

Log of Q&A Chat Session

Meeting the Special Education Needs of Foster Children

April 5, 2006

Laurel Nishi - 10:14 am

Q: How do you define out of home care?

Cheryl Smithgall - 10:18 am

A: Out of home care in this report includes students who have substantiated maltreatment and have been placed in family foster care, relative care, and residential placements. The report contains a more detailed explanation of this as well.

chris mathias - 10:17 am

Q: Is some of the disproportion due to the age of Testing?

Cheryl Smithgall - 10:19 am

A: We see disproportionate representation across all ages; however, the age of testing as well as the peak ages of entry into care have an impact on which system the children will come to the attention of first.

chris mathias - 10:18 am

Q: Are some of the older students more likely to be tested than younger children?

Cheryl Smithgall - 10:20 am

A: We don't have data at the point of referral for evaluation; only after the classification has been obtained

Millie Sweeney - 10:21 am

Q: Is the birth family involved in any of the assessment or formulation of the tx recommendations? Millie Sweeney, TN Voices for Children

Cheryl Smithgall - 10:24 am

A: Please take a look at the qualitative findings in the 2004 report; they address who was involved in the evaluations; I can say that in response to open ended questions about who was involved, we rarely heard accounts of biological parents participating

Susan Blumberg - 10:18 am

Q: Cheryl, what diagnoses are included in the ED classification?

Cheryl Smithgall - 10:25 am

A: These are education classifications that are not broken down into further categories for us. There are a few notes in the last section of the report re: overlap with mental health claims data

Bessie Rush - 10:16 am

Q: Do you find that there is a difference in the numbers of disruptions in traditional vs. relative care?

Martha Shirk - 10:26 am

A: A future web conference will deal specifically with disruptions in care. Please check the schedule.

michele jarrett - 10:27 am

Q: Have you looked at the relationship between a child's behavior problems in school (prior to out of home care) and after that child was placed in care?

Cheryl Smithgall - 10:30 am

A: At the time we were conducting the analyses the discipline data were only available for two years, so we focused on subsequent violations but did not examine violations prior to foster care and/or the classification

Dick Wertheimer - 10:24 am

Q: Dick Wertheimer, Child Trends. How do you take advantage of the foster parents' intensive direct experience with the foster child in facilitating the interaction of social services with the education system?

Gene Griffin - 10:32 am

A: In Illinois the foster parent is included in the integrated assessment process. The foster parent should have input into describing the needs and strengths of the child as well as in discussing what service interventions would be appropriate.

Bessie Rush - 10:26 am

Q: Do you find that there is a difference in the numbers of disruptions in traditional vs. relative care? Bessie Rush/ Family To Family

Martha Shirk - 10:33 am

A: The webcast on stability in foster care is scheduled for June 7.

Millie Sweeney - 10:32 am

Q: Are foster care youth placed in non public schools due to their status as foster children or their diagnoses/behaviors? Millie Sweeney, TN Voices for Children

Cheryl Smithgall - 10:34 am

A: Here, we found that the majority of children in private schools are in either residential placements or family foster care placements and many were previously enrolled in general education schools; suggestive of level of severity driving the decision

Minh Ngo-Gonzalez - 10:32 am

Q: Are charter schools considered non-public schools?

Cheryl Smithgall - 10:35 am

A: In our study, non-public schools primarily refers to schools serving children with special needs; charter schools are not in that group

Patricia Hall - 10:42 am

Q: Lucas County Children Services, Toledo, OH)-Question for Gene - Who was actually responsible in the child welfare agency for collecting all of the educational information upfront on each child? If it was the child's caseworker, what were their caseloads?

Gene Griffin - 10:45 am

A: With integrated assessment there is an intake coordinator, separate from the case worker, who can get records. Our caseload is aiming at 15 to 1

Janet Stotland - 10:44 am

Q: PA Education Law Center: How do the approaches for schools differ if the problem is trauma rather than traditional mental illness?

Gene Griffin - 10:53 am

A: A quick reference- check "Helping Traumatized Children Learn" a report by the Massachusetts Advocates for Children and Harvard Law School

Gabriella Celeste - 10:42 am

Q: Could you speak more about the kinds of best practice programs that exist in dealing effectively with trauma?

Gene Griffin - 10:54 am

A: The National Child Traumatic Stress Network website has some nice summaries and ratings of trauma treatment programs

George Gabel - 10:56 am

Q: Does being in relative care impact the rate of ED classification after entering care?

Cheryl Smithgall - 10:56 am

A: Appendix B contains some information on type of foster care placement by ED classification; we questioned the potential for selection effects among relative care

Joy Stewart - 10:57 am

Q: Were children in out-of-home care also disproportionately classified as special education other than ED?

Cheryl Smithgall - 10:57 am

A: Yes, by 8th grade almost half of the students in care have a special education classification of any type. The 2004 report provides more detail addressing this question

Michelle Lustig - 10:45 am

Q: Is there any data on the percentage of children in NPS sites who are not in foster care?

Cheryl Smithgall - 11:06 am

A: no, there isn't

Millie Sweeney - 10:45 am

Q: We have found that having an advocate present during manifestation hearings for zero tolerance offenses has led to more favorable outcomes for the child/youth that address the reasons behind the behaviors-- M.Sweeney, TN Voices for Children

Janet Stotland - 10:54 am

Q: Ed Law Center: (To help answer a previous question) Under IDEA 2004 the law now requires that, if an assessment begins in one district, a new district MUST finish the assessment within the mandated timeline unless a parent agrees to an extension to time.
