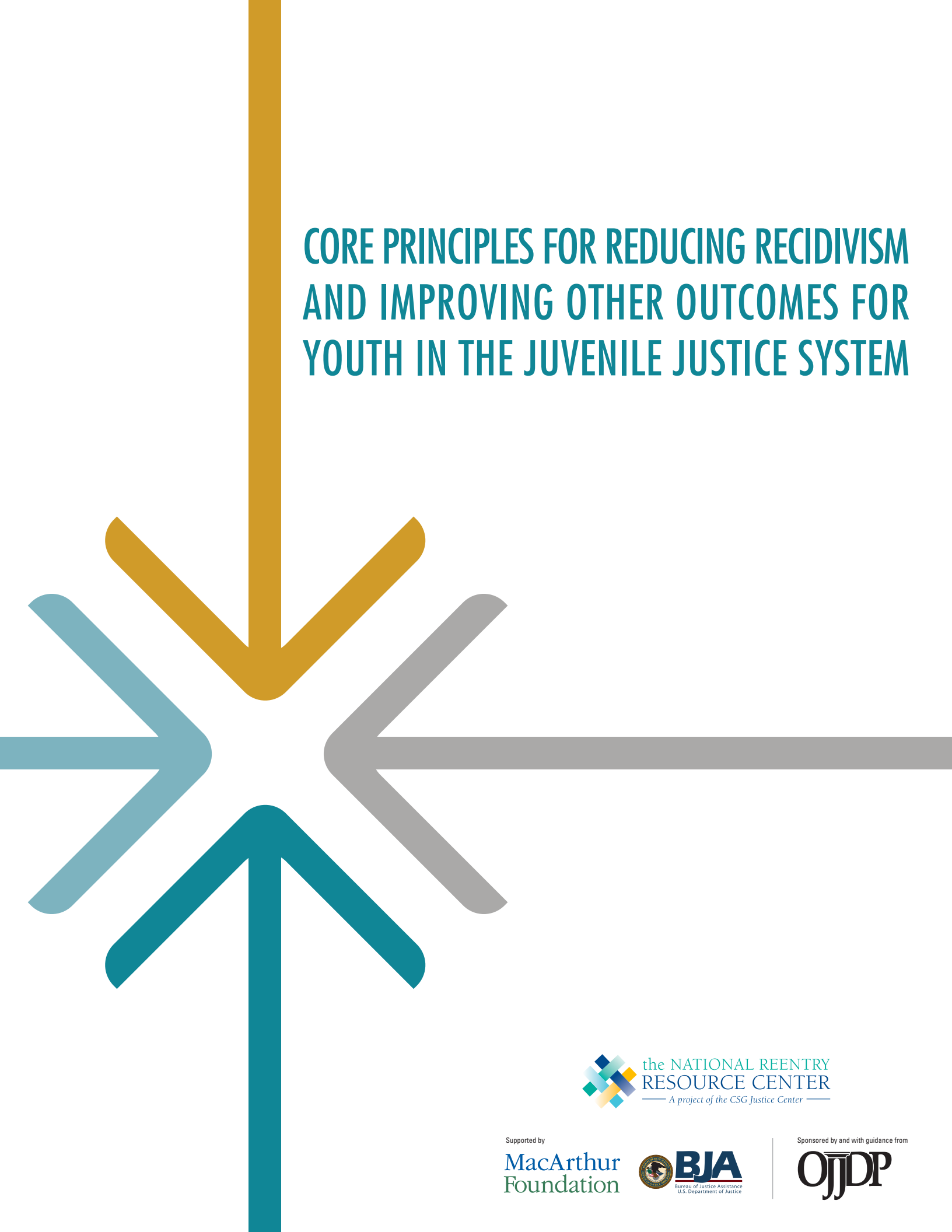
CORE PRINCIPLES FOR REDUCING RECIDIVISM AND IMPROVING OTHER OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM



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Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

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INTRODUCTION

THIS WHITE PAPER IS WRITTEN TO GUIDE LEADERS ACROSS ALL BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT; juvenile justice system administrators, managers, and front-line staff; and researchers, advocates, and other stakeholders on how to better leverage existing research and resources to facilitate system improvements that reduce recidivism and improve other outcomes for youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

The last two decades have produced remarkable changes in state and local juvenile justice systems.* An overwhelming body of research has emerged, demonstrating that using secure facilities as a primary response to youth's delinquent behavior generally produces poor outcomes at high costs.[1] Drawing on this evidence, the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative have provided the field with models for reform, research-based guidance, and technical assistance that has transformed many state and local juvenile justice systems. In part due to these efforts, between 1997 and 2011, youth confinement rates declined by almost 50 percent.[2] During the same time period, arrests of juveniles for violent crimes also fell by approximately 50 percent, to their lowest level in over 30 years.[3]

The importance and value of these achievements can't be overstated. At the same time, these trends alone are not sufficient for policymakers to assess the effectiveness of their state and local governments' juvenile justice systems. They must also know whether youth diverted from confinement, as well as youth who return to their communities after confinement, have subsequent contact with the justice system. In addition to recidivism data, policymakers should have information about what services, supports, and opportunities young people under system supervision need, whether these needs are being met, and to what extent these young people are succeeding as a result.

Yet policymakers often lack the information they need to determine whether youth who do come in contact with the system emerge from their experience better off, worse off, or unchanged, particularly in the long term. Twenty percent of state juvenile corrections agencies don't track recidivism data for youth at all. Of the states that do track recidivism, the majority doesn't consider the multiple ways a youth may have subsequent contact with the justice system, which range from rearrest, readjudication, or reincarceration within the juvenile justice system to offenses that involve them with the adult corrections system. For example, most states that track recidivism are unlikely to capture as youth recidivism data an event such as a 17-year-old released from a juvenile facility who is incarcerated in an adult facility as an 18-year-old. Additionally, the vast majority of states doesn't track whether youth who came into contact with the system ultimately stay in school, earn a degree, or find sustainable employment.

To the extent that state and local governments are able to measure their juvenile justice systems' impact on rearrest, readjudication, and reincarceration rates, the results have been discouraging. It's not uncommon for rearrest rates for youth returning from confinement to be as high as 75 percent within three years of release, and arrest rates for higher-risk youth placed on probation in the community are often not much better. While there have been promising advances in the field, few juvenile justice systems can point to significant and sustained progress in reducing these recidivism rates.[4]

* Due to the variability in juvenile justice system structures across the country, we use the term "juvenile justice system" or "juvenile justice agencies" to encompass all agencies involved with reducing recidivism and improving other outcomes for delinquent youth, including juvenile courts, probation, detention, local and state corrections, and aftercare/parole systems.

The Challenge of Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Youth Outcomes

Recidivism rates for youth involved in the juvenile justice system have been persistently high for many reasons, but not because nothing works to reduce recidivism. In fact, a wide-ranging and growing body of research exists on how to reduce the likelihood that a youth will reoffend. However, four challenges have historically impeded efforts to harness this research effectively and translate it into policies and practices that improve outcomes for youth:

There is an incomplete and sometimes misguided understanding of the research. Many state and local officials have minimal exposure to the research on what works to improve outcomes for youth, despite the significant dissemination efforts of leading foundations and the federal government. Additionally, some juvenile justice agencies are familiar with some but not all of the research, which undermines the effectiveness of their efforts. For example, a juvenile probation agency might develop a new program to reduce recidivism for youth with substance use disorders based on their review of the substance use treatment research. However, its program design will be severely flawed, and as such, produce limited improvements in youth outcomes, if they haven't also reviewed the research on how to simultaneously address the other primary causes of youth's delinquent behaviors, such as negative peer groups or family dysfunction, as well as account for the distinct possibility that such youth will have a co-occurring mental disorder.

What Do We Mean by "Other Youth Outcomes"?

Given that one of the key goals of the juvenile justice system is to improve public safety, recidivism reduction is a main focus of this white paper. Yet, recidivism isn't the only measure of juvenile justice system success or failure—youth development outcomes such as educational attainment, skill development, behavioral health improvements, and better family functioning, amongst others, are just as important, if not more so, to ensuring youth's long-term success. As such, the phrase "other youth outcomes" is used throughout this white paper to refer to a broad set of positive youth outcomes beyond just recidivism.

Approaches to adopting the research are piecemeal. Too often, a legislator, judge, or other system leader will latch onto a specific aspect of the research on how to reduce recidivism for youth in the juvenile justice system and push for related reform without recognizing how other parts of the system must change to support its success. For instance, a legislator exposed to the research on how the use of confinement for low- and moderate-risk youth can actually increase youth's likelihood of reoffending may advance legislation that requires these youth to receive community supervision, as opposed to placement in a secure facility. However, if the legislator also doesn't ensure that the counties that must now supervise these youth are informed about, support, and fund effective community supervision and service strategies, it's unlikely that this selective application of the research will result in measurable improvements in youth outcomes. Juvenile justice systems shouldn't refrain from using the research to improve their systems in one area just because they can't simultaneously change all related aspects of their system at once. At the same time, a more cohesive approach to using the research to guide policy and practice improvements will generate better and more sustainable results.

Further complicating these challenges, recidivism reduction efforts are rarely coordinated across government agencies, local juvenile justice systems, or multiple service systems. For example, up to two-thirds of all youth in the juvenile justice system have had contact with the child-welfare system. Yet a probation officer might require a youth to participate in multiple service programs, while that same youth's child welfare caseworker might provide services that involve only the youth's family members. As a consequence, the two systems can unintentionally undermine each other's efforts, with the result often being higher recidivism rates for youth involved in both systems rather than the systems working together to achieve better outcomes than one system could have accomplished alone. In this vein, agencies within the juvenile justice system and across other youth-serving agencies often don't have a shared view of key challenges, don't collaborate, and don't use limited resources efficiently to implement the policies and practices demonstrated by research to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes.

There is inadequate fidelity to the research in implementing programs or practices. The proliferation of research and clearinghouses on evidence-based programs and practices has dramatically increased knowledge of *what* to do but hasn't provided the same level of guidance on *how* to do it effectively. Research has consistently demonstrated that when implemented poorly, even interventions with the strongest evidence base can have marginal or even negative impacts on recidivism and other youth outcomes. For example, many juvenile justice systems have funded evidence-based programs such as Multisystemic Therapy and assumed that service providers could implement them in accordance with the research without any system assistance or oversight. Instead, service providers often lack the sufficiently qualified staff, formal quality-assurance protocols, and the data collection capacity needed to administer the program with fidelity to the research, and without this infrastructure, fail to achieve expected results.

There is insufficient accountability. In government, what does not get measured rarely gets done. Without consistent and reliable data on recidivism and other outcomes for youth under system supervision, policymakers and agency leaders can't fully assess system performance and hold themselves, their staff, or service providers accountable for improvement. As noted above, a number of states don't track recidivism or other youth outcomes at all, and for those that do, many don't track multiple recidivism events, reoffending that is accounted for by the adult corrections system, long-term reoffending, or positive youth outcomes. In addition, policymakers and system leaders are generally not maximizing the use of whatever youth outcome data is available to hold agencies accountable for results and guide system policy, practice, and resource allocation.

The Need for Core Principles

The best way to help prevent a youth's subsequent contact with the juvenile justice system is to prevent him or her from being involved with the system in the first place. The field has been engaged in significant efforts to divert status offenders and other low-risk youth from ever coming into contact with the system. The focus of this white paper is on what works to promote successful reentry for those youth who are under the supervision of a juvenile justice system, which encompasses a process that begins the moment any youth comes into contact with the system, no matter how brief or at what level, to support their successful transition from supervision to a crime-free and productive adulthood.*

* This paper largely focuses on service and supervision decisions as opposed to judicial proceedings that relate to the adjudicatory process. For more guidance on the key role that juvenile defenders can play and for resources on how best to support their efforts, juvenile justice systems can connect with the National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC) through their website at www.njdc.info.

To help advance this goal, this white paper does the following:

- **Part One** synthesizes and distills the research on what works to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system into four core principles. The discussion of each principle includes the latest research supporting the importance of the principle accompanied by specific policy, practice, and resource-allocation recommendations, which when taken together, offers the potential for significant recidivism reductions and improvements in other youth outcomes. It also provides examples illustrating how state and local juvenile justice officials have established particular policies and system interventions to implement these principles.
- Recognizing that improved outcomes are possible only when research on what works is implemented with fidelity, **Part Two** details lessons learned from research and practice on how to implement the principles effectively, and provides examples of how state and local juvenile justice systems have operationalized the principles in practice.

To develop this paper, the CSG Justice Center received support from the MacArthur Foundation and the U.S. Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance, and worked in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. While researching this paper, the CSG Justice Center reviewed and summarized the extensive body of literature that has been sponsored, conducted, and promoted over the last several decades by a number of key organizations, including the MacArthur Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the National Academy of Sciences, Blueprints and the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and others. The effort to synthesize this research was informed by numerous conversations with and feedback from prominent juvenile justice researchers; two full-day convenings of national experts, advocates, and practitioners; individual meetings and discussions with foundation, federal government, and advocacy leaders; and six on-site, multi-day meetings with a range of state and local officials in leading juvenile justice systems across the country.

Most of the existing "what works" research focuses on one specific area, policy, practice, or approach, rather than a full picture of what juvenile justice systems need to do to reduce recidivism and improve other outcomes for youth. This white paper considers a wide, multi-faceted range of research and related resources and distills them into four core principles that, when implemented effectively together, produce the best outcomes for youth. Further, the paper recognizes the critical role that effective implementation plays in promoting improved youth outcomes and the relative lack of practical guidance and examples to that end that have been available to juvenile justice systems. As such, the paper seeks to fill this gap by building upon the lessons learned from foundation- and government-sponsored reform efforts, and the research of the National Implementation Research Network and other groups, by providing detailed guidance for juvenile justice agency leaders and managers on how to operationalize the research with fidelity.

Policy and Practice Examples In Context

The white paper highlights examples of how state and local juvenile justice systems have implemented aspects of the "what works" research. However, because many state and local governments struggle to collect accurate and comprehensive data on recidivism and other youth outcomes, it is difficult to connect measurable improvements in these outcomes directly to specific policies, practices, or investments. Thus, the state and local examples in this paper should be understood largely as promising approaches, and federal agencies, funders, state and local governments, and the field should seek to build the system and research capacity for evaluating the direct impacts of these and other initiatives.

How to Use This White Paper

This paper should be used by policymakers, system administrators and practitioners, as well as advocates and other key stakeholders to:

1. *Develop a full understanding of "what works"* to reduce recidivism and improve other outcomes for youth under juvenile justice system supervision. This paper offers juvenile justice systems, in one place, an opportunity to become familiar with the wide body of knowledge on how to improve outcomes for youth, distilled into four core principles accompanied by concrete recommendations for policy and practice.
2. *Integrate distinct improvement strategies,* which, when implemented together, have the maximum impact on recidivism and other youth outcomes. This paper reviews each principle individually, but considerable attention is paid to how each principle works in concert with the other three principles so that juvenile justice systems can design and advance comprehensive efforts to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes.
3. *Operationalize these principles with fidelity to the research.* The paper provides practical guidance to help state and local officials understand how to translate these concepts into policy and practice, including examples of juvenile justice systems that have implemented these principles effectively.
4. *Assess the current status of juvenile justice systems policies and practices and measure progress toward improvement.* Policymakers and juvenile justice system leaders can use this paper to assess the extent to which their current policies and practices are in line with the core principle and concrete policy and practice recommendations outlined in the paper, and to set goals for adopting and effectively implementing them in their systems.

Part One: Policies and Practices That Reduce Recidivism and Improve Other Youth Outcomes

PRINCIPLE 1: BASE SUPERVISION, SERVICE, AND RESOURCE-ALLOCATION DECISIONS ON THE RESULTS OF VALIDATED RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS.

HISTORICALLY, THE ABSENCE OF OBJECTIVE CRITERIA for determining what level and type of supervision and services produce the best outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system has led to a number of negative consequences, including:

- Relying on restrictive forms of supervision that don't promote public safety or positive youth behaviors but do create bloated juvenile corrections budgets;
- Poor youth outcomes, including recidivism rates that remain high for most juvenile justice systems and lower graduation and employment rates for youth who are released from system supervision.[5]
- Reduced confidence that anything works with these youth, which stifles innovation and motivation for improvement.
- Inequity, as youth of color are treated more harshly by the juvenile justice system and are less likely to receive needed services and supports than their white peers.[6]

Over the last decade, research and practical experience have established an evidence-based foundation that policymakers and system agency leaders can use to reduce recidivism for youth in the juvenile justice system and allocate resources more efficiently. This foundation is known as the principles of Risk, Need, and Responsivity (RNR), which are best executed in practice through the use of validated assessment tools.*

The application of RNR in juvenile justice systems significantly reduces the likelihood that a youth will reoffend.[7] The RNR principles are defined as follows:

- The *Risk principle* focuses supervision and services on youth most likely to reoffend. Prioritizing system interventions for youth at high risk of reoffending can lead to a significant reduction in recidivism. Conversely, intervening with youth who are at low risk of reoffending has a limited impact and can even lead to adverse outcomes.
- The *Need principle* addresses a youth's greatest criminogenic needs.† Systems can have the greatest impact on recidivism when they attend to the specific, individualized needs that are the primary causes of youth's delinquent behaviors, such as substance use or negative peers.

* Some risk assessment instruments go beyond determining risks for reoffending and also try to ascertain the risks associated with technical violations of probation or parole that can lead to reincarceration (recidivism measures). There are also specialized risk assessment tools that have been developed to determine specific areas of risk, such as violent behavior and sexual offending behavior. These risk tools may be used in addition to assessing the risk of reoffending, but no risk tool exists that can predict the behavior of a specific individual.

† This report will refer to criminogenic needs as "dynamic risk factors" given that it is a more developmentally appropriate term when referring to adolescent behavior.

- *The Responsivity principle* identifies a youth's barriers to learning and improving his or her behavior, and tailors services to help overcome them. The Responsivity principle can enhance the impact of services by addressing needs or conditions, such as mental disorders, that interfere with service engagement, and by motivating youth to change.

While juvenile justice systems are increasingly adopting validated assessment tools to advance the principles of RNR, a number of state systems don't use validated assessments at all for youth in their custody.[8] At the local level, the use of these tools is likely even more limited given that local juvenile justice systems typically have fewer resources to adopt and implement assessments effectively.

There is no way to accurately predict youth behavior all the time. But the predictive power of validated assessments to identify the likelihood that youth will reoffend and the primary causes of their delinquent behavior is significantly more consistent and reliable than professional judgment alone.[9]

Brief risk-screening tools can help courts, prosecutors, and probation agencies at the point of intake to more objectively determine the viability of diverting youth from formal system involvement or whether a more in-depth assessment is warranted. Risk-screening tools have also been developed to help these agencies make more objective pre-adjudication detention decisions.[10] Once a youth is adjudicated delinquent and awaiting disposition, juvenile justice staff can administer a full risk and needs assessment to make the most informed, and therefore potentially effective, supervision and service decisions.

Thus, policymakers who support and promote the use of validated assessments to advance the principles of RNR can help ensure that juvenile justice systems don't unintentionally worsen youth behavior and that limited resources are used efficiently to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes.

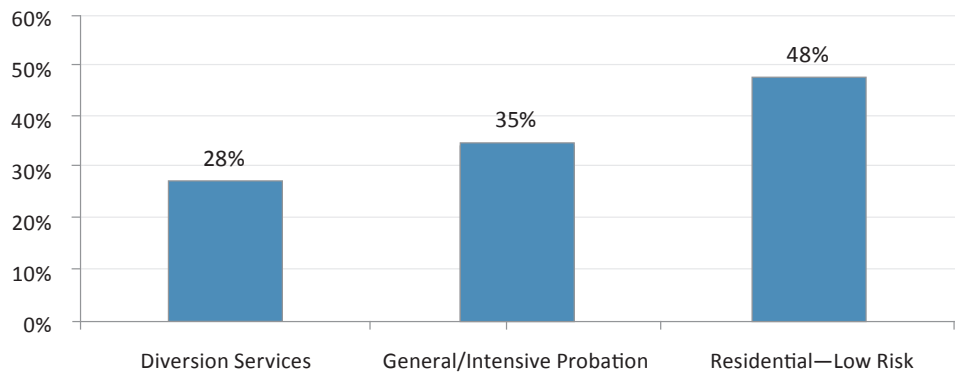
What is a Validated Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is an evaluation of both dynamic (changeable) and static (unchangeable, or historical and/or demographic) factors that predicts the risk of recidivism and provides guidance on supervision and services. A risk assessment is considered *validated* if quality research has demonstrated that higher scores on the instrument are statistically associated with a higher probability of reoffending.

RECOMMENDATION A: Minimize juvenile justice system supervision and services for youth who are at a low risk of reoffending.

Research shows that juvenile justice systems can do more harm than good by actively intervening with youth who are at low risk of reoffending.[11] As just one example, a study of the implementation of the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) risk assessment in Florida found that youth assessed as low risk who were placed in confinement were rearrested at a higher rate than low-risk youth who were placed on probation or received diversion services in lieu of supervision.[12]

Figure 1. One-Year Rearrest Rates for Low-Risk Youth by Placement Type, FY2007-08 and FY2008-09

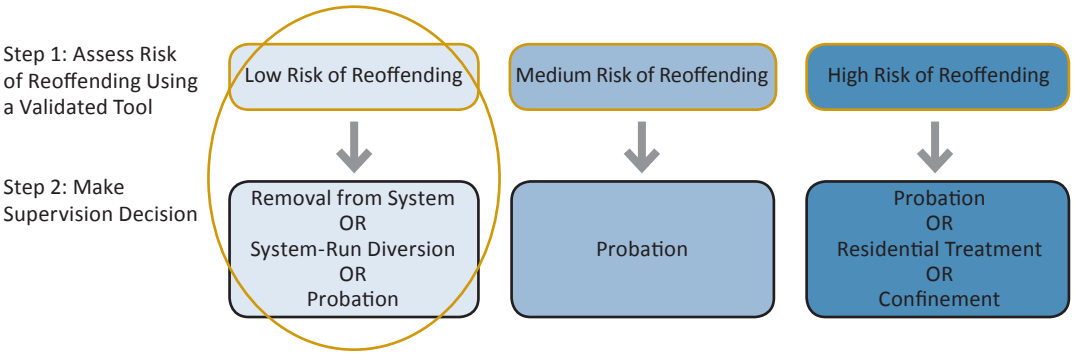


Source: Kristin Parsons Early, Gregory A. Hand, and Julia L. Blankenship, *Validity and Reliability of the Florida PACT Risk and Needs Assessment Instrument: A Three-Phase Evaluation.* Table 9. (FL: Justice Research Center, 2012) www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/probation-policy-memos/jrc-comprehensive-pact-validity-and-reliability-study-report-2012.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=2.

The courts, law enforcement, prosecutors, schools, and other service systems should work together to prevent most youth from ever coming into contact with the juvenile justice system. For youth who do enter the system, validated risk assessments are the best tools available for objectively classifying them as being at low, medium, or high risk to reoffend. Policymakers should require and fund state and local juvenile justice systems to adopt validated risk assessments, the results of which should be used as one of the primary drivers for making supervision decisions. These systems should be encouraged to provide minimal supervision and services, if any, to youth whose assessment scores indicate a low risk of reoffending, while reinforcing the importance of holding these youth accountable for their actions through some form of restitution, such as community service.

These steps are outlined through the supervision decision-making matrix in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Matching Risk of Reoffending with Supervision Decisions



By minimizing interventions for low-risk youth, juvenile justice systems will avoid the costly and harmful mistake of over-intervening with youth who, with limited systems involvement, will likely age out of their delinquent behavior on their own, and do so without much, if any, further impact on public safety.[13] Fewer interventions for low-risk youth also mean more resources can be devoted to the supervision and services for young people at higher risk for reoffending.

RECOMMENDATION B: Maximize the impact and value of system resources by prioritizing services for youth most likely to reoffend and by minimizing the use of confinement.

Policymakers who require juvenile justice systems to reserve the most restrictive supervision levels and services for the small number of youth assessed as being at high risk of reoffending can get the most "bang for their buck" in terms of lower recidivism rates and other positive youth outcomes. Research shows that well-implemented programs that intervene with moderate- or high-risk young people reduce recidivism and improve other outcomes more than programs targeting low-risk youth.[14] Additionally, it's not uncommon for a small number of youth to be responsible for the majority of juvenile offenses in a given locale.[15] Thus, while juvenile justice systems can use validated assessments to identify and minimize system interventions for low-risk youth, these tools are equally important for identifying and targeting interventions to those youth who represent the most pronounced risk to public safety and the greatest potential for improvement.

> *"In practical terms, juvenile justice systems will generally get more delinquency reduction benefits from their intervention dollars by focusing their most effective and costly interventions on higher risk juveniles and providing less intensive and costly interventions to the lower risk cases."*
>
> — Mark Lipsey, et al., *Improving the Effectiveness of Juvenile Justice Programs: A New Perspective on Evidence-Based Practice*

It is particularly important that juvenile justice systems have a rational, data-driven way to determine when to remove youth from their families and communities and place them in detention or correctional facilities. Research shows that confinement, on average, has a limited and sometimes even negative effect on youth outcomes[16] and is the most expensive intervention available, with costs often averaging $100,000 or more per youth annually.[17] Still, an estimated 40 percent of the youth confined in 2010 were held as a result of violations of probation or low-level offenses such as disorderly conduct or truancy, behaviors that are typically associated with youth who are at lower risk of reoffending.[18] Youth of color are also more likely than their white peers to receive more restrictive supervision, such as confinement or intense probation supervision, than is warranted by their behavior and risk level.[19]

The financial and human costs of confinement are compounded, and any potential benefits weakened, when confinement is used unfairly and/or for youth who represent only minimal threat to community safety. As such, policymakers and juvenile justice systems should seek to balance protecting public safety with ensuring that only youth who are at the highest risk of reoffending and those who have committed the most egregious offenses are confined, recognizing that not all high-risk youth will require confinement.

Between 1997 and 2011, 19 states reduced their juvenile confinement rates by more than 50 percent.[20] These states achieved reductions after implementing a variety of legislative reforms, fiscal incentives, and policy and practice changes, including requiring the use of validated risk assessments. A report supported by the MacArthur Foundation detailed the findings of a study that showed that, all else being equal, youth were about half as likely to be confined after juvenile justice systems implemented a validated risk assessment to guide their supervision decisions than they were before the assessment was implemented.[21]

Louisiana: Implementing a Risk Assessment Tool to Improve Youth Outcomes

In 2007, the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) adopted the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) risk assessment tool to assist probation staff in making supervision and service decisions. OJJ assigned an assessment coordinator to oversee the initiative and developed an Implementation Committee composed of system stakeholders and local coordinators at each of the state's pilot sites. The National Youth Screening and Assessment Project (NYSAP) at the University of Massachusetts provided training and helped to prepare policies and associated documents, such as case plan templates, that are essential to implementing a comprehensive assessment system.

As a result of these efforts and other juvenile justice reforms in the state, researchers found that youth with at least one SAVRY assessment were on probation an average of seven fewer months than youth who did not receive a SAVRY assessment. Across the state, fewer low-risk youth received an out-of-home placement, and supervision levels were appropriately matched with risk levels in 85 to 90 percent of cases.[22] In addition, three probation offices showed that an average of only 17 percent of adjudicated youth were assessed as being at high risk of reoffending, and out-of-home placement rates dropped by 30 to 50 percent in 2 of the 3 probation offices.

RECOMMENDATION C: Use validated assessments to identify the primary causes of a youth's delinquent behaviors and focus system interventions and resources on addressing these causes.

Research has documented a specific set of needs, known as dynamic risk factors, which are the primary causes of youth's delinquent behavior. Although static risk factors are strong predictors of reoffending, these dynamic factors can be stronger predictors of certain types of reoffending (mainly violent reoffending), than the static risk factors traditionally weighted heavily by the juvenile justice system, such as offense history and age of first offense.[23] The advantage of dynamic factors is that they can provide information about 'why' a youth is engaging in delinquent behavior, which juvenile justice systems can then address through targeted interventions.

Dynamic Risk Factors

Dynamic risk factors are those that can be changed as part of the normal developmental process or through system interventions. Some of the most prevalent factors for young people include:

- Family/parenting problems
- Negative beliefs and attitudes
- Negative peers
- Poor school performance
- Substance use
- Lack of social attachments

A synthesis of 134 research studies on juvenile delinquency found that services that target known dynamic risk factors produce far greater recidivism reductions than other service strategies. For example, in one study, youth whose dynamic risk factors were addressed were 36 percent less likely to reoffend, while those who received system interventions that focused on creating fear of punishment increased a youth's likelihood of reoffending by 18 percent.[24] These effects were strongest when targeted at youth assessed as high risk. Furthermore, the potential for reducing recidivism has been more pronounced when services are designed to comprehensively address youth's key needs together, with studies showing that youth who had few or none of their dynamic risk factors targeted were significantly more likely to reoffend than those that had the majority of their dynamic risk factors targeted.[25]

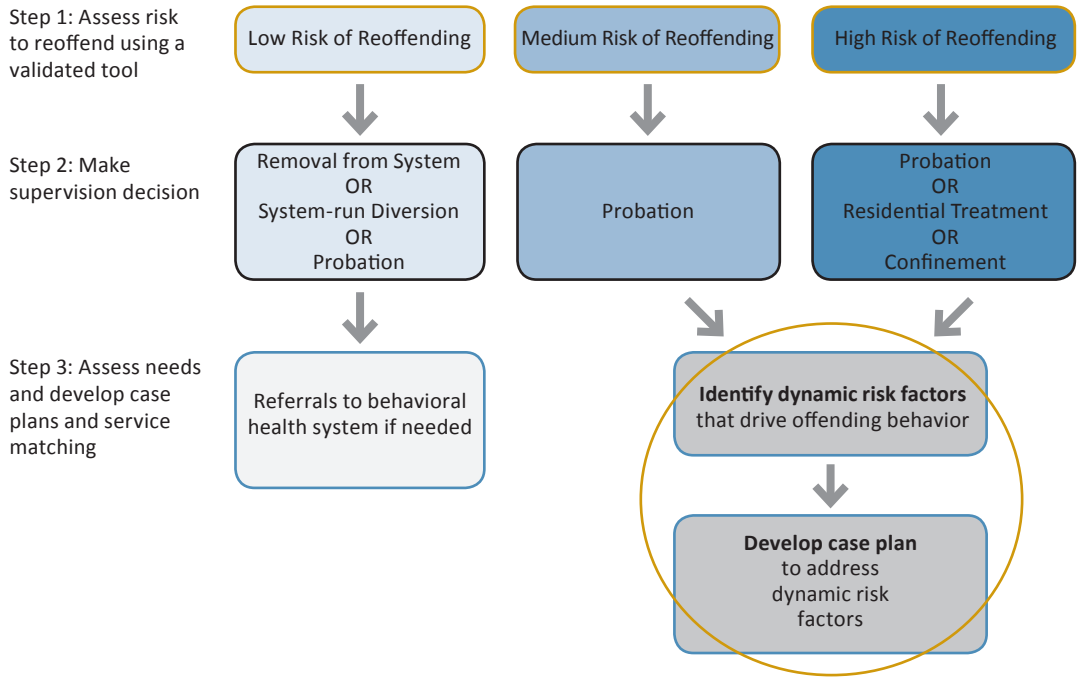
Juvenile justice systems can also increase the impact of matching services to youth's dynamic risk factors by ensuring that service case plans leverage youth's strengths, such as family support, positive peers, skills, and interests, as well as account for their barriers to change. Common challenges faced by youth in the juvenile justice system, such as mental disorders, are not directly associated with reoffending (and thus not included in assessments of dynamic risk factors) but play a key role in whether youth engage with and respond to services.[26] As a result, in conjunction with risk assessments, juvenile justice systems should employ additional assessments to identify these responsivity and protective factors to ensure that services are administered to individual youth in the manner most likely to positively impact their behavior.

Given these findings, policymakers should require juvenile justice systems to adhere to the following practices:

- *For all youth assessed as being at medium or high risk of reoffending, use validated risk and need assessments to identify the dynamic risk factors that are the primary causes of youth's delinquent behaviors.* Not all risk assessments are designed to identify dynamic risk factors, so juvenile justice systems should ensure that they select an appropriate tool for this purpose.
- *Based on assessment results, develop case plans to address youth's dynamic risk factors while taking into account barriers to service engagement.* These case plans should serve as the main focus of system interventions for youth, whether in confinement or the community, while also supporting youth's general social and health care service needs through external referrals.

These critical steps are integrated into the supervision decision-making matrix in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Putting it All Together: Using Validated Assessments to Match Youth to Supervision and Services



RECOMMENDATION D: Use specialized, validated screenings and assessments to identify youth with mental health and substance use treatment needs and match them to services, minimizing juvenile justice intervention when appropriate.

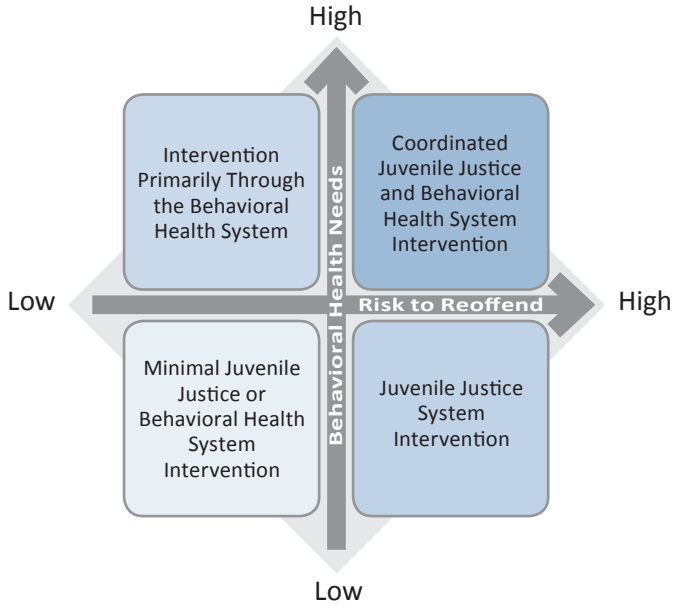
Policymakers who are committed to reducing recidivism, improving other youth outcomes, and using supervision and service resources efficiently should require juvenile justice systems to supplement validated risk assessments with behavioral health assessments, such as mental health and substance use screening and assessment tools, at key system decision points.[27]

Mental health is a critical factor in whether youth engage with and respond to programs and services, and substance use is one of the most common and intractable dynamic risk factors. Risk and needs assessments typically don't assess mental health, and they are not always able to identify youth with significant substance use disorders. Researchers estimate that up to 70 percent of youth in juvenile justice detention, correctional, or community-based facilities have a diagnosable mental disorder and a quarter or more have a serious mental disorder that impairs their ability to function. Approximately 25 to 50 percent of youth in juvenile justice facilities also have significant substance use disorders, often co-occurring with mental disorders.[28]

Given these challenges, policymakers should support the adoption of behavioral health screening tools to identify youth with acute mental health or substance use needs that require immediate treatment to ensure that youth do not harm themselves or others.

Youth assessed as having significant but not immediate mental health or substance use treatment needs, and who are also identified through validated risk assessments as being at low to low/moderate risk of reoffending, should receive minimal supervision or services from the juvenile justice system. Instead, policymakers should require juvenile justice systems to ensure that these youth's behavioral health and community-support needs are met primarily by the behavioral health system, as they are not related to a young person's likelihood of reoffending.

Figure 4. Juvenile Justice and Behavioral Health Systems Intervention Decision-Making Matrix



For youth with significant behavioral health needs who are at higher risk of reoffending, juvenile justice systems should use risk and needs assessments in conjunction with behavioral health screening and assessment tools to match youth with the most effective combination of supervision and services. The coordinated delivery of these interventions between the juvenile justice and behavioral health systems can reduce recidivism, improve behavioral health and other outcomes for youth, and facilitate the most efficient use of service resources within and across both systems.[29]

Texas: Identifying and Diverting Youth with Mental Disorders

Through legislation enacted in 2001, Texas mandated the use of the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument—Second Version (MAYSI-2) as a validated mental health screening tool for all youth referred to local probation departments. This screening allows departments to identify youth in need of mental health services and divert them to appropriate interventions in lieu of a formal court disposition, when appropriate. One such program, the Front-End Diversion Initiative (FEDI), pairs youth with a specialized juvenile probation officer (SJPO) who provides case management and helps link youth and their families to community-based services. SJPOs maintain caseloads of generally no more than 15 cases, and must become certified in the FEDI through 40 hours of training on adolescent mental health, youth development, crisis intervention and management, family engagement, and motivational interviewing.[30]

Preliminary results indicate that FEDI participants were referred to more community resources and were less likely to be adjudicated. Youth also had improved school attendance and fewer disciplinary referrals upon program completion than in the three months prior to FEDI supervision.[31]

PRINCIPLE 1
KEY TAKEAWAY QUESTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- ✔ Do youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system receive a validated screening and/or assessment for risk of reoffending?
- ✔ Do youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system receive a validated screening and/or assessment for mental and substance use disorders?
- ✔ Are youth who are assessed as at low risk of reoffending diverted from formal system supervision?
- ✔ Is the use of the most intensive services and confinement reserved primarily for youth assessed as at high risk of reoffending and/or those who are adjudicated of the most serious offenses?
- ✔ Is a validated risk and needs assessment used to identify the primary causes of youth's delinquent behaviors, and do youth's case plans actually reflect these assessment results?
- ✔ Are youth with significant substance use and/or mental disorders, who are also low and low/moderate risk of reoffending, diverted from juvenile justice system supervision, when appropriate, and referred to necessary services?

PRINCIPLE 2: ADOPT AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES DEMONSTRATED TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM AND IMPROVE OTHER YOUTH OUTCOMES, AND USE DATA TO EVALUATE SYSTEM PERFORMANCE AND DIRECT SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS.

Obviously, policymakers shouldn't fund services that don't work. Yet, many juvenile justice systems still operate programs that not only don't work but can worsen youth's delinquent behaviors. Policymakers can best protect public safety and use resources efficiently by promoting and funding only those system interventions demonstrated by research to be effective at reducing recidivism and improving other youth outcomes such as educational attainment, skill development, and behavioral health. It's also critical that policymakers require and support juvenile justice systems to track the actual impact of these services on recidivism and other youth outcomes to know what policies and practices are working at the state and local levels, what isn't, and how to allocate resources accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION A: Eliminate the use of programs and practices that do not reduce recidivism or improve other youth outcomes.

As noted above, many interventions aimed at deterring youth from delinquent behavior are ineffective at reducing recidivism and improving other youth outcomes, and in some cases, actually increase delinquency.[32] These ineffective programs are primarily based on control, discipline, fear, surveillance, or punishment. In the largest and most comprehensive review conducted to date of 600 evaluations of delinquency interventions, researchers found that programs and practices that fail to address the underlying causes of youth's behavior consistently demonstrate negligible or negative effects.[33] In addition, the costs associated with some of these inferior interventions—particularly those involving confinement—can be exorbitant and produce very little if any positive return on investment.

Commonly Used but Generally Ineffective Programs and Practices

- Large, overcrowded, juvenile correctional facilities
- Restrictive out-of-home placements for mental health treatment, including psychiatric hospitalization and residential treatment centers
- Boot camps and other disciplinary programs
- Curfew laws
- Scared Straight and other "shock therapy" programs
- Self-help or self-esteem programs

Mark Lipsey, et al., *Improving the Effectiveness of Juvenile Justice Programs: A New Perspective on Evidence-Based Practice* (Washington, DC: Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, December 2010), cjjr.georgetown.edu/pdfs/ebp/ebppaper.pdf.

The elimination of these programs can help ensure that the juvenile justice system does not unintentionally do more harm than good and free up resources for reallocation to more effective interventions. It is important to note that doing away with any entrenched system interventions, programs, or facilities will not happen overnight. For example, the closing of a facility or de-funding a long-standing program requires significant political buy-in and support; identifying appropriate alternatives with sufficient capacity for the youth currently placed in such settings; determining how to repurpose facilities or other service infrastructure; and finding a way to ensure that program employees can still use their skills to contribute to improved outcomes for youth. Before making these sometimes difficult policy and resource-allocation decisions, then, policymakers will need to work closely with all system agencies and other key stakeholders to develop a detailed implementation plan.

RECOMMENDATION B: Support and fund services shown to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes.

While traditional forms of supervision can suppress delinquent behaviors in the short term, policymakers must invest in effective services for youth while they are on supervision to produce long-term gains in community safety and youth outcomes. Research shows that once youth are no longer under system supervision, they tend to revert to their previous delinquent activities if their attitudes, beliefs, skills, and support systems have not fundamentally changed.[34] Juvenile confinement is the most restrictive form of supervision, and it generally has marginal or even negative effects on recidivism once youth return to the community.[35] Recent findings suggest that confining youth can actually increase their likelihood of being incarcerated as adults by more than 20 percent and can also significantly reduce their chances of completing high school.[36]

As states increase their use of validated risk assessments to divert more medium- and high-risk youth to the community, the delivery of effective services for these youth is key to helping them be successful in the community. Likewise, as the population of youth in confinement is reduced to a smaller number of high-risk youth, it's critical that juvenile justice systems ensure that youth in confinement are placed in humane and supportive environments and have their primary service needs met so these expensive placements promote improved outcomes for youth upon their return to the community.

In both community and residential settings, research shows that programs and practices focused on promoting youth's positive development are the most effective interventions: they have the potential to reduce recidivism rates by up to 40 percent and improve long-term positive outcomes for youth and families.[37] Two specific service approaches have demonstrated particular success with youth in the juvenile justice system: cognitive behavioral therapy and family- and community-centric approaches.

- *Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT):* Services focused on changing the way youth think, especially through cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), can improve outcomes for youth in facilities and community-based programs.[38] Trained clinicians, probation officers, or facility staff can use CBT to help youth identify and change the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that contribute to their delinquency. The most effective CBT approaches are action-oriented—they help youth develop and practice the skills needed to make better decisions, particularly when confronted with circumstances that could lead to further delinquent behavior.[39]
- *Family- and community-centric approaches:* Youth's families, peers, schools, and communities exert significant influence on their behavior.[40] As such, many of the programs that have demonstrated the most success focus not only on facilitating youth behavioral change, but also seek to strengthen youth-family interactions, improve parenting skills, and connect youth to other positive adults, peers, and activities in their schools and community.[41] This approach can help family members learn how to rely on each other and local supports—rather than continued services from external providers—to meet their needs.[42]

With so many programs to choose from, it can be difficult to identify those that actually use these demonstrated approaches and are the best fit for addressing their youth population's primary service needs. The overuse of the term "evidence based" has led to confusion about which approaches research has definitively shown work to reduce delinquent behaviors compared to programs and practices that may reflect aspects of this research but haven't undergone rigorous evaluation. A manual produced by the Technical Assistance Partnership, Inc. provides useful guidance in defining evidence-based practices as those that have been rigorously studied in both research settings and in the real world and found to consistently produce the intended results.[43]

A handful of programs that use CBT and family- and community-centric approaches are evidence based because they have demonstrated, through multiple "gold standard" randomized comparison evaluations, that when implemented effectively, they improve outcomes for youth who are at high risk of reoffending.[44] Juvenile justice systems can identify these models through clearinghouses that certify programs as evidence based, including the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence's Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development and the Office of Justice Program's CrimeSolutions.gov.

A number of states—including Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, New Mexico, New York, and Pennsylvania—have, at a significant scale, implemented two of the most rigorously evaluated evidence-based programs: Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy.[45] In part as a result of the use of these programs, many of these states have seen significant drops in their confinement rates; served diverted youth successfully in the community; and reduced recidivism and improved other youth outcomes far more affordably and effectively than they would have had they used more restrictive alternatives, such as confinement.[46]

State policymakers can use legislation or funding incentives, such as providing increased funding to counties that use evidence based approaches, to encourage the adoption of effective service approaches at the state and local levels. Given that these programs most often yield better outcomes, but only if implemented with fidelity to their research-based approach, policymakers should also provide juvenile justice systems with the funding they need to implement these programs in a high-quality way.[47]

Still, juvenile justice systems do not have to limit their services exclusively to those with an existing evidence base. Research is increasingly demonstrating that many homegrown programs not currently certified as evidence-based can also have substantial positive impacts if they adhere to the elements of effective juvenile justice practice, such as the approaches described above.[48] Juvenile justice systems can support these efforts as well as test innovative service strategies for meeting the specific needs of their most challenging populations of youth if they commit to adhering to the research on what works to reduce recividism and regularly assessing service implementation quality and outcomes.

Tennessee and Louisiana: Promoting Programs and Practices Demonstrated to Reduce Recidivism and Improve Other Youth Outcomes

In 2007, Tennessee passed the Evidence-Based Law, which required state agencies to ensure that state funds for juvenile justice programs are spent only on evidence-based programs. Tennessee defined an evidence-based intervention as one governed by a protocol or manual that specifies the nature, quality, and amount of service that constitutes the program, and that scientific research using at least two separate cohorts has shown to produce positive youth outcomes.[49]

In 2006, Louisiana was selected as a MacArthur Foundation Models for Change site and identified the adoption of evidence-based practices as a priority area for juvenile justice reform. The state's youth service agencies issued a joint position statement supporting the adoption of evidence-based practices at the local level, and the legislature passed House Bill 701, which increased the authority of districts to enter into cooperative agreements with service providers to establish evidence-based programs for court-involved youth. Louisiana also passed legislation that funded a statewide Functional Family Therapy program. These and other reforms have led to more than a tenfold increase in the number of youth referred to evidence-based programs in some locales.[50]

Washington State: Investing in Effective Services and Saving Money

In a time of limited resources, policymakers are searching not only for programs that improve youth outcomes, but ones that do so in a cost-effective way. Through the Community Juvenile Accountability Act, Washington was the first state to require the use of evidence-based programs to reduce juvenile delinquency. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) analyzed over 500 comparison-group evaluations of corrections programs and developed an economic model to assess the rate of return on investment in different program types.

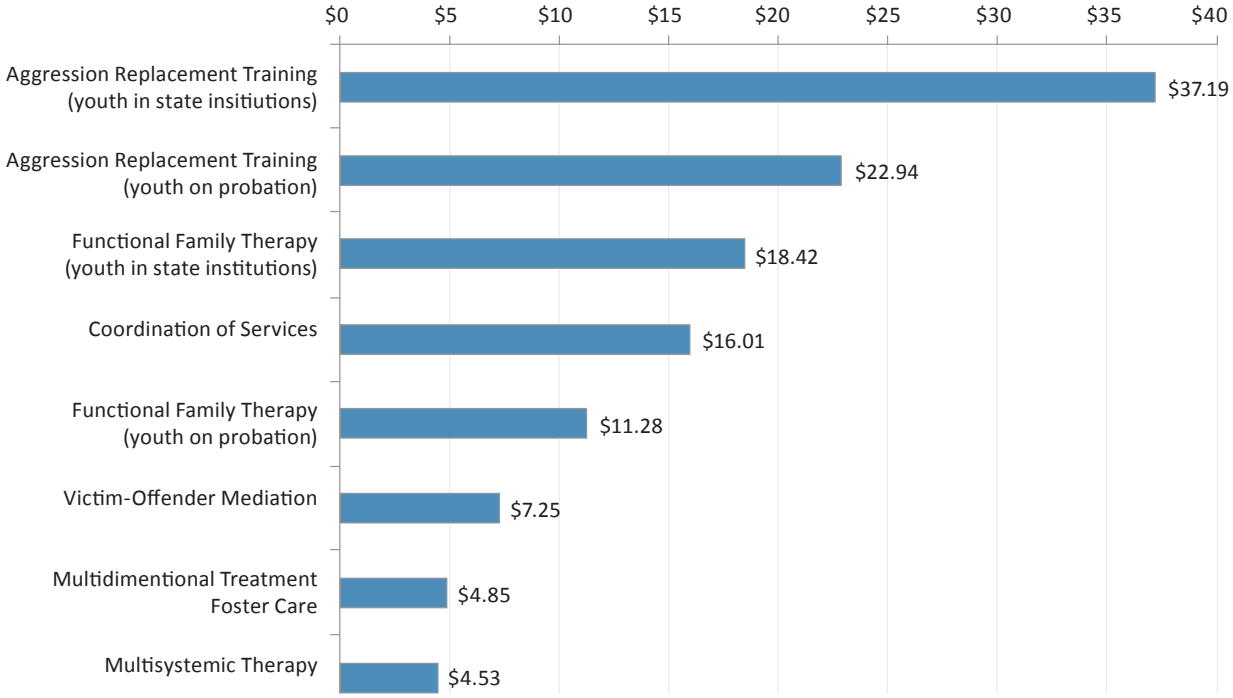
> *"The message from [WSIPP's cost-benefit findings] is clear, whether one chooses to intervene with youth when they are institutionalized, in group or foster homes, or on probation, states and localities can adopt programs that produce remarkably large economic returns. The same is true for programs that seek to divert juveniles before they are convicted of further crimes. Indeed, some programs deliver $10 or more of benefits for each $1 of cost."*[52]
>
> — Richard J. Bonnie, et al., eds., *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach*

WSIPP's analysis showed that investing in services demonstrated by research to improve youth outcomes can result in substantial cost savings. Aggression Replacement Therapy, for example, generates $37.19 in benefits for every $1.00 spent on the program for youth in confinement. [See Figure 5]

Based on these findings, in 2007, the state legislature invested $48 million to expand the use of evidence-based programs, which was estimated to save approximately $250 million that the state would otherwise have spent on prison construction and operation. Two years later, the legislature passed a law requiring all local juvenile courts to prioritize the use of evidence-based programs when spending state money. The law also established a weighted funding formula that gave more funding to local juvenile justice systems that targeted services to higher-risk youth and placed youth in evidence-based programs.[51]

Policymakers around the country are following Washington State's lead, seeking to fund only those services demonstrated to offer an economic return, and developing and applying their own cost-benefit formulas to ensure that system services generate positive outcomes and cost savings.

Figure 5. Cost Benefits of Juvenile Justice Interventions



Washington State Institute for Public Policy, *Washington State Juvenile Court Funding: Applying Research in a Public Policy Setting* (Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2010), www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1077/Wsipp_Washington-State-Juvenile-Court-Funding-Applying-Research-in-a-Public-Policy-Setting_Full-Report.pdf.

RECOMMENDATION C: Evaluate recidivism and other youth outcomes, and use this data to guide policy, practice, and resource-allocation decisions.

The ultimate proof of whether juvenile justice systems are employing effective services for youth under their supervision is lower recidivism rates and improved youth outcomes. Some policymakers are familiar with the number of youth in confinement, but far fewer can identify recidivism rates or high school graduation rates for youth under system supervision and whether policy reforms and service investments are making a measurable difference. Similarly, though most state agencies track outcomes for the youth under their supervision, few states are capturing and analyzing all of the recidivism and other youth outcome data needed to provide a full and reliable picture of system effectiveness. Yet these data speak directly to whether taxpayer dollars are being used judiciously to protect public safety and help youth to become crime-free and productive adults.

In partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts' Public Safety Performance Project and the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, the Council of State Governments Justice Center conducted a survey in fall 2013 of state juvenile correctional agencies' data collection practices for youth in state custody. The survey results showed that most states struggle to comprehensively measure recidivism rates and other youth outcomes like education and behavioral health for the most high-risk youth under their supervision.[53]

Juvenile justice systems can better evaluate the impact of system interventions on recidivism and other youth outcomes and position policymakers and agency leaders to make more informed decisions about how to best use resources to improve these outcomes by implementing five key recommendations:

1) *Measure recidivism for all youth involved with the juvenile justice system, considering the multiple ways they may have subsequent contact with the justice system.* Juvenile justice systems should track the distinct ways in which youth can have subsequent contact with the justice system,[54] including rearrest, readjudication/reconviction, recommitment/reincarceration, and technical violations/revocations. Systems should also account for new offenses that occur after a youth is no longer under system supervision, as well as offenses processed by the adult corrections system.

2) *Analyze recidivism and other youth outcome data to account for youth's risk levels, as well as other key youth characteristics and variables.* When measuring recidivism, it is critical that systems take into account the assessed risk level of the population being measured. For example, high-risk youth released from a juvenile correctional facility would be expected to experience a higher recidivism rate than low-risk youth diverted from such a facility. Absent this context, policymakers and agency leaders might incorrectly conclude that changes in youth outcomes are due to improvements or deficits in system performance when they may actually stem from changes in the risk level of the youth served.

> *"Recidivism reveals whether juvenile offenders who leave custody go on to lead crime-free lives, but not whether they lead productive, crime-free lives. Recidivism does not measure whether these young adults demonstrate successful pro-social behavior and contribute in a positive way to their communities. To really understand which programs and treatments are effective in reforming young offenders and place them on a firm footing in life, juvenile correctional agencies are beginning to track not only what goes wrong, but also what goes right by tracking positive youth outcomes."*
>
> — Shannon Myrick, Oregon Youth Authority[55]

   In addition to analysis by risk, policymakers should require and fund agencies to analyze recidivism and other youth outcome data by youth demographic groups, placement type, facility, service provider, length of stay, and the services and programming youth receive to understand system effectiveness.

3) *Develop and maintain the infrastructure necessary to collect, analyze, and report recidivism and other youth outcome data.* Policymakers are encouraged to promote the development of an electronic case management system to capture all data necessary to track outcomes for youth under system supervision, as well as the development of interagency information-sharing agreements and policy and procedures necessary to promote data accessibility, integrity and its appropriate use.

4) *Make recidivism and other youth outcome data available to key constituents and the general public.* Policymakers should require juvenile justice agencies to formally report recidivism and other youth outcome data annually to all branches of government, court personnel, other agencies that serve youth, State Advisory Groups, service providers, other key system stakeholders, and the public. Agency leaders should also work with policymakers to develop an agreed-upon, user-friendly way to report these data that helps them to focus on and understand a priority set of key indicators of system effectiveness.

5) *Use recidivism and other youth outcome data to inform juvenile justice policy, practice, and resource allocation.* Policymakers should partner with juvenile justice agencies to establish formal processes through legislation or agency policy to review youth outcomes and evaluate system performance based on established targets for improvement. The budget development process offers an opportunity to tie overall agency funding, as well as resources for specific programs and reform initiatives, to demonstrated progress on achieving these targets. Similarly, juvenile justice agency leaders should develop their own internal processes to review recidivism and other youth outcome data with both management and line staff, and use these data to identify strategies for improvement and hold staff accountable for results.

Policymakers and juvenile justice system leaders should use these recommendations to assess and improve their efforts to evaluate the impact of system interventions in a comprehensive and reliable way, and ultimately, to support only those programs and practices that are shown to reduce recidivism and improve other outcomes for youth.

Measuring and Using Juvenile Recidivism Data to Inform Policy, Practice, and Resource Allocation

To understand to what extent states currently track recidivism data for youth involved in the juvenile justice system and use that information to inform policy and funding decisions, the Council of State Governments Justice Center, The Pew Charitable Trusts' Public Safety Performance Project,* and the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators surveyed juvenile correctional agencies in all 50 states.† An issue brief developed by the CSG Justice Center—"Measuring and Using Juvenile Recidivism Data to Inform Policy, Practice, and Resource Allocation"—shares the results of the survey, a detailed breakdown of the recommendations described above, and examples of how select states have translated these recommendations into policy and practice. For more information and the full issue brief, visit www.csgjusticecenter.org/youth/.

Oregon: Developing a Statewide Juvenile Justice Case Management and Reporting System

When the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) was established in 1995 to oversee juvenile corrections, one of its initial activities was to assemble an interagency steering committee to develop a vision and local support for a collaborative, integrated information-management system that became known as the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS). Prior to the development of the JJIS system, the state and counties were unable to respond to policymakers' requests for data on juvenile crime, recidivism, and programs. In 1997, the state legislature approved funding for the system contingent upon the state securing intergovernmental agreement with counties. Through ongoing work with state and local government agencies, OYA developed the JJIS and provides funding, technical support, and training for its continued use by the state and 36 county juvenile justice agencies, and over 100 approved external partner agencies, including OYA's contracted residential care providers.[56] OYA and the JJIS Steering Committee have also approved a variety of data-sharing agreements in support of best practices research and state and national reporting requirements.

The JJIS system tracks youth from referral to a juvenile court through confinement and reentry, and includes assessment, disposition, case planning, services, custody, incident, positive youth engagement, and youth outcome data. Over the last two decades, the JJIS has been used to track case histories and outcomes, share information across juvenile justice systems and agencies, and generate a variety of reports for policymakers and other stakeholders in areas such as recidivism and the disproportionate impact of justice involvement on youth of color.

* To view state-by-state results of the survey, see "Measuring Juvenile Recidivism: Data Collection and Reporting Practices in Juvenile Corrections," The Pew Charitable Trusts Public Safety Performance Project, available at www.pewstates.org/research/data-visualizations/measuring-juvenile-recidivism-85899542839.

† While Washington D.C.'s Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services participated in the survey, their responses are not included in the analysis due to the challenge of comparing a district with states.

PRINCIPLE 2
KEY TAKEAWAY QUESTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- ✔ Is the juvenile justice system incentivized or required to use programs and practices demonstrated by research to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes?
- ✔ Has public funding been eliminated for interventions shown to be ineffective at reducing recidivism and improving other youth outcomes?
- ✔ Do service providers receive ongoing, expert assistance to implement programs and practices with fidelity to the research?
- ✔ Is continued funding for juvenile justice programs tied to demonstrated effectiveness?
- ✔ Are recidivism rates and other outcomes for youth under system supervision measured and analyzed in a comprehensive and reliable way?
- ✔ Are recidivism and other youth outcome data shared with key constituents and the general public and used to guide system policies, practices, and resource allocation?

PRINCIPLE 3: EMPLOY A COORDINATED APPROACH ACROSS SERVICE SYSTEMS TO ADDRESS YOUTH'S NEEDS.

If juvenile justice systems implement validated risk assessments and divert low-risk youth from system supervision, most of the youth who remain under supervision will have an array of dynamic risk factors and responsivity barriers that serve as significant obstacles to their transition to a crime-free and productive adulthood. Indeed, the majority of youth involved with the juvenile justice system has significant mental health, substance use, child welfare, and education needs that can contribute to their likelihood of reoffending into adulthood and prevent them from achieving other positive outcomes. Juvenile justice systems that implement programs and practices that adhere to the research on what works are best positioned to effectively address some of these dynamic risk factors. Yet, no juvenile justice system has the resources or expertise, on its own, to successfully address the multifaceted needs of the youth under its supervision, nor should it be expected or held accountable for doing so.

Traditionally, however, juvenile justice and other service systems have operated in silos rather than collaborating to deliver an integrated, research-based set of supports and services that simultaneously address the primary causes of youth's delinquent behaviors and keep them from transitioning into productive adults.[57] This lack of collaboration has proven particularly problematic because many youth under juvenile justice system supervision, and/or their families, are already involved in the behavioral health, child welfare, and/or education systems.

Thus, state and local governments that prioritize a coordinated, cross-systems approach to meeting the needs of youth in the juvenile justice system can improve outcomes for youth as well as realize a number of other important benefits,[58] including:

- less duplication of efforts and systems working at cross-purposes;
- streamlined court, agency, and provider decision making and service delivery;
- clearer delineation of the role of juvenile justice to reduce tendency to push low-risk youth into the juvenile justice system only to access needed services that they should be receiving from other service systems;
- increased utilization of available services and an identification of service gaps so juvenile justice and other service systems can cost-effectively address youth's needs across systems.

RECOMMENDATION A: Partner the juvenile justice system with the other key service systems in which youth are or should be involved in order to assess and effectively address their needs.

Youth in the juvenile justice system have an array of needs—such as housing, health care, or transportation—that can influence how they respond to system interventions. The discussion below focuses on youth's mental health, substance use, child welfare, and education needs because research has shown that these challenges are experienced by the largest proportion of youth in the juvenile justice system and have the most significant impact on their risk of reoffending.

Mental health. Approximately 60 to 70 percent of youth in juvenile justice detention, correctional, or community-based facilities have a diagnosable mental disorder and over 27 percent have a serious mental disorder that impairs their ability to function.[59] While mental health is not directly linked to a youth's likelihood of delinquent behavior, the failure to accurately identify and appropriately treat youth's mental disorders can exacerbate their conditions and make them less able to participate effectively in programing to improve this behavior.[60] Due to poor identification of these needs or lack of resources, however, many juvenile justice systems place youth in community or institutional settings that are unequipped to address their mental health needs and/or are not sensitive to their trauma history.

Youth with mental disorders—as identified through the use of mental health screening and assessment tools—who are not diverted from justice system involvement are likely to have better outcomes if the juvenile justice system partners with the behavioral health system to coordinate treatment both in the community and in confinement.[61] This collaboration is especially important because many juvenile justice systems report a dearth of adolescent mental health services, limited expertise among existing service providers, and significant barriers to accessing services and navigating payment reimbursement policies. Juvenile justice and mental health system administrators should work together to collect data on the prevalence of mental disorders for youth in their systems and the availability of services to meet their treatment needs, then use the data to identify and address gaps in services.

In particular, research suggests the best way to use limited resources to treat youth's mental health needs is investing in more community-based rather than residential treatment programs and in interventions that employ cognitive behavioral and family-centric approaches.[62] Innovations such as telepsychiatry[63] —providing mental health services through videoconferencing—can also be a cost-effective way to address a lack of local treatment capacity, especially in more rural communities. Amendments to Medicaid State Plans can ensure that all of these interventions are fully reimbursable and provide sustainable funding to support a sufficient level of services.

Policymakers should also help facilitate continuity of care for youth who are released from confinement, because gaps in treatment can set back any progress made in treatment, increasing youth's risk of reoffending.[64] For example, in a number of jurisdictions, youth's Medicaid benefits are automatically terminated upon their entry into a juvenile facility.[65] Youth must then reapply for these benefits upon release. Often, youth are released back into the community with only a few days of medication. The benefit reapplication process can take up to 90 days or longer to complete, by which time many youth will have already suffered the effects of being without their medication placing them at increased potential for reoffending.[66] States such as New York, California, and Ohio have passed legislation or advanced interagency agreements that suspend rather than terminate Medicaid benefits during confinement so youth can receive services and medication immediately upon community reentry.

Pennsylvania: Developing Integrated Systems of Care for Youth with Mental Disorders Who Are Involved with the Juvenile Justice System

The MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Initiative has supported a number of efforts to improve mental health outcomes for youth involved with the juvenile justice system, including the Mental Health/ Juvenile Justice Action Network[67] and the Comprehensive Systems Change Initiative (CSCI).[68] As part of Pennsylvania's Mental Health / Juvenile Justice Targeted Area of Improvement, Pennsylvania's Allegheny, Chester, and Erie counties implemented a collaborative model between the juvenile justice and mental health systems to identify and better serve youth with mental health needs across juvenile justice agencies.[69] Pennsylvania supported a mental health coordinator in each county and formed a state-level policy team to drive key policy and funding reforms. The Initiative selected the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument-Second Version (MAYSI-2) for use at probation intake to better identify youth with mental health needs, and it implemented weekly meetings of mental health and juvenile probation staff to coordinate case assessments, supervision, and services at all critical system decision points. The counties also developed a shared case management system for addressing mental health needs identified by the MAYSI-2 and increased the availability of and technical assistance for evidence-based services to address these needs in the community.

Blueprint for Change: A Comprehensive Model for the Identification and Treatment of Youth with Mental Health Needs Who Are in Contact with the Juvenile Justice System

In 2001, the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funded the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (NCMHJJ) to develop a comprehensive model to help the juvenile justice field better respond to youth with mental disorders. NCMHJJ's *Blueprint for Change* provides a practical, detailed framework for juvenile justice and mental health systems to use when developing policies and programs aimed at improving mental health and other outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system.

For more information and for the full report, visit: ncmhjj.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Blueprint.pdf.

Substance use. Approximately 25 to 50 percent of youth in juvenile facilities have substance use disorders,[70] often co-occurring with mental disorders at rates of 60 percent or more.[71] Substance use is one of the primary causes of delinquent behavior. Recent research has demonstrated that the presence of a substance use disorder and the level of youth's substance use are strongly related to reoffending well into young adulthood.[72] Likewise, providing substance use treatment has been shown to have a measurable and long-term impact on youth behavior.[73] Despite this evidence, few youth in the juvenile justice system with substance use disorders receive any treatment, let alone those services that research has demonstrated are effective.[74] As such, greater leadership is needed from policymakers to ensure that juvenile justice agencies invest in effective substance use treatment and to promote collaboration between the juvenile justice and behavioral health systems to deliver and oversee these services both while youth are under system supervision and after supervision ends.

Similar to the processes for identifying youth with mental disorders, juvenile justice systems should use validated screening and assessment tools to identify youth with substance use disorders, and ensure there is sufficient local capacity to meet youth's treatment needs in the community and in secure facilities. The juvenile justice and behavioral health systems should also partner to fund substance use interventions that reflect a number of common elements of effective practice. The interventions should:

- be community-based;
- provide a comprehensive, integrated response to youth's substance use and/or mental disorders, as well as the primary causes of their delinquent behaviors;
- be at least 90 days in length;
- involve families;
- utilize cognitive behavioral approaches and other techniques to motivate youth and families to engage in services and help youth develop the skills needed to make better choices; and
- recognize that relapse is typical and youth require ongoing access to treatment beyond the period of supervision for long-term success.[75]

Juvenile justice systems are increasingly establishing juvenile drug courts to coordinate and oversee youth's substance use treatment; however, research is inconclusive about the effectiveness of such specialized courts for youth.[76] Policymakers should tie any funding for drug courts or other substance use services to demonstrated adherence to the research on what works to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes generally as well as the specific elements of effective substance use treatment listed above.[77] Juvenile justice systems can rely upon SAMSHA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices[78] as a key resource to help identify substance use and co-occurring mental and substance use disorder program models that reflect these elements and are shown to work with youth.

Model Policies for Juvenile Justice and Substance Abuse Treatment

In 2001, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation started the Reclaiming Futures Initiative to improve substance use treatment and outcomes for youth in ten juvenile justice systems across the country. A subsequent report provides a series of policy recommendations at the federal, state, and local levels for strengthening substance use services within the juvenile justice system and promoting positive youth outcomes.

For more information and the full report, visit: reclaimingfutures.org/members/sites/default/files/main_documents/RFreport_ModelPolicies08.pdf.

Child welfare involvement. While specific estimates vary, as many as 65 percent of youth in the juvenile justice system may have past or current involvement with the child welfare system.[79] These "crossover" or "dual status" youth are disproportionately African American and female. They generally remain in the juvenile justice system longer than their peers and receive more restrictive supervision than warranted by their risk level. These youth are also at greater risk for reoffending and having poor long-term outcomes than youth in the juvenile justice system who have not been involved with the child welfare system.[80]

The Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (Center for Juvenile Justice Reform)[81] and Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps (RFK Action Corps)[82] have both developed approaches that state and local governments can use to prevent youth from crossing over between the juvenile justice and child welfare systems and to reduce reoffending and out-of-home placement rates for those youth already involved with both systems. The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform developed a research-based practice model called the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) that describes the specific practices that need to be in place to reduce the number of youth who cross over between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, the number of youth entering and reentering care, and the length of stay in out-of-home care. The RFK Action Corps developed a four-phase framework to support state and local jurisdictions seeking to improve outcomes for dual status youth and their families.

Given that juvenile justice and child welfare systems can have competing goals and values, while exhibiting clear differences, both approaches emphasize the importance of establishing a cohesive set of cross-systems best practices to improve youth and family outcomes.[83] These best practices include:

- information/data sharing to ensure youth's involvement in each system is easily identifiable by the other systems;
- court hearing and detention/disposition decision coordination, including policies that support a "one family, one judge" practice model;
- joint case assessment and planning processes that result in a unified service plan addressing the primary causes of youth's delinquent behaviors while also promoting youth safety, well-being, and better family functioning;
- coordinated service delivery and case management to minimize the use of resources and the potential for systems working at cross-purposes; and
- engagement of families in all major cross-systems decisions, plans, and services.

Currently, over 70 jurisdictions are implementing the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform's Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM).[84] While an empirical evaluation is pending, initial data from the first 13 sites implementing CYPM suggest that jurisdictions that employ CYPM can achieve better child welfare, behavioral health, and educational outcomes, as well as lower confinement and reoffending rates for crossover youth.[85]

In 2013, RFK Action Corps completed a four-site demonstration project in Hampden County, Massachusetts; Newton County, Georgia; Outagamie County, Wisconsin; and Santa Clara County, California. Participating sites reported the development of more meaningful and effective relationships with system partners, greater sensitivity to the value and perspective of families in the process of decision making about their child, and increased comfort in appropriately sharing and using necessary information.[86]

Addressing the Needs of Youth in the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform and RFK Action Corps have both published key resources detailing how to employ a coordinated approach to more effectively meet the needs of youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

- In 2012, with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Initiative and Georgetown University, the two organizations jointly published *Addressing the Needs of Multi-System Youth: Strengthening the Connection between Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice,* available at cjjr.georgetown.edu/pdfs/msy/AddressingtheNeedsofMultiSystemYouth.pdf.
- In 2013, the RFK Children's Action Corps published the *Guidebook for Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare System Coordination and Integration: A Framework for Improved Outcomes, 3rd Edition* and the accompanying publication *Dual Status Youth—Technical Assistance Workbook,* available at rfknrcjj.org/resources/.

Education. Youth in the juvenile justice system are significantly more likely than their non-delinquent peers to be suspended or expelled, have academic skills well below their grade level, possess a learning or developmental disability, and drop out of school.[87] Enrollment in school and academic achievement is associated with lower rates of reoffending and better outcomes into adulthood, and degree attainment is strongly associated with future earning potential.[88] Thus, policymakers have significant incentive to promote partnerships between the juvenile justice and education system as a way to facilitate long-term gains in public safety and the economic well-being of youth as they transition to adulthood.

Three points of intersection between the juvenile justice and education systems merit particular attention from policymakers: keeping youth in school, correctional education, and school reenrollment for youth in confinement.

- *Keeping youth in school.* Given the long-term relationship between academic success and youth outcomes,[89] policymakers should encourage juvenile justice agencies to partner with education systems to keep youth in school, address their barriers to learning, and promote continued academic progress. One key area for cross-systems collaboration is reforming school zero tolerance policies, which have resulted in a rise of suspensions, expulsions, and arrests of students for school-based offenses (with particularly disparate impacts for youth of color),[90] often for relatively minor infractions.[91]

  To reduce the number of youth who are removed from school and referred to the juvenile justice system, policymakers should require school systems to develop a graduated response policy to youth misbehavior, including the use of more developmentally appropriate alternatives to suspensions and expulsions. At the local level, state and local governments should form cross-systems collaboratives that engage the juvenile justice and education systems and other key partners to reduce school-based referrals to the juvenile justice system and more generally promote school enrollment and achievement.[92] Judicial leaders have been particularly effective in facilitating these efforts.

Clayton County, Georgia: Reducing School-Based Referrals to Juvenile Court

In Clayton County, Georgia, a juvenile court judge spearheaded the development of a cooperative agreement between law enforcement, schools, and community-based organizations to reduce the negative impact of arrest policies in schools. This agreement included the provision that schools could not refer youth to the juvenile justice system for a misdemeanor until the youth's third offense and a series of graduated responses were employed.[93] School referrals to the juvenile court dropped almost 75 percent as a result of these efforts,[94] which have now been replicated in other jurisdictions across the country, including Jefferson County, Alabama; Connecticut; Denver, Colorado; and Broward County, Florida.

  Policymakers can also foster relationships between education and juvenile probation departments to keep youth in school and on track. Establishing interagency protocols to share information on youth's school and juvenile justice status and designating cross-systems liaisons to implement these protocols can help both systems work together to identify and address problem behaviors before youth are rearrested and help promote their school attendance and achievement.[95]

Finally, it is important to note that youth in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems face significant challenges with education due to their frequent relocation to other school districts and shifts between community and institutional settings.[96] Given that many youth are involved in both systems, it's imperative that education, juvenile justice, and child welfare agencies work together to maintain these youth in appropriate school settings, assist with the transfer of records and other key information, and support their academic progress.

Connecticut: Keeping High-Risk Youth in School and Supporting Their Educational Success

The Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) is a collaboration between school personnel, law enforcement, and service providers to keep high-risk youth in school. SBDI uses a graduated response system to youth misbehaviors, with arrest considered a last resort.[97] Instead, the program deploys a mobile behavioral health treatment team called "Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services" (EMPS) to provide crisis stabilization in schools and follow-up case management services. SBDI also provides teachers and school administrators with a high level of training and technical assistance, both in adolescent mental health and behavior and in understanding and accessing local resources. On average, schools participating in SBDI to date have seen a 64-percent increase in school referrals to EMPS and a 29-percent reduction in court referrals. A 2011 evaluation conducted by Yale University found that youth who first received EMPS had fewer subsequent referrals to courts compared to those initially referred to court.[98]

- *Correctional education.* A second critical area for close collaboration between the juvenile justice and education system is the provision of appropriate and high-quality education to youth in confinement.[99] More than 60,000 students receive education services in confinement each year,[100] but many juvenile justice systems struggle to appropriately meet these youth's educational needs. A cross section of system stakeholders[101] and advocates,[102] as well as the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education,[103] agree on the importance of improving juvenile correctional education and advancing a number of key policies and practices to advance this goal:
  - *Employ qualified educators to teach in juvenile facilities.* Juvenile justice agencies should partner with teacher training programs to develop specialized certification programs, recruit qualified candidates, and invest in supporting the professional development of facility teachers. Given the difficulty of teaching youth in a correctional setting, agencies will need to compensate teachers well in order to attract the most qualified candidates.
  - *Provide learning environments that promote high standards and meet the specific educational needs of students in facilities.* Youth in facilities should have access to the same safe learning space, curricula, and technology-based learning tools, and be held to the same state standards, as youth in high-quality community-based schools. Given the particular educational challenges faced by youth under their supervision, juvenile justice systems are also advised to support sufficient services for youth with educational and other disabilities, credit recovery and alternative credentialing programs, and vocational certification programs aligned with industry standards and local workforce needs.

- *Require independent accreditation of correctional educational programs.* Finally, policymakers should require agencies to obtain accreditation for their correctional educational programs. Initially, agencies can participate in assessment and accreditation processes based on nationally recognized standards from the American Correctional Association[104] or Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators.[105] Since these standards apply only in part to correctional education, juvenile justice systems should also strive for accreditation through one of the six nationally recognized regional education accrediting commissions.[106]

Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia: Employing Innovative Models for Improving Juvenile Correctional Education

Pennsylvania created the Academic and Career/Technical Training Alliance (PACTT) to ensure that youth in correctional facilities receive rigorous, relevant, and high-quality education and vocational training. PACTT staff serve as expert liaisons between all other agencies involved in the education and reenrollment process; provide technical assistance to facilities; and recommend policy reforms.[107]

In 1997, the District of Columbia contracted with the Maya Angelou Academy, a D.C.-based nonprofit, to run the school located inside its juvenile justice facility; the school is now considered one of the strongest juvenile correctional education programs in the country.[108] The Academy's approach reflects a number of key practices: 1) hiring talented teachers with high energy and expectations; 2) building a school culture of trust; 3) developing a modular, theme-based curriculum that is delivered through differentiated, individualized instruction; 4) weaving special education services into all parts of the school; and 5) spending time and effort on preparing students to transition into self-sustaining learners.

- *School reenrollment after confinement.* Many juvenile justice systems struggle with successfully transitioning youth from facility to community schools. As many as two-thirds of youth fail to reenroll in school after returning from confinement,[109] and those youth who are not attached to school upon release are more likely to drop out and reoffend.[110] Reasons for reenrollment challenges often involve delays in the transfer of education records; perceived or actual confidentiality barriers to data and record sharing; and credit transfer policies that are not always compatible across the school district and juvenile justice system. Community schools may also be reluctant to welcome youth back to campus based on their previous behaviors.[111]

  Policymakers can help states and counties overcome these barriers by funding transition coordinators to work across the juvenile justice and education systems to facilitate youth's timely reenrollment in school.[112] Coordinators can identify which community schools best promote educational success for each youth; facilitate the transfer of credits and school records; and navigate the interests and logistics involved in the transition process across both systems. They can also serve as an important point of contact for youth and families during the reenrollment process.

A number of states and locales have instituted innovative strategies for facilitating school reenrollment:

- In Kentucky, each student's grades and credits are entered into an online program called "Infinite Campus." When a student transfers to any other school in the state, the records can be immediately accessed by the receiving school.[113]
- In Maine, local superintendents bring together a "reintegration team" 10 days prior to a youth's release from a state juvenile facility. The team consists of the school principal or his or her designee, the parents, the student's teachers, and a guidance counselor. The team's role is to establish a plan for the student's reenrollment and an appropriate educational path to graduation.[114]
- The Cook County, Illinois, juvenile probation department created a specialized Educational Advocacy unit to help youth and families navigate the school system and get appropriate services. The unit includes designated reentry officers who help youth in detention who haven't previously been in school to enroll in an appropriate educational setting upon release.

Addressing the Educational Needs of Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

The relationship between the juvenile justice and education systems has garnered considerable attention with federal agencies, nonprofits, and a wide range of other stakeholders from both systems calling for reforms and issuing national guidance and resources to support state and local improvement efforts:

- In summer 2011, Education Secretary Duncan and Attorney General Holder announced the launch of a collaborative project—the Supportive School Discipline Initiative—between the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice to support the use of school discipline practices that foster safe, supportive, and productive learning environments while keeping students in school.[115]
- In January 2014, the U.S. Department of Education issued a resource package to help states and school districts craft local solutions to enhance school safety and improve school discipline. Included in this package is "Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline," which draws from emerging research and best practices to describe three key principles and related action steps that can help guide state- and locally controlled efforts to improve school climate and school discipline.[116]
- In June 2014, Education Secretary Duncan and Attorney General Holder sent a letter to all Chief State School Officers and State Attorneys General emphasizing the importance of juvenile justice systems improving educational outcomes for youth and detailing a set of guiding principles and resources to help states accomplish this goal.[117]
- In June 2014, the Council of State Governments Justice Center published *The School Discipline Consensus Report,* a comprehensive set of consensus-based and field-driven recommendations to improve conditions for learning for all students and educators, better support students with behavioral needs, improve police-schools partnerships, and keep students out of the juvenile justice system for minor offenses.[118]

PRINCIPLE 3
KEY TAKEAWAY QUESTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- ✔ Does the juvenile justice system partner with the behavioral health system to identify and effectively address the treatment needs of youth with mental, substance use, and co-occurring disorders?
- ✔ Does the juvenile justice system partner with the child welfare system to share information on youth's involvement in each system and to coordinate interventions for youth and families?
- ✔ Does the juvenile justice system partner with the education system to keep youth in school, promote their academic progress in confinement and the community, and support successful school transitions?
- ✔ Are juvenile justice and other service-system leaders required to participate in a committee or taskforce that meets regularly to promote policies, programs and practices that reduce recidivism and improve other outcomes for youth?
- ✔ Do the juvenile justice, behavioral health, child welfare, education, and other service systems share data?
- ✔ Do the juvenile justice, behavioral health, child welfare, education, and other service systems use a coordinated approach across systems to address youth's needs?

PRINCIPLE 4: TAILOR SYSTEM POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND SUPERVISION TO REFLECT THE DISTINCT DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS.

Long-standing research on the relationship between age and crime shows that most youth "age out" of delinquent behavior without formal system intervention. Even the majority of youth who commit serious offenses stop most, if not all, of their criminal activity by the time they reach young adulthood.[119] Yet studies also show that many of these youth struggle to achieve long-term academic and employment success.[120]

The use of validated assessments, effective services, and a coordinated approach across systems can help juvenile justice systems to reduce recidivism and promote better outcomes for youth. However, juvenile justice systems must also undergo a fundamental shift to tailor system interventions to reflect the unique challenges that all young people face during their adolescence in order to help youth transition successfully to a crime-free and productive adulthood.

Young people are not mini-adults. Their families, peers, schools, and communities have a significant influence on their beliefs and actions. They engage in risky behaviors, fail to account for the long-term consequences of their decisions, and are relatively insensitive to degrees of punishment. They also struggle to regulate their impulses and emotions. A growing body of research confirms that these differences are developmental—the result of biological and neurological conditions unique to adolescence—and that ignoring these distinct aspects of adolescent development can undermine the potential positive impact of system interventions and even do more harm than good.[121]

Thus, a developmentally appropriate approach to working with youth should undergird all policies, programs, and supervision in the juvenile justice system. There is no single program model or tool for establishing a developmentally appropriate approach. While further rigorous research is still needed, this approach appears to be a key missing ingredient for enhancing the positive impact of a wide range of system policies and practices. Indeed, after an extensive review of decades of research, the National Academy of Sciences recently concluded that this approach offers significant promise for producing improved outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system.[122]

To help policymakers ensure that juvenile justice systems move beyond just a rhetorical recognition of the importance of adolescent development, what follows are key developmentally appropriate policies and practices that juvenile justice systems can employ to lower recidivism and improve other youth outcomes.

A Developmentally Appropriate Approach to State and Federal Juvenile Justice Policy

A number of states have implemented new policies and practices—or reversed old ones—in recognition of the need to adopt a more developmentally appropriate approach to achieve better youth outcomes:

- States are increasingly reconsidering[123] the age at which youth are tried as adults[124] and the age at which juvenile justice systems must terminate services.
- States are also carefully reviewing the use of waivers to adult court,[125] juvenile confinement, and other policies and practices largely demonstrated as ineffective for youth.[126]
- The United States Supreme Court has recognized the stages of adolescent development by barring the mandatory sentencing of life without parole and the death penalty for young people under the age of 18.[127]

RECOMMENDATION A: Engage families and other supportive adults in major system decisions and processes.

Research shows that youth who have supportive caregivers also have better outcomes than youth with less supportive caregivers. In contrast, youth whose caregivers fail to provide consistent structure and support are at far greater risk of engaging in delinquent behavior.[128] Traditionally, many juvenile justice systems have either not considered the role that families can play in system interventions or have viewed families more as part of the problem than part of the solution.[129] Policymakers can ensure that families and other supportive adults are involved in system decisions and services by:

- *Supporting the identification of appropriate caregivers.* Juvenile justice systems should immediately identify and engage with youth's family, primary caregivers, and/or other supportive adults. As part of this process, juvenile justice systems should not assume youth's biological parents are the only or most appropriate members of their adult support team, and reach out to the child welfare system to gather further information, if warranted.
- *Requiring family involvement in system decisions.* Juvenile justice systems that involve families in a meaningful and respectful way in court proceedings and case planning processes are more likely to identify youth's priority needs and how best to address them, obtain family buy-in and support, and encourage families to take a more active role in their child's success.[130]

- *Promoting family engagement in system interventions.* Many of the most effective programs for justice-involved youth give a central role to parenting-skill development and behavior change.[131] As such, policymakers are advised to fund family-based services and require the involvement of families in supervision and services.

  Family engagement is critical not only for youth in the community but also for youth in confinement. Research shows that youth who receive more family contact while in residential placement have better behavior and academic performance.[132] Juvenile justice systems can adopt a number of policies and practices to encourage family involvement for youth in facilities, including: exploring ways to keep confined youth closer to home;[133] promoting family-friendly visiting hours and policies; providing transportation to families who otherwise couldn't visit; and using technology such as videoconferencing to connect youth who are far from home with supportive adults. Families should also be engaged early and often for reentry planning to identify and address what services and supports both youth and their families need to ensure a successful reintegration.

> *"Given all that is known regarding the significance of parenting and of the parent-child relationship, expecting that a youth might experience significant and lasting change with only superficial family involvement seems illogical. The juvenile justice system, however, appears to have a long way to go toward integrating parents and families into interventions and court processes."*
>
> — Richard J. Bonnie, et al., eds., *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach*

- *Supporting mentoring programs that positively engage families as well as youth.* Mentoring programs have demonstrated positive impacts on youth behavior and on academic and social outcomes.[134] For best results, programs must rigorously screen and train mentors and appropriately match mentors to mentees; and the mentoring relationship should last at least 12 months, encompass regular meetings, and connect youth with support services.[135]

RECOMMENDATION B: Employ a developmentally appropriate approach to system supervision by focusing resources on promoting positive behavior change and using a graduated response to violations.

Since adolescents are risk takers, impulsive, and do not react well to punishment, it should come as no surprise that research shows that traditional supervision alone has a small, if any, impact on recidivism and other youth outcomes once it's over. This impact is particularly muted when contact is brief, authoritarian, and concentrated on monitoring and enforcing the conditions of probation instead of on engaging youth and promoting positive youth behaviors.[136] In other words, supervision is most effective when less focused on catching youth doing something wrong and more focused on helping them do right.

Policymakers can ensure that the resources used for probation and parole—the most frequently employed interventions by juvenile justice systems—produce a long-term positive impact on youth behaviors by promoting three key developmentally appropriate policies and practices:

1. Establish appropriate conditions of community supervision
2. Reposition the role of supervision officers
3. Institute graduated responses to youth behavior

1. Establish appropriate conditions of community supervision. Juvenile justice systems can inadvertently set youth up for failure by establishing a laundry list of conditions that youth under system supervision might not understand or cannot realistically achieve. As a consequence, some community supervision systems unintentionally push youth deeper into the juvenile justice system: approximately 15 percent of all youth in confinement are there as a result of a technical violation of their parole or probation.[137]

To start to address this challenge, juvenile justice agencies can work together to establish conditions of supervision that are understandable to young people and realistically achievable. Washington State, for example, developed a pilot project to provide courts with ways to present conditions of probation to youth in a more developmentally appropriate manner. The project resulted in a substantial increase in youth's understanding of such conditions.[138] Youth who understand what is expected of them are more likely to comply with these mandates.

2. Reposition the role of supervision officers. Juvenile justice systems should enable officers to spend less time monitoring the conditions of supervision and more time helping to address the primary causes of youth's delinquent behaviors. Supervision officers are often uniquely positioned to take on this role and make a measurable difference in recidivism and other youth outcomes.

In addition to establishing more reasonable supervision conditions that minimize the need for constant oversight and enforcement, policymakers and administrators can promote other developmentally appropriate strategies, including:

- Enabling smaller supervision caseloads that allow for more frequent and meaningful contacts between supervisory officers and youth.
- Using youth's assessed risk level to determine frequency of contact with officers. Officers should also have the authority to increase or decrease frequency of contact when reassessments demonstrate changes in youth's risk levels or as an incentive for good behavior and complying with supervision conditions.
- Requiring regular contact with family members and other important members of youth's support networks.
- Allowing supervision sessions to be held in youth's homes or other environments in which they feel secure, and are more likely to engage and respond to interventions.
- Supporting training for officers in evidence-based techniques, such as cognitive behavioral approaches, for engaging youth and facilitating changes in their attitudes and behaviors.

Comprehensive Models for Positioning Supervision Officers as Agents of Behavior Change

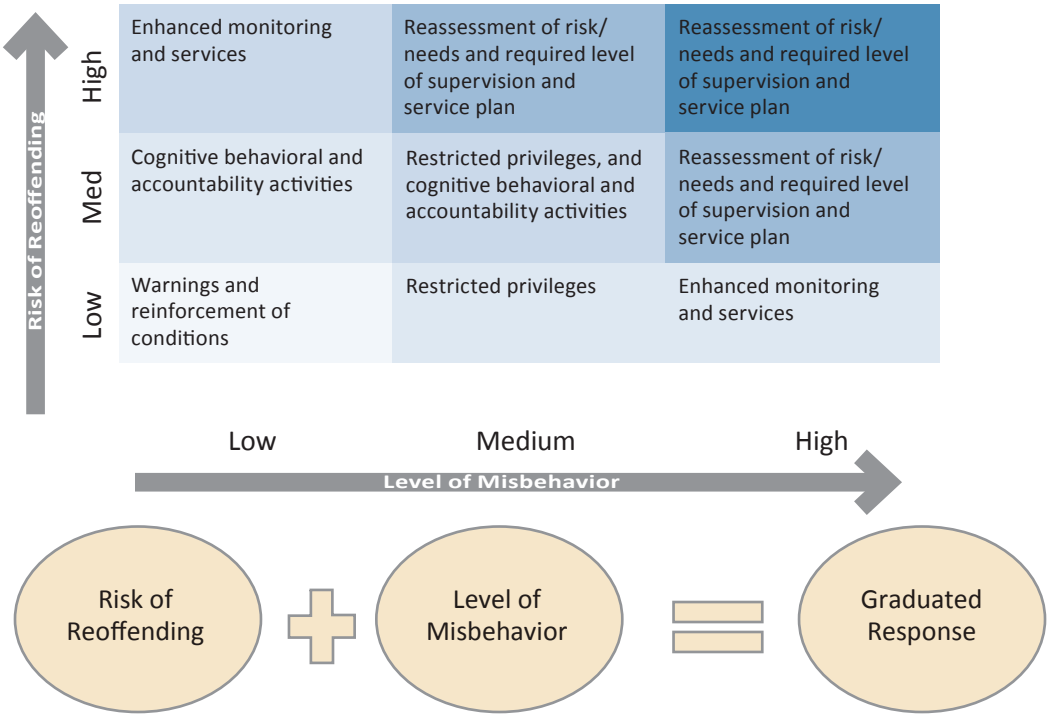
California, Indiana, Ohio, and Oregon, and are partnering with the University of Cincinnati to implement a comprehensive supervision framework that combines many of the strategies mentioned above.[139] The Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) model is designed to reposition probation and parole officers to promote positive youth behaviors by teaching them how to build rapport with youth and apply the principles of Risk, Need, and Responsivity to supervision practices. Probation officers are trained and receive ongoing coaching and support to develop case plans targeted at youth's dynamic risk factors and to use cognitive-behavioral approaches in their interactions with youth to address these needs. While a long-term outcome evaluation is still pending, a 2012 study showed that the EPICS training resulted in a substantial increase in probation and parole officers using skills and techniques associated with lower recidivism and improvements in other key youth outcomes.[140]

The Los Angeles County Probation Department offers another example of how juvenile justice systems can revamp the role of probation officers. The department trained probation officers to serve as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) therapists, and trained regular supervising officers in the FFT approach through a model known as Functional Family Probation (FFP). FFP probation officers maintain traditional probation functions, but have reduced caseloads and work in a family's home using FFT techniques to promote youth and family behavior change. Through this initiative, as well as other reforms, in the first year of implementation, the department reduced the number of youth in confinement by 12 percent and saved an estimated $11 million that would have been spent on facility construction and operation.[141]

3. Institute graduated responses to youth behavior. Given that adolescents are particularly responsive to external rewards and are relatively insensitive to degrees of punishment, juvenile justice systems should mostly use incentives and rewards, rather than threats or punitive consequences, to promote youth compliance with the conditions of supervision.[142]

At the same time, a fundamental part of adolescence is making mistakes and learning from them. When youth fail to adhere to court or supervision mandates, policymakers should encourage juvenile justice systems to use a graduated response model.[143] A graduated response model enables juvenile justice systems to employ a continuum of interventions to address youth misbehavior, as warranted by youth's assessed risk level and the nature of their non-compliance, rather than jumping immediately to more extreme and costly responses such as a formal violation of probation and return to court or a period of confinement.[144] This approach ensures that youth are held accountable for their actions in a developmentally appropriate manner and that supervision resources are used cost effectively. Figure 6 provides an example of a graduated response model.

Figure 6. Graduated Supervision Responses to Youth Misbehavior



Source: Eileen Kinney and Becky Ney, "Sanctions and Incentives: A Colorado Probation Perspective" (presentation, Conference on Administrative Sanctions and Incentives in Probation Supervision, New Orleans, LA, December 12, 2012), www.appa-net.org/eWeb/Resources/SPSP/Key-Performance-Measures.pdf.

A graduated response model can also help system agencies to hold themselves accountable for whether a youth's risk levels were initially assessed appropriately and their priority needs identified and addressed effectively, and make ongoing adjustments to the youth's supervision and services, as necessary. For example, if the youth is continuously committing relatively minor probation violations, the youth may require a different type or increased level of supervision or a change in services to improve their behavior.

RECOMMENDATION C: Hold youth accountable for their actions in ways that address the harm caused to victims and communities and that support positive behavior change.

It is critical that youth are held accountable for their actions. However, some juvenile justice systems mistakenly conflate accountability with punishment and consign youth to restrictive supervision levels and enact harsh conditions of supervision as a way to "teach youth a lesson." Besides the significant costs and poor youth outcomes associated with this punitive approach, such efforts do little to help repair the harm caused to victims and communities.

Growing evidence suggests that juvenile justice systems that employ restorative justice accountability practices can improve youth behavior, improve youth's and victims' experience with the justice system, and reduce victims' post-traumatic stress symptoms and related costs.[145] A restorative justice model emphasizes the need for youth to understand and take responsibility for their wrongdoing and acknowledge and repair the harm caused to individuals and the community. Restorative justice can encompass a range of activities, including community service, monetary or other forms of restitution, family conferences, and victim conferences and mediation. These activities are more likely to improve outcomes for victims and communities when focused on the impact of violent crime and individual victims who can meet directly with youth.[146]

Pennsylvania: Promoting Balanced and Restorative Justice

In Pennsylvania, Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) was established by statute in 1995 as the foundation of the juvenile justice system. This approach has resulted in the statewide use of specific accountability practices for youth such as restitution, community service, and victim mediation conferences. While Pennsylvania continues to refine the implementation of BARJ principles, the philosophy and practices have become part of the fabric of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. BARJ is the overriding philosophy behind Pennsylvania's broader reform efforts to improve youth, victim, and community safety outcomes, and the state's commitment to annually reporting these outcomes to the public.[147]

RECOMMENDATION D: Promote youth's respect for and compliance with the law by engaging them in system decisions and processes and by addressing system bias and the disparate treatment of youth of color and other groups that are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system.

Research shows that youth's perceptions of procedural justice—i.e., how fairly they believe they are treated—affect their attitudes about the legitimacy of legal authority, and thus, their compliance with legal processes, supervision, and services.[148] Youth are more apt to feel they have been treated fairly when they feel respected, have an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns, and believe adults act out of a desire to help rather than control or punish them.[149]

Policymakers and judicial leaders can advance procedural justice by encouraging processes that give youth meaningful opportunities to help shape the decisions, service environments, and interventions that affect them. Increasing evidence suggests that the positive perceptions engendered by such efforts are associated with lower recidivism rates.[150] The U.S. Department of Justice recently formally recognized the importance of this issue by instituting plans to establish the National Center for Building Community Trust & Justice to explore, assess, and disseminate information about strategies intended to enhance procedural justice, reduce implicit bias, and support racial reconciliation in communities of color.[151]

Of critical importance to improving youth's perceptions of procedural justice is improving system equity. Research has consistently documented that youth of color are disproportionately represented at all phases of the juvenile justice system, with increasing levels of disproportionality as youth receive more serious sanctions such as confinement, and are treated more harshly by the system for the same behaviors as their white peers.[152] Moreover, despite attention to this lack of system equity, most juvenile justice systems haven't significantly mitigated its prevalence or effects.[153]

Policymakers must take on a greater leadership role to improve the equity of the juvenile justice system. Beyond the moral and legal imperatives of addressing this issue, which cannot justly be covered here, a more equitable system is also one that is more likely to reduce recidivism, improve other youth outcomes, and use system resources efficiently, including in the following ways:

- Youth of color consistently have lower opinions of the fairness of the juvenile justice system than white youth.[154] Courts and juvenile justice systems need to address both the perception and reality of system inequity to encourage youth of color and other groups disproportionately represented in this system to fully engage with the legal processes and system interventions designed to help them.
- Juvenile justice systems can only maximize the potential benefits of data-driven decision-making tools such as validated assessments if the biases of individuals who administer assessments and those who make supervisions and service decisions based on the results don't override this objective criteria. Policies and practices that push youth of color further into the juvenile justice system and require more intensive interventions than warranted by youth's risk levels are doing more harm than good to these youth and wasting taxpayer dollars.
- At the same time, youth of color are often not involved with other systems (e.g., the behavioral health system) critical for addressing their priority needs. Juvenile justice systems that provide the tools and resources required to identify youth's needs and connect them with evidence-based interventions across the various service systems in an objective manner are best positioned to ensure that these reforms benefit all youth equally.

As a first step, policymakers must require the collection of detailed data on the proportionality and treatment of youth of color at key juvenile justice decision points at the state and local levels. This information is critical to quantifying the extent of the problem and where bias is occurring and for determining how best to prioritize needed policy and practice improvements. Subsequently, policymakers should encourage changes that promote objective decision-making, such as adopting and reliably using validated assessments; implementing a disposition or graduated response matrix to standardize responses to youth behaviors;[155] improving the quality of and access to defense attorneys;[156] and ongoing training for courtroom, supervision, and program staff on recognizing and overcoming their explicit and implicit biases and becoming more culturally competent.[157] Finally, continued oversight is needed from policymakers to track progress and hold juvenile justice systems accountable for quantifiable improvements, including the collection of regular feedback from youth, families, and staff on system equity, procedural justice, and what further changes are needed.

Multnomah County, Oregon: Promoting a More Equitable Juvenile Justice System

Through its Communities of Color Initiative, Multnomah County, Oregon, undertook a series of reforms to improve system equity, including the development of a culturally sensitive risk assessment instrument to guide detention admissions decisions.[158] The county also implemented a recruiting and hiring initiative to increase the cultural diversity of juvenile justice staff and provided training and education for staff and the court on disproportionality and disparate treatment. As a part of the initiative, community-based organizations with strong ties to the African American and Latino communities also worked closely with probation staff to locate culturally competent case management, treatment, and mentoring services for youth of color at risk of confinement.

PRINCIPLE 4
KEY TAKEAWAY QUESTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- ✔ Are youth and families meaningfully engaged in key system decisions and interventions?
- ✔ Are conditions of supervision understandable to youth and families and realistically achievable?
- ✔ Are supervision agencies focused primarily on engaging youth and helping them to improve their behavior rather than monitoring and compliance?
- ✔ Do supervision agencies respond in developmentally appropriate and graduated ways to youth's violations of supervision conditions?
- ✔ Are youth held accountable for their actions in ways that help repair the harm caused to victims and communities?
- ✔ Are all systems engaged in significant efforts to improve the equity of system decisions, processes, and interventions?

Part Two: Key Implementation Strategies, Structures, and Supports

THE FIRST SECTION OF THE WHITE PAPER summarizes the core principles that, when taken together, can help juvenile justice systems reduce recidivism, and improve other outcomes for youth under their supervision. The second section offers greater detail on how to implement the recommended policies and practices associated with these core principles.

Research and field experience has consistently demonstrated that how well interventions are implemented is as important to producing good outcomes as the substance of a particular policy, practice, or program.[159] Yet, the importance of implementation is frequently an afterthought, only rising to the attention of policymakers and system leaders when evaluations demonstrate poor results due to ongoing implementation difficulties. Legislators may not understand how important their role is in supporting the high-quality implementation of system policies and practices.

At the systems level, significant drivers of poor implementation include: a dearth of clearly articulated and enforced quality-control standards; minimal funding for system readiness and implementation activities; insufficient capacity for and attention to data collection and analysis and accountability; and sustainability challenges. At the local level, key reasons for not achieving desired results can include the desire to adapt evidence-based programs in ways that don't adhere to the research; a dearth of leadership and the absence of a performance-based organizational culture; limited service provider capacity and expertise; and insufficient workforce development/training and staff turnover.[160]

When attention is given to implementation, juvenile justice systems have often relied on strategies such as information dissemination, education, one-time training, policy and executive agency mandates, and funding incentives. However, these individual efforts alone are insufficient to ensure high-quality implementation.[161]

This section of the paper details how juvenile justice systems should establish a system of ongoing and integrated implementation structures and supports to maximize the potential of the policies and practices outlined in Part One of this white paper for reducing recidivism and improving other youth outcomes. Highlighted are key implementation challenges faced by juvenile justice systems; the recommended research-based and field-tested strategies and tools for guiding implementation processes; and the role that state and local policymakers can play in building system capacity and guiding reforms that promote quality implementation. Just as it is the integration of the four principles' policies and practices that offers the most significant potential for juvenile justice systems to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes, it is the coordinated efforts of policymakers, administrators, and practitioners to ensure that these efforts are implemented with high quality that will produce the most significant and sustainable results.

PRINCIPLE 1: BASE SUPERVISION, SERVICE, AND RESOURCE-ALLOCATION DECISIONS ON THE RESULTS OF VALIDATED RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS.

When used appropriately, the results of risk and needs assessments serve as a guiding foundation for helping juvenile justice systems to match youth with the level and type of supervision and services most likely to reduce their future offending. There is no way to accurately predict youth behavior all the time, and even the best assessments face significant limitations, however, research shows that validated assessments are significantly more consistent and reliable at identifying the likelihood youth will reoffend than professional judgment alone.[162]

To take full advantage of the predictive capability of risk assessments for guiding supervision and service decisions, it is not enough simply to select and start using one. Instead, research consistently shows that careful attention to the many decisions, policies, and practices that shape how assessments are selected and implemented determines whether they are conducted reliably and consistently; whether results are used appropriately; and, ultimately, whether juvenile justice systems are able to maximize the potential of these tools to reduce recidivism, improve other youth outcomes, and allocate system resources more efficiently.[163]

Juvenile justice agency leaders and managers are advised to promote a number of key policies, structures, and supports related to the use of assessments, including:

1. Select a risk assessment instrument validated for the population served
2. Determine when to use risk assessments, what type, and how often
3. Engage youth and their families to assess risk, need, and responsivity
4. Select and appropriately use validated behavioral health screening and assessment tools
5. Establish an assessment quality-improvement system

1. Select a risk assessment instrument validated for the population served. The most important factor in selecting a risk assessment tool is choosing an instrument that is validated on the population for which it is intended. A risk assessment is considered validated if it has demonstrated through multiple research studies demonstrate a high probability of predicting whether a youth will reoffend. Researchers have found that the same assessment tool may not be valid for all youth across juvenile justice systems or even within a single system.

Ideally, juvenile justice systems should conduct their own validation studies to ensure that the chosen assessment tool is sufficiently predictive of reoffending for their target population. However, local validation is not always feasible given necessary research capacity, and not always required depending upon the structure of the instrument (e.g., this is only necessary for score-based tools that apply strict cut-offs for what score qualifies as low, moderate, or high risk).[164] Alternatively, a small number of assessment tools have proven sufficiently predictive of youth's reoffending in more than one locale. If juvenile justice systems decide to select an externally developed and validated instrument, it is critical that it is used according to the guidelines developed by the assessment creators and only for the population on which the tool was validated. If juvenile justice systems decide to validate an assessment on their own population, they should also develop a protocol to revalidate the assessment at regular intervals and/or when this population changes to ensure the continuing accurate prediction of risk of reoffending.

Florida: Validating its Risk Assessment Tool

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) worked with researchers at Florida State University to validate the risk assessment instrument they use with youth in their custody, which is the Residential Positive Achievement Change Tool (R-PACT).[165] For the validation study, they reviewed a sample of 4,735 youth who completed their residential placements in FY2010–11. Researchers determined that the R-PACT accurately predicts which youth will reoffend and that these predictions are accurate across all demographic subgroups such as gender and race/ethnicity. Through their analyses, they were also able to determine which domains assessed with the R-PACT were best able to predict future reoffending (e.g., prior offending, social skills, and relationships with peers) and which were less predictive (e.g., mental health). The researchers recommended that DJJ use the R-PACT to guide reentry decisions, focusing on the domains most predictive of reoffending and those that could be impacted by matched system interventions.

2. Determine when to use risk assessments, what type, and how often. Juvenile justice systems can choose to administer risk assessments at a number of key decision points to guide supervision and service decisions. An important point of clarity for informing these decisions is the difference between an assessment and a screening tool. A risk assessment is a comprehensive examination and evaluation of youth's risk of reoffending, and it helps guide decisions on supervision and services. These assessments are typically only validated for youth post-disposition, are time-intensive, and require extensive and ongoing training and quality-assurance protocols to ensure they are administered and used appropriately.[166]

A screening tool is usually much shorter than a risk assessment tool and is focused primarily on static risk factors. Therefore, screening tools are best used when risk of reoffending is the only issue of interest. Nonclinical staff can learn to administer screening tools with little or no formal training. While no method can predict a youth's behavior 100 percent of the time, screening instruments are the best tools available for system agencies to rely on when making diversion and detention decisions, where time and information about the youth is limited. And compared to full risk assessments, juvenile justice systems are better able to develop screening tools on their own to reflect local system functioning and the characteristics of their population.[167]

The National Youth Screening and Assessment Project (NYSAP) and Models for Change Initiative provide useful guidelines that can help juvenile justice systems determine the best use of screening or assessment tools at each decision point, as described in Table 1:[168]

TABLE 1. GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF SCREENING VS. ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Decision Point	Tool Type	Guidelines
Intake	Screening tool	Agencies are advised to use screening tools with all youth at intake to quickly identify youth who may require additional assessment for risk of reoffending or behavioral health needs.
Diversion	Screening tool	Agencies can choose to use a risk screening instrument, which is the most objective tool available, to inform diversion decisions. If a juvenile justice system decides to use a screening tool at this point, policies must be established to protect youth from self-incrimination.[169]
Pre-adjudication	Screening tool	Two factors merit consideration when making pre-adjudication detention decisions: failure to appear and public safety. Many systems have created their own brief screening tools to measure risk of reoffending at pre-adjudication phase.[170] A different tool is needed to assess the likelihood of failure to appear in court.
Adjudication	N/A	Neither a brief nor full risk assessment tool should be used at this point. Adjudication is only about whether youth violated the law—not whether they will in the future.
Post-disposition corrections	Full risk and needs assessment tool	Juvenile justice systems should use comprehensive risk and needs assessments that address static and dynamic risk factors on all youth at the disposition phase to guide supervision and case planning.

Another key factor that juvenile justice systems need to consider when determining which assessments to use and when to employ them is that assessment results are not fixed, due to the rapid developmental changes that occur in adolescence. A youth's classification as being at high risk of reoffending can quickly change, even during the course of a trial or a brief stay in detention, as a result, perhaps, of receiving needed services or changes in family circumstances. Therefore, agency staff should account for the ongoing development of youth at specific ages when administering assessments, and systems should never treat the results of one assessment as a permanent predictor of future offending.[171]

Instead, juvenile justice systems should require reassessments at regular intervals (e.g., every six months) and/or at certain progress points in the youth's case plan, such as upon return to the community, or after certain life milestones. Reassessments can help agencies to track treatment progress, identify new or intensified challenges to reducing youth's risk of reoffending, and adjust supervision levels and the nature

and intensity of services youth receive accordingly. A number of validated risk assessment instruments are approved for this purpose.[172] Juvenile justice systems should institutionalize reassessment practices through policy, balancing the need to selectively use staff time and resources and not "over-assess" youth while ensuring that the use of assessments is as flexible and dynamic as youth's development.[173]

Ohio: Using Assessment Tools to Accurately Identify Risk at Each System Decision Point

Recognizing the importance of having a continuum of assessments validated for each decision point, the Ohio Department of Youth Services worked with the University of Cincinnati to develop the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) tools. The OYAS encompasses five tools tailored to each key decision point: Diversion, Detention, Disposition, Residential Placement, and Reentry. The tools assess for risk factors associated with delinquency and then help to facilitate case planning and service provision. The OYAS tools also allow for and promote reassessments.[174]

3. Engage youth and their families to assess risk, need, and responsivity. Assessment experts and experienced juvenile justice systems stress that, for the most accurate and useful results, staff should not conduct needs assessments as if they were administering a questionnaire. Instead, assessors should engage youth, families, and other members of youth's caregiver network in conversations designed to elicit a full and honest picture of youth's strengths and needs. This approach can help assessors to identify the underlying triggers for individual youth's delinquent behavior. For example, knowing that a youth has a substance use problem is only half the story—understanding that this problem is driven by associations with a negative peer group can help systems tailor services in specific ways that will measurably impact future offending.

Juvenile justice systems are also advised to supplement risk and needs assessment results with the use of additional assessments to identify responsivity factors not captured by most stand-alone tools. For example, research indicates that many youth are likely to have experienced trauma prior to their involvement in the juvenile justice system.[175] Trauma can interrupt or redirect cognitive development and increase the likelihood of psychological impairment that, if unaddressed, will limit youth's responsivity to services, no matter how well matched to their dynamic risk factors.[176] Thus, juvenile justice systems should use assessments for specialized populations such as youth who have committed sex offenses,[177] as well as to assess for less transparent challenges, such as trauma, commonly experienced by youth in the system, when developing case plans to facilitate positive changes in behavior.

4. Select and appropriately use validated behavioral health screening and assessment tools . The first step in identifying youth in the juvenile justice system who have mental and substance use disorders is the implementation of standardized screening tools at key system decision points. As with risk screening, these screenings are a brief process—typically lasting between 20 and 30 minutes—that helps juvenile justice systems to quickly identify those youth who are likely to have a mental or substance use disorder.[178] The most widely used and rigorously validated mental health screening tool for youth in the JJS is the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-2).[179] The Global Appraisal of Individual Needs—Short

Screener (GAIN-SS) has also gained popularity for use with this population.[180] The CRAFFT is a substance use screening tool that is validated for juvenile justice populations.[181] As with mental health screening tools, these instruments can identify youth with immediate needs and who require a comprehensive assessment and can help determine when diversion from the juvenile justice system to the behavioral health system is appropriate.

Dr. Thomas Grisso at the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project, the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, and the Models for Change initiative have identified a number of key guidelines for ensuring that mental health and substance use screening instruments are implemented effectively, including:[182]

- Systems should use only screening instruments specifically developed for adolescents.
- All staff who administer the instrument must undergo training in its appropriate use.
- Mental health and substance use screenings should occur as soon as possible after a youth is formally admitted to the juvenile justice system or any juvenile justice program.
- Given an average shelf life of two to four weeks, screening results should be updated—at a minimum—at each subsequent system decision point after such time has passed.
- Juvenile justice systems should not use screening tools to diagnose a particular disorder or to develop case plans.
- Legal protections are needed to ensure that screening results are never used as part of adjudication or disposition proceedings.[183]

Once youth are screened and identified as having a potential mental or substance use disorder, juvenile justice systems should refer youth to a clinician for a full assessment. This can be completed in house or contracted out to a behavioral health care provider. A number of these assessments are validated for use with adolescents, including the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS),[184] the Comprehensive Adolescent Severity Inventory (CASI), the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Initial (GAIN-I),[185] the Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BASC-2),[186] and the Child Behavioral Checklist (CBCL).[187] These assessments are comprehensive and time-consuming and may include psychological testing, clinical interviews, and a review of psychiatric history. The results of these assessments are not necessarily intended to diagnose a mental or substance use disorder but to identify functional impairment or a potential diagnosis, in which case youth would receive a referral to a psychologist/psychiatrist for a more in-depth assessment and treatment planning.[188]

5. Establish an assessment quality-improvement system. To maximize the potential of assessments to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes, juvenile justice agencies need to develop a culture that emphasizes these tools as the foundation of good juvenile justice practice.[189]

> "Adoption of a risk assessment tool will not lead to any changes in the way youth are processed or handled in an agency or juvenile court if the tool is not implemented properly. The implementation of a risk assessment tool—how it is put in place, operated, and maintained—is at least as important as the tool itself. The implementation process is wide-ranging, in that it includes attention to policy development, staff attitudes, operational instructions, monitoring, and evaluation of outcomes."[190]
>
> — Gina M. Vincent, Laura S. Guy, and Thomas Grisso, *Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation*

The key components of building, operationalizing, and sustaining this culture include:[191]

- *System readiness and staff buy-in.* The use of assessments to guide supervision and service decisions requires a significant philosophical and practical shift in how decisions for youth are made for many juvenile justice stakeholders. As a result, juvenile justice agencies are advised to not implement risk assessments in isolation but instead to adopt these tools as part of a broad vision and mission focused on the principles of Risk, Need, and Responsivity and the use of evidence, based on data, to guide juvenile justice system decisions and practices.

  Juvenile justice leadership plays a critical role in helping staff to understand and invest in this data-driven approach, particularly in the engagement of a high-level person to serve as an assessment coordinator who can champion and oversee implementation efforts. In addition, the formation of assessment committees that encompass a cross-section of juevenile justice agencies and other key stakeholders, as well as partnering with an external assessment expert, can help facilitate key readiness and implementation decisions.

  While it's important that judges, attorneys, and service providers understand the assessment process and results, typically probation and facility staff conduct the assessments. Research suggests that one of the most difficult barriers to successful assessment implementation is getting staff to buy in to the chosen instrument, particularly if they have historically relied solely on personal judgment to make decisions.[192] Additionally, 50 percent of respondents in a national survey of front-line community corrections practitioners, who were mandated to use risk assessment tools, admitted to completing the assessments but not using the results to develop case plans. In some cases, they also reported manipulating the data.[193] Juvenile justice leadership should therefore take care to involve staff in the assessment tool selection and roll out process and frame the use of these instruments as enhancing rather than replacing professional judgment. Juvenile justice systems should also rely on significant supervisor oversight and support to ensure that line staff not just conduct assessments but also use assessment results appropriately.

Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation

In partnership with the MacArthur Models for Change Initiative, the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project at the University of Massachusetts Medical School published a comprehensive report that outlines a step-by-step process on how to properly implement a risk assessment instrument. This report is a culmination of decades of academic research and practical experience from sites that have implemented these assessments effectively.

For a copy of the report, visit modelsforchange.net/publications/346.

- *Assessment policies and structured decision-making tools.* The development of written policies and procedures should guide how assessments are conducted, who receives the results, and how results are used. Of particular note, agencies should identify when assessment overrides are permitted. Juvenile justice professionals need the discretion to override risk assessment results on a limited basis for making supervision decisions that account for special circumstances.[194] For example, some assessment tools don't predict the likelihood of youth specifically committing violent crimes but only the likelihood that a youth will reoffend at all in the future. On an infrequent basis, then, assessment professionals may need to consider the nature of the crime committed in conjunction with risk assessment results when making recommendations in order to balance the best interests of the youth, community safety, and ensure the ongoing support of key stakeholders such as the prosecution and law enforcement for the use of assessments. Given the potential for the abuse of such flexibility, overrides should be tracked carefully, require high-level approval, and occur in only special cases.[195]

  Juvenile justice systems can also employ three key structured decision-making tools to support adherence to assessment policies:

  - *Communication templates.* Assessment experts recommend the use of a standardized template for how assessment results are communicated to key system stakeholders. The template should include a clear structure for identifying sources of input, the categorical ratings and key factors that determined these ratings, and recommendations for supervision and services. Judges and other court personnel will need regular training on how to interpret these findings and use them to guide case decisions.
  - *Dispositional and service-referral matrices.* Systems should support the appropriate use of assessment results by developing dispositional and service-referral matrices to guide supervision decisions and case planning. Dispositional matrices should clearly articulate which placement or supervision level is most appropriate for a youth given his or her risk level while service-referral matrices should reflect the services available in facilities and in the community to best address their specific dynamic risk factors.
  - *Case plan template.* Once all information from the risk and needs assessment process is collected and appropriate services are identified, agencies can synthesize this information through a case plan template. The template should be organized around harnessing the youth's strengths and addressing their dynamic risk factors, incorporate responsivity factors, and omit interventions not indicated as necessary by the assessment results. A good case template helps staff to ensure that the number, type, duration, and intensity of services are matched to youth's risk level and priority needs. Juvenile justice systems should ensure case plans are easily understood by and shared with families as well as the service providers who will help put them into action.

Florida: Implementing a Disposition Matrix to Make Fair and Effective Supervision Decisions

As a participant in the Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project,[196] the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has implemented a disposition matrix to help probation staff make objective, informed, and the consistent placement and supervision recommendations that are based on a youth's risk of reoffending and severity of the offense.[197] The matrix was created by examining statewide data and aligning policies with the best evidence available concerning effective interventions. Strict implementation guidelines are in place for use of the tool, including restrictions on when staff can deviate from the recommended dispositional category. Through its comprehensive case management system, which allows for disaggregation by county/district, race, and gender, DJJ closely tracks staff's fidelity to the matrix model and outcomes associated with supervision decisions. DJJ also tracks court deviations from the optimum and preferred disposition recommendations, as well as the impact on recidivism. DJJ recently completed a validation study on the matrix, which found that youth receiving placements within the Disposition Matrix's suggested range had significantly lower recidivism than those placed outside of the suggested range. The 12-month recidivism rate for youth placed outside of the Disposition Matrix recommendations was two times higher than for those placed within the suggested range.[198]

Figure 7. Florida's Disposition Recommendation Matrix

Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Disposition Recommendation Matrix
(Staff must always begin with the least restrictive setting within a particular disposition category. See Structured Decision-Making guidelines.)

Most Serious Presenting Offense	PACT Risk Level to Reoffend			
	Low-Risk to Reoffend	Moderate-Risk to Reoffend	Moderate- to High-Risk to Reoffend	High-Risk to Reoffend
1st TIME MISDEMEANOR[1]	Level 1	Level 1	N/A	N/A
Minor[2]	Level 2 or 3a	Level 2 or 3a	Level 2 or 3a–c	Level 3a–c or 4
Serious[3]	Level 2 or 3a	Level 2 or 3a–b	Level 3a–c or 4	Level 3a–c or 4
Violent[4]	Level 2 or 3a–b	Level 2, 3a–c or 4	Level 3a–c, 4 or 5	Level 3a–c, 4 or 5

[1] - First time misdemeanor offenders with no history of participation in alternatives to arrest. Under § 985.12.F.S., all first-time misdemeanants are eligible for civil citation. Youth deemed ineligible for civil citation (based on community standards) should be reviewed under the " Misdemeanor" category, based upon the PACT Risk Level to Reoffend.

[2] - All misdemeanor offenses.

[3] - Felony offenses that do not include violence.

[4] - Violent felony offenses (do not include misdemeanor assault and battery, which is captured under "minor).

Level 1 - Alternatives to Arrest
Level 3 - Community Supervision
(3a) - Probation supervision
(3b) - Probation enhancement services (ART, Lifeskills, etc.)
(3c) - Day Treatment, MST, FFT, Minimum Risk Commitment

Level 2 - Diversion & Non-DJJ Probation
Level 4 - Non Secure Residential Commitment (Low- & Moderate-Risk Programs)
Level 5 - Secure Residential Commitment (High- & Maximum-Risk Programs)

- *Ongoing staff training and support.* Training is a key component for facilitating staff buy-in and ensuring that assessments are implemented effectively. Staff and supervisors need continuous training on the rationale and value of assessments and the technical requirements for each tool.[199] In addition, given the importance of building rapport with youth and families during the assessment process, staff will benefit from training on motivational and engagement techniques with youth and families.

  Juvenile justice agencies should maximize the impact of training activities by developing an ongoing system of training for line staff and managers that includes regular refreshers for new and existing staff along with hands-on coaching and support to pilot, test, and refine assessment processes.[200] Researchers recommend that juvenile justice systems employ a train-the-trainer approach to build and sustain local training capacity rather than constant dependence on external experts. In addition to being more cost effective,[201] the certification of in-house trainers appears to yield more accurate and consistent results because staff benefit from trainers who "speak their language."[202]

- *Quality improvement processes, data collection, and accountability.* Finally, quality improvement protocols and ongoing data collection are critical for optimizing the potential benefits of validated assessments. Systems can employ tools and processes such as standardized assessment performance criteria; audio recording or videotaping staff conducting assessments or having supervisors sit in on assessments to review adherence to these criteria; and ongoing case audits. Systems should use the key findings from these evaluations to hold staff accountable and develop improvement plans.[203]

Juvenile justice systems will also benefit from the establishment of an electronic case management system with reporting functionality to keep track of when assessments are conducted and the assessment results. A commitment to electronically capturing and analyzing assessment data can help juvenile justice systems to generate ongoing reports to evaluate whether assessments are conducted in a reliable manner and the supervision and services provided to youth are matched to assessment results.

Assessment data can also serve as an invaluable tool to help systems understand the characteristics, strengths, and needs of their youth population and whether resources are aligned accordingly. For example, aggregate assessment data might reveal a higher proportion of low-risk youth in the system than expected, allowing for reduced investments in the use of confinement. Data can identify gaps between youth's dynamic risk factors and available services, and can help support the reallocation of system resources to address these gaps.

Taken together, the combination of qualitative and quantitative data on how assessments are conducted and whether and how the results are used can help juvenile justice systems to hold staff accountable for their assessment performance and their role in promoting improved youth outcomes.

Utah: Developing a Comprehensive Quality-Improvement System to Support the Implementation of Risk Assessments

> *"Through this training process we are positioning front-line staff as agents for change in a child's life."*
>
> — Juvenile Justice Supervisor, Utah Division of Juvenile Justice Services

In 1999, the Utah Division of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS) partnered with the Juvenile Court to develop a systematic process for identifying the strengths and needs of delinquent youth.[204] The Risk Assessment Committee that came out of that partnership chose to adopt two validated tools originally developed by the state of Washington: the Prescreen Risk Assessment (PSRA) and the Protective and Risk Assessment (PRA). The PSRA is a short assessment used at intake and at the time of court hearings, and the PRA is a comprehensive assessment given to youth committed to Juvenile Court Probation or to the Division of Juvenile Justice Services. The tools are used to identify risk of reoffending, treatment needs, and progress made during programming.

Utah has progressively developed a continuum of implementation supports to ensure that these assessments are conducted and used appropriately, including:

- Established Risk, Need, and Responsivity as guiding principles for the juvenile justice system.
- Instituted new hiring policies to focus on employing staff who are skilled at engaging youth and families in assessment conversations related to their needs.
- Requires probation officers to become certified on the use of the assessment tool and case management model, with promotions tied to staff's participation in training and demonstration of assessment competency.
- Established detailed performance criteria for conducting and using assessments, and requires probation staff to meet these criteria as determined by videotapes of assessment interviews scored by supervisors. Both front line and management staff are also required to participate in ongoing training on youth and family engagement, completing risk assessments, and creating case plans through the Case Planning Tool (CPT). At the end of each training series, staff are administered an exam on their understanding of core concepts, and their supervisors conduct a quality-assurance review of actual completed risk assessments and case plans.
- Assessment results are stored in a case management system as part of the youth's electronic case records. The Court and Agencies' Record Exchange (CARE) system can be accessed by DJJS and Juvenile Court staff and allows both agencies to have real-time information on any youth, including demographic information, system activities, assessment and reassessment results, and case plans. CARE is also a key tool for use by the research department and external consultants to conduct case reviews; evaluate recidivism and other youth outcomes by assessed risk level; assess the performance of service providers in achieving better or worse outcomes than expected given the risk level of the population served; and to support assessment validation studies.
- Finally, the Quality Service Review (QSR) group conducts regular evaluations of the fidelity and quality of assessment and case planning processes. Annually, cases are chosen at random from every case manager for an in-depth evaluation that involves documentation reviews and interviews with youth, parents, case managers, therapists, service providers and other related agencies who were involved with the case. The results of these and other quality reviews inform adjustments to system policies and practices and help identify training and other improvement needs.

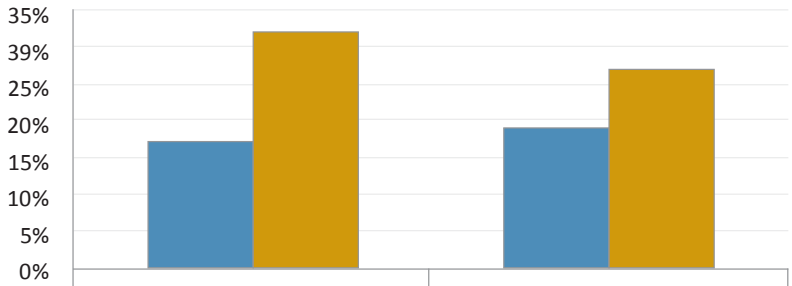
PRINCIPLE 2: ADOPT AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES DEMONSTRATED TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM AND IMPROVE OTHER YOUTH OUTCOMES, AND USE DATA TO EVALUATE SYSTEM PERFORMANCE AND DIRECT SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS.

The juvenile justice field has greater access to information on what works to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes than ever before, but many juvenile justice systems struggle to achieve the potential outcome improvements and cost savings made possible by this research due to significant implementation challenges. Evaluations have consistently shown that juvenile justice systems that fail to implement evidence-based programs and practices with fidelity to the research will not obtain desired results.[205]

Studies in Washington and Ohio illustrate the significant relationship between adherence to the research on effective service delivery and recidivism rates:

- The Washington State Institute for Public Policy evaluated the state's implementation of Functional Family Therapy (FFT) by 14 local juvenile courts and the implementation of Aggression Replacement Training (ART) in 26 courts and found that youth seen by competent therapists were much less likely to reoffend than youth who saw non-competent therapists.[206]
- Using the Correctional Programs Assessment Instrument (CPAI), the evaluators of RECLAIM Ohio[207] found that interventions that did not adhere to the principles of Risk, Need, and Responsivity and had poor implementation quality were associated with an 11-percent increase in recidivism rates. In contrast, programs that used effective service approaches and were implemented well were associated with a 14-percent recidivism reduction.[208]

Figure 8. 18-Month Felony Recidivism Rates for Youth Participating in Evidence-Based Programs in Washington State



	FFT	ART
Completely Delivered	17%	19%
Not Competently Delivered	32%	27%

Source: Robert P. Barnoski, *Outcome Evaluation of Washington State's Research-based Programs for Juvenile Offenders* (Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004).

Given the critical link between fidelity to the research and better outcomes, juvenile justice systems need to take a systemic approach and devote funding specifically for ensuring services for youth in their system are implemented in a high-quality way. Research and field experience have identified a number of key steps that juvenile justice systems should take to help advance this objective, including:

1. Establish quality standards to guide service delivery
2. Assess service quality and fidelity to the research
3. Provide ongoing, expert implementation assistance
4. Collect data on and evaluate service outcomes

1. Establish quality standards to guide service delivery. Juvenile justice systems will not benefit from choosing the right interventions unless these services are targeted to the right youth and implemented in the right way with fidelity to the supporting research. Juvenile justice agency leaders and managers should focus their efforts on promoting the following service quality standards demonstrated by research as critical to implementing system interventions effectively:

- *Service matching.* Many youth—even those who commit serious offenses—receive few if any programming or treatment services from the juvenile justice system. When they are provided, youth are often referred to these services indiscriminately. Some youth, for example, receive substance use treatment regardless of whether they have a history of use or a diagnosis, while other youth who struggle with this disorder never receive the treatment they badly need.[209] This misuse of services is not only a waste of resources but can lead to poor outcomes. The foundation of implementing juvenile justice services effectively, then, is the first principle of this paper: using validated assessments to prioritize services for youth with the highest risk of recidivism and to match youth with the services that address their specific dynamic risk factors.

  Supervision agencies and service providers can best ensure that service matching occurs through active and ongoing collaboration. Providers must identify the risk level of the population their programs are best equipped to serve, and articulate the dynamic risk factors that their programs are designed to address. Thus, agencies can refer youth to the most appropriate providers and set of services. Likewise, the ability of supervision agencies to conduct assessments with fidelity, develop case plans informed by assessment results, and share these case plans is critical to positioning providers to tailor their services to youth's needs and achieve the best possible outcomes. Juvenile justice systems can support this shared responsibility by tracking assessment and service referral data; conducting case audits that involve both parties; and scheduling regular meetings to review these data and identify needed program and practice changes.

- *Dosage optimization.* Juvenile justice systems should support the effective implementation of system interventions by monitoring whether youth receive the intended frequency and intensity (i.e., "dosage") of services needed to realize the full benefits. The failure to provide a youth with an appropriate service dosage will result in a less than optimal outcome. At the same time, keeping youth in community or residential programs longer than necessary will not improve outcomes and could even produce negative effects.[210] Traditionally, however, many juvenile justice systems have consigned youth to lengths of stay in confinement or community-based programs without any attention to whether and how this time served provides the treatment dosage needed to improve youth behavior.

  Juvenile justice systems can likely reduce confinement lengths of stay and probation terms, and also achieve significant cost savings as a consequence, by taking a more purposeful, data-driven approach to service dosage. All juvenile justice programs, including those that take place in facilities, should be required to identify specific treatment goals and an expected duration and intensity of services needed to achieve these goals. Supervision agencies will then need to collaborate with service providers to collect data on program contacts, duration, and the accomplishment of treatment goals. At the individual case level, agencies should use this data to conduct case-progress reviews with providers to determine whether youth have achieved sufficient progress to end supervision and services or whether adjustments to youth's case plans are needed. At the systems level, agencies should use aggregate data on service dosage and youth outcomes to better forecast average lengths of stay, residential bed needs and usage, and supervision officer caseloads, and to adjust placement/supervision policies and service practices, and to reallocate resources accordingly.

- *Quality-assurance mechanisms.* Juvenile justice systems can support the effective implementation of services by requiring providers to employ quality-assurance mechanisms and protocols designed to promote fidelity to research-based service models. Required components of program models, particularly for high-risk youth, should include:[211]
  - Minimum qualifications standards for staff and management hiring
  - Written policy and procedure manuals that specify the program model, target population and eligibility criteria, treatment goals, optimal dosage, service delivery strategies, and administrative supports
  - Initial and ongoing training, coaching, and supervision for staff and managers in the program model and its components
  - Standardized case planning and supervision tools and templates
  - Data collection and reporting tools for measuring case outcomes, staff and organizational adherence to the program model, and standardized processes for reviewing and using this data for improvement and accountability purposes

> *"Achieving the consistency and fidelity that effective programs appear to require will necessitate new ways of supervising and managing those who have direct contact with youth and their families. Shifting from a management focus on preventing abuse or infractions to one that empowers employees to provide effective services to their clients is going to be a major struggle."*[212]
>
> — Peter Greenwood, *Advancing Evidence-Based Practice*

Washington State: Promoting the Quality Implementation of Juvenile Justice Programs

As a result of Washington State's evaluation of evidence-based programs that showed the substantial relationship between implementation quality and youth outcomes,[213] the state legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to develop required program quality and outcome standards for all state-funded juvenile justice programs. As stated in the legislation, "Because model adherence and competent delivery of research-based intervention programs is critical for reducing recidivism, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy shall develop adherence and outcome standards for measuring effectiveness of treatment programs referred to in this act. The [Juvenile Rehabilitation Agency] shall utilize these standards to assess program effectiveness. The courts shall also utilize these standards in determining their continued use of these alternatives. The courts shall not continue to use programs that do not comply with these standards."

The standards developed by WSIPP to guide the implementation of juvenile justice services include requirements in the following areas:[214]

- Program and organizational management practices
- Staff hiring criteria, and staff training, performance evaluation, and retention practices
- Development, use, and maintenance of a manual that specifies the program policies and procedures for staff as well as organizational quality-assurance activities
- Identified outcome measures and expectations including at least 75 percent successful program completion rates, improvements in dynamic risk and protective factors, and reduced recidivism rates with sufficient follow-up to assess both further juvenile justice system and adult corrections involvement.

Washington employs quality assurance specialists to help promote these standards throughout the state and a policy committee to provide ongoing oversight. As further accountability measures, the oversight committee guides comprehensive empirical evaluations of program providers, directs the specialists to employ corrective actions as needed, and can discontinue funding for any program that fails to comply with these quality standards.

2. Assess service quality and fidelity to the research. Juvenile justice systems that commit to adopting programs and practices demonstrated by research to improve youth outcomes and that establish quality standards for guiding the provision of these services need an objective way to determine whether community-based providers and facilities are meeting these standards. States and counties are increasingly using standardized tools to conduct system-wide assessments of service quality, such as:

- *Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol.* The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) is a scoring tool for assessing program quality based on the findings from over 600 studies on what works to reduce juvenile recidivism. The SPEP helps measure service matching, whether the program model reflects an effective service approach, service dosage, and implementation quality. Higher program SPEP scores are correlated with 10- to 15-percent lower recidivism rates. Counties in Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin are using the SPEP to guide program selection, implementation, and investments.[215]
- *Correctional Program Checklist.* The Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) is another tool that juvenile justice systems can use to ensure program investments improve youth outcomes. In 2003, for example, the Oregon legislature required state agencies that provide treatment to reduce juvenile delinquency to annually increase the percentage of programs that are evidence-based. The Oregon Youth Authority used the CPC to define and identify those programs that met the criteria for "evidence-based." As of June 2012, approximately 80 percent of correctional facility living units and 98 percent of contracted community-based residential programs in Oregon met the CPC criteria of "Effective" or "Highly Effective."[216]
- *Correctional Program Assessment Instrument.* The Correctional Program Assessment Instrument (CPAI) is used to measure how closely a correctional program adheres to the research on what works to improve outcomes for youth. The RECLAIM Ohio Initiative was used to pilot the CPAI through the University of Cincinnati, and Ohio continues to use the tool to guide and evaluate the implementation of juvenile justice programs across the state.[217]

Juvenile justice systems will need to make a number of key decisions regarding the use of these service quality assessment tools, including:

- Whether to develop internal systems capacity or external partnerships to conduct the assessments, and how often to conduct such reviews
- How to encourage provider buy-in so assessments become a quality improvement tool rather than engendering rote compliance
- How to electronically capture the assessment results
- How to use the results to improve services, hold providers accountable, and allocate funding

Juvenile justice systems that address these operational challenges in systemic ways, including devoting sufficient staff and resources to the assessment process, and that do so in partnership with the provider community, are likely to maximize the benefits of their service investments.

3. Provide ongoing, expert implementation assistance. In order to achieve expected service quality standards, providers require ongoing support to address quality-improvement needs.[218] A number of states have experimented with a range of systemic solutions for connecting service providers with ongoing and comprehensive assistance with program implementation:

- In Connecticut, the Department of Children and Families and the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch jointly fund the Connecticut Center for Effective Practices to provide training and quality assurance for and to help evaluate all MST programs in the state.[219]
- Florida contracted with a private intermediary to assist with the local procurement of services, service-delivery oversight, and quality assurance for the provision of evidence-based practices statewide as an alternative to confinement.[220]
- Ohio established the Center for Innovative Practices to provide training, quality assurance, and resources to support a number of Ohio's evidence-based practice initiatives. Ohio also established the Innovative Diffusion and Adoption Research Project to evaluate the implementation of these initiatives across the state.[221]

Pennsylvania: Building Statewide Capacity to Support the Effective Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices

Through the leadership of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and its partners, Pennsylvania was one of the earliest states to promote the statewide adoption of evidence-based practices for youth in the juvenile justice and other youth-service systems. PCCD quickly realized, however, that providers struggled to implement these programs as intended and PCCD funding was not being used efficiently to improve youth outcomes.

To address the implementation gap between research and practice, PCCD invested in a partnership with Penn State University to build statewide capacity, through an intermediary known as the EPISCenter, to promote the adoption and effective implementation of evidence-based practices. The EPISCenter provides counties and service providers with resources, training, and technical assistance on program selection and start-up, model adherence and quality assurance, and data collection and outcome measurement. The EPISCenter and probation staff are now piloting the use of the Standard Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) to assess program quality and are helping to build the capacity to use the SPEP at the local level. The EPISCenter also developed a web-based system to assist service providers with data collection, and provides quarterly reports to key stakeholders on recidivism and other youth outcomes.

As a result of PCCD and the EPISCenter's efforts, in FY2011, a total of 3,650 Pennsylvania youth participated in evidence-based practices, with 60 percent of these youth at imminent risk of out-of-home placement. Approximately 88 percent of these youth were able to remain in their communities and 87 percent had no new offenses at the time of completion of the program. As a group, the counties that adopted these programs and received support from the EPISCenter experienced a decrease in confinement over a six-year period, while counties that did not adopt such programs experienced no change or even increased confinement. The EPISCenter estimates that Pennsylvania has seen an immediate savings of over $16 million resulting from these efforts and are projected to see a long-term economic benefit of $71.4 million resulting from crime reduction due to the quality implementation of evidence-based programs.[222]

4. Collect data on and evaluate service outcomes. The ultimate test of whether juvenile justice services are being implemented effectively is measurable improvements in recidivism and other youth outcomes. Many juvenile justice systems struggle to collect these data, however, and there can be a significant time lag between when youth receive services and when these outcomes are fully known. The evaluation of implementation outcomes in real time can help agency leaders and managers know if programs are on track before significant investments have been made and long-term youth outcomes are understood.

As a complement to the ongoing use of tools such as the SPEP to assess program quality, juvenile justice leadership must determine the most important case outcomes to track. Potential implementation process and intermediary youth outcome measures could include:

- service utilization and engagement;
- case contacts;
- program duration;
- program model adherence;
- successful completion rates of treatment goals such as education and skill attainment; and
- successful case closure rates.

Juvenile justice systems should ensure the consistent collection and integrity of these data by creating an electronic platform for provider reporting; quality-control standards for data entry; embedding data entry requirements into providers' contracts; and assigning staff to monitor compliance. While costly, a system-wide electronic case management system that allows for the collection and integration of youth assessment and disposition data along with service provision and outcome data is a critical tool towards this end. Without such a system, policymakers and system leaders run the risk of not knowing recidivism rates or other youth outcomes and/or being unable to attribute better or worse outcomes to the specific services that youth receive.

Juvenile justice systems can make best use of service provision and implementation data by creating feedback loops for sharing data with service providers and using tools such as written improvement plans, corrective action plans, and performance-based contracts to promote accountability and continuous quality improvement. In conjunction with implementation supports, the ongoing evaluation of program quality and implementation outcomes can help juvenile justice systems identify and address short-term implementation challenges so the long-term outcome and cost savings benefits of a more effective service-delivery system are fully realized.

Performance-based Standards: Developing a Systemic Way to Track, Evaluate, and Improve Juvenile Justice Facility Practices

Performance-based Standards (PbS) is national data-driven improvement model that juvenile justice agencies use to collect, report, and assess performance data twice a year on the conditions, quality of life, and services provided to youth offenders in facilities. PbS provides immediate evaluation of the implementation of facility practices in easy-to-read bar graph reports that help participants analyze the data over time as well as in comparison to similar facilities and in alignment with the PbS national standards. PbS was developed in 1995 by the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators to respond to the problematic issues highlighted in the 1994 Conditions of Confinement Study and established more than 100 performance outcome measures reflecting national standards for improved performance. PbS provides real-time data, which allows participants to address issues when they arise and connects participants with an expert coach to guide the use of data for making performance improvements.[223]

Oregon: Using Implementation and Outcome Data to Improve System Policies and Practices

The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) has launched a series of data-driven improvement initiatives collectively known as the Youth Reformation System,[224] including:

- *Population forecast.* The Oregon Office of Economic Analysis is mandated by legislation to produce a semiannual report that forecasts the number of facility and residential beds needed over the next 10 years. OYA has built a forecasting model that incorporates data on youth's risk levels, placements, and outcomes to determine the number and type of beds that most efficiently use system resources.
- *Placement and treatment.* Based on assessment data and detailed information on youth's risk of reoffending and treatment needs, OYA created a series of decision-informing tools that help the agency to better determine whether youth should be committed into their custody, and if so, what level of supervision and type of services are most conducive to their successful reentry.
- *Program evaluation.* OYA has instituted a number of data-driven initiatives to evaluate and improve system performance, including: strengthening its use of the Correctional Program Checklist to identify those quality-improvement areas most strongly correlated with recidivism for OYA youth; implementing additional quality-improvement activities in facilities to promote service fidelity; assess positive youth outcome improvements; using data to ascertain optimal lengths of stay; determining cost-avoidance and return on investment; and evaluating recidivism for youth as soon as possible after it occurs rather than waiting months or years later.
- *Community context.* Finally, OYA is partnering with other state agencies to use census and service-delivery data to identify those communities from which delinquent youth are most likely to come (and to which they'll likely return), the service capacity of these communities, and the service history of the families living in them. Through this data analysis, OYA is hoping to reallocate service funding in ways that reduce the number of youth coming into contact with the system and improve outcomes for those who return to their committees after confinement.

PRINCIPLE 3: EMPLOY A COORDINATED APPROACH ACROSS SERVICE SYSTEMS TO ADDRESS YOUTH'S NEEDS.

A coordinated approach to meet the needs of youth in the juvenile justice system can reduce costs and increase service availability, access, and quality.[225] Most juvenile justice systems acknowledge the importance of this collaboration, but they also fail to commit to its implementation. Instead, juvenile justice systems are often left to tackle challenges such as arranging for school reenrollment or connecting youth with appropriate mental health services on a case-by-case basis. As a result, reducing recidivism and other positive youth outcomes are often heavily dependent on local receptivity to systems collaboration, the existence of cross-systems protocols, and the willingness of specific public agency staff to return phone calls or attend meetings.

Juvenile justice stakeholders who seek to ensure that systems coordination isn't left to chance and who want to maximize its potential benefits for lower recidivism rates and improvements in other youth outcomes can promote a number of key implementation strategies suggested by research and practice:

1. Establish a formal, ongoing structure for collaboration
2. Identify shared goals and indicators of success and devise an action plan to achieve these goals
3. Establish data-sharing and other cross-systems protocols and processes
4. Facilitate regular cross-systems training
5. Evaluate outcomes, and share and use data to guide improvements

1. Establish a formal, ongoing structure for collaboration. An essential litmus test for whether juvenile justice systems are committed to systems coordination is whether there is a formal structure that brings together leaders from different systems and branches of government to implement interagency policy and practice improvements. States and locales have used a number of strategies to organize these collaboratives, including passing legislation that requires cross-systems partnerships, executive mandates, and drawing upon existing oversight structures such as State Advisory Groups (SAGs).[226]

At the local level, judicial leadership has proven particularly effective in bringing juvenile justice and partner systems to the table. As leaders of successful cross-systems initiatives emphasize: "When a judge calls a meeting, everyone shows up." It is important to note, however, that in many states and counties, judicial rotations in juvenile court are often as short as one or two years. As a consequence, judges often only become well versed in juvenile justice near the end of their rotations. Additionally, agencies that serve youth are forced to constantly train new judges in evidence-based practices, setting back the momentum for improvements that may have started with previous judges. State and local policymakers and judicial leaders can play a key role, then, in empowering judges to form and lead cross-systems collaboratives by ensuring that their juvenile justice rotations are at least three years. To maximize the significant potential of the court to serve as agents for cross-systems collaboration and reform, judicial leaders can also promote a structured orientation program and regular training for judges on the juvenile justice system, adolescent development, and the policies and practices demonstrated by research to reduce recidivism and improve youth outcomes.

Regardless of whether a collaborative comes together through judicial leadership or another mechanism, it is more likely to function effectively if the following factors are in place: all key systems and branches of government participate; representatives have decision-making authority on behalf of their agencies; and the initiative receives executive-level oversight and support. The group should also have a written charter that outlines its mission as well as participant roles and responsibilities. The collaborative should meet at least monthly or bimonthly, and the group should appoint co-chairs from the juvenile justice and other key systems.[227]

Palm Beach County, Florida: Second Chance Act Reentry Taskforce

As a mandatory grant requirement, all U.S. Department of Justice-funded Second Chance Act grantees must establish a reentry task force that reflects "extensive evidence of collaboration with state and local government agencies overseeing health, mental health, housing, child welfare, education, substance use, victim's services, and employment services, and with local law enforcement agencies."[228] Palm Beach County, Florida, for example, has developed an effective multidisciplinary task force that meets regularly to discuss policies related to court-involved youth. Led by a juvenile court judge, the task force provides an ongoing structure for agencies to collaborate to reform policies and practices in the best interest of youth served across agencies. Through the work of the task force, these agencies have been able to partner with the Palm Beach County School District to ensure a smoother educational transition for youth returning after confinement, and they have modified the county's existing web-based, multiagency, case management data warehouse to enhance communication with service providers.

2. Identify shared goals and indicators of success, and devise an action plan to achieve these goals. Agencies are only likely to invest the time in building cross-systems partnerships if they reap tangible, immediate benefits. At inception, collaboratives should identify concrete goals for improving youth and family outcomes across the juvenile justice and other service systems, as well as specific process and outcome indicators for success that can serve as focal points for their systems improvement efforts. For example, juvenile justice systems may want to increase the availability and quality of evidence-based behavioral health services for adolescents. While the ultimate test of whether this goal is realized is improved youth behavioral health outcomes, the identification and accomplishment of process outcomes such as increased service funding or development of protocols that make it easier to access treatment are short-term accomplishments that can keep agencies engaged in the process.

Similarly, the development of an action plan with clear goals, tasks, timelines, and responsible parties can help ensure continuous progress and hold agencies accountable for moving a shared agenda forward. The formation of subcommittees of management-level staff focused on achieving goals in specific issue areas is often the best way to execute these action plans, with the higher-level collaborative serving as a steering and oversight body. Hiring a coordinator to facilitate executive and subcommittee activities can also serve as a key way to ensure that agencies maintain a tangible investment in the initiative.[229]

3. Establish data-sharing and other cross-systems protocols and processes. An integrated approach to assessment, case planning, and service delivery is at the heart of effective cross-systems partnerships. The foundation of this strategy is data sharing. At the individual level, juvenile justice systems need to know when youth are involved in and receiving assessments and services from other systems. At the aggregate level, understanding how often youth in the juvenile justice system are involved in other service systems can help agencies appreciate the need for collaboration and demonstrate to policymakers the value of supporting cross-systems initiatives.

While juvenile justice and other systems face legal barriers to sharing information, system agencies are increasingly taking a closer look at confidentiality laws and discovering that many restrictions are more a function of agency policy or culture than law.[230] At minimum, then, agencies should establish clear policies on what information can be shared and with whom, and they should craft interagency data-sharing agreements that formalize these policies and ensure their consistent application amongst staff.[231] Given the complex web of case management systems often found across service systems, investing in a unified information management system that automates data sharing can significantly improve staff efficiency and streamline assessment processes. In the absence of this capacity, systems are advised to identify liaisons that can serve as points of contact whenever the need arises to identify youth's potential cross-systems involvement.

Juvenile justice systems can also best support a coordinated approach through collaborative case planning and service delivery. Required family/team meetings that bring cross-systems personnel, youth, and families together at key decision points such as disposition, rearrest/violation, and reentry can help ensure youth's priority service needs are met in an integrated, streamlined manner.[232] Meetings at regular intervals can also serve as a way to track progress, make needed adjustments to case plans, and to determine when treatment goals have been accomplished and services are no longer needed. Agencies can formalize expectations related to these meetings and other collaborative activities through memorandums of understanding that specify parties' roles and responsibilities; written interagency protocols and policy and procedure manuals; and blended funding initiatives that combine resources from multiple systems to support shared processes and services.

Instituting Cross-Systems Protocols and Processes to Improve Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Outcomes

Through the work of the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, a number of juvenile justice systems have instituted cross-systems protocols designed to improve both youth and family outcomes. For example, in Outagamie County, Wisconsin, leadership was able to promote a more integrated approach between the juvenile justice and child welfare systems through a number of practices, including the implementation of monthly cross-agency meetings. Hampden County, Massachusetts was able to develop common outcome measures for dual status youth across the juvenile justice and child welfare systems as a way to keep better track of these youth and promote shared strategies for improvement.[233]

Counties have made significant progress also instituting cross-systems protocols through the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM), which was developed by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at the Georgetown McCourt School of Public Policy. For example, in Charleston County, South Carolina, when a youth in the child welfare system is arrested, the juvenile intake worker immediately notifies the child welfare social worker, and both parties conduct a joint case review to make a shared set of recommendations to the court for the detention hearing. Both workers continue to attend and coordinate efforts in subsequent dependency and delinquency hearings until either or both cases are closed.[234] And in Marion County, Oregon, representatives from both systems participate in Child-Family Team Meetings with a trained facilitator to conduct joint case planning.

4. Facilitate regular cross-systems training. Providing ongoing training for juvenile justice and other agency staff, including training that brings cross-systems representatives together, is a key tool for breaking down system silos among agencies. Cross-systems training is particularly valuable because some systems are reluctant to work with the juvenile justice system due to the desire to avoid serving high-risk youth.[235] Jurisdictions can use cross-systems training to build knowledge on how other systems function and educate staff about the use of cross-systems protocols and agreements.

Mental Health Training Curriculum for Juvenile Justice

The National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (NCMHJJ) is working with ten juvenile justice systems to ensure that staff are trained in youth's mental health needs and better able to work across systems to improve behavioral health outcomes. NCMHJJ has developed the Mental Health Training Curriculum for Juvenile Justice, which is an eight-hour training designed to provide juvenile justice staff with information about adolescent development, common mental disorders for youth in the juvenile justice system, effective treatment approaches, and the important role of families in treatment. Juvenile justice systems receive training in the curriculum through a train-the-trainer model as well as ongoing follow-up and support with the goal of establishing sustainable local mental health training capacity.[236]

5. Evaluate outcomes, and share and use data to guide improvements. Finally, it is critical that juvenile justice systems evaluate the impact of their systems coordination initiatives and hold themselves accountable for results. Joint progress reviews at multiple levels can help support this goal. Agencies should conduct case-level reviews, particularly for cases that go awry, to identify needed practice improvements across systems, and agency-level check-ins to evaluate adherence to and the impact of cross-systems protocols and agreements. Finally, agencies should administer process evaluations, led by collaborative steering committee members or external experts, to identify and document concrete improvements in cross-systems policy and practice.

The ultimate test of such a coordinated approach is whether outcomes for youth improve as a result. Members of the collaborative should seek to pool research capacity and resources to code and track youth involved in multiple systems and evaluate changes in recidivism rates and shared positive youth outcomes. Collaboratives should also strive to produce at least annual reports documenting process and outcome improvements; share these results with all branches of government at the state and local level; and regularly update their action plans to advance necessary changes to policy and practice.

How the Wraparound Milwaukee Model Reduces Recidivism and Out-of-Home Placements through an Integrated Service Approach

Wraparound Milwaukee serves youth at risk of placement in a correctional or residential treatment setting, with approximately 70 percent of program participants referred by a delinquency court order.[237] The program incorporates coordination with multiple service systems as well as with youth and families at every stage, and uses a number of unique implementation structures[238] to support this approach:

- Care Coordinators carry small caseloads and manage the case from inception through program completion. Coordinators conduct an initial assessment to identify risks, strengths, and needs, and convene a youth-family team meeting that includes all relevant agencies to develop a wraparound service plan.
- A Mobile Urgent Treatment Team of mental health professionals is available 24 hours a day to serve youth and their families. The team reduces the need to remove youth from their school, home, or community in the event of a crisis.
- Families are enrolled in a social/medical health maintenance organization with a comprehensive benefit plan that offers more than 80 different mental health and support services through a network of 200 agencies. All agencies share a management information system that allows for a single electronic record of services provided.
- A flexible funding model enables the merger of services from the mental health, child welfare, and juvenile justice systems and de-categorizes funding sources so that available resources can cover any service needs. Over $45 million in funds across service systems and Medicaid are leveraged to finance these supports.

Since its inception in 1994, Wraparound Milwaukee has significantly improved outcomes for approximately 7,000 youth. An evaluation of the model found that of the 1,369 youth included in the study, only 21 percent had new offenses after their enrollment in Wraparound Milwaukee, and as youth become more engaged in the program, their likelihood of reoffending declined significantly.[239] The program has contributed to a 73-percent drop in residential placements. Wraparound Milwaukee's costs ($3,450/month) are less than half as much as placement in a Wisconsin Treatment Center ($10,000/month), a third as much as placement in a juvenile correctional facility ($9,000/month), and a tenth as much as a 30-day hospital stay ($37,000/month).[240]

> *" ...Wraparound Milwaukee's care model breaks through rigid program silos and delivers cost effective and higher quality care that involves families from day one. The program champions a unique approach to care where one size doesn't fit all. In honoring Wraparound, we hope other states will learn from the program's innovation and adopt similar practices to ensure improved care of at-risk youth."*
>
> — Stephen Goldsmith, Director of the Innovations in American Government program at Harvard's Kennedy School[241]

King County, Washington: Improving Outcomes for Youth across Service Systems

For over ten years, the juvenile justice and other service systems in King County, Washington, have met monthly to advance a cross-systems approach to reducing recidivism and improving other youth outcomes. The initiative, known as Uniting for Youth, was first organized by a local judge and has been sustained through the leadership of an executive committee comprising high-level inter-branch government and systems representatives from all the youth service systems in the County. In 2006, the need for this collaborative was reinforced by a prevalence study that showed two-thirds of King County youth who were referred to the juvenile justice system had past or existing child welfare involvement. Additionally, 70 percent of these youth reentered the juvenile justice system due to a new offense within two years of being released from a facility; of youth who had no child welfare involvement, just 34 percent reentered the juvenile justice system within two years.[242]

Uniting for Youth established a series of subcommittees focused on common concerns such as dual-jurisdiction youth, mental health services, and education, and each sub-committee developed a work plan with clear action items to advance interagency improvements. A systems integration coordinator was funded by multiple participating agencies to coordinate the work of the executive committee and subcommittees.

A sampling of the many cross-systems achievements produced by Uniting for Youth includes:[243]

- Developed an information-sharing resource guide that details what data can be shared across systems and specific guidelines for doing so for each system.
- Established interagency protocols and designated system liaisons that enable the juvenile justice and child welfare systems to identify cross-systems involvement. The protocols and relationship building through the initiative have also fostered a culture of joint-case planning, court preparation, and service provision among probation and child welfare agency staff for all crossover youth.
- Facilitated a county ordinance that devotes one-tenth of one percent of county sales tax revenue to fund mental health services. Uniting for Youth played a leading role in determining how these funds were allocated to support improved youth mental health outcomes.
- Created the PathNet initiative to provide GED preparation, continued access to higher education, vocational training and certification, and case management to youth returning from confinement who lack the credits to receive their high school diploma. PathNet also facilitated innovative legislation in 2010 that allows nonprofit providers to access State Basic Education Allocation Funding to serve this population, and thus, provides a statutory framework to support a statewide dropout reengagement system.
- Secured millions of dollars in federal and foundation grants through cross-systems proposals and the ability to demonstrate an integrated approach.
- Facilitates quarterly multiagency training attended by hundreds of staff on interagency protocols and how to access services in other systems.

PRINCIPLE 4: TAILOR SYSTEM POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND SUPERVISION TO REFLECT THE DISTINCT DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS.

There is no single best practice or agreed upon set of quality standards for implementing a developmentally appropriate approach. What follows offers guidance for juvenile justice systems to optimize the potential of a developmentally appropriate approach for reducing recidivism and improving other youth outcomes. It provides strategies that research and field experience have begun to suggest about how best to operationalize these values in practice, including:

1. Prioritize the advancement of youth's long-term, positive development
2. Tailor systems interventions to individual youth
3. Formalize meaningful family and youth engagement
4. Reposition supervision agencies and officers to serve as agents of positive youth behavior change
5. Promote system equity across all juvenile justice agencies

1. Prioritize the advancement of youth's long-term positive development. The science of adolescent development suggests a clear gap between what all youth need to become thriving adults—including familial support, attachment to a positive peer group, and concrete skills and academic/employment achievement—and the interventions commonly employed by most juvenile justice systems.[244] As a consequence, juvenile justice leadership must be willing to abandon traditional notions derived largely from adult corrections about how best to manage youth behavior in community and residential settings that have proven costly and ineffective, and instead, consider how the advancement of youth's positive development can serve effectively as both a short and long-term public safety strategy.

Missouri: Committing to Youth's Positive Development

The Missouri Division of Youth Services (DYS) is perhaps the most advanced juvenile justice system in the country in transforming its juvenile justice system to advance youth's long-term positive development. The "Missouri Approach" is the most well-known and broadly disseminated approach to juvenile corrections and reentry. While more rigorous research is needed to evaluate its impact on recidivism for the highest-risk youth in its system, approximately 70 percent of DYS youth were not reincarcerated three years after leaving confinement.[245] Some of the many concrete ways that DYS implements its positive development approach in practice are:

- DYS receives state Medicaid funding for the services it provides to youth in facilities because of the therapeutic nature of its approach. DYS does not employ armed guards, cells, pepper spray, prolonged isolation, face-down restraints, or strip searches. Additionally, rather than employing parole officers to monitor youth upon release, youth are assigned a case manager from inception of placement through the end of their commitment. Case managers assess youth's strengths; develop a plan for youth's long-term achievement; and coordinate with facility and community staff and service providers to implement and oversee this plan.

- Small facilities hold a maximum of 40 to 50 youth with dorm-style housing units that contain just 10 to 12 beds. Youth are allowed to dress in their own clothes and keep personal items in their rooms.
- DYS uses therapeutic model based primarily on group counseling and peer support that is integrated into every aspect of youth's experiences. Youth are organized into small peer groups and interact almost exclusively with this cohort throughout their time in placement. Youth have frequent and regularly scheduled opportunities to talk about their goals and feelings and are free to call a "circle" at any time to raise concerns about themselves or other group members. Staff members also call circles frequently to enforce expectations regarding safety and respect and to recognize positive behaviors.
- Facility employees conduct immediate and ongoing outreach to family members at the inception of a youth's placement and involve families in therapy, release planning, and post-release services and case management.
- DYS runs an accredited school district, and youth receive intensive educational support and the opportunity to earn high school credits, completion, and take online college courses. Youth also have the opportunity to engage in vocational training and community service. Community advisory boards attached to each facility provide structured opportunities for skill development for youth in the community.
- Only highly qualified staff are hired, and they receive over 300 hours of training in their first two years of employment in the DYS positive youth development approach.

> *"Perhaps the greatest need among troubled and delinquent teens—and the biggest key to change and success—is to discover their own sense of dignity and self-respect. Therefore, Missouri's approach is always dignifying and never degrading, always respectful and never 'because I told you so' or 'because you're bad.' DYS staff are trained and encouraged to treat youth (and their families) with respect at all times, to intervene whenever they sense any young person acting disrespectfully, and to teach youth that the more respect they show others, the more they will reap for themselves."*[246]
>
> — Richard Mendel, *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youth Offenders*

2. Tailor systems interventions to individual youth. The science of adolescent development recognizes the roles that youth's gender and cultural identities as well as specific stage of development, play in shaping their needs and responses to system interventions. While system interventions should primarily focus on what works generally to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes, research is beginning to show that juvenile justice systems can potentially enhance these impacts by attending to the unique challenges faced by subpopulations of youth. For example, girls in the juvenile justice system are more likely than boys to have experienced trauma due to sexual violence, have mental disorders,[247] and have their relationships with their families and romantic attachments play a significant role in shaping their behaviors.[248] While juvenile justice systems should not treat girls as a homogenous group, it makes sense to more intentionally match females with interventions that meet their particular needs.[249] Similarly, though research is far more exploratory in this area, a better appreciation of youth's cultural and ethnic identities,[250] such as tribal groups,[251] and how these identies shape youth's behaviors can potentially help systems to better address youth's needs.

The rapid developmental changes that occur during adolescence also emphasize the importance of systems considering how to support older adolescents and youth "aging out" of the system to successfully transition to adulthood.[252] Juvenile justice systems are increasingly struggling with how to best serve this population given that most evidence-based programs are not well tested for older youth.[253] The majority of youth in confinement is 16 or older, and few research-based interventions exist for helping them to transition to independence, locate affordable housing if needed, connect to appropriate education and skills training opportunities, and achieve financial security upon reentry.

Juvenile justice systems will need to more actively seek out innovative ways to identify and support the unique needs of these transition-aged youth.[254] In North Dakota, for example, legislation requires the Department of Human Services to use a wraparound planning process to develop services for transition-aged youth in the juvenile justice system as well as other high-risk populations. Services under the program include an individualized assessment, a single plan of care for youth across service systems, enhanced vocational training, in-home support, and use of a statewide independent living skills curriculum. North Dakota established a statewide Transition to Independence Program at eight regional centers to facilitate these services.[255]

Juvenile justice systems may also want to experiment with interventions shown to reduce adult reoffending such as education and vocational training, particularly in residential settings, for which there is more limited evidence of effectiveness for youth[256] but the potential for more pronounced effects for young adults.[257] The U.S. Department of Labor funds two comprehensive approaches to employment and training for at-risk youth that offer significant promise in this regard. Job Corps, a comprehensive education and training program, is one of them. It has statistically demonstrated significant impacts on future arrests, incarceration, educational attainment, and employment for young adults.[258] The YouthBuild program, which trains young adults in the construction trade while providing education and other support services, has also shown promise in improving outcomes for older youth.[259]

3. Formalize meaningful family and youth engagement. Most juvenile justice systems purport to respect and value family and youth engagement in system decisions and processes, but they often struggle to put this into practice. In a survey of more than 1,000 families of incarcerated youth, 80 percent of families reported no involvement in the system decisions that impacted their children.[260] System agencies should adopt specific tools, structures, and protocols that formalize family and youth engagement. Key examples include:

- *Family identification training and tools.* A number of juvenile justice systems, such as the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS) have implemented Family Finding, an approach borrowed from child welfare to ensure that all youth are connected to supportive adults. Staff receives training on how to identify and engage that youth's caregiver network and link them with youth appropriately.[261] ODYS has also used the Juvenile Relational Inquiry Tool, which is a series of questions designed by the Vera Institute of Justice to help facility staff build rapport with youth and identify the family and other supports that can facilitate youth's successful community reentry.[262]
- *Family genograms and eco-maps.*[263] Once youth's caregivers are identified, systems can employ genograms and eco-maps as simple visual tools to help staff facilitate conversations with youth and family members about the social and system supports in their lives.[264] With training, staff can use such tools, in conjunction with other assessments, to better understand both youth's needs as well as the protective factors that supervision and services can leverage to promote outcome improvements.
- *Youth/family team meetings.* Juvenile justice systems can formalize the involvement of youth and families in key system decisions and case planning processes through family conferencing or youth/family team meetings. These meetings bring together system personnel, youth, families, and other key stakeholders in youth's lives in a structured way, and they have demonstrated promising effects on reoffending and other youth and family outcomes in both child welfare and juvenile justice systems.[265] Pennsylvania has invested in a statewide effort to use the Family Group Decision Making model to engage youth's caregiver networks to collectively make key system decisions.[266]
- *Family engagement specialists.* The employment of current or former family members whose children were involved in the juvenile justice system can serve as an effective way for systems to ensure that their policies and practices are in fact family friendly. Family engagement specialists can help parents to navigate the system; establish peer support groups; provide training to system professionals on family engagement; and propose policy and practice changes that enable and encourage family members to actively support their child's positive behavior change.
- *Family/youth policy committees and surveys.* In addition to case-specific processes and staff, the more general inclusion of youth and families' voices and input can provide systems with valuable insight about how to improve system policies to best meet youth and family needs.[267] Juvenile justice systems should establish family/youth policy councils or advisory boards, conduct regular surveys, and administer interviews for youth exiting facilities or community programs to collect this feedback. For example, the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators' Performance-Based Standards initiative requires participating facilities to survey families and youth to gather feedback about facility conditions, staff, services, and overall satisfaction with their experiences.[268]

4. Reposition supervision agencies and officers to serve as agents of positive youth behavior change. For many supervision agencies, a shift from a traditional, adult-corrections mentality to a developmentally appropriate approach focused on promoting positive youth behaviors is a radical change. The RFK Children's Action Corps developed the *Probation Review Guidebook* to help supervision agencies overcome what is often a culture resistant to change and identify and implement needed reforms. Supervision agencies can use the *Guidebook* to undertake a comprehensive self-assessment, review how well existing policies connect to objectives, and develop recommendations and action plans for improvement. The *Guidebook* suggests that meaningful reform efforts require review and remediation strategies in four key areas of system operations: program planning and implementation; best practices and benchmarking; performance measurement and client outcomes; and intra-agency and interagency work processes.[269]

Supervision agencies should also develop concrete implementation tools to help ensure that new ways of supervising youth are adhered to in practice. In particular, the use of a graduated response matrix offers agencies a key strategy for officers to work within a set of written, standardized guidelines to promote youth behavior change while holding youth accountable for their actions.[270] Officers can use this matrix to tailor their activities to youth's risk levels and match youth's behaviors with developmentally appropriate responses.

Supervision staff should work collaboratively with youth and families to identify potential rewards that will serve as effective incentives, such as verbal praise and material-, relationship-, and activity-based rewards.[271] Likewise, agencies should ensure that a diverse range of graduated sanctions is available to officers, such as verbal or written reprimands, reporting or activity requirements, electronic monitoring, and day/evening reporting centers. Staff can also benefit from the development of written protocols that guide how to use a graduated response matrix and ongoing training to promote its appropriate use. Juvenile justice systems will also need to regularly collect and analyze data on the use and outcomes of a graduated response system to show that it is reducing reoffending, violation rates, and improving other youth outcomes.

The Central and Eastern Oregon Probation Case Management Model

With the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, the Central and Eastern Oregon Juvenile Justice Consortium developed a case management approach for probation officers built on risk and needs assessments, the use of incentives and positive reinforcements, and accountability measures with a restorative justice focus. The approach also provides officers with a four-step framework and decision-making matrix to guide a graduated response to violations that is individualized to youth based on their specific risks and needs.[272]

Reclaiming Futures Illustrative Graduated Response Grid

Through Reclaiming Futures—a 5-year, $21-million initiative sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to improve treatment outcomes for youth with drug and alcohol problems in the juvenile justice system—participating probation offices developed an Illustrative Graduated Response Grid.[273] The grid serves as a concrete tool for helping officers to employ a graduated response system that includes incentives, rewards, and sanctions for youth based on their risk level as well as their substance use needs.

Figure 9. Illustrative Graduated Responses Grid: Incentives, Rewards, and Sanctions

Substance Abuse Risk		For Desired Behaviors	For Undesirable Behaviors	For Desired Behaviors	For Undesirable Behaviors	For Desired Behaviors	For Undesirable Behaviors
		Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
High		**Positive Reinforcement** 1. CD or DVD 2. Bowling Passes 3. Art or Music Classes 4. Restore Free Time	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Electronic Monitoring 2. Juvenile Hall Time 3. Evening Reporting 4. Intensive Community Based Treatment	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Certificate of Achievement 2. Visit from Friends 3. Award Additional Token Economy Points	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Residential Placement 2. Evening Reporting 3. Electronic Monitoring	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Additional Privilege (telephone call home) 2. Structured Activity with staff 3. Home Visit	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Residential Placement 2. Ranch/Camp Placement 3. Institutional Placement
		Negative Reinforcement 1. Remove Electronic Monitoring 2. Reduce Juvenile Hall Time 3. Eliminate Evening Reporting	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Eliminate Free Time Afternoons, Evenings and Weekends	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Eliminate Electronic Monitoring 2. Return Home from Residential Placement 3. Reduce Community Service	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Loss of Privilege(s) 2. Loss of Recreation Time 3. Loss of Token Economy Points	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Reduce Length of Stay in Placement 2. Reduce Testing	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Loss of Privilege(s) 2. Loss of Recreation Time 3. Loss of Token Economy Points
Medium		**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Praise, Approval 2. Gym Membership 3. Paid Social Activity with Approved Friends 4. Classes to Support Hobby	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Require 12 Step Group attendance 2. Multiple Daily Check-in w/Parent 3. Short Term Voluntary Counseling	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Gym Membership 2. Sponsored Sports League 3. Dinner with Family Four Times/Week	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Require mandatory testing 2. Require community-based treatment program 3. Search and Seizure	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Offer to Fund Tattoo Removal 2. Participation in a Community Mural	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Residential Placement 2. Ranch/Camp Placement 3. Juvenile Hall Time
		Negative Reinforcement 1. Rescind Stay Away Order 2. Reduce Meetings with P.O. 3. Reduce Check In with Parent	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Stay away order from specified locations. 2. Two Meetings with P.O. each week	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Reduce Frequency of Testing 2. Eliminate Search Term	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Eliminate Free Time Afternoons and Evenings 2. Reduce Recreation Options	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Return Home from J.H., or Placement 2. Reduce Testing	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Loss of Privilege(s) 2. Loss of Recreation Time 3. Loss of Token Economy Points
Low		**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Praise, Approval 2. Driving Lessons 3. Financial Reward 4. Fun Activity 5. Classes to Support Hobby	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Set Curfew Time 2. Add Time to Probation 3. Require Weekly Meeting w/ P.O.	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Letter or Card of Recognition 2. Raffle opportunity 3. Movie Ticket	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Write apology letter 2. Visit an AOD program 3. Attend Appropriate Victim/Offender Dialogue	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Lunch w/ staff 2. Gift Certificate 3. C.D. or D.V.D. 4. Blockbuster card	**Positive Reinforcement** 1. Refer case to Placement Screening. 2. Two or More Meetings with P.O. Weekly
		Negative Reinforcement 1. Reduce Testing 2. Removal of Curfew 3. Abbreviate Probation Term	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Decrease Free Time Evenings and Weekends 2. Restrict Access to Friends 3. Reduce Allowance	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Reduce Testing 2. Removal of Curfew 3. Abbreviate Probation Term	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Decrease Free Time After School, Evenings and Weekends 2. Forfeit Allowance	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Remove Probation Condition 2. Reduce mandatory testing 3. Reduce Meetings with P.O.	**Negative Reinforcement** 1. Eliminate Free Time 2. Reduce Telephone and Computer Use 3. Loss of Recreation Time

Criminogenic Risk

Key Definitions:

Positive Reinforcement: Privileges, praise and/or tangible rewards applied as the result of desired behaviors.
Negative Reinforcement: Restrictions and/or sanctions reduced or removed as a result of desired behaviors.
Positive Punishment: Restrictions and/or sanctions applied or increased as a result of undesired behavior.
Negative Punishment: Privileges and/or tangibles reduced and/or removed as a result of undesired behavior.

Source: Benjamin Chambers, "Juvenile Justice System - Resources for Graduated Sanctions and Incentives," Reclaiming Futures, April 5, 2011, www.reclaimingfutures.org/blog/juvenile-drug-courts-graduated-responses-NCJFCJ-Reclaiming-Futures.

5. Promote system equity across all juvenile justice agencies. Juvenile justice systems that commit to improving recidivism rates and other youth outcomes must also commit to establishing a more equitable juvenile justice system. Given the variability in juvenile justice systems and the complexity of this challenge, there is no single implementation strategy for creating a fairer, more balanced system. However, system leaders can institute a number of changes that have proven to help reduce the disproportionality and disparate treatment of youth of color and other groups that tend to be disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system, such as LGBT youth or youth with disabilities.[274]

- *Collect and analyze data at all juvenile justice decision points and set goals for improvement.* To most effectively address disproportionality, it must first be defined and quantified.[275] Juvenile justice agencies will need to ensure that an accurate and consistent definition of race/ethnicity is used across all agencies working with youth and that the staff who record these data are trained accordingly.[276]

  Subsequently, juvenile justice systems should calculate a Relative Rate Index (RRI)—an objective means of comparing the rates of juvenile justice contact experienced by different groups of youth—at each key system decision point (arrest, petition, detention, adjudication, disposition, revocation) to establish baseline measures of disproportionality.[277] Using these data, systems can identify and track progress on achieving a set of realistic targets for improvement at each decision point and develop specific policy and practice reform strategies for accomplishing these goals.[278]

- *Designate clear leadership for improving system equity, and partner with a broad constituency, including communities of color, to better define and help solve the problem.* Providing resources for a Disproportionate Minority Contact Coordinator or division that is responsible for improving system equity can help ensure that it remains a priority. Responsible parties should also collaborate with nontraditional partners—particularly those from communities of color including parents, youth, and community/faith-based organizations and advocates—to develop a full picture of equity challenges and how best to overcome them.[279]

Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative has been a leader in helping jurisdictions across the country to improve their juvenile justice systems and reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Their Pathways Report on *Reducing Racial Disparities in Juvenile Detention* provides concrete policy and practice recommendations for reforms and offers lessons learned from jurisdictions who have worked to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in their juvenile justice practices.

To access the report, visit: aecf.org/resources/reducing-racial-disparities-in-juvenile-detention/.

DMC Action Network

Launched in 2007 as a project of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Action Network brings together state and local leaders from 17 jurisdictions to provide and share proven strategies and tools for reducing the disproportionate contact of youth of color in the juvenile justice system.

For more information on the DMC Action Network, visit www.cclp.org/DMC_Action_Network.php.

For example, the Oregon Youth Authority's Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations is tasked with ensuring fairness and inclusion for youth of color in the juvenile justice system. The office hosts annual summits that bring together state and local government officials and a broad, diverse cross section of system stakeholders to review data and develop action plans to reduce the overrepresentation of youth of color in their juvenile justice systems.[280]

- *Employ structured decision-making tools, and train staff on cultural competence to support their appropriate and effective use.* A key benefit of juvenile justice systems adopting risk and needs assessments, dispositional matrices, graduated responses systems, and other structured decision-making tools is the ability to make more objective, and potentially more equitable, supervision and service decisions. Juvenile justice system leaders can best maximize these benefits by providing staff with extensive and ongoing training on how to use these tools in a culturally competent manner.

  Cultural competence training should equip staff with a deeper awareness of cultural factors (e.g., differences in communication styles, body language and demeanor, language use, beliefs about family, and attitudes toward authority figures) that typically influence decisions about youth[281] and also raise staff's awareness of their own implicit biases and how to overcome them.[282] Through such training, staff can learn how to make supervision and service decisions that can best address youth's needs in ways that are sensitive to the norms and culture of a diverse array of young people.[283]

  For example, Rock County, Wisconsin, developed graduated responses for youth on supervision and trained officers in their appropriate use, seeking a more fair and objective way of administering sanctions for violations. Officials reported a 35-percent reduction in youth of color sanctioned to secure detention for probation violations, with the largest reduction reported for African-American youth. Admissions to secure detention were down 45 percent overall.[284]

- *Establish culturally-competent services and supports.* In addition to training, juvenile justice systems should adopt more culturally competent policies and practices to better meet the needs of the youth and families who come into contact with the system, including:

  - hiring interpreters and translators for non-English speaking youth and families;
  - developing brochures and other materials in native languages;
  - ensuring that treatment and education programs are relevant to all demographic groups
  - coordinating speakers, presentations, or special events to celebrate diversity and raise cultural awareness for youth under supervision;
  - assisting with transition support to find culturally relevant community services for youth with specific demographic needs; and
  - hiring, promoting, and retaining at all levels qualified personnel who reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the youth under system supervision.[285]

Finally, it's important that youth of color in the juvenile justice system have access to the community-based services and supports they need. The provision of these resources can prove challenging due to barriers involving eligibility criteria, language and culture,[286] perceptions of youth's response to programs and services,[287] and the fact that some evidence-based programs have not been rigorously evaluated with youth of color.[288] If administrators identify such barriers in their systems, they can support non-traditional partners and providers who are already working with youth of color or train existing contract providers to work with these youth in a more culturally competent way.[289] In Pennsylvania, for example, one county surveyed all of its religious and secular youth-serving organizations to identify and strengthen opportunities to improve outcomes for youth of color.[290]

CONCLUSION: IMPLEMENTING THE CORE PRINCIPLES

THIS WHITE PAPER PROVIDES JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS with core principles and related recommended policies and practices for reducing recidivism and improving other outcomes for youth under their supervision. The first critical principle of this framework, which sets an evidence-based foundation for everything that follows, is for juvenile justice systems to use validated risk assessments to objectively identify those youth who are least and most likely to reoffend. Policymakers should require juvenile justice systems to use these assessment results to minimize system interventions for youth with a low risk of reoffending and to focus the most restrictive and intensive system interventions on youth most likely to reoffend.

At the same time, the objective assessment of youth's dynamic risk factors offers a way for juvenile justice systems to identify and focus on the primary causes of individual youth's delinquent behavior. Juvenile justice systems that use these assessments results, in conjunction with findings from mental health and substance use assessments, as the primary basis for developing case plans for youth and matching them with appropriate services, are best positioned to use system interventions effectively to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes.

If validated risk and needs assessments help improve outcomes by identifying *who* the juvenile justice system should supervise and prioritize for intensive supervision and services and *what* needs should serve as the focal point for case planning and services, then principle two builds upon this foundation by detailing *how* juvenile justice systems can best address youth's needs. Programs and practices that promote youth's positive development and that use cognitive behavioral and family/community-centric approaches can generate substantial improvements in youth outcomes. Policymakers can require or incentivize juvenile justice systems to implement these programs and practices for youth being supervised in the community or who are in confinement, and also guide juvenile justice systems on how to select and implement these interventions in ways most likely to have the greatest impact and generate cost savings.

The ultimate test of service investments is whether they reduce recidivism and help youth to transition to a crime-free and productive adulthood. Given the data challenges experienced by many juvenile justice systems, policymakers must exert greater leadership to build the necessary system capacity to measure, analyze, collect, report, and use outcome data to guide ongoing system decisions and to hold agencies and service providers accountable for results.

At the same time, the juvenile justice system can only have a limited impact on youth outcomes on its own. As detailed in principle three, most youth in the juvenile justice system (and their families) are already involved in other service systems and often have significant mental health, substance use, child welfare, and education needs that can lead to or exacerbate delinquent behavior if left unaddressed. Policymakers can improve service access, speed, and quality, and use system resources most efficiently, by ensuring the juvenile justice system collaborates with other service systems to address youth's needs in a coordinated fashion and in ways proven by research to be effective.

As juvenile justice systems seek to employ this coordinated approach, principle four highlights how they must embrace the fact that youth are not little adults, and more deliberately and systematically engage families, other supportive adults, and even youth themselves in system decisions and interventions. Additionally, significant untapped potential exists for juvenile justice systems to reposition and better train and support the adults who manage and deliver system interventions to become agents of positive youth behavior change. In particular, more developmentally appropriate supervision and accountability policies and practices can help reduce recidivism and also improve both youth's and victims' experience with the system.

Finally, as juvenile justice systems seek to put all of these policy and practice improvements into place, they must also address system equity and perceptions of procedural fairness. Youth are keenly aware of and sensitive to whether they are treated fairly. The persistent and substantial inequity of juvenile justice system decisions undermines the broader legitimacy and effectiveness of juvenile justice legal processes and system interventions. Policymakers must invest in meaningful efforts to reduce system bias and disparate treatment to ensure that all youth can equally benefit from the recommended policies and practices detailed across all four principles.

Over the last 15 years, policymakers, juvenile justice systems, funders, federal agencies, researchers, and advocates came together in an extraordinary way to reduce the number of youth in confinement with dramatic results. The adoption and effective implementation of one of the principles, let alone all the recommended policies and practices described in this white paper will serve as a significant challenge for even the most advanced juvenile justice systems. It will require policymakers across all branches of government to provide substantial leadership, commit to using taxpayer dollars judiciously to support "what works," and focus on results and accountability. It will necessitate juvenile justice and other system leaders to establish a more cohesive vision for what the juvenile justice can and should do to improve youth outcomes, and to marshal the buy-in, capacity, expertise, and resources to achieve these goals. It will only succeed if juvenile justice agency leaders, judges and other court personnel, and front-line staff receive the tools, resources, and support they need to implement these policies and practices with high quality and fidelity to the research. And it requires juvenile justice systems to unite again with external partners and the community to launch another unwavering effort in pursuit of making a measurable impact on the key goals of the juvenile justice system—reducing subsequent offenses (thereby protecting public safety) and helping youth to become law-abiding and productive adults.

ENDNOTES

[1] Richard J. Bonnie et al., eds., *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach* (Washington DC: National Academies Press, 2013).

[2] "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement," ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/.

[3] Charles Puzzanchera, "Juvenile Arrests 2011," *National Report Series Bulletin* (December 2013): 1–3.

[4] There is no nationally accepted "average" juvenile recidivism rate. Individual recidivism reports from states show a wide range of outcomes, with many states exhibiting rearrest rates of more than 50 percent, and sometimes as high as 80 percent, for high-risk youth in the community over a 1-3 year follow-up period.

[5] Bruce Western and Katherine Beckett, "How Unregulated Is the U.S. Labor Market?: The Penal System as a Labor Market Institution," *American Journal of Sociology* 104, no. 4 (1999): 1030–60; Gary Sweeten, "Who Will Graduate? Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement," *Justice Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2006): 462–80; Anna Aizer and Joseph J. Doyle, Jr., "Juvenile Incarceration, Human Capital and Future Crime: Evidence from Randomly-Assigned Judges" (working paper, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, 2013), available at nber.org/papers/w19102.

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[7] James Bonta and Don A. Andrews, *Risk-Need-Responsivity Model for Offender Assessment and Rehabilitation* (Ottawa, ON: Public Safety Canada, 2007).

[8] Andrew Wachter, *Statewide Risk Assessment in Juvenile Probation* (Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2014), available at ncjj.org/pdf/JJGPS%20StateScan/JJGPS%20StateScan%20Statewide%20Risk%20Assessment%202014_2.pdf.

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[285] "Culturally Competent Staff Practices," juvenilejustice-tta.org/resources/dmc/dmc-strategies/training-and-ta/culturally-competent-staff-practices; Hoyt et al., *Pathways to Juvenile Detention Reform*.

[286] There is some evidence that matching the ethnicity of the provider to the family may increase program effectiveness. See, for example, Larry E. Beutler, Heidi Zetzer, and Elizabeth Yost, "Tailoring Interventions to Clients: Effects on Engagement and Retention," in: *Beyond the Therapeutic Alliance: Keeping the Drug-Dependent in Treatment*, eds., Lisa Simon Onken, Jack D. Blaine, and John J. Boren, (Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997), 85–109.

[287] Farrell, Betsinger, and Cosgrove, "Using Evidence-Based Programs."

[288] See Cailin O'Connor, Stephen A. Small, and Siobhan M. Cooney, "Culturally Appropriate Programming: What Do We Know About Evidence-Based Programs for Culturally and Ethnically Diverse Youth and their Families?" *What Works, Wisconsin– Research to Practice Series* 1, no. 1 (2007): 1–5, available at whatworks.uwex.edu/attachment/whatworks_01.pdf; Sandra Jo Wilson, Mark W. Lipsey, and Haluk Soydan, "Are Mainstream Programs for Juvenile Delinquency Less Effective with Minority Youth than Majority Youth? A Meta-Analysis of Outcomes Research," *Research on Social Work Practice* 13, no. 1 (2003): 3–26.

[289] Sarah Cusworth Walker, Eric Trupin, and Jacquelyn Hansen, *A Toolkit for Applying the Cultural Enhancement Model To Evidence-Based Practice* (Chicago: Models for Change, November 2013), available at modelsforchange.net/publications/476.

[290] Shoenberg, *Innovation Brief*.

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