



Policy Brief

**Tennessee
Commission
on Children
and Youth**

A Therapeutic Approach to Juvenile Justice

**January
2015**

"We need to make sure that the solution we have is not causing a negative impact."

The Honorable Dwight Stokes, Juvenile Court Judge, Sevier County, Tennessee

"A Therapeutic Approach to Juvenile Justice" was primarily developed during Fall 2014 following incidents at two Tennessee Department of Children's Services' (DCS) Youth Development Centers. As a follow-up to these events, staff with the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth has been engaged with the Department of Children's Services in a variety of ways regarding strategies to address the climate within the facilities and improve outcomes for youth. The consistent theme has been to provide more therapeutic services, as discussed in this Policy Brief. TCCY is very pleased DCS is moving in that direction and expresses appreciation to Commissioner Jim Henry and leadership staff at DCS for their commitment to making lasting changes by implementing a therapeutic approach in the youth development centers. As discussed in this Policy Brief, Tennessee youth and families and Tennessee taxpayers deserve no less.

Linda O'Neal

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Juvenile Justice in Tennessee

The juvenile justice system in Tennessee served 1,200 youth in state-residential facilities in fiscal year 2012-13.¹ Tennessee’s shared future prosperity depends on fostering the health and well-being of the next generation. Equipping today’s most at-risk youth for the future means adapting policies that will not do more harm than good in the long run.

“There has been a great advance in knowledge—including how to operationalize it in practice. And at this stage, we don’t know everything, **but we know much more about how to have an effective system than we are actually practicing.** The challenge is how to get what we know into practice.”

Mark Lipsey, Director, Peabody Research Institute

Road Map

- **Philosophy Matters** – Despite enduring beliefs about the best way to deal with troubled youth, data suggest only a therapeutic approach enacts positive, long-term results.
- **Money Matters** – Smaller, community-based programs are common sense alternatives that produce better results for taxpayer investment.
- **Data Matter** – Evidence from longitudinal research and meta-analyses lists the key elements of model juvenile justice programs.
- **Environment Matters** – Mental health and brain development exert a strong influence on the life of young offenders. Knowledge about adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and mental health awareness should guide how decision-makers address problems and recommend solutions.
- **Youth Matter** – Children of color will experience a disproportionate amount of contact with the juvenile justice system, even though their offense rate is comparable to their peers. A just and fair approach to juvenile justice should be implemented to address this disparity.
- **Other States** – Success from states like Alabama and Missouri show focusing on smaller facilities and community-based alternatives yield promising results in terms of public safety, lowered costs and youth outcomes.
- **General Programs** – Opportunities for juvenile justice reform abound as decision-makers consider the gamut of successful programs.

Recommendations for Tennessee

1. Shift toward a therapeutic rather than a correctional approach to juvenile justice, which is more effective, cost-efficient and beneficial for all groups involved.
2. Emphasize risk assessment, needs assessment and case management strategies with youth to tailor approaches, limit unnecessary treatments and yield the best outcomes for each child’s situation.
3. Develop a comprehensive, cohesive plan to provide juvenile justice services in a therapeutic environment utilizing best practices and evidence-based/evidence-informed services.
4. Rely on community-based alternatives to juvenile justice that use smaller facilities and have well-trained staff to supervise youth.
5. Reduce racial disparities and bias that exist within the current juvenile justice system.
6. Develop measurements for recidivism in the juvenile justice system to inform program evaluation, and then prioritize programs that reduce recidivism and improve youth outcomes.
7. Use residential placements only for children who are a safety risk.



PHILOSOPHY MATTERS: Lessons from History

Nationally, the United States has witnessed numerous trends in the ways actors handle juvenile justice. In the 1960s, the emphasis rested on rehabilitation and restoration. With the “tough on crime” and “war on drugs” narrative of the 1980s, punishment, corrections and detention characterized many approaches to juvenile justice. Despite beliefs about what *should* be the best way to resolve problems, the evidence is clear about which philosophies have the best lasting effects on public safety, economic development and stronger communities. [One comprehensive study](#) analyzed the effectiveness of programs that used different methods when addressing juveniles.ⁱⁱ Two broad philosophies were distinguished.

The Therapeutic Approach

- Oriented to get kids back on track instead of simply punishing them;
- Stresses accountability over punishment;
- Addresses underlying causes of poor behavior.

Correctional (external controls to suppress bad behavior)	Therapeutic (skills, relationships, insights)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programs oriented toward instilling discipline (boot camp); ▪ Programs aimed at deterrence through fear of the consequences of bad behavior (prison visitation programs like Scared Straight); ▪ Programs emphasizing surveillance to detect bad behavior (probation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restorative (restitution and remediation); ▪ Skill-building (cognitive behavioral techniques, social skills, academic/vocational skill building); ▪ Counseling (individual, group, family; mentoring); ▪ Multiple Coordinated Services (case management and service brokering).

Findings

- Programs that focused on discipline and deterrence alone had a negative effect on recidivism. These programs actually saw increases in the rate of recidivism when compared to their therapeutic counterparts. More youth returned to the system within a few years, and public safety decreased.
- Programs that kept children in their communities instead of disconnecting them from their prosocial environment experienced positive gains and more lasting positive effects.

Importance of Risk Assessment

- Mental illness affects a large number of youth who are involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice system. Tennessee statistics match the national average, showing roughly 54 percent of children in foster care placements and 89 percent of children in youth development centers had mental health diagnoses in fiscal year 2011.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Over two-thirds of youth in juvenile justice detention centers and correctional facilities today meet criteria for one or more mental disorders.^{iv}
- Better mental health services may reduce the initial and subsequent juvenile justice involvement by almost a third, with effects were more pronounced for serious offenders.^{vi}



MONEY MATTERS: Looking at the Numbers

According to the [Justice Policy Institute](#), 93,000 young people were held in juvenile justice facilities in 2008. Over two-thirds of these youth are held in state-funded residential facilities at significant cost to families, students and taxpayers.^{vii}

The Cost of Doing Nothing

- The cost of juvenile justice in Tennessee is significant, especially considering the fact that it does not necessarily improve public safety and often results in worse outcomes for the youth, families and communities affected.
- While Tennessee has incarcerated fewer youths by a small margin over the past three years, the number of youth served remains high and at a high cost to Tennessee taxpayers.^{viii} See below data for state and national figures.



The Benefits of Reform

- States that have reconfigured their juvenile justice system towards a treatment mentality experience returns in terms of reduced recidivism, fewer unnecessary incarcerations and smaller facilities with much lower operational costs.
- Youth who receive treatment and therapeutic services more frequently become productive citizens who give back to their communities and participate in the economy.



Johnson S. Wilder Youth Development Center	\$12, 289, 000
Woodland Hills Youth Development Center	\$12, 051, 900
Mountain View Youth Development Center	\$12, 044, 600
Total Funds Spent on State Facilities	\$36, 385, 500

Table 1: Tennessee State Appropriations for Programs, estimated for FY 2013-2014



DATA MATTER: What Works and What Doesn't

The Most Effective Programs

Target high-risk cases. Low-risk interventions reveal smaller effects and are less cost-effective.

Use a therapeutic approach. Focus on constructive personal development rather than control and deterrence.

Mimic program types with largest effects. Follow successful program designs with fidelity.

Implement selected programs well. Monitor programs and aim for long-term sustainability.

A meta-analysis of over 548 evaluation studies took a look into the relationship between delinquency interventions and results. Here are the findings:

- Neither juvenile nor adult boot camps have proven to be effective, according to a comprehensive meta-analysis. In fact, **they usually increase recidivism by about 8 percent on average.**
- Evidence-based, therapeutic programs are the most effective at reducing recidivism rates and also are better equipped to promote positive life outcomes.
- Surveillance programs show positive effects and include “mainly intensive probation programs, which often have significant counseling components by probation officers. . . . [Representing] a mix of control and therapeutic strategies.”
- Group counseling, mentorship, family counseling and skills-based activities consistently reveal stronger outcomes.^{ix}

Building Better Programs

Use Smaller Facilities. Larger populations are often accompanied by harsh/stressful conditions and increased suicide rates

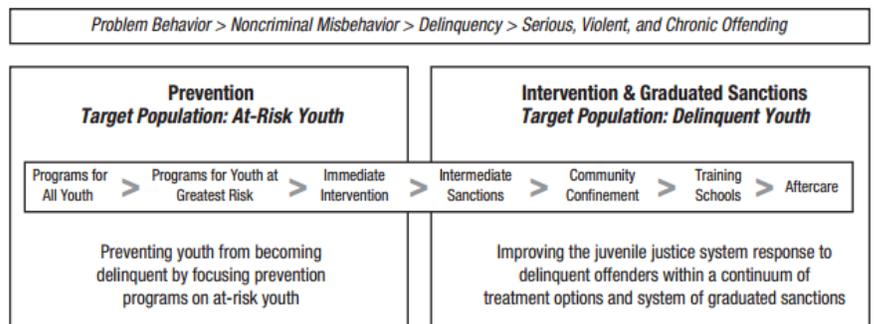
Focus on rehabilitation and development. An emphasis on support and rehabilitation engineers better responses.

Maintain safety. Build relationships and utilize eyes-on supervision.

A Comprehensive Strategy

- Most youth do not require time in a state-funded residential facility. Applying a one-size fits-all model to juvenile justice does not work because youth have a variety of needs; interventions should be best fitted for their circumstances.
- **Needs-driven vs. Services-driven.** Most states function from a services-driven angle that matches youth to available services.^x Research from [Safely Home](#) Youth Advocate Programs suggests needs-driven services for youth yield the greatest results by limiting unnecessary treatment methods and adapting approaches to the child. Thus, the program recommends a spectrum of possible interventions.

Figure 1: Comprehensive Strategy for Juvenile Justice



Sources: Wilson & Howell (1993, 1994); Howell (2003a, 2003b, 2009)



ENVIRONMENT MATTERS: The Brain and ACEs

The Role of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Juvenile Offenders

- **Experiences shape the architecture of the brain.** Neuroscience and early childhood research show that early interactions between the developing brain and the environment have lasting effects on one's outcomes later in life.
- **Stress derails development.** An environment of high (toxic) stress is often an indicator for which youth may end up in the juvenile justice system. Living in poverty, cognitive deficits and low school involvement impact brain development and decision-making.^{xi}
- **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) often exert negative effects.** Children who have experienced ACEs exhibit higher instances of chronic physical health and mental health impairment or other behavioral problems.

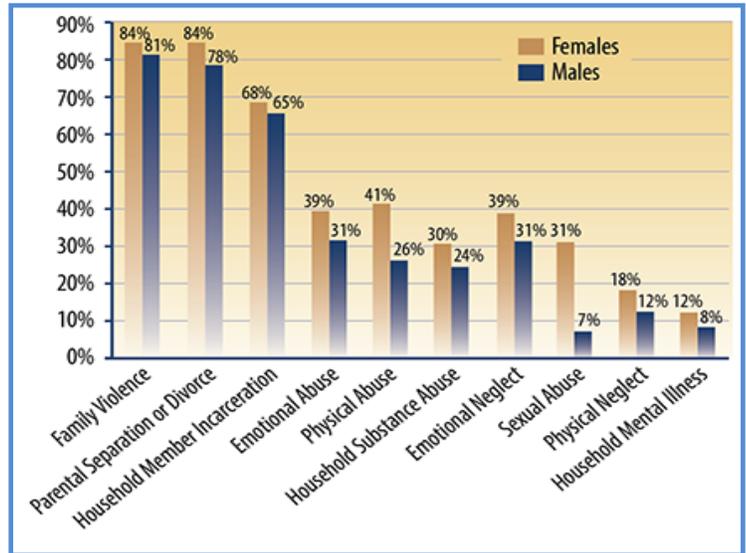


Figure 2. ACEs Results from Florida Study

- **Most youth in the juvenile justice system have multiple adverse childhood experiences.** Florida juvenile justice researchers found that “Offenders report disturbingly high rates of ACEs and have higher composite scores than previously examined populations.” Only 3.8 percent showed no signs of ACEs. This evidence confirms the strong relationship between stresses in one's environment and chances that one will encounter the juvenile justice system.^{xii}

Changing Brain Architecture^{xiii}

- Child neglect
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Divorce
- Domestic abuse of a parent
- Parental substance abuse
- Having a parent in prison
- Sexually transmitted diseases



- Alcoholism & substance abuse
- Depression
- Drug use, smoking
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Suicide attempts
- Unwanted pregnancies
- Ischemic heart disease, other physical problems
- Sexually transmitted diseases

- **The brain is flexible and will respond to its environment.** While the brain receives much of its foundation in early childhood, external factors can strengthen, weaken or replenish that existing framework.^{xiv}
- **A positive behavioral and intellectual environment can enhance the brain's architecture.** The Allen Institute for Brain Science cites research that positive factors like nutrition, stimulation, activity and affection have the power to rewire the brain.^{xv}
- **What we know is not always put into practice.** Brain science research should guide the ways juvenile justice configures solutions and treatments. A therapeutic approach to juvenile justice that includes appropriate treatment and rehabilitation of youth would result in healthier, more productive outcomes.



Principles Matter: Building Better Policies and Practices

[The Council of State Governments](#) recently issued the publication “Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System.” The publication includes policies, descriptions and implementation strategies for improving outcomes in juvenile justice; a few recommended policies are listed below.^{xvi}

Recommendations		
1. Base supervision, service and resource-allocation decisions on the results of validated risk and needs assessments.		
Key Policies	Use specialized, validated screenings to identify youth with mental health and substance use treatment needs and match them to services, minimizing juvenile justice intervention when appropriate	Prioritize services for youth more likely to reoffend while minimizing the use of confinement
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.		
Key Policies	Eliminate use of programs and practices that do not reduce recidivism and improve youth outcomes; fund those programs that do	Evaluate recidivism and other youth outcomes, and use this data to guide policy, practice and resource allocation
3. Employ a coordinated approach across service systems to address youth's needs.		
Key Policies	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	
4. Tailor system policies, programs and supervision to reflect the distinct developmental needs of adolescents.		
Key Policies	Hold youth accountable for their actions in ways that address the harm caused to victims and communities and that support positive behavior change	Promote youth’s respect for and compliance with the law by engaging them in system decisions and processes and by addressing system bias and disparate treatment of youth of color and other groups that are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system



EXPERIENCE MATTERS: What Other States Are Doing

The Missouri Model

What It Did

- o Closed large facilities in favor of smaller group homes, camps and treatment facilities;
- o Maintained safety through relationships and eyes-on supervision rather than isolation and correctional hardware;
- o Provided intensive youth development offered by dedicated youth development specialists rather than correctional supervision by guards.

Results

- o Lower recidivism than other states ;
- o An impressive safety record alongside realized positive youth outcomes;
- o At a budget much smaller than that of other states.^{xvii}

Alabama’s Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.^{xviii}

What It Did

- o Decreased the number of institutionalized youth on the front end by diversion, probation and other incarceration alternatives that may be more effective;
- o Closed down some of its larger facilities in favor of more diverse and effective interventions.

Results

- o 87 percent of youth were not arrested while in program; 80 percent remained arrest-free after being discharged;
- o Number of kids living in community went from 68 percent to 91 percent.

“The Comeback States”: CA, CT, IL, MS, NY, OH, TX, WA, WI

What They Did

- o Increased the availability of evidence-based alternatives to incarceration;
- o Required intake procedures that reduce use of secure detention facilities;
- o Closed or downsized youth confinement facilities;
- o Reduced schools’ overreliance on the justice system to address discipline issues;
- o Disallowed incarceration for minor offenses;
- o Restructured juvenile justice responsibilities and finances among states and counties.^{xix}

State	Change in Youth Confined, Public Facilities Only 1985-2000 ¹	Change in Youth Confined, Public Facilities Only 2001-2010	Change in Youth Confined, All Facilities 2001-2010	Community Alternatives	Restrictions on Use of Detention	Facility Closings and Down-sizing	Shrinking School-to-Prison Pipeline	Not Confined for Minor Offenses	Realign, Reinvest Statewide
CA	40%	-41%	-36%						
CT	37%	-26%	-50%						
IL	100%	-35%	-38%						
MS	94%	-69%	-48%						
NY	91%	-60%	-43%						
OH	47%	-38%	-37%						
TX	200%	-35%	-37%						
WA	45%	-40%	-36%						
WI	91%	-54%	-43%						

Results

- o Reductions in arrest rates for all nine states, with an average of 23 percent decline;
- o Savings on the state level for all states that closed their larger facilities

YOUTH MATTER: Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)

- In Tennessee, **21 percent** of the population ages 10 through 17 was African-American, according to 2011 data. This same group accounted for **47 percent** of youth sentenced to juvenile detention facilities that same year.^{xx} This occurs despite evidence that African-Americans commit crime at a similar rate as their counterparts.
- A [study](#) conducted by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth found *at all points of contact* in the juvenile justice system, youth of color were more frequently affected than other age groups and often suffered harsher consequences. A number of theories abound about why this occurs, although it is clear that the system that currently exists is one that disproportionately affects minority youth. Within these findings, socioeconomic factors often play a strong role.



Delinquency Risk Factors

- Poverty;
- Single parent families;
- Segregation and stagnated socialization;
- Lack of cultural perspective and competence of providers;
- High minority youth unemployment;
- Subjective decision-making in the juvenile justice system;
- Absence of or poor legal representation;
- Under-representation of ethnic/racial service providers;
- Lack of education;
- Overt discrimination and racism.^{xxi}

Essential Tools

1. Risk Assessment
2. Needs Assessment
3. Case Management Plan

Some Recommendations for DMC

Extracted from the 2012 DMC Study conducted by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

1. Provide **ongoing and additional cultural sensitivity/competency** for all juvenile court stakeholders, law enforcement officers (including especially school resource officers), Department of Children’s Services staff, local education agency staff and other relevant participants in the juvenile justice process.
2. Ensure **due process and the provision of effective legal representation** for youth in the juvenile justice system
3. Training of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers, on the impact of juvenile justice system involvement on youth; provide strategies and resources to minimize juvenile court involvement
4. The Department of Education (DOE) and Local Education Agency (LEA) should **address underlying factors in DMC and facilitate the receipt of appropriate educational services** to provide all children with opportunities to be successful in school and in life.
5. **Make sufficient health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services** available to children and their parents to address underlying factors related to DMC.
6. Create **and improve strategies to increase parenting skills and parental involvement** in the lives of their children to reduce DMC and improve outcomes.
7. Address underlying causes of DMC through improved coordination and information sharing among all relevant parties in the juvenile justice system (juvenile courts, DCS, local education agencies, service providers).
8. Strengthen and expand DMC taskforces.
9. Improve understanding of the realities of juvenile delinquency and the effect it has on individual stakeholders.

EVIDENCE MATTERS: General Programs

From the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Model Guides Page^{xxii}

Group Counseling and Mentoring Programs

- Programs that focus on mentoring and skill-building experience the best gains in terms of decreased rates of reentry. Rather than cramming as many youth into residential facilities as possible to “enact public safety,” these programs offer alternatives and developmental supports for youth so that they can effectively re-enter their communities. In particular, they stress:
 - Cognitive Skills
 - Behavioral Skills
 - Social Skills
 - Personal Challenge
 - Academic or Job Related Skills^{xxiii}

Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) – Washington State

- Aggression Replacement Training is a multi-week, 30-hour intervention program that focuses on fostering impulse control and reducing anger. The program possesses three central components:
 - *Structured Learning Training:* Fosters prosocial responses to difficult situations through multiple techniques;
 - *Anger Control Training:* Builds recognition of internal and external triggers of aggression and builds up control mechanisms;
 - *Moral Reasoning:* Enhances values and morality of aggressive youth.

Results: 24 percent statistically significant reduction in felony recidivism with net savings of \$6.71 per every dollar invested (in terms of avoided crime costs)

Adults in the Making (AIM) – Rural Georgia

- AIM is an alcohol and substance abuse deterrence program that utilizes a family-centered preventive intervention program. The program engages in the prevention of risky behaviors and safeguards the negative impact of life stressors.

Results: Reductions in risky behavior and also risk factors for youth compared to non-AIM participants

Quality Control: How to Get the Results

- Sufficient amount of the program service must be provided;
- Control of high dropout rates, staff turnover
- Avoid pitfalls of poorly trained personnel, incomplete service delivery, etc.



EVIDENCE MATTERS: General Programs (cont.)

Family Counseling

Multisystemic Therapy (MST)

Multisystemic Therapy is a community- and family based program that addresses all environmental systems that could impact chronic and violent juvenile offenders. Targeting offenders ages 12 through 17, this treatment program focuses on addressing the youth’s environment while also “keeping teens at home, in school and out of trouble.” The results have been telling:

- Long-term re-arrest rates reduced by 25-70 percent;
- Out-of-home placements reduced by 47-64 percent;
- Families functioning much better;
- Decreased substance use;
- Fewer mental-health problems for serious juvenile offenders.^{xxiv}

Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

Functional Family Therapy is a short-term (approximately 30 hrs.) family-based prevention and intervention program that addresses the broad range of problems evident in juveniles who engage in delinquent and criminal behavior.

How It Works:

- Views acting out as a result of dysfunctional family relations and aims to create new patterns of family behaviors;
- Targets parenting skills, youth compliance and the complete range of behaviors (cognitive, emotional, relational) that can influence the child’s outcome;
- Works with individuals and families to develop support.^{xxv}

Results (Relative to the Comparison Group)

- Average number of offenses dropped by nine for FFT group;
- Recidivism rates 20 percentage points lower;
- Program received 34.9 percent reduction in felony crimes and a 30 percent reduction in violent crimes when administered with a therapist-level adherence to the model.^{xxvi}

Primary Prevention Programs

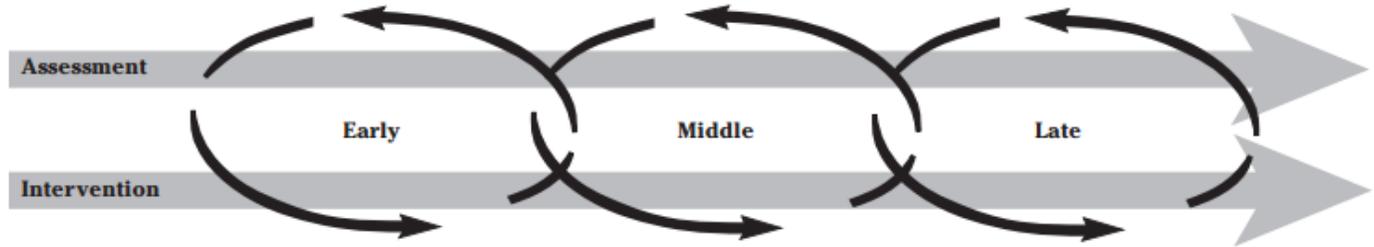
In addition to programs providing therapeutic services for youth involved with the juvenile justice system, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Model Programs listing includes primary prevention programs that prevent or address adverse childhood experiences and improve outcomes for children.

- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS);
- Families and Schools Together (FAST);
- HOMEBUILDERS Intensive Family Preservation Services;
- Harlem Children’s Zone;
- Nurse-Family Partnership;
- Perry Preschool Project;
- Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10 – 14;
- Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT);
- Triple P – Positive Parenting Program.



Figure 2: Structure of Functional Family Therapy

Functional Family Therapy Clinical Model: Intervention Phases Across Time

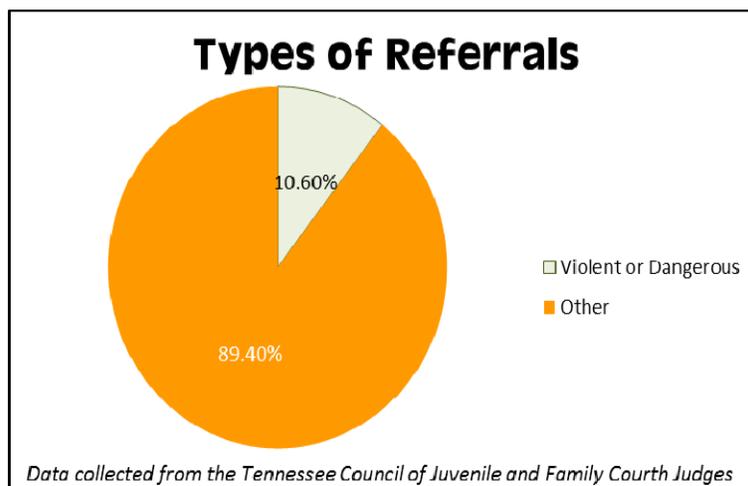
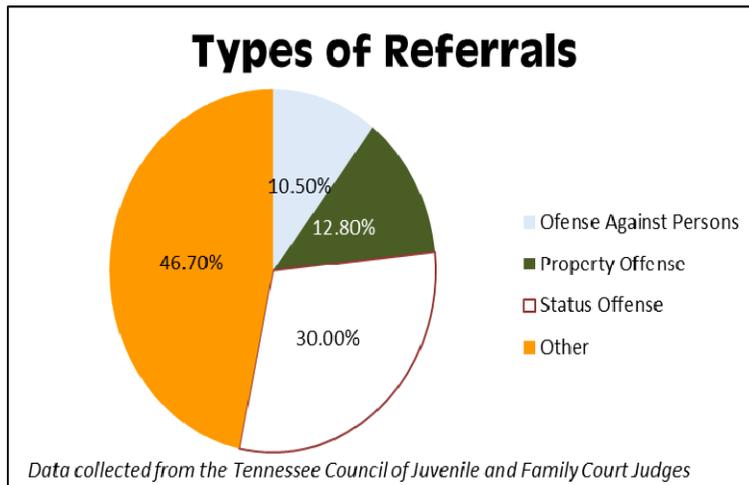


	Engagement and Motivation	Behavior Change	Generalization
Phase goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop alliances. Reduce negativity, resistance. Improve communication. Minimize hopelessness. Reduce dropout potential. Develop family focus. Increase motivation for change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement individualized change plans. Change presenting delinquency behavior. Build relational skills (e.g., communication and parenting). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain/generalize change. Prevent relapses. Provide community resources necessary to support change.
Risk and protective factors addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negativity and blaming (risk). Hopelessness (risk). Lack of motivation (risk). Credibility (protective). Alliance (protective). Treatment availability (protective). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor parenting skills (risk). Negativity and blaming (risk). Poor communication (risk). Positive parenting skills (protective). Supportive communication (protective). Interpersonal needs (depends on context). Parental pathology (depends on context). Developmental level (depends on context). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor relationships with school/community (risk). Low level of social support (risk). Positive relationships with school/community (protective).
Assessment focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior (e.g., presenting problem and risk and protective factors). Relational problems sequence (e.g., needs/functions). Context (risk and protective factors). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of relational skills (communication, parenting). Compliance with behavior change plan. Relational problem sequence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of community resources needed. Maintenance of change.
Therapist/Interventionist skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpersonal skills (validation, positive interpretation, reattribution, reframing, and sequencing). High availability to provide services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure (session focusing). Change plan implementation. Modeling/focusing/directing/training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family case manager. Resource help. Relapse prevention interventions.

Source: Sexton and Alexander, 1999.

The Charge Matters: The Nonviolent Majority

- **One of the greatest trends in juvenile justice reform is to reduce the number of youth being institutionalized on the front end.** Missouri, Florida, Alabama, New York, Ohio, Texas, California, Illinois, Mississippi, Connecticut, Washington and Wisconsin have all made sweeping reductions in the number of incarcerated youth by acknowledging that simply detaining more youth does not necessarily advance public safety concerns or yield productive outcomes for these youths.
- **The majority of youth referred to the Juvenile Courts have not committed a serious, violent offense.** In fact, almost a third of youth occupy beds for status offenses. In Tennessee, status offenders are called “unruly” in state statutes and are youth below the age of 17 who partake in actions that would not be considered illegal for an adult to partake in but are illegal to a youth due to their minor status.^{xxvii}
- **Adolescents are developmentally more prone to risky behaviors, but when left in their communities, will usually “age out.”** Early childhood and brain science research consistently points out that regions of the brain that govern self-control and delayed gratification are as plastic in adolescence as in early childhood.^{xxviii} Research suggests increased exposure to novel or challenging experiences may be beneficial for adolescents.
- **Keeping children in their communities does less harm in the long run.** Instead of separating low-risk kids from their families and communities at a crucial stage of their development, some states have moved to increase the number of diversions, community-based programs and other alternatives to detention.



Tennessee Spotlight: Memphis City Schools SHAPE Program

Heralded by the OJJPD as an alternative to juvenile justice, the School House Adjustment Program Enterprise (SHAPE) has successfully reduced the number of children sent to juvenile court. SHAPE was initially funded with federal grants administered by TCCY and now provides early-intervention programs in over 21 schools in Shelby County.^{xxix}

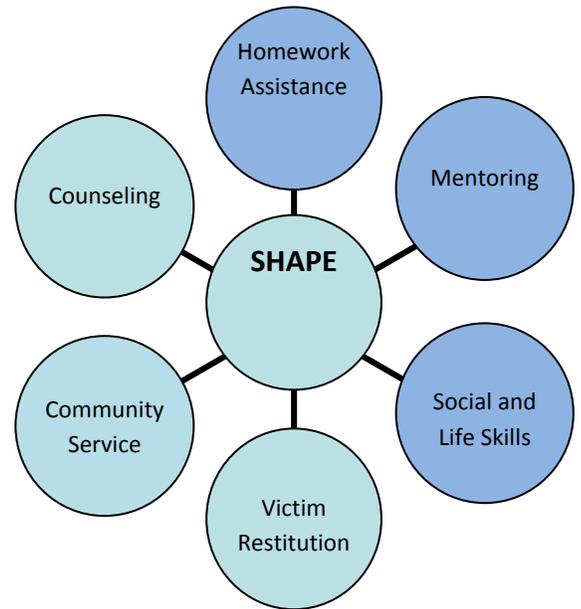
What It Does

SHAPE is a six-week early-intervention program for youth who have committed minor infractions. This program, which replaces a police record, incorporates academic training, mentorship, community service and restorative justice techniques. Because the program acknowledges that minority students receive a disproportionate amount of contact with the juvenile justice system, SHAPE also functions as a diversion method. If children comply with the program during a six-month period, then their initial juvenile summons is destroyed.

Who is Involved

The SHAPE program reflects the success of collaboration among stakeholders and primary actors involved in the juvenile justice system. For SHAPE, key actors include:

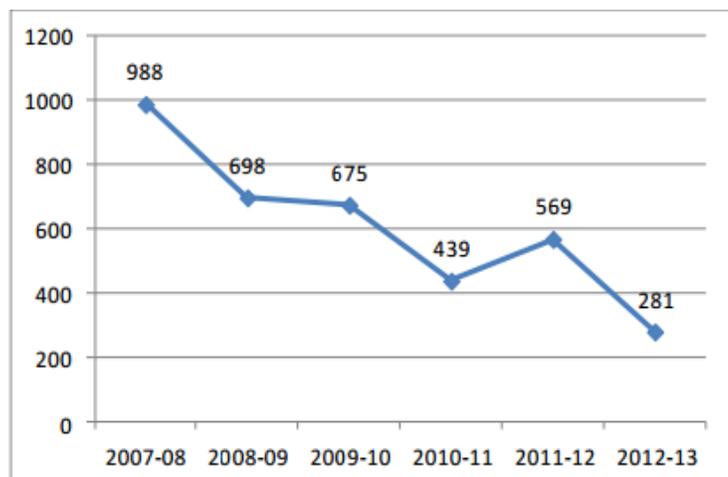
- Memphis City/Shelby County Schools;
- Shelby County Juvenile Court;
- Memphis Police Department;
- Public Defender’s Office;
- Memphis City Mayor’s Office;
- Youth and Their Families.



Results

- In the 2012-13 academic year, there was a 50.6 percent decrease in transports to juvenile detention facilities in SHAPE schools, reflecting a 71.6 percent reduction since the program was implemented in 2007.
- 61.3 percent of SHAPE students had no contact with the Juvenile Court after their initial referral.
- Lower 12-month juvenile recidivism rate when compared to the analogous states.

Figure 1: Number of Transfers to Juvenile Court at SHAPE Schools



To read more about SHAPE’s success, click [here](#).

Tennessee Spotlight: Memphis SHAPE Program (cont.)



Figure 2. “SHAPE prevents children from having a record that will affect them the rest of their life.” *Robert W. Jones, Shelby County Public Defender*



Figure 3. “We’re just getting them to discover in themselves the redeemable qualities that are already in them—the wonderful things that are already inside of them that maybe no one ever told them exists.” *Michael Craviness, Site Coordinator*

To watch the full interview, click [here](#):



Promising Start: TSU and Youth Empowerment Project

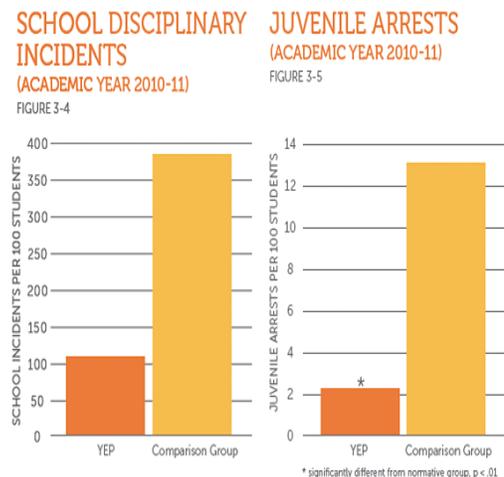
FAST FACTS

- PROGRAM NAME: Triple Impact
- PROGRAM ENROLLMENT: 50
- RACE/ETHNICITY: Black non-Hispanic
- SEX: Male/Female
- AGE RANGE: 13-16
- TIME COMMITMENT: 4 hrs/week (academic year); 180 hrs (summer program)
- FOCUS: Academic Enrichment, Healthy Behaviors, Anti-Violence, Career Development
- ENRICHMENT: Mentoring/Tutoring, Life Skills Development, Civic Engagement, Personal Development and Wellness, Cultural Enrichment

Tennessee State University, in partnership with Pearl-Cohn High School, has started a promising intervention program for at-risk youth. The Youth Empowerment Project (YEP), a Wisconsin-based anti-violence initiative, has broken ground in its ability to treat and restore at-risk youth around the country through after-school programming. By providing grants to programs that include a youth center, mentorship, summer and after-school programming, YEP supports a model that is proven to have a high impact on children’s lives. YEP sees extraordinary returns in juvenile arrests, school suspensions, teen pregnancy, childhood obesity and school disciplinary incidents when compared to areas with no programming.

Tennessee’s YEP program, [Triple Impact](#), provided fifty students at Pearl-Cohn High School with mentoring, tutoring, life skills development, civic engagement, personal development and wellness and cultural enrichment components. In addition, the program addressed a multitude of issues related to academic enrichment, anti-

violence, career development and healthy behaviors. The One instructor notes, “Triple Impact YEP does more than just help them; it empowers them to help themselves.”



TCCY's Vision. All children in Tennessee are safe, healthy, educated, nurtured and supported and engaged in activities that provide them opportunities to achieve their fullest potential.

TCCY's Mission. The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) advocates improving the quality of life for children and families and provides leadership and support for child advocates.

The Commission. The policy-making body of TCCY is a 21-member commission whose members are appointed by the governor. At least one member is appointed from each of Tennessee's nine development districts. Four youth members meet the federally mandated composition required for a Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act state advisory group.

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