

LEADING FOR RESULTS: TOP 3 ROOT CAUSES OF PLACEMENT INSTABILITY

Our data shows the majority of those experiencing placement instability:
Older youth ages 13 to 18 with higher levels of disabilities/needs

Placement instability is not just a foster care problem
is it directly related to key points throughout the entire child welfare system

COMMUNITY PREVENTION

#1



**INADEQUATE
COMMUNITY-
BASED
PREVENTION
SERVICES
TO SERVE
OLDER HIGH
NEEDS YOUTH**

FRONT DOOR TO CHILD WELFARE

#2



**FRONT DOOR
INTO
FOSTER CARE
IS TOO WIDE
DUE TO A LACK
OF
UNDERSTANDING
OF THE ROLE
OF FOSTER CARE**

FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS

#3



**LACK OF
PLACEMENTS
FOR OLDER YOUTH
WITH INTENSIVE
BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH NEEDS**

LEADING FOR RESULTS: PLACEMENT INSTABILITY

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO ROOT CAUSES

Community Prevention

Inadequate community-based prevention services to serve older higher-needs youth

Policy & Practice

- Lack of community readiness for SB 367
- Lack of multidisciplinary team meetings in rural counties for high risk youth

Community & Organizational Resources

- Lack of access to services needed due to affordability or transportation challenges
- Lack of available resources to families struggling with other needs (not struggling with abuse or neglect), including services for mental health and parenting support (in-home services, mentoring/support networks, respite, etc.)
- Lack of available substance use disorder providers for youth (especially in rural areas)
- Inadequate discharge planning and supports from Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities

Front Door of Child Welfare

Lack of understanding of the role of foster care

Policy & Practice

- Lack of system readiness for SB 367
- Juvenile justice does not have out-of-home placement option other than incarceration
- Ability for non-DCFS staff to petition removal
- Policy knowledge gaps for new staff
- Steady increase in removals that are NOT related to abuse/neglect (i.e. FINA)

External Factors

- Misunderstanding by community providers and courts about foster care's ability to facilitate or speed up access to services
- Court decision-making misaligned with DCF recommendation (removals due to truancy or juvenile justice) & Courts uncomfortable with TDM recommendations
- Police protective custody criteria misaligned with DCF's criteria for out-of-home placement
- Courts use foster care as punishment and/or when they do not trust parents to follow through with services

Foster Care Placements

Lack of placements for older youth with intensive behavioral health needs

Policy & Practice

- Practice of placing older youth with challenging behaviors outside of their community
- Policy does not allow placement with relatives with DCF history or past legal charges, or out of state relative to be initial placement
- Policy does not allow informal relative placements without making foster care referral
- Lack of family engagement to identify relative resources (i.e. parents assume relatives do not wish to serve as resources)

Community & Organizational Resources

- Lack of robust supports for relatives to care for older youth and stabilize placements
- Foster homes not designed for high-needs intensive youth with mental health and challenging behavioral problems