

Policy Brief

SAFETY

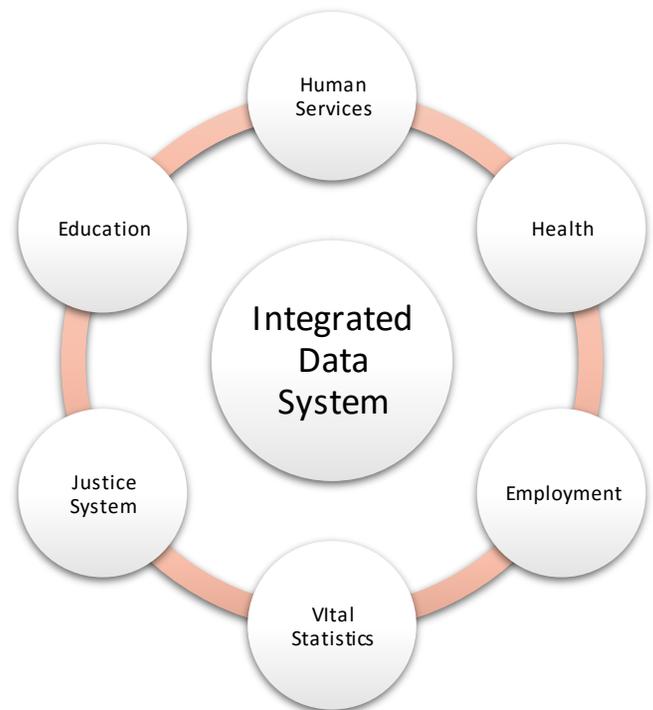
Child Welfare Data System 2017

Entities and communities should endeavor to provide a holistic, comprehensive, and integrated experience for children, youth, and families seeking support and receiving services. – Child Welfare League of America¹

Children who enter the child welfare system often cross over into other systems of care.

- A child who is abused/neglected is 55% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile;²
- More than 20% of children who leave foster care experienced housing problems within two years of leaving;³
- Former foster children are more likely to become homeless, incarcerated, or dependent on state services.⁴

For example, in Clark County, children who enter the child welfare system would have their information entered into the Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth (UNITY) data system and the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). If he/she then receives welfare services, they would be entered into the CACTUS System and the Nevada Operations of Multi-Automated Data System (NOMADS). If they go through the court system they will get entered into Odyssey, and through the juvenile justice system into the Family Tracking, Reporting and Automated Case Support (FamilyTracs) system. If that child becomes homeless or receives homelessness services, they would be entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and if they receive workforce aid they would be entered into the Southern Nevada Workforce Connections data reporting system (NVTrac). Additionally, they would still be tracked by the School District and by health care services. Without being able to see what services/resources a child has already received, the service providers operate with blinders which may result in a lack of appropriate services, duplication of services and a lack of efficiency amount all agencies. Additionally, many of these systems are old and lack the capacity to input, store and /or report data necessary for these agencies to make timely and appropriate decisions for these youth.



¹ Child Welfare League of America, *National Blueprint for Excelling in Child Welfare* p. 70

² <http://cijr.georgetown.edu/pdfs/Fall%2008%20NCJFCJ%20Today%20feature.pdf>

³ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2707485/>

⁴ http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2007/06/foster-care-children-need-better-educational-opportunities#_ftn10

This problem would be alleviated with the creation of an integrated data system. Integrated data systems are data systems that “integrate individual-level data from multiple administrative agencies on an ongoing basis. These systems may exist for jurisdictions at various levels, including states, counties, and cities. Records in these systems may include those from human services (such as child welfare, income supports, and child care subsidies), health, employment, vital statistics, justice system and education.”⁵ They could be accessed by participating entities and would include securely exchanged information that protects privacy and confidentiality. This would allow the organizations to quickly look up their client, see their personal information, which would be automatically populated, and see what services their clients have used or are currently using. Having an integrated data system would lead to “an increased knowledge and communication among agencies, resource sharing and reduction of duplicated efforts, greater specialization, and an improved image with clients and the community.”⁶ Using an integrated data system would provide substantial benefits to the clients by offering “referrals to more and a wider range of services, improved access, and improved case management”⁷, while also saving time for clients and providers.

Recommendations:

The Children’s Advocacy Alliance recommends that the Nevada Legislature conduct a feasibility study to look at the viability of an integrated data system with community input. CAA also recommends the integrated system include the following key design elements:

1. Collect information from multiple service providers, which will provide greater coordination.
2. The power of available technology should be leveraged to the fullest. For example, back-end systems should support robust, bidirectional information exchange, and automatically populate appropriate information into a record that follows the child through a continuum of care and over time.
3. Information must be exchanged securely, in a manner that protects privacy and confidentiality, and the tools must support the specific designation of individuals authorized to see specific portions of the record (i.e. granular data segmentation and role-based access), among other protections.
4. Electronic records generated must be able to extract and summarize important information, to include historical information to provide an accurate and complete client record.
5. Electronic records should be designed with consumer-facing features, such as patient portals and pre-visit questionnaires, as well as links to available tools that can feed critical information into the record, such as remote monitoring devices.⁸



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⁵ http://neighborhoodindicators.org/sites/default/files/publications/final_concept_paper_nnip_ids.pdf

⁶ http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/coordination_FR.pdf

⁷ http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/coordination_FR.pdf

⁸ <http://childwelfaresparc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/15-Electronic-Information-Exchange-Elements-that-Matter-for-Children-in-Foster-Care.pdf>