth

• Developing policies and practices that support prevention and developing specific skills and competencies necessary for adulthood success
Policies and Practices for Prevention, Skills and Competencies Development

Strategies

- Reduce school interruption and dropout
- Ensure CW and JJ youth’s special education needs are met
- Implement provisions of the Fostering Connections and Chafee Act
- Establish partnership with community colleges
- Solidify connection with local employers
- Plan for extended service and support provision
- Allow youth in group care settings to seek and maintain employment
Policies and Practices for Prevention, Skills and Competencies Development

Policy Implications

• Fund data sharing mandates
• Develop shared or integrated information technology systems with partner agencies
• Require the collection, reporting and monitoring of crossover statistics
• Modify “bench books” which provide guidance to judges
Polling Question #7
Recommendations: Supporting Transition Age cross-over Youth

- Ensuring that the services available to youth are developmentally appropriate
Services available to youth are developmentally appropriate

Initial assessments must gauge the youth’s physical, emotional, educational, cultural and vocational status

Create assessment tools that measure the youth’s development across factors that predict adulthood success

Target services to address developmental challenges

Limit the use of criminal transfer for juvenile justice youth, they demonstrate worse outcomes in the adult criminal system
Services available to youth are developmentally appropriate

Policy Implications

- Strengthen review mechanisms for transfer decisions
- Increase coordination with adult corrections when youth are placed in those institutions
- Require developmentally and culturally appropriate services
- Change legislative and regulatory mandates
  - Extend foster care to age 21 (Fostering Connections)
  - Extend Medicaid coverage through age 21
  - Create early asset building opportunities for older youth to build financial literacy
  - Raise the maximum age for which a youth may establish juvenile service eligibility
Polling Question #8
## Questions and Answers

- Phone lines will now be open
- Questions posed in chat function will be posed to participants for peer learning purposes

### Additional Questions to facilitate peer learning:

- Discuss one initiative in your agency/community where you have employed any of these strategies and/or policies to achieve better outcomes for cross-over youth.
- How has your agency/community addressed one or more collaboration barriers in order to achieve better outcomes for cross-over youth?
- What community partners need to be at the table and how have you engaged them to achieve better outcomes for cross-over youth?

### Data Matters……..
Cross-over Youth: 7 Recommendations

1. Use Federal funding to create programs for older youth and track their outcomes.

2. Strengthen collaboration between the JJ and CW systems to efficiently target service provision and improve outcomes for crossover youth.

3. Engage young adult to work with their case managers in formulating a plan that includes the goals they wish to achieve by age 25.

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Cross-over Youth: 7 Recommendations

- Engage with the community to create broad support systems for transitioning youth
- Promote policies and practices that address family relationships and permanency
- Develop policies and practices that support prevention and development of the specific skills and competencies necessary for adulthood
- Ensure that the services available to youth are developmentally appropriate

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