



## **Oregon Juvenile Department Directors' Association**

*Representing Oregon's County Juvenile Departments*

[www.ojdda.org](http://www.ojdda.org)

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## **OJDDA Supports Foster Care Services for Crossover Youth**

### **HB 4080**

Children and youth whose life circumstances land them in the Child Welfare Foster Care System must overcome significant traumas and challenges as they work to create healthy and positive lives for themselves.

Youth that are known concurrently between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are commonly referred to as "crossover youth".

These youth have unique needs that include:

- Need of quality care and support, that is provided by well trained and well supported foster care providers that understand and can appropriately respond to their needs.

Crossover youth demonstrate the highest needs, with a history of significant and multiple traumas.

- The population as a whole requires a more intense array of services and supports than other youth known to each system individually.
- A disproportionate number of crossover youth are youth of color and girls.
- Crossover youth generally have higher issues of mental health and substance use disorders.
- They have higher incidents of running away resulting in further traumatized victimization.

- They are at a high risk for engagement in and coercion into other risky and destructive behaviors, including commercial sexual exploitation.

Adolescents in the child welfare system are often deemed less at risk than younger children based on parental behaviors that substantiate threat of harm determinations for younger children are no longer considered damaging to adolescents because they can "fend for themselves." The result is that crossover youth have less access to appropriate foster care services, resulting in not receiving the services they need to heal, have healthy development exposing them to further traumas, committing additional crimes and are pushed deeper into the juvenile justice system.

### **County Juvenile Department's Response:**

The significance of the issues these youth face and the lack of services to address them has led 6 counties in Oregon (Douglas, Jackson, Lane, Marion, Multnomah and Washington) to work with the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University to implement the Crossover Practice Model. The model is a collaboration between Juvenile Justice, DHS child welfare, Mental Health and other systems to work collaboratively to support these youth and prevent them from deeper penetration into the juvenile justice system. Even with these focused and well-intentioned efforts, appropriate access to foster care and other services falls short.

### **Recommendation**

Crossover youth have the right to appropriate foster care and services that will meet their needs and prevent the likelihood of further victimization and criminal offending. It is in the interest of policy makers to ensure these services exist, as they are less costly and more appropriate than incarceration, institutionalization, and the costs of intergenerational traumatization resulting from unaddressed harms that are passed on to the children of our crossover youth.

OJDDA supports HB 4080 and the creation of a Foster Care Advisory Commission. OJDDA requests that the needs of Crossover youth be addressed by the Commission and requests that an OJDDA representative be appointed to any technical or advisory committee that addresses these issues.