

## IMPROVED LIFE FUNCTIONING OUTCOMES WITH CHILDREN RECEIVING YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM SERVICES

In recent months, Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP) has published an impressive set of community based outcomes showing substantial improvements in the number of youth who stay out of incarceration facilities while receiving YAP services. Most youth receiving these services remain free of arrest, and the vast majority remains in the community at time of discharge. Clearly, reduced crime, reduced incarceration, reduced taxpayer expenses, and maintaining a connection to one's community are values and outcomes we can all embrace as positive. The outline below reveals the science to service behind the YAP success.

YAP's use of empirical data to drive its service delivery is illustrated by its successful implementation of KIDnet software, a robust outcomes tracking system developed at the University of Maryland. The use of standardized measures with real time outcome reporting is part of the service culture and aids in identifying target areas for service intervention. For this analysis, YAP used the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment to identify the initial areas of need for the child and to measure change over time to inform service delivery decisions. The CANS is a widely accepted measure that is used both nationally and internationally as a valid and reliable tool to identify areas of need, improve communication between the child and the service, track functional outcomes, and drive a strengths based approach to the delivery of service.

For this analysis, Youth Advocate Programs partnered with the University of Maryland Division of Services Research to conduct analysis on a cohort of youth from Pennsylvania, Ohio and Maryland. The University of Maryland analyzed data from 456 youth who received YAP services over a six (6) month period. Children referred from both the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system showed significant improvement in overall life functioning while receiving service.

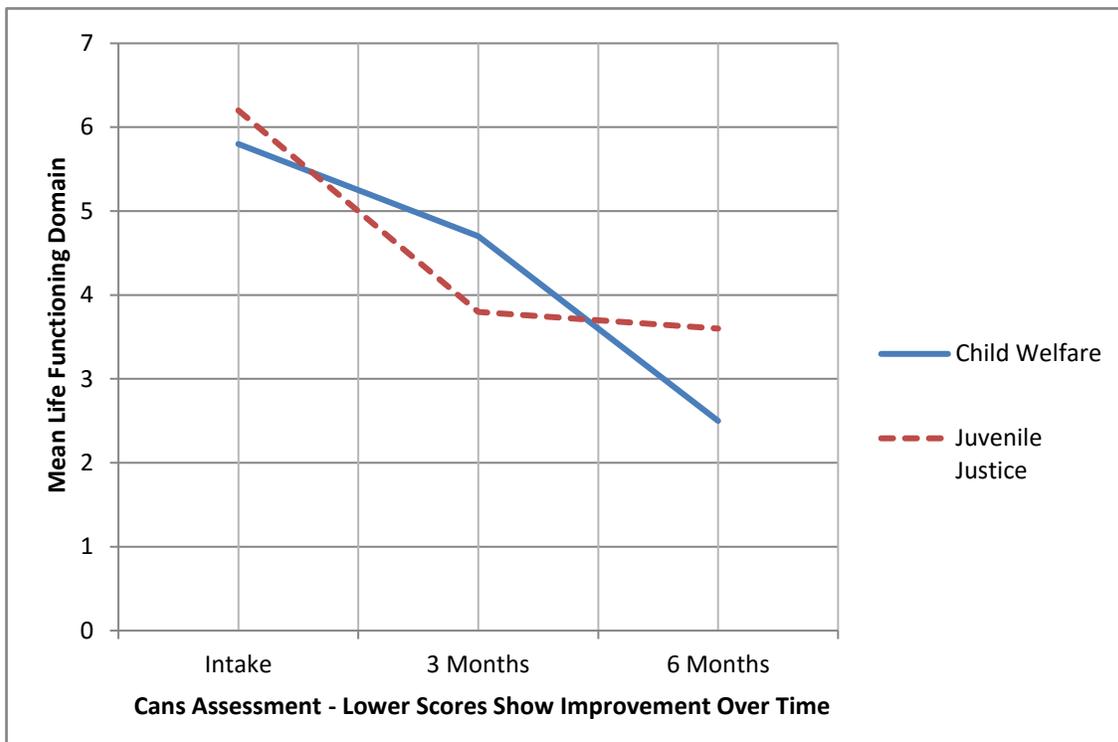
### **ADDRESSING LIFE FUNCTIONING - CRITICAL TO WELLBEING AND STABILITY**

Youth in need of services at YAP are having difficulties at home or in school or in areas of social development. Areas of Life Functioning assessed and addressed by YAP include family functioning, the child's current living situation, school attendance and achievement, as well as social and recreational functioning. YAP specializes in identifying the problem areas the child is experiencing and applying community based support services to mitigate these problems and improve overall functioning and outcomes.

Of the 456 youth who received services, 361 were referred from the juvenile justice system and 95 were referred from child welfare. Life functioning scores were assessed at intake and again every three months during the six month period.

**LIFE FUNCTIONING IMPROVING OVER TIME**

The graph below illustrates positive change over time with both populations showing statistically significant improvement in life functioning scores for both populations. Lower scores delineate improvement in life functioning. Both juvenile justice and child welfare cohorts, showed significant improvement in their overall life functioning over the six month service.



The average age of the children in this analysis was 14 years old. They were predominately male (67%). They were 35% African American, 25% white, and 40% other.