



Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families

Longitudinal Analysis on Juvenile Justice Involvement Among Entry Cohort of Children who Entered into Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (RI DCYF) Foster Care in 2000-2001

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This report presents a longitudinal analysis on 1,905 children (median age =10, std =6.1) who were initially removed from home and entered into RI DCYF foster care between 2000-2001 without prior removal and adjudication in the RI juvenile justice system. These children were followed until their 18th birthday or until their first adjudication 1) to measure time to event between foster care entry and first adjudication and 2) to identify predictors of juvenile justice involvement among children who experienced child welfare foster care system. Among 1,905 children initially entered into RI DCYF foster care between 2000-2001 without prior removal and adjudication, **1,588 children (83.4%) were never adjudicated into RI juvenile justice system until age 18**. The findings presented in this report can guide the implementation of timely interventions to reduce the probability of juvenile justice involvement and promote child well-being.

Follow-up Population. Table 1. shows characteristics of children who entered RI DCYF foster care between 2000-2001 and followed until their 18th birthday or their first adjudication. Approximately 53% of the entry cohort of children were male, majority were White Non-Hispanic followed by Hispanic, about half were living in urban core cities and about 56% were between ages 0 and 11 at the time of foster care entry. The most frequent removal reason was neglect followed by child behavior. Removal reasons are multi-select, thus a child may have been removed due to more than one reason. At the time of removal, about two-thirds of the children entered into a non-congregate care placement and the median length of time between the removal and discharge from all out-of-home placements was 258 days, or about 8 months. The population’s history of child welfare involvement showed that about 67% of the children experienced 1 removal episode, about 66% experienced 1 to 4 indicated maltreatments with median age at first ever maltreatment of 3 years, and majority never had detention prior to their 18th birthday or their first adjudication.

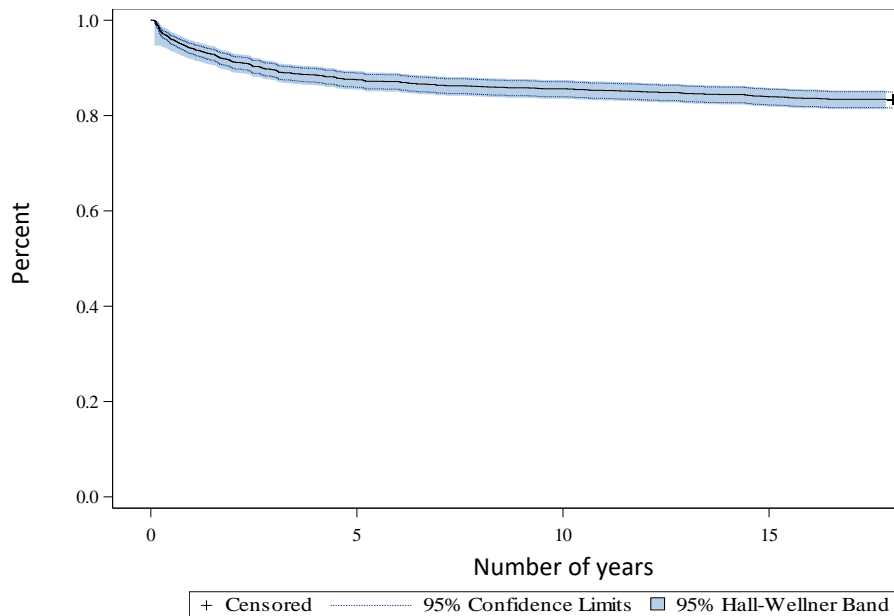
<i>Table 1. Characteristics of foster care entry cohort.(N=1905)</i>					
	N	%		N	%
Gender			Removal reasons ⁺		
Female	897	47.1%	Neglect	1062	55.8%
Male	1008	52.9%	Child behavior	684	35.9%
Race and ethnicity			Parent ability to cope	509	26.7%
Black Non-Hispanic	297	15.6%	Physical abuse	254	13.3%
Hispanic	373	19.6%	Number of removals		
Multiracial/other Non-Hispanic	123	6.5%	1	1270	66.7%
White Non-Hispanic	1092	57.3%	2 or more	635	33.3%
Unknown	20	1.0%	Number of maltreatments		
Case cities\towns			0	504	26.5%
Urban core	970	50.9%	1 to 4	1250	65.6%
Non urban core	709	37.2%	5+	151	7.9%
Out-of-state\missing	226	11.9%	Median age at first maltreatment	3 years	
Median age at foster care entry	10 years		Age at first maltreatment (years)**		
Age at foster care entry (years)			Under 5	817	58.5%
0-11	1061	55.7%	5+	577	41.5%
12+	844	44.3%	No maltreatment/missing age	514	-
First placement service type			History of detention (unadjudicated)		
Congregate care	637	33.4%	Yes	350	18.4%
Non congregate care	1268	66.6%	No	1555	81.6%
Median length of time in first foster care episode	258 days				

⁺removal reasons are multi-select. Neglect includes RICHIST removal reason of neglect, parent drug/alcohol abuse, inadequate housing, parent incarceration, abandonment, and relinquishment. Child behavior includes RICHIST removal reason of child behavior program and child drug/alcohol abuse.

^{**}children who never had indicated maltreatment are not reflected in the percentage. 10 children who had indicated maltreatment but missing age at first ever indicated maltreatment are not reflected.

Time to Adjudication. To measure time to event (first adjudication) among foster care entry cohort who subsequently were adjudicated, survival analysis was conducted with right censoring of data. Among 1,905 entry cohort of children, 1,588 children (83.4%) were never adjudicated in the juvenile justice system until age 18 (see Figure 1). Among 317 children (16.6%) who were subsequently adjudicated in the RI juvenile justice system, the average length of time between foster care entry and first adjudication was 1,373 days, or approximately 4 years. The median was 694 days, or about 2 years.

Figure 1. Survival analysis on time from entry into DCYF foster care to first adjudication.



Factors Associated with Adjudication. There are many factors associated with whether a youth is adjudicated. Some factors are related to the nature of the crime while other factors may be more systemic such as institutional racism, economic inability for representation and inequity with knowledge of the justice system process. Research reveals youth of color are adjudicated at higher rates than youth who are white when controlling for type and severity of underlying offense. This disparity is greatest among less serious offenses ¹Generalized Estimating Equation (GEE) was performed to analyze predictors associated with juvenile justice involvement among entry cohort of children into foster care. Factors significantly associated with adjudication include gender, race and ethnicity, age, child behavior, indicated maltreatment and history of detention. Compared to male children, female children were less likely to be adjudicated. Black Non-Hispanic and Hispanic children were more likely to be adjudicated compared to White Non-Hispanic children. Children who first entered foster care at older age, age 12 or older, were more likely to be adjudicated compared to children who entered foster care at a younger age. Children who were removed from home due to child behavior and children with prior detention were more likely to be adjudicated compared to children without child behavior and without history of detention, consecutively. Compared to children who never experienced indicated maltreatment, those who experienced 5 or more indicated maltreatment were more likely to be adjudicated. There was no significant difference in juvenile justice involvement between children who never experienced indicated maltreatment and those who experienced 1-4 indicated maltreatment. Majority of children who never experienced maltreatment (n=504) are older youth who entered foster care due to child behavior.

Table 2. Predictors significantly associated with juvenile justice involvement among foster care entry cohort (GEE).

	Not adjudicated		Adjudicated		P-value	Sig.
	N	% (row)	N	% (row)		
Gender						
Female (N=897)	818	91.2%	79	8.8%	<.0001	*
Male (N=1008) <i>reference</i>	770	76.4%	238	23.6%		
Race and ethnicity						
Black Non-Hispanic (N=297)	239	80.5%	58	19.5%	.012	*
Hispanic (N=373)	297	79.6%	76	20.4%	.008	*
Multiracial/other Non-Hispanic (N=123)	100	81.3%	23	18.7%	.374	
White Non-Hispanic (N=1092) <i>reference</i>	937	85.8%	155	14.2%		
Age at first ever removal						
0-11 (N=1061) <i>reference</i>	962	90.7%	99	9.3%		
12+ (N=844)	626	74.2%	218	25.8%	.017	*
Removal reason of child behavior						
Yes (N=684)	484	70.8%	200	29.2%	.0006	*
No (N=1221) <i>reference</i>	1104	90.4%	117	9.6%		
Number of indicated maltreatment						
0 (N=504) <i>reference</i>	388	77.0%	116	23.0%		
1 to 4 (N=1250)	1078	86.2%	172	13.8%	.06	

5+ (N=151)	122	80.8%	29	19.2%	.006	*
History of detention (unadjudicated)						
Yes (N=350)	160	45.7%	190	54.3%	<.0001	*
No (N=1555) <i>reference</i>	1428	91.8%	127	8.2%		

Summary. Longitudinal study was conducted on 1,905 children who entered RI DCYF foster care between 2000-2001 without prior removal and adjudication in the RI juvenile justice system and were followed until 18th birthday day or first adjudication. The analysis indicated:

- Majority of the children (83.4%) were never adjudicated into RI juvenile justice system until age 18.
- Among those who were adjudicated, the average length of time between foster care entry and first adjudication was 1,373 days, or approximately 4 years. The median was 694 days, or about 2 years.
- Factors significantly associated with juvenile justice involvement among children who experienced foster care system included gender, race and ethnicity, age, child behavior, experience of maltreatment and history of detention.

The findings suggest that the time between first foster care entry and first juvenile adjudication is relatively short. Such a short time period between foster care and adjudication underscores the need for timely, tailored services at both the individual and system level to reduce the probability of youth in foster care with elevated risk of an adjudication event. The findings are consistent with other studies revealing racial and ethnic inequities in the juvenile justice system, further supporting the need for collaborative efforts among all systems – child welfare, public health, educational, law enforcement, faith based- that touch youth, families and communities to ensure optimal outcomes for children and families in general and specifically among families involved with the child welfare system.

Data source: RICHIST as of 12/17/2018

Data notes:

- Excluded youth 18 or older at the time of entry.
- Excluded children removed for less than 1 day.
- Excluded if first placement type of removal is adoption subsidy or hospitals.
- Excluded if sentenced within 30 days of entry into DCYF foster care.
- 2 youth who are currently age 16 as of 12/17/2018 are excluded.
- Congregate care includes placement type of assessment and stabilization center, group homes, high end residential treatment, residential treatment center, residential counseling center, residential treatment – substance abuse, psychiatric Hospital, semi- independent living, and supervised apartments.
- Urban core cities include Central Falls, Newport, Providence, Pawtucket and Woonsocket.

References

1. Michael Evangelist, Joseph P Ryan, Bryan G Victor, Andrew Moore, Brian E Perron, Disparities at Adjudication in the Juvenile Justice System: An Examination of Race, Gender, and Age, *Social Work Research*, Volume 41, Issue 4, December 2017, Pages 199–212, <https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svx017>