

# FactSheet

## No Wrong Door

While many children thrive and find success in school and in life, others need support along the way. Children, youth and families currently access specific services from a specific agency, according to particular labels or situations. Yet, in many if not most cases, these children require the attention of more than one social services agency. Known as “cross-systems” kids, these young people may get lost when they leave one system or, as frequently happens, exit one system only to enter another because of the difficulty in meeting their needs and appropriately serving them.

The needs of these children span multiple agencies because they cannot be neatly packaged into what one agency can deliver. Yet, they may be excluded from accessing services offered by one state agency due to their involvement with another. In addition, funding restrictions and bureaucratic silos can make it difficult for a given state or local agency to offer a full array of services, especially for children experiencing loss, separation, disruptions in schooling, violence, or any number of other life stressors. Integration of services to meet an individual child’s or family’s needs can result in better outcomes, a reduction in duplicative or cross-purpose services, and less costly service delivery.



### Key Facts

- ▶ 70% of youth entering the juvenile justice system were assessed as needing substance abuse treatment; 48% were in need of mental health services.
- ▶ A significant number of children leave one child-serving system, only to reappear in another. For example, 29% of the youth who entered Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs in 2008 had been in the care of the state prior to becoming a runaway or homeless youth—many within 30 days of leaving state care.
- ▶ Comprehensive, cross-systems responses that reach the whole child and the whole family can help to ensure that youth and children grow up connected to community supports and make a successful transition to youth and adulthood.

- ▶ The Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study provides compelling evidence that experiencing multiple childhood traumas results in severe and multiple lifelong consequences that are more expensive to treat.

### We Can Do Better

- ▶ New York must establish a No Wrong Door approach and provide seamless access to all child-service systems, services and community supports.
- ▶ A developmental approach should be incorporated into the framework by which social service agencies offer supports to children and families. Services must be child-centered, family-focused, community-based, and coordinated.