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Division of Child and Family Services  
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Fostering Healthy Children Program

# HELPLINE

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# UTAH PSYCHOTROPIC OVERSIGHT PROGRAM

PROVIDING OVERSIGHT,  
EDUCATION, AND  
CONSULTATION TO  
PROFESSIONALS CARING FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN  
UTAH STATE CUSTODY

UPOP provides  
services to the Utah  
Division of Child  
and Family Services  
(DCFS) and Juvenile  
Justice and Youth  
Services (JJYS).

## UPOP

Children and youth in state care are more likely to have emotional and behavioral needs and are prescribed psychotropic medications at a higher rate than children from comparable backgrounds not in state care.

While some children and youth in state care have mental health needs that are effectively treated with medication, there are significant challenges to using psychotropics safely and effectively in these populations that must be addressed.

## CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Children in child welfare are at particularly high risk for prior and future exposure to traumatic experiences. Multiple traumatic experiences is more likely to result in emotional and behavioral dysregulation as well as greater rates of mental health disorders.

## HISTORY

In 2016, The Utah State Legislature mandated and created, through statute, the Utah Psychotropic Oversight Program (UPOP). The program consists of child and adolescent psychiatrists and a nurse practitioner contracted through The University of Utah to the Utah Dept. of Health and Human Services via the Medicaid program.

## CASE CATEGORIES FOR REVIEW

- < 6 yrs old prescribed one or more psychotropic medications
- > 7 yrs old prescribed two or more psychotropic medications
- Any case referred to UPOP where there is a concern or request for consultation

UPOP will review all qualifying children and youth in Utah State Custody receiving psychotropic education, through the lens of trauma-informed care.



## OUR MISSION

- Ensure that youth in state custody receive safe, evidence-based, trauma-informed care consistent with their current mental health needs.
- Collaborate with DCFS and JJYS teams to educate and consult on appropriate psychotropic prescribing and informed consent for this population.
- Provide consultation and education to community prescribers to support psychiatric management of children and youth in state care.