



State Headquarters:
1225 South Weller Street, Suite 420
Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 322-2444

Offices in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Yakima and
Spokane Counties
questions@teamchild.org
www.teamchild.org



**All children have the
potential to succeed.**

TeamChild Wellness Project: The youth, our program & referrals

City of Tacoma Collaboration
Presentation
October 22, 2014

Paul Alig and Sara Zier



TeamChild

Our Vision:

TeamChild believes that it is the paramount duty of our community to help youth overcome the obstacles of poverty, juvenile justice involvement, disability, neglect and abuse, racism and discrimination, in order to achieve their true potential.

Our Mission:

TeamChild upholds the rights of youth involved, or at risk of involvement, in the juvenile justice system to help them secure the education, healthcare, housing and other support they need to achieve positive outcomes in their lives.



Juveniles in Washington State

- Juveniles represent 25% of the total population in Washington State.
- One in five children live in poverty.
- Half of all juveniles live in King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties.
- TeamChild counties have the highest numbers of high school dropouts and children living in poverty, as well as higher numbers of juvenile arrests.
- Over 37,000 youth enter the juvenile justice system through arrests each year.
- About 50% of these youth are arrested in TeamChild counties.
- There is about 1 TeamChild attorney for every 2,200 youth arrested in the five counties we currently serve.
- Thousands more dependent and Becca kids experience similar risk factors but are not served by TeamChild.

Source: GJJAC. Washington State Juvenile Justice Report (2005).





TeamChild Offices

- **King County (Main) Office**
1225 S. Weller, Suite 420
Seattle, Washington 98144
(206) 322-2444
(206) 381-1742 Fax
- **Pierce County Office**
715 Tacoma Ave. S
Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 274-9929
(253) 274-1888 Fax
- **Snohomish County Office**
2731 Wetmore Ave, Suite 410
Everett, WA 98201
(425) 258-3132
(425) 259-2906 Fax
- **Spokane County Office**
1704 W. Broadway
Spokane, WA 99201
(509) 323-1166
(509) 323-3051 Fax
- **Yakima County Office**
32 North 3rd Street, Suite 422
Yakima, WA 98901
(509) 573-4993
(509) 575-5530 Fax



TeamChild History in Pierce County and the Wellness Project

- TeamChild has been in Pierce County since 1998
 - Started in Remann Hall
- TeamChild's Wellness Project began in 2011 through a Soros Fellowship and other startup funding
 - City of Tacoma and other funding helps sustain this project



The Need

- Too many children end up involved in the juvenile justice system for behaviors related to mental health needs and a host of adverse childhood experiences.
 - 64% of children who enter Juvenile Justice & Rehabilitation Administration (JJRA) custody have mental health needs
 - Similar nationally: approximately 70% of youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system warrant at least one mental health diagnosis. About 55% warranted two or more co-occurring mental health diagnoses



What is TeamChild's Wellness Project?

- The Wellness Project is committed to strategically ensuring that the juvenile justice system does not become the default mental health provider for children struggling with mental health issues.
- TeamChild's Wellness Project provides legal services and community awareness activities to ensure that young people understand and assert their rights to timely, meaningful, and appropriate mental health care in the community.
- www.teamchild.org/wellnessproject



Representation of Youth Clients

- Provide civil legal advocacy to at risk youth and young adults
- Our priorities include: youth who are low income & youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system.
- Work on a variety of legal issues, including: access to appropriate school programs, medical and drug and alcohol treatment, mental health care, access to community services such as Division of Developmental Disabilities services, and access to safe and stable housing.
- TeamChild's model is to provide legal advocacy to the youth, not to the parent or guardian.
- TeamChild's legal representation is voluntary.
- The youth works with TeamChild to identify the scope of TeamChild's advocacy.



Making Referrals to TeamChild

- Referrals come to our office in many ways. Our goal is to be accessible to youth and to obtain information necessary to screen the case and determine level of service.
- You can:
 - Call TeamChild directly with a referral
 - Provide parent, guardian or youth with TeamChild's contact information. Be sure the guardian or youth shares with TeamChild that you referred them!
 - Fill out a TeamChild referral form and send it to TeamChild.
- Regardless of method of referral, it is extremely helpful for the referral source to share relevant records, including juvenile court records and any educational records with TeamChild for use when screening the case.





Making Referrals to TeamChild

Continued

- Referral information is gathered by TeamChild's program assistant over the phone.
- Initial screening requires basic information about the youth, including contact information, information about the legal issues the youth is facing, the names and phone numbers of other adults working with the youth (attorney, caseworker, therapist, etc.) and information about the youth's special needs, if any.
- Attorneys staff new referrals, assess whether TeamChild can provide legal advocacy or will refer the case elsewhere, and communicate this decision to the youth and/or parent or guardian.



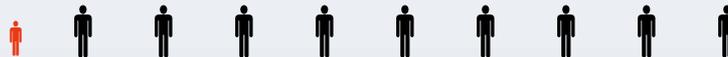
Why make a referral to TeamChild?

Educational Outcomes

- Of the youth that received active representation between July 2006 and June 2007, 68% were out of school when they were referred to TeamChild.



- By the time TeamChild closed the cases for these out of school youth, 87% of the youth were reinstated into school.

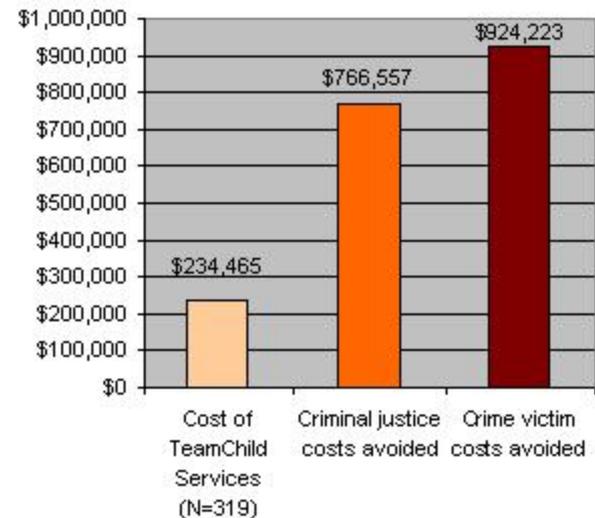


Criminal Justice Outcomes

- The Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that citizens save almost \$4,000 in taxpayer dollars for every child who receives full assistance from TeamChild.¹
- A recent study shows that 12 months after receiving TeamChild services, youth are half as likely to have juvenile court contacts than a matched comparison group.²

Cost Saved by TeamChild, 2003-04

Based on WSIPP's Cost-Benefit Study, 1998



[1] Washington State Institute for Public Policy, *Watching the Bottom Line: Cost-Effective Interventions for Reducing Crime in Washington*, January 1998. Chart reflects cost savings values adjusted from 1998 to 2003 dollars.

[2] Rainier Research Associates, *TeamChild-Snohomish County Project*, December 2004.



Wellness Project Success Story

- “Robert” is a 13 year old special education student with learning disabilities and behavioral needs. He was referred to TeamChild after a behavior incident at school that resulted in charges in the juvenile court. Although the court found Robert eligible for Diversion—a program giving first time offenders an opportunity to fulfill certain requirements and avoid having a conviction in his criminal record—Robert was unable to participate in mental health counseling, a required component of the Diversion agreement.
- Robert wanted to attend counseling, but had been turned away by community mental health providers because of an insurance problem; dual eligibility for Medicaid and a private insurance carried by his father, with whom he had no contact. After helping Robert and his mother resolve the insurance matter, TeamChild advocated for him to get into individual counseling, and gathered documentation of his enrollment and appointment schedule. This allowed Robert to keep his case in Diversion so his criminal charges could be dismissed.
- Meanwhile, Robert found himself pushed out of school. Although he’d had no new discipline issues, one day he was simply told by school staff not to come back. The school district offered Robert only minimal out of school tutoring instead - and these decisions were made without any discussions or meetings with his family.
- TeamChild helped Robert and his mother request a special education meeting to advocate for a more appropriate placement, and the school district responded by offering Robert a better (though not ideal) plan to address his needs. Since then, TeamChild has continued to advise Robert about alternative school options and his rights. Sadly, because of his previous experiences, Robert has grown distrustful of his current school and its ability to adequately protect him from bullying and provide him appropriate services. Robert is looking forward to high school where he hopes he will have a better experience.



Looking Down the Road

- Much of the Wellness Project advocacy to date has focused on helping youth in crisis get stable
- Advocacy to Sustain Recovery
 - Independent Living
 - Youth Shelter
 - Extended Foster Care
 - High School Graduation
 - Criminal Record Sealing
 - Access Developmental Disabilities Services





State Headquarters:
1225 South Weller Street, Suite 420
Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 322-2444

Offices in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Yakima and
Spokane Counties
questions@teamchild.org
www.teamchild.org



**All children have the
potential to succeed.**

**“Treat people as if they
were what they should
be, and you help them
become what they are
capable of becoming.”
-Goethe**

Thank You