

# Focused Interventions (for Expectant/Parenting Youth and Crossover Youth)

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Strategic Initiative has supported focused interventions for two subgroups of transition-age foster youth: expectant and parenting youth (including access to reproductive/sexual health care to prevent unplanned pregnancy) and crossover youth who are involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

## Impact of COVID-19 on reproductive health and parenting youth

Despite some disruptions to staff training on reproductive health and some services for youth, public agencies and grantees have been able to maintain youth access to reproductive and sexual health services throughout most of the pandemic. Services for parenting youth have also been delivered remotely.

The percentage of foster youth in LA who are parents continues to remain steady.<sup>i</sup>

**4%** of LA foster youth ages 10-20 are parents (362 youth in 2020, compared to 348 youth in 2014).

The percentage of foster youth in NYC who are parents has remained steady after a substantial decline from 2016 to 2018.<sup>ii</sup>

**6%** of NYC foster youth ages 10-20 are parents (219 youth in 2020, compared to 510 youth in 2016).

## Accessible reproductive health care

***Agencies and grantees in LA and NYC partnered to ensure youth could access reproductive and sexual health services during the COVID-19 pandemic.*** In NYC, the Adolescent Health Unit of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, funded through the [Fund for Public Health](#), delivered virtual training on reproductive health to provider agency staff. Provider agencies that received contraceptive grants from the Adolescent Health Unit kept their clinics open for telehealth and in-person appointments. Staff at clinics (e.g., school-based health clinics and family planning clinics) reached out to youth and used school health data to inform them when they were due for contraceptives. In LA, grantees developed COVID-19-specific resources to ensure continued access to reproductive health services during the pandemic and continued to support implementation of reproductive health policies (see Spotlight).

***Through virtual service delivery and new resources, grantees and public agencies are responding to youth needs.*** Grantees in LA noted that caseworkers and providers have been more accessible and responsive to

client needs while working remotely. **Children’s Law Center** will continue offering virtual services post-pandemic, recognizing the benefits to youth, caregivers, and social workers. In **NYC**, the child welfare agency and grantees continue to develop and implement reproductive and sexual health resources for youth, including redeveloping their reproductive health sexual assessment tool and collaborating with Planned Parenthood to design an activity book about safe sex and health.

## Tailored supports for expectant and parenting foster youth

*Program grantees and public agencies in LA and NYC continued to support expectant and parenting youth.*

**Children’s Law Center’s** Crossover Advocacy & Resource Effort program continued to serve and legally represent expectant and parenting foster youth in **LA**, while also responding to youth’s emergency needs for baby items during the pandemic. Increased funding from the Initiative, combined with a remote format, enabled **The Alliance for Children’s Rights and Public Counsel** to more than double the number of Expectant and Parenting Youth (EPY) Conferences held to connect expectant and young parents with child care, home visitation programs, health care, and other resources in **LA**. To strengthen engagement with expectant and parenting youth, the child welfare agency in **NYC** used social media to reach more young people staying at home. In **NYC**, the child welfare agency also continues to partner with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to connect expectant and parenting foster youth with home visiting services through the Nurse-Family Partnership and New Family Home Visits program. However, gaps in services for parenting youth remain, including mental health services.

*Policymakers expanded supports for parenting youth in multiple ways this year.* The passage of AB 1979 in California included an additional supplement for housing providers to place parenting youth in one-bedroom apartments. Specific to the pandemic, the LA County Board of Supervisors approved \$15 million of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding for child care vouchers to support essential workers and low-income families through December 30, 2020, and the infant supplement for expectant and parenting youth was extended until June 2021 for youth turning 21 during the pandemic.

## Spotlight: LA grantees support policy implementation

The **LA Reproductive Health Equity Project (LA RHEP)** and public agency partners continued strong implementation of SB 89 in 2020 to support foster youth access to reproductive health education and services and to train foster parents, Short Term Residential Therapeutic Providers (STRTPs), caseworkers, and attorneys. **LA RHEP** also conducted a four-part, youth-driven webinar series for youth to address issues related to sexual health, caregiver attitudes, access to reproductive health services, and healthy behaviors.

## Impact of COVID-19 on crossover youth

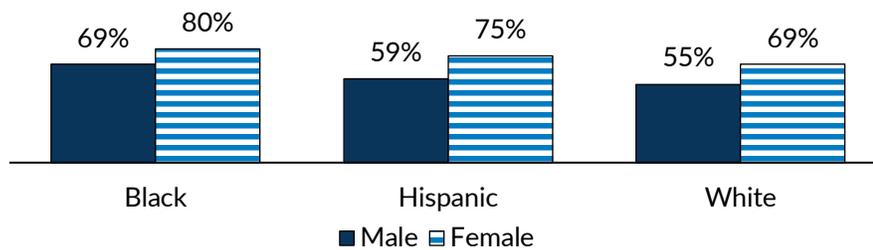
Similar to their peers, crossover youth experienced challenges navigating the transition to distance learning due to the pandemic and faced limited employment opportunities. Uniquely, many youth were moved out of detention settings to minimize the transmission of COVID-19; however, with limited support services and a shortage of available families, agencies encountered challenges in locating family-based placements.

### Most juvenile justice-involved youth in LA also have child welfare experience, with variations by race and gender.<sup>iii</sup>

- 64 percent of youth involved in the juvenile justice system in LA are dually involved with the child welfare system.
- 94 percent of youth dually involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems interacted with the child welfare system first.

#### Dual Status Youth by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Los Angeles, 2020



### The number of youth in care in NYC transferred to juvenile placement facilities decreased by 88 percent from 2013 to 2019.<sup>iv</sup>

#### Number of Foster Youth Transferred to a Juvenile Placement Facility

New York City, 2013-2019



## Tailored supports for crossover youth

*Programs in LA and state-level policy have been implemented to promote diversion.* **Children's Law Center's** Crossover Advocacy and Resource Effort Unit, which represents youth dually involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, is working with LA's Division of Youth Diversion & Development (YDD) to ensure foster youth have access to the YDD diversion pilot—a program to prevent youth from becoming involved in the justice system. **Children's Law Center** and other partners have trained community-based organizations on the unique challenges foster youth face and strategies to help encourage self-disclosure of their child welfare involvement in order to be properly served by diversion programs. In September 2020, **California** signed Assembly Bill 2425 into law, thereby requiring the confidentiality of juvenile police records of youth after diversion from the juvenile justice system.

*The number of youth held in NYC detention facilities decreased in response to the pandemic, but family-based placements for crossover youth remained limited.* Through increased collaborative efforts in NYC, various parties including the city's child welfare agency and **Vera Institute for Justice** worked together to transition youth from secure detention into extended home visits to prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, identifying placements for these youth remained a challenge due to the limited availability of family-based placements for crossover youth, more limited community supports during the pandemic, and families' concerns about their ability to provide proper supervision. To further develop placements for crossover youth, **Children's Village** continues to advocate for funding for specialized foster families for youth with low-level offenses.

*Stakeholders and grantees in both jurisdictions continue to prioritize the educational and employment needs of crossover youth.* With youth placed in LA's probation camps and community schools facing learning gaps resulting from difficulty engaging in distance learning, grantees including **Alliance for Children's Rights**, **National Center for Youth Law**, and **Public Counsel** signed a letter urging the county's education agency to prioritize developmentally appropriate education services for juvenile justice-involved youth.<sup>4</sup> The child welfare agency in NYC has contracted with **Children's Village** to provide education and employment services to youth ages 17 and older participating in Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults and continued to provide internship and employment opportunities for crossover youth in NYC this year; however, opportunities became more limited during the pandemic. In LA, **Children's Law Center's** Crossover Advocacy and Resource Effort (CARE) Unit continues to support youth in completing job applications, obtaining work permits, and accessing employment.

### Spotlight: Strengthening data on crossover youth

The unit of NYC's child welfare agency that serves crossover youth launched their long-anticipated database in September 2019. Using daily arrest data, the database automatically generates records for foster youth populated with available administrative child welfare data and generates emails to case planners regarding upcoming court hearings. In LA, a study conducted by **Children's Data Network** and CAL State LA revealed that almost all dually involved youth first interacted with the child welfare system. To emphasize the need for more juvenile justice prevention services tailored to foster youth, **Children's Data Network** has shared data with stakeholders.

## Looking ahead

**Reproductive health.** In coordination with ongoing SB 89 implementation efforts, **LA RHEP** plans to create a community of practice for caregivers to identify ongoing training and support needs and will revisit legislative efforts, which stalled during the pandemic, to measure sexual and reproductive health service access and outcomes for youth in foster care. In NYC, the child welfare agency continues efforts to redevelop their reproductive health sexual assessment tool and is working with the Adolescent Health Unit at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, funded through the **Fund for Public Health**, to address unequal access to reproductive health services; share information and resources with youth; and increase access to information, webinars, and trainings for school-based health centers and foster care agency partners.

**Crossover youth.** The [Vera Institute for Justice](#)'s work to develop recommendations for improving child welfare congregate care facilities for girls and gender expansive youth in NYC through in-person assessments stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Vera Institute for Justice](#) hopes to engage transition-age foster youth over age 18 with previous experience in congregate care to inform these efforts moving forward. In LA, [Children's Law Center](#) and [Children's Data Network](#) have established a partnership to identify and develop prevention strategies for foster youth exhibiting high risk for juvenile justice involvement and will be working to link [Children's Law Center](#)'s case management records to administrative data to inform this work.

For more information on progress made toward accomplishing all the Initiative's objectives in 2020, see the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative 2020 Evaluation [Report](#).

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<sup>i</sup> Among children in foster care on July 1 of each year. Includes youth in foster care who are supervised under the child welfare system. N=362/9,097 foster youth who were parenting in 2020. Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Chambers, J., Hammond, I., Williams, C., Miramontes, A., Ayat, N., Sandoval, A., Benton, C., Hoerl, C., McMillen, B., Wade, B., Yee, H., Flamson, T., Hunt, J., Carpenter, W., Casillas, E., & Gonzalez, A. (2020). *CCWIP Reports*. Data provided to Child Trends by DCFS on 11/18/20 and obtained from the University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project. CWS/CMS 2020 Quarter 2 Extract.

<sup>ii</sup> Counts as of July 1 of the given year. Excludes youth whose entry reason is juvenile delinquency and youth in care for less than eight days. Data includes male and female youth based on sex. Source: New York State's CCRS database as of October 7, 2020 and CNNX database as of November 13, 2020 provided by New York City Administration for Children's Services.

<sup>iii</sup> Among youth born in or after 1998 whose first juvenile justice petition was between 2014 and 2016 (N=6,877). Dual status youth is defined by the study as any youth who has had contact with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in Los Angeles. Source: Herz, D.C., Eastman, A., McCrowskey, J., Guo, L., & Putnam-Hornstein, E. (2021). *The Intersection of Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice: Key Findings from the Los Angeles Dual System Youth Study*. <https://www.datanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/LADS-study.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Among youth who were in foster care at the time they were transferred to a juvenile placement facility. Excludes youth whose entry reason is juvenile delinquency and youth in care for fewer than eight days. Sources: New York State's CCRS and CNNX database as of October 6, 2019 provided by New York City Administration for Children's Services and New York State's CCRS and CNNX database as of October 27, 2020 provided by New York City Administration for Children's Services.

<sup>v</sup> Alliance for Children's Rights, ACLU Foundation of Southern California, Arts for Healing and Justice Network, Children's Defense Fund-California, Independent Juvenile Defender Program, Los Angeles County Bar Association, Loyola Law School-Youth Justice Education Clinic, National Center for Youth Law, Public Advocates, & Public Counsel. Alliance for Children's Rights. (2020, October 9). RE: Request to Review and Amend the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (LCP) [Letter to T. Thurmond]. California.