

Juvenile Justice GPS (Geography, Policy, Practice & Statistics) is an online repository providing state policy makers and system stakeholders with a clear understanding of the juvenile justice landscape in the states. The site layers the most relevant national and state-level statistics with information on state laws and practice and charts juvenile justice system change. In a landscape that is highly decentralized and ever-shifting, JJGPS provides an invaluable resource for those wanting to improve the juvenile justice system.

Dual Status Youth: Data Integration to Support System Integration

In recent years there has been significant growth in the literature examining the overlap between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. It is believed that many justice-involved youth experience contact with both systems either simultaneously or at various points over the course of their lives. Studies have shown as high as two-thirds of youth involved in the juvenile justice system experience contact with the child welfare system (Halemba and Siegel, 2011). Youth who become involved in both systems, here-in referred to as dual status youth, are especially vulnerable to poor outcomes. Dual status youth have been shown to experience an earlier onset of delinquent behavior, poor permanency outcomes, higher out-of-home placement rates, increased detention stays, frequent placement changes, and higher rates of offending (Sickmund and Puzanchera, 2014).

With increased attention to this population, many juvenile justice and child welfare agencies have begun to share information and coordinate services for dual status youth. Experts are providing guidance and technical assistance to help jurisdictions learn how to coordinate these services and better address the needs of this vulnerable population. However, many jurisdictions across the country lack the data infrastructure to adequately identify the population and their needs. To allocate their limited resources, jurisdictions must know the basic characteris-

tics of dual status youth, their prevalence (e.g., size of dual status youth population), their level of involvement in each system, and their history of referrals to each system. This information can be difficult to obtain because it often requires cooperation and data sharing across multiple agencies and data systems.

This *StateScan* addresses difficulties and barriers to collecting prevalence data on dual status youth and presents a few examples from states that have succeeded in these efforts.

Challenges to Collecting Data

Youth and their families experience different levels of involvement with child welfare and juvenile justice agencies. These agencies may provide preventative services or other types of oversight and support without formal court involvement. When cases necessitate formal court involvement, information about the youth is entered into an administrative database (e.g., court or case management system). It is often easier for policy makers or researchers to focus their efforts on the limited number of youth with deeper system involvement (dually adjudicated youth)

Who are Dual Status Youth?

There are different levels of involvement a youth may have with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. **Dually identified** youth have current involvement with the juvenile justice system and a history of involvement in the child welfare system. These youth do not have current involvement in both systems. Dually identified youth represent the largest proportion of dual status youth.

Another subset of dual status youth are considered **dually involved**. These youth have some form of concurrent involvement with both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Involvement in either system need not be formal and supervision may be voluntary (child welfare) or because of a referral to a diversion program (juvenile justice).

A further subset of dual status youth are those that are identified as **dually adjudicated**. These youth are found to be both dependent and delinquent by a judge at an adjudicatory hearing. In some states, one judge can adjudicate the youth as being dependent and delinquent at the time of the adjudicatory hearing(s). In many states, separate courts process these case types and determine adjudication status. Dually adjudicated are under the formal care of both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. These youth represent the smallest proportion of dual status youth with system involvement and are a subset of dually involved youth.

Source: Wiig, Janet K., Tuell, John A., and Heldman, Jessica K. 2013. *Guidebook for Juvenile Justice & Child Welfare System Coordination and Integration*. Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps.

because of the amount of information available. Although the numbers of dually identified and dually involved youth are larger, there is less information readily available about this population. When services are provided to a youth informally, the information captured in an administrative data system about the youth and their case is limited. This makes it difficult to determine whether or not a youth had contact with both systems.

The structure of a state's juvenile justice and child welfare systems also has an influence on their capacity to identify dual status youth and ensure that all relevant agencies have access to the necessary data. In 2014, in nine states child welfare and juvenile justice operate in a single state-level agency, either through a single or two separate departments (Fromknecht, 2014). While being under the same umbrella agency reduces some communication barriers, it does not guarantee sharing of information without complications.

Data Sharing within State Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Agencies

In 2014, the National Center for Juvenile Justice interviewed juvenile justice professionals across the country to learn how each state coordinates information sharing and services for dual status youth. Interview topics included whether states coordinate services for dual status youth, whether states share data between agencies, the existence of committees or advisory groups focused on dual status youth issues, formal and informal interagency collaborative agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOUs), statutes, policies, and/or court rules.

The findings are presented both online at www.jjgps.org/systems-integration and in the publication, *Systems Integration: Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice*, by Anne Fromknecht. These resources highlight how states and counties have implemented process's for adopting and improving services for dual status youth. Users can compare differences between states and find details about reform efforts happening across the country.

Not all departments that are under the same umbrella agency share a common data system.

In other states, child welfare and juvenile justice are in separate state-level agencies. In these states, agencies often have separate data systems that may not be easily linked to identify dual status youth. In many states, data sharing is further complicated because child welfare and juvenile justice are administered at the county or district level. In these decentralized states, each agency in each county likely has a separate data system which makes linking at the county level difficult and at the state level more difficult still.

When multiple data systems are involved, the ability to link youth records across information systems through common identification numbers (e.g., youth, family, or case ID) may not be possible. When there are not compatible identifiers between systems, agencies must match individuals across data systems using algorithms based on names and demographic information. This process can be resource heavy and is often complicated by inconsistencies in data entry practices. This problem is compounded in locations without a data analysis and research capacity where matching and linking tasks must be done by hand.

Lastly, the states' ability to examine historical data within their systems can limit the number and type of dual status youth identified. In some states, a data system may only be able to identify youth with concurrent involvement and not be able to easily ascertain if a youth had previous contact with either system. Even when data systems have the capacity to access historic records of a youth, there must be enough historical data to accurately identify all dual status youth. A prevalence study of dual status youth in Oregon found the average age of a child maltreatment investigation was 6.2 years and the average age of referral to the juvenile justice system was 14.5 years. With the majority of child maltreatment cases appearing early in a youth's life, the data system must extend far enough back in time to identify all dual status youth (Feyerherm and Johnson, 2012).

Ideally, there should be records available from a youth's infancy through age 18–21 to capture youth's complete histories with each system.

Available National and State Data

A national estimate of the number of dual status youth is not yet available. A few jurisdictions have produced reports on the number of dual status youth within their state or county. Recent studies were conducted in King County, Washington (Halemba and Siegel, 2011), Los Angeles County, California (Herz, 2015), as well as some states including Oregon (Feyerherm and Johnson, 2012), Connecticut (Randall, Sabatelli, and Farrell, 2015), and Maryland (Young, Bowley, Bilanin, and Ho, 2014). While most studies focus on a single point in time, there are a few states that monitor this population on an annual basis. Florida, Delaware, and Tennessee report the number of dual status youth annually.

Though imperfect, the U.S. Children's Bureau's Annual Progress and Service Report (APSR) provides limited insight into some states' numbers of dual status youth. Under Title IV-B, state child welfare agencies are required to report the number of "juvenile justice transfers" defined as "the number of children under the care of the state child protection system who were transferred into the custody of the state juvenile justice system" during the fiscal year (Children's Bureau, 2015).

The data focus on dual status youth with the highest level of involvement in both systems and therefore only represents a small subset of dually adjudicated youth (see box on page 1). The APSR data are the only national data available on the issue. Through examining the reports, one can see the complexities associated with trying to identify these youth (e.g., different ways of defining juvenile justice transfer, misaligned timeframes, and dissimilar units of count). However, this information provides a valuable starting point for examining each state's ability to collect information on dual status youth and factors that should be considered when looking at the national prevalence of these youth.

Insight gained from APSR

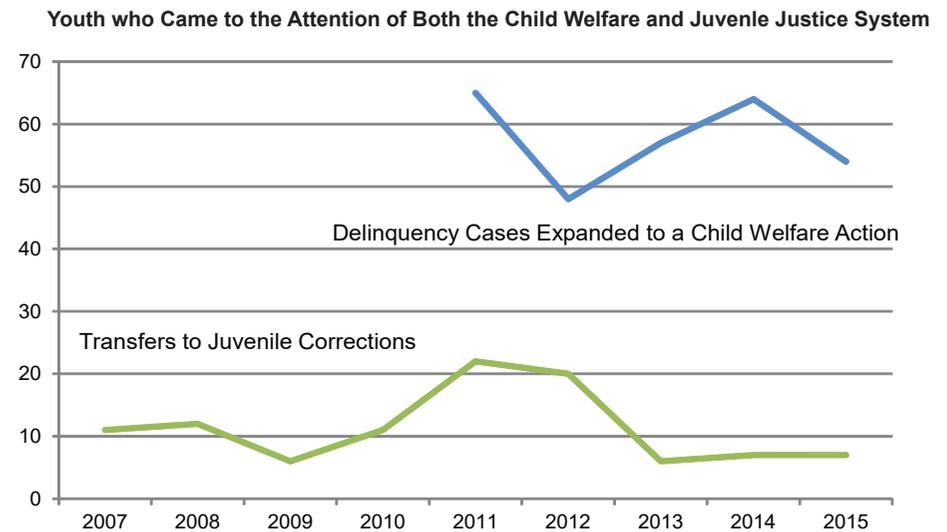
Although states cannot easily be compared, the APSR data do provide insight into these policies and practices within states. For example, in some states youth can only be involved with one system or the other, but not both simultaneously. Prior to 2004, California was an example of a state where youth could only be involved in a single system; however, when Assembly Bill 129 was enacted in 2004, it gave individual counties the ability to choose whether to participate in adopting a dual status youth protocol. In other jurisdictions, such as the District of Columbia, the Child and Family Services Agency reports the number of youth involved in both systems, referred to as “dually jacketed” youth.

In some states the APSR data also give a window into practices within the courtroom. Similar to the District of Columbia, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Family and Community Services, Child and Family Services went beyond the reporting requirements to capture additional details. The Idaho APSR data identifies the number of youth transferred from child welfare to juvenile corrections and the number of “delinquency cases expanded to child welfare” (figure 1). According to the report, these youth were initially brought to court under a juvenile delinquency charge and through court proceedings, were found to also have been abused, neglected, homeless, or without a stable home. Although these figures may not represent the total number of dual commitments due to the judge’s ability to vacate the delinquency proceedings to allow the child to remain under the custody of child welfare, they give context to the intricacies of collecting data on this population. When studying the prevalence of dual status youth, it is vital to understand statutory and practice nuances such as these.

Available State Data

While data integration (e.g., shared data systems) is not common among child welfare and juvenile justice agencies, a few states have examined this population, can share data consistently,

Figure 1: Idaho APSR Juvenile Justice Transfer Data



Source: National Center for Juvenile Justice. *Juvenile Justice Geography, Policy, Practice & Statistics*. Available: <http://www.jjgps.org/systems-integration#reported-data?&state=13>.

Figure 2: Florida DJJ – DCF Profile of Dually Served Crossover Youth

10 Most Common Offenses - State FY 2014-2015			
	DJJ Involved	Dually Involved	Total
Total	52,248	2,277	54,525
Assault/Battery Not Aggravated	9,551	530	10,081
Burglary	7,894	284	8,178
Non Law Violation of Probation	7,875	464	8,339
Petit Larceny	6,780	214	6,994
Misd Violation of Drug Laws	5,429	103	5,532
Aggravated Assault/Battery	4,483	267	4,750
Prosecution Previously Deferred	3,728	107	3,835
Grand Larceny (excludes auto theft)	2,471	99	2,570
Disorderly Conduct	2,114	75	2,189
Misd Obstruction of Justice	1,923	134	2,057

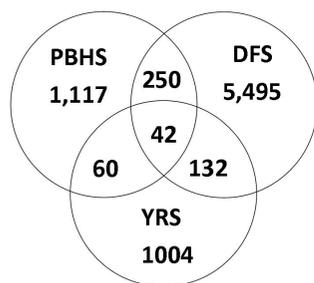
Source: Adapted from *DJJ-DCF Profile of Dually-Served Crossover Youth*. Available: <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/delinquency-data/djj-dcf-profile-of-dually-served-crossover-youth/djj-dcf-dashboard>.

and produce reports yearly. For example, the Florida Department of Children and Families and the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) share data at the state level for both service coordination and research purposes. Data are combined from their two statewide data systems, the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) and the Juvenile Justice Information System. In 2015, the Florida DJJ created an “interactive profile of dually served crossover youth” dashboard (figure 2). The dashboard allows users to examine dual status youth who were in an out-of-home placement (e.g., foster care) with the Florida DCF at the time of contact with the DJJ. The user can view and sort

numerous variables including number of arrests, types of offenses, demographics, location/home county at the time of arrest, month of arrest, and dispositions of the youth. All of these variables compare dually involved youth with youth who only had DJJ involvement at the time of arrest.

Another example is Delaware’s Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families which administers services for child welfare and juvenile justice. The Department permits data sharing at the state level between the administrative agencies for research purposes and in local jurisdictions for case coordination. This is

Figure 3: Delaware Departmental Client Distribution



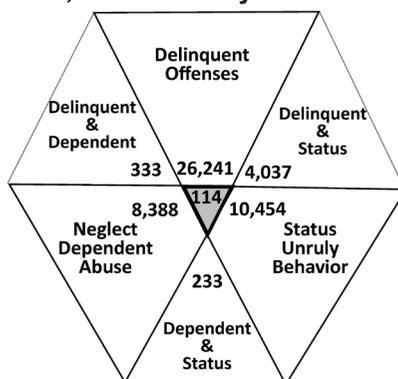
PBHS – Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services
 DFS – Division of Family Services
 YRS – Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services

Source: Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families.

achieved through their data system, the Family and Child Tracking System, which allows for the easy identification of dual status cases. The database is ideal for researching dual status youth because youth can be identified and linked to many services at various points in time. The Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families reports monthly statistics on youth who receive services from multiple systems, including juvenile justice, child welfare, and behavioral and mental health, through their [Venn Report series](#) (figure 3).

A third example is the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, which oversees both juvenile justice and child welfare services. The Department shares state-level data for research and reporting purposes. However, similar sharing does not consistently exist between the child welfare and juvenile justice serving agencies within counties. Through their data system, the Tennessee Family and Child Tracking System, the state of Tennessee is able to link concurrently involved youth in both child welfare and juvenile justice. One limitation is that they are not able to determine if a youth is active in one system and has had prior involvement with the other. The Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges produces an [Annual Juvenile Court Statistical Report Series](#) that details the number of children referred to court for any combination of delinquency, dependency, and status offenses (figure 4).

Figure 4: Tennessee Children with Delinquent, Neglect/Dependent/Abuse, Status/Unruly Referrals



Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services.

Conclusion

Both state and national initiatives are underway to study this population. In 2015, the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention awarded a grant to the School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics at California State University - Los Angeles to identify effective strategies for collecting a national incidence rate on dual status youth. The grantees of this award are exploring the utility of linking administrative data in three jurisdictions to capture the incidence rates and various permutations of dually involved youth, developing case studies of jurisdictions that are developing integrated systems for dually involved youth, and developing a tool to assess levels of, and capacity for, system integration. This grant has been part of a larger effort to understand how both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems interact and can overlap.

To find out more about how states integrate juvenile justice and child welfare services visit www.jjgps.org.

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The National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) is a non-profit organization that conducts research on a broad range of juvenile justice topics and provides technical assistance to the field. NCJJ is the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

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