

Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board

Community Based Interventions
Subcommittee Meeting

June 23, 2025

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approval of April Meeting Minutes
3. OCA Announcements
4. Dually Involved Youth Project: DCF Guest Presentation
5. Discussion & Next Steps

OCA Announcements

An act regarding families and children in need of assistance (S.141/H.265): Joint Committee on Children, Families, and Persons with Disabilities hearing anticipated in early July

Addresses many of the JJPAD Board recommendations in its 2022 report including:

- Expands the role and function of FRCs to support more children outside of the court process
- Changes the Juvenile Court CRA filing process to ensure the court is a true “last resort”
- Raises the lower age of Juvenile Court jurisdiction for CRA filings from 6 to 12
- Requires the OCA to prepare and update materials about the CRA system

OCA to publish an updated report with data



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Children and Families

Department of Children and Families:
***"Crossover Youth": Youth in the Custody of the Department
and Children and Families who are also involved with the
Department of Youth Services***

Candice Gemski, Deputy Commissioner of Clinical Services and Support
Kim Occhiuti, Director, Office of Management Planning and Analysis



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Definition Clarity:

Youth involvement may not necessarily mean a youth is in the custody of the Department of Children and Families.

Children become involved with the Department of Children and Families because of abuse and/or neglect by a caregiver/parent.

BASELINE DATA

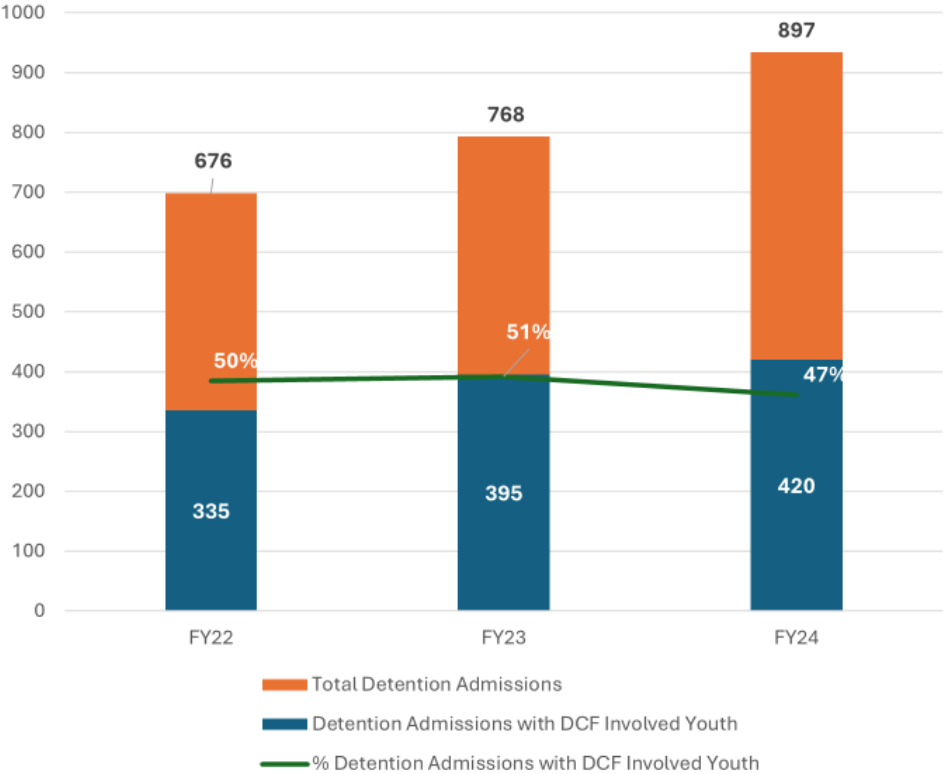
- ◆ Close to 80% of families served by DCF are intact families
- ◆ Approximately 33,000 children across the Commonwealth are involved with the Department of Children and Families
- ◆ Close to 6500 youth under 18 are in DCF placement
- ◆ Approximately 1800 youth over 18 are involved with the Department of Children and Families
- ◆ Close to 80% of youth chose to remain involved with DCF upon turning 18

Dually Involved Youth Data Considerations

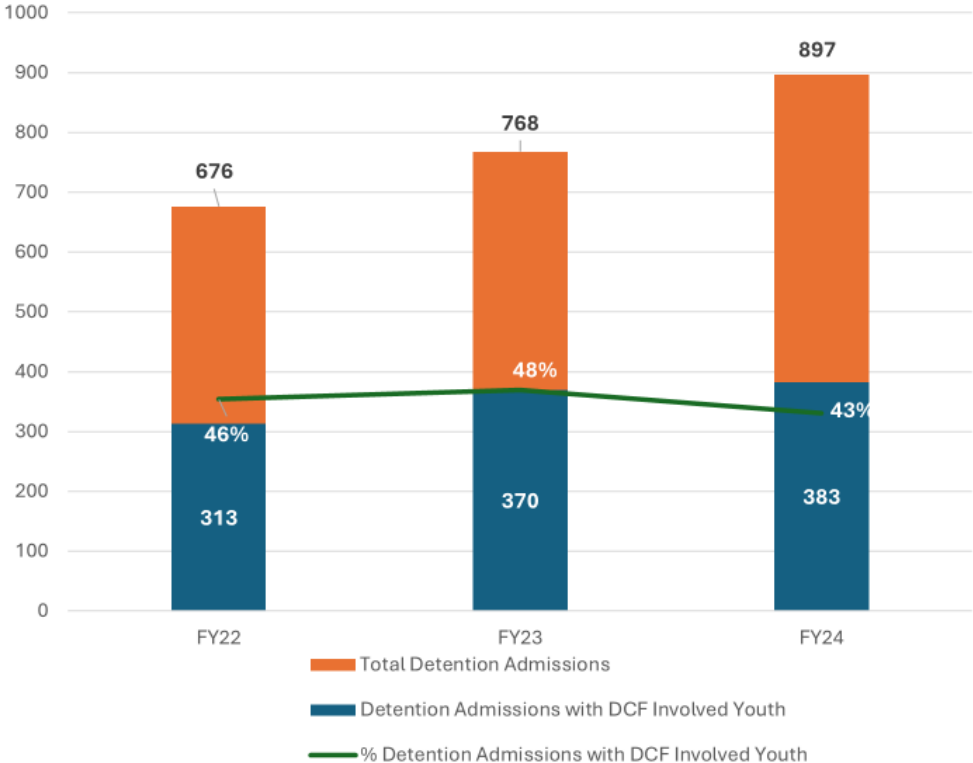
- ◆ MDM - system used to match DYS & DCF Youth
 - Includes DCF consumers adult and child
 - Includes DCF Pending Response Cases and Cases Open for Services
 - Includes youth in or not in DCF custody
- ◆ Case Type and Custody Status not documented in MDM

Counts including Pending Response Cases vs. Cases Open for Service Only

Dually Involved Youth From JJPAD FY24 Annual Report
Detention Admissions for Youth with DCF involvement at Time of Admission **(Includes Youth on DCF Pending Response and Open for Service Cases)** as a Percent of Total Detention Admissions (FY22-FY24)



Recast Dually Involved Youth From JJPAD FY24 Annual Report
Detention Admissions for Youth with DCF involvement at Time of Admission **(Includes Youth Only on DCF Cases Open for Services)** as a Percent of Total Detention Admissions (FY22-FY24)



Dually Involved Youth Data Considerations - Continued

- ◆ Manual match of youth produces more accuracy
 - Affects counts by as much as 10% (2% to -10%)
 - Common match discrepancies
 - Dual last names
 - Discrepant Birth Dates
 - DCF adult vs. DCF child
 - Timing of Match vs. Data Entry
- ◆ Current DCF Federal reporting for Juvenile Justice Transfers only count youth in DCF custody
- ◆ Counts of Detention Admissions vs. Youth



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Trainings to Guide DCF Staff in Working with Adolescents

DCF Staff Training

- ◆ New Worker Training
 - Adolescent Engagement and Assessment included in three separate components of intensive initial training curriculum

- ◆ Regular Trainings offered to staff-Key Topics offered throughout the year
 - From Infancy to Adolescent – Developmental Considerations During Response
 - Understanding the Adolescent Brain
 - CSEC
 - Working with Adolescents: From Protection to Permanency
 - Unmasking Gang Culture: Understanding and Addressing Gang Behavior



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Policy to Guide the Department's Interventions with Adolescents

DCF Policy

◆ Missing or Absent Policy

- Provides blueprint for staff engagement with youth who may be "Missing or Absent"
- Missing: a child whose whereabouts are UNKNOWN. Includes: a child who may have been abducted; a child who may have run away or be “on the run” whose whereabouts are unknown, whether or not they make periodic contact with the Department, the placement resource, parent(s)/caregiver(s), or custodian; or o a child who has come under Department jurisdiction on an emergency basis under MGL c. 119, 51B(c), and the child’s whereabouts become unknown before the initial court hearing
- Absent: a child who has left (or run away from) a Department-approved placement or their parent(s)/caregiver(s), whose whereabouts are KNOWN and refuses to return

◆ Permanency Planning Policy

- DCF continues the provision of services beyond age 18 to young adults who remain in Department care or custody until their 18th birthday.
- "If youth turns 18 while in DCF custody, is in a DYS facility and is interested in continuing services, DCF will collaborate with DYS regarding a sensible plan including placement."
- Reconnecting with DCF
 - Young adults who were closed as Department consumers at age 18 or older after being in the Department’s custody and who have not reached their 22nd birthday may reapply to the Department for voluntary services.



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Interventions/Supports for Youth in DCF custody

Supports within the Department of Children and Families

- ◆ Social worker contact-working collaboratively with caregivers
- ◆ Support and Stabilization Services
 - CRA Pilot Programs in multiple counties (Springfield, Brockton, Fall River)
- ◆ Placement –Kin First Agency
 - 41% of Youth placed with Kin
 - Engagement with kin/fictive kin when placement is not possible
- ◆ MOA Program-Missing or Absent Youth
- ◆ Adolescent Outreach Workers
- ◆ Consultants available to DCF staff based upon presenting issues
 - Domestic violence, Substance Abuse, Mental Health, LGBTQIA

Supports in the Community

- ◆ Therapeutic Services
 - Mental Health Supports
 - Youth Mentors
- ◆ Family Engagement
- ◆ Collaboration with other state partners involved with the youth: Probation, DYS and DMH
- ◆ School Engagement/Supports
 - Using Best Interest Determination Meetings to Determine Best Academic Placement
 - Seeking additional Academic supports when necessary



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Placement Policy and Practices

Placement

- ◆ Continuum of Placement-Required to Seek Least Restrictive whenever possible
 - Kin
 - Engagement of Family by social worker and/or kinship social workers
 - Infrastructure of Placement Meetings in most Area Offices to ensure that search is robust
 - Unrelated Foster Care
 - Search within an Area Office and Statewide if necessary
 - Comprehensive Foster Care
 - Congregate Care-Emergency Residence, Group Homes, and/or Residential School Programs

Placement Continued:

- ◆ Goal is to maintain the youth in their community of origin whenever possible
- ◆ Placement in Congregate Care may take the youth out of their community of origin-leaving behind family and both natural and formal supports
- ◆ Placements are staff secure-not hardware secured
- ◆ Short term placement remedies
 - Nightly placement disruptions
 - Impact to youth's stability



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Role of DCF Placement Coordinators: Liaison to DYS

DCF Regional Placement Coordinator

- ◆ DCF has five geographic regions:
 - Northern
 - Boston
 - Southern
 - Central
 - Western
- ◆ Each region is led by a Regional Director.
- ◆ Each region has one Regional Placement Coordinator (RPC), supervised by the Regional Director.
- ◆ Examples of RPC responsibilities:
 - Provide guidance, consultation, and technical assistance to Area Offices on placement, including 688 cases
 - Serve as liaison with DYS for dually involved youth

Examples of DCF RPC role as liaison to DYS

- ◆ Serves as DYS's point of contact for communication about the region's dually involved youth who are detained or committed to DYS
- ◆ Serves as DCF representative at DYS regional standing meetings, examples include:
 - Weekly - detained youth
 - Monthly - committed youth
 - Frequent emails between meetings
 - Coordinates youth-specific meetings, as needed
- ◆ “Explains / Interprets” the DCF system to DYS and vice versa
 - **DCF:** *“DYS needs to keep that youth longer. The current discharge date is too soon.”* Discharge is per court order, not at discretion of DYS.
 - **DYS:** *“DCF needs to keep that family’s case open longer to provide more support.”* When there are no longer protective concerns, DCF has no authority to keep a case open.

Ideas for Improving Collaboration for Dually Improved Youth

- ◆ Shared inter-agency collaborative meetings
 - DYS staff and DCF staff from the same region attend the same session
 - Discuss aspects of each agency's regulations, policies, procedures
 - Explain differences in services, especially services with same or similar name (e.g., foster care)
- ◆ Exploration of mirroring/sharing services
 - Overcoming barriers to access
 - Understanding different payment rates and funding sources
 - Addressing resource challenges



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Current Placement Landscape and Challenges

Current Placement Challenges

- ◆ Lack of Intensive Emergency Residence Providers
- ◆ Placement search for more complex youth requires sustained attention and wide net to include out of state providers
- ◆ Need profiles
 - Children and adolescents with ID (Intellectual Disability), ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), other neurodevelopmental disorders with significant behavioral challenges
 - Adolescents with significant mental and/or behavioral challenges
 - Children and adolescents in either of the two groups above who also have significant medical needs

Bright Spots

- ◆ Sustained Efforts that have led to an increase in placement with kin
- ◆ Engagement with Providers coming to the table to brainstorm/problem solve
- ◆ Engagement with sister agencies in EOHHS

Questions?

For Next Time:

Guiding Research Questions

1

How does the research define dually involved youth, and what is the national data prevalence of dual involvement?

2

Who is dually involved? What are the common risk factors and life experiences that contribute to dual involvement?

3

What are the common pathways to dual involvement? What systemic factors contribute to dual involvement?



DIY

CBI Next Steps

Summer

- National research on dually involved youth

Fall

- Matched dataset analysis and case file review
- Draft findings
- Other jurisdictions

Winter

- Draft recommendations
- Draft report to Board

Next Meeting:

July 28th

11am-12:30pm

(All meetings are virtual; Zoom information is in each calendar invitation)



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