

The Youth Acceptance Project (YAP) Cuyahoga County 2019-2021

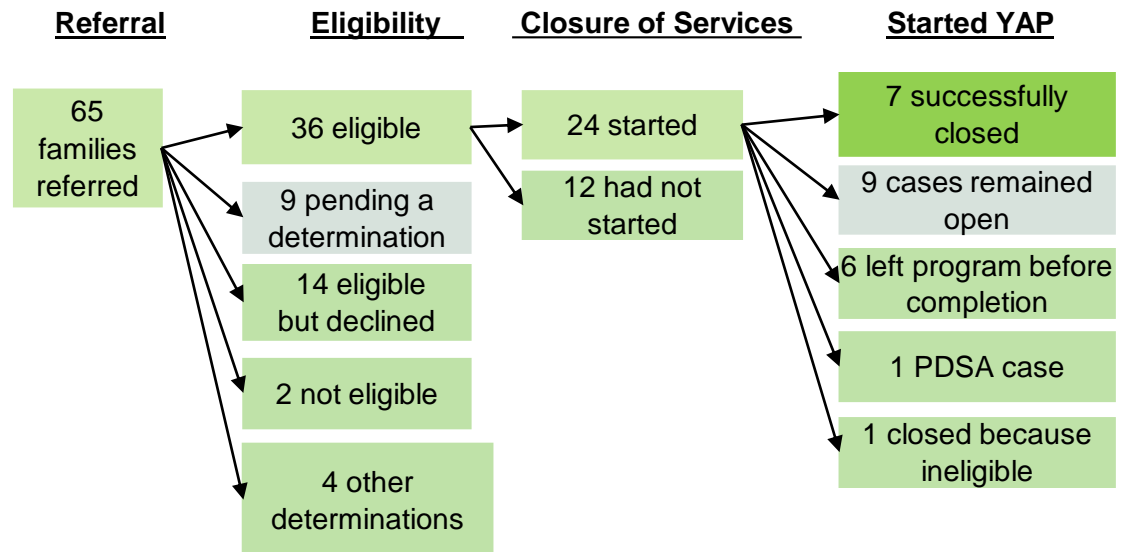
The Youth Acceptance Project (YAP) is a clinical model that works with families of LGBTQ+ youth to address their fears and worries related to their LGBTQ+ child and help the family learn new and supportive behaviors to improve their youth's well-being.

The YAP social workers/clinicians provide a trauma-informed, psycho-educational model while partnering with parents/caregivers; supporting them to process misinformation, resistance, fear, and grief that families often struggle with when they learn that their child is LGBTQ+. The result of this intervention has significant positive impact on the family's functioning as well as lasting positive impacts on the overall wellness of LGBTQ+ children.

Context

The Youth Acceptance Project (YAP) was implemented in Cuyahoga County, Ohio as part of the QIC-LGBTQ2S from 2018 to 2021. This data summary should be reviewed with the sample size in mind. The quantitative data is based on a sample of 7 clients that completed YAP services (n=7). The qualitative data was pulled from interviews conducted with a sample of 3 youth and 1 caregiver (n=4).

Referral, Eligibility, Enrollment Numbers



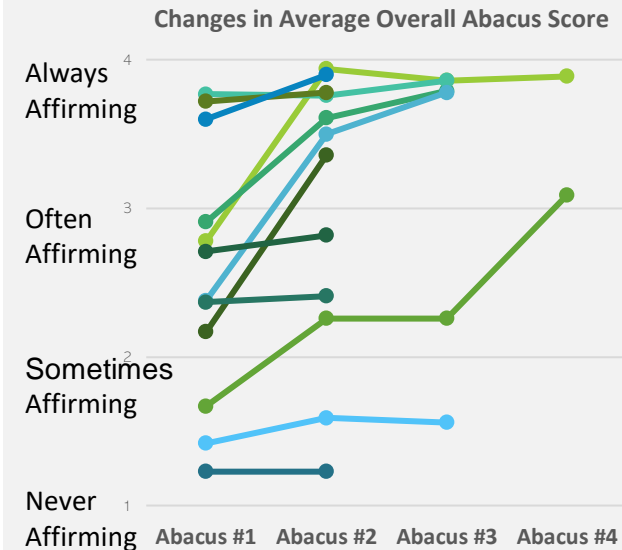
Thirty-four caregivers began YAP services. Of these caregivers, 22 had left the program at the end of the project, including:

- Nine (41%) caregivers who completed their YAP goals
- Four (18%) caregivers who became inaccessible
- Three (14%) caregivers who declined to continue in the program
- Three (14%) who could not be reached by the clinician despite re-engagement attempts
- Three (14%) caregivers who left services for other reasons

Please note this includes all caregivers, even caregivers of youth who did not officially start YAP services.

YAP Abacus Data

As part of the YAP model, Family Builders created an abacus form that asks clinicians to assess the extent to which a caregiver engages in affirming behaviors, based on their conversations and interactions with children/youth and families. Abacuses are intended to be completed at the start of services, every three months during services, and then at the end of services. Abacuses scores were averaged to create an overall average score as well as scores for sub-sections related to 1) Participating in specialized services; 2) Holding affirming beliefs, 3) Expressing affirmation during interactions with youth, 4) Advocating for the youth, 5) Obtaining appropriate medical services.



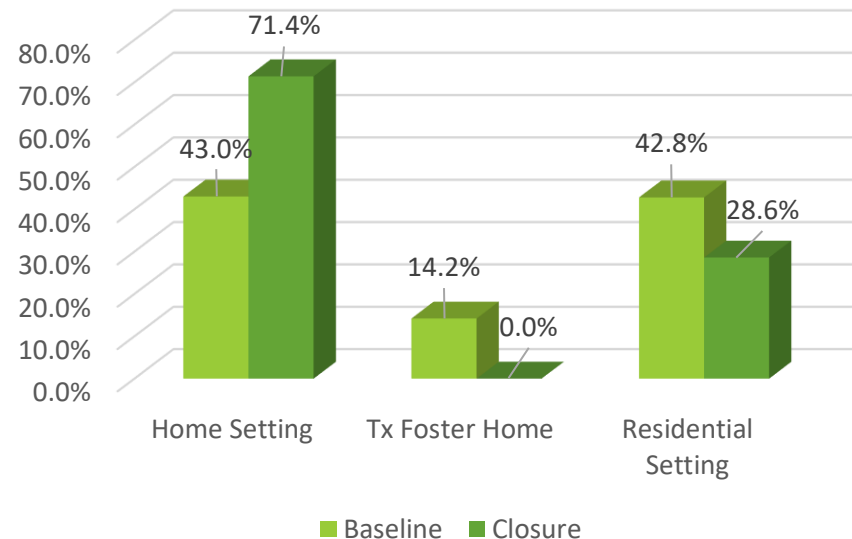
Abacus Score Summaries

- ✓ Most abacus show improvements from sometimes affirming to often affirming.
- ✓ The majority of abacus show an increase in participation over time.
- ✓ The majority of abacus show an increase in affirming beliefs over time.
- ✓ The Majority of abacus show caregivers have an increase in affirming behaviors while interacting with their LGBTQ+ youth.
- ✓ The Majority of abacus show an increase in caregivers advocating for their LGBTQ+ youth.

YAP Placement Data

For the seven cases that successfully closed: at baseline 3 youth resided in-home (43%), 1 resided in a treatment foster home (14.2%), and three resided in a residential setting (42.8%; either a residential treatment center or group home). At close of YAP services, all 3 youth who resided in-home at baseline remained in home at closure, the 1 youth who resided in treatment foster care at baseline moved home at case closure; for the 3 youth who were residing in an RTC or group home, 1 returned home, 1 remained in a group home setting, and one moved from an RTC to a group home.

Permanency Pre-Post YAP for Youth (N=7)



Qualitative Data

Interviews were conducted in the Spring of 2021 to capture participant's perceived outcomes of the YAP services. Coding was completed on 4 interviews from a mix of young people and caregivers who all received YAP services. Due to the small sample (n=4), no analysis was done on the coded passages. Findings should be considered with the small sample in mind.

Quotes About Communication

"I can say it, worked with me and my son. And she did a lot for us because at the beginning of the program we weren't talking, at the end of the program we were."

"But yeah, again, I definitely don't think we could have done it without the services that were provided. Because I guarantee if we never went through Connect or met Leah, I would not be on speaking terms with my family. I would just be living here, they would be living there, no communication. I remember that at that time, I blocked my parents and she just kept reminding me each session like, "Hey, you want to try to text them?" I'd tell her, "No." "Hey, you want to try to text them? It doesn't hurt. We can work this out. I talked to them, they want to talk to you." The next thing you know, as the services went on, I unblocked them and we talked again, so definitely, probably couldn't have done that without her."

Changes in Supportive or Unsupportive Behaviors

"Probably just being more accepting because my family is very conservative and they don't like things they don't understand. And yeah, I just tried to push them out a little, just get them to the point where they didn't absolutely hate it... Me and my mom's pretty good. I'm in a little trans group right now and she's approving everything. So I could start testosterone and things of that sort soon. And she's helping me with the name change. And my dad is also helping me with the name change because it has to include both parents. I talk to my dad every once in a while. It's pretty cool. It's just little regular checkups and things."

"I mean, they don't say anything to my face anymore about it and they stopped being super religious around me because they used to. I don't know what was their problem, but they used to try to push a lot of weird religion stuff on me."

"Yeah. Also my son is gay, and that was hard for me to deal with. I'm an older parent, I adopted him when I was in my fifties and I just grew up in era when that was really just not something people talked about or dealt with. So I must admit my part, I had to accept that even though he was wild and crazy and doing things that were inappropriate, I still had to face the fact that I wasn't accepting of who he was either, so there was a lot of issues there.

And it took me a while, with her help, to see that, trying to change. Things are different now, we don't have to accept something or like it, but we still have to respect it because it's no different and we're all different. Like I said, I grew up in the sixties, seventies where that was kind of taboo. I'm sure it existed, but you didn't hear about it as a kid."

History of the QIC-LGBTQ2S

The National Quality Improvement Center on Tailored Services, Placement Stability, and Permanency for LGBTQ2S Children and Youth in Foster Care (QIC-LGBTQ2S) was a program lead by The Institute for Innovation and Implementation, at the University of Maryland School of Social Work (The Institute). The project was funded by The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau to improve permanency, stability, and wellbeing for youth in foster care who identified as LGBTQ+.

Over the course of 5 years, the QIC-LGBTQ2S partnered with four child welfare agencies as Local Implementation Sites in: Allegheny County, PA; Michigan Tri-County, Cuyahoga County, OH; and Prince George's County, MD. Together, the sites, program purveyors, and the Institute developed, implemented, and evaluated several best practices and programs for LGBTQ+ youth and their families. The result of the five-year effort was the development and refinement of 9 manualized and evidence-informed interventions that can now be replicated in similar settings. In addition to developing these programs, sites also engaged in several initiatives to create affirming child welfare policies and SOGIE data collection projects.

Funding Statement

This project was funded by the National Quality Improvement Center on Tailored Services, Placement Stability and Permanency for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Two-Spirit Children and Youth in Foster Care (QIC-LGBTQ2S) at the Institute for Innovation and Implementation, University of Maryland Baltimore School of Social Work. The QIC-LGBTQ2S is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau under grant #90CW1145. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the funders, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

