

From Conversation to Collaboration

How Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Agencies Work Together to Improve Outcomes for Dual Status Youth

By Robert F. Kennedy National Center for Juvenile Justice, the Models Resource Center Partnership

How can agencies start the conversation?

As strategies aimed at initiating collaboration are put into action, it is important to acknowledge that participants each have unique professional orientations, training, and experience. Stakeholders from child welfare, juvenile justice, education, mental health, and law enforcement agencies, as well as youth and parent representatives, bring vital perspectives to the process of reform. Establishing a safe and encouraging environment for candid communication, respecting each point of view, is essential to launching the necessary conversations and then finding commonalities from which to build collaborative approaches.

Often the initial conversations about collaboration happen between child welfare and probation agencies. Work in jurisdictions across the country has revealed some common trends and beliefs held among these lead agencies. These fall into four primary categories that present challenging but essential starting points for conversation between child welfare and juvenile justice departments – goals, roles, privacy, and capacity. The following grid ill

Privacy/ Information Sharing Policy	<i>"We need to know more information about the dual status youth in our system in order to make the best decisions about them."</i>	
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Conclusion

The prospect of agencies working together can seem challenging. However, candid conversations between agencies can help them better define obstacles and work together to overcome them. Through shared understanding, each agency is better able to see itself as a part of the solution. Ultimately, collaboration provides a foundation for sustainable changes that help jurisdictions achieve their potential for better serving dual status youth, their families, and their communities.

"Hands down, this is the most rewarding work I have done. For the first time, there are solutions being generated for and benefiting very youth who have traditionally had the worst of both worlds."

Laura Garnette, Deputy Chief Probation Officer,
speaking about Santa Clara County's Dual Status Youth Initiative.

