

January 14, 2020 — Juvenile Dependency Crossover Cases & Georgetown Project

Panel: Judge Prescott, Greg Penn, Maria Gilhooley, and Melissa Berroa. .

- **Crossover cases have both a dependency and a delinquency component.** We need to take control of the most difficult issues, which usually include placement, education, and mental health.
- Miami-Dade County uses a **1-Judge/1-family model**. If a case is open in the dependency system and a child picks up a delinquency, the Judge handling the dependency case keeps the delinquency case as well. If the case came in for delinquency and a subsequent dependency case is opened, the delinquency judge keeps both cases. **The Unified Children's Court** includes dependency, delinquency and family crossover cases. (It is no longer called Unified Family Court).
- The **Georgetown Project** is the link for everyone involved with the youth to come together and break down the issues/silos with the child.
 - It is a multi-disciplinary team meeting. Everybody should be there — the child, the Judge, the attorneys, GAL, someone from the agency, family and friends, etc. They will discuss the issues and obstacles. The child should be encouraged to speak, but to do so respectfully and watching their language!
 - It is very important for GAL to attend this meeting because you have info that others do not which may be beneficial in helping the child.
 - Judges and public defenders need to know information that the GALS know. It is okay for GALS to speak with the public defender with GAL attorney present — you are both advocating for the child.
 - To be part of Georgetown, both the dependency and delinquency must be open. If one of the cases are closed, the case remains with the same Judge, but is no longer part of Georgetown.
 - The goals are: (1) increased family engagement and a voice in the decision-making; (2) increased cross-agency collaboration and communication; (3) increasing identification of a youth's needs; (4) trying to find most appropriate placement setting; (5) identifying appropriate services and treatment.
 - GALS are a party in the dependency case; in delinquency case, the Child is the party. Your role as a GAL is the same in both, although you aren't a party on the delinquency case.
 - Before sentencing, all parties reconvene for another Georgetown staffing.
 - The first instance where there is an open dependency and the child picks up a delinquency, the JAC notifies everyone. A lawyer protocol staffing is held within 10 days (every Tuesday). Within 30 days the MDT (multi-disciplinary team) meeting/Georgetown staffing takes place (always on Thursday).
- Each Judge has a specific day for hearing cross-over cases.
- Cases must be handled in the jurisdiction where the offense occurred.
- Substance abuse and mental health are major issues. Mental health issues require a higher level of care.
- Both the JPO (Juvenile Probation Officer) and the Case Manager are interested in the charges, but need to know everything about the child to determine appropriate services, placement, etc.
- A JPO is assigned to the case the moment it enters the system.
- Recommendations are made to the Court based on information gathered.

- **Continuum of Care**

- If a child is arrested they are taken to the JAC (juvenile assessment center). A record is run and the SAO (State Attorney's Office) determines if a civil citation or diversion program is offered. For misdemeanors ONLY, the youth is offered a civil citation program. This allows youth with no previous criminal history to avoid a criminal record. They are allowed 3 opportunities. There are services provided for a specific time (3-6 months), and charges are never filed and no fingerprints are taken or in the system.
 - For misdemeanors or 3rd degree felonies, the SAO may approve a diversion program. These include the same services a youth would have if they were on probation without a record.
 - If a case goes to trial and the youth is found guilty, they may be placed on probation.
 - If there is a probation violation, the child may face commitment (3 months to 2 years). After sentence is completed, they will be placed on conditional release.
- The number of juvenile delinquency cases has decreased because of the citation and diversion programs. Unfortunately, the severity of the cases has increased.
 - In Dependency, there is a case plan, and in Delinquency, there are probation services. These cases may be different, but they are both in front of the same Judge.
 - There are no residential substance-abuse placements in Dade County. For those with dual diagnoses, the closest in-state placement is identified.

If you are interested in learning more about the delinquency process/ system, there is a **webinar — Delinquency 101:**

<https://florida-guardian-ad-litem-program.thinkific.com/courses/delinquency-101>

Creating an account is an easy 3-step process! After going to https://florida-guardian-ad-litem-program.thinkific.com/users/sign_up, simply follow these three steps:

1. Click "Sign In" on the upper right-hand side of the screen.
2. Select "Create a new account" and complete the following fields: First Name / Last Name / County of residence / Email address / and New password.
3. Click "Sign up". The GAL Program and I Am for the Child Academy will never ask you for your credit card information. Should you have this issue, please contact academy@gal.fl.gov.