

Policy and Implementation at the Office of the Child Advocate

The OCA plays a pivotal role in identifying and addressing systemic gaps and challenges in the delivery of state services to children. Through data-driven research and analysis, as well as case reviews, we uncover areas in need of reform and make recommendations to ensure state policies and practices meet the needs of children.

The OCA can help the Legislature weigh crucial decisions and provide feedback on legislation regarding issues facing children and youth.

The OCA is a Convener

The OCA chairs various working groups, bringing together diverse stakeholders to tackle complex issues collaboratively.

Current groups include:

Recent OCA Policy Reports

- [Juvenile Pretrial Practices \(2025\)](#)
- [Improvements to DCF Annual Report \(2024\)](#)
- [Family Resource Centers \(2024\)](#)
- [Improving the Child Requiring Assistance System \(2022\)](#)

Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board (JJPAD): The JJPAD is charged by the Legislature with evaluating juvenile justice system policies and procedures, including the impact of any recent statutory changes, and making recommendations.

Childhood Trauma Task Force (CTTF): The CTTF was created by the Legislature to focus on how the Commonwealth can better identify and provide services to youth who have experienced trauma.

Child Fatality Review: The OCA provides training and technical assistance to local teams that conduct reviews as well as programmatic support to the multidisciplinary state team, which makes policy recommendations to reduce child injury and death.

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Advisory Council: This group, which the OCA co-leads in partnership with the Children's Trust, works to help prevent child sexual abuse.



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Office of the Child Advocate Pilot Projects

The OCA also collaborates with various partners to pilot innovative programs and services designed to improve the quality of state services for children and youth.

By supporting pilot program design, implementation, and evaluation, we ensure that new initiatives are thoroughly tested and refined before broader implementation.

Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program

The OCA, in partnership with DYS, launched the Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program, which provides alternatives to arrests and prosecution for youth. In partnership with the Attorney General's Office, the MYDP now also offers diversion for youth who otherwise would have been charged with offenses related to "sexting." Read the latest evaluation of [the MYDP here](#).



Transition Aged Youth Housing Stabilization and Support Program

The OCA partnered with EOHHS to design a program for youth who do not want to continue receiving DCF services after age 18, but still need support. The TAY HSSP works with these young adults to identify their needs and connects them with supports - including housing, education, employment, and transitional assistance - as needed. Read the latest evaluation of the [TAY HSSP here](#).

Mandated Reporter Training

The OCA created a training for mandated reporters to help improve the quality of reports and reduce the impact of bias. This training provides an overview of the definitions, requirements, and protections associated with being a mandated reporter. It is now available in Spanish! The training also has a module specifically designed for educators. [Take the training here](#).

For more information about all our policy and implementation work, please read our [Annual Report](#).