To remedy the persistent separation of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in research and reform efforts, Evident Change and the Juvenile Justice Research and Reform (JJR&R) Lab at Drexel University, with support from the William T. Grant Foundation and the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, hosted a convening of researchers, practitioners, individuals with lived experience of system involvement, and funders with the goal of creating a strategic research agenda to address dual-system involvement.

Participants in the convening worked together to create a list of the most important challenges that contribute to youth becoming involved in either the child welfare system or juvenile legal system becoming involved in the other system as well. They then derived themes for potential solutions, made recommendations for future research, and created specific recommendations for different key audiences related to dual-system involvement. The full paper is available for download.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Integrate various perspectives into all phases of research, especially those from individuals with lived expertise.
2. Describe and evaluate current practices within the child welfare and juvenile legal systems as they relate to dually involved youth.
3. Examine strategies that build the capacity of communities and other agencies to support youth and families.
4. Pilot and investigate the impacts of innovative reforms within the child welfare and juvenile legal systems.
5. Investigate effective methods for influencing system leaders to apply evidence-based strategies and principles to improve outcomes for youth and families.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS, PRACTITIONERS, AND FUNDERS

RESEARCHERS

1. Actively engage in communities of learning and partnership focused on the challenges and opportunities that arise for this unique population.
2. Partner with local agency leaders and policymakers to assess existing operations and use assessment results to provide evidence-based recommendations for system reform.
3. Offer guidance and/or support to agencies seeking to create or enhance their data systems.

PRACTITIONERS

1. Adopt trauma-informed practices throughout all program and agency operations.
2. Incorporate youth voice and promote youth agency.
3. Build cross-sector partnerships and cross-system collaborations.

FUNDERS

1. Actively engage in communities of learning and partnership.
2. Prioritize long-term investments, going beyond the typical one- to three-year periods.
3. Support investments in data infrastructure, policy advocacy, and efforts to evaluate and scale promising practices.
4. Promote youth leadership within solicitations and funded projects.

LEARN MORE

For more information about Evident Change or the Juvenile Justice Research and Reform Lab, visit us at EvidentChange.org or JJRRLab.com.

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