

Comments Received: Review and Discussion of Dual-Status Youth Data Standards Working Group (AB1911): Draft Legislative Report (August 10, 2017)

1. Martha Matthews, Directing Attorney, Children’s Rights Project, Public Counsel

As the draft report recognizes, placement stability is a key domain to measure, but it’s difficult to capture using currently available data. (see pp. 8-9). I would suggest one more key aspect of this domain that should be tracked: “Type of exit” from placement. I think it’s possible using currently available data to sort placement exits into two types – planned and unplanned. Planned exits would include transfers to another placement that better meets the youth’s needs (e.g. a group home nearer to the youth’s family), to a less restrictive placement (e.g. from a group home to a foster home, relative’s or parent’s home), transfers into transitional housing for older youth, and other types of planned transition (to college, the military, a job and an apartment, etc.).

Unplanned exits would include not only runaways but also hospitalizations, arrests, 7-day notices given by the placement, etc. ... all of which are ‘bad’ exits in that they are sudden disruptions of the youth’s living situation.

I think this measure would be a better indicator of placement stability than just tracking the number of placement changes, types of placements, etc.

2. Neha Desai, Senior Attorney, National Center for Youth Law

Page	Section	Comment
1	II.A Sentence beginning, “States that have investigated...”	There are two references in this sentence to youth “involved” with the CW system. It would be helpful to note the scope of what “involvement” includes from these studies (eg/ would a call to the hotline count? An unfounded investigation” or only an adjudication of dependency?)
1	II. A Sentence beginning, “These include being African-American...”	When the risk factors re: who is vulnerable to entering the JJ system are listed, no context is provided as to the systemic and societal factors that lead to these vulnerabilities. The first factor listed is “being African-American” – I fear that this plays into old stereotypes of who “bad kids” are and unintentionally places the blame on kids instead of acknowledging larger dynamics at play (eg/ well-documented system bias, disproportionate minority contact, over-policing of certain communities, quality of legal representation, etc.). Karen de Sa’s recent series that address the over-criminalization of kids in shelters helps paint a more holistic picture of at least some of the issue involved. I understand that this sentence is a summary of existing research so it cannot be altered such that it no longer represents what is contained in the research articles, but I think we could add a few

		<p>sentences that lay out broader context thereby painting a fuller picture of the issue.</p> <p>If there is interest in adding this context, I would be happy to draft language to this effect.</p>
8	Recommendations of Outcomes to track	<p>Commercial sexual exploitation is listed as an outcome to track. It should be noted, here or elsewhere that CMS/ CWS now tracks multiple CSEC domains. Efforts to track CSE in the dual status context, should be informed by the current experience (and challenges that have emerged) of tracking CSE. Further, where possible, the data should be linked to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure that more comprehensive data is available.</p>
9	Participation in Extended Foster Care	<p>I suggest including a bullet on “Number of youth eligible for extended foster care who are <i>not</i> participating.”</p>
12	Homeless Definition	<p>I would include “couch surfing” in the definition even though it is implicitly already included because this comes up a lot as an area of confusion in terms of whether or not to categorize as youth as homeless.</p>
13	Child Welfare History Definition	<p>There are 3 possible outcomes of a CW investigation, currently only two are listed. I would Include the outcome of “unfounded” – so it would read, “substantiated, unfounded or inconclusive.”</p>
14	CWS Referral	<p>I would delete the last phrase of the sentence “and is being actively investigated by a CW agency” because it is still referral even if it is not being “actively investigated,” for example, if a referral is “evaluated out.”</p> <p>I also would consider deleting the phrase, “that meets the WIC criteria” since the dependency court process that begins once a petition is filed is where the determination is made as to whether the WIC criteria is met. A reported incident of abuse/ neglect still qualifies as a referral even if the court later determines that the allegations do not fit within any of the WIC 300 subsections.</p>
15	Assessment - CWS	<p>I would add to the end of the sentence, “and corresponding needs.”</p>
25	Confidentiality paragraph	<p>This paragraph only references federal laws and regs, I think it’s worth noting here or perhaps elsewhere in this doc (since this section is CDSS’ response) that California law provides more stringent requirements that federal law in terms of info sharing and confidentiality.</p>

3. Judge Carol Isackson (ret.), Special Counsel to the President/CEO, Voices for Children, San Diego, CA

I am writing to comment on the Working Group Report, but, first, by way of re-introduction, as it has been a while since we have had contact—I retired from the Bench in San Diego two years ago and have been serving as Special Counsel to Sharon Lawrence, the CEO of Voices for Children, San Diego’s CASA program.

Sharon and I have reviewed the Working Group report and are impressed both with the depth of the Group’s work, as well as the multiple obstacles to overcome to achieve statewide data collection for child welfare and juvenile justice youth. The workgroup and your staff did an excellent job of defining and explaining the challenges involved.

We have one thought for consideration by the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee regarding the Group’s recommendations: We would like to see CASA involvement included as part of future statewide data collection so that programs can determine which minors in each system and county have or do not have a CASA. It also would be helpful if the date of appointment and termination of appointment could be added to this data, but, most important, would be just the fact of CASA or no CASA. We wonder if the CASA inquiry could be added to the list of items to be collected under “Outcomes”—or elsewhere--- in the data collection process. Having access to this data in the context of all the other information that hopefully will be collected may enable CASA programs, as well as the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, to begin to assess the impact of CASAs on outcomes.