
INTRODUCTION

Scope and Acknowledgements

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W.S. 28-8-107(b) authorizes the Legislative Service Office to conduct program evaluations, performance audits, and analyses of policy alternatives. Generally, the purpose of such research is to provide a base of knowledge from which policymakers can make informed decisions.

In January 2004, the Management Audit Committee directed staff to undertake a review of court-ordered placements of juveniles. The Committee requested an analysis of the program's costs, operations, and outcomes. Based on preliminary research, this study focuses on juveniles who are placed at in-state residential treatment centers (RTCs) and it addresses the following questions:

- What problems is residential treatment for juveniles intended to address? What does the treatment consist of, how much does it cost, and how long does it last?
- Does Wyoming have a higher placement rate than other states in the region?
- How do some juveniles come to be court-ordered into treatment, while others go to detention or jail?
- What is the process for determining to which RTC a juvenile will be sent, and what the length of stay will be?
- What strategies does the Department of Family Services use to control the rates it pays providers for room, board, and treatment? Is there a process for coordinating DFS' provider payments with payments from other agencies for medical and education services?
- How does DFS monitor provider operations to ensure that juveniles in placement receive appropriate services?

- What outcome data is available to indicate that those who complete their treatment have an improved ability to function in society?

Acknowledgements

The Legislative Service Office expresses appreciation to the many staff at the Department of Family Services who assisted in this research. We also gratefully acknowledge assistance from the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and from providers of residential treatment services around the state.