



DCF Legislative Testimony

February 26, 2025

TESTIMONY OF: Tanya Keys , Deputy Secretary Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON: 2020 Cross Over Youth Working Group Final Report

Chair Howerton and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present highlights from the 2020 [Crossover Youth Working Group Final Report to Legislature](#), completed in January, 2020. Shortly after the workgroup report was available, [testimony was provided on the final report](#) by the Department for Children and Families (DCF) to the House Children and Seniors Committee Children and the 2020 Special Committee on Foster Care Oversight.

My remarks today focus on key takeaways from the data analysis of the workgroup regarding sixteen (16) specific data elements set forth in the 2019 legislative budget proviso and information regarding incremental progress with supports and resources for older youth in the child welfare service array.

2019–2020 WORKGROUP BACKGROUND

In 2019, House Substitute for SB 25 included a budget proviso legislatively mandating DCF to convene two working groups to study the impact of SB 367 on "crossover" youth. Youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are referred to as "crossover" youth. The involvement of youth in each system might vary widely. The first working group, the Crossover Youth Services Working Group, met in fiscal year (FY) 2019 and identified themes, challenges and needed services. The second working group, the Crossover Youth Working Group met July 2019 to January 2020 to gather and study 16 specific data elements. Analysis, research support, workgroup facilitation and report preparation were provided by the talented staff at the Kansas Health Institute.

At that time, to learn more about attributes of youth served by both systems, the working group collected data from FY 2019. The case review design was a retrospective, cross-sectional study to assess crossover youth and comparison group demographics and variables of interest. Data sources included DCF, KDOC, KBI, KDADS, KDHE, and OJA.

The workgroup focused on data for an "in foster care" group and DCF foster care case management contractors, KVC Kansas and Saint Francis Ministries identified 691 crossover youth to include in a case review for data elements. Crossover youth were identified at a single point in time, July 31, 2019, based upon behaviors and involvement that may have occurred years before. The crossover case review cohort was identified as youth aged 10 and older in custody of the Secretary of DCF who:

- Have had law enforcement calls for behaviors which could result in juvenile offender charges, or
- Have had law enforcement calls due to repeated runaway behaviors, or
- Were referred to foster care following juvenile justice system involvement, or
- Were referred as a result of parents' inability or unwillingness to manage the child's behaviors, or
- Are involved in the juvenile justice system through diversion or immediate intervention services or programs (IIP), or
- Have an open juvenile justice case.

The 2019-2020 workgroup working definition of cross over youth preceded and is not the same as the current [Kansas Crossover Youth Practice Model](#) definition, which is a young person, age 10 and older, with any level of concurrent involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Involvement in the Juvenile Justice system includes, but is not limited to, court-ordered community supervision, Immediate Intervention Programs (IIP), and youth placed in detention and correctional facilities. Involvement in child welfare system includes, but is not limited to, out of home placement, or participation in preventative services.

REPORT TAKEAWAYS & CHALLENGES

As the workgroup reflected on data points of comparisons, a few discoveries emerged to consider or inform future practice in assessment and bridge to appropriate level of service delivery.

- While they make up only a small segment of the broader foster care or juvenile offender populations, crossover youth often have significantly higher needs and require highly coordinated cross-system collaboration and greater placement stability for services to be effective.
- Contact with law enforcement is an important entry point for crossover youth. Passage of SB 367 limited authority of law enforcement officers to place youth in detention and replaced it with a detention risk assessment with grounds to override. The detention risk assessment is utilized and informs decisions. At the time of the report, statewide policy did not guide data collection on the utilization of services recommended to youth and their families by juvenile intake and assessment services.
- Identifying earlier intervention needs and using services through community mental health centers (CMHCs) is needed and acute care is needed for youth who are actively a danger to themselves such as runaways. At that time, a significant barrier to services was noted as placement instability.

A central challenge for the working group is that crossover youth are not captured in data collection systems. There is a lack of integrated data systems across state agencies and other entities and a lack of centralized law enforcement data. A concurrent challenge in the effort was an inability to define or identify individuals “at-risk” of becoming crossover youth and a lack of existing mechanisms for information sharing between agencies. Although the short-term challenges limited the 2019 data analysis, the working group recognizes future efforts at a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) and active planning with the (then) pilot with Georgetown Crossover Youth Practice Model would inform and provide long term relief or remedy to help define, track and impact Kansas outcomes for crossover youth.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 16 DATA ELEMENTS IN THE CASE REVIEW

Data collection in the review of 691 youth involved demographics, nature and type of contacts, juvenile intake and assessment, services and placements. Data analysis of the sixteen (16) proviso point elements, key findings are noted and current activity underway related to the data findings is highlighted. Not all data elements were applicable to all 691 youth. The review completed in 2019 has not been replicated in subsequent years.

Proviso Point 1: Numbers and **demographics** of crossover youth compared to the broader juvenile offender population. This review identified 691 crossover youth and 2,446 youth in the broader juvenile offender population.

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

- a) 42.7% crossover youth in this review were female compared to 22.3% of youth in broader juvenile offender population.
- b) Half (45.7%) of the crossover youth in this review were age 16-17 and another one-third (32.1 percent) were age 14-15 which is generally like the broader juvenile offender population.
- c) 70.3 % crossover youth in this review and 63.7% the broader juvenile offender population were non-Hispanic Whites.

Related Program or Practice Activity

- a) The ages of youth who crossover services and proportion of females parallels demographics of youth who experience absences or run experiences in foster care.
- b) DCF increased training and practice model development for workforce on youth engagement and implemented a special response team to increase placement stability for youth and prevent run behavior. [practice approaches include Motivational Interviewing, Mental Health First Aid for Adolescents, Family Finding, Cognitive Interaction Skills]

Proviso Point 2: Types and nature of calls to law enforcement related to crossover youth compared to the broader juvenile offender population. There were 222 crossover youth in the review that had arrests with criminal charges in FY 2019

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

- a) 38.7% were charged with felonies and 60% charged with misdemeanors.
- b) 37.8% crossover youth in the review were adjudicated as juvenile offenders with property crimes in FY 2019 compared to 27.1% of the youth in the broader juvenile offender population.

Proviso Point 3: Numbers and nature of alleged offender behaviors of **crossover youth taken into custody by law enforcement** could not be conducted as Law enforcement does not have a consistent, centralized data collection system and reliable data on criminal charges for youth returned home.

Proviso Point 4: Numbers and nature of alleged offender behaviors of **crossover youth taken for intake and assessment**. In FY 2019, 100 crossover youth in this review had at least one criminal damage to property charge recorded at intake by a JIAS worker.

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

- a) Law enforcement officers detained crossover youth (in this review cohort) for transport to JIAS 18 times in FY 2019 for exhibiting assaultive/destructive behavior.

Proviso Point 5: Release and referral determinations, including rates of detention, from intake and assessment process for crossover youth alleged to have engaged in behavior that may cause injury to self or others or damage to property and youth who pose a risk to public safety.

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

Of the 1,194 placement outcomes following juvenile intake for the crossover youth in the review:

- a) 24.7% resulted in a detention placement
- b) 20.9% resulted in a crossover youth being sent back to a parent or guardian.

Proviso Point 6: Use of detention risk assessment override for crossover youth

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

- a) Crossover youth in this review had 2.1 KDAI completions and other youth had 1.4 KDAI completions. Average score on the KDAI for crossover youth was 5 (low risk).
- b) 65.5% of overrides resulted in detention (high risk)
- c) The main override reasons in FY 2019 included no appropriate alternative available (37.2%)

Proviso Point 7 and 8: Services; Number of crossover youth received evidence-based services and nature of services.

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

- a) Acute Mental Health – Inpatient
- b) Aggression Replacement Therapy(ART)
- c) Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)
- d) Functional Family Therapy (FFT) – thirteen (13) crossover youth in the review were referred to FFT in FY2019.
- e) Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT)
- f) Multisystemic Therapy (MST)
- g) Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility
- h) CMHC
- i) Parent mgmt. Training-Oregon PMTO
- j) Substance Use Disorder
- k) Youth Advocate Program YAP
- l) DCF implemented FFT and MST for prevention services via Family First Act implementation and (at the time of the report was) exploring ways to und training foster care grantees to have FFT clinical teams in each grant area.

Proviso Point 9: Any other juvenile offender information routinely captured by the DOC.

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

The Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument – Second Version (MAYSI-2) screens and scores across six domains, and youth might receive a “caution” or “warning” designation. “Warning” represents a higher level of need or concern in that domain.

- a) 23% of MAYSI-2 assessments completed indicated a caution for somatic complaint, such as anxiety or depression, in FY 2019.
- b) 17.6% MAYSI-2 assessments completed indicated a warning for suicide ideation

Proviso Point 10: Information on the **types and classifications of placements** used by crossover youth placed in foster care

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

- a) Crossover youth were more than twice as likely to be placed in group residential homes than were other foster care youth in FY 2019 (36.1% compared to 14.7 percent).
- b) 10.1% crossover youth were placed with a relative compared to 28.7% other foster care youth.
- c) No crossover youth received a pre-adoptive placement in FY 2019; however, one in twelve (8.5 percent) other foster care youth received a pre-adoptive placement that year.

Related Program or Practice Activity

- a) Implemented 10/1/19, the Family First Act requires youth placed in Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) receive independent evaluation within 30 days of placement. That evaluation is provided to court to approve or disapprove continued placement in group care. The goal is to increase family-based placement settings.
- b) Juvenile Crisis Intervention Center (JCIC) program regulations were implemented in 2024.
- c) Foster Care Case Management outcomes increased to require 50% of children be placed with relative or kin.
- d) Youth engagement, support to relatives and licensed family homes and family finding have been amplified to increase family-based placements.

Proviso Point 11: Information on **placement stability** of crossover youth placed in foster care

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

- a) In FY 2019, the placement stability rate for crossover youth in this review was 26.1 compared to a rate of 9.7 for all Kansas foster care youth (including crossover youth).
- b) The average number of placements was eight placements for crossover youth compared to three placements for other foster care youth.

Proviso Point 12: Use of PRTF by crossover youth including waitlist data

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

- a) In FY 2019, there were 282 beds available for youth at the eight PRTFs across the state. The week of 2/17/25, there were 323 of 450 total licensed beds staffed for children's use.
- b) In FY 2019, 93 (14.2%) crossover youth in this review were admitted to a PRTF.
- c) The average stay for crossover youth at a PRTF was four ½ months (137 days).

Proviso Point 13: Any other reportable event information routinely captured by the department of corrections

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

- a) The average age at first intake and assessment for a crossover youth in this review was 12.2 compared to 13.8 for other youth who completed an intake.
- b) 25.3% of the crossover youth in this review already had services in place compared to 10.4% of other youth who completed an intake.

Proviso Point 14: Gaps in available corrections interventions for crossover youth placed at home. The working group did not study crossover youth placed at home because this population group could not be identified

Proviso Point 15: Gaps in available corrections interventions for crossover youth placed in foster care.

Proviso Data Analysis Key Findings

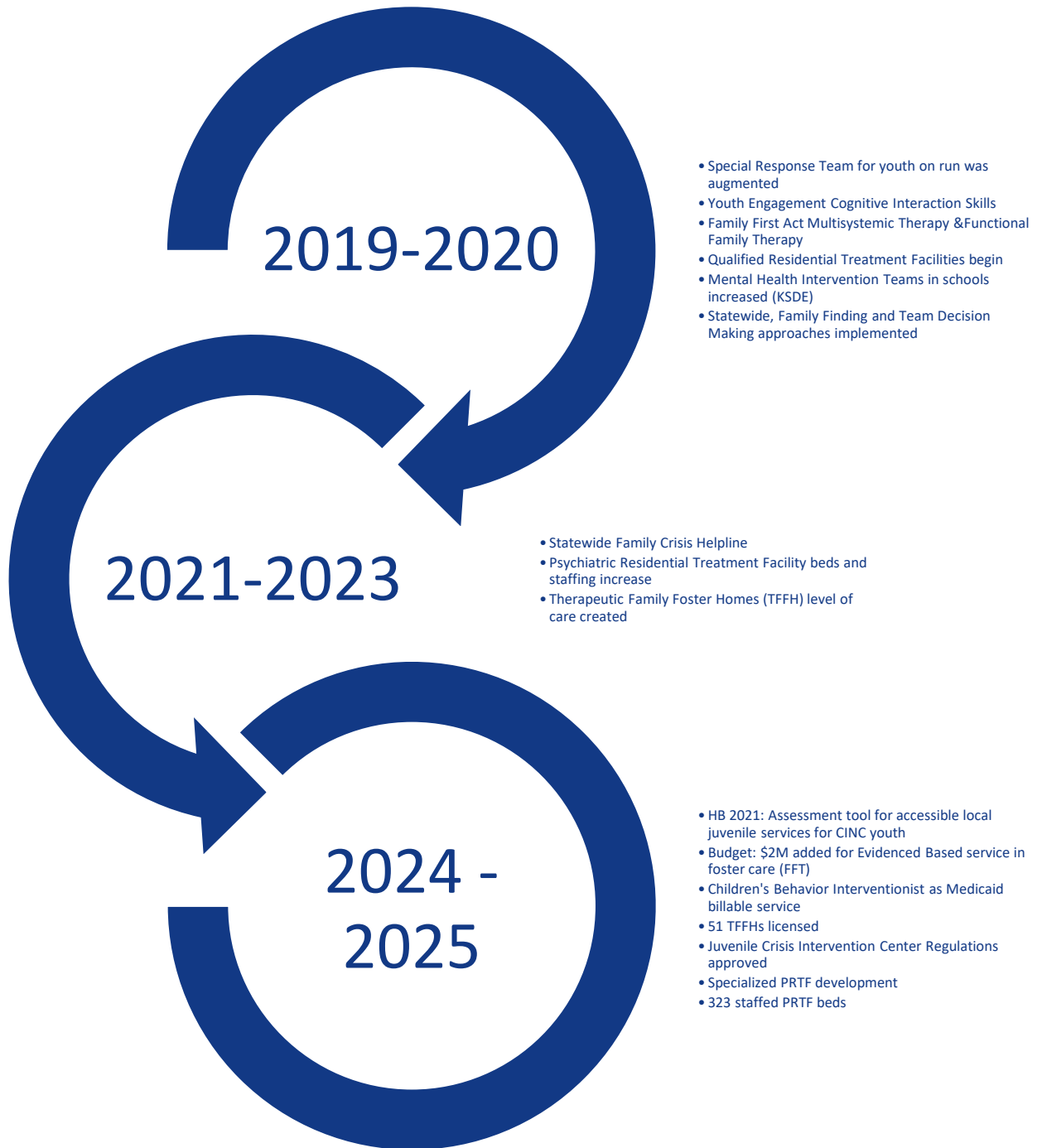
- a) Referral to prevention services offered by DCF might be underutilized by juvenile intake and assessment worker and law enforcement.
- b) A service referral form for locally available services is not readily available for law enforcement.
- c) The totality of crossover youth and its family needs might not be fully assessed.

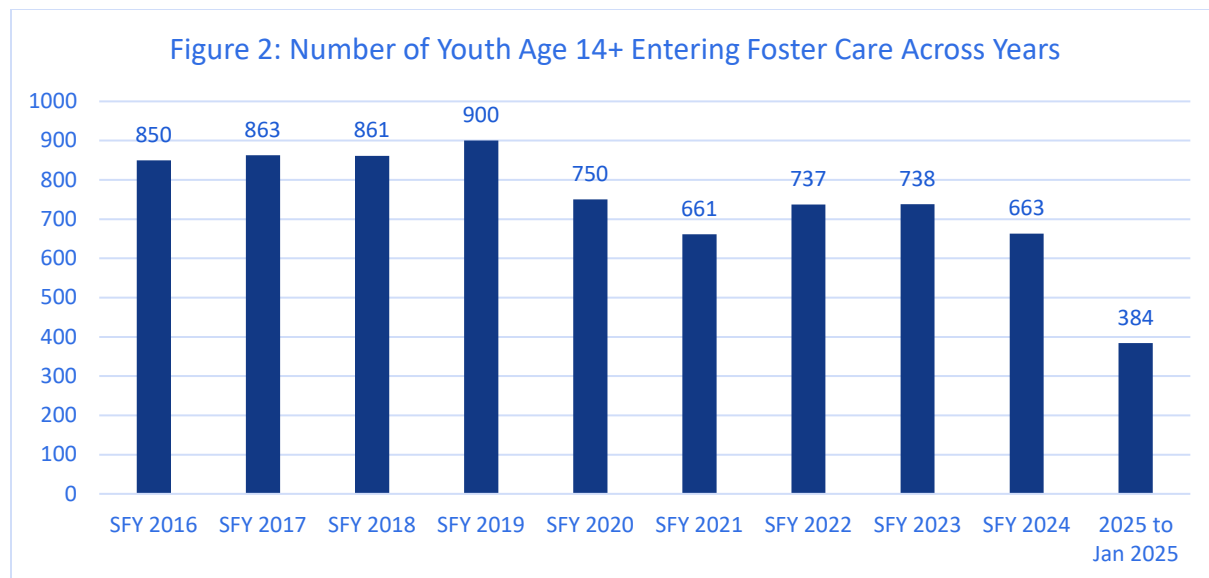
Proviso Point 16: Other matters relating to the impact of 2016 Senate Bill No. 367 on youth at risk of being placed or placed foster care. The working group considered but did not ultimately study the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)

PROGRESS TIMELINE HIGHLIGHTS

Since 2019, several practice approaches and resources related to the final report have been implemented to service families whose sons and daughters receive services from both child welfare and juvenile justice (Figure 1). These resources over time have had a positive impact to reduce the need for older youth to enter foster care (Figure 2) and have improved wellbeing for youth in foster care. Important milestones in the timeline of supports were in 2019 with implementation of mental health services prevention programs through the Family First Prevention Services Act, in 2023 with implementation of the Family Crisis Helpline and in 2024 with HB 2021. House Bill 2021 provides flexibility so that if a child is eligible to receive services from DCF, KDOC, or the judicial branch, the agencies are to collaborate to provide that service. Further, foster care case management agencies now administer a risk and needs assessment to children who have been identified as exhibiting behavior that could lead to offending behavior during a child in need of care proceeding. The assessment results include procedures to bridge youth to participate in local evidence-based programs.

Figure 1





Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on the 2020 Crossover Youth Final Report.

