



NOVEMBER



**ENGAGING & EMPOWERING YOUTH:
Youth Feedback About Their GAL and Court
Experiences, as Well as Other Youth
Participation Data**



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OCR sends its deepest appreciation to the over 300 youth who completed an OCR survey and/or participated in an OCR focus group. Thank you for sharing your time, ideas, and expertise. We enjoyed meeting you and learning from you. We hope this paper does justice to your experiences and ideas.

Additionally, OCR thanks the many community partners who have supported OCR's Engaging and Empowering Youth Initiative. This paper would not have been possible without your efforts. So many names come to mind. We are certain to miss someone, and for that, we apologize.

- Colorado Supreme Court Improvement Program
- Children's Justice Act ("CJA")
- Elysia Clemens, Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer at Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab
- Sarah Moses, Senior Researcher/Project Manager at Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab
- Jenny Bender, Executive Director of Colorado CASA
- Betsy Fordyce, Executive Director of Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center
- Stacy Sanders, Executive Director of Elevating Connections
- Tamisha Macklin, Navigator/Case Manager at Pathways to Success
- Kippi Clausen, Unfolding Directions
- Ann Sullivan, Faculty at Metropolitan State University Department of Social Work
- Mica Stone-Reinig, former Assistant Program Manager at Tennyson Center for Children
- Gretchen Russo, Judicial and Legal Administrator at Colorado Department of Human Services
- Ricardo Mathias, Youth Engagement Specialist at the Colorado Department of Human Services
- Derek Blake, Chafee Program Coordinator at Colorado Department of Human Services
- Sarah Ruiz, Quality and Compliance Specialist at Southern Peaks Regional Treatment Center
- Jamie Glick, Regional Director of Behavioral Health at Rite of Passage
- Donna Schmalberger, Retired Second Judicial District Judge
- Linda Billings Vela, Fourth Judicial District Court Judge
- Tina Horton, El Paso County Combined Court Juvenile Court Facilitator
- Cara Weber, Program Assistant House Bill 1451/Collaborative Management Program
- Maggie Dawson, Legacy Project Lead Coordinator at Advocates for Children CASA
- Zane Grant, Executive Director of CASA of Pueblo
- Drucilla Pugh, Lead Case Supervisor at CASA of Pueblo
- Kindra Cox, Case Supervisor at CASA of Pueblo
- Joy Thompson, Executive Director of CASA of Mesa County
- Kay Hardy, Supervisor at Lutheran Family Services
- Brittany Gardner, Chafee Program Supervisor at Mesa County Department of Human Services
- Allison Pearce, Chafee Independent Living Specialist at Jefferson County Department of Human Services
- Maitri Day, Child Welfare Permanency Caseworker at Weld County Department of Human Services

In this and all endeavors, OCR appreciates the support and engagement from its Board of Directors. Last but definitely not least, OCR also thanks its staff who diligently and passionately worked to make OCR's Engaging and Empowering Youth Initiative and this paper a reality, including former Executive Director Linda Weinerman and former law student interns Amber Arias and Emily Wassel.

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INTRODUCTION

THE OFFICE OF THE CHILD’S REPRESENTATIVE

The Office of the Child’s Representative (“OCR”) is a state agency charged with “giving children a voice in the Colorado court system” by providing “uniform, high-quality legal representation and non-legal advocacy to children involved in judicial proceedings.”¹ OCR selects, trains, oversees, and supports attorney Guardians *ad litem* (“GALs”) who represent the best interests of children in all dependency and neglect (D&N) proceedings, some juvenile delinquency proceedings, and eight other case types.² D&N and delinquency cases are OCR’s most numerous case types, accounting for 94% of attorney expenditures in Fiscal Year 2019-20 (“FY19-20”).³

OCR’S ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING YOUTH INITIATIVE

In FY18-19, OCR launched an Engaging and Empowering Youth (“E&EY”) Initiative. OCR’s E&EY Initiative aims to provide children a voice in legal systems through effective attorney services and advocacy and to ensure youth voice and interests are paramount in the development of law, policy, and practice. The first action step of OCR’s E&EY Initiative is supporting GALs’ application of the youth-centered requirements of Chief Justice Directive (“CJD”) 04-06, which governs GAL appointments in Colorado. OCR’s efforts related to this action step have included the following.

- Providing youth-centered GAL trainings.
- Creating lists of rights for children with D&N cases, safeguards for youth in foster care, and rights for siblings in foster care and making such lists available during GAL trainings, on OCR’s online Youth Center, and on OCR’s online Litigation Toolkit.⁴
- Collaborating with Colorado’s Fourth Judicial District on a pilot project providing youth engagement bench cards⁵ to judicial officers handling D&N and delinquency cases, youth snacks in courtrooms where D&N and delinquency cases are heard, and toolkits describing elements of D&N cases and containing case-related tools such as calendars and card holders to youth with D&N cases.
- Determining how to leverage OCR’s existing oversight tools to inform efforts to increase youth participation.

The second action step of OCR’s E&EY Initiative is collecting randomized feedback from youth with D&N and delinquency cases and using such feedback in GAL evaluations and in the development of law, policy, and practice.⁶



Youth comments about youth voice and participation included the following.

"Youth have a voice. They have a choice."

"If you are old enough to understand what is happening around you - like your parents not taking care of you - then you are old enough to know what is going on in your case."

THIS PAPER

This paper analyzes the youth feedback collected through OCR's E&EY Initiative and other OCR data related to youth participation, then makes recommendations for youth participation in legal proceedings and OCR's oversight and programming.

- *Section I outlines OCR's youth-centered policies and directives.*
- *Section II summarizes prior OCR reports addressing youth participation.*
- *Section III describes the types of data analyzed in section IV, which forms the basis for the recommendations in section V.*

The recommendations in section V encourage OCR to:

- *establish performance goals related to youth court attendance, participation and satisfaction, in addition to establishing strategies addressing such goals;*
- *establish strategies for implementing youth feedback and voice into OCR's policies and programs;*
- *establish strategies for incorporating youth survey feedback into OCR's GAL oversight;*
- *continue to collect youth feedback; and*
- *designate an E&EY Initiative Team to achieve these important recommendations and goals.*

I. OCR: A STATE AGENCY FOCUSED ON YOUTH VOICE AND PARTICIPATION

Section I outlines OCR's youth-centered (A) mission and values, (B) performance goals, and (C) CJD governing GALs.

A. OCR'S MISSION AND VALUES

OCR's mission and values ground OCR's strategic planning, operations, and programs in the goal of giving youth a voice in the court system.

- OCR's mission statement expresses a commitment to giving "children and youth a voice in Colorado legal proceedings through high-quality legal representation that protects and promotes their safety, interests, and rights."
- One of OCR's three core values is empowerment, a value indicating OCR appreciates the diverse experiences and expertise of the children OCR serves and OCR supports others in its mission to empower children.

B. OCR'S PERFORMANCE GOALS

Colorado's State Measurement for Accountable, Responsible and Transparent ("SMART") Government Act requires OCR to prepare and publish a Performance Management System and an annual Performance Plan.⁷ The Plan outlines the processes and metrics OCR uses to monitor its performance in fulfilling its statutory mandate to provide effective attorney services for children and youth. OCR's Performance Management System and Performance Plan reflect OCR's commitment to youth voice. For several years, "providing children a voice in legal systems through effective attorney services and advocacy" has been outlined as OCR's top performance goal. OCR's strategies for accomplishing this goal include ensuring

children’s voice and interests are paramount throughout proceedings and in the development of policy, law, and practice. OCR’s FY20-21 processes and metrics for this goal include the: ⁸

- number of youth events OCR attends or sponsors;
- number of youth surveys OCR receives;
- percentage of attorneys seeking to renew their contract about whom OCR has at least one youth reference interview completed;
- percentage of attorneys who state the position of children five and older during OCR court observations;
- percentage of attorneys who state their efforts to get children to attend court during OCR court observations;
- percentage of youth who report in surveys that their GAL always or usually told the judge what youth wanted;
- percentage of youth over 12 who attend Benchmark or Permanency Planning Hearings; and
- percentage of youth who report that their GAL always or usually asked them about going to court.

C. CJD 04-06 GOVERNING GALs

In addition to explaining that GALs must diligently take the steps necessary to represent and protect children’s best interests, CJD 04-06 outlines minimum requirements for GALs, including the following requirements addressing youth voice and engagement (Figure 1).

Case Type	GAL Requirement
All ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GAL best-interest determinations must include developmentally appropriate consultations with children and considerations of children’s positions.
D&N ¹⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State children’s positions during hearings unless children indicate they do not want their GAL to do so. • “[E]ndeavor to maximize the child’s involvement in the court proceedings, when consistent with the child’s best interests, by discussing the court process, ascertaining whether the child wishes to appear in court and identifying and advocating for the elimination of barriers to the child’s attendance at court.” Additionally, GALs should conduct post-hearing follow-ups regarding outcomes and the child’s experiences at court. • Meet with children in placement as soon as reasonable but within 30 days of their initial appointment and as soon as reasonable but within 30 days of every change in placement. • Maintain contact and ongoing communication with children to continue to assess children’s best interests, consider children’s positions, and state children’s positions during hearings.
Delinquency ¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personally meet with juveniles as soon as possible after appointment in a setting that promotes meaningful communication and make diligent efforts to personally meet detained juveniles as soon as possible but no later than seven days after appointment or the date detention commenced. • Maintain ongoing contact and communication with juveniles, and such contact should not be limited to court appearances.

Figure 1

In-person contact is waived only where children reside more than 100 miles outside a judicial district.¹² However, even then, GALs must personally interview children as developmentally appropriate.¹³ Although such interviews may be via electronic or other means of communication, GALs must endeavor to see such children in placement and OCR pays reasonable costs consistent with OCR billing policies and procedures.¹⁴

II. PRIOR OCR STUDIES ADDRESSING YOUTH VOICE AND PARTICIPATION

Many national organizations and studies support youth participation in legal proceedings.¹⁵ The benefits of such participation include increased information, system transparency and accountability, increased quality of decisions, feelings of empowerment and control for children, and increased understanding and “buy-in” from children.¹⁶ Consistent with the child-centered policies and directives outlined in section I, OCR has participated in multiple studies addressing youth voice and participation in legal proceedings. The information gleaned and lessons learned from such studies forms the foundation for the type of data collected, the methods of data collection used, and data analysis performed in OCR’s E&EY Initiative.

Section II summarizes the data collection methods, key findings, and recommendations of those studies.

A. MULTIDISCIPLINARY LAW OFFICE PROJECT 2011-2017 (REPORTS 2014 AND 2017)

The two primary models of Colorado GAL representation under OCR’s direct jurisdiction are independent contractors and one multidisciplinary law office (“MDLO”) of attorneys, case coordinators, and support staff. Between 2011-17, OCR piloted the expansion of MDLOs; a 2014 initial review of the pilot program led to a 2017 extension.

Among other points, the 2014 pilot evaluation investigated whether the model of GAL representation affected youth feedback about whether they felt listened to, the level of their participation in their case, the quantity of contact they had with their GAL, and quality of the relationship they had with their GAL.

- OCR emailed GALs assigned to 129 youth, asking whether it was developmentally appropriate for OCR to contact the youth, requesting the youth’s preferred method of contact, and asking the GALs to notify the youth that a researcher would be contacting the youth.
- Researchers mailed surveys and self-addressed stamped envelopes to 86 youth, provided surveys and a survey link to Chafee groups in five counties and CASA volunteers in one county, and offered youth a free download as an incentive.
- Researchers invited 59 youth to participate in telephone interviews and offered a gift card as an incentive.

OCR received six youth surveys and six youth completed telephone interviews. Although the results were inconclusive due to the small sample size, the overall trend was positive for both models of GAL representation.

- The themes from the telephone interviews included healthy communication, positive regard for professionals, and mixed involvement in court.
- Most youth reported their GAL represented their wishes and respected their opinions.
- One interviewed youth reported her MDLO GAL did not listen to her.

The 2014 MDLO Report recommended that OCR implement a system for gaining youth feedback, noted OCR had added youth reference interviews to attorney contract renewals, and indicated OCR was exploring an annual anonymous youth satisfaction survey and other means to gain youth feedback at case closure.

OCR extended the MDLO pilot project to 2017 for additional implementation and evaluation. Youth feedback was incorporated into this extended pilot via focus groups and surveys.

- OCR attempted to schedule focus groups in the three counties with MDLOs. Due to a cancellation and re-/scheduling difficulties, OCR completed one focus group of 17 youth. Fifteen youth expressed positive feelings about their GAL. Most indicated they attended court and had mixed feelings about future attendance.
- OCR asked the 17 focus group youth to complete a survey; emailed an electronic survey to approximately 65 departments, CASA, and agency staff identified as youth service providers; and sent hard copies (upon request) to two agencies with programs focused on engaging older youth. OCR received 25 surveys. Overall, MDLO GALs did not receive more positive youth feedback than those OCR attorneys not working in an MDLO.

The 2017 MDLO Report recommended that OCR build upon its efforts to establish a systematic process for obtaining youth feedback and recommended that OCR explore a process for obtaining youth feedback as part of case closure.

B. MAY 2014 COURT ATTENDANCE CAPSTONE PROJECT AND OCTOBER 2014 SUPPLEMENT

This capstone project analyzed rates and stakeholder perception of youth court attendance.¹⁷ GAL entries into OCR's case management and billing system demonstrated that children aged 12 and older attended 40.65% of Permanency Planning Hearings in FY13.¹⁸ Stakeholder perceptions of youth court attendance was determined via 258 responses to a survey emailed to judicial officers, court staff, GALs, department caseworkers, county attorneys, respondent parent counsel, and Court-Appointed Special Advocates ("CASAs"). Stakeholders:

- identified youth voice, youth empowerment, and informing the court about youth wishes as the primary benefits of youth court attendance;
- did not support court attendance by children younger than five;
- did not support youth court attendance at adjudication hearings;
- reported courts consult with children regarding permanency plans by relying on GALs, CASAs, or caseworkers; and
- identified school, exposure to negative information, and docketing/long wait times as common impediments to youth court attendance.¹⁹

The project recommended:

- that courts consistently apply a presumption that all children attend all D&N proceedings (with the possibility of excluding adjudication proceedings and children under five due to stakeholder feedback) and enter findings reflecting the reasonableness of children’s absences and alternative means of communication;
- more options and accommodations for youth attendance and participation;
- training for judicial engagement with youth;
- additional efforts to collect youth feedback such as focus groups; and
- a pilot project implementing recommendations for youth court attendance.²⁰

In response, OCR created infographics supporting and dispelling myths about youth court attendance.²¹

C. 2016 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STUDY

OCR partnered with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (“NCJFCJ”) and the Colorado Court Improvement Program (“CIP”) on this study examining stakeholder perceptions in seven judicial districts that identified youth engagement as a Best Practice Court Team focus.²²

The 19 GALs and eleven judicial officers who responded to a stakeholder survey indicated:

- youth court attendance needed to be prioritized;
- the biggest barriers to youth court attendance were transportation and time out of school; and
- many jurisdictions had developed solutions to address barriers to youth court attendance, including collaborating with various entities, scheduling hearings at convenient times, and using other communication methods.²³

Researchers emailed youth surveys to lead judicial officers in seven participating jurisdictions and one jurisdiction disseminated surveys to youth.²⁴ The two youth who completed surveys reported:

- they attended court at least once;
- they understood why they should attend court;
- they would be willing to attend court in the future;
- they had positive court experiences; and
- transportation was a barrier to court attendance.²⁵

The study’s recommendations surrounded the following themes:

- encouraging youth to attend court via the development of policies and protocols maximizing children’s opportunities to attend all court events;
- preparing youth for court; and
- supporting and engaging youth in court.²⁶

D. 2018 YOUTH D&N COURT PARTICIPATION PROJECT

This doctoral thesis informed OCR’s effort to develop a standard approach for gaining youth feedback and explored youth and judicial perceptions about youth D&N court participation.²⁷ Twenty-two youth completed individual surveys and participated in group discussions.²⁸ Six judicial officers participated in telephone interviews.²⁹

The youth and judicial officers agreed:

- youth should be provided options for court participation;
- youth should choose how their opinions are shared with courts; and
- court inclusion can empower youth and inform courts when implemented thoughtfully but can harm youth when not implemented thoughtfully.³⁰

The project recommended that professionals:

- identify a responsible party to notify, transport, and prepare youth for hearings;
- help youth understand court hearings;
- seek feedback from youth on a voluntary basis about all parties and aspects of cases and ensure youth confidentiality related to such feedback;
- modify courtrooms so they are welcoming to youth; and
- develop policies prioritizing youth wishes.³¹

III. INTRODUCTION TO E&EY DATA SOURCES

Section III introduces the three types of data considered by OCR's Engaging and Empowering Youth Initiative: (A) youth feedback, (B) GAL performance reports addressing youth participation and representation, and (C) OCR's Youth in Court Report.

A. YOUTH FEEDBACK COLLECTED THROUGH OCR'S E&EY INITIATIVE

This subsection describes (1) OCR's collection of youth feedback, (2) OCR's analysis of collected feedback; and (3) the demographics of the youth who completed surveys.

1. OCR's collection of youth feedback

Survey 1

In FY18-19, OCR developed Survey 1 and collaborated with youth groups, youth residential facilities, and youth service providers to administer the survey across Colorado. Youth ate pizza and drank beverages provided by OCR while OCR explained what OCR is and why OCR is interested in youth feedback, encouraged youth to provide honest feedback (both positive and negative), and promised anonymity. Youth completed surveys and OCR provided a gift card as an incentive. Survey 1 had 27 questions. See Appendix A. Eleven were open-ended. Youth said it was too long and "felt like homework." Many open-ended questions were left unanswered.

Focus Groups and Survey 2

In FY19-20, OCR added focus groups to its methods of collecting youth feedback and developed and administered Survey 2. While surveys sought youth feedback about specific GAL and court experiences, focus groups sought youth feedback about policy issues related to GALs and courts. OCR created youth events for conducting focus groups and collecting Survey 2. OCR planned and commenced youth events in the same ways OCR planned and began survey events. After an introduction similar to the introduction used during survey events, a staff member typically asked standard questions from an OCR Focus Group Form, while another took notes.³² In efforts to enhance the relaxed environment of the focus groups, as

well as to protect youth anonymity and confidentiality, OCR did not record and/or transcribe focus groups. After a focus group, youth typically completed surveys.³³

Survey 1 proved to be a pilot survey critical to the development of Survey 2. Survey 2 has 30 questions. Most questions are optional and structured in a “matrix” with questions on one side and answers along the top (Figure 2). See Appendix B. Only three questions are open-ended; OCR converted most of Survey 1’s open-ended questions into close-ended questions and used popular answers from Survey 1 as answer choices in Survey 2.

About your GAL:

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Did your GAL respond when you reached out?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you trust your GAL?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did your GAL know what was best for you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 2

Amount of Youth Feedback

In total, OCR conducted 12 focus groups with 93 youth. Seven focus groups with 40 youth occurred at residential facilities, while five focus groups with 53 youth occurred at non-residential locations. OCR collected over 100 Survey 1s and nearly 200 Survey 2s.

2. OCR’s analysis of collected youth feedback

OCR reviewed the 67 pages of notes taken during the 12 focus groups and drafted a 17-page summary identifying nine themes discussed during focus groups. This paper identifies themes as topics discussed by youth during at least six of the 12 focus groups.

An OCR intern manually entered the responses to Survey 1 onto a spreadsheet, then conducted analysis. OCR simplified this process by posting Survey 2 online and purchasing five electronic devices for youth to complete online surveys during youth events.³⁴

3. Demographics of youth who completed surveys

Age

Both surveys asked youth to identify their age. The ages of youth who completed surveys ranged from eleven to over 20 (Figure 3). Most youth were 15-19 (77%), with 17 as the most common (24%) age.

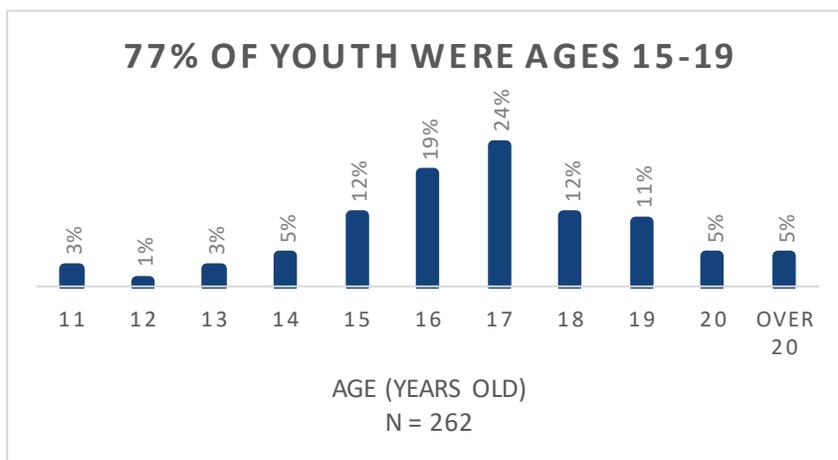


Figure 3

Case Type

Both surveys contained case type questions. Survey 1 asked youth whether they had a D&N case, a delinquency case, or a D&N and a delinquency case. See Appendix A. To reflect all case types a youth may have experienced, Survey 2 asked youth for which kind of case(s) they had their GAL and provided answer choices of D&N, delinquency, truancy, or other. See Appendix B. As illustrated by Figure 4, youth overwhelmingly reported involvement in D&N and delinquency proceedings.

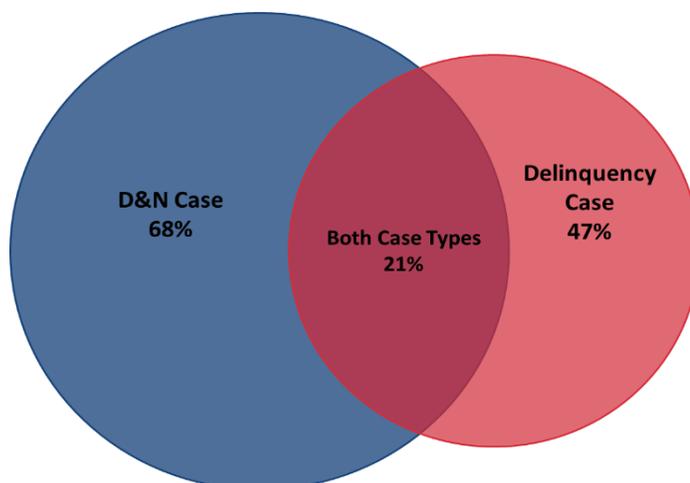


Figure 4

Multiple Surveys

Consistent with its goals of engaging and empowering youth, OCR did not prohibit youth from completing multiple surveys. Survey 2 asked whether youth previously completed a survey about their GAL. 5% of youth indicated they previously did so.

B. GAL PERFORMANCE DATA ADDRESSING YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

This subsection describes two types of GAL performance data related to youth participation representation collected by OCR: (1) youth interviews and (2) court observations.

1. Youth interviews

During OCR's annual attorney evaluation processes, OCR conducts youth reference interviews on attorneys seeking their triennial contract renewal. GALs seeking contract renewal provide OCR the names and contact information of two youth. OCR interviews at least one. Because the youth are self-selected by GALs and OCR obtains a broad spectrum of youth feedback via focus groups and surveys, this paper does not treat youth interviews as a randomized source of information. However, youth interviews remain a valuable source of qualitative information about individual youth experience with their GALs and courts.

2. Court observations

OCR completes at least three court observations of each renewing attorney. Among other criteria, the D&N Court Observation Form addresses whether:

- the child was present,
- the child was given a chance to address the court,
- the GAL addressed the GAL's efforts to get the child to attend court, and
- the GAL stated the child's position. See Appendix C.

As a limited number of court observations on a limited number of attorneys are completed annually, court observation data cannot accurately reflect the full scope of youth participation. However, court observations remain a valuable source of information to start to analyze district and/or GAL practices. This paper analyzes the five criteria listed above for children aged five and older.

C. YOUTH IN COURT REPORT

OCR's online case management and billing system (Court-Appointed Reimbursement Electronic System or "CARES") requires GALs to enter data indicating whether every child attended every hearing. OCR's resultant Youth in Court Report permits analysis of statewide, district, and individual attorney practice.³⁵

Historically and with an initial version of CARES, OCR analyzed the attendance of youth aged 12 and older at Permanency Planning and Benchmark Hearings. See Appendix D. OCR focused its analysis on these hearings and these ages because OCR believed that statutes then-requiring courts to consult with youth older than 12 about their permanency goals and the purposes of Benchmark Hearings promoted the highest rates of youth participation at these hearings.

In 2018, OCR launched a new version of CARES that allowed the creation of a more comprehensive analysis of youth participation in all hearing types, by district, and by child's age at the time of each hearing. Additionally, new CARES allows OCR to analyze *in camera* interviews of children as a means of promoting youth participation in court, a feature not available in initial CARES. For this paper, OCR used the Youth in Court Report to replicate its previous Benchmark and Permanency data and to begin to analyze the use of *in camera* interviews, age of youth participation in court, and youth participation in other hearing types.

IV. RESULTS OF E&Y DATA SOURCES: CONCLUSIONS, SUPPORTING DATA, AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of the E&Y data sources described in section III and analyzes such data through the themes of (A) GAL contact with youth, (B) GAL performance in general, (C) GAL performance related to court, and (D) youth court experiences. Most results are organized by conclusion, supporting data, and analysis.

A. CONTACT BETWEEN GALs AND YOUTH

This subsection presents the data and analysis surrounding the following conclusions: (1) youth valued GAL contact, (2) most youth preferred in-person and other traditional means of GAL contact, (3) most youth discussed a wide variety of topics with their GAL and valued those conversations, (4) youth perceptions of GAL responsiveness were mixed, and (5) most youth reported frequent GAL contact and wanted more GAL contact.

1. Youth valued GAL contact.

GAL contact with youth emerged as a theme in focus groups and surveys. When asked an open-ended question about GALs' primary roles and responsibilities, youth from ten focus groups referenced contact with youth.



2. Most youth preferred in-person and other traditional means of GAL contact.

Survey 2 asked youth to identify the best ways their GAL got to know them (Figure 5).³⁶

- Most (81%) youth responses identified in-person communication, demonstrating that expenditures of Colorado and GAL resources related to in-person communication (such as GAL planning, travel, and time) are well-spent.
- Overall, surveyed youth placed greater value in traditional means of contact such as in-person and telephone contact over more tech-based options such as texting and emailing.

Basic means of communication also emerged as a focus group theme. During nine focus groups, youth discussed telephone as an alternative means of contact.

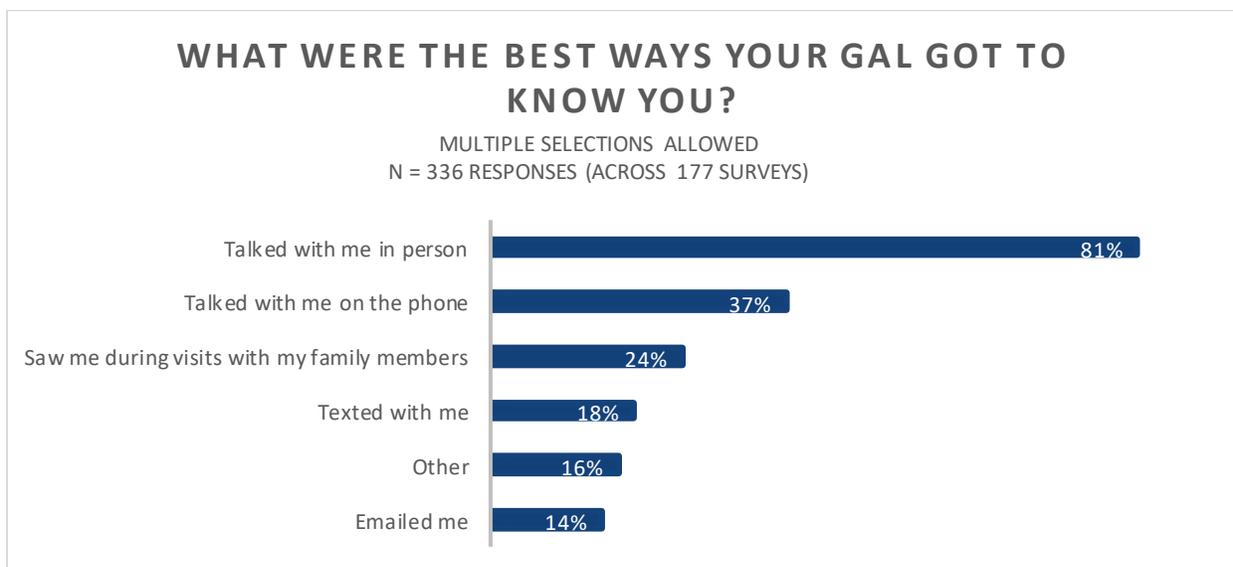


Figure 5

3. Most youth discussed and valued discussing a wide variety of topics with their GAL.

Topics discussed

Survey 1 asked youth to identify the topics discussed with their GAL (Figure 6).³⁷

- Youth most frequently identified the discussion topics of parents, where they were living, where they wanted to live, and their future plans.
- Notably, eight of the 12 answer choices accounted for at least 70% of the total responses, demonstrating that youth and GALs consistently discuss a variety of topics.

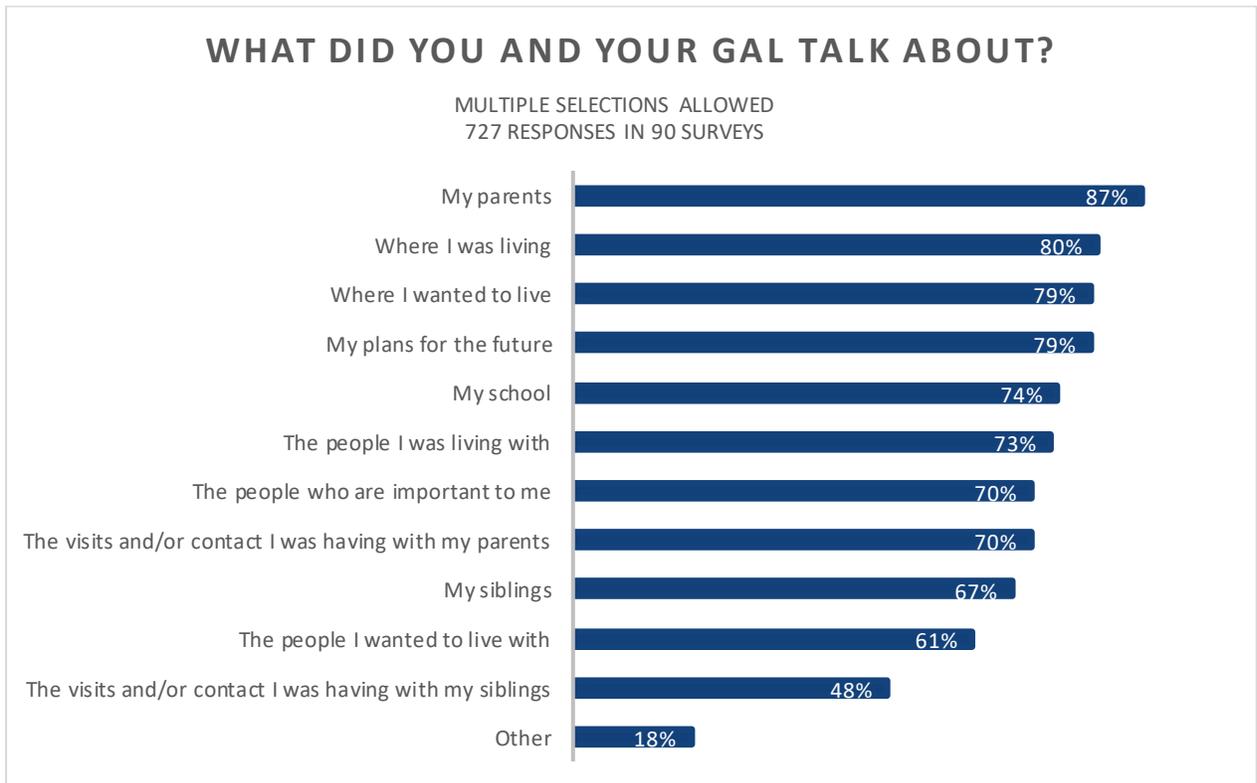


Figure 6

Value of topics discussed

To inform GAL practice, Survey 2 asked youth to identify *the most important topics* they discussed with their GAL (Figure 7).³⁸

- Youth most frequently indicated the important topics they discussed with their GAL were the people important to them, their future, where they were living or wanted to live, and their school/education.
- However, no topic earned an overwhelming majority of responses, demonstrating that all topics are important to youth.

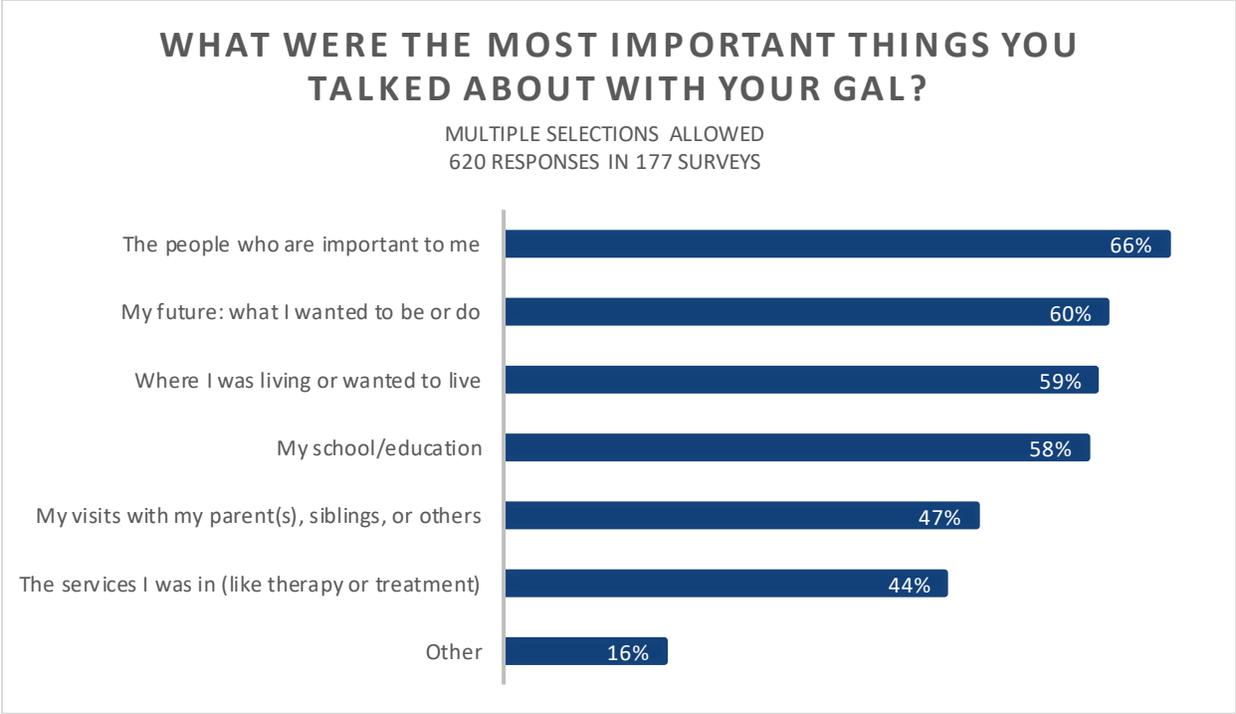


Figure 7

4. Youth perceptions of GAL responsiveness were mixed.

GAL responsiveness

In Surveys 1 and 2 combined, 169 of 235 youth (72%) indicated their GAL *always* or *usually* responded when they reached out. 28% indicated their GAL *sometimes* or *never* responded when they reached out (Figure 8).

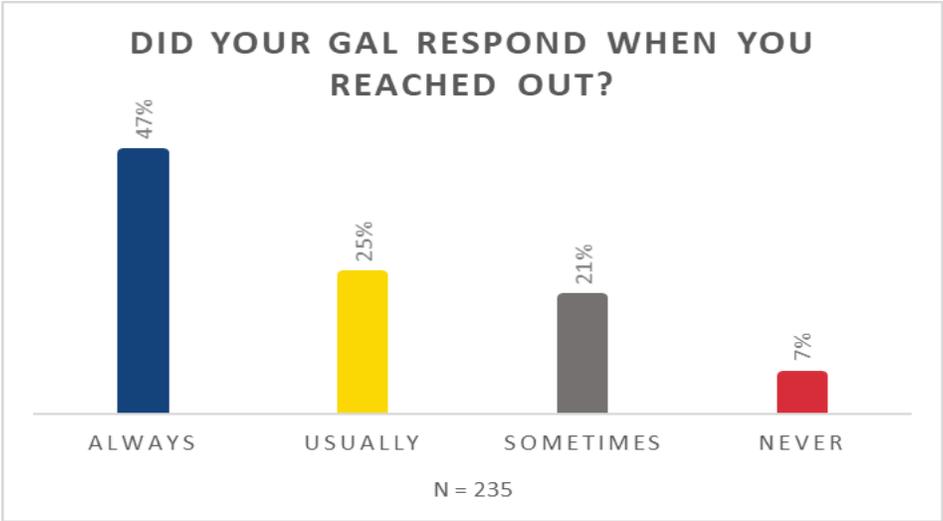


Figure 8

Although the question did not clarify what “not responding” meant (*e.g.*, not immediately responding or never responding), the fact that 28% of youth indicated that their GAL *sometimes* or *never* responded when they reached out raises some questions and/or warrants further consideration due to the CJD 04-06 requirement that GALs maintain ongoing communication with youth to continue to assess youths’ best interests, consider youths’ positions, and state youths’ positions during hearings.

GAL lack of responsiveness

During six focus groups, youth expressed concerns about GALs not answering telephones and/or returning calls. Youth comments related to GAL responsiveness during focus groups and in surveys were mixed.



Youth comments about GAL responsiveness included the following.

“My GAL makes me a priority at all times no matter what is happening in her personal life.”

“[Name] almost never answered my phone calls or questions. I only saw her in court.”

5. Most youth reported frequent GAL contact and wanted more GAL contact.

Frequency of contact

On Survey 1, 73 of 95 youth (77%) reported having contact with their GAL *at least once a month*. The remaining 23% reported having contact at an “other” frequency and provided examples including, “whenever I needed him,” every other month, every month and a half or so, only in meetings or at court, and in a severe need.

In Survey 2, 51% of youth who selected D&N case and 76% of youth who selected delinquency case reported having contact with their GAL *at least once a month* (Figure 9).

Three points are noteworthy.

- CJD 04-06 does not require GALs to have *monthly* contact with children.
 - CJD 04-06 requires GALs appointed in D&N cases to meet with children in placement as soon as reasonable but within 30 days of their initial appointment and as soon as reasonable but within 30 days of every change in placement, and to maintain contact and ongoing communication with children to continue to assess children’s best interests, consider children’s positions, and state children’s positions during hearings.
 - CJD 04-06 requires GALs appointed in JD cases to personally meet with juveniles as soon as possible after appointment in a setting that promotes meaningful communication and to make diligent efforts to personally meet detained juveniles as soon as possible but no later than seven days after appointment or the date detention commenced, and to maintain ongoing contact and communication with juveniles, and such contact that should not be limited to court appearances.
- The fact that a higher percentage of youth reported having monthly contact with their GAL in Survey 1 than in Survey 2 does not necessarily mean that there was a decline in actual or perceived contact between the two surveys as the identities, residential status, and case types of responding youth varied between the two surveys.
- Increased GAL contact in delinquency cases may be because delinquency cases typically have more frequent hearings and youth are required to attend delinquency hearings.

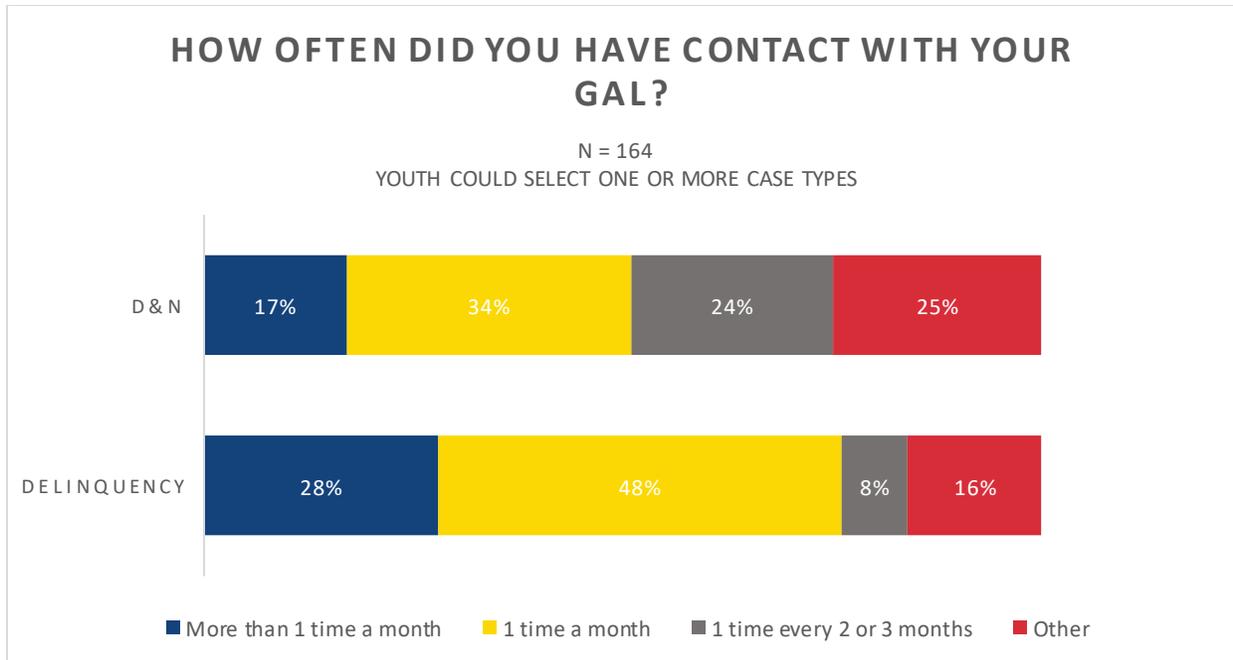


Figure 9

GALs contacting youth in every placement

Survey 1 asked youth whether their GAL visited them in every place they lived during their case. Answer choices were yes; no, my GAL did not visit me in one placement; and no, my GAL did not visit me in [] placements. 84% of youth indicated their GAL visited them in every placement.

Survey 2 asked if the GAL visited youth in every placement during their case. Answer choices were yes or no. 81% of youth who selected D&N case and 70% of youth who selected delinquency case indicated their GAL visited them in every placement (Figure 10).

Two points are noteworthy.

- CJD 04-06 requires GALs appointed in D&N cases to conduct an in-person meeting with youth as soon as reasonable but no later than 30 days of every change in placement but does not contain the same requirement for GALs appointed in delinquency cases.³⁹
- While the fact that 19% of youth who selected D&N case reported their GAL did not visit them in every placement raises some questions about GAL compliance with CJD 04-06’s in-person visit requirements, many youth who participated in OCR youth events and completed surveys were living in residential facilities which may have satisfied CJD 04-06’s 100-mile waiver. However, as explained in section I.C., even when the 100-mile waiver applies, CJD 04-06 states GALs shall endeavor to see youth in placement and indicates OCR will pay reasonable costs associated such endeavors.

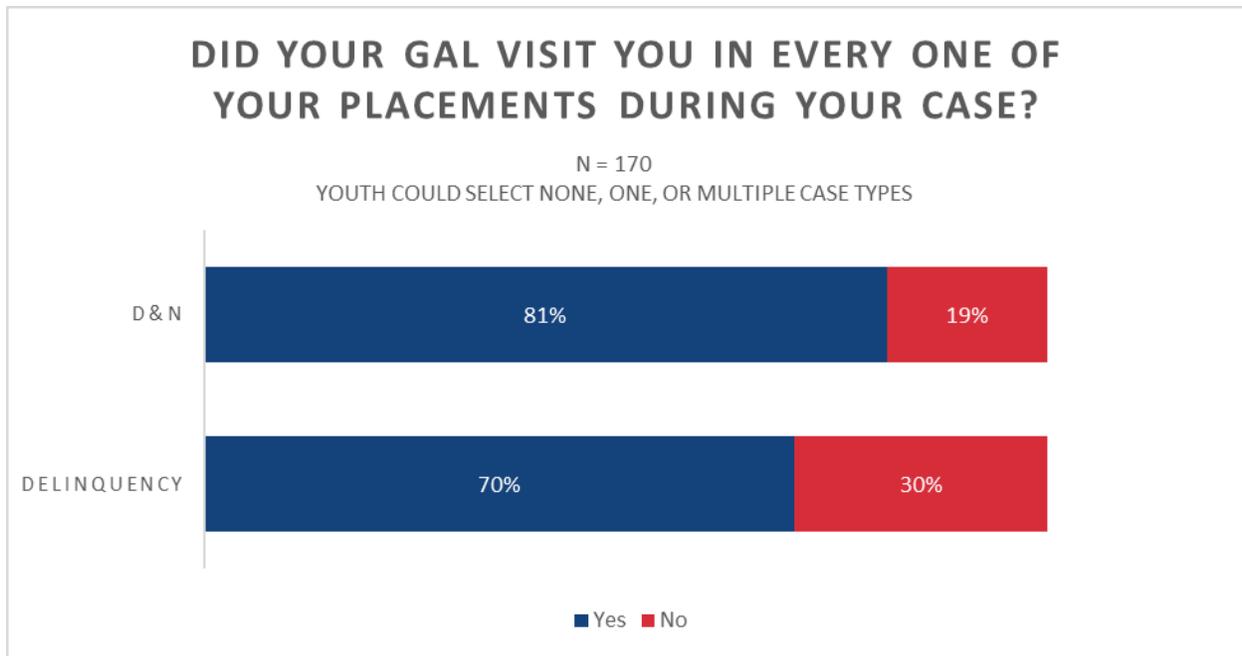


Figure 10

Youth desiring more GAL contact

Youth from all 12 focus groups indicated they wanted more GAL contact. Seven focus groups discussed barriers to GAL contact such as placements that do not permit youth to contact their GAL, GALs' need to respond to other clients who are in crisis, distance between GAL and youth residences, and high GAL caseloads.



Youth comments about their desire for more GAL contact included the following.

"[H]e does a great job and [...] I just wish I could see him more than once a month."

"She had little contact with me while I lived in [another state] for almost two years. She never called to see how I was doing. After I came back, she didn't contact me either. She is only in contact with me when we have our PST meetings or absolutely needed."

GAL contact requirements

During focus groups, youth recommended that GALs be required to see youth within certain timeframes and were mixed about the duration of the timeframe. Nine focus groups discussed the frequency with which GALs should be required to see youth. (The total of focus groups listed below exceeds nine because some of the nine focus groups provided more than one recommendation related to the frequency of GAL contact.)

- During six focus groups, youth recommended that GALs be required to see youth two to three times a month.
- During five focus groups, youth recommended monthly contact.
- During four focus groups, youth recommended that GAL contact requirements be tied to court (such as before, during, and after court or some combination thereof).

Correlation between frequency of GAL contact and other youth feedback

As discussed in sections IV.B.1., IV.B.2., and IV.D.1., Survey 2 data also showed a correlation between the frequency of GAL contact and youth perception of whether their GAL knew what was best for them, whether youth trusted their GAL, and whether youth wanted to attend court.

B. GAL PERFORMANCE IN GENERAL

This subsection presents the data and analysis surrounding the following conclusions: (1) most youth valued GAL investigations, (2) youth satisfaction with GAL investigations was mixed and related to the frequency of GAL contact, (3) most youth trusted their GAL, and (4) youth referenced their feelings and valued GAL relationships, relationship-building skills, and help.

1. Most youth valued GAL investigations. Youth satisfaction with GAL investigations was mixed and related to the frequency of GAL contact.

Value of GAL investigations

During focus groups, youth recognized the importance of GAL investigations. When asked to identify GALs' primary roles and responsibilities, youth at ten focus groups referenced investigation and/or investigatory tasks.

Satisfaction with GAL investigations

Survey 1 asked whether their GALs got to know youth well enough to understand what was best for youth, and provided answer choices of yes or no. 86% of youth indicated their GAL got to know them well enough to understand what was best for them.

Survey 2 asked youth whether their GAL knew what was best for them. Answer choices were always, usually, sometimes, or never. 64% of youth reported their GAL *always* or *usually* knew what was best for them.

Youth satisfaction with GAL investigations was mixed during focus groups and in open-ended survey questions.



Youth comments about GAL investigations included the following.

“My GAL reviewed my reports and knows more about me than I know about myself.”

“GALs should get more than one side of the story.”

Relationship between frequency of GAL contact and youth perception of whether their GAL knew what was best for them

Survey 2 revealed a relationship between youth perception of whether their GAL knew what was best for them and the frequency of GAL contact (Figure 11).

- Nearly all (94%) youth who reported having GAL contact *more than once a month* also reported their GAL *always* or *usually* knew what was best for them.
- Similarly, the largest percentage of youth who indicated their GAL *never* knew what was best for them (10%) also reported having GAL contact once every three months.

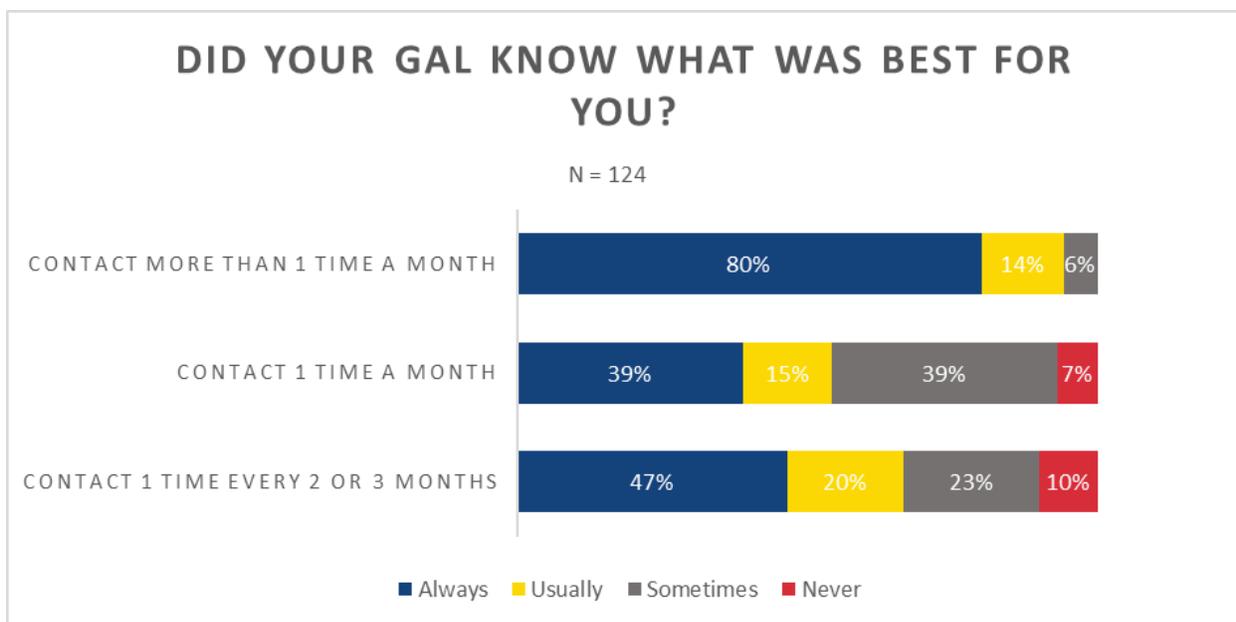


Figure 11

2. Most youth trusted their GAL.

Survey 1 asked youth whether they trusted their GAL and provided answer choices of yes because [] or no because []. 86% of youth indicated they trusted their GAL.



Reasons youth trusted their GAL included the following.

“She has been behind me from the start.”

“She was always honest with me and answered all my questions the best she could.”

“She does what she tells me and my sister [that] she’s going to do. Also, I had her for five years now.”

Survey 2 asked whether youth trusted their GAL and provided answer choices of always, usually, sometimes, or never. 73% of youth reported they *always* or *usually* trusted their GAL (Figure 12).

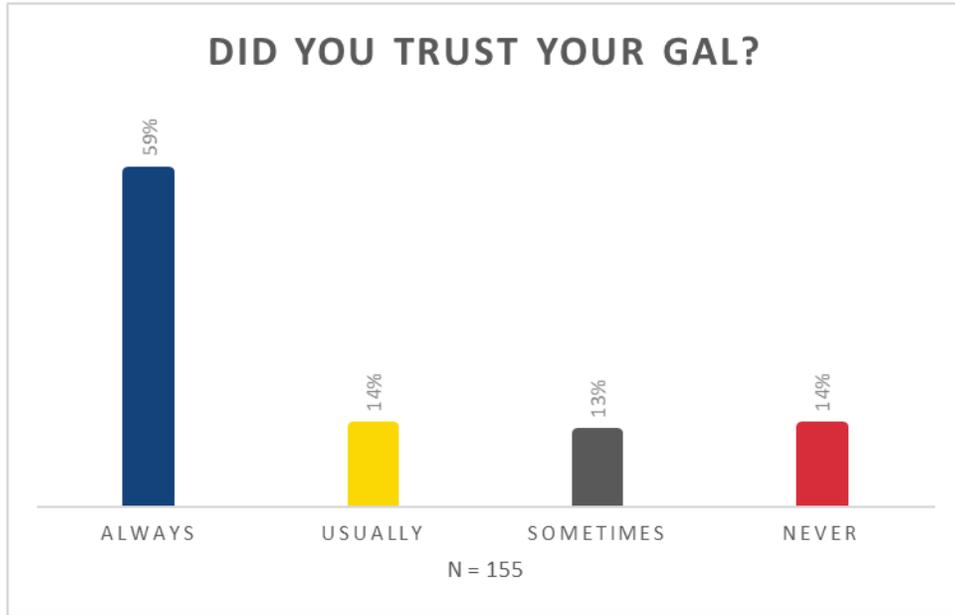


Figure 12

Relationship between frequency of GAL contact and youth trust of their GAL

Survey 2 also revealed a relationship between youth trust in their GAL and the frequency of their GAL contact (Figure 13). Nearly all (97%) youth who reported having GAL contact *more than once a month* also reported that they *always* or *usually* trusted their GAL.

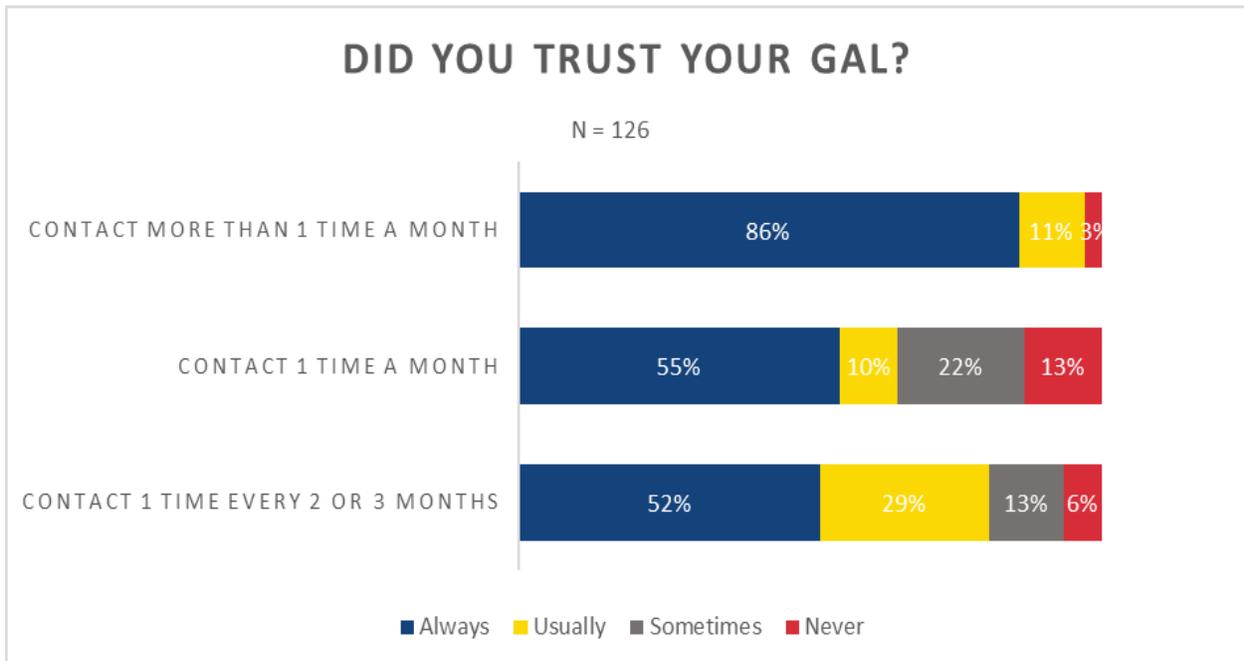


Figure 13

3. Youth referenced their feelings and valued GAL relationships, relationship-building skills, and help.

Feelings

During the largest focus group (20 youth), OCR asked youth to write their responses to questions on sticky notes. One question asked, "What should youth with D&N and delinquency cases know?" Many youth answers addressed youth feelings.



What should youth with D&N and/or delinquency cases know?

"They matter."

"They are not alone."

"People care about them and understand them."

GAL relationships and relationship-building skills

GAL relationships and relationship-building skills such as listening and connecting emerged as a theme of youth comments during focus groups and in surveys.



Youth comments about GAL relationships and relationship-building included the following.

"My GAL is awesome. She really seems to understand what I am going through. She shared that she has been through similar stuff. I look at my GAL and think, 'Dang, I could be like her.'"

"My GAL was a caring mother figure. That was nice. But I needed more. Ask me why I ran, don't just say, 'Oh, you ran again.' I ran because I couldn't use the laundry. The group home director said I slapped her. I never did. Believe me. Listen to me."

GAL help

GAL help also emerged as a theme of youth comments during focus groups and in surveys.



Youth comments related to GAL help included the following.

"My GAL and her consultant always make sure I'm happy and safe. They actually work towards my best interests and are helping me get where I want to be."

"I asked my GAL for help getting a warrant taken care of. My GAL didn't. My GAL just said, 'stay out of trouble.' My GAL should have told me, 'this is what you have, this is what you need to do, these are the resources.'"

C. YOUTH FEEDBACK REGARDING GAL COURT PERFORMANCE

This subsection presents the data and analysis surrounding the following conclusions.

- 1. Most youth indicated their GAL talked with them about what happens and/or would happen in court.*
- 2. Most youth indicated their GAL asked them what they wanted the judge to know.*
- 3. Most youth indicated their GAL talked with them about their right to attend court.*
- 4. Most youth indicated their GAL always or usually asked them if they wanted to attend court. Less than half of youth who did not always want to attend court indicated their GAL asked them why they did not want to attend court.*
- 5. Most youth indicated their GAL told the court what they wanted. OCR observed most GALs telling courts what youth wanted.*
- 6. Most youth reported their GAL talked with them about what happened in court.*

While some aspects of court performance are standard across case types, others are not. While GALs appointed in D&N and delinquency cases are expected to consult with children in a developmentally appropriate manner and consider children's positions in determining children's best interests, only GALs appointed in D&N cases are typically required to state children's positions during hearings. Only GALs appointed in D&N cases are required to endeavor to maximize a child's involvement in court proceedings when consistent with a child's best interests by discussing the court process, ascertaining whether the child wishes to appear in court, and identifying and advocating for the elimination of barriers to the child's court attendance. Moreover, only GALs appointed in D&N cases are encouraged to conduct a post-hearing follow up with children regarding the outcome of the hearing and, if applicable, the child's experience at the hearing.

Figure 14 demonstrates surveyed youth reported remarkable consistency in GAL performance related to court, regardless of case type. The only notable exception was that youth with a delinquency case indicated their GAL talked with them about what happened in court more consistently than youth with a D&N case.

Figure 14 summarizes Survey 2 results related to GAL court performance areas and subsections following Figure 14 analyze each performance area.

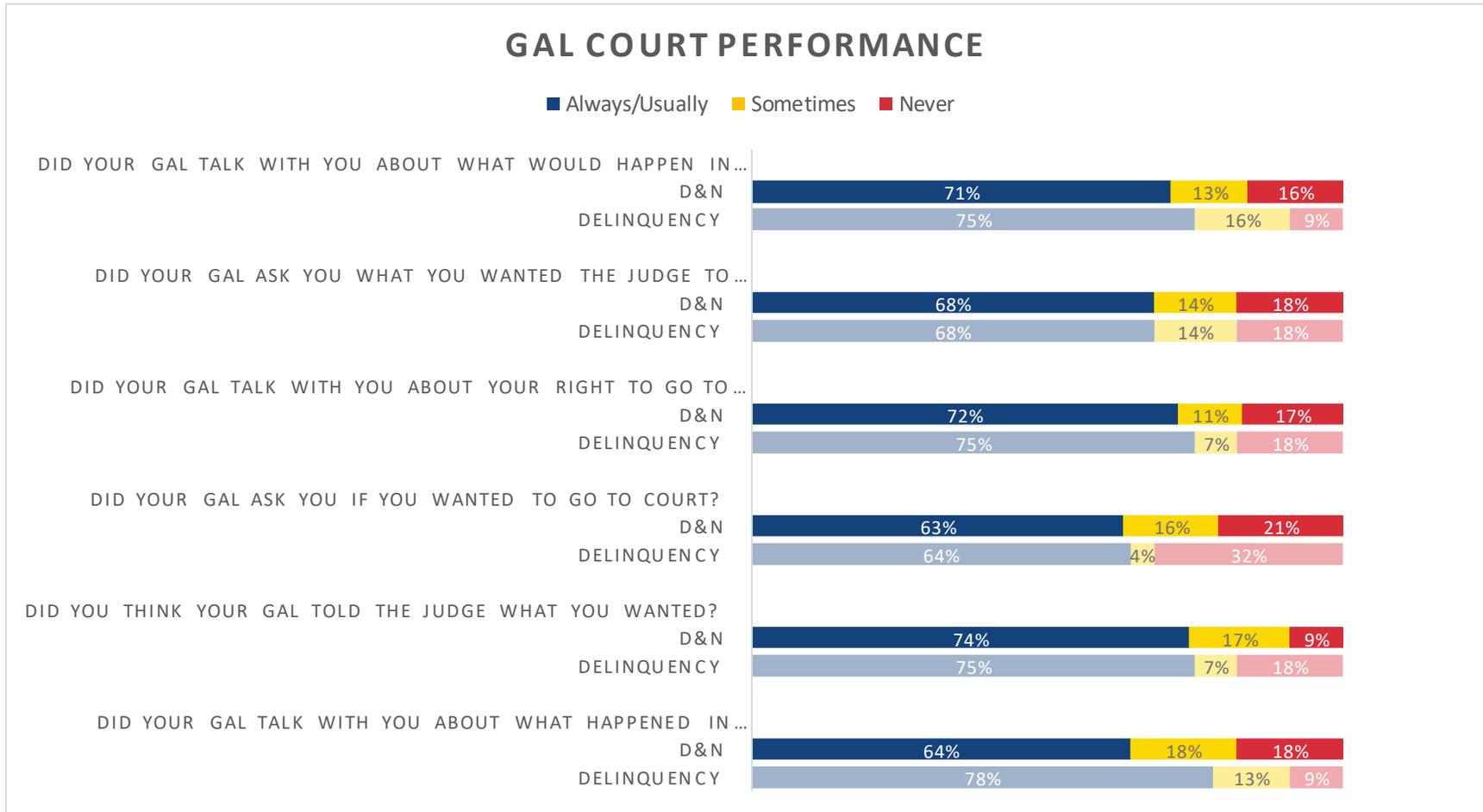


Figure 14

1. Most youth indicated their GAL talked with them about what happens and/or would happen in court.

Survey 1 asked youth whether their GAL talked with them about what happens in court. Answer choices were yes or no. 86% of youth indicated their GAL talked with them about what happens in court.

In Survey 2, 71% of youth who selected D&N case and 75% of youth who selected delinquency case indicated their GAL *always* or *usually* talked with them about what would happen in court (Figure 14).

The fact that 29% of youth who selected D&N case indicated their GAL sometimes or never spoke with them about what would happen in court raises some questions about GAL compliance with the CJD 04-06 requirement that GALs appointed in D&N cases to try to maximize youth involvement in court proceedings when consistent with youths' best interests by discussing court processes.

2. Most youth indicated their GAL asked them what they wanted the judge to know.

Survey 1 asked whether GALs asked youth what they wanted to have happen in their case. Answer choices were yes or no. 86% of youth indicated their GAL asked them what they wanted to have happen in their case.

In Survey 2, 68% of youth who selected D&N case and 68% of youth who selected delinquency case indicated their GAL *always* or *usually* asked them what they wanted their judge to know (Figure 14).

Two points are noteworthy.

- Youth who selected D&N case indicated that their GAL always, usually, sometimes or never asked what they wanted their judge to know at similar rates to youth who selected delinquency case, although CJD 04-06 only requires GALs appointed in *D&N cases* to state youth positions on the record.
- The fact that 32% of youth who selected D&N case indicated their GAL sometimes or never asked them what they wanted their judge to know raises some questions about GAL compliance with the CJD 04-06 requirement that GALs appointed in D&N cases state youth positions on the record.



Youth comments about youth voice included the following.

"My opinion matters no matter what."

"When GALs represent the best interests of youth, they should take youth voice into account and not belittle youth voice."

"My GAL asked me where I wanted to go... a group home or a foster home. They could not find a group home in [one city], so they put me in a foster home in [another city]. It made me feel good when I had a choice."

"My GAL looked at my charges and made assumptions about what my GAL had to do. My GAL goes for one thing with all kids. My GAL did not ask me what I wanted. She treats all cases the same."

3. Most youth indicated their GAL talked with them about their right to attend court.

Survey 1 asked if GALs talked to youth about their right to go to court. Answer choices were yes or no. 87% of youth indicated their GAL talked with them about their right to attend court.

In Survey 2, 72% of youth who selected D&N case and 75% of youth who selected delinquency case indicated their GAL always or usually talked with them about their right to attend court (Figure 14).

Two points are noteworthy.

- Youth who selected D&N case indicated that their GAL always, usually, sometimes or never talked with them about their right to attend court at similar rates to youth who selected delinquency case, although youth with delinquency cases are required to attend court.
- The fact that 28% of youth who selected D&N case indicated their GAL talked with them about their right to attend court raises some questions about GAL compliance with the CJD 04-06 requirement that GALs appointed in D&N cases try to maximize youth involvement in court proceedings when consistent with youths' best interests by discussing court processes.

4. Most youth indicated their GAL always or usually asked them if they wanted to attend court.

Survey 2 asked whether GALs asked youth if they wanted to attend court (Figure 14). Answer choices were always, usually, sometimes, and never. 63% of youth who selected D&N case and 64% of youth who selected delinquency case reported their GAL *always* or *usually* asked them if they wanted to attend court. 21% of youth who selected D&N case and 32% of youth who selected delinquency case indicated their GAL never asked them if they wanted to attend court.

Additionally, Survey 2 asked youth who reported they did not *always* want to attend court if their GAL asked them *why* they did not want to attend court. Of the youth who indicated that they did not want to attend court always, 46% who selected D&N case and 32% who selected delinquency case indicated that their GAL asked them why they did not want to attend court.

Two points warrant consideration.

- The low percentage of youth who selected delinquency case and indicated their GAL always or usually asked them if they wanted to attend court (64%) and/or indicated their GAL asked them why they did not always want to attend court (32%) may be because youth with delinquency cases are required to attend delinquency hearings.
- The low percentage of youth who selected D&N case and indicated that their GAL always or usually asked them if they wanted to attend court (63%) and/or indicated their GAL asked them why they did not want to attend court always (46%) raises some questions about GAL compliance with the CJD 04-06 requirement that GALs appointed in D&N cases try to maximize youth involvement in court proceedings when consistent with youths' best interests by discussing court processes, determining whether youth want to attend court, and identifying and advocating for the elimination of barriers to the youth court attendance.

5. Most youth indicated their GAL told the court what they wanted. OCR observed most GALs telling courts what youth wanted.

Youth feedback about GALs telling courts what they want

During seven focus groups, youth indicated GALs should always tell courts what youth want.

Survey 1 asked youth whether their GAL told the court *what they wanted to have happen* in their case. Potential answers were yes or no. 81% of youth reported their GAL told the court what they wanted to have happen in their case.

Survey 2 asked youth if they thought their GAL told the judge *what they wanted* and provided answer choices of always, usually, sometimes, and never (Figure 14). 74% of youth who selected D&N case and 75% of youth who selected delinquency case indicated their GAL *always* or *usually* told the judge what they wanted.



Youth comments about GALs telling courts what they want included the following.

"My GAL does not listen to me. When we go to court, I tell my GAL what I want--like I want to be on an ankle monitor. My GAL said she would think about it. Then, she didn't say it in court. That hurt my feelings."

OCR observations of GALs telling courts what youth want

During FY18-19 and 19-20, OCR observed most GALs stating youth positions (Figure 15). Notably, OCR court observations consider whether GALs state the position of children *aged five or older*, an age range much broader than the ages of surveyed youth. However, because OCR's court observation data includes children's birthdates, a more refined analysis by age may be possible in the future.

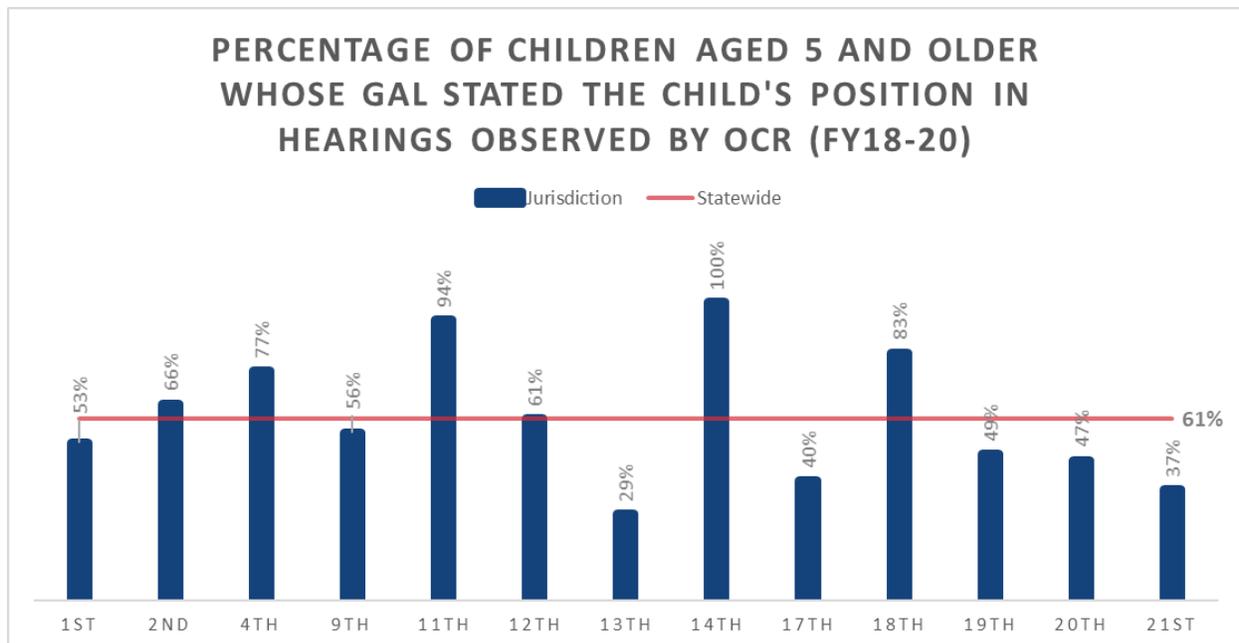


Figure 15

6. Most youth reported their GAL talked with them about what happened in court.

Survey 1 asked whether GALs spoke with youth about what happened in court. Answer choices were yes or no. 91% of youth indicated their GAL spoke with them about what happened in court.

In Survey 2, 64% of youth who selected D&N case and 78% of youth who selected delinquency case indicated their GAL *always* or *usually* talked with them about what happened in court (Figure 14).

Two points are noteworthy.

- The high percentage of youth who selected delinquency case and indicated that their GAL always or usually talked with them about what happened in court may be due to the fact that youth with delinquency cases and their GALs typically attend court together.
- The low percentage of youth who selected D&N case and indicated their GAL always or usually talked with them about what happened in court raises some questions and/or warrants further consideration due to the CJD recommendation that GALs conduct post-hearing follow-ups regarding outcomes and the children's experiences at hearings.

D. YOUTH EXPERIENCES IN COURT

This subsection presents the data and analysis surrounding the following conclusions.

1. *Most youth wanted to attend court.*
2. *Youth reported mixed rates of court attendance. OCR data reflected low rates of youth court attendance and GAL statements of efforts to get youth to attend court.*
3. *Youth reported mixed rates of speaking in court. OCR observed low rates of youth speaking in court.*
4. *Youth feedback about whether adults listened to them in court was mixed.*
5. *Most youth understood what happened in court.*

Figure 16 summarizes Survey 2 results related to each of the above conclusions, while subsections following Figure 16 present data and analysis related to each conclusion.

YOUTH EXPERIENCES IN COURT

■ Always/Usually
 ■ Sometimes
 ■ Never

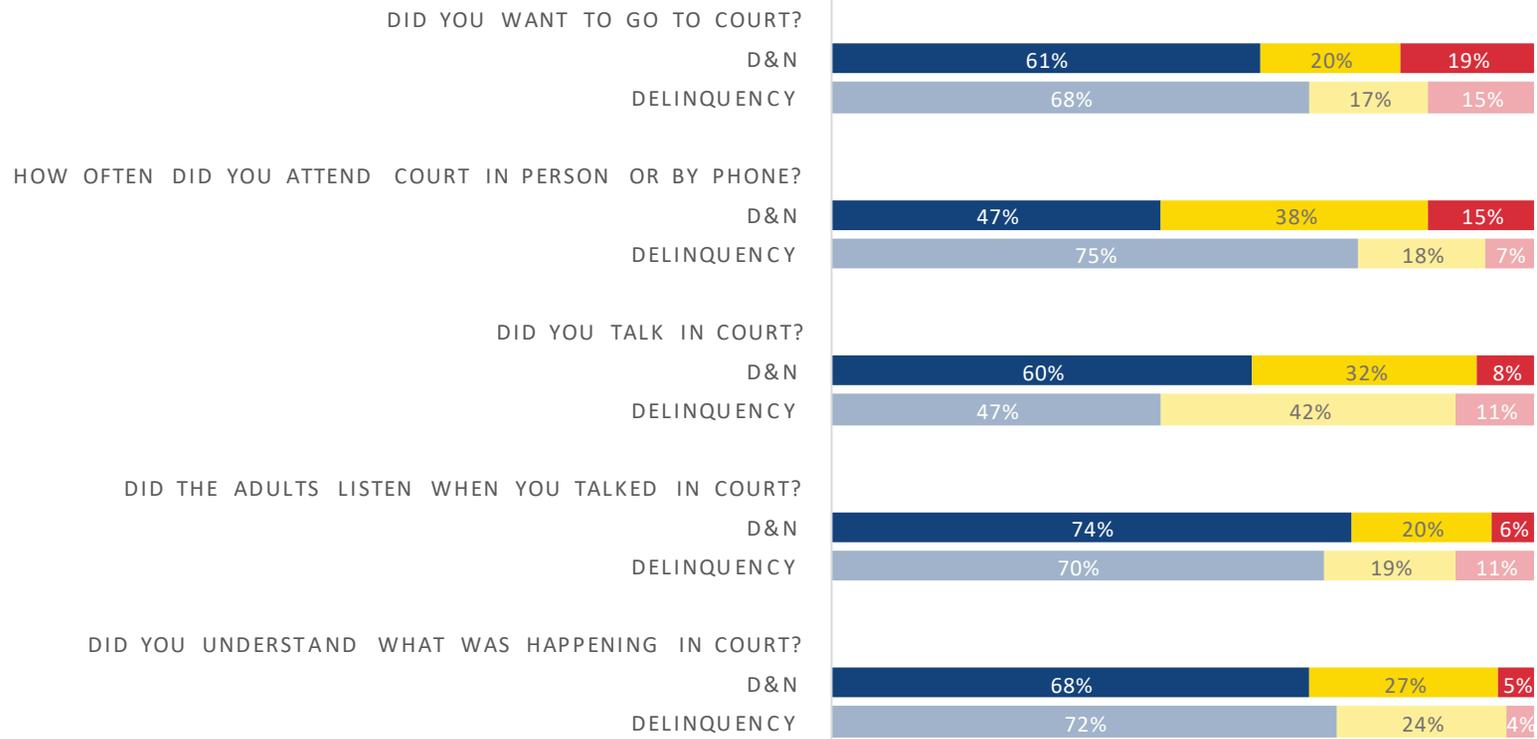


Figure 16

1. Most youth wanted to attend court.

In Survey 2, 61% of youth who selected D&N case and 68% of youth who selected delinquency case indicated they *always* or *usually* wanted to attend court (Figure 16).

Reasons for participation

During six focus groups, youth provided reasons for youth participation comprising themes of obtaining information, ownership, self-advocacy, and responsibility.



Youth comments about youth participation included the following comments and related to the following themes.

Wanting information: *"I like going to court. It keeps me updated about my case."*

Ownership: *"It's our lives. We know our story best. It may be a GAL's or a caseworker's job, but it's our lives."*

Self-advocacy: *"Statements about youth coming from youth are powerful." "The more we participate, the more we know how to have a voice." "If we are not there, we cannot say what we want." "We need to be able to respond to false accusations."*

Responsibility: *"Being in court shows the court we are trying." "I have to go to court because I have a delinquency case. I like having to go to court. It is my responsibility. I have to take accountability for what I did." "I have to find a way to get there. It is my responsibility... getting there and not having a warrant."*

Wanting information

Youths' desire for information extended beyond that which could be gleaned in court. During focus groups, youth expressed interest in information about: everything, details, what is happening in court, whether their parents would be attending court hearings, case-related meetings, their rights, rules and consequences, goals and plans, their files and documents, their siblings, and updates and changes.



Youth comments about wanting information included the following.

"I want to know "[e]very little thing. I don't care what it is. I just want to know. I don't want to be left out."

"Court was good. My dad was there and I just wanted to bawl my eyes out just seeing him. I would like to know if he is going to be there ahead of time. But I would still attend court."

"I mish [my GAL] talked more about the consequences my family was facing."

During focus groups, youth also indicated that they do not need to be protected from case-related information.



Youth comments about youth not needing protecting from case-related matters included the following.

"It's our case. It is about us. If someone can't say something in front of us, they should not say it at all."

"They wouldn't let me in the courtroom to hear my dad talking about what he did to me and my brother. I deserve to know what was going on. I wanted to hear my dad talk about what he did to me and my brother and see if he showed regret and understood what he did. I deserved to get closure." When another youth responded, "They probably didn't want to upset you," the original youth replied, "I've already been through it."

"I was not allowed in a meeting for 30 minutes. It made me wonder what kind of secrets they were telling. They were laughing, with me outside the room."

Reasons not to attend court

When youth indicated they wanted to attend court *less than always*, Survey 2 asked why (Figure 17. The "JD" in Figure 17 is an abbreviation for juvenile delinquency case.) The most popular answers were school, not wanting to see parent(s), and other. Other reasons included youth perceptions that court is scary, stressful, and/or boring.

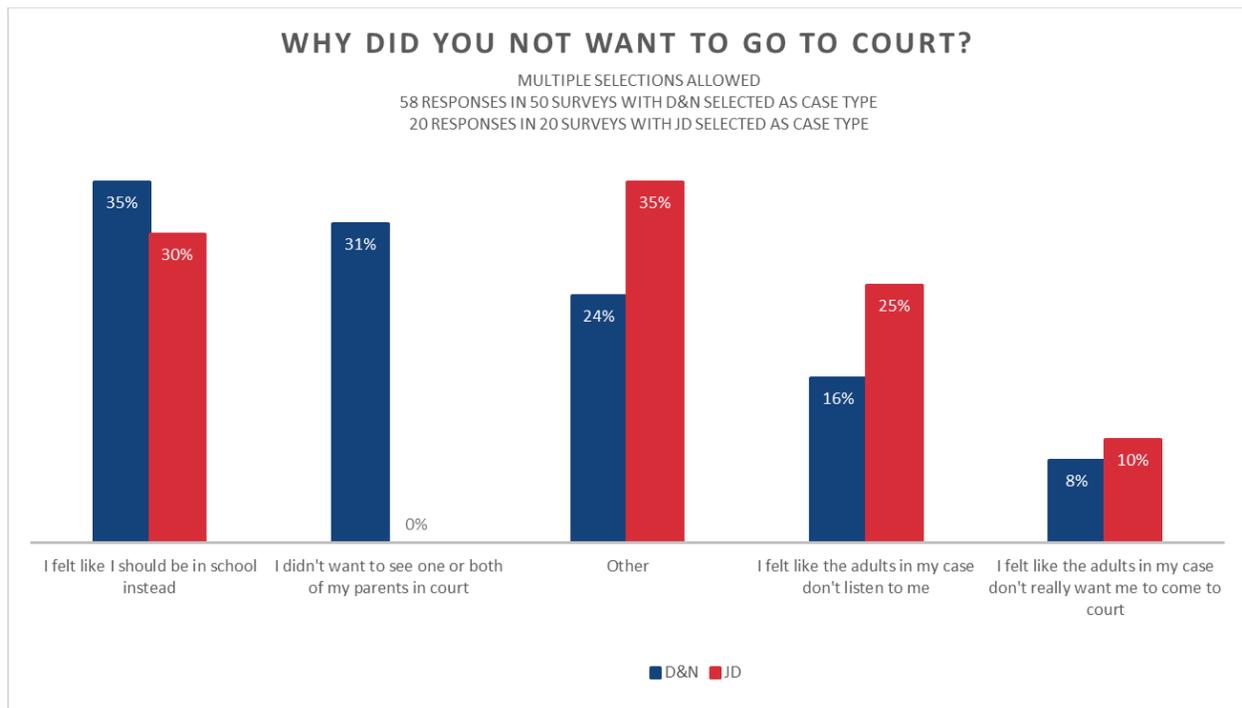


Figure 17



In response to a question asking why youth did not want to attend court, one youth responded, *"I didn't want my family to see me in a courtroom in cuffs or shackles."*

Relationship between frequency of GAL contact and youth desire to attend court

Survey 2 also revealed a relationship between youth desire to attend court and the frequency of GAL contact. Youth reporting more frequent GAL contact were more likely to report wanting to attend court. As an example, 68% of youth who reported having GAL contact more than once a month and 71% of youth who reported monthly GAL contact indicated they *always or usually* wanted to attend court, compared to 42% of youth reporting bimonthly contact and 35% of youth reporting contact once every three months.

Court experiences

During focus groups, youth provided mixed feedback about their court experiences.



Youth comments about their court experiences included the following.

Positive: *"My court is helping me become a better person." "My magistrate was awesome because she asked me if I was okay and said she was glad I was there." "My judge will say things over and over again until it sinks in."*

Negative: *"Courts think we are stupid kids, but two judges are good." "My court promised that I am getting out of placement four times, but nothing was done."*

Improving court

During focus groups, youth identified the following ideas for making court more accessible and/or comfortable: arranging transportation to court, opening and/or closing courtrooms, increasing communication with youth during court, having food, and having therapy dogs.



Youth ideas for increasing court accessibility and comfort included the following.

"There should be a law that transportation is provided for youth to attend court anywhere unless your family can do it. If no one can do it, there should be a system."

"Kids should not be in other kids' hearings."

"There should be fewer people. But when there are a lot of people, I pretend they are there to support me."

"Let me speak my ideas to the court."

Alternatives to in-person court attendance

In surveys and in focus groups, youth discussed appearing in court via telephone, writing a letter to a judge, meeting with a judge in a restaurant, and receiving a video of court proceedings.



Youth comments about alternatives to in-person court appearance included the following.

"It's hard to express our concerns over the phone. You hear words, they ask you if you understand, then they set things over for a new hearing."

"I got to sit down and have Frosties with my judge."

"If youth are afraid to see their family in person, maybe they could get a video of the court session."

2. Youth reported mixed rates of court attendance. OCR data reflected low rates of youth court attendance and GAL statements of efforts to get youth to attend court.

Youth reports about youth court attendance

In Survey 1, 87% of youth indicated they attended court *at least once*. In Survey 2, youth who selected delinquency case reported they *always or usually* attended court at a significantly higher rate (75%) than youth with GALs in D&N cases (47%). This difference is likely because youth with delinquency cases are required to attend court.

OCR observations of youth court attendance

During FY18-20, OCR observed low rates of youth court attendance (Figure 18).

- Figure 18 demonstrates that 15% of children aged five and older statewide attended D&N hearings observed by OCR.
- During FY18-20, OCR completed court observations in the districts included in Figure 18. Districts not referenced in Figure 18 were not observed by OCR in FY18-20.
- OCR's observations considered whether children *aged five or older* attended hearings, an age range much broader than the ages of surveyed youth. However, because OCR's court observation data includes children's birthdates, a more refined analysis by age may be possible in the future. For this paper, OCR's Youth in Court Report may provide a better representation of youth attendance at hearings.

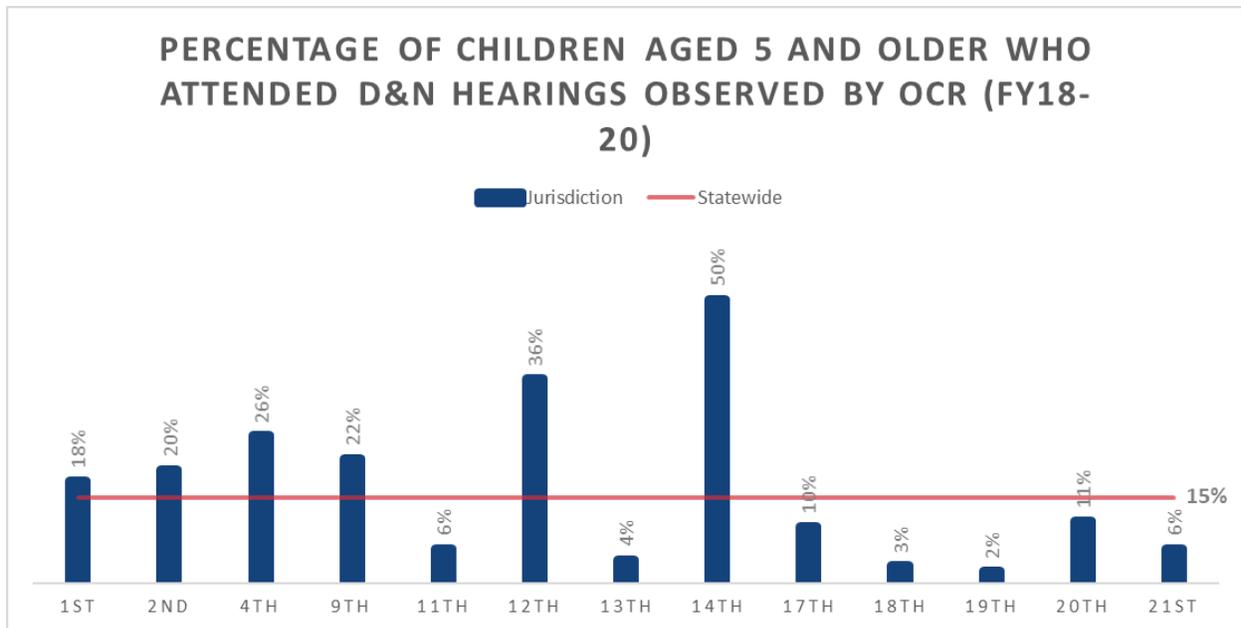


Figure 18

OCR Youth in Court Data

The last OCR Youth in Court Report from the initial version of CARES revealed that 43% of children aged 12 or older attended their Permanency Planning and Benchmark Hearings between July 1, 2017, and March 31, 2018. See Appendix D. The first OCR Youth in Court Report from the current version of CARES revealed that 30% of children aged 12 or older attended Permanency Planning and Benchmark Hearings between July 1, 2019, and March 31, 2020. See Appendix E. While OCR cannot state the reasons for this decline with any degree of certainty, OCR identified the following potential contributing factors.

- Children who previously attended Permanency Planning and Benchmark Hearings may be attending *in camera* interviews, as such interviews were recently addressed in Colorado D&N caselaw and recently authorized by current CARES. However, as illustrated below in this section, OCR CARES data does not show high rates of *in camera* interviews.
- In a 2018 study of youth attendance at Colorado D&N proceedings, judicial officers indicated OCR’s “increased promotion of youth-inclusion practices” resulted in efforts to increase youth court attendance.⁴⁰ In the years leading up to that study, OCR conducted stakeholder surveys, trainings, and other programming geared towards youth court participation. Moreover, historically and with initial CARES, OCR ran its Youth in Court Report and disseminated that report to courts and GALs on a quarterly basis. In recent quarters, OCR has been unable to run and disseminate its Youth in Court Report during the transition to current CARES.
- OCR’s inability to run and disseminate its Youth in Court Report, as well as changes in and adjustments to current CARES, may have also contributed to less consistency in GAL reporting youth in court data.

OCR’s preliminary analysis of Youth in Court data for children of *all ages* and *all D&N hearing types* also reflected low rates of youth attendance (Figures 19-20).

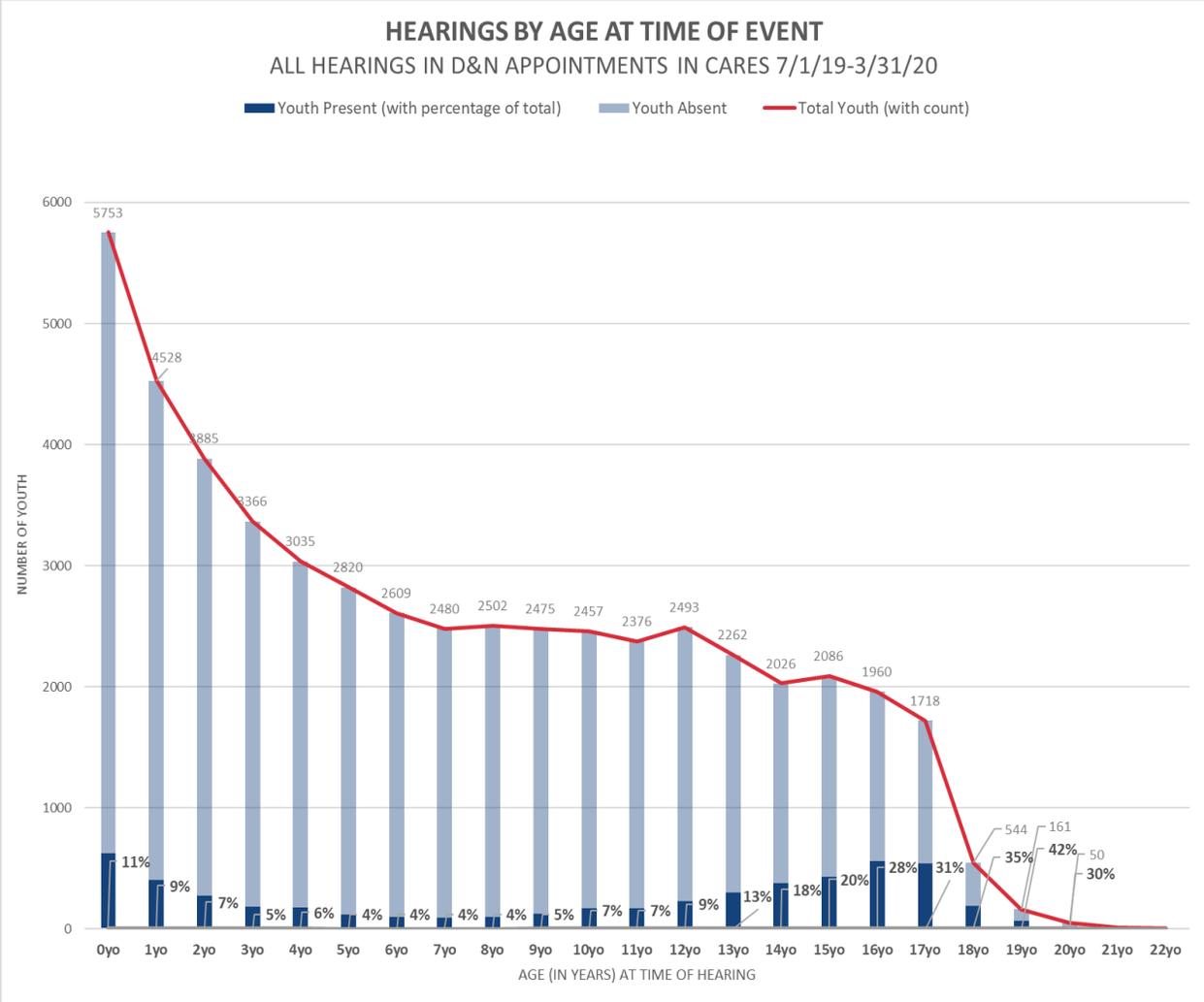


Figure 19

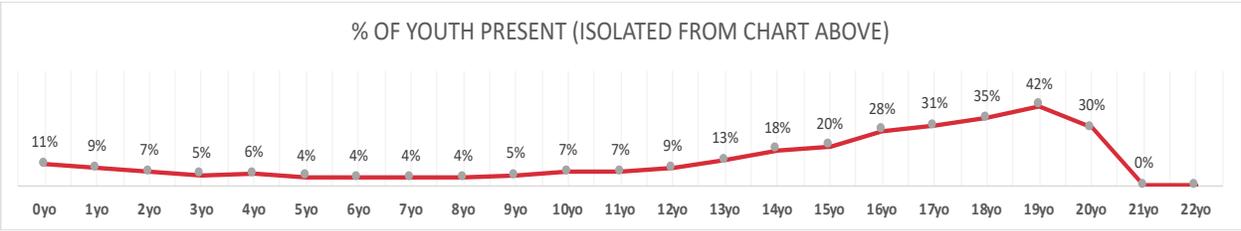


Figure 20

To engage in a more meaningful analysis of Youth in Court Report data, OCR analyzed the D&N hearing types with the highest rates of youth participation (Figure 21).⁴¹

- The rate of youth attendance at Benchmark Hearings is 44.2%, a rate that appears to be underreported because the goals of Benchmark Hearings typically include preparing youth for emancipation and are specifically designed to include youth.⁴² While OCR cannot state the reasons for the low rate of youth attendance at Benchmark Hearings with any degree of certainty, OCR would be interested in determining whether some Benchmark Hearings were entered into CARES as Permanency Planning or Review Hearings.
- While the rate of youth attendance at Permanency Planning Hearings is low (11.7%), the rate of youth attendance at Review Hearings is not much lower (9.7%).

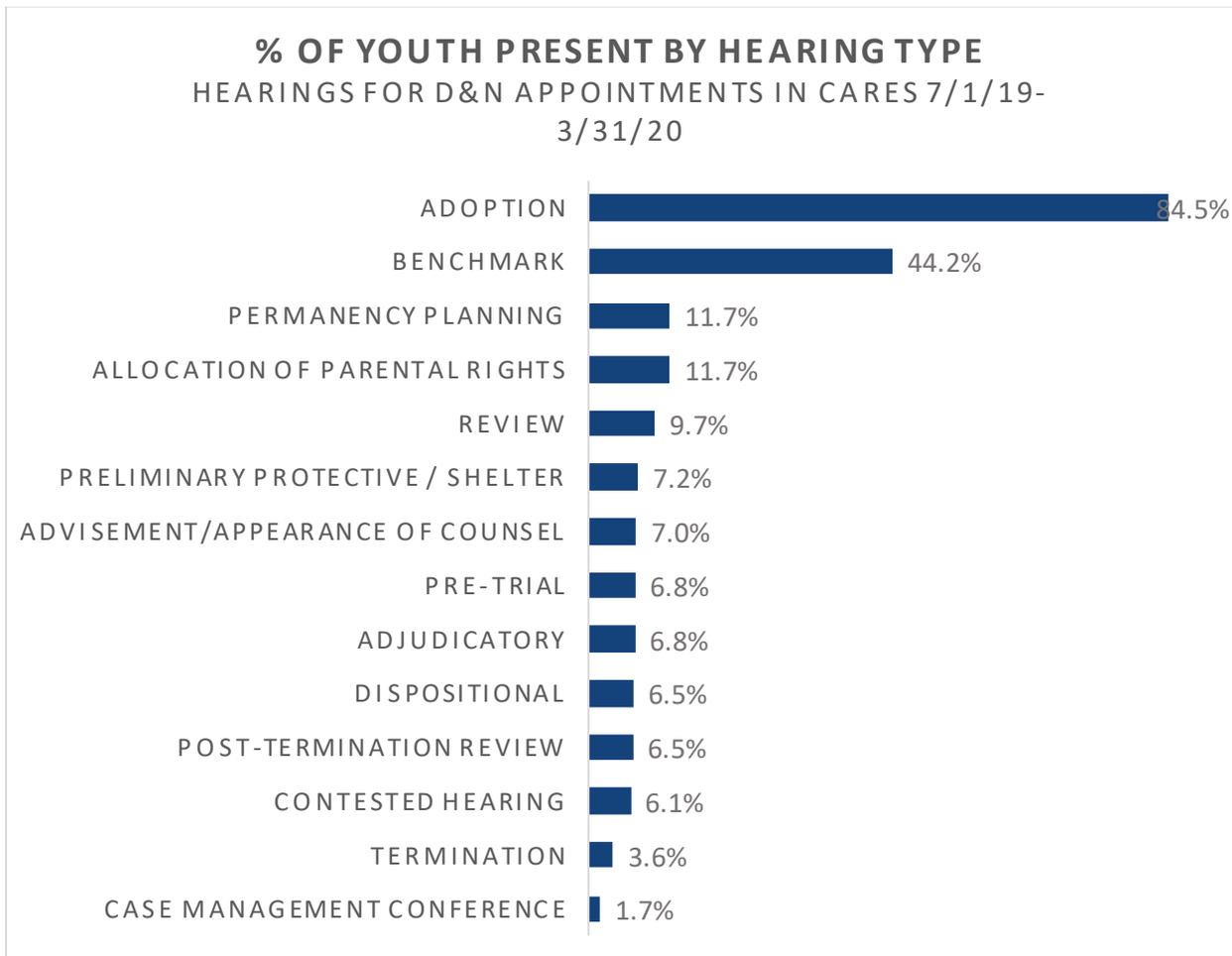


Figure 21

OCR also determined the frequency and locations of *in camera* interviews of youth (Figure 22).

- OCR conducted its analysis of *in camera* interviews on local levels due to important feedback from judicial officers and attorneys expressing concern that initial CARES did not permit coding and therefore did not track *in camera* interviews occurring in local courts.
- Counties and districts not included in Figure 22 did not have *in camera interviews* reported in CARES.
- OCR’s analysis revealed that only 165 *in camera* interviews were entered into CARES within the designated timeframe. This may be because GALs entered *in camera* interviews into CARES as something other than *in camera* interviews.

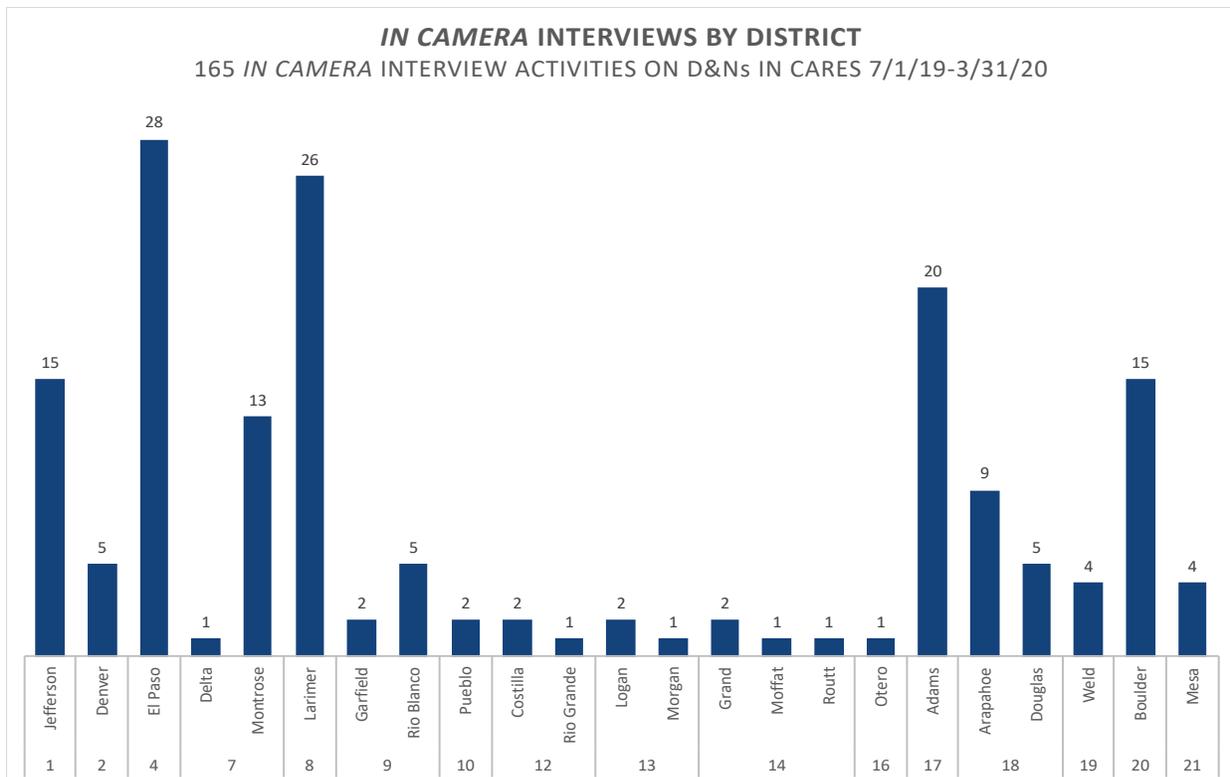


Figure 22

OCR observations of GALs stating efforts to get youth to court

During FY18-20, OCR observed low rates of GALs stating their efforts to get children to attend court (Figure 23). Notably, during FY18-20, OCR completed court observations in the districts included in Figure 23. Districts not referenced in Figure 23 were not observed by OCR in FY18-20.

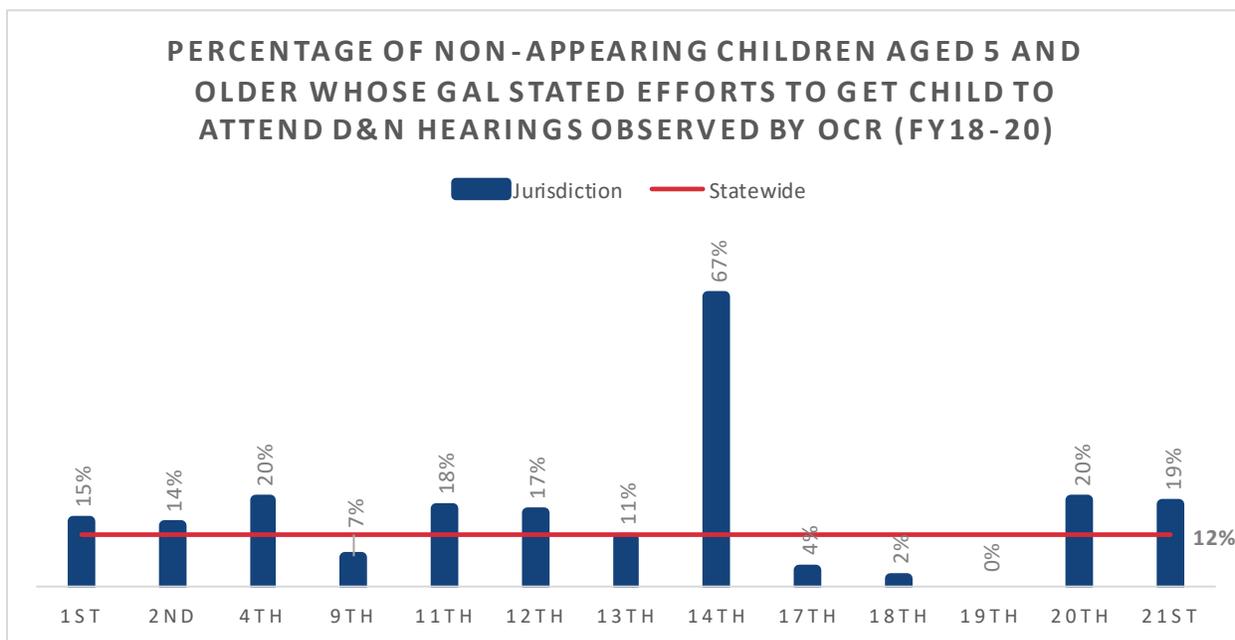


Figure 23

3. Youth reported mixed rates of speaking in court and OCR observed low rates of youth speaking in court.

Youth reports about youth speaking in court

In Survey 2, most youth who selected D&N case (60%) reported they *always or usually* spoke in court, while less than half of youth who selected delinquency case (47%) reported the same (Figure 16). This difference may be because youth with delinquency cases have a right against self-incrimination and defense counsel to directly represent their positions.

OCR observations of youth speaking in court

During FY18-19 and 19-20, OCR observed some instances of youth being given the opportunity to address courts (Figure 24).

- OCR’s D&N Observation Form asks, “Was this child given a chance to address the court?” Answer choices are yes, no, and child under five years old. Children over five years old who are present are typically recorded as a yes. Such children who are not present are typically recorded as a no. However, such children who appear by telephone, send a letter to the court, or appear in another way are marked as yes.
- Districts not referenced in Figure 24 were not observed by OCR in FY18-20.

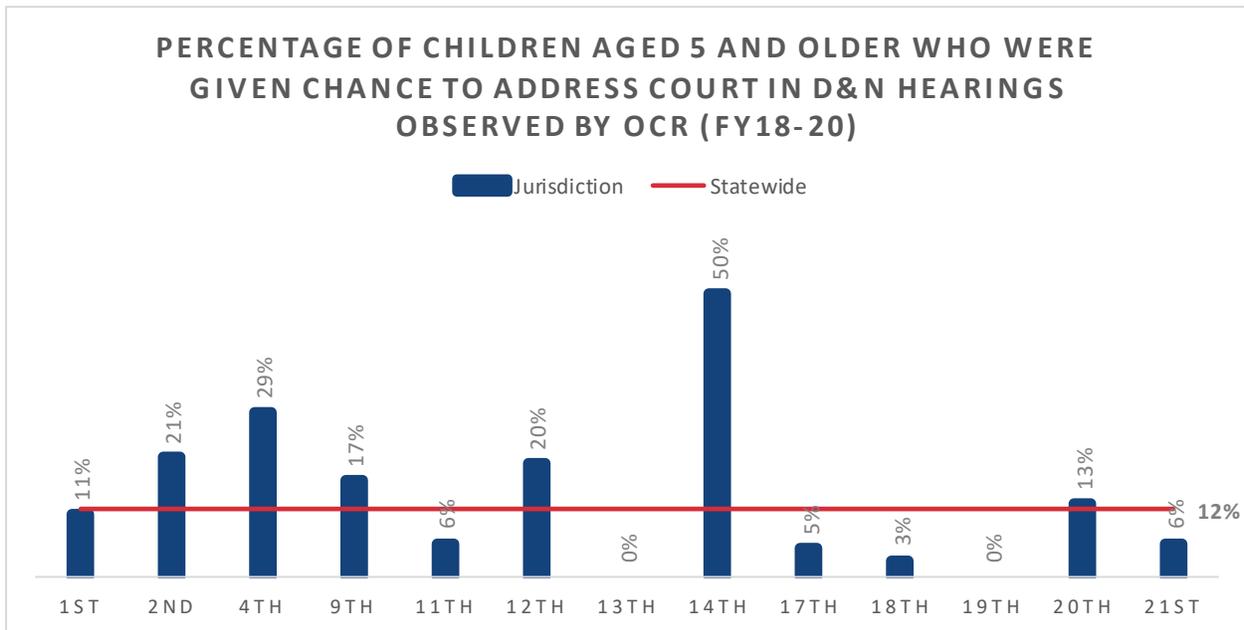


Figure 24

Youth speaking for themselves or GALs speaking for youth

Eight focus groups discussed whether youth should speak for themselves or GALs should speak for youth. Youth preferences were mixed.



Youth comments about speaking for themselves or GALs speaking for them included the following.

Youth speaking for themselves: "It was nice to get to tell the judge what was going on with us. Directly from us." "I did not have a chance to speak in court. I feel left out. They are making decisions for me and I don't have any say in it." "People don't ask unless the judge does. It would help if my GAL asked if I would like to talk. I would like to talk." "I wish I could tell things to the judge."

GALs speaking for youth: "I don't want to speak in court. I will freak out. I don't know what I am talking about." "I liked when my GAL talked for me because my judge does not like me." "Sometimes the judge asks too many questions of us and not of the GAL. I just want to be free. I want to hear things. I don't want to talk."

4. Youth feedback about whether adults listened to them in court was mixed.

In Survey 2, 74% of youth who selected D&N case and 70% of youth who selected delinquency case indicated adults *always* or *usually* listened when youth spoke in court (Figure 16). During focus groups, youth comments about whether adults listened to them in court was mixed.



Youth comments about whether adults listened to them in court included the following.

"They never listen to what I have to say."

"Courts just keep pushing through. They do not listen to what I want. They just ignore me. It feels like they are just doing what they feel they have to do."

5. Most youth understood what happened in court.

In Survey 2, most youth who selected D&N case (68%) and/or delinquency case (72%) indicated they *always* or *usually* understood what was happening in court (Figure 16).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

OCR's E&EY Initiative furthers OCR's historical mandates and goals centered on youth participation and obtaining randomized youth feedback. Youth are the most important source of feedback about GALs, as youth are the ultimate consumer of GAL services. Moreover, the quality of GAL advocacy has a direct impact on quality of the lives of youth. OCR's E&EY Initiative helps ensure that OCR policies and programs ultimately benefit youth. Most importantly, youth participation benefits youth.

OCR has been successful in conducting a reasonable number of focus groups and collecting a substantial number of youth of surveys. With that said, as a state-funded entity, OCR continually seeks ways to streamline these activities and increase efficiency. OCR can build upon and/or improve its E&EY Initiative via the recommendations in this Section.

More specifically, OCR could (A) establish performance goals related to youth court attendance, participation and satisfaction, in addition to establishing strategies addressing such goals; (B) establish strategies for implementing youth feedback and voice into OCR's policies and programs; (C) establish strategies for incorporating youth survey feedback into OCR's GAL oversight; (D) continue to collect youth feedback; and (E) designate an E&EY Initiative Team to achieve these important recommendations and goals.

A. OCR SHOULD SET AMBITIOUS YET REALISTIC PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR YOUTH COURT ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND SATISFACTION AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES FOR MEETING THOSE GOALS.

Section I explained that Colorado's State SMART Government Act requires OCR to prepare and publish a Performance Management System and an annual Performance Plan. The very first goal of OCR's Performance Management System and Performance Plan is providing children a voice in legal systems through effective attorney services and advocacy. OCR's first strategy for meeting this goal is ensuring that children's voice and interests are paramount throughout proceedings and in the development of policy, law, and practice. OCR already incorporates many goals into its Performance documents.

This subsection outlines (1) how OCR could expand its performance goals for youth court attendance, participation, and satisfaction, and (2) strategies OCR can implement to achieving such performance goals.

1. OCR should expand its performance goals for youth court attendance, participation, and satisfaction.

OCR should set ambitious yet realistic performance goals related to youth court attendance. During FY13, youth aged 12 and older attended 40.65% of Permanency Planning Hearings. OCR's Youth in Court Report demonstrates that between July 1, 2017, and March 31, 2018, youth aged 12 and older attended 43% of Permanency Planning and Benchmark Hearings, while between July 1, 2019, and March 31, 2020, youth aged 12 and older attended 30% of Permanency Planning and Benchmark Hearings. OCR should establish incremental performance goals aimed at increasing the rate of youth attendance at Permanency Planning

and Benchmark Hearings for youth aged 12 and older. Moreover, as Permanency Planning and Benchmark Hearings are only two hearing types youth should attend, OCR should engage in further analysis of youth court attendance at other hearing types and consider including performance measures related to other hearing types and other age ranges in future Performance Plans.

OCR should set ambitious yet realistic performance goals related to youth court participation. Section IV.A. presented survey results and court observation data related to GALs telling courts what youth wanted. That data demonstrated varying rates of GALs making a record of their efforts to get children aged five and older to attend D&N hearings and GALs making a record of the positions of such children. OCR also collects stakeholder perceptions related to GALs making records of youth positions. In each fiscal year's Performance Plan, OCR analyzes, reports on, and sets goals related to each year's court observation and stakeholder data. OCR should continue to set incremental goals related to observation and stakeholder criteria and add youth stakeholder data as an additional indicator. Additionally, OCR should continue to identify other indicators of GALs meeting this practice standard such as OCR's Youth in Court Report because court observation data may not be fully representative of GALs making such records statewide as observation data pertains only to attorneys due for contract renewal on any given year and OCR is able to gather only a limited number of observations on each attorney.

OCR should set ambitious yet realistic performance goals related to youth satisfaction with GALs. Section IV.A. outlined youth feedback related to youth satisfaction with GALs. Among other positives, most surveyed youth reported:

- frequent contact with their GAL;
- their GAL visited them in every placement;
- they trusted their GAL;
- their GAL talked with them about what happens or what would happen in court;
- their GAL talked with them about their right to attend court;
- told courts what they want; and
- their GAL spoke with them about what happens in court.

Additionally, survey data identified opportunities for growth related to:

- GAL responsiveness;
- GALs contacting youth with D&N cases in every placement;
- youth perception of whether GALs knew what was best for them;
- GALs talking with youth in D&N cases about what would happen in court;
- GALs talking with youth with D&N cases about what youth want courts to order;
- GALs talking with youth with D&N cases about their right to attend court; and
- GALs talking with youth with D&N cases about whether youth wanted to attend court (and if not, why not).

OCR should set incremental goals related to youth satisfaction with GALs and adding such goals to its Performance Plans.

2. OCR should implement strategies for reaching its expanded performance goals for youth court attendance, participation, and satisfaction.

OCR should collaborate with GALs and stakeholders to reach its goals furthering youth engagement and empowerment.

- OCR should share and post this paper, summaries of this paper, and/or a webinar about this paper to the Youth Center of OCR's website. OCR should submit conference proposals related to this paper and/or offer to present this paper at locations across the state.
- OCR should consider opportunities for co-presenting with youth, GALs, and/or courts who are interested in this area and/or have demonstrated excellence in this area.
- At every opportunity, OCR should seek additional youth and stakeholder feedback and ideas for improving youth court attendance.

OCR should return to sharing its statewide Youth in Court Report, utilize data reporting enhancements, and continue to increase GAL report capabilities.

- OCR should return to the practice of running and sharing with GALs and stakeholders on a quarterly basis its Youth in Court Report data measuring the attendance of youth aged 12 and older at Benchmark and Permanency Planning Hearings.
- In addition to sharing this Report, OCR should utilize the report's enhanced capabilities to assess youth court attendance at certain ages and/or in other types of hearings.
- OCR should provide GALs the capability and encourage GALs to run this report to analyze and set their own practice targets related to youth court attendance on their caseloads.

OCR should share district-specific information related to youth court attendance, youth court participation, and youth feedback. OCR staff attorneys currently disseminate district-specific statistics regarding cost per case, filing trends, and other information on at least an annual basis. Adding district-specific data about youth court attendance and participation as well as information demonstrating how district data compares to statewide data would allow OCR to more meaningfully engage with judicial officers, attorneys, and other stakeholders to identify strengths, challenges, and strategies for increasing youth court participation. Providing judicial officers district-specific youth survey data regarding their court experiences would also allow courts to consider how their local practices may be impacting youth court experiences.

OCR should continue to create and share tools supporting youth engagement and empowerment.

- OCR should continue to make its youth-friendly lists of rights for children with D&N cases, safeguards for youth in foster care, and rights for siblings placed in foster care available to all GALs.
- OCR should consider developing and disseminating youth-friendly tips for speaking in court.
- OCR should add a page of youth-friendly resources to OCR's website.
- OCR should share innovative youth engagement tools used by districts—including the tools used in the OCR/Fourth Judicial District Pilot Project discussed in the introductory section of this paper—with GALs and stakeholders across the state in order to expand the use of such tools and assess the impact they have on youth court attendance, youth court participation, and youth satisfaction with their GALs.

OCR should build upon youth-centered GAL trainings and tools. OCR should continue to build upon and infuse youth voice into current youth-centered GAL trainings related to CJD 04-06, court observation criteria, and CARES entries.

B. OCR SHOULD INCORPORATE YOUTH FEEDBACK AND YOUTH VOICE INTO ITS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS.

To incorporate youth feedback and voice into its policies and programs, OCR should consider (1) recommending changes to CJD 04-06 related to youth court attendance and OCR's youth-centered court observation data and GAL contact requirements; (2) exploring the possibility of a professional researcher to support OCR's efforts to collect and analyze data; and (3) creating a youth action council to aid in the development of OCR's E&EY Initiative as well as policy, law, and practice.

1. OCR should recommend changes to CJD 04-06.

CJD 04-06 requires GALs appointed in D&N cases to “endeavor to maximize the child’s involvement in the court proceedings, when consistent with the child’s best interests, by discussing the court process, ascertaining whether the child wishes to appear in court and identifying and advocating for the elimination of barriers to the child’s attendance at court.”⁴³ CJD 04-06 also states that GALs appointed in D&N cases should conduct post-hearing follow-ups regarding outcomes and the children’s experiences at hearings.⁴⁴

OCR should consider recommending CJD amendments related to youth court attendance and OCR’s youth-centered court observation data. Section IV.A. outlined OCR’s court observation data related to GALs talking with youth about what would happen in court, youths’ right to attend court, and what happened in court. Commentary to CJD 04-06.V.E.1. states the following.

When ascertaining the child’s position regarding issues before the court, the GAL shall endeavor to maximize the child’s involvement in the court proceedings, when consistent with the child’s best interests, by discussing the court process, ascertaining whether the child wishes to appear in court and identifying and advocating for the elimination of barriers to the child’s attendance at court. The GAL should conduct a post-hearing follow up with the child regarding the outcome of the hearing and, if applicable, the child’s experience at the hearing.

OCR should consider recommending that the above commentary be moved from CJD commentary to the main text, so it stands out as a requirement. Moreover, OCR should consider revising the “when consistent with the child’s best interests” phrase to clarify when the requirement applies. Finally, OCR may want to recommend language explicitly referencing GAL discussions of what will happen in court, youths’ right to attend court, and what happened in court, as such discussions are in the best interests of youth and such discussions could be expected to increase youth court attendance and participation.

OCR should consider CJD amendments related to GAL contact with youth. Section IV.A. explained that youth at every one of the 12 OCR focus groups wanted more GAL contact. OCR could respond to this unequivocal feedback by:

- recommending CJD changes requiring and/or encouraging a specified frequency of contact, and/or
- encouraging GALs to have more contact with youth, particularly in-person contact as surveyed youth expressed a strong preference for in-person contact. GALs could also consider alternative means of communication via texts, telephone calls, video calls, and/or social media.

Before implementing these recommendations, OCR should carefully consider:

- obtaining additional youth input about their desired frequency and type(s) of contact;
- whether recommending or requiring a specified frequency of contact is responsive to individualized youth voice and is in the best interests of all youth, as not every youth wants or needs more GAL contact and youth need permanent connections apart from their GAL;
- the appropriate timeframe for a specified frequency of contact requirement or recommendation, as focus group youth expressed preferences for every 30 days, as determined in consultation with youth, as requested by youth, and/or before and after court hearings;
- whether recommending or requiring a certain frequency of contact is financially possible considering OCR's annual appropriation from the Colorado General Assembly and the impact these recommendations may have on that appropriation; and/or
- whether and how to monitor GAL compliance with a specified frequency of contact requirement or recommendation.

2. OCR should consider research and data analysis support.

Sections III and IV introduced and analyzed the many robust data sources OCR has developed related to youth feedback, court attendance, and court participation. OCR's analysis of existing data sources identified additional analyses that could inform OCR policy and programming. To inform its policies and identify best practices, OCR should engage in further analysis of existing and enhanced data sources to better understand trends and engagement strategies as well as training and support needs. However, current OCR staff lack the expertise, tools, and/or time to conduct a more sophisticated analyses. As OCR's E&EY Initiative advances many program goals associated with available funding sources, OCR should explore the possibility of using federal or other funding to engage a professional researcher for the purposes outlined below and/or other similar purposes.

- Whether and how to use focus groups to inform OCR policies and programs, how to frame focus group questions, conduct focus groups and take focus group notes in ways that engage and empower as many focus group participants as possible *and* preserve data, as well as recommendations for analyzing focus group data.
- Whether additional data entry should be required in CARES such as whether youth want to attend court, and whether it is feasible for attorneys to be required to enter such data.
- Analyzing the impact *in camera* interviews had on the rate of youth court participation.
- Analyzing whether and how GAL discussions of youths' right to attend court impacts youths' desire to attend court.
- Analyzing youth's perception of GAL responsiveness.
- Analyzing whether and how youths' perception of GAL responsiveness is related to youths' trust of their GAL and youths' perception of whether their GAL knew what was best for them.
- Analyzing court observation criteria by the age of the child.
- Analyzing whether and how youth wanted to attend court by case type.

- Analyzing why youth who selected D&N case did not want to attend court.
- Identifying the percentage of children who attend court at least once and/or other frequencies in OCR's Youth in Court Report data.
- Identifying ages and hearings at which youth court participation emerges in OCR's Youth in Court Report and court observation data.
- Assessing whether and how the qualitative information available through youth reference interviews could inform OCR's policies and programs.
- Analyzing potential relationships between data sources.
- Aligning feedback OCR receives through its case consultant program with feedback OCR receives through its E&EY Initiative.
- Identifying additional reports and measures to analyze OCR policies and strategies.

3. OCR should carefully create a youth action council.

In addition to maximizing its use of existing data sources, OCR should consider creating a youth action council to aid in the development of OCR's E&EY Initiative as well as in the development of policy, law, and practice.

Over 120 youth responded affirmatively to survey questions asking whether they are willing to have future contact with OCR in order for OCR to learn more about GALs and ways to help GALs; each of those youth provided their name and contact information. OCR should communicate with those youth and ask whether and how they are interested in participating the council.

To truly engage and empower youth participating in the council in a trauma-informed manner, OCR should consider the following.

- Involving individual(s) with social work, trauma, or similar training in council planning and meetings.
- Developing a clear, transparent, and trauma-informed vision for how the council will inform OCR's policies and programs.
- Developing the council consistent with recognized best practices by researching Positive Youth Development and collaborating with experts.
- Soliciting potential council members from GALs.
- Compensating council members for their time and expertise.
- Asking council members how they would like to be involved in the council and honoring those requests.
- Empowering council members to make decisions including the council's name, leadership, and meeting methods, locations, frequency, and duration.

C. OCR SHOULD CONSIDER STRATEGIES FOR INCORPORATING YOUTH SURVEY FEEDBACK INTO ITS GAL OVERSIGHT.

A vast majority of the online surveys identified a GAL by name, and that survey data can be sorted by GAL. OCR's annual contract verification and triennial contract renewal processes are already incredibly robust and involve many reports containing many types of data. OCR should explore the possibility of running reports summarizing youth surveys by GAL name and include this summary as an information source in OCR's annual verifications processes. Moreover, OCR should consider the following benchmarks for follow-up, as they may suggest potential CJD 04-06 and/or contract compliance issues:

- their GAL contacted them less than once every three months;
- their D&N GAL did not visit them in every placement;
- their D&N GAL did not ask them what they wanted the judge to know;
- their D&N GAL did not ask them if they wanted to go to court;
- their D&N GAL did not ask them why they did not want to go to court; and
- their D&N GAL did not tell the judge what they wanted.

While OCR recognizes the difficulties in meaningfully responding to anonymous feedback, OCR already gathers such feedback from other stakeholders and could use the refinements OCR made to its current processes to inform how to use youth data fairly in OCR's evaluation process. OCR's oversight policies also provide for information sources to be analyzed in relation to other information sources; these procedures serve as an additional safeguard to ensure a fair and measured response to any negative youth survey data.

Regardless of whether benchmarks indicate follow-up, disseminating youth feedback will provide GALs an opportunity to learn about how youth are experiencing their GALs. Such feedback can lead to self-reflection that can lead to practice improvements.

D. OCR SHOULD CONTINUE TO COLLECT YOUTH FEEDBACK.

OCR's efforts towards collecting feedback from a broad spectrum of youth have included:

- posting the youth survey to the Youth Center of OCR's website;
- creating cards asking youth to complete an online survey and making these survey cards available to GALs during trainings;
- collaborating with the Fourth Judicial District to provide youth with D&N cases Youth Toolkits containing the link to the online survey; and
- collaborating with residential facilities, youth service providers, and CASA offices to schedule youth events and/or collect surveys online and via email, mail, and/or pickup.

OCR should continue each of these efforts and may want to consider:

- collaborating with courts, specialty courts, and other stakeholders to make survey cards and/or Youth Toolkits available in venues across the state;
- exploring ways to reach youth placed outside of Colorado; and/or
- building upon existing relationships with the Department of Youth Services and other residential facilities and child services providers who work with detained juveniles and/or youth who are unlikely to participate in youth groups or events offered by departments of human services.

To increase youth participation and engagement and to allow for more robust and informative data analysis, OCR, in collaboration with the researcher recommended in section V.B.2. and the youth action council recommended in section V.B.3., may want to consider evaluating and making changes to its (1) youth survey and (2) youth events.

1. OCR should consider making changes to its youth survey.

In addition to consulting with the researcher recommended in section V.B.1. and the youth action council recommended in V.B.1., OCR should consider reviewing youth surveys used in other locales to evaluate and identify changes that would allow for a more robust and informative analysis. In considering other surveys and potential changes to its survey, OCR should be careful to also consider the impact such changes can have on OCR's ability to analyze aggregate survey data over time.

Possible survey changes are outlined below in alphabetical order by subject matter.

Case type(s): Analyze and/or amend the case type(s) question, given the potential limitations on youth self-reporting case type(s) and difficulties presented by the current case type(s) question and survey structure.

Demographic(s): Consider adding questions related to youth race and gender and the impact such questions may have on youth anonymity and/or confidentiality.

GAL contact with youth

- Clarify each use of the word "contact" to specify the kind of contact such as in-person, telephonic, social media, or – other types - of contact.
- Consider and analyze the appropriateness and/or effectiveness of asking youth to quantify the frequency of GAL contact with specificity (such as once a month or more than once a month).
- Add a question asking how often youth would have liked to have in-person and/or other types of contact with their GAL, to obtain quantitative data to support the qualitative focus group data regarding youths' desire for additional GAL contact.
- Amend the question asking about the best ways GALs got to know youth to include additional means of contact such as virtual meetings and social media, locations of in-person contact, and/or activities in which GALs and youth engaged during in-person contact.
- Replace the question asking about the best ways the GAL got to know youth with a question asking whether specific GAL tasks helped GALs get to know youth and their best interests. Tasks could include talking with youth in person, on the telephone, during virtual meetings, on social media and/or in texts or emails; seeing youth during visits with parents and/or siblings; speaking with parents; speaking with caseworkers, doctors, therapists, or other professionals; speaking with school personnel; viewing school and/or other records; and other.

GAL information-sharing with youth: Add a survey question asking what information youth with D&N and delinquency cases – want to know about, allowing OCR to obtain quantitative data supporting the qualitative focus group data regarding -information sharing. Answer options could include the people in their case(s), the purpose(s) and dates of hearings and meetings, their rights, and other.

GAL responsiveness to youth: Analyze the GAL responsiveness question and clarify the question to obtain details about youth concerns.

GALs stating youth positions in court: Clarify the question asking, "Did your GAL ask you what you wanted your judge to know?" to reflect that OCR is seeking information about whether GALs spoke with

youth about their *positions*. An example might be, “Did your GAL talk with you about what you want the judge to order in your case?”

Simplification: Although this paper analyzed and/or OCR used all 30 questions in Survey 2, evaluate current questions with a goal of survey simplification and/or length.

Social Services Professionals (SSPs)/Case Consultants (CCs)

- Clarify the SSP/CC question, as the question produced youth answers related to GALs.
- In addition to asking about the frequency of their contact with GALs, ask youth about their contact with their GAL’s team.
- If the SSP/CC question remains open-ended, relocate the question to the end of the survey with the other open-ended questions.
- As OCR continues to plan and implement its CC program, continue to review the SSP/CC question to ensure it meets program needs.

Temporality: Ask youth when they had their GAL on their case, relative to the date they completed their survey.

Topics of conversation: Add court to the list of potential answers to the question asking youth about the most important topics they discussed with their GAL.

Youth anonymity: Determine whether and how to clarify the ways OCR uses survey answers.

Youth court attendance: Add a question asking youth who *always* or *usually* wanted to attend court why that was so. Answer choices could include to hear what was going on in their case, because hearings are about them, to tell adults what they wanted or felt, to show adults they are trying to do better, to see parent(s), to get a break from placement, and other.

2. OCR should consider making changes to its youth events.

OCR’s youth events, focus groups, and surveys were valuable not only for the opportunities they provided for OCR to engage and empower youth, but also for the challenges they presented and the lessons OCR learned from them. Strengths included the following.

- Meeting and engaging with youth is consistent with OCR’s goals of empowerment and youth voice. Focus groups engaged and empowered youth because they provided youth an opportunity to express their opinions about policy issues related to GALs and courts. Surveys engaged and empowered youth because they provided opportunities for youth to express their opinions about their specific GAL and court experiences.
- It is important for OCR to have face time with youth. Youth events, focus groups, and surveys provided opportunities for OCR staff to engage with youth - and to experience facilities where such youth reside. After one youth event at a residential facility, a youth even gave OCR staff a tour of the facility.
- The relationships OCR established through youth events may have contributed to the increase in the youth survey participation rate, as compared to prior OCR efforts.

Challenges of and lessons learned from OCR youth events, focus groups, and surveys included the following.

- Some youth were unable to recall their GAL's name. To mitigate this issue, OCR brought GAL appointment lists to later youth events and helped youth identify their GAL in surveys.
- As with every online survey, it is impossible to verify that every online survey was completed by a youth with a GAL. However, the likelihood that online surveys were completed by someone else is minor. Most surveys were collected during youth events. Moreover, it would be difficult to complete a survey by mistake. OCR's home page contains a "Provide Feedback" tab for adults and the youth survey commences with, "**IF YOU HAVE EVER HAD A GAL, WILL YOU COMPLETE A SURVEY?** [...]. The **best and most important** feedback OCR can get about GALs is from the youth who have worked with GALs!"
- During focus groups, OCR was challenged to consistently pose non-leading questions, reply neutrally, decrease the impact of particularly vocal youth, and engage quieter youth. To mitigate some of these concerns, OCR revised its Focus Group Form to emphasize the importance of non-leading questions and provide questions for engaging all youth. Additionally, in later focus groups, OCR distributed a page where youth could write thoughts and ideas. However, only one youth used this page.
- While OCR hoped that information gathered from focus groups could inform policy and programming decisions, OCR faced challenges identifying representative themes from focus groups. While OCR continued to refine its focus group tools and procedures throughout this process, OCR struggled to determine when comments made in focus groups should qualify as a theme. Analysis of youth surveys appeared to provide more representative and robust information from youth.

As a result of the above, in consultation with the researcher recommended in section V.B.1. and the youth action council recommended in V.B.3., OCR may want to consider:

- investing additional resources to improve the quality and goals of focus groups and focus group data;
- returning to its initial plan of conducting survey events and shifting a few focus group policy-related questions to the survey; and/or
- shifting focus groups to presentation and/or discussion of youth rights and administering surveys at these events.

E. OCR SHOULD CONTINUE TO DEDICATE ATTORNEY STAFF TO ITS E&EY INITIATIVE AND CONSIDER ADDING A PERFORMANCE ANALYST TO CREATE AN E&EY INITIATIVE TEAM.

OCR strives to be efficient and effective in utilizing its annual appropriation from the Colorado General Assembly. In FY19-20 (through March 31, 2020), OCR used 92% of its expended funds for attorney services and only 8% for administration.⁴⁵

OCR's lean administrative structure required OCR's E&EY attorney staff member to spend considerable time coordinating, planning, and executing youth events. In FY19-20, the General Assembly approved two new Performance Analyst positions to support OCR in its efforts to ground its oversight and programs in effective use of data and performance metrics. The skillset and expertise of the new Performance Analysts are well-suited to many of the tasks associated with ongoing implementation of OCR's E&EY Initiative and the recommendations of this paper.

OCR should formally assign a Performance Analyst to OCR's E&Y Initiative, creating a E&Y Team to engage in strategic planning, goal setting and prioritization of projects, execute youth events, assist in running reports and data analysis, support OCR's youth action council, and involve additional OCR staff in youth events. Moreover, OCR should allocate time for each youth event to be attended by one member of the E&Y Team and an additional staff member. Many OCR staff members have participated in these events and have a wealth of experience and expertise interacting and engaging with youth. A designated E&Y Team will help streamline the coordination and consistency of these activities while promoting overall staff engagement.

Endnotes

¹ C.R.S. 13-91-102(1)(a) (2019) and 13-91-104(1) (2019).

² C.R.S. 19-91-105(1)(a), 19-1-111(1) (2019). See CJD 04-06.I.B. (outlining the case types in which GALs represent children’s best interests), available at https://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Supreme_Court/Directives/04-06_Amended2019MarchAttachA_2020AprilFINAL.pdf (last visited September 23, 2020). Colorado D&N and delinquency proceedings are governed by the Colorado Children’s Code, Chapter 19 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. C.R.S. 19-1-101 (2019). The Colorado Children’s Code defines “child” as a person younger than 18 years old and “youth” as a person younger than 21. C.R.S. 19-1-103(18 and 113) (2019). This paper uses “child” and “youth” synonymously.

³ *OCR Report to the General Assembly for Fiscal Year 2019-20* (September 1, 2020), 16, available at <https://www.coloradochildrep.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GA-Report-2019-FINAL.pdf> (last visited September 23, 2020).

⁴ OCR’s Youth Center is available at <https://coloradochildrep.org/youth-center/> (last visited September 23, 2020). OCR’s Litigation Toolkit is an online repository of pleadings, practice tools, and social science resources available to OCR contract attorneys.

⁵ American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, *Engaging Young Children (Ages 0-12 Mo) in the Courtroom, Engaging Toddlers (Ages 1-3) & Preschoolers (Ages 3-5) in the Courtroom, Engaging School-Age Children (Ages 5-11) in the Courtroom, Engaging Adolescents (Ages 12-15) in the Courtroom, and Engaging Older Adolescents (Ages 16+) in the Courtroom*, available at <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/83666/12-aba-child-interview-bench-cards.pdf> (last visited September 23, 2020).

⁶ Youth provided the quotations in the graphics throughout this paper during OCR focus groups and/or in OCR surveys. Spelling errors have been corrected.

⁷ C.R.S. 2-7-200.1 *et seq.* (2019).

⁸ OCR Performance Plan (June 2020), 7-8, available at <https://coloradochildrep.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FY1920-FINAL-Performance-Plan-SMART.pdf> (last visited September 23, 2020).

⁹ CJD 04-06.V.B.

¹⁰ CJD 04-06.V.D.1., CJD 04-06.V.D.1. commentary, CJD 04-06.V.D.4.a., CJD 04-06.V.D.5.a., and CJD 04-06.V.D.5.b. Emphasis added.

¹¹ CJD 04-06.V.E.1. and commentary, CJD 04-06.V.E.1. commentary, and CJD 04-06.V.E.4.a. and commentary. The in-person requirement is waived where GALs appointed in delinquency cases have already established a meaningful relationship with the juvenile in an existing court appointment. CJD 04-06.V.E.1. commentary.

¹² CJD 04-06.V.G.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ American Bar Association (“ABA”), *Model Act Governing the Representation of Children in Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Proceedings* (2011), § 9, available at https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/child_law/aba_model_act_2011.pdf (last visited September 23, 2020); National Association of Counsel for Children (“NACC”) *American Bar Association Standards of Practice for Lawyers Who Represent Children in Abuse and Neglect Cases (NACC Revised Revision)* (1999), 17, available at https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.naccchildlaw.org/resource/resmgr/Standards/ABA_Standards_NACC_Revised.pdf (last visited September 23, 2020); National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, NCJFCJ Children in Court Policy Statement (2012) available at <https://www.ncjfcj.org/wp->

[content/uploads/2019/08/ncjfcj-children-in-court-policy-statement.pdf](https://coloradogrid.org/helperFiles/GRID%20ebook%202020.pdf) (last visited September 23, 2020).

¹⁶ OCR, Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel ("ORPC"), and Office of the State Court Administrator Court Improvement Program ("CIP"), *Guided Reference in Dependency: An Advocacy Guide for Attorneys in Dependency Proceedings* (2020), F43-44, available at <https://coloradogrid.org/helperFiles/GRID%20ebook%202020.pdf> (last visited September 23, 2020).

¹⁷ Genevieve Rotella and Amanda Donnelly, *Children and Youth in Colorado Courts: Participation in Dependency and Neglect Proceedings* (May 2014), 45-46, available at <https://coloradochildrep.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Youth-in-Court-Report1.pdf> (last visited September 23, 2020).

¹⁸ *Id.* at 35.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 48, 58, and 60.

²⁰ *Id.* at 74-78 and 81-82.

²¹ OCR, *Supporting and Promoting Youth Court Attendance*, available at <https://create.piktochart.com/output/9635587-supporting-youth-court-attendance> (last visited September 24, 2020), and *Youth in Court Mythbusters*, available at <https://create.piktochart.com/output/9837067-youth-in-court-mythbusters> (last visited September 24, 2020).

²² NCJFCJ, *Evaluation Report: Colorado Youth Engagement Study* (2016), 5, available at <https://www.coloradochildrep.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CO-Youth-Engagement-Report.pdf> (last visited September 23, 2020).

²³ *Id.* at 29.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.* at 28-47.

²⁷ Ann Sullivan, *Youth Attendance at Dependency Court Proceedings: A Mixed Methods Study of Judicial Officers and Youth* (Spring 2018), 11-12 and 17, available at https://mountainscholar.org/bitstream/handle/10217/189270/Sullivan_colostate_0053A_14640.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (last visited September 23, 2020).

²⁸ *Id.* at 62.

²⁹ *Id.* at 63.

³⁰ *Id.* at iii.

³¹ *Id.* at 175-177.

³² While staff strived to take verbatim notes, circumstances sometimes rendered approximations the only possibility.

³³ OCR protected youth anonymity and confidentiality in both surveys. The introductory page of the Survey 2 has a large note stating, "**And please note!** This survey is anonymous, which means we will not tell your GAL that you completed a survey or how you answered the questions. After asking whether youth would like to have future contact with OCR, Survey 2 states, "*No matter how you answer this question, we will not tell your GAL that you completed a survey or how you answered the questions!*" The survey answers are housed online; an extremely limited number of OCR staff have access to them and none of the staff have connected youth names with answers to other questions. When youth volunteered their name and contact information on Survey 1, OCR staff literally cut that information from the survey and placed it in a separate envelope.

³⁴ OCR's youth survey is available online at <https://coloradochildrep.org/youth-center/> (last visited September 23, 2020).

³⁵ Specific jurisdictional practices have a significant impact on youth court attendance. It is difficult to ascertain every reason why certain counties have higher percentages of youth attendance than others.

³⁶ “Other” responses included contact during court, meetings, and visits, as well as words and phrases indicating limited GAL contact.

³⁷ “Other” topics included drugs, treatment, probation, relationships, transgender and other goals, strengths, growing up, and permanency options.

³⁸ “Other” important topics identified by youth included food, how youth are doing, the system, and references to lack of memory and/or limited GAL communication.

³⁹ CJD 04-06.V.D.5.a. and V.D.E.

⁴⁰ Ann Sullivan, *Youth Attendance at Dependency Court Proceedings: A Mixed Methods Study of Judicial Officers and Youth* (Spring 2018), *supra* note 27 at 129.

⁴¹ Hearing types are not mutually exclusive, and one court appearance may constitute multiple hearings (e.g., a Permanency Planning and a Review Hearing, an Adjudicatory and Dispositional Hearing). If one hearing is coded as multiple hearing types, the data reflects each coded hearing type.

⁴² Denver Juvenile Court District Plan for Handling Dependency and Neglect Cases, 12 and 19, available at

https://www.courts.state.co.us/userfiles/file/Administration/Planning_and_Analysis/Family%20Law%20Programs/CIP/District%20Plans/Denver_Juvenile_Court_DP_Aug_2014.pdf (last visited September 23, 2020).

⁴³ Commentary to CJD 04-06.V.D.1. Emphasis added.

⁴⁴ *Id.*

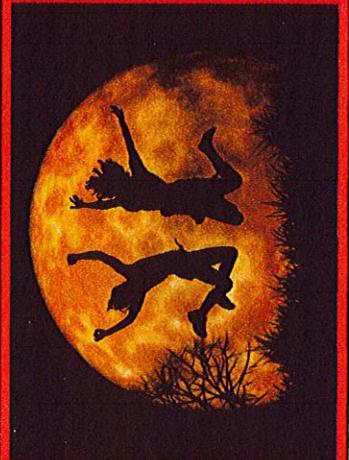
⁴⁵ OCR Performance Plan (June 2020), *supra* note 8 at 14.



ENGAGING YOUth EMPOWERING



Colorado Office of the
Child's Representative



HELLO

We are the office of the Child's Representative, or OCR for short.

OCR is a state office which hires, trains, and helps attorneys called Guardian *ad litem*, or GALs for short.

GALs represent what is best for youth in many court cases. Two of those cases are:

- Dependency and neglect cases, which are opened because someone believes a family needs the government's help; and
- Delinquency cases, which are opened because someone said a youth did something that was against the law.

If you are a youth who has or has had a D&N case OR a delinquency case with a GAL, will you please complete this survey? Your answers will tell us what we need to do to help GALs and play a huge role in how we help GALs!



Questions? Comments? Concerns? Ideas?

Please contact OCR at:

- (303) 860-1735 or
- info@coloradochildrep.org.

A LITTLE BACKGROUND ABOUT YOU...

Have you completed this survey before?

- Yes. No.

If you completed one before, please do not complete another one. Thanks!!

How old are you? _____ years old.

Did you have a dependency and neglect case (D&N for short)? D&N cases are opened because someone thinks a family needs the government's help.

- Yes. My GAL's name was _____
 No.

Did you have a delinquency case? Delinquency cases are opened because someone said a youth did something that was against the law.

- Yes, and my GAL's name was _____
 Yes, but the court did not give me a GAL.
 No.

Did you have a D&N case AND a delinquency case? Yes. No.

Can we contact you for your ideas about GALs and youth?

- Yes.

My name is _____

You can reach me at _____

- No.



YOUR CONTACT WITH YOUR GAL...

When you reached out to your GAL to speak with him/her, did your GAL respond to you? (Please check the box for one answer.)

- Never. Sometimes.
 Usually. Always.
 I never reached out to my GAL to speak with him/her.

How often did you have contact with your GAL? (Please check the box for one answer.)

- Once a day. Once a week.
 2 or 3 times a month. Once a month.
 Other: _____

Did your GAL visit you in every place you lived during your case?

- Yes.
 No. My GAL did not visit me at one placement.
 No. My GAL did not visit me at _____ placements.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about your contact with your GAL? _____



TOPICS YOU AND YOUR GAL TALKED ABOUT...

What did you and your GAL talk about? (Please check the box for every answer that answers the question for you.)

- My parents,
- The visits and/or contact I was having with my parents,
- My brothers and/or sisters,
- The visits and/or contact I was having with my brothers and/or sisters,
- My school,
- Where I was living,
- Where I wanted to live,
- The people I was living with,
- The people who are important to me (like my family, friends, neighbors, teachers, coaches, people at my church),
- The people I wanted to live with,
- My plans for my future, and/or
- Other: _____



YOU AND YOUR GAL...

Did your GAL get to know you well enough to understand what is best for you? Yes. No.

What did your GAL do to get to know you? _____

What, if anything, could your GAL have done to get to know you better? _____

Did your GAL ask you what you wanted to happen in your court case? Yes. No.

Did your GAL tell the court what you wanted to have happen in your court case? Yes. No.

How do you know that your GAL told the court OR did not tell the court what you wanted to have happen in your court case? _____



JUST A LITTLE MORE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR GAL...

Did you trust your GAL?

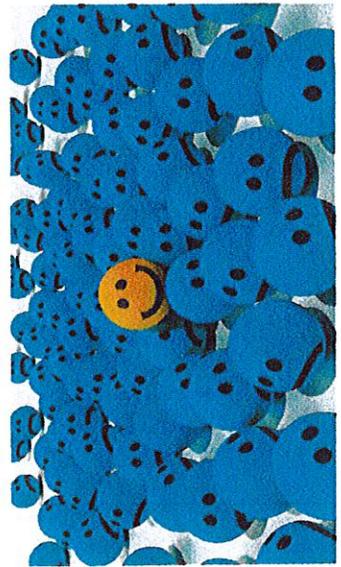
- Yes because _____
- _____
- _____
- No because _____
- _____
- _____

Did your GAL do a good job?

- Yes because _____
- _____
- _____
- No because _____
- _____
- _____

Please tell us anything else you would like us to know about your

GAL _____



COURT...

Please answer these questions if you had a D&N case.

Who told you about the court dates in your case? (Please check the box for every answer that answers the question for you.)

- My parents, My placement,
- MY GAL, My caseworker, and/or
- Other: _____ No one told me my court dates.

Did your GAL talk with you about what happens in court?

- Yes. No.

Did your GAL talk with you about what happened in court case at court?

- Yes. No.

Did your GAL talk to you about your right to go to court?

- Yes. No.

Did you go to court?

- Yes. I went to court _____ times. No.

How was court when you went? Did it go well or not? Why did it go well or not well?

Is there anything your GAL or the court could have done to make you feel more welcome at court?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about court?





We are the Office of the Child's Representative (OCR). OCR helps attorneys called **guardians ad litem** or "GALs." GALs are lawyers who tell judges and other people what is best for children and youth.

IF YOU HAVE EVER HAD A GAL, WILL YOU PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SURVEY?

- ✓ The **best and most important** feedback OCR can get about GALs is from you – the youth who have worked with GALs!
- ✓ **Your answers will make a difference!** Although you can skip questions you do not want to answer and/or aren't sure about, we hope you will answer every question! We will use your answers to help other youth with GALs.
- ✓ **And please note!** This survey is *confidential*, which means we will not tell your GAL that you completed a survey or how you answered the questions!



Who was your GAL? (If you had more than one GAL, please pick one GAL for this survey.)

- My GAL's first and last name was _____.
- I am not sure.

Have you completed a survey about this GAL before? Yes No

How old are you?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 | <input type="checkbox"/> 15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> 17 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14 | <input type="checkbox"/> 18 | |

What kind of case(s) did you have your GAL for? (You can pick more than one answer.)

- Delinquency. These cases start because someone said a child did something that was against the law.
- Dependency and Neglect (D&N). These cases start because someone thinks adults are not taking care of a child the way they should.
- Truancy. These cases start because someone said a child did not go to school.
- Other > Please explain: _____.

***If* anyone else from your GAL's office worked on your case, were they helpful in getting to know you and your needs? Why or why not?**

How often did you have contact with your GAL?

- More than 1 time a month
- 1 time a month
- 1 time every 2 months
- 1 time every 3 months
- Other > Please explain: _____.

Did your GAL visit you in every one of your placements during your case?

- Yes No

What were the best ways your GAL got to know you? (You can pick more than one answer.)

- Talked with me in person
- Saw me during visits with my family members
- Emailed me
- Talked with me on the phone
- Texted with me
- Other > Please explain: _____.

What were the most important things you talked with your GAL about?

(You can pick more than one answer.)

- The people who are important to me (like parents, brother, sister, other family, friends)
- My school/education
- The services I was in (like therapy or treatment)
- My visits with my parent(s), brother(s), and sister(s), or others
- Where I was living or wanted to live
- My future: what I wanted to be or do
- Other > Please explain: _____

About your GAL:

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Did your GAL respond when you reached out?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you trust your GAL?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did your GAL know what was best for you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Before court:

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Did your GAL talk with you about what would happen in court?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did your GAL ask you what you wanted the judge to know?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did your GAL talk with you about your right to go to court?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did your GAL ask you if you wanted to go to court?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you want to go to court? <i>(If you <u>did not always</u> want to go to court, please answer the questions in the blue box. If you always wanted to go, skip the blue box.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Did your GAL ask you why you did not want to go to court? Yes. No.

Why did you not want to go to court? *(You can pick more than one answer.)*

- I felt like I should be in school instead.
- I felt like the adults in my case didn't really want me to come to court.
- I felt like the adults in my case don't listen to me.
- I didn't want to see one or both of my parents in court.
- Other > Please explain: _____

About court:

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Did you think your GAL told the judge what you wanted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did your GAL talk with you about what happened in court?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How often did you attend court in person or by phone?

Always Usually Sometimes Never



If you attended court:

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Did you talk in court?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the adults listen when you talked in court?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you understand what was happening in court?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you didn't attend court:

Did your GAL talk with you about other ways you could talk with the judge, such as writing a letter?

Yes No

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about court?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your GAL or the people in his/her office?

May we (OCR) contact you to learn more about GALs and to help GALs?

No matter how you answer this question, we will not tell your GAL that you completed a survey or how you answered the questions!

No thanks (leave the next part blank). **Yes, you can contact me using the info below:**

My first and last name is _____.

My telephone number or email address is _____.

This is the end of the survey! Thank you!



Colorado Office of the Child's Representative D&N Court Observation Form

▲ OBSERVER

▲ OBSERVATION DATE

▲ CASE NUMBER

▲ JD / COUNTY

▲ JUDICIAL OFFICER

Yes No

▲ Contested hearing?

▲ GAL OF RECORD

▲ Attorney Registration Number (GAL of Record)

Yes - In Person Yes - By Report Yes - By Phone No (see next question)

▲ Did GAL of record appear?

▲ If GAL of record did not appear, enter name of GAL who appeared.

▼ HEARING TYPE: (check all that apply)

- Adjudicatory
- Advisement
- Dispositional
- Permanency
- Placement Review
- Post-Termination
- Preliminary Protective Proceeding
- Pretrial
- Return on Summons
- Review
- Termination
- Other:

▼ Briefly identify the nature of the hearing and legal issues involved: (1,200 character limit, approx. 175 words)

Children affiliated with this case:

	Child 1 x	Child 2 x	Child 3 x	Child 4 x	Child 5 x
Name					
DOB					
Q1) Was child present? (incl. any electronic means)	Yes No Child under 5 years old				
Q2) Was this child given the chance to address the Court?	Yes No Child under 5 years old				
Q3) Did GAL address efforts to get child to attend?	Yes No Child present or under 5yo				
Q4) Did GAL provide current, independent info about this child?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
<i>Sources / types of information from Q4</i>					
Q5) Did GAL state last contact with child?	Yes No Child present Contested Hearing (N/A)				
Q6) Did GAL clearly state a position?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
<i>Position stated from Q6</i>					
Q7) Did GAL state child's position?	Yes No Child under 5 years old				
<i>Child's position from Q7</i>					

Youth in Court Report - FY18 Q1 through Q3

Permanency Planning & Benchmark Hearings Involving a Child Age 12 or Older

Hearings 7/1/2017 through 3/31/2018

Overall Summary by District

District	Total Hearings	Child Present	% Present	% Present FY17*
01 - Gilpin	0	0	-	25.00%
01 - Jefferson	211	90	42.65%	41.46%
02 - Denver	2	0	0.00%	-
02 - Denver Juvenile	218	90	41.28%	43.89%
03 - Huerfano	2	1	50.00%	0.00%
03 - Las Animas	0	0	-	100.00%
04 - El Paso	248	142	57.26%	63.24%
04 - Teller	3	1	33.33%	66.67%
05 - Clear Creek	3	1	33.33%	11.11%
05 - Eagle	0	0	-	50.00%
05 - Lake	0	0	-	-
05 - Summit	1	0	0.00%	33.33%
06 - Archuleta	1	1	100.00%	100.00%
06 - La Plata	8	6	75.00%	100.00%
06 - San Juan	0	0	-	-
07 - Delta	19	9	47.37%	52.63%
07 - Gunnison	1	1	100.00%	100.00%
07 - Hinsdale	1	1	100.00%	-
07 - Montrose	13	7	53.85%	42.31%
07 - Ouray	0	0	-	-
07 - San Miguel	1	1	100.00%	-
08 - Jackson	0	0	-	-
08 - Larimer	72	19	26.39%	50.42%
09 - Garfield	16	6	37.50%	75.00%
09 - Pitkin	2	2	100.00%	100.00%
09 - Rio Blanco	5	5	100.00%	100.00%
10 - Pueblo	15	7	46.67%	13.04%
11 - Chaffee	0	0	-	-
11 - Custer	0	0	-	66.67%
11 - Fremont	22	6	27.27%	28.00%

*FY17 provided for comparison: % present for hearings 7/1/2016 through 6/30/2017

Youth in Court Report - FY18 Q1 through Q3

Permanency Planning & Benchmark Hearings Involving a Child Age 12 or Older

Hearings 7/1/2017 through 3/31/2018

Overall Summary by District

District	Total Hearings	Child Present	% Present	% Present FY17*
11 - Park	1	1	100.00%	-
12 - Alamosa	8	8	100.00%	11.11%
12 - Conejos	3	3	100.00%	40.00%
12 - Costilla	22	11	50.00%	0.00%
12 - Mineral	1	0	0.00%	0.00%
12 - Rio Grande	13	2	15.38%	55.56%
12 - Saguache	1	0	0.00%	66.67%
13 - Kit Carson	1	1	100.00%	100.00%
13 - Logan	8	0	0.00%	42.11%
13 - Morgan	11	5	45.45%	7.69%
13 - Phillips	0	0	-	85.71%
13 - Sedgwick	0	0	-	-
13 - Washington	2	0	0.00%	-
13 - Yuma	0	0	-	-
14 - Grand	0	0	-	-
14 - Moffat	0	0	-	100.00%
14 - Routt	1	0	0.00%	-
15 - Baca	0	0	-	0.00%
15 - Cheyenne	0	0	-	100.00%
15 - Kiowa	2	2	100.00%	-
15 - Prowers	1	1	100.00%	50.00%
16 - Bent	0	0	-	-
16 - Crowley	3	2	66.67%	-
16 - Otero	12	6	50.00%	53.85%
17 - Adams	150	72	48.00%	37.43%
17 - Broomfield	5	2	40.00%	70.00%
18 - Arapahoe	169	47	27.81%	22.37%
18 - Douglas	39	11	28.21%	62.30%
18 - Elbert	2	1	50.00%	25.00%
18 - Lincoln	0	0	-	33.33%

*FY17 provided for comparison: % present for hearings 7/1/2016 through 6/30/2017

Youth in Court Report - FY18 Q1 through Q3

Permanency Planning & Benchmark Hearings Involving a Child Age 12 or Older

Hearings 7/1/2017 through 3/31/2018

Overall Summary by District

District	Total Hearings	Child Present	% Present	% Present FY17*
19 - Weld	49	17	34.69%	42.11%
20 - Boulder	51	23	45.10%	37.50%
21 - Mesa	8	3	37.50%	33.33%
22 - Dolores	0	0	-	-
22 - Montezuma	0	0	-	-
Totals:	1427	614	43.03%	44.88%

Note: In this report, "hearings" is defined by child rather than by case number. For example, a hearing involving two children over the age of 12 will be counted as two hearings for this report.

*FY17 provided for comparison: % present for hearings 7/1/2016 through 6/30/2017

Percentage of Youth Present at Hearings 7/1/19 to 3/31/20
 Permanency Planning Benchmark Hearings Involving a Child Age 12 or Older

Court	Total Hearings	Child Present	Percent Present
1 - Gilpin	1	0	
1 - Jefferson	194	57	29%
2 - Denver	213	88	41%
3 - Huerfano	2	1	50%
3 - Las Animas	0	0	
4 - El Paso	216	85	39%
4 - Teller	1	0	
5 - Clear Creek	4	2	50%
5 - Eagle	4	0	
5 - Lake	1	1	100%
5 - Summit	2	1	50%
6 - Archuleta	2	2	100%
6 - La Plata	1	1	100%
6 - San Juan	0	0	
7 - Delta	9	4	44%
7 - Gunnison	0	0	
7 - Hinsdale	0	0	
7 - Montrose	21	3	14%
7 - Ouray	0	0	
7 - San Miguel	5	0	
8 - Jackson	1	0	
8 - Larimer	180	37	21%
9 - Garfield	6	4	67%
9 - Pitkin	1	1	100%
9 - Rio Blanco	5	4	80%
10 - Pueblo	17	7	41%
11 - Chaffee	6	0	
11 - Custer	1	1	100%
11 - Fremont	28	12	43%
11 - Park	11	2	18%
12 - Alamosa	8	4	50%
12 - Conejos	1	0	
12 - Costilla	6	1	17%
12 - Mineral	0	0	
12 - Rio Grande	43	17	40%
12 - Saguache	0	0	
12- Kit Carson	0	0	
13 - Logan	12	4	33%
13 - Morgan	10	3	30%
13 - Phillips	1	0	
13 - Sedgwick	0	0	
13 - Washington	5	4	80%

Note: In this report, "hearings" is defined by child rather than by case number. For example, a hearing involving two children over the age of 12 will be counted as two hearings for this report.

Percentage of Youth Present at Hearings 7/1/19 to 3/31/20
 Permanency Planning Benchmark Hearings Involving a Child Age 12 or Older

Court	Total Hearings	Child Present	Percent Present
13 - Yuma	4	2	50%
14 - Grand	5	2	40%
14 - Moffat	8	4	50%
14 - Routt	3	1	33%
15 - Baca	0	0	
15 - Cheyenne	0	0	
15 - Kiowa	0	0	
15 - Prowers	0	0	
16 - Bent	0	0	
16 - Crowley	0	0	
16 - Otero	3	1	33%
17 - Adams	102	36	35%
17 - Broomfield	3	1	33%
18 - Arapahoe	168	26	15%
18 - Douglas	67	17	25%
18 - Elbert	10	2	20%
18 - Lincoln	6	2	33%
19 - Weld	47	9	19%
20 - Boulder	67	8	12%
21 - Mesa	30	7	23%
22 - Dolores	0	0	
22 - Montezuma	0	0	
TOTALS	1541	464	30%

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