

Dually involved youth

Dually involved youth are involved in the state's child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Research has found that children with at least one placement in foster care are significantly more likely to have a delinquency petition filed against them than those not in foster care.¹ Although there have been attempts to address the issue of youth entering both systems, such as the convening of the Cook County Dually Involved DCFS Youth Advisory Board, the number of dually involved youth and the circumstances that lead to their involvement in both systems are still largely unknown.

Research on the issue is stymied by confidentiality mandates and poor data reporting and collection, but involvement in the child welfare system may be a risk factor for delinquency.² Others counter that more troubled and violent DCFS wards are often committed to Illinois Youth Centers because of a lack of more appropriate resources in DCFS facilities.

Data summary

Table 18 shows the numbers of DCFS wards in IDOC and county-run detention facilities on Dec. 31, 2005. The number of DCFS wards in confinement is often underreported. Detention screeners are not required to report that a youth is a DCFS ward, and would only know of the designation if the youth volunteered the information. The Juvenile Monitoring Information System includes a field to enter a youth's DCFS status, the entry of that data is not a requirement. Additionally, DCFS reports the data from a single day. Since placements in detention are often short-term, a point-in-time report fails to capture the full number of youth who pass through both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in any given year.

Table 18
Number of dually involved youth ages 10-21 in Illinois, 2005

Placement type	Total cases
County facility	170
Adult IDOC	88
Youth IDOC	123
Total	381

Source: Department of Child and Family Services
Note: These totals were logged on Dec. 31, 2005.

Despite data reporting and collection problems, the number of youth in both systems on December 31, 2005, provides an estimate of the scope of this issue.

Notes

¹ Ryan, Joseph and Mark Testa, "Child Maltreatment and Juvenile Delinquency: Investigating the Role of Placement and Placement Instability," *Children and Youth Services Review* 27 (2005): 227.

² Fusco, Chris, "1 in 4 Boys in Foster Care Get Charged with Crimes," *Chicago Sun-Times*, January 14, 2004, News Special Edition 31.