



2018 State Roundtable Report Transitional Youth



Workgroup Co-Chairpersons

Honorable Michael Sholley

Court of Common Pleas of Union/Snyder Counties

Keith Hayes

Chester County Children & Youth Services

Transitional Youth Workgroup

Co-Chairpersons:

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Judge

Court of Common Pleas of Union/Snyder Counties

Keith Hayes

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Dear Members of the State Roundtable,

In 2011 the Pennsylvania State Roundtable convened the Transitional Youth Workgroup. The Workgroup was convened to address the unique needs and challenges of older youth in Pennsylvania. Through the hard work of members of the Workgroup, the Workgroup has created multiple informational tools and made numerous presentations. In addition, a substantial amount of information was gathered through surveys and interviews. This information has been shared with not only the State Roundtable but numerous organizations throughout the state.

Our recommendation this year is to end the Workgroup. This should not be seen as an indication that work regarding older youth is concluded, at this point, rather, it is our hope that the tools and information created by the Workgroup will create a basis for the appropriate handling of issues involving older youth in Pennsylvania.

One area that the Workgroup believes needs substantial effort in the future is congregate care. Although we have seen progress in this area in some of our counties, it continues to present a substantial challenge and a negative impact on youth in our state. The Workgroup is of the opinion, however, that this issue is of such magnitude that it warrants the convening of a State Roundtable Workgroup to focus exclusively on the issue of congregate care. Our Workgroup has provided a starting point by identifying some best practices and statistics regarding congregate care.

We would like to thank the State Roundtable for its support throughout the years. In addition, we would like to thank the individual members of the Workgroup. Each of them contributed substantially to the Workgroup's success.

A special thanks goes to the Honorable Charles Saylor and Vanessa Garrett Harley, Esquire, the original co-chairs of the Workgroup. They clearly set the tone and laid the foundation for the future work of the Workgroup. In addition, we would like to thank Jennifer Horn and Christy Stanek, for the tireless work (and patience) since the Workgroup's inception. Without their efforts it is unlikely there would have been reports, surveys or agendas for our meetings.

Sincerely,

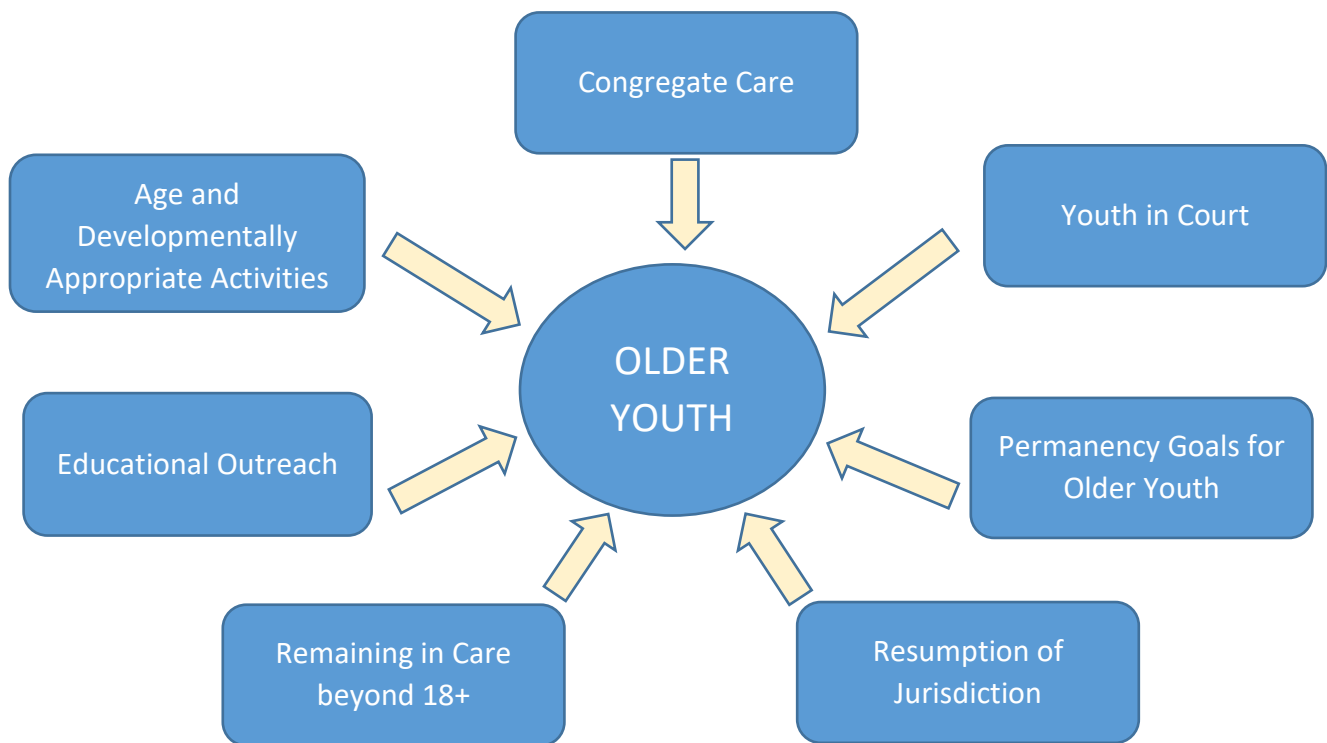
Michael H. Sholley, Co-Chair

Keith Hayes, Co-Chair

FINAL REPORT

Background Information:

In May 2011, the Pennsylvania State Roundtable (SRT) identified older youth as a priority and convened the Transitional Youth Workgroup (TYWG). The initial charge was to “examine the issues facing older youth in the Pennsylvania foster care system, with emphasis on the unique needs of youth transitioning to adult life.” The Workgroup spent the first year examining a variety of issues facing older youth and setting goals for its work. For six years following its convening, the Workgroup provided information, educational outreach and tools addressing the following issues:



Accomplishments

Following the first year of examining statewide and national data and best practices around older youth, the Workgroup immediately began addressing a variety of issues affecting older youth. In addition, Act 91 became effective on July 12, 2012, which added an additional focus to the Workgroup. The legislative enactment shifted initial efforts to providing guidance about resumption of jurisdiction and education regarding other aspects of that law. The following diagram, identifies the progression of work throughout previous years, including products and accomplished status of State Roundtable charges.

State Roundtable Year	Charge	Product	Status of Charge
2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assume lead efforts as they relate to congregate care 2. Examine best practices related to the use of APPLA 3. Develop an Act 91 guide to assist professionals working with older youth 4. Develop strategies to enhance the voice of youth and families in all phases of child welfare involvement 	Act 91 Resumption of Jurisdiction Flyers distributed Statewide 2014 Pennsylvania’s Dependency Benchbook revisions for older youth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued 2. Continued 3. Completed 4. Completed
2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to explore potential strategies for right-sizing congregate care 2. Continue to examine best practices on APPLA 3. Development of a youth video regarding resumption of jurisdiction and benefits of staying in care beyond 18 	Act 91 Extension of Care Video Act 91 Resumption of Care Video Educational Outreach 2014 FGDM Presentation: “FGDM for Older Youth – Strategies for successful Engagement”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued 2. Continued 3. Completed

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Identify strategies to normalize the foster care experiences of older youth and allow children to be granted age appropriate freedoms 5. Identify strategies to enhance youth voice in the legal process 		<p>4.Completed</p> <p>5.Completed</p>
2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement an in-depth analysis process for 5-7 counties congregate care youth cases 2. Finalization of a youth court survey to identify potential strengths/concerns regarding youth involved in the court process and possible solutions 3. Create a youth court information guide/brochure 4. Finalization of the draft APPLA tool “Key Questions/Decisions when establishing permanency goals for older youth” 5. Develop provider contract language, specific to normalcy and prudent parenting standard, to assist counties in ensuring older youth are afforded age and developmentally appropriate activities 6. Develop strategies aimed at assisting judicial officers, attorneys, and child welfare professionals in identifying youth denied age appropriate activities and understand the impact this has on normal development 7. Distribute the youth experiences video presented at the 2015 Children’s 	<p>Finalized Congregate Care Analysis Tool</p> <p>Youth court survey administered and findings provided</p> <p>Youth Court Guide</p> <p>APPLA Permanency Tool Charts</p> <p>Provider contract template regarding normalcy and prudent parenting standard language</p> <p>Educational Outreach 2015 Fall Hearing Officer Education Session: “Serving Older Youth”</p> <p>2016 Children’s Summit: “Establishing Normalcy for Youth in Out of Home Care”</p>	<p>1.Completed</p> <p>2.Completed</p> <p>3.Completed</p> <p>4.Completed</p> <p>5.Completed</p> <p>6.Completed</p> <p>7.Completed</p>

2016	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete and analyze data resulting from a 5-7 county congregate care analysis 2. Provide recommendations to the 2017 Children’s Summit Planning Committee for the Workgroup to develop an educational presentation on understanding and responding to normal teenage behaviors 3. Develop a video on understanding adolescent development and professionals reactions to normal teenage behaviors 4. Develop strategies to assist in identifying alternatives to congregate care level of placement 	<p>Completed an on-site congregate care analysis in 9 counties, representing all Leadership Roundtables.</p> <p>Analyzed congregate care analysis data and provided a finalized report</p> <p>Educational Outreach June 16, 2016 SWAN statewide conference “Triumph for Normalcy in the child dependency system: A Court Perspective”</p> <p>April 24, 2017 Children’s Summit – Lecture and Panel Presentation: “Exploring Typical Adolescent Behavior Using Evidence-Based Themes and Real Life Experience”</p> <p>September 14, 2016 Hearing Officer Education Session: “Understanding Judicial Responsibilities in the Sext Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed 2. Completed 3. Continued 4. Continued
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2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue development of strategies and best practices to assist in identifying alternatives to congregate care level of placement 2. Assess the need for a video on understanding adolescent development and professionals reactions to normal teenage behaviors 3. Provide a recommendation to the Office of Children and Families in the Courts that enhanced legal representation of older youth be considered as a topic for a future advanced legal training 4. County consideration be given to the inclusion of older youth representation at local children’s roundtable meetings 	<p>Analyzed congregate care data from CPCMS and Department of Human Services</p> <p>Created and administered a survey, specific to Judges and Administrators in 8 low use congregate care counties, as determined by the data analysis</p> <p>2017 Children’s Summit presentation provided in Video on the Office of Children and Families in the Courts website</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Completed 2.Completed 3.Completed 4.Completed
2018	Recommendations to the 2018 State Roundtable can be found in the next section of this report	<p>Low use congregate care county data report provided</p> <p>Educational Outreach: 2018 Family Group Decision Making Conference Panel Presentation: “Reducing the Use of Congregate Care through Family Group Decision Making”</p>	N/A

2018 State Roundtable Progress

Survey: Low Use Congregate Care Counties

The Workgroup had one primary charge over the past year, which was to ***“identify strategies and best practices to assist in identifying alternatives to congregate care level of placement.”*** The Workgroup analyzed congregate care data, over a five year period, through Pennsylvania’s Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) and Department of Human Services, General Indicators found in the Needs Based Plan and Budget. Based upon this analysis, the Workgroup then identified eight counties, who appeared to have consistently low congregate care use in both data based systems. The counties identified included the following:

Adams County

Allegheny County

Chester County

Delaware County

Lackawanna County

Lycoming County

Mercer County

Montgomery County

These eight counties then completed survey questions to further examine, and determine, any similar court and agency practices of counties with low congregate care use. To assist in the development of the survey questions, the Workgroup referred back to information learned from the Workgroup’s 2015 county congregate care analysis and the Annie E. Casey Foundation tool, “Right-Sizing Congregate Care,” which had previously been provided to the State Roundtable in 2013. Essentially, the Workgroup wanted to know whether this nationally supported tool worked in Pennsylvania. The tool includes five systemic “levers of change promoting right-sizing congregate care.”

System Levers of Change

- 1. Composition of Services**
- 2. Front-line Practices**
- 3. Performance Management**
- 4. Policy**
- 5. Finance**

Casey's consulting work found that when at least two of the 5 levers were targeted, change in congregate care occurred. In fact, the Workgroup's survey analysis showed identified counties active within all five levers of the tool. To more specifically examine these levers, separate surveys were created for county dependency Judges and Administrators. While the levers were the same for each survey, the questions posed differed between the survey for Judges and the survey for Administrators due to their role in making congregate care decisions.

Judge Survey

Results of the Judge survey shows 9 possible judicial responses. There were no questions regarding the 5th lever, finance, for the Judge survey; however, these questions are in the Administrator survey. Actions showing the highest percentage, in each lever, are indicated below.

1. Composition of Services

- ❖ 100% (9) ask multiple questions about how least restrictive options of care have been exhausted (i.e. kinship, foster care)
- ❖ 89% (8) deny congregate care recommendations by the agency when not appropriate
- ❖ 89% (8) ask about community based programs that could meet the youth's needs

2. Front-Line Practice

- ❖ 100% ask the parents and child about family and kin involved in their lives
- ❖ 89% (8) ask if Family Group Decision Making or another family engagement meeting has occurred
- ❖ 78% (7) ask multiple questions about extended family and kin at each hearing

3. Performance Management

- ❖ 100% order a return home or lesser level of care when a youth has met sufficient treatment goals, **regardless** of a facility's recommendation for continued congregate care due to a youth not reaching "levels" or specific time table (i.e. 6-9 month programs)
- ❖ 89% (8) ask about a youth's progress in treatment at each hearing

4. Policy

- ❖ 89% (8) require a 90 day, or sooner, permanency review on all youth in congregate care
- ❖ 78% (7) ask whether the youth can receive the same mental health treatment in the community as received in congregate care
- ❖ 78% (7) ask whether the youth can receive the same drug and alcohol treatment in the community as received in congregate care

Administrator Survey

Results of the Administrator survey was pulled from 7 out of 8 counties, totaling 7 possible Administrator responses in the survey. Results show multiple actions taken in all 5 levers. Actions showing the highest percentage, in each lever, are indicated below.

1. Composition of Services

- ❖ 100% report the following actions:
 - Ask Multiple questions about how least restrictive options of care have been exhausted (i.e. kinship, foster care)
 - Recommend kinship care for older youth
 - Recommend foster care for older youth
 - Deny congregate care recommendations from the provider when not appropriate
 - Ask about community based programs that could meet the youth's needs

2. Front-Line Practice

- ❖ 100% report the following actions:
 - Ask multiple questions about extended family and kin
 - Ask the parents and child about family and kin involved in their lives
 - Ensure frequent parent/youth visitation while a youth is in kinship or foster care
 - Ensure frequent parent/youth visitation while a youth is in congregate care
 - Ensure visitation with extended family and kin when a youth is in out of home care, including congregate care

3. Finance

- ❖ 86% (6) increase community services for older youth
- ❖ 71% (5) include language in congregate care provider contracts to ensure age and developmentally appropriate activities and prudent parenting standards
- ❖ 71% (5) redirect congregate care savings to community services

4. Performance Management

- ❖ 100% ask about a youth's progress in treatment
- ❖ 100% recommend a return home or lesser level of care when a youth has met sufficient treatment goals, **regardless** of a facilities recommendation for continued congregate care due to a youth not reaching "levels" or specific time tables (i.e. 6-9 month programs)
- ❖ 86% (6) ask about the effectiveness of a congregate care program prior to recommending a youth into that congregate care facility

5. Policy

- ❖ 100 % report the following actions:
 - Conduct internal early teaming reviews on youth in congregate care
 - Ask whether the youth can receive the same mental health treatment in the community as in congregate care
 - Ask whether the youth can receive the same drug and alcohol treatment in the community as in congregate care
 - Have a good working relationship with the county mental health
 - Have a good working relationship with the county drug and alcohol

Through examining the results of both surveys, conclusions can be drawn to the correlation between counties with low congregate care and activities in levers found within the national tool for Right-Sizing congregate care. The Workgroup recommends this tool be utilized through local children’s roundtables to further examine county practices around congregate care use. The tool can be found under **APPENDIX A: RIGHT-SIZING CONGREGATE CARE**. In addition, responses from both surveys can be found under **APPENDIX B: JUDGE SURVEY** and **APPENDIX C: ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY**.

Although not a charge of the State Roundtable, the Workgroup created a presentation for the 2018 Pennsylvania Family Group Decision (FGDM) making conference. The presentation, “Reducing the use of congregate care through Family group Decision Making” was presented on April 17, 2018. The presentation included an overview of the on-site congregate care analysis completed in 2016, FGDM challenges within some counties, resources created by the Workgroup and a panel of professionals sharing how their use of FGDM positively impacted the reduction of congregate care for older youth. Faculty for this presentation included:

***Honorable Michael Sholley, Court of Common Pleas of Snyder/Union Counties**

***Clay Cauley, Esquire, Juvenile Court Hearing Officer, Chester County**

***Keith Hayes, Retired Administrator, Chester County**

***Stephanie Salvatori, Independent Living Caseworker, Lycoming County**

***Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Esquire, Guardian Ad Litem, Lycoming County**

Kate Croll, Emergency Placement Supervisor, Monroe County

Michelle Haydt, Permanency Supervisor, Monroe County

Ginny Dickerson, FGDM Coordinator, It Takes A Village, Inc.

***Transitional Youth Workgroup members**

The Presentation was well received with evaluation ratings as follows:

- Presentation: 3.5/4.0
- Relevancy of Presentation: 3.9/4.0
- New Material Presented: 3.5/4.0

- 100% of respondents indicated that the presentation was beneficial to the work they do.

A copy of the power point used during the presentation can be found under, ***APPENDIX D: FGDM PRESENTATION.***

Moving Forward With Congregate Care

On February 9, 2018 Family First Prevention Act was signed into law. The law significantly impacts the child dependency system and the use of congregate care for youth. Essentially, it restructures how federal IV-E funding can be utilized to support families involved in child welfare. In addition, it greatly supports the belief that children should grow up in families, not facilities. Highlights of the law include the following:

- ❖ Allows federal funding for prevention, stabilization and reunification services, along with services to support kinship
- ❖ Provides financial incentives for placing children with families when out of home care is needed
- ❖ Provides financial penalties for unnecessary use of congregate care placements
- ❖ Provides restrictions to the length of funding for congregate care placements
- ❖ Sets forth requirements for congregate care facilities to be licensed in order to receive federal funding

There is much to examine in regards to the implementation of this law. While Pennsylvania has made improvements over the past few years, there is still work to be done in reducing the use of congregate care. Some counties have reduced use. Some counties use strategies and practices proven effective. However, as learned through the Workgroup's on-site congregate care analysis, there are still

youth in congregate care for non-treatment related issues. Questions remain about the level of treatment and effectiveness of congregate care programs and challenges remain in locating community services to address the needs of older youth in their homes, instead of in a facility.

The Workgroup has exhausted the broad array of charges given by the State Roundtable and believes it should end. The Workgroup further believes that although it has “scratched the surface” in examining the use of congregate care, there is more to be done. With the new legislation signed into law, the Workgroup recommends that the State Roundtable convene a new workgroup whose purpose is to focus solely on the issue of congregate care. The Workgroup recommends utilizing the analysis, strategies and tools completed to this point, as beginning foundation for the new workgroup. The Workgroup further recommends that the newly convened workgroup be inclusive of all key stakeholders, including, but not limited to, mental health and congregate care facilities. Finally, the Workgroup offers the following statement as the charge for any new State Roundtable Congregate Care Workgroup that is created, “Children should grow up in families, not facilities.”

2018 State Roundtable Recommendations

1. Transitional Youth Workgroup be concluded as all previous State Roundtable charges have been completed
2. 2018 State Roundtable convene a Congregate Care workgroup to further examine congregate care reduction/elimination and assist Pennsylvania in the implementation of the Family First Prevention Act
3. Congregate care data analysis, strategies and tools, completed by the Transitional Youth Workgroup, be utilized as foundation for the newly convened Congregate Care Workgroup

The Transitional Youth Workgroup would like to thank the State Roundtable and all past members of the Workgroup for their efforts over the past 7 years. There have been significant improvements made in the awareness of issues impacting older youth in Pennsylvania. Congratulations to all counties who have taken steps to improve the lives of older youth.