

THE LINK

CONNECTING JUVENILE JUSTICE AND CHILD WELFARE

The Kentucky Experience: Serving Youth from Prevention to Aftercare

The Kentucky General Assembly established the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) in 1996 in response to a federal consent decree that required the commonwealth to improve confinement conditions in its juvenile corrections facilities. During its five years under the consent decree, Kentucky transformed its juvenile justice system from one of the most inadequate in the nation to one of the best.

DJJ promotes a comprehensive array of cost-effective services for at-risk youth, directed toward preventing delinquency, providing efficient rehabilitation services, and altering the rate of recidivism with appropriate aftercare, while minimizing risk to the community. In providing services, DJJ supports and believes in the complete involvement of both the family and the community in the rehabilitation process.

Prevention and Early Intervention

DJJ has created several boards and councils to provide oversight of federal and state juvenile justice and delinquency prevention grant funding. Through the work of these groups, DJJ provides grants to local communities for prevention, intervention, and alternatives to secure detention programming. The department has also partnered with the state National Guard to create the Kentucky Youth ChalleNge Program, a prevention and early intervention program for youth ages 16-18 who have

dropped out of school and are not charged with a felony offense. The program seeks to improve the life skills and employment potential of these youth through military-based training.

Detention

DJJ currently monitors county-operated intermittent holding facilities, juvenile holding facilities, and secure juvenile detention facilities for compliance with state and federal mandates for detaining juveniles securely. The department also operates four secure juvenile detention facilities and will open or contract for six additional facilities to assume responsibility for the pretrial detention of all Kentucky juveniles alleged to be delinquent. Under the plan, juvenile detention centers will be located within a reasonable distance of those counties that use the facilities the most.

DJJ views detention as a process rather than a secure custody environment. Thus, as state-operated

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Juvenile Justice Division reports that the feedback from the inaugural issue of *The Link* has been terrific. I was pleased to hear from many first-issue recipients that we are providing an informative and valuable "link" between the child welfare and juvenile justice communities.

The newsletter, however, is just one example of the important and impressive work coming from this new division within CWLA. With assistance from Linda Harllee and Sheryce Parrish, Director Rodney Albert has molded the division's efforts and led the League's campaign to promote awareness of the links between child welfare and juvenile justice. His talent and infectious energy have given the unit a strong start.

Unfortunately, family commitments have called Rodney back to his native Oklahoma. He quips, "I'm trading my wingtips for cowboy boots." All of us at CWLA wish him happiness and success in his new endeavor.

Although Rodney will be sorely missed, the League's Juvenile Justice Division will remain in able hands. John Tuell takes over the division on July 9. John comes to the League from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), where he was Deputy Director and Region Chief for the State and Tribal Assistance Division. At OJJDP, John was responsible for the operation and administration of a division that implements six major federal block and discretionary grants to states and territories. Previously, he worked for the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court as an Administrator for the Boy's Probation House and the South County Probation Office. John has a master's degree in criminal justice from George Washington University and a bachelor's degree in social work from James Madison University.

Under John's leadership, the division will continue CWLA's outreach in the area of juvenile justice. We look forward to continuing the dialogue on the links between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Sincerely,



Shay Bilchik
CWLA Executive Director

THE LINK CONNECTING JUVENILE JUSTICE AND CHILD WELFARE

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The Child Welfare League of America is the nation's oldest and largest membership-based child welfare organization. We are committed to engaging people everywhere in promoting the well-being of children, youth, and their families, and protecting every child from harm.

A list of staff in CWLA service areas is available on the internet at www.cwla.org/whowhat/serviceareas.htm.

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CWLA Convenes National Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice

The Juvenile Justice Division is addressing the link between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and advocating for more appropriate, least restrictive placements for youth who come into the juvenile justice system.

An essential component of successfully implementing this new initiative is getting expert advice from people with an interest in juvenile justice issues. As a result, CWLA has established a National Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice.

CWLA invited representatives of its public and private member agencies to join the advisory

committee. This charter group represents a broad range of perspectives from around the country.

The committee held its first meeting March 6, 2001, in conjunction with CWLA's national conference in Washington, DC. In the next phase, CWLA will invite additional members from outside CWLA to serve, including youth, public and private juvenile justice agencies, and national organizations concerned with juvenile justice.

Ralph Kelly, Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, and Kathy G. Colbenson, CEO of CHRIS Homes, Atlanta, have agreed to serve as committee

cochairs. The balanced perspectives of Kelly, who heads the public agency that has been the driving force in the successful reformation of Kentucky's juvenile justice system, and Colbenson, who runs an accredited private organization serving the mental health needs of youth from the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, will provide excellent leadership for this effort.

CWLA welcomes the expertise of the committee members and looks forward to working together in a productive relationship as we move forward to reduce juvenile delinquency nationwide.

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Meet the Chairs • Meet the Chairs

The Link Interviews the Chairs of the Newly Formed National Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice

Kathy Colbenson became CEO of CHRIS Homes in Atlanta, Georgia, a therapeutic treatment program for abused and neglected children with severe emotional disturbance, in 1987. At that time, the agency operated four therapeutic group homes and an independent living program with a total capacity of 30 and an annual operating budget of \$402,000. Today, CHRIS Homes provides flexible, family-focused, community-based mental health treatment services to troubled children and their families through its residential and nonresidential programs. The agency's budget is more than \$4,800,000 and it employs 100 talented and committed people.

Under Colbenson's leadership, CHRIS Homes received national accreditation from the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services and was named Agency of the Year in 1996 and 1998 by the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children (GAHSC). Colbenson received an award for Administrator of the Year in 1998 from GAHSC and was recognized as one of ten "Women of Distinction" in February 2000 for her work in behalf of children.

In October 1998, CHRIS Homes received the Managing for Excellence Award from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta. In June 2000, CHRIS Homes received the Valuing Diversity Award from the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, and in January 2001, the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award from Emory University's Goizueta Business School and Rollins School of Public Health.

Colbenson holds a master's degree in psychology from West Georgia College and was a practicing clinician between 1974 and 1990. Colbenson lives in East Atlanta with her husband, two golden retrievers, two cats, and an assortment of backyard birds and squirrels. She is the daughter of a Baptist minister, the mother of a 24-year-old daughter and a 19-year-old stepdaughter, and a member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Atlanta.

Ralph E. Kelly has an extensive background in child welfare and juvenile justice services and has worked in a variety of capacities with at-risk children, youth, and families for the past 30 years. Kelly began his

career as a youth worker in a residential treatment center and held a number of posts in residential and community-based settings before becoming the executive director of a multifunctional child welfare and family services organization.

During the early 1980s, Kelly served as Executive Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice. He joined the New York State Division of Parole in 1985, where he held supervisory and administrative positions, including directorship of an aftercare program for boot camp graduates, which was the largest and most extensive program of its kind in the nation.

In September 1994, he became Director of the New Jersey Division of Juvenile Services, a program serving more than 750 delinquent youngsters in 40 residential and day treatment programs.

In September 1996, Kelly became the first Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice. Since that time, he has overseen the transfer of residential, group home, day treatment, and juvenile probation programs; implemented a strategy for compliance with the U.S. consent decree; developed and implemented a 320-hour preservice training program for youth workers; enhanced the staffing, mental health services, and quality of care in all programs; developed and implemented a state-wide plan for state-operated detention and alternative-to-detention programs; implemented a community-based prevention program; developed the Juvenile Intensive Supervision Teams program; implemented intensive in-home supervision in several counties; and led the effort to bring Kentucky into compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. On January 16, 2001, Kentucky achieved full compliance with the federal decree.

Kelly has been instrumental in the movement to professionalize the role of the child and youth care worker. He was the first president of the New York State Association of Child and Youth Care Workers and led that organization to develop the first statewide certification program for child and youth care professionals. In the early 1980s, he was the founding President

Meet the Chairs • Meet the Chairs

of the National Organization of Child Care Workers (now the Association of Child and Youth Care Practitioners), further identifying the need for the professionalization of the child and youth care worker. He currently serves on several boards, including the Inter-Association Child Care Conference, Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, and Child Welfare Institute, and is a delegate to the American Correctional Association.

Kelly has received numerous honors for his work, including the Albert E. Treischman Award for outstanding leadership in child and youth care; the Outstanding Alumni Award from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work; and the Lifetime Achievement Award for Services to America's Youth from the Ohio Association of Child and Youth Care Professionals. Kelly has spoken at a number of conferences and seminars in North America and has achieved an international reputation in the field of child and youth care work.

Kelly received his bachelor's degree in sociology and master's degree in child care and child development from the University of Pittsburgh. He received his doctorate in education from Nova Southeastern University in Florida. Kelly is married to Sandra E. Kelly, a nurse consultant.

Q: How did you come to work with vulnerable youth? Tell us about your current position.

Colbenson: I am a licensed marriage and family therapist and began work as a clinician. My specialty is working with children, adolescents, and families. In 1980, I met my first [child welfare] system child and, although I went on to work in other settings and eventually started a private practice, that child and her situation never left me. Meeting that child got under my skin, and my passion for working with the most vulnerable youth in our society started growing. Since 1987, I have served as the CEO for CHRIS Homes, and now I participate in seeing those children learn how to succeed.

Kelly: *I started as a child care worker in a private Catholic child care agency more than 30 years ago to pay for college and I ended up staying in the work. Since 1996, I have served as the Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice.*

Q: Share your philosophy of treating or serving youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Colbenson: I believe serving the whole child is the key to producing positive outcomes. That means looking at the child's strengths and needs in a comprehensive way that considers each child's environmental context. I believe these children, and for that matter all of us, are products of our genetics, the world we live in, and the choices we make. Very often, the troublesome behaviors these youth exhibit are a direct result of the skills they had to develop to survive. They cannot be expected to give up those behaviors until they experience the world as a safer place and discover that some adults are trustworthy. The philosophy of treatment at CHRIS Homes begins with addressing each child's basic and fundamental need to be cared for by adults who will both nurture them and set limits, addressing basic socialization and educational needs.

Kelly: *Youth involved in the juvenile justice system should certainly be provided with treatment and rehabilitation—in an effort to reduce recidivism to crime by holding youth accountable for their actions while providing appropriate sanctions and needed services. Sanctions work to help youngsters learn that they must be held accountable for their behavior. Services are programs of treatment and the rehabilitation necessary to help youngsters achieve productive lives. An effective juvenile justice system cannot provide sanctions without also providing needed services. Conversely, an effective juvenile justice system cannot provide needed services without also providing appropriate sanctions. There must be a balance.*

Q: What do you believe are the greatest problems facing youth and families in this country?

Colbenson: Children and families need stability and time to develop relationships and create support systems. The world is changing rapidly, but basic human developmental needs are the same. The world is speeding along, but our development as civilized persons cannot be rushed without a price. Our challenge is how to create the stability within which our children can develop a sense of individual self-worth and concern for others.

In this society, we are constantly reminded of what we do not have. Some people have been able to

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make great advances and gain great knowledge and wealth, but most have not. So what is happening to those with fewer resources? We are losing our middle class, and knowledge gaps have been created. Poverty is the single greatest risk factor for a poor outcome. The media tells youth all the things they should want, but society does not provide them with the tools to attain them. Youth and many families are having difficulties legitimately earning enough money to survive.

Kelly: *The continuing need for better educational systems to address drop-out youth or youth who are no longer finding satisfaction in attending school; parents who are increasingly suffering from a lack of effective parenting skills; and the media's glorification of violence.*

Q: For the sake of being tough on crime, lawmakers in many jurisdictions have created systems that sweep youth offenders into adult systems and facilities, with little or no chance for rehabilitation. What is your opinion of this increasing trend?

Colbenson: I think it is alarming. As a country, we incarcerate more people than any other industrialized nation. We want to take children—who we as a society have failed—and write them off, lock them up, and then expect taxpayers to pay for their incarceration. As a taxpayer, I want to put my money in rehabilitation. We label children so horribly. We label a 9-year-old male child as a sex offender after he was sexually abused because he touches another little girl or boy. That child is copying what was done to him. If you take the history of any child in any treatment program or jail, you are going to find there were physical, psychological, emotional, or developmental needs that were not met—often at many different points along the way.

Kelly: *This is a bad trend. Kids, regardless of their offenses, should be handled in the juvenile justice system up until the age of 18 or 21. An effective juvenile justice system has a clear philosophy of rehabilitation and treatment, which is not always present in adult systems.*

Q: CWLA is actively involved in identifying the links between child maltreatment and juvenile justice. Share your ideas regarding these links, and whether you believe “these are the same children” in both systems?

Colbenson: Yes, a resounding yes. Not every child welfare child is in the juvenile justice system, but just about every child in the juvenile justice system came

to the attention of the child welfare system, and many had problems in the educational system at some point along the way. The youth whom we serve at CHRIS Homes had red flags all over the place prior to their entry into the juvenile justice system. These youth do not have the tools to get their needs met legitimately, and perhaps their parents do not either. This gets back to the basic needs.

Kelly: *Yes, these are definitely the same children. Very few kids who assault have not also been assaulted themselves. Many of our kids are both victims and victimizers. In most situations, the backgrounds of young people explain some of the reasons for their behavior. This knowledge is useful in developing appropriate services for youngsters and handling youngsters on a day-to-day basis. In Kentucky, we teach this to our youth care workers (juvenile correctional officers). This knowledge helps to create a staff that is more understanding and empathetic to the needs of the juveniles.*

Q: Many youth in the juvenile justice system need services from multiple systems; generally, however, a lack of communication and coordination exists across involved systems, including mental health and substance abuse, education, child welfare, and juvenile justice. How do you think systems can improve in responding to this vulnerable population?

Colbenson: I think the way our systems are currently set up is a huge part of the problem. There are pots of money and that creates turf guarding. The mindset is to protect your pot of money. Our system is set up so that it is easy to say the child in need is not my child. Systems are afraid to pool their monies, and the welfare of the child gets lost in the struggle between systems. CWLA's effort is a giant step in the right direction. If we are truly going to serve children, we have to find ways to coordinate services across systems. Every system touches a child. There are no pure one-system children.

Kelly: *There must be a collaborative and coordinated effort on all levels. Kentucky has 11 interdisciplinary Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Councils throughout the state, with a broad base of representation including law enforcement, local officials, judges, educators, business leaders, religious leaders, youth, and other community members. Each council has a staff person paid for with state funds. We have found these councils to be very effective in promoting cross-system communication.*

Q: Numerous studies document the racial disparities in the juvenile justice system. What do you think is the first step to combat this problem?

Colbenson: By recognizing the problem, acknowledging it, and not making excuses for it. Everyone, at every step, every stage of the system, especially at the point of entry, has to be asked to consciously think about racial disparities, and it has to be monitored by those in authority. If African American youth are disproportionately found in the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system, we must ask why are the youth receiving high-end services most often white? African American youth get labeled as aggressive much more often than they get diagnosed with a mental health problem. A white kid is more often assessed for a mental health program. This issue is not looked at closely enough, and the discrimination begins at the earliest points in the system.

Kelly: *The first step to combating racial disparity in the juvenile justice system is to understand the problem. Kentucky is currently conducting an extensive study on disproportionate minority confinement to explore the causes of this problem in our state. The problem exists not only in the juvenile justice system, but throughout the entire criminal justice system. We hope to have some recommendations by January 2002 in the event there is a need to develop proposed legislation.*

Q: School shootings are a concern across the country. What strategies may be effective in preventing further shootings?

Colbenson: It seems to me that adults are afraid to speak to and correct kids. Kids want to be corrected, and they want limits set. They really do not want all the power and freedom they are given. A standard of respectful behavior needs to be set and enforced by the use of corrective statements. Research has shown that a corrective statement by an adult makes a huge difference to a child who is being put down. Adults must say to a youth that it is not okay to call another person names, and be willing to correct bad behavior as many times as it is required. Adults have gotten away from correcting bad behavior. In the recent shootings, the shooters have been middle-class white kids who felt picked on and outcast.

The other piece is that guns must be controlled. If there is no gun handy, then a kid cannot take a gun to school. Adults need to take action.

Kelly: *We need to listen to our kids more. I have addressed high school students throughout the state on methods to prevent violence in our schools. I advise*

the kids that they must take responsibility for what goes on in their schools. Oftentimes, these students know more about what is going on than the adults. At the same time, schools need to reach out more to the students. These recent school shootings have generally involved alienated youngsters, and our schools must find a way to reach out to all of the students.

Q: In your opinion, what is the answer to combating juvenile delinquency nationwide?

Colbenson: Early detection is the answer to combating juvenile delinquency—the early detection of family instability, homelessness, poor school performance, and incidents of abuse and neglect. The best prevention is intervention. This means responding to address problems early and fully.

Kelly: *Prevention. Putting more money in the front end than the back end. It costs a fraction of the money to spend on the front end than the back end, which is incarceration; and it costs a little larger fraction to put community-based services in place. There are lots of innovative and effective ways to address the needs of juveniles in the community, and we are attempting to do some of this in Kentucky—mentoring programs, afterschool programs, tutoring programs, etc. Prevention works. Research suggests that crime can be reduced by 75% by getting kids to finish school. These types of programs help ensure that our kids finish school.*

Q: What is your vision for CWLA's involvement in advocating for an effective, fair juvenile justice system?

Colbenson: One voice for all children—a voice that pulls systems together for all children. CWLA has an opportunity to frame the problem so the public can get behind the effort and the politicians cannot refuse it. The challenge is that money invested in children will never result in an immediate savings in the pots of money that serve children and families. But the positive effects, the payoff, will be seen later on down the line. CWLA is helping through this juvenile justice initiative by framing the problem and encouraging systems to come together for all children.

Kelly: *CWLA is the premiere child advocacy organization in this country. I am very excited about this new initiative, and I would like to see CWLA take a strong advocacy role for youth in the juvenile justice system. Juvenile justice kids are America's children also. When kids commit a crime, they should not get left out—many of these kids are in the child welfare system also.*

Hearing on Violence Prevention Acknowledges Virginia Program

Studies show that victims of child abuse are more likely to engage in criminal activity later in life and that youth with histories of severe abuse and neglect are much more likely to become chronic and serious juvenile offenders. U.S. Representative Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA) advocates for violence prevention, starting at the earliest age possible, and he continues to develop legislation that would increase resources for violence prevention initiatives.

"While some in Congress push 'tough on crime' legislation with dubious effects, we already know what works to reduce crime," Scott stresses. "All the research shows that prevention and early intervention programs like Healthy Families Virginia do far more to prevent violence by stopping it from happening in the first place."

Joseph Galano, Department of Psychology, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, testified at a congressional briefing on violence prevention convened by Scott on March 13. In his testimony, Galano cited Healthy Families Virginia, an initiative designed to prevent child abuse and neglect and, ultimately, prevent juvenile crime.

Healthy Families Virginia began in 1994 and is part of the national Healthy Families America initiative, which has proven effective in preventing child abuse and neglect. The goal of Healthy Families Virginia is to ensure that each child has the best possible start in life and enters school ready to learn. Healthy Families Virginia is a free, voluntary program offering

support to first-time parents of all socioeconomic levels. Information and support are available to all new parents, while the program offers overburdened families home visits for up to five years.

Home visitation by a trained family support worker is a key element. The program emphasizes child development, health, and nutrition; parent-child interaction and discipline; issues impacting family functioning; family referrals to existing resources and services; and education and modeling to promote nurturing relationships. Healthy Families Virginia is different from most community systems, many of which are designed to serve families once problems have occurred. Instead, Healthy Families Virginia is initiated before inappropriate parenting behaviors develop.

Initiatives in the Healthy Families Model often bring significant cost savings. The Oregon Healthy Start Program estimates the cost savings associated with its early prevention program to be \$3,000 per participant. The savings are reflected in reduced arrests and associated costs among youth ages 12–15, reduced criminal justice costs from averted criminal acts in adult years, and reductions in estimated crime victim costs. Money spent on prevention means less money spent to treat, rehabilitate, or confine affected children later in life.

Galano's testimony is available online at www.house.gov/scott/youth_violence_briefing_galano_statement.htm.

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

The **Younger Americans Act** continues to gain support. The bill has more than 30 cosponsors in the House of Representatives as of this writing, and a Senate version of the bill was recently introduced. A broad grass-roots effort is underway throughout the country to build support for the bill. Many young people, youth-serving agencies, and other organizations are getting involved and urging their senators and representatives to support the legislation. To find out how you can help, visit the National Youth Development Information Center website at www.nydic.org and click on Younger Americans Act. For more information on the bill, visit the Child Welfare League of America website at www.cwla.org and click on Advocacy, or contact the Public Policy Division, 202/942-0256, e-mail advocate@cwla.org.

U.S. Representatives Lamar Smith (R-TX) and Bobby Scott (D-VA) have introduced legislation to make improvements in the juvenile justice system. The **Consequences for Juvenile Offenders Act**, H.R. 863, would provide \$1.5 billion over three years to states to implement a system of graduated sanctions for crimes committed. A primary goal of the measure is to keep troubled children from committing serious crimes by addressing the issues when they commit minor offenses. Sanctions could include counseling, restitution, community service, a fine, probation, or confinement. Funds may be used to establish or expand substance abuse programs, establish accountability programs to reduce recidivism, and train law enforcement personnel with respect to juvenile crime.

The House Judiciary Committee adopted the bill by voice vote on March 28; the bill now awaits action by the full House. The Senate will likely take up the House bill shortly after final action in the House.

JUVENILE JUSTICE NEWS AND RESOURCES

OJJDP Creates Child Protection Division

A new *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, released April 9 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), describes a newly created Child Protection Division and its efforts to safeguard children by supporting research and programs on child victimization and exposure to violence; providing information, training, and technical assistance to state, local, and community-based agencies; and developing and demonstrating effective child protection initiatives.

The connection between childhood maltreatment and juvenile delinquency has been indicated in more than two decades of research. OJJDP's establishment of a Child Protection Division demonstrates a recognition of the need to bring child protection to the forefront of our nation's efforts to reduce delinquency.

Copies of the *Juvenile Justice Bulletin, Keeping Children Safe: OJJDP's Child Protection Division* (NCJ #186158) are available at www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/general.html#186158. To order free printed copies, write OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20857; or call 800/638-8736.

Juvenile Court Training Curriculum Available

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation provided funding to the Youth Law Center, the Juvenile Law Center, and the American Bar Association Juvenile Justice Center to develop and provide training for juvenile justice

professionals around the country. The project's goal was to develop a training curriculum that applied the findings of adolescent development and related research to practice issues confronted by juvenile court practitioners.

The six-module curriculum is a result of trainings developed and delivered by experts nationwide. The information is designed for judges, prosecutors, defenders, probation staff, and other juvenile justice professionals.

This training curriculum is designed to support improvements in the juvenile justice system in local jurisdictions. Possible strategies include using the training modules as a basis to work with local juvenile justice officials, schools, mental health professionals, PTAs, city councils, media, and others interested in improving the quality of the juvenile justice system. The modules include:

- Kids are Different: How Knowledge of Adolescent Development Theory Can Aid Decisionmaking in Court
- Talking to Teens in the Justice System: Strategies for Interviewing Adolescent Defendants, Witnesses, and Victims
- Mental Health Assessments in the Justice System: How to Get High Quality Evaluations and What to Do with Them in Court
- The Pathways to Youth Violence: How Child Maltreatment and Other Risk Factors Lead Children to Chronically Aggressive Behavior
- Special Ed Kids in the Justice System: How to Recognize and

Treat Young People with Disabilities that Compromise their Ability to Comprehend, Learn, and Behave

- Evaluating Youth Competence in the Justice System
- Literature Review: Understanding Adolescents—A Juvenile Court Training Curriculum

Module 4 focuses on the development dynamics of violent offending—what causes the onset of violent behavior in children, and what causes violent behavior to continue into adulthood. This module allows training participants to acquire the knowledge needed to identify developmentally appropriate interventions for young people who have committed violent acts.

The MacArthur Juvenile Court Training Curriculum is available online through the American Bar Association Juvenile Justice Center's website, www.abanet.org/crimjust/juvjus/macarthur.html. From the site, you can access the table of contents and executive summary for each module, or the entire module text.

Hard copy sets of all six modules and the literature review are available for \$50. To order a set or receive more information about the modules, contact Mary Ann Scali at scalim@staff.abanet.org.

Report Reviews Research on Juveniles Who Commit Sexual Offenses

On March 20, OJJDP released a report reviewing research and literature pertaining to juveniles who have committed sex offenses. The report provides a comprehensive,

Building Blocks for Youth:

Youth, Race, & Crime in the News

Youth rarely appear in the news, but when they do, they are often connected to violence or crime. A new study finds the news media unduly connect youth to crime and violence and that youth of color are overrepresented as perpetrators and underrepresented as victims of crime.

Off Balance: Youth, Race, & Crime in the News is the fourth in an ongoing series of analyses published by Building Blocks For Youth, a multiorganizational initiative whose goal is to promote a fair, effective juvenile justice system.

In January 2000, Building Blocks issued its first report, *The Color of Justice*, which found youth of color in California were more than eight times as likely to be incarcerated by adult courts as white youth for equally serious crimes. Building Blocks' comprehensive national study, *And Justice for Some*, reported youth of color are treated more severely than white youth at each stage of the justice system, even when charged with the same offenses. In October 2000, Building Blocks' third report, *Youth Crime, Adult Time*, an in-depth study of youth prosecuted as adults in 18 of the nation's largest jurisdictions,

found racial disparities similar to its earlier reports and raised serious concerns about the fairness and appropriateness of the process.

This latest report, prepared by the Justice Policy Institute and the Berkeley Media Studies Group, examines the crime coverage in 70 newspapers and television news shows. Key findings show

- The news media report crime, especially violent crime, out of proportion to its actual occurrence.
- The news media report crime as a series of individual events without adequate attention to its overall context.
- The news media, particularly television news, unduly connect race and crime, especially violent crime.
- Few studies examine portrayals of youth on the news. Those that do find youth rarely appear in the news and when they do, they are connected to violence.

The study notes the combined distortions of people of color overrepresented as criminals and underrepresented as victims, young people overrepresented as criminals, and the excessive cover-

age of violent crime produce an inaccurate and unfair image of crime in America. Despite sharp declines in youth crime, the public expresses great fear of its young people. "Rather than informing citizens about their world," the report says, "the news is reinforcing stereotypes that inhibit society's ability to respond to the problem of crime, including juvenile crime."

Youth, Race, & Crime in the News offers recommendations and suggestions to the media in an effort to create a more accurate overall picture of crime. The report urges that "reporters, editors, and producers expand their sources; provide context for crime news; increase enterprise and investigative journalism; balance stories about crime and youth with stories about youth generally; conduct and discuss content audits of their own news; and examine the story selection process and make adjustments, if necessary."

The report is available at www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/media; contact the Youth Law Center, 1010 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20005-4902; or call 202/637-0377.

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secure juvenile detention facilities open, the department ensures a wide range of alternatives to secure detention programs are also available. This creates a continuum of detention services in which the juvenile is matched with an appropriate level of supervision and restriction.

Rehabilitation

In seeking to rehabilitate delinquent youth, the department recognizes the importance of viewing each youth as an individual with unique treatment needs. Each DJJ program uses a multidisciplinary treatment team to review those treatment needs and develop individualized treatment plans for each youth. Education is a key factor in rehabilitation, so DJJ treatment teams develop and integrate individualized education plans into treatment. Through aftercare planning and the increased employability that results from academic achievement, workplace readiness training, and vocational training, DJJ seeks to keep youth crime free when they return to their communities.

Kentucky has been nationally recognized for the continuum of care it provides for rehabilitating delinquent youth. DJJ both operates and contracts for a variety of programs, including community supervision, day treatment, group homes, residential treatment, and private child care. DJJ seeks to serve youth in the least restrictive, most appropriate placements possible.

DJJ has created many programs to better meet the needs of the juveniles it serves:

- **The Juvenile Intensive Supervision Team** program is a partnership between local law enforcement agencies and DJJ to provide intensive surveillance of delinquent youth placed in the community.

- **The Juvenile Community Work Program** enhances community services options in rural communities by providing a positive environment in which to hold youth accountable for delinquent acts.
- **The Cadet Leadership and Education Program** is an evolved form of boot camp that combines military drilling and regimen with intensive therapeutic services and supported transition back into the community.

Collaboration

At one time, DJJ was housed within Kentucky's Cabinet for Families and Children (CFC). Once DJJ became a separate agency, however, communication and coordination problems arose. To resolve those difficulties, CFC and DJJ formed a working group with representatives from each agency. A memorandum of understanding allows the agencies to share records with one another and to assist each other's efforts. This collaboration allows the two agencies to make better decisions in the interests of the children and youth they serve.

Since its impetus, DJJ has worked to create a unified juvenile justice system by coordinating all juvenile justice services from prevention through aftercare. DJJ has made incredible progress toward this goal and recognizes that maintaining a model juvenile justice system requires continuous improvement.

For more information about DJJ, contact Vicki Reed or Kym Newcom, Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, 1025 Capital Center Drive, Frankfort, KY 40601; 502/573-2738; vrreed@mail.state.ky.us or kknwcom@mail.state.ky.us.

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annotated account of the characteristics of these juveniles and the types of offenses they commit. The report also describes a broad array of clinical assessment tools, including psychological testing; presents a thorough discussion of recidivism rates and issues; and concludes with a review of treatment approaches and settings and a look at program assessment. The report lists more than 125 references. The information is designed to better enable professionals to address the developmental needs of juveniles who have committed sex offenses and the unique risks these juveniles pose.

To obtain copies of *Juveniles Who Have Sexually Offended: A Review of the Professional Literature* visit www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/

pubs/general.html#184739; write OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20857; or call 800/638-8736.

New Bulletin Offers Guidelines for Selecting Child Victimization Questionnaires

A new OJJDP bulletin provides guidance to professionals who work with children about selecting the right questionnaire to measure possible victimization. The bulletin describes the different types of questionnaires and methods to determine which would work best.

Questionnaires are often the most reliable way to determine child victimization because they

are clear, specific, and comprehensive. Children are also often more likely to report victimization on questionnaires than they are during informal talks. In addition, questionnaires can capture many victimizations that are not reported to police.

Choosing and Using Child Victimization Questionnaires is available online through OJJDP at www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/violvict.html#186027. For additional information, or to obtain a copy of this publication, visit www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org; write OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20857; or call 800/638-8736.