

**Children's Law Center**  
University of South Carolina School of Law

# **Dually-Involved Youth Data Report 2020**

*A study of children involved with South Carolina's departments of social services and juvenile justice*

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*This project was supported by Federal Formula Grant #1J17003, awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice through the South Carolina Department of Public Safety. The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: Bureau of Justice Assistance, bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of crime. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

## I. Introduction

The Children’s Law Center, University of South Carolina conducted a study to identify the characteristics of dually-involved youth in South Carolina in order to better understand and serve them. The key findings of the study are highlighted in this data report. For purposes of this study and data report, “dually-involved youth” refers to youth who have had an indicated finding of abuse or neglect by the S.C. Department of Social Services (DSS) and at least one referral to the S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

The study involved the collection of de-identified data (through the data service of the S.C. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA)) of children born in South Carolina in 1997, 1998, and 1999 with an indicated finding of abuse or neglect by DSS.<sup>1</sup> RFA then linked the data to the selected variables of data obtained from DJJ, the S.C. Department of Mental Health, and the S.C. Department of Education.

According to study findings:

- **161,039** children were born in S.C. during the three-year period<sup>1</sup>
- **21,763** or **13.5%** of those children had at least one indicated finding of abuse or neglect by DSS
- **5,398** or **24.8%** of the cohort children with an indicated DSS finding were dually-involved youth (*also had at least one referral to DJJ*)

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<sup>1</sup> Data Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of 1990 - 2019 Final Birth data, National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved from the Annie E. Casey, the KIDS COUNT Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6038-total-births-byrace#detailed/2/42/false/10,9,8/3,2,1,4,13/12703,12704> (last visited, April 6, 2021).

## II. Racial Disparities

Of the **161,039** children born in S.C. during the three-year period:

- **98,171** or 60.9% were White or Caucasian
- **56,252** or 34.9% were Black or African American
- **6,616** or 4.1% identified as another race

**21,763** had at least one indicated finding of abuse or neglect by DSS

Of the 21,763 cohort children who had at least one indicated case of abuse or neglect with DSS:<sup>2</sup>

- **11,654** or 54.9% were White or Caucasian
- **8,823** or 41.6% were Black or African American
- **742** or 3.5% identified as another race<sup>3</sup>

**5,398** or **24.8%** of the children with an indicated finding were dually-involved youth (also had at least one referral to DJJ)

Of the **5,398** dually-involved youth born in S.C. during the three-year period:

- **2,309** or 42.8% were White or Caucasian
- **2,919** or 54.1% were Black or African American
- **170** or 3.1% identified as another race

| Race         | Children Born in S.C. (1997, 1998, 1999) | %    | Cohort children with at least one indicated finding of abuse or neglect | %     | Cohort dually-involved youth | %     |
|--------------|--|------|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|
| <b>White</b> | 98,171                                   | 61%  | 11,654  | 54.9% | 2,309                        | 42.8% |
| <b>Black</b> | 56,252                                   | 35%  | 8,823   | 41.6% | 2,919                        | 54.1% |
| <b>Other</b> | 6,616                                    | 4%   | 742   | 3.5%  | 170                          | 3.1%  |
| <b>Total</b> | 161,039                                  | 100% | 21,219  | 100%  | 5,398                        | 100%  |

<sup>2</sup> According to the cohort data provided by FRA, the total number of children born during the three-year period of the study with an indicated finding of abuse or neglect was 21,763, as reported previously. However, there were 544 children with unknown race information, so they were removed, leaving a total of 21,219 in the final cohort with available race information. Therefore, the percentage by race below was calculated based on the total of 21,219.

<sup>3</sup> Including races of American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Multi-racial and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. Not including unknown data.

### III. Comparison of Dually-Involved Youth with Youth Not Dually Involved

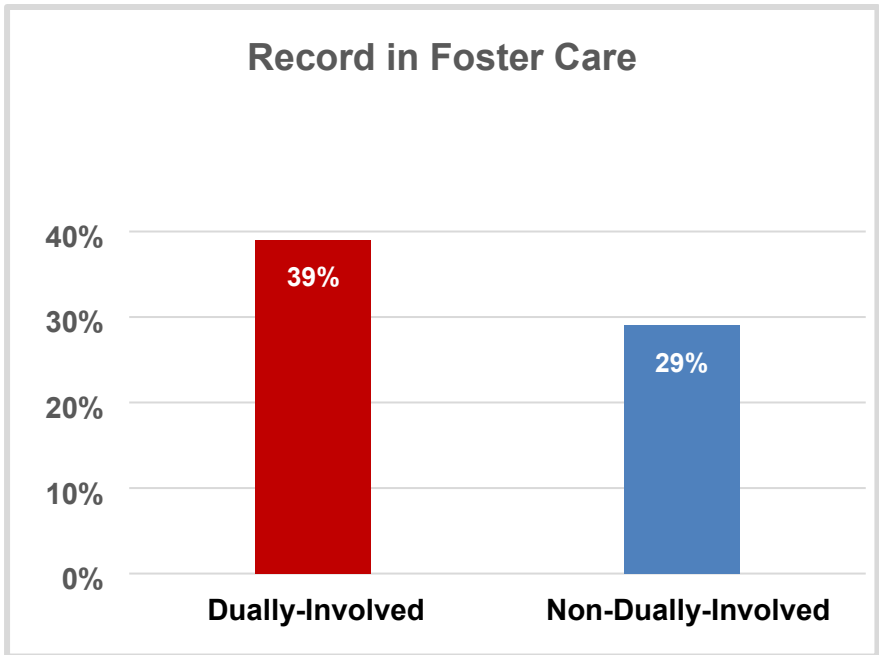
| <b>Selected variables</b>   | <b>Dually-involved youth (%)<br/>n=5,226<sup>4</sup><br/>(24% out of the CPS cohort [N=21,763])</b> | <b>Non-dually-involved youth (%)<br/>n=16,537<br/>(76% out of the CPS cohort [N=21,763])</b> |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Hispanic ethnicity</b>   | n=121 (2.3% out of dually-involved youth)   | n=581 (3.5% out of non-dually-involved youth)  |
| <b>Gender</b>   | Female = 2,065 (39.5%)<br>Male = 3,149 (60.3%)<br>Unknown = 12 (0.2%)                               | Female = 8,840 (53.5%)<br>Male = 7,618 (46.1%)<br>Unknown = 79 (0.5%)                        |
| <b>Children had at least one record in foster care<sup>5</sup></b>  | n = 2,034 (38.9% out of dually-involved youth)  | n = 4,783 (28.9% out of non-dually-involved youth)   |
| <b>Children had at least one record with DMH<sup>6</sup></b>        | n = 3,610 (69.1% out of dually-involved youth)  | n = 5,597 (33.8% out of non-dually-involved youth)   |
| <b>Children with at least one record of handicapping conditions</b> | n = 2,499 (47.8% out of dually-involved youth)  | n = 4,947 (29.9% out of non-dually-involved youth)   |
| <b>Children with free and reduced lunch (1994-2016)</b>             | n = 5,116 (97.9% out of dually-involved youth)<br>Missing data = 110 (2.1%)                         | n = 12,437 (75.2% out of non-dually-involved youth)<br>Missing data = 4,100 (24.8%)          |
| <b>Students repeated grades</b>                                     | n = 3,479 (66.6% out of dually-involved youth)<br>Missing data = 1,747 (33.4%)                      | n = 5,257 (31.8% out of non-dually-involved youth)<br>Missing data = 11,280 (68.2%)          |

<sup>4</sup> This is smaller than the total number of dually-involved youth reported earlier (n=5,398) due to the removal of cases with substantial missing data for the purpose of comparison.

<sup>5</sup> Determined by children with a foster care service open date.

<sup>6</sup> Selected by children with a DMH admission date.

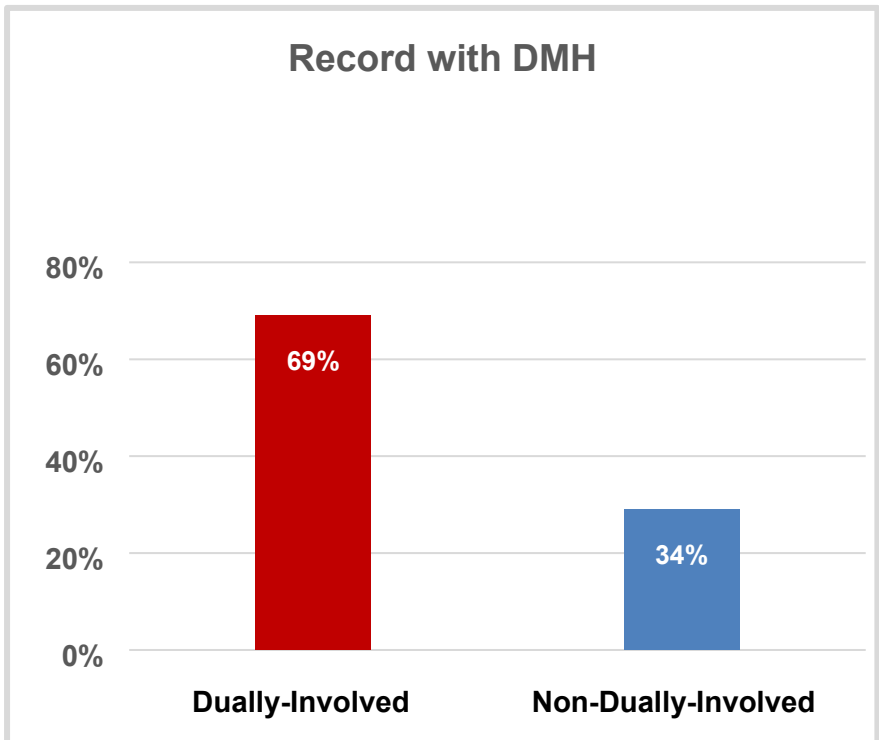
### Record in Foster Care



### Foster Care Placement

**2,034** or **39%** of dually-involved youth had at least one record in foster care, compared to **29%** of youth who were not dually involved.

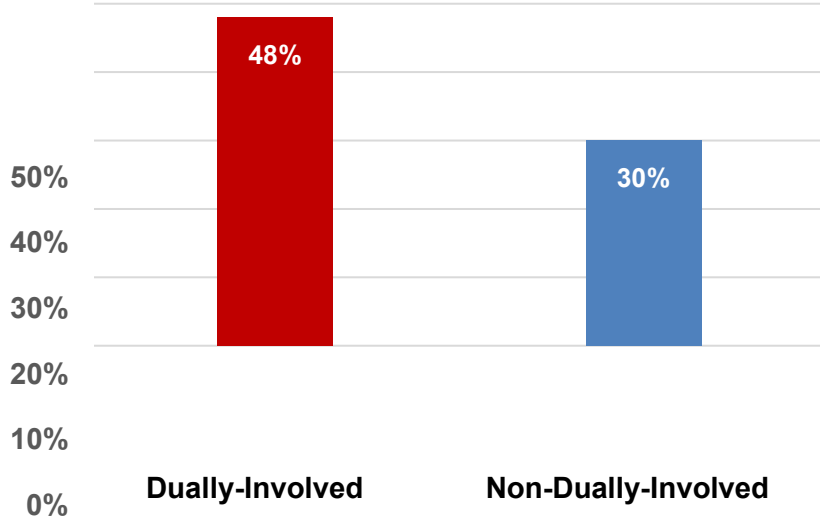
### Record with DMH



### Mental Health Referral

**3,610** or **69%** of dually-involved youth had at least one record with SC Department of Mental Health (DMH), compared to **34%** of youth who were not dually involved.

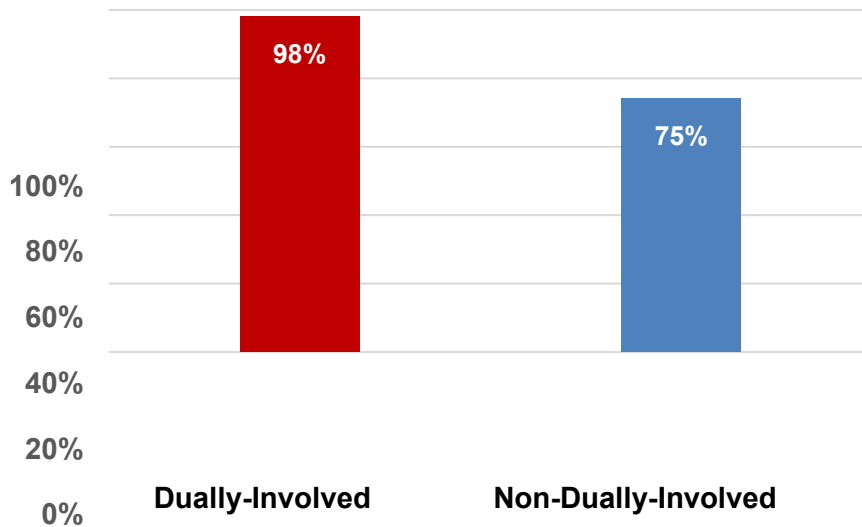
### Handicapping Conditions

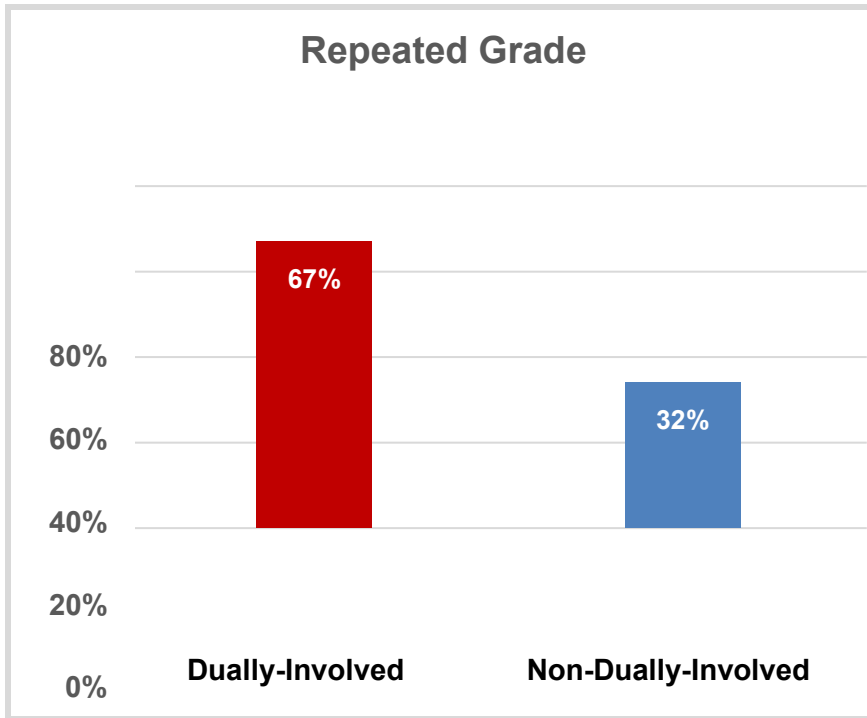


### Handicapping Condition

**2,499** or **48%** of these dually-involved youth had at least one record of handicapping conditions, compared to **30%** of youth who were not dually involved.

### Free or Reduced Lunch





**Repeated Grade**  
**3,479** or **67%** of dually-involved youth repeated a grade (Missing data = 1747 / 33%), compared to **32%** of youth who were not dually involved (Missing data = 11,280 / 68%).

#### IV. Limitation

While every effort was made to provide an accurate and comprehensive report of findings, this study was limited by some incomplete, missing, and unknown data, as well as varying definitions from various agencies and data sources. Therefore, findings should be interpreted with caution. This is another strong indication of the need for more comprehensive data collection in future studies, which is critical for guiding decisions on policy, practices, and resource allocations for dually-involved youth. Findings of this report were descriptive only and should not be inferred and generalized to other time periods and cohorts.