

Assessment of the Dependent Child Legal Representation Pilot

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Purpose and Conceptual Rationale

Background and Significance

For over half a century, juvenile *delinquency* courts in the United States (US) have recognized a child's right to due process within the juvenile justice system. Beginning with *In re Gault* (1967), the US Supreme Court ruled that children within the juvenile justice system have many of the same rights as adults, including a right to counsel. Federal guidance related to children's due process rights within *dependency* proceedings is somewhat less clear. Although federal statute requires that states develop procedures for the appointment of a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) in dependency cases, there is no requirement that the GAL be an attorney (in many jurisdictions, this requirement is frequently met with a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)). Furthermore, GALs are appointed to represent the *best interests* of the child as compared to delinquency cases where counsel typically represents the child's *stated interest* (42 U.S.C. §5106a(b)(2)(A)(xiii)).

While best-interest representation may be desirable in some cases, such representation may tend to overshadow a child's personal interests. Recent survey results of dependent children in Washington State are consistent with this thinking. Specifically, LeVezu (2018) found that 84% of dependent child respondents who had been assigned *both* a GAL and a stated-interest attorney also reported that their opinions had been shared in court. In cases where only a GAL had been assigned, 20% of the respondents reported having their opinions shared.

In response to the national and local dialogue referenced above, in 2017, Washington enacted 2nd Engrossed Substitute Bill 5890. Among other things, this law appropriated funds...

...to the office of civil legal aid [OCLA]...for the office to provide legal representation for foster children in two counties at the initial shelter care hearing in dependency proceedings...

In other words, the legislature required OCLA to pilot universal legal representation for dependent children in two counties. In addition to authorizing the pilot, the legislature also appropriated funds to support an evaluation of the pilot focused on the experiences of children who are represented as a result of the pilot, and those who are not. The law requires that the pilot specifically focus on

...[t]he time to achieve permanency and permanency outcomes;...[e]ducational, social, or other relevant child welfare indicators as determined relevant by the center including, but not limited to, relevant child welfare indicators identified through consultation with foster children, youth, and other stakeholders involved in the research assessment. The assessment must also identify and project cost savings to the state, if any, as a result of providing legal representation for children at the shelter care hearing.

Thus, this project is an effort by the legislature to expand due process rights for dependent youth in Washington, while simultaneously quantifying the impact that such an expansion might have across multiple domains.

Research Questions

Similar to the QIC-ChildRep intervention described by Orlebeke et al. (2016), the underlying logic of the Dependent Child Legal Representation (DCLR) pilot is that dependent children lack trained and effective legal advocacy within the dependency system. As described below, the QIC-ChildRep pilot has previously assessed the efficacy of the type of standards-based legal representation involved in the DCLR pilot. In other words, this pilot is not focused on whether or not the type of legal representation provided in the pilot is preferable to another model of representation. Rather, the overarching research question under consideration in this study is whether or not the presence of DCLR is beneficial to dependent children, as compared to current systems of advocacy and representation in Washington.

As outlined in Figures 1-3 below, the study will proceed by measuring two categories of dependent measures which exist in the theoretical model under consideration. These measures include process measures (*P*), and child outcomes (*O*). The logic of the DCLR pilot is that measures in both categories are impacted, directly or indirectly, by the assignment of a trained attorney (*T*). Thus, the two overarching research questions in this study are

1. What effect does the provision of trained, standards-based attorneys to dependent youth have on the dependency processes?, and
2. What effect does the provision of trained, standards-based attorneys to dependent youth have on child outcomes?

The specific process measures identified for inclusion in this study are as follows:

- Trust in Attorney Process
- Perceived Information Sharing Process
- Perceived Voice in Court Hearings Process

The specific outcome measures identified for inclusion in this study are as follows:

- Suspension/Expulsion Rate
- Grade Point Average
- Truancy Rate
- Status Offense Rate
- Grade & Subject-Specific Proficiency Rate (3-11)
- Kindergarten Readiness Rate
- 12 Month Permanency Rate
- 24 Month Permanency Rate
- Continuity Rate
- Turnover Rate
- Student Flow
- Placement Move Rate
- Institutional Placement Rate
- Relative Placement Rate
- Hope Bed Placement Rate
- Runaway Rate
- Average Runaway Days
- Medical Home Rate
- Early-Intervention Service Rate
- Child Reported Parent Visit Rate
- Child Reported Sibling Visit Rate
- Child Reported Timing of First Visit
- Child Reported Visit Frequency

Literature

There is a paucity of peer-reviewed literature examining the legal representation of dependent children, and until recently, the field lacked consensus regarding legal practice standards for child representation in dependency proceedings. In 2009, in an effort to establish such standards, Children’s Bureau (CB) established a National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System (QIC-ChildRep). Housed at the University of Michigan Law School, QIC-ChildRep formalized a best-practice model for stated-interest legal representation in dependency proceedings. This model was evaluated using randomized controlled trials in Washington and Georgia. Results of the Washington evaluation suggest that, relative to children who were represented by lawyers with no specialized training, children receiving representation under the best-practice model had a higher rate of early exits from foster care. Additionally, best-practice attorneys were found to have more contact with foster parents and other substitute caregivers. Cases in which best-practice attorneys were assigned were also more likely to have utilized non-adversarial case resolution options, including family team decision-making meetings (FTDMs) (Orlebeke et al. 2016). The American Bar Association (ABA) has since adopted this model as the recommended standard in juvenile dependency proceedings (Lehrmann 2010).

While Orlebeke et al. (2016) demonstrated some benefits from the use of the best-practice attorneys as compared to untrained attorneys, the QIC-ChildRep evaluation did not answer a more basic question: does the presence of stated-interest attorneys benefit children compared to the counterfactual condition of no attorney? While the literature is similarly silent on this question, Zinn and Peters (2015) recently published findings of the Foster Children’s Project (FCP) of the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Florida; a project in which children placed in foster care from July 2001 to December of 2004 were provided stated-interest counsel for the duration of their dependency cases. While this study predates the establishment of the QIC-ChildRep model (i.e. there was no specific practice model utilized by attorneys in the FCP pilot), the findings of the study suggest that children with stated-interest legal representation achieve permanency more quickly than children without representation.

As should be obvious based on the outcome measures listed above, the current study has a much broader outcome focus than previous studies. From a research perspective, a more expansive focus is valuable given the underdeveloped nature of this domain of child welfare research. Exploratory analyses which describe the relationship between DCLR and a wide range of outcomes will be helpful to future, more targeted research endeavors. The expansive list of process and outcome measures is also important for policy makers who have to contend with multiple constituents who care about more than the traditional child welfare metrics which tend to pervade child welfare literature (e.g. risk of referral, timing of permanency outcomes). Finally, traditional benefit-cost analysis (BCA) (a requirement of the statute appropriating funds for this project) requires the amortization of benefits and costs across a wide range of outcomes. While such calculations are often made by inferring the likelihood of outcomes based on population-based data or other sources, gathering this data from an actuarial perspective (i.e. using administrative data with actual outcomes), will allow us to conduct BCA calculations with much more precision than what is typically possible in the BCA literature.

Dependent Child Legal Representation Pilot Evaluation

As can be inferred from the above, Washington currently has no universal requirements for the appointment of attorneys prior to terminating the parent-child relationship. Some Washington jurisdictions voluntarily appoint counsel to children once they reach a particular age. This flexibility is allowed under 13.34.100 RCW, which also allows a child in *any* jurisdiction to request appointment of counsel and requires that dependent children be regularly notified of their right to request counsel after the age of 12.

Starting in 2014, 13.34.100 RCW was also amended to require the appointment of counsel to *all* dependent children who remain in care with “...no remaining parent with parental rights for six months or longer...” Since 2014, the provision of post-termination legal counsel has been implemented by the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA). All attorneys appointed under this program are also trained under Washington’s standards-based legal representation framework (SBLRF), which is based on the QIC-ChildRep model.

The DCLR pilot can be seen as an expansion of Washington’s due-process protections for dependent youth. While the DCLR pilot is not permanent and not universal, it does represent a clear effort by the state legislature to expand due process rights for children involved in Washington’s dependency courts. As with the post-termination legal counsel program described above, OCLA is also utilizing the SBLRF within the DCLR pilot. In other words, all attorneys hired to represent youth in the DCLR pilot will be trained and required to operate within the SBLRF. The general logic model for the SBLRF is outlined in Figure 1; a simplified version of the logic model described by Orlebeke et al. (2016).

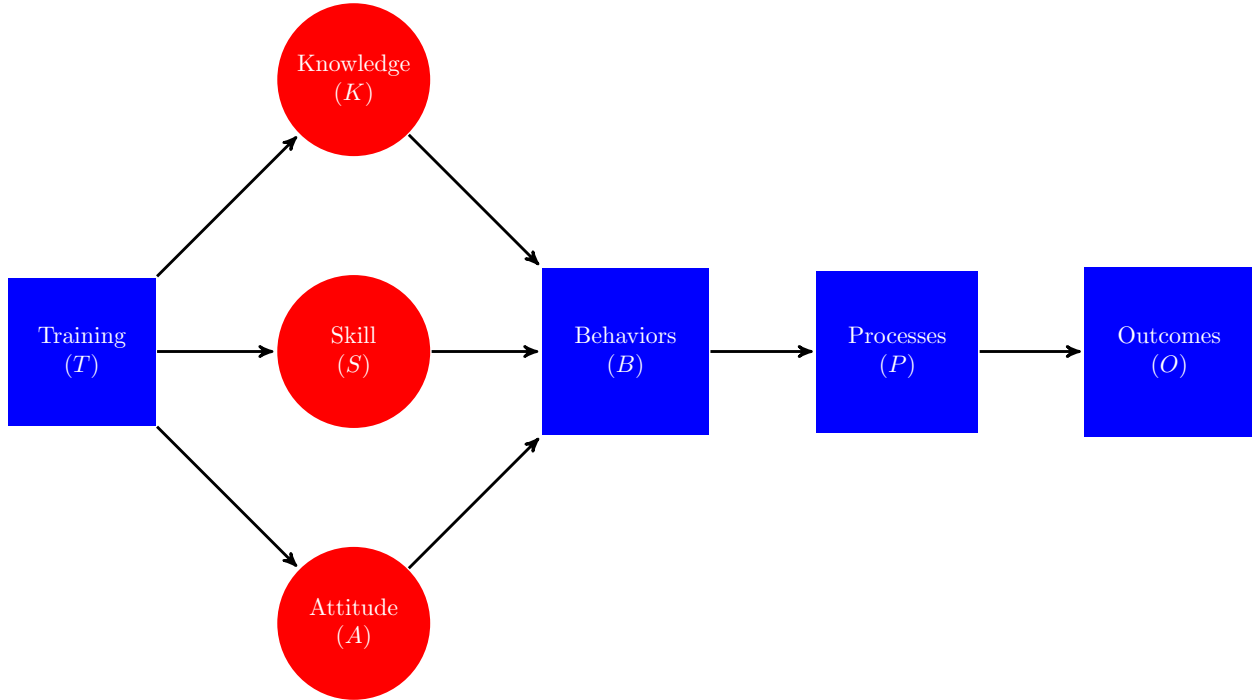


Figure 1: Washington Standards-Based Legal Representation Logic Model

Figure 1 follows the tradition of structural equation modeling literature in which manifest variables (i.e. things we directly observe) are drawn as squares, and latent variables (i.e. things we observe indirectly) are drawn as circles. Of particular importance to the current discussion is the learning that takes place as the result of the SBLRF training (i.e. changes to an attorney’s knowledge, skill, and attitude). As outlined by Orlebeke et al. (2016), learning that takes place across these constructs is hypothesized to change attorney behaviors. Further down the “causal” chain, we see that these behaviors are also believed to impact court processes, which in turn impact child outcomes.

Study Design

Conceptual Model

As of the date of this writing, we do not have plans to perform any assessment of how SBLRF attorney knowledge, skill, or attitude may have been impacted by the standards-based legal training utilized in Washington. As described above, much of the training has been previously evaluated via the QIC-ChildRep program. Our focus in the current project will be on the impact of standards-based legal representation on attorney behaviors, case processes, and child outcomes. While we recognize that knowledge, skill, and attitude (KSA) still play a role in our program model (and a role in the types of questions we can reasonably ask in this study), we will not be engaged in data collection efforts regarding these constructs. Figure 2 collapses these constructs into a single latent variable as shown below in the condensed logic model (i.e. directed acyclic graph (DAG)). Similarly, although we will be collecting information on attorney behaviors (B) in this study for the purpose of control measures, we will not examining these behaviors as a primary predictor of interest.

Figure 1 also constructs a series of dashed lines representing direct effects between constructs (in addition to the mediation effects implied by Figure 1). In this way we are proposing a more plausible partial mediation model; one in which direct and indirect effects exist (see Baron and Kenny 1986 for a seminal treatment of this and related topics). Figure 2 also adds a generic confounding variable (C) to make clear that several demographic factors (e.g. age at entry) likely exist which are related to attorney behaviors, process activities, and child outcomes.

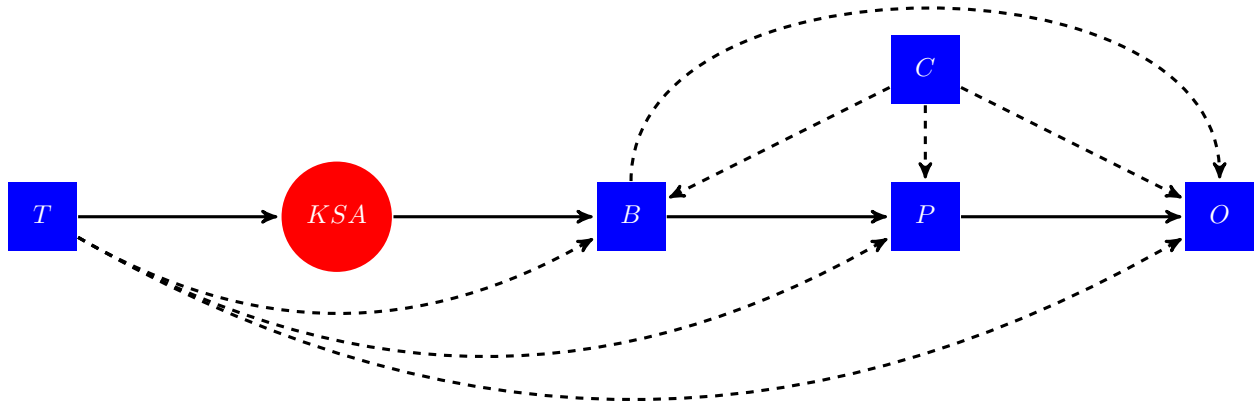


Figure 2: Condensed Logic Model

Identifiable Effects

Using Figure 2 as a foundation, we next follow Pearl (1988) to determine which “effects” in our model will be “identified” in subsequent statistical analyses. Specifically, we follow Pearl’s d -separation criterion as implemented in Textor and van der Zander (2016). In brief, d -separation is a process through which a researcher can locate conditionally independent sets in diagrams such as the one outlined in Figure 2. This foundational step is important as it allows us to determine which relationships have a meaningful interpretation given our theoretical understanding represented in Figures 1 and 2. The results of this analysis are outlined in Table 1 and Figure 3. Table 1 shows each identifiable effect and the control variables required to estimate the effect. Figure 3 highlights these effects with solid black paths. The effects along dashed paths have been determined to be unidentified (e.g. $C \rightarrow B$), not of substantive interest (e.g. $C \rightarrow B$), or not measured (e.g. $KSA \rightarrow B$) in the current project.

Identifiable Effect	Required Control Variables
$P \rightarrow O$	B, C, T
$T \rightarrow O$	B, C, P
$T \rightarrow P$	B, C

Table 1: Relevant & Identifiable Effects

The theoretical graphs presented so far are purposely general to articulate our overall approach to determining which effects are identifiable in planned statistical analyses. Individual statistical models will require further refinement, particularly with respect to the inclusion of one or more confounding variables. For any given model, further graphical tests will be conducted to ensure that estimated effects are not influenced by spurious paths in the underlying theoretical model in a Simpson’s paradox (see Blyth (1972) for a discussion of the paradox).

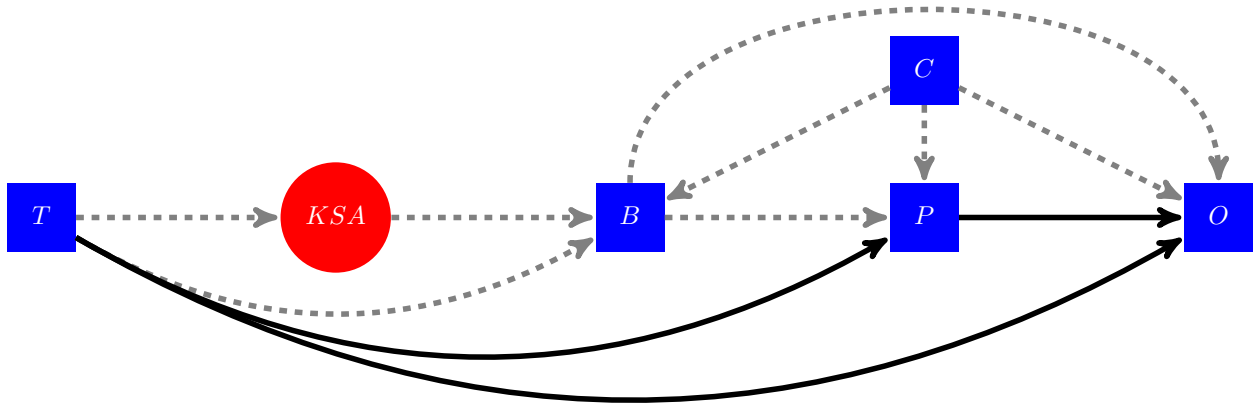


Figure 3: Highlighted Effects

Primary Objectives

Use of Comparison Groups

Sampling Plan

As it has been largely designed within the aforementioned proviso, the sampling plan in this study is ostensibly simple - compare the outcomes of dependent children in Grant and Lewis with the dependent children in Whatcom and Douglas. However, this sampling plan is complicated by at least two interrelated factors: 1. the amount of resources devoted to this project, and 2. the number of dependent children we can reasonably expect to observe in the pilot counties.

Study Resources

Although the pilot has adequate funding to sustain legal representation (in terms of SBLRF-attorney salaries) within Grant and Lewis counties, it is unlikely that the pilot has enough funds to maintain representation for these children through the end of their dependencies. This issue is described some in the following app which simulates dependency caseloads within Lewis and Grant: Pilot Simulation Tool. As stated within the app, and in the aforementioned legislation, the total budget of the pilot is currently \$1,296,000; \$648,000 for each half of the current biennium. By the end of the current month, we estimate that as much as \$330,000 will have been expended. As of this writing, the OCLA team has not made a firm decision as to when the pilot SBLRF-attorneys should stop taking new cases. However, with the following assumptions:

1. SBLRF-attorneys will not exceed 60 cases per attorney,
2. Annual SBLRF-attorney salaries will remain at \$120,000 per 60 cases,
3. SBLRF-attorneys will remain assigned to dependent children until their dependencies close, or they become legally free,
4. That children enter to and exit from dependency at roughly the same rate that they have since 2010, and
5. That OCLA will continue to assign SBLRF-attorneys to new children until projected funds are expended,

we estimate that OCLA will need to stop taking new cases in January of 2019, or risk an overspend. While the research team is hopeful that additional funds will be appropriated to continue gathering data into the next biennium, we cannot be certain that such an appropriation will take place. As such, our sampling plan is written from a “worst case” data collection scenario; assuming that no new funds will be appropriated.

Expected Exits in Pilot Sites, as Planned

Although we have plans to estimate treatment effects across a wide array of outcomes, we have focused power calculations on permanency outcomes. This focus has been chosen because permanency outcomes have been the focus of the limited number of studies which have been conducted in this domain. Furthermore, in terms of potential effects resulting from attorney assignment, permanency outcomes are one of the most direct mechanisms through which other outcomes (e.g. costs) will be impacted as the result of the pilot. If we don’t have sufficient power to observe permanency effects, it is unlikely that we will be able to draw inference related to other more distal outcomes.

Using effect sizes from Orlebeke et al. (2016) and Zinn and Peters (2015), we first estimated “meta-effects” as outlined by Follmann and Proschan (1999), and as implemented by Viechtbauer (2010) in the `metafor` package. The results of this analysis gives us reason to expect that dependent children with trained legal representatives will achieve permanency more quickly than children with untrained legal representatives (Orlebeke et al. 2016) or no legal representation at all (Zinn and Peters 2015). The average “hazard ratio”

across both of these studies ($HR = 1.34$) suggests that there is a 57.3% chance that represented children will achieve permanency before unrepresented children.

Using standard parameters for the probability of Type I and Type II errors (.05 and .20 respectively), Schoenfeld (1983) provides formulas for the calculation of required sample sizes in the context of event history modeling. Specifically, given the aforementioned effect size, we would require 374 observed permanency events in order to have confidence in our analysis from the standpoint of statistical power. By the time the December 2019 report is due to the legislature, however, we estimate that we will have only observed 233 permanency events and a target survey sample of approximately 64 children. In other words, as designed by the legislature, the current study is under powered.

Expected Exits in Pilot Sites, as Predicted with Additional Resources

If additional funds are appropriated for this project during the 2019 legislative session, it is likely that we will observe enough permanency events to achieve the statistical power of 374 events. Specifically, with another year of funding, we would expect that the pilot could continue assigning attorneys through January of 2020. Assuming a similar reporting timeline to the current proviso, we could reasonably expect to have observed 478 permanency events by December of 2020. With two additional years of funding, we could continue assigning attorneys through June of 2020, with 591 permanency events by April of 2021.

This would also allow us to continue to collect responses to our youth exit survey. With one more year of funding (and a commensurate period of follow-up), we could reach a target sample of approximately 156 children. With two more years of funding, we could reach a target sample of approximately 198.

Plans to Accommodate Low Statistical Power

Ideally, this project will receive continued funding and we can continue data collection into 2020 or even 2021. In the meantime, however, we intend to be responsive to the larger evaluative question of the legislature using a larger sample of represented and non-represented children in the Washington dependency population. Specifically, we define four populations of interest for the current project:

The Pilot Cohort

The pilot cohort is defined as all children for whom dependency petitions are filed between September of 2017 and January of 2019. The pilot cohort is limited to children who fall within the jurisdiction of Douglas, Whatcom, Lewis, and Grant counties. In the event that the pilot is extended, the collection period will also be extended to align with the new stop date of the pilot. Within current study parameters, we estimate that 510 children will enter the pilot cohort.

The Pilot Cohort - Survey

A subset of the pilot cohort, children ages eight and above at dependency dismissal, will also be sampled for exit interviews. Youth exit survey data will be collected through November of 2019. Similar to the larger pilot cohort, the survey collection period will also be extended in the event that new funds are appropriated. Within current study parameters, we estimate that 64 children will be eligible for participation in the survey.

The Pilot Cohort - Plus

While our intention is to limit initial analyses of the Pilot Cohort to Douglas, Whatcom, Lewis, and Grant, we intend to conduct this analysis through the use of a propensity score model. Historically, Douglas has had extremely low rates of dependency filings and all four counties have variable trends in their dependency data. As such, it is possible that we may not gain enough matches from a propensity score model limited to these four counties. Although we intend to restrict Pilot Cohort analyses to Lewis and Grant in terms

of “treatment” cases, we will also conduct sensitivity analyses which attempt to find control cases from all counties in the state. Thus, the Pilot Cohort - Plus sample is identical to the Pilot Cohort, except that it is not limited to children who fall within the jurisdiction of Douglas, Whatcom, Lewis, and Grant counties.

The State Cohort

The State Cohort will focus on a variety of analyses which are supplementary to Pilot Cohort models. While there is only one formal pilot in operation right now, children currently receive legal representation in a variety of ways outside of the formal pilot.

For example, in 2010, the legislature passed a requirement that dependent children 12 years and older be informed of their right to request counsel. While this law does not guarantee a right to counsel for these children, it has expanded the practice by giving the right to request such counsel.

In addition to a child’s right to request counsel at the age of 12, some jurisdictions routinely appoint counsel for children in dependency proceedings. For example, since October of 2005, King County appoints attorneys for all children starting at age 12 (King County LJuCR 2.4(a)). More recently, in 2016, Benton/Franklin County has begun appointing attorneys for all children starting at age 8. This was an expansion of Benton/Franklin’s 2015 policy which appointed attorneys at the age of 9 (Benton County LJuCR 9.2(A)(1)).

As can be seen, there is variation throughout the state in how children are assigned attorneys in dependency proceedings. Our goal with the state cohort is to exploit this variation through one or more quasi-experimental studies as described in more detail below.

The State Cohort will focus on cases for whom dependency petitions were filed between October of 2005 and January of 2019. This approach will ensure that we are able to examine the earliest known legal representation policy in King County. Data from FamLink suggest that the State Cohort will include around 72,000 distinct children. Most of these children will not have any identifiable legal representative, much less a SBLRF-attorney. Nonetheless, the sample should provide more than enough statistical power given our expected effect size.

Using multiple quasi-experimental approaches, State Cohort analyses will be used in conjunction with the Pilot Cohort analyses in order to make use of all available information. Assuming analyses from the State Cohort are consistent with analyses from the Pilot Cohort in terms of direction and magnitude, the analyses from all cohorts can be used to provide legislators with all available information regarding the effects of legal representation.

Major Variables of Interest

Statistical Analyses

Data Collection Procedures

Contact with Human Subjects

What

Child respondents will be asked to complete the Youth Exit Survey (YES) online. A working sample of the survey is available [here](#), and is also included in Appendix K. This survey is hosted by the SSW on a REDCap server.

Prior to completing the YES, the permanent caregiver of the child will be contacted using contact information contained within SCOMIS. The caregiver will be asked to consent to their child's participation in the YES using the consent form submitted with this application. If the contact information is not valid or is outdated, attorneys for the caregiver (where applicable) will be contacted to obtain more recent contact information. In the case of Grant and Lewis, the child's attorney may also be contacted to determine the most recent contact information.

If the local courts are amenable, recruitment may also take place through the use of flyers or other recruitment literature displayed within the local court house. The research team is also in preliminary conversations with the parents 4 parents (P4P) program in Whatcom. It is possible that staff from P4P may also assist in the recruitment of child respondents. If such assistance ultimately becomes feasible, relevant P4P staff will be added to the research team.

Once parental consent is obtained, the child will be asked to assent to their participation in the study using the assent form also submitted with this application. If the child appears and feels capable of completing the YES on their own, they are allowed to do so. If they request assistance, or appear to require assistance, a member of the research team will assist them in completing the YES via phone, or in person depending on the manner in which the caregiver and child were contacted.

Who

As implied above, the YES may be completed with one of three different modalities: guided completion over the telephone, guided completion in-person, or self-paced completion. The guided completion options will involve a member of the research team reading and/or clarifying the survey questions with the respondent child. Under these scenarios, the member of the research team will be personally completing the questions based on the responses of the respondent child.

Where

As stated above, with permission of the local Superior Courts, some recruitment may take place within the local court houses. However, given the geographic dispersion of the pilot locations, we anticipate that most recruitment will be done over the phone. Similarly, when assistance is required for survey completion, we anticipate that most of the assistance will take place over the phone. In the event that permission is obtained to actively recruit within local court houses, the research team will file an amendment to add an Appendix L to this project, along with any recruitment literature which will also be submitted for review.

When

As described in more detail below, the research team will be notified via weekly report of pending and completed dependency dismissals. This report will also contain contact information for all attorneys assigned to the case at dismissal, and the last known contact information for the child's permanent caregiver. Ideally, the child will be able to complete the survey within one week of their dismissal date. During the first year of data collection, we estimate that no more than 2 respondents will exit from dependency each week.

Identifiable Records

Agencies Holding Data

The following agencies hold data that will be utilized in this project:

AOC The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) will be directly contributing data to Linkage Processes A and B. AOC will also provide a weekly report of dismissals from the dependency system.

OSPI The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will be contributing data to Linkage Process C.

OCLA The Office of Civil Legal Aid will be directly contributing data to Linkage Process A and B.

DCYF The Department of Children Youth and Families will be directly contributing data to Linkage Processes A, B, and D.

SSW The School of Social Work at the University of Washington (SSW) (i.e. the "research team") will be directly contributing data to Linkage Process B.

Method for Obtaining Records

Subsequent to the approval of this application, data sharing agreements (DSAs) will need to be established between the research team, and each of the aforementioned agencies. All data transmissions made in support of this project shall meet or exceed the data security requirements of the aforementioned agencies. When data transmission policies between agencies conflict, the more secure transmission method will be utilized. No transmission of data will be made outside of secure shell protocol (SSH) version 2.0.

At a minimum, two DSAs will be required:

DSA for Linkage Processes A & C An agreement between AOC, OCLA, DCYF, OSPI, and SSW. This DSA will facilitate the integration of data from Linkage Process A into the OSPI Schema described in the Appendix Gs via Linkage Process C. This DSA will also describe the process for securely transmitting data between all of the aforementioned entities, and the timeline for these transmissions.

DSA for Linkage Processes A, B, & D An agreement between AOC, OCLA, DCYF, and SSW. This DSA will facilitate the integration of data from Linkage Process A and B into the Project DB by way of Linkage Process D. This DSA will also describe the process for securely transmitting data between all of the aforementioned entities, and the timeline for these transmissions.

Plans to Link Records

As can be seen in Figure 4, multiple linkage processes are planned to facilitate the various components of this project. The multiple processes are planned for the purpose of 1. accommodating different timelines for different components of the project, and 2. accommodating the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements of OSPI separately from other linkage efforts. Each of the four linkage efforts (A-D) are outlined below.

Each of these processes are progressive toward the creation of the Project Database (Project DB) - a secure MS-SQL database managed by SSW. The Project DB will contain three schemas - **cw**, **survey**, and **ospi**.

Linkage Processes A

The CW Schema generated from Linkage Process A shall serve as foundation data for all aspects of this project. As can be seen in Figure 4, Linkage Process A will integrate data from OCLA's training databases, the Superior Court Management Information System (SCOMIS, managed by AOC), and Washington's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (FamLink, managed by DCYF). Linkages between

FamLink and SCOMIS will be made via established probabilistic methods. AOC conducts a similar linkage on a quarterly basis under a separate agreement with DCYF. In order to minimize the workload of DCYF, however, the linkage for this project will only involve integrating a small set of identified data to be used for this linkage process (and Linkage Processes B & C). Specifically, the following fields will be shared from the so-called PEOPLE_DIM table from the FamLink data warehouse:

- first name, last name, middle name, middle initial, prefix, and suffix fields for all persons identified in FamLink (i.e. NM_FIRST, NM_LAST, NM_MIDDLE, NM_MIDDLE_INTL, NM_PRFX, NM_SFX)
- non-identifying demographic fields which will be used to help refine the matches to SCOMIS data (i.e. CD_CTZN, TX_CTZN, CD_GNDR, TX_GNDR, CD_HSPNC, TX_HSPNC, CD_INDN, TX_INDN, CD_INDN2, TX_INDN2, CD_RACE, TX_RACE, CD_RACE_FIVE, TX_RACE_FIVE, CD_RACE_FOUR, TX_RACE_FOUR, CD_RACE_THREE, TX_RACE_THREE, CD_RACE_TWO, TX_RACE_TWO, CD_RLGN, TX_RLGN, CD_STATE_RSDNT, TX_STATE_RSDNT, DT_BIRTH, and DT_DEATH)
- ID_PRSN, a unique identifier for all persons within FamLink. ID_PRSN will be used as the primary person key within the **survey** and **cw** schemas in the Project DB.

In addition to the SCOMIS-FamLink linkage, AOC will also integrate attorney training records held by OCLA. These records, however, will be integrated deterministically using attorney bar numbers which are reliably available in both data sources.

Once linkages are completed, AOC will transmit the identified data (i.e. CW Schema (ID) in Figure 4) to OSPI. Separately from the transmission to OSPI, AOC will transmit de-identified data to SSW (i.e. CW Schema (no-ID) in Figure 4).

These linkages and transmissions are planned to take place three times throughout this project:

- On or before 1/11/2019, containing data on dependency cases with petition dates from 1/1/2005 through 12/31/2018.
- On or before 4/12/2019, containing data on dependency cases with petition dates from 1/1/2005 through 3/31/2019.
- On or before 12/13/2019, containing data on dependency cases with petition dates from 1/1/2005 through 11/30/2019.

Linkage Processes B

The survey schema generated from Linkage Process B shall serve as a contextual data set for those dependent children residing under the jurisdictions of Lewis, Grant, Douglas, and Whatcom Superior Courts. As can be seen in Figure 4, Linkage Process B will integrate data from the OCLA Attorney Survey (collected by OCLA as a part of routine quality assurance activities) and the Youth Survey administered by SSW. The Youth Survey database will be seeded with weekly reports of dependency exits containing last known contact information for the child and the attorney of the child (if applicable). Weekly reports will be transmitted from AOC to SSW starting on 12/7/2018 (or earlier if approval is secured from the WSIRB in advance of expectations) and continuing through 11/30/2019.

This contact information will be utilized by the SSW research team to contact the child, gain the consent of their permanent caretaker, and gain the ascent of the child. Depending on the age and stated technological sophistication of the child, the Youth Survey database will be populated either directly by the child (through an online interface), or through the assistance of a member of the research team.

Periodically, the OCLA-held attorney survey, and the newly collected youth survey will be integrated with the same FamLink identifying information referenced in Linkage Process A. After the integration has been completed, AOC will transmit de-identified data to SSW (i.e. Survey Schema (no-ID) in Figure 4).

These linkages and transmissions are planned to take place twice throughout this project:

- On or before 2/1/2019, containing the FamLink **id_prsn** field for all available survey respondents.
- On or before 5/17/2019, containing the FamLink **id_prsn** field for all available survey respondents.

Linkage Processes C

The OSPI Schema generated from Linkage Process C exists to help us understand educational outcomes identified by the aforementioned stakeholder engagement process. Linkage Process C will specifically integrate testing data from the TIDE data system along with enrollment and disciplinary data from CEDARS. Both of these data systems are managed by OSPI. Using an established deterministic linking method, OSPI will take the identified Child Welfare schema generated and transmitted by AOC through Linkage Process A and combine the Child Welfare Schema with records from TIDE and CEDARS. In this way, the OSPI schema will contain some of the same data contained within the Child Welfare Schema. The distinction between these two schemas is that the OSPI schema will not contain the FamLink `id_prsn` field. Instead, persons in the OSPI schema will be identified using an OSPI-generated research ID. Once the linkage has been completed, OSPI will securely transmit a de-identified version of the OSPI schema for storage within the Project DB.

These linkages and transmissions are planned to take place three times throughout this project:

- On or before 1/18/2019, containing data on dependency cases with petition dates from 1/1/2005 through 12/31/2018, and educational records (where available) starting in 2000.
- On or before 4/19/2019, containing data on dependency cases with petition dates from 1/1/2005 through 3/31/2019, and educational records (where available) starting in 2000.
- On or before 12/20/2019, containing data on dependency cases with petition dates from 1/1/2005 through 11/30/2019, and educational records (where available) starting in 2000.

Linkage Processes D

Upon the receipt of the aforementioned de-identified extracts, each extract will be integrated into the appropriate database schema. The OSPI Schema will be used “as-is”. The Survey and CW schemas, however, will be combined with selected fields from the de-identified FamLink Core Data set - an extract of data shared with the SSW on a quarterly basis for a variety of research projects under a long-standing DSA the SSW and DCYF. The FamLink Core Data also utilize the `ID_PRSN` field as a person key. As such, SSW can integrate the relevant fields of data into the Project DB without the need for further assistance from DCYF. Linkage Process D will be conducted upon receipt of a given schema of Child Welfare or Survey data, according to the schedules outlined in the previous sections.

Identifiers to be Used to Link Records

As outlined above, within the Project DB, records will be identified using either the `ID_PRSN` field or the OSPI-generated research ID. Prior to inclusion in the Project DB, records will be integrated using a combination of deterministic and probabilistic techniques involving the fields of data outlined in the Linkage Process A section above.

Table 2: Sample Estimates, by Population

Expectation	Population
Pilot Cohort	510
Pilot Cohort - Survey	64
Pilot Cohort - Plus	510
State Cohort	75,000

Study Subjects

Expected Number of Subjects

As outlined above, there are four distinct populations of interest: The Pilot Cohort, The Pilot Cohort - Survey, The Pilot Cohort - Plus, and The State Cohort. As described in more detail above, summary counts for each of these populations is provided in Table 2. These estimates assume no changes to the current legislative requirements of this study.

Inclusion Criteria

State Cohort

The largest population of interest in the study is the State Cohort. Children for this study will be included if they entered care after the start of the King County judicial rule which provides legal representation to all children over the age of 12. That said, we will not restrict this population on the basis of age as children who enter care under the age of 12 may still be in care once they reach the age of 12. Thus, inclusion in the State Cohort is defined as **having a removal in which the removal date is greater than or equal to October 1, 2005.**

Pilot Cohort

The Pilot Cohort is a perfect subset of the State Cohort. Three additional restrictions are applied to the State Cohort in order to define the Pilot Cohort population. These additional restrictions are as follows:

- **1. The child must have had a removal date between September of 2017 and January of 2019 as recorded in FamLink records,**
- **2. The child must have had an associated dependency petition as recorded in SCOMIS records, and**
- **3. The child’s dependency case must be under the jurisdiction of Lewis, Grant, Whatcom, or Douglas.**

Pilot Cohort - Plus

As stated above, although we intend to restrict Pilot Cohort analyses to Lewis and Grant in terms of “treatment” cases, we will also conduct sensitivity analyses which attempt to find control cases from a propensity score model using all counties in the state. Thus, the Pilot Cohort - Plus sample is **identical to the Pilot Cohort, except that it is not limited to children who fall within the jurisdiction of Douglas, Whatcom, Lewis, and Grant counties.**

Pilot Cohort - Survey

In addition to the aforementioned restrictions, the survey subset of the Pilot Cohort will be additionally restricted by age. Specifically, **a child will need to be eight years of age or older on the day of discharge in order to participate in the survey.**

Exclusion Criteria

As stated above, a child will need to be eight years of age or older on the day of discharge in order to participate in the survey subset of the Pilot Cohort. Thus, children under the age of eight are excluded from the survey portion of the study.

In addition to age, the core Pilot Cohort population does not include children who are subject to jurisdictions outside of the identified pilot counties.

Although children represented by attorneys without SBLRF certification may be included in sensitivity analyses as a control measure, these children are not considered to be a part of our exposure variable. As such, **for some analyses, we will likely exclude children who are represented by an attorney who does not have SBLRF certification.**

Age Group Limitation

As stated above, we are limiting the survey to children who are eight years of age or older on the day of discharge. This restriction is necessary to ensure that survey respondents are able to comprehend the survey.

ESL

Based on prior survey work with this population, we have good reason to believe that there is a very low prevalence of non-english speaking children in the Washington child welfare system. If this assumption proves faulty throughout our data collection work, we will adjust the survey protocol through an ammendment to this application.

Recruitment

Identification

Process

The SCOMIS database will be used, on a weekly basis, to select the sample in accordance with the sampling plan described above. If multiple children are identified for a single caregiver, all associated children will be recruited for participation. The recruitment prioritization process will proceed as follows:

Primary Process - After confirming that a guardian's children have not already been recruited through the secondary recruitment process outlined below. The research team member will use contact information from the report to directly attempt contact with the identified guardian for a child(ren), as outlined below.

Secondary Process - In addition to the above, with the permission of local courts, recruitment materials will be displayed on public announcement areas (e.g. bulletin boards) within the county court houses. These materials will explain the eligibility criteria, and provide contact information for the research team. If an individual contacts the research team on the basis of these recruitment materials, the team member will confirm that a guardian's children have not already been recruited through the primary recruitment process outlined above. If permission is not gained from a given local court, no secondary recruitment process will be employed for that court (See Appendix F for the recruitment flyer).

For each guardian recruited, the following information will be compiled in the YES database: guardian name, child name, gender, date of birth, address, phone number, and email address. The guardian name, child

name, and gender will be used for the purpose of recruitment and to assist in data linkages under Linkage Process B outlined above.

Adult Recruitment Process - For children who have exited the dependency process due reaching the age of majority (i.e. “aging out”) or due to their having achieved status as an emancipated minor, contact will be attempted identically to the guardian contact process.

Gaining Consent

Primary Recruitment Process

Opt Out Letters - Upon receipt of the weekly SCOMIS report, the research team will send “opt out” letters using certified mail, with a return receipt requested (See Appendix F for the opt out letter). The purpose of the opt out letter is to inform guardians of the purpose of the study, to assure them of confidentiality, and to give them the opportunity to decline participation in the study. If guardians do not opt out at this point they can still elect to leave the study at any point in the study process. Contact information for parents who do not opt out or for whom the letters are not returned undeliverable, will be contacted with an Advance Letter as described below.

Undeliverable Opt Out Letters - If an opt out letter is returned underdeliverable, the guardian’s personal attorney will be contacted. The team member will identify the attorney using information from the SCOMIS report, in conjunction with Washington State Bar Association records to contact the personal attorney. Upon contact with the attorney, the team member will determine if the attorney is willing to serve as a contact intermediary, between the research team and the guardian. If the attorney is amenable, the guardian will be sent an opt-out letter as described above, but with the personal attorney making the submission to ensure confidentiality.

If the team member is unable to contact the guardian’s personal attorney (or if the guardian was not a party to the dependency), the team member will attempt to contact the child’s attorney (where assigned) and repeat the process outlined above.

When 15 days have elapsed between the date that a guardian attorney (or child attorney) agree to attempt contact, the research team will make an additional attempt to contact the attorney to confirm that the attorney has 1. received relevant return receipts, and 2. that no contact has been made by the guardian to opt out of the study. For guardians who meet both of these criteria, they will be contacted with an Advance Letter as outlined below.

Advance Letter

Using information gathered through the opt our letter process, the research team will next send an Advance Letter to the relevant guardians (see Appendix F for Advance Letter). The purpose of the advance letter is to briefly explain the study, assure confidentiality and describe the YES survey. The letter will inform the guardian of the compensation for their child’s time and effort in responding to the survey. A telephone number and email address for the research team will be listed for any questions.

Primary Recruitment Process - One week after the advance letter is mailed, a research team member will begin attempting to contact guardians by phone or email to schedule an appointment for the purpose of explaining the research. This is a highly mobile population and it is likely that for some percentage of respondents the phone numbers, addresses, or email addresses will not be current. If this is the case, any attorneys involved in the recruitment process will be re-contacted for updated contact information. The research team will also search publically available databases to update contact information.

Upon contacting guardians, the research team member will confirm that they are speaking to the guardian. They will explain the reason for their phone call and ask if it is okay schedule an appointment to tell them more about the study. If the parent agrees, a mutually determined time will be scheduled.

During the scheduled telephone appointment, the guardian will be provided with an opportunity to ask any outstanding questions of the research team. If the parent agrees to have their child proceed with the YES, the text of the parental consent letter will be read to the guardian. If the guardian consents to their child's participation in the study, the research team member will gain a verbal affirmation of the consent. The verbal affirmation will be recorded in the YES database.

Secondary Recruitment Process - For guardians who contact the research team using the secondary recruitment process, a member of the research team will schedule time for an introductory phone call with the guardian. During this call, the research team will read the text of the opt out letter to the parent. If the guardian agrees to proceed, during the same phone call, the text of the advance letter will also be read to the guardian. After having been read the advance letter, if the guardian agrees to proceed, the text of the parental consent letter will be read to the guardian. If the guardian consents to their child's participation in the study, the research team member will gain a verbal affirmation of the consent. The verbal affirmation will be recorded in the YES database.

Adult Recruitment Process - For children who have exited the dependency process due reaching the age of majority (i.e. "aging out") or due to their having achieved status as an emancipated minor, the advance letter information will be communicated identically to the process for informing guardians outlined above.

Determining Survey Modality

If the research team member and guardian confirm that the child respondent is capable of completing the YES independently, the research team member will provide the child respondent with a link to the survey. The link will be provided verbally, by email, or by SMS message depending on the stated preference of the guardian.

If the research team member and guardian confirm that the child respondent is not capable of completing the YES independently, the research team member will schedule a time for a member of the research team to set up a telephone interview with the child in which the child will be read questions from the survey and responses to the questions will be recorded by the research team in the YES database.

Completing the Survey

Independent Completion - All respondents (adult or child) who independently complete the survey online will follow the provided survey link into any modern web browser. The link will first take the respondent to a page in which the respondent to a consent/assent page prior to being presented with any survey questions.

At the completion of the survey, the respondent will be asked to choose whether they would like to have their gift card sent to them by mail, or if they would like to receive an electronic gift card that they can receive immediately upon the completion of the survey.

Interviewer-Guided Completion - All respondents (adult or child) who complete the survey with an interviewer from the research team will be contacted as scheduled through the processes above. Upon contacting respondent, the interviewer will confirm that they are speaking to the appropriate person. They will explain the reason for their phone call and ask if it is okay to continue the interview. If the respondent agrees, the respondent will be asked to complete a verbal assent/consent process in which the text of the child assent/consent form will be read to the respondent. If the respondent consents to participate in the study, the research team member will gain a verbal affirmation of the consent. The verbal affirmation will be recorded in the YES database.

After the affirmation, the interviewer will read the questions verbatim to the respondent. At the completion of the survey, the respondent will be asked to choose whether they would like to have their gift card sent to them by mail, or if they would like to receive an electronic gift card that they can receive immediately upon the completion of the survey.

Location of Recruitment

As described above, the location of the recruitment will take place using a combination of public postings, telephone conversations, and regular US mail.

Person Making Contact

The individual primarily responsible with making contact with respondents in this study is Jooree Ahn. Jooree is a trained social worker who has been participating in various child welfare system research projects for several years. Jooree has an MSW and an MPH degree and has participated in multiple survey projects involving child welfare clients in the State of Washington. She is more than qualified to manage the recruitment effort of this project.

In the event that additional persons are added to the team to assist in interviewing or recruitment efforts, these interviewers will be supervised by Jooree. For the duration of the field period, the PI will weekly with Jooree (or other interviewers as needed) to debrief, answer questions, and provide feedback regarding data quality.

Protecting Privacy During Recruitment

The YES database will be maintained within a REDCap database managed by the research team at the SSW. The database is accessed through a web interface which is vended by a server utilizing an HTTPS/SSL standard. In other words, all communications with the YES database will be encrypted. When data are transmitted to AOC for integration, transmissions shall be made through SFTP, or a more secure protocol.

Minimizing Undue Influence

The fact that the individuals are being contacted after the completion of their dependency will help to ensure undue influence in the decision to complete the survey. DCYF, the agency which served as the petitioner in the prior dependency case is not involved in the recruitment process and the family has already been informed by the court that their “case is closed”.

Additionally, the consent and assent forms include an explanation that “the decision on participation in this research will in no way change prior case decisions for your child, or services provided to your child in the future.” The assent document makes a similar statement.

Subject Compensation

Respondents will receive \$50 in appreciation for their time at the completion of the interview or at any point they request to end the interview.

Guardians will also receive \$50 in appreciation for their time at the completion of the interview or at any point the child respondent requests to end the interview.

Subject Understanding

In both modes of survey completion the respondent will be asked to confirm their understanding of study procedures, study risks, and study benefits prior to the completion of the survey.

After being prompted to confirm their understanding, if the respondent (either verbally or by response to the website prompt) indicates that they do not understand, the information will be communicated to the respondent one more time, followed by an additional prompt for understanding.

If the respondent makes a second response (either verbally or by response to the website prompt) indicating that they do not understand, they will be thanked for their time, and asked for a preference regarding compensation for their time.

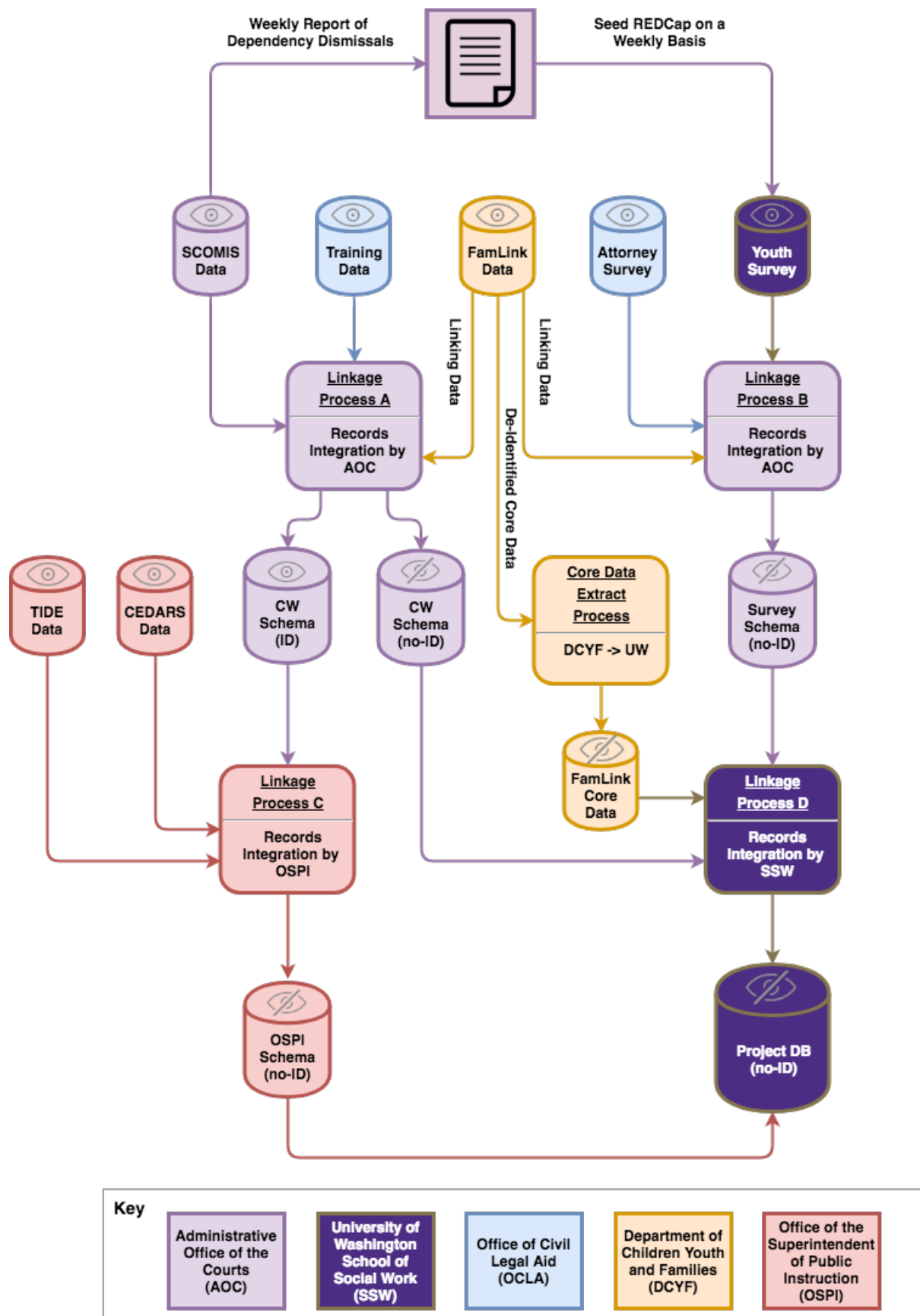


Figure 4: Data Integration Plan

Table 3: Readability, by Document

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	Flesch Ease Level	Document Title
10.1	57.5	Parent Consent Letter
9.8	56.7	Adult Respondent Consent Letter
6.0	75.5	Child Assent Letter
3.7	88.8	Child Assent Letter under 12
10.3	58.4	Parent Consent Script
7.8	55.4	Secondary Recruitment Process Flyer
7.4	72.4	Advance Letter
8.7	65.1	Opt Out Letter
10.3	56.5	Adult Respondent Script
6.1	79.1	Child Assent Script
4.4	87.0	Child Assent Script under 12

Survey Documents

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