

# Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System



## MYTH VS. FACT

### Shared Case Responsibility

#### MYTH

If a youth referred to juvenile probation has an open case in the child welfare system, probation officers should check in with the assigned child welfare case worker from time to time, but otherwise proceed as usual.



Youth simultaneously involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are often referred to as “dual system,” “dual status,” or “crossover” youth. Across the Commonwealth, the delinquency and dependency cases for such youth may be determined by the court to be subject to “Shared Case Responsibility” (Gold, 2010; Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission, n.d.). Shared Case Responsibility can take many forms and require various levels of coordination between both systems.

#### FACT

Formal coordinated case planning between juvenile probation and child welfare has been shown to lead to fewer petitions and increased youth involvement in prosocial activities.



Numerous thought leaders, including the Shapiro Administration (Pennsylvania Department of Human Services 2024), recommend prioritizing early identification of needs and prompt service intervention, improving information sharing across systems, and working to implement family-centered, multi-system case planning

(Bush-Mecenas, Gomez-Bendana, Barnes-Proby, & Gates, 2023). Information sharing, especially with external research entities, is often limited. However, initial research suggests that adherence to these recommended principles leads to fewer petitions and increased youth involvement in prosocial activities (Herz & Dierkhising, 2019).

#### References:

1. Bush-Mecenas, S., Gomez-Bendana, H., Barnes-Proby, D., & Gates, S. M. (2023). *Education and Child Welfare System Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes for Youth in Foster Care: Identifying Opportunities to Enhance Cross-System Collaboration*. RAND Corporation. Retrieved from: [Education and Child Welfare System Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes for Youth in Foster Care: Identifying Opportunities to Enhance Cross-System Collaboration | RAND](#)
2. Gold, Richard J. (2010). *Shared Case Responsibility Policy and Procedures*. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Department of Public Works: Office of Children, Youth, and Families. Retrieved from: <https://swantoolkit.org/wp-content/uploads/OCYF-Bulletin-3130-10-01-Shared-Case-Responsibility-Policy-and-Procedures.pdf>
3. Herz, D. C. & Dierkhising, C. B. (2019). *OJJDP Dual System Youth Design Study: Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Pursuing a National Estimate of Dual System Youth*. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31385232/>
4. Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (2024). *Shapiro Administration Releases Report, Recommendations to Improve Coordination of Care, Services for Children and Young Adults with Complex Needs*. Retrieved from: [Shapiro Administration Releases Report, Recommendations to Improve Coordination of Care, Services for Children and Young Adults with Complex Needs \(pa.gov\)](#)