

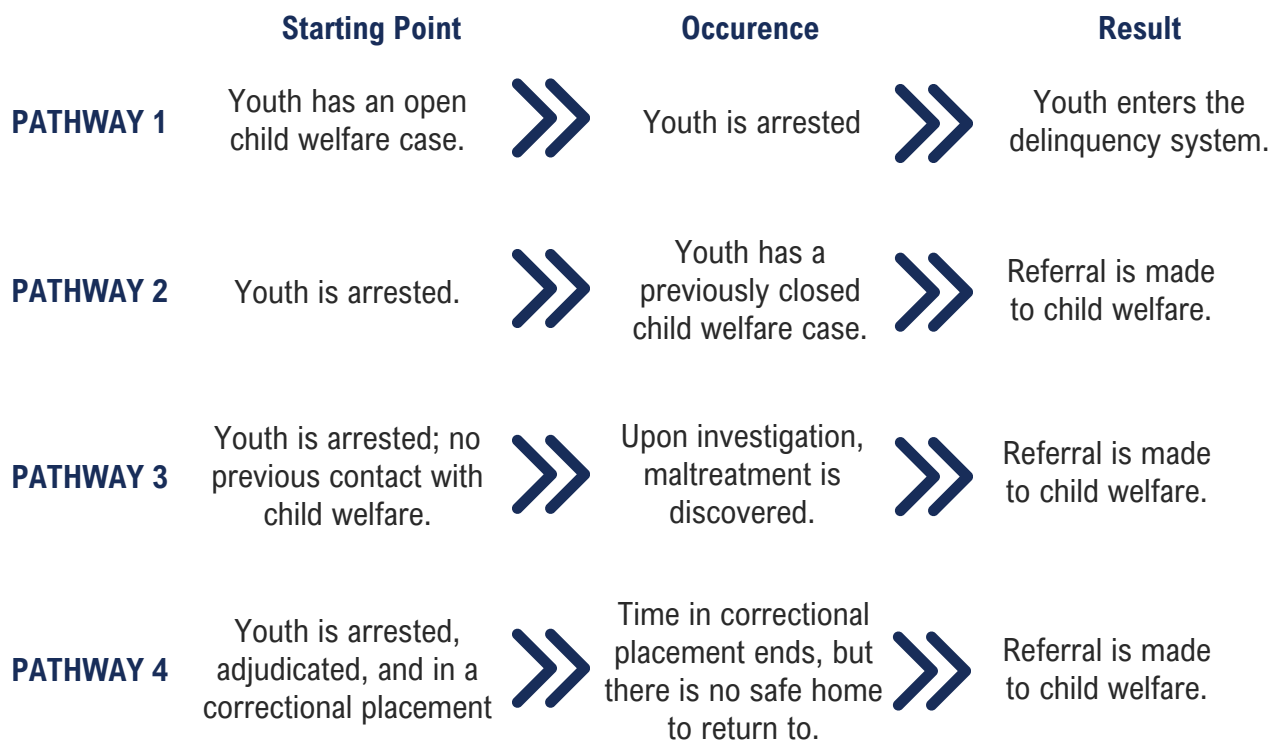
CROSSOVER YOUTH

A “crossover youth” is a child who is “at risk of or is fluctuating between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.” These youth are also sometimes referred to as “dual-system involved youth.”¹

Just because a child enters the child welfare system does not mean they will become involved in the juvenile justice system. However, long standing research shows that “a history of child abuse, neglect, and child welfare system involvement increases the likelihood of aggression, violence, delinquency, and justice system involvement.”^{2, 3}

Nationwide, at least half of youth entering the juvenile justice system have a history of child welfare intervention.⁴

HOW DOES A CHILD BECOME A CROSSOVER YOUTH?⁵



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HOW GEORGIA IS SERVING CROSSOVER YOUTH

To effectively serve crossover youth, the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system must collaborate on the delivery of services and assistance to families and limit the amount of time youth spend in out-of-home placements.⁶

Georgia's efforts to service crossover youth include:

- Creating the Children in Need of Services (CHINS) classification and detention alternatives to provide community services and divert youth away from further court involvement.⁷
- Using Local Interagency Planning Teams (LIPTs) and Multi-Agency Treatment for Children (MATCH) to bring together multiple agencies and court staff to address the treatment of youth with complex needs.
- Appointing Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) who are often assigned to more complex juvenile court cases, including crossover youth.⁸
- Implementing provisions from [Senate Bill 401](#) (passed in 2024) which mandates the statewide collection and reporting of dependency case data, which will help with the early identification of crossover youth and track outcomes.

CHALLENGES FACING GEORGIA

While these are important steps for addressing the needs of crossover youth, the lack of a statewide protocol for cross-agency information sharing and limitations on existing databases present opportunities for improvement.

For additional information on Crossover Youth, see [Punishment to Potential: A Landscape of Georgia's Juvenile Justice System](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Mandate better and more consistent identification of crossover youth, and evaluation of integrated systems approaches to improving their outcomes.
- Integrate agency data systems to share robust and timely information and data between the DJJ, individual juvenile courts, and other child-serving agencies to better identify needs, prevention strategies, and outcomes.
- Encourage and enforce cooperation and coordination among the various agencies and courts that administer, oversee, and support the juvenile justice system.
- Create a designated funding stream for LIPTs.
- Expand community-based alternatives by increasing the availability of diversion programs across all counties, developing partnerships with community organizations to provide comprehensive services, and establishing methods to measure the effectiveness of these alternatives.

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REFERENCES FOR CROSSOVER YOUTH

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- 7 The PEW Charitable Trusts. (July 2013). Public Safety Performance Project: Georgia's 2013 Juvenile Justice Reform. Retrieved June 2, 2025 from https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs/content-level_pages/reports/georgia20201320juvenile20justice20reform20summary20briefjuly2013pdf.pdf.
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