January | 2025

PROBATION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Probation Data Snapshot from July 31, 2024

A Probation Oversight Commission Analysis of Youth with DCFS Involvement

The mission of the Probation Oversight Commission (POC) is to re-imagine probation services in the County of Los Angeles to achieve accountability, transparency, and healing of the people served by and working for the Probation Department.

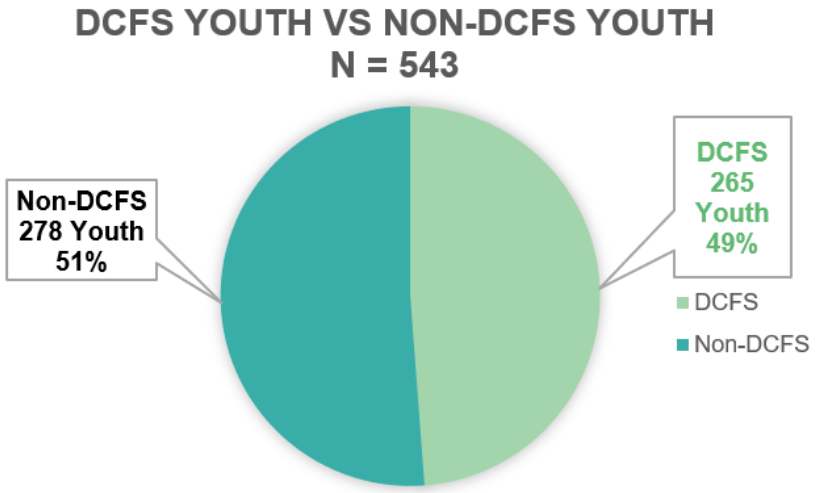
Introduction

The Probation Department shared an anonymized data "snapshot" with the Probation Oversight Commission with demographic information about the youth housed at all of their juvenile detention facilities on July 31, 2024. This report provides information about youth who have or had an open Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) case at some point during their detention.[1] Young people under the jurisdiction of both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (often referred to as *dual system* or *crossover* youth) are among the most vulnerable youth served by the County given their history of trauma and unmet, complex needs.

Overview of all Facilities

DATA SUMMARY

- 265 out of 543 (49%) youth had DCFS involvement.



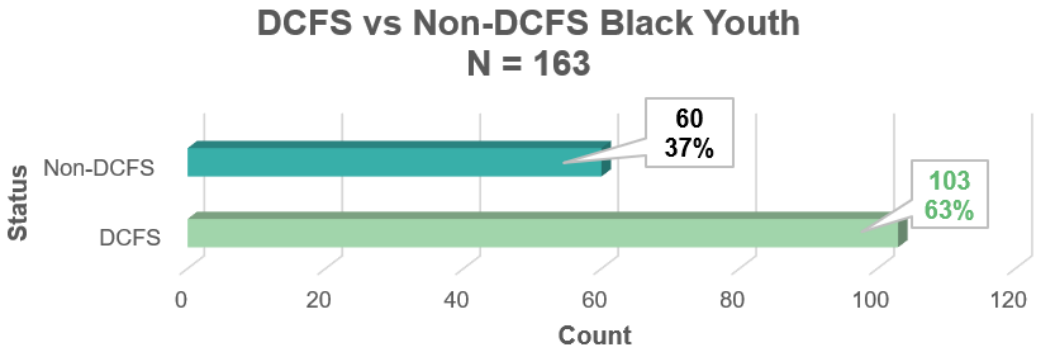
A 2021 study by the Children's Data Network and California State University Los Angeles found that "nearly two-thirds of all young people who had their first delinquency court petition between 2014 and 2016 [in Los Angeles County] had been involved with Child Protective Services at some level in their lives."[2]

Nine (9) DCFS youth were listed as CSEC[3] (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children). All 9 were Black or Latine girls, 16 or 17 years old.

[1] Probation explained that a DCFS flag indicates youth who have or had an active child welfare case at some point during their interaction with Probation. This report refers to youth with a DCFS flag in the dataset as "DCFS Youth."
[2] Herz, D.C., Eastman, A.L., & Suthar, H. (2022) Children's Data Network: Pathways to Dual System Involvement in Los Angeles County Using An Empirical Approach. Youth Violence and Justice
[3] Commercial sexual exploitation of children is closely related to sex trafficking according to the American Academy of Pediatrics and involves crimes of a sexual nature committed against youth for financial and economic reasons. This includes but is not limited to: sex tourism, performing in clubs, and engaging in sexual activity in exchange for housing, food or money.

ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN

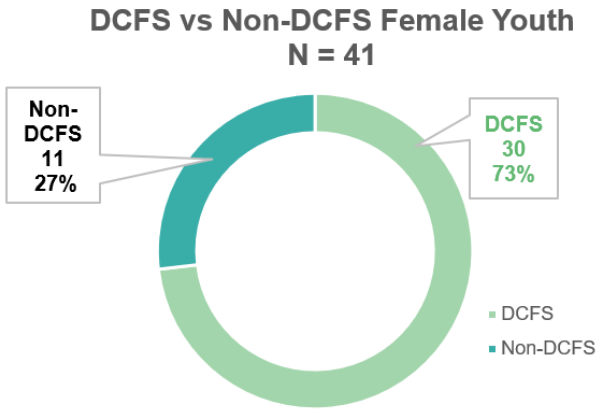
Ethnicity	Count
Black/African American Youth	103 = 38.87% of the DCFS Population
Hispanic/Latine Youth	149 = 56.23% of the DCFS Population
White/Caucasian Youth	12 = 4.53% of the DCFS Population
Other	1 = This is less than 1%



GENDER BREAKDOWN

Gender	Count
Male	234 = 88.3% of the DCFS Population
Female	30 = 11.32% of the DCFS Population
Gender Non-conforming	1 = > 1% of the DCFS Population

- 73% of Female Youth have had a history with child welfare compared to 47% of Males.



IMPACT BY SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT

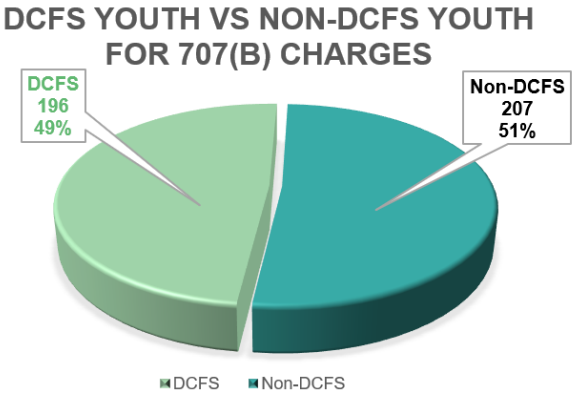
Using the youth's residential zip code, the chart below depicts the distribution of DCFS youth by supervisorial district. Supervisorial District 2 has the most DCFS youth.

Supervisorial District	Count
1st Supervisorial District	26 Youth (10%)
2nd Supervisorial District	97 Youth (37%)
3rd Supervisorial District	17 Youth (6%)
4th Supervisorial District	67 Youth (25%)
5th Supervisorial District	38 Youth (14%)
Out of County/Blank Zip Code	20 Youth (8%)

DCFS YOUTH WITH 707(B) CHARGES[4]

- 196 out of 265 DCFS youth (74%) were booked on a 707(b) charge.

DCFS Youth (265 Youth)	196 707(b) Charges = 74% of total DCFS Youth
Non-DCFS youth (278 Youth)	207 707(b) Charges = 74% of total Non-DCFS Youth

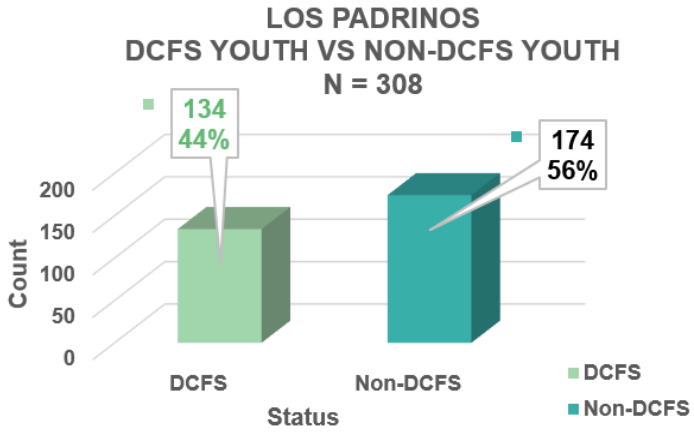


When comparing DCFS youth and non-DCFS youth, there is no significant difference in the likelihood a youth is detained for a 707(b) offense.

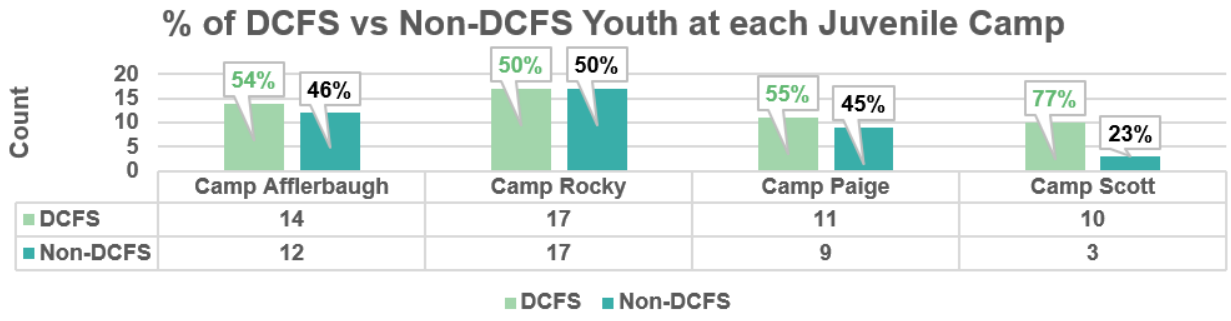
- 69 (26%) of DCFS Youth have not been charged with a 707(b)-eligible offense.
- There are 42 (48%) DCFS youth among the total 88 SYTF population.

Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall

- 44% (134 out of 308) of youth at Los Padrinos were DCFS Youth

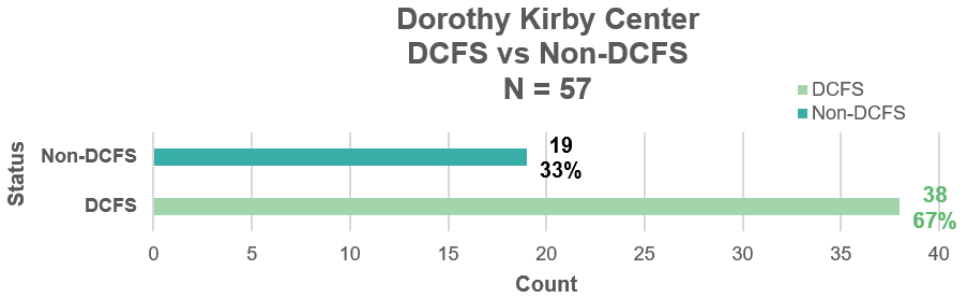


Camps



[4] Section 707(b) of the Welfare and Institutions Code lists the types of crimes that could lead to transfer to adult court and require that a youth be kept in custody and brought before a judge before they are released.

Dorothy Kirby Center (DKC)



DKC houses boys and girls dispositioned to DKC placement as well as girls dispositioned to a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF).

As expected, the rate of DCFS youth at DKC is higher than at other facilities because the youth dispositioned there often have complex trauma and mental health needs.

Conclusion

Researchers have long cautioned that youth with a history of child welfare involvement are more likely to have contact with the juvenile court system.[5] Furthermore, young people with the longest and deepest involvement with the child welfare system are more likely to be dispositioned to restrictive settings and have higher recidivism rates when compared to youth with no child welfare contact[6] [7].

Research reveals that dual system youth often:

- ***Have higher levels of substance abuse and mental health problems.*** A study conducted in 2015 showed that among a sampling of 718 dual system youth in L.A. County, 31% were previously placed in a psychiatric hospital.[8]
- ***Struggle at school and are significantly more likely to perform lower academically than their peers.*** A 2018 study found that 37% of L.A. County cross-over youth petitioned to delinquency court had sporadic or poor school attendance and 41% were credit deficient.[9]
- **Have *worse outcomes in young adulthood than youth involved in one of the two systems alone.*[10]** This includes being more likely to experience homelessness and adult incarceration.

Untreated, complex trauma from abuse, neglect and exposure to the child welfare system often manifests as behavioral issues in youth. Behavioral issues often lead to justice system involvement.[11] Policymakers should expedite efforts to immerse young people who have experienced maltreatment with a continuum of trauma-informed intervention services to support their healing and reduce the likelihood of encounters with law enforcement. Dual system youth are among the most vulnerable youth in our society; especially those that have suffered sexual exploitation; they, and their families, should be met with caring and specialized rehabilitative support.

[5] Herz, supra note 2.
[6] ibid.
[7] Juvenile Justice Information Exchange. JJIE Hub: Key Issues — Dual Status Youth - Juvenile Justice Information Exchange Juvenile Justice Information Exchange
[8] Herz, D.C., Eastman, A.L., & Suthar, H. (2022) Children's Data Network: Pathways to Dual System Involvement in Los Angeles County Using An Empirical Approach. Youth Violence and Justice Empirical-Pathways_Policy-Brief_Final.pdf
[9] Herz, Denise, Dierkhising, Carly and Jessica Raithel et. al. (2019) Dual System Youth and their Pathways: A Comparison of Incidence, Characteristics and System Experiences using Linked Administrative Data. J*ournal of Youth and Adolescence* (2019)58: 2432-2450 https://aisp.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2019_Article_.pdf
[10] Herz, supra note 9.
[11] Baugh, Reighley. "The Foster Care-To-Prison Pipeline." December 14, 2018. TribTalk-The Texas Tribune.