

# Youth and Family Centers Program: 2007-08

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## At a Glance

The Youth and Family Centers (YFC) began formally offering behavioral health services to students in the Dallas Independent School District in 1995. In 2007-2008 the Youth and Family Center Evaluation investigated the question of whether the YFC had an effect upon the Dallas Independent School District's (Dallas ISD) students' involvement with academic intervention or disciplinary programs as measured by student involvement in Student Support Team Stage I, II or III referrals to these programs. Evaluators consulted the Dallas ISD student, eNCORE and disciplinary data bases to evaluate the question. The evaluation also addressed the number of services delivered and growth of the program and characterized student and YFC staff characteristics.

### Physical Plant Characteristics

The setting for services delivery was an important characteristic contributing to the perceptions of clients concerning the quality of services delivered by the YFCs. Evaluation and Accountability E&A evaluators visited each of the YFC service delivery sites to evaluate the condition and appearance of the facility. Observations were focused on the condition of the building, maintenance issues and custodial conditions prevailing at each center. Visits were by appointment, so the staff of each center knew when evaluators would be on-site. While all centers were clean on the inside, several had trash and other debris around the parking and outside areas of the building. There was considerable variability in the appearance and maintenance posture among the centers. Some were well maintained while others presented peeling paint, holes in the earth next to sidewalks, non-functioning lights and other discrepancies. Most YFCs are housed in portable buildings on the parking lot of a high school. Centers relied on district central maintenance for building maintenance and upon the host school's custodial staff for routine cleaning and supplies, such as toilet paper and hand towels. Centers did not have staff or budgets of their own to manage these critical services.

### Staff Overview

The YFC program employed 65 staff members in 2007-2008. Staff included support and administrative personnel (24), full-time professional employees (20), and part-time permanent staff (21). The part-time staff mostly consisted of therapy providers providing mental health services to students and their families in the evening hours. All but eight staffers were assigned duties at one of the YFC service delivery centers. The eight staffers assigned to the program office provided administrative and leadership services in support of the service delivery centers.

### Staff Educational Levels

YFC staff's educational attainment was heavily weighted towards the master degree, with 38 of 65 staffers holding the MA degree. Most of these were therapists providing services to students and their family. Some 20 support staff were high school graduates, many with some college, but without a degree. Five staffers held a Ph.D. degree and 2 held bachelor degrees.

### Client Characteristics

Youth and Family program office records and the Dallas Independent School District's student databases were consulted to develop data concerning the characteristics of YFC Clients. Results are presented in tabular and text form. The YFC program served a total of 3,599 district students during the 2007-2008 school year.

YFC demographics closely matched districtwide demographics in terms of ethnicity for Hispanics (60.0% YFC vs. 63.5% districtwide) and African Americans (30.1% YFC vs. 30.0% districtwide).

YFC clients were less likely to be Talented and Gifted program participants (6.3% YFC vs. 12.1% districtwide, but were just as likely to be low socio-economic status (SES) or limited-English proficient (LEP) as their non-client peers (78.2% YFC vs. 72.0% districtwide for low SES and 32.5% for YFC vs. 31.0% district wide for LEP).

YFC clients were more heavily distributed in Grade 2 through Grade 9 than in EC through Grade 1 or Grade 10 through Grade 12. This distribution mirrored the general district population and the proportional differences in student distribution throughout the grades between YFC clients and the general district population never achieved a difference of even 4%. The largest difference (-3.7%) occurred at PK, followed by 3.1% in Grade 4 and -3.1% in Grade 12.

### YFC Program Growth

Table 1 presents the number of students served and the number of visits for psycho-social services from the 2004-2005 school year through the 2007-2008 school year. Data for the 2006-2007 school year were not available.

Table 1: Number of YFC Clients and Services

School Year	Number of Students	Number of Visits	Mean Number of Visits/Student
2004-2005	4,211	24,838	5.9
2005-2006	3,388	20,469	6.0
2006-2007	N/A	N/A	N/A
2007-2008	3,599	28,690	8.0

### Disciplinary Referral Characteristics

The academic and disciplinary referral system, called the Student Support Services, at Dallas ISD was a three stage process. Stage I involved classroom-level minor academic and disciplinary interventions identified and administered in the classroom by the teacher. The Campus Instructional Leadership Team (CILT) or the Student Support Team (SST) could consult with the teacher at Stage I. Stage II involved more serious school-level interventions recommended and approved by the SST. Stage III interventions involved the most serious academic or disciplinary interventions, and may have included removal from the classroom and reassignment to an Alternative Learning Center. Stage II and Stage III referrals required approval by both the CILT and the SST.

Table 2: YFC Client and Discipline System Population

YFC Client	USI Referral	Stage I	Stage II	Stage III
3,599	20,030	22,154	2,810	17,116

### Hypothesis Building

Most Stage I referrals (85.5%) came about via the USI instrument administered in the fall. The USI predominantly identified psycho-social issues that may need mediation. Not all USI referrals resulted in a Stage I referral, but most did (94.9%). The initial evaluation approach was to examine how many YFC clients had received a Stage I or a USI referral. Of 20,030 students receiving a USI referral in 2007-2008 about 6% (1,169) were YFC clients. The YFC served 3,599 students in 2007-2008. Thus about 32% of YFC clients received a Stage I USI referral. The questions then became, were Stage I referrals likely to receive fewer subsequent Stage II or Stage III referrals, suggestive of the efficacy of early intervention, and were YFC clients distinguished in any way from other Stage I students?

### Regression Findings Summary

Something associated with being African American or Hispanic not controlled in the models developed for this evaluation remained a statistically significant factor in determining how many Stage II and Stage III referrals a student received. Older students were more likely to receive increased Stage II and III referrals than younger students in these data. LEP students were less likely to garner more referrals. Special Education status conferred no additional risk of referral beyond Stage I, and TAG students were statistically less likely to be referred. Students receiving a Stage I referral from any source, or those students that became YFC clients, either on their own or via an SST Stage I referral, were also less likely to garner Stage II and III referrals. Being a YFC client proved beneficial to students regardless of the risk factors they faced.

For more information, see EA08-143-2, available at [www.dallasisd.org/eval/](http://www.dallasisd.org/eval/) or contact Dr. Michael D. Lucas at 972-925-6452