

## Association Between Out-of-home Placement Characteristics and Crossover from Foster Care to Juvenile Justice

*Translating research to practice may be difficult, yet a better understanding of current research is necessary to ensure child welfare workers, educators, and other professionals engage in best practices when working with children and families. The Minn-LInK Discussion Guide is designed to help facilitate thoughtful dialogue about the information presented in the research brief in order to inform practice and enhance discussion surrounding meaningful issues.*

*The current study included 981 Minnesotan youth (born 2000-2001) who were in out-of-home care between ages 9-10, and followed administratively through age 18. The study examined the association between out-of-home placement characteristics and the likelihood or timing of crossing over from the foster care system to the juvenile justice system. Findings indicated that placement in residential care; removal for physical abuse, a child reason, or a parent reason; school mobility during adolescence; and child characteristics such as being American Indian/Alaska Native, male, and receiving special education services increased risk of crossover.*

### Discussion on Practice Implications

1. This study found that youth who were removed for a child reason (child physical or mental health, child behavior, or child alcohol or substance use) were significantly more likely to cross over and to cross over earlier. Why do you think these youth are at particular risk? Have you seen this pattern in your own practice? Are there ways you (intentionally or unintentionally) approach youth differently when they are removed for a child reason compared to youth who are removed for other reasons?
2. Though a shocking number of the youth with a history of foster care crossed over, the majority did not. This emphasizes that many of youth in the foster care system are able to be resilient. Thinking about your own practice, when have you observed resilience among this population of youth? How can you help promote wellbeing in the youth you work with?
3. This study found that school mobility during adolescence, but not before adolescence, increased risk for crossover. This highlights the different needs youth have at different developmental stages. For example, older youth are particularly vulnerable to disruptions in peer relationships, while younger youth may be less reliant on those relationships. In what ways have you taken a developmental perspective when assessing the strengths and needs of the youth you work with? What specific aspects of adolescent development might be important in working with youth who are in out-of-home care?

### Discussion on Agency- & System-Level Changes

1. This study utilized information from multiple systems to have a more comprehensive understanding of how factors in the child welfare and education systems related to involvement in the juvenile justice system. Though the same youth travel through these different systems, systems sometimes do not collaborate. How do different systems collaborate in your state? What strengths and limitations have you observed? What needs on a broad level to happen to increase system collaboration? What can you do to improve this issue?
2. This study found that youth who identify as male, youth who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native, and youth receiving special education services are at-risk for crossover. What conclusions can be made about this finding, and how might state and local policies reinforce the disparities evident in this research? What policies or practices are in place (or need to be in place) to help prevent these disparities and why are they not working for all youth?