



A CAMPAIGN OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE & DELINQUENCY PREVENTION COALITION
—the collective voice of more than 300 organizations nationwide—

Sign-on at info@juvjustice.org

JJDPA Statement of Principles

We, the undersigned, urge the Congress to adhere to the following four principles in approaching the Reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A). These principles are grounded in research and their efficacy underscored by the fact that the JJDP A has for more than 30 years provided direction and support for juvenile justice system improvement and, thereby, significantly contributed to the diminution of juvenile crime and delinquency.

I. **Keep children and youth out of the justice system:** Whenever possible, keep children and youth out of the juvenile and criminal justice systems by addressing their needs and those of their families early and effectively.

II. **Ensure equity and competence:** Do everything possible to ensure equity and competence with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender and sexual orientation, in legal representation before the courts and throughout all system practices and policies.

III. **Ensure responses appropriate to a young person's age and stage of development:** Do everything possible to ensure that children and youth in the justice system are treated in an age-appropriate manner and provided with developmentally appropriate, evidenced-based services and supports. Ensure, when needed, that sanctions are appropriate to a youth's age and offense.

IV. **Strengthen the federal partnership with state and local governments:** Strengthen the federal role in supporting state and local needs by providing sufficient resources and appropriations for jurisdictions to effectively implement the JJDP A, to fully comply with its core requirements/protections and to ensure state and local adherence to high standards of performance.

What is the JJDPA?

Why care?

Each year, juvenile courts handle an estimated 1.6 million delinquency cases and adjudicate youth delinquent in nearly 7 of every 10 petitioned cases. The daily census of youth under age 18 who are incarcerated is 97,000—yet, it is estimated that 25 percent of them are detained while awaiting placement or court proceedings. Many youth who are confined are nonviolent and highly amenable to the benefits of rehabilitative services and supports provided in non-institutional home and community based settings. Juveniles in the courts have been shown to suffer from higher than average incidence of mental/behavioral health problems, learning disabilities and school failure, as well as under-addressed family intervention and support needs. Moreover, for more than two decades, state-level data have shown that youth of color have been overrepresented at every stage of the juvenile justice system.

Additionally, some researchers estimate as many as 200,000 youth have their cases processed in adult criminal court each year as a result of prosecutorial or judicial waiver, statutory exclusion for certain offense categories, or because they reside in states with a lower age of criminal jurisdiction (age 16 or 17). On any given day, an estimated 7,000 youth under the age of 18 are inmates in adult jails, of these 90% are being held “as adults.” Youth who are not under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court are not covered by the JJDPA’s core requirements/protections.

Right now, juvenile arrest rates are at historically low rates—lower than any levels recorded since the 1980s. Nationwide, law enforcement agencies arrest approximately 2.2 million persons under the age of 18 each year, yet in nearly half of all cases the most serious charges are larceny-theft, simple assault, a drug abuse/liquor law violation or disorderly conduct. Furthermore, research indicates that youth of color are detained more often and for longer periods of time than their white counterparts for the same low level offenses.

The continuing success of effective juvenile crime prevention and deterrence depends on Congress strengthening both the provisions of the JJDPA, as well as the funding resources needed to fulfill such provisions to the greatest possible extent.

Data sources: Snyder, Howard N. and Sickmund, Melissa. 2006. *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. www.ncjj.org; Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2005. *Childhood on Trial: The Failure of Trying and Sentencing Youth in Adult Criminal Court*, Washington, DC. www.juvjustice.org

How could adherence to these principles guide JJDPa reauthorization?

I. Keep children and youth out of the justice system: Whenever possible, keep children and youth out of the juvenile and criminal justice systems by addressing their needs and those of their families early and effectively.

- **Continuum of Care:** Support an array of prevention and intervention strategies for children and families in collaboration with providers of educational, medical, mental/behavioral health, after school, workforce development services, and others, utilizing theory- and evidenced-based practices.
- **Detention Alternatives:** Develop and sustain community- and family-based alternatives to locked detention, both pre- and post-adjudication.
- **Effective Re-entry and Re-connection:** Help young people leave the system, return home and stay home. Provide for effective reconnection to schools, families, community-based family support and/or counseling, jobs, and housing, upon release from confinement.

II. Ensure equity and competence: Do everything possible to ensure equity and competence with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender and sexual orientation, in legal representation before the courts and throughout all system practices and policies.

- **Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities:** Given disproportionately high representation of youth of color in the justice system, it is imperative to direct major federal resources to states/localities to implement system-change strategies designed to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. In turn, states/localities should report their progress in reducing racial/ethnic disparities, as well any forms of differential treatment of youth of color as compared with their white counterparts, at all stages from surveillance/arrest to re-entry.
- **Cultural and Linguistic Competence:** At all system contact points, services and supports given to children, youth and families, as well as institutional conditions, must be linguistically and culturally competent.
- **Due Process Rights:** The promise of due process rights for juveniles remains largely unfulfilled. Jurisdictions should ensure that youth have timely access to competent and qualified defense counsel and are required to consult with counsel prior to waiving their constitutional right to such counsel.
- **Ensure Safety:** All populations of youth, especially those who have proven susceptible to harm such as girls, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth, and children with serious mental/behavioral health concerns, must be safe when in the care or custody of the justice system.

III. Ensure responses appropriate to a young person's age and stage of development: Do everything possible to ensure that children and youth in the justice system are treated in an age-appropriate manner and provided with developmentally appropriate, evidenced-based services and supports. Ensure, when needed, that sanctions are appropriate to a youth's age and offense.

- **Incentives:** Provide incentives to state and local jurisdictions to develop and implement developmentally-appropriate services and supports for children and families that emphasize limited system contact and research-driven approaches to youth development.

- Normal Adolescent Behavior vs. Delinquency: Guard against juvenile and criminal justice system responses that are unduly punitive, criminalize normal adolescent behavior or assume that youth competence and culpability equals that of adults.
- Restorative Justice: In response to offending, implement policies, programs and practices that seek to restore the victim and the community and hold the youth offender accountable.
- Take Steps to Extend Federal Protections to All Youth Until Age 18 or Older: Provide incentives for states to take necessary steps to ensure that the four JJDP Core Requirements/Protections are applied as faithfully as possible to all youth until the age of 18, or to youth older than age 18 who are under extended juvenile jurisdiction, whether they have been tried in the juvenile or criminal court.

IV. Strengthen the federal partnership with state and local governments:
Strengthen the federal role in supporting state and local needs by providing sufficient resources and appropriations for jurisdictions to effectively implement the JJDP, to fully comply with its core requirements/protections and to ensure state and local adherence to high standards of performance.

- Optimal Funding: Ensure that funding authorizations in the JJDP are provided at optimally effective levels to fulfill the all of the mandates of the JJDP, as well as those contained in related juvenile justice programs, such as the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) program.
- Grants for State/Local Needs: Ensure that the federal role under the JJDP is responsive to state-identified/locally-identified needs and the State Plan process, including field-based and field-strengthening research and evaluation to refine and expand the array of best and evidenced-based practices.
- Performance Measures: Establish and support states and localities to set, implement and monitor performance measures for achieving the highest possible standards for safe, effective and competence-building systems, programs, policies and practices. Provide resources to support training, technical assistance and information dissemination in line with state needs.

We, the undersigned organizations and leaders, seek the support of Congress to see the aforementioned principles are assured in the Reauthorization of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP):

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Human Rights Watch
 International CURE
 Penal Reform International
 Physicians for Human Rights
 Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
 United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
 World Vision

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Policy Section
 African American Juvenile Justice Project (AAJJP)
 Alliance for Children and Families

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Civil Liberties Union
American Correctional Association
American Federation on State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Humane Association
American Probation and Parole Association
American Psychiatric Association
Asian Law Caucus
Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC)
ATTIC Correctional Services
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Camp Fire USA
Campaign for Youth Justice
Center for Children's Law and Policy
Center for Juvenile Justice Reform and Systems Integration, Georgetown University
Center for Public Representation
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Correctional Education Association
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD)
Council for Educators of At-Risk and Delinquent Youth
Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators
Covenant House
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Generations United
Girls Inc.
Justice Policy Institute
Juvenile Justice Trainers Association
Juvenile Law Center
Legal Action Center
Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office
Mental Health America
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
National Alliance for Faith and Justice
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association for Children of Alcoholics
National Association for Juvenile Correctional Agencies
National Association of Counties
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
National Association of Home Builders
National Association of School Psychologists
National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice
National Center for Youth Law
National Collaboration for Youth
National Community Education Association
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council of La Raza
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

National Disability Rights Network
National H.I.R.E. Network
National Human Services Assembly
National Juvenile Defender Center
National Juvenile Detention Association
National Juvenile Justice Network
National Legal Aid and Defender Association
National Network for Youth
National Parent-Teacher Association
National Partnership for Juvenile Services
National Recreation and Park Association
National Urban League
National Youth Advocate Program
Residential Care Consortium
Southern Poverty Law Center
The National Center for Lesbian Rights
The Sentencing Project
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Neighborhood Centers of America
Voices for America's Children
W. Haywood Burns Institute
Women of Reform Judaism
YMCA of the USA
Youth Advocate Programs
Youth Law Center

STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Alabama:

Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program
Alabama Youth Justice Coalition
Children First Foundation
Jefferson County Family Court
Legal Aid Society of Birmingham
Prodigal Child Project
Southern Juvenile Defender Center
The Ordinary People Society
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Alaska:

Alaska PTA
Gastineau Human Services Corporation
Juneau Youth Services

Arizona:

Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission— The Arizona State Advisory Group
Children's Action Alliance
Friendly House

California:

Asian and Pacific Islander Youth Advocacy Network (AYAN)
California State Juvenile Officers' Association
Center for Juvenile Law and Policy, Loyola Law School
Los Angeles Leadership Academy
Mothers for Peace
Pacific Juvenile Defender Center
Para Los Niños
Watts/Century Latino Organization
Youth Justice Coalition/Free L.A.

Colorado:

Pendulum Foundation

Connecticut:

African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities, Inc (AFCAMP)
Center for Children's Advocacy, University of Connecticut School of Law
Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance
Office of the Child Advocate, State of Connecticut
Connecticut Parent Teacher Association
Connecticut Voices for Children
FAVOR, Inc.

Delaware:

Children & Families First
Delaware Center for Justice
Delaware Collaboration for Youth

District of Columbia:

Georgetown Law Juvenile Justice Clinic
Justice 4 DC Youth! Coalition
Latin American Youth Center
UDC David A. Clarke School of Law, Juvenile and Special Education Law Clinic

Florida:

13th Judicial Circuit - Administrative Office of the Court, Juvenile Diversion Program
Children's Campaign, Inc.
Florida Keys Children's Shelter, Inc.
Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida; Duval, Clay and Nassau Counties
Latino Leadership Inc.
Law Offices of Public Defender Bennett H. Brummer, 11th Judicial Circuit
Miami-Dade County Juvenile Services Department
Redlands Christian Migrant Association

Georgia:

Barton Child Law & Policy Clinic of Emory Law School
Circle of Concern, Inc.

Hawaii

Education (Youth) and Health Programs, Department of Defense, State of Hawaii
Hawaii Parent Teacher Association

Idaho:

Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Idaho Parent Teacher Association

Illinois:

Alternatives, Inc.
Child Care Association of Illinois
Children's Home Association of Illinois
Illinois Collaboration on Youth
Illinois Parent Teacher Association
John Howard Association of Illinois
Juvenile Justice Initiative
Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender
North Lawndale Juvenile Justice Collaborative
Southwest Youth Collaborative
Uhlich Children's Advantage Network (UCAN)
Youth Network Council

Indiana:

Indiana Juvenile Justice Task Force, Inc.
Indiana Parent Teacher Association
Leadership & Renewal Outfitters

Iowa:

Iowa Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Kansas:

Kansas Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention—The Kansas State Advisory Group

Kentucky:

Children's Law Center, Inc.
Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy
Kentucky Protection & Advocacy

Louisiana:

Brooks Law Group, PLLC.
Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC)
Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana
Louisiana Protection & Advocacy Center

Maine:

Maine Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG)—The Maine State Advisory Group
Youth Alternatives

Maryland:

Maryland Juvenile Grant Planning and Review Council - The Maryland State Advisory Group
Maryland Juvenile Justice Coalition
MD Office of the Public Defender
The Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland, Baltimore

Massachusetts:

Adolescent Consultation Services
Center For Human Development
Children's League of Massachusetts
Children's Law Center of Massachusetts, Inc.
Children's Services of Roxbury
Citizens for Juvenile Justice
Communities for People
Criminal Justice Institute, Harvard Law School
Doc Wayne Athletic League
Disability Law Center, Inc.
Division of Health & Human Development Program
Fall River Deaconess Home
Institute on Race and Justice
Justice Resource Institute
Juvenile Rights Advocacy Project at Boston College Law School
Juvenile Justice Center of Suffolk University Law School
Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers, Inc
Massachusetts Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee - The Massachusetts State Advisory Group
NFI Massachusetts, Inc.
Penikese Island School
Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, Inc.
Roxbury Youthworks, Inc.
Spectrum Health Systems, Inc.
The KEY Program, Inc.
Youth Advocacy Project of the Committee for Public Counsel Services
YouthBuild Boston
Youth Opportunities Upheld (YOU) Inc.

Michigan:

Advocacy, Re-entry, Resources & Outreach (ARRO)
Association of Children's Mental Health (ACMH)
Children's Charter of the Courts of Michigan
Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan
Michigan Collaborative on Juvenile Justice
Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency
Michigan Federation for Children and Families
Michigan Prevention Association
Michigan's Children
Second Chance Legislation
The Michigan Resource Center for Health and Safety
Traffic Safety Association of Michigan
United Way for Southeastern Michigan

Minnesota:

Juvenile Justice Coalition of Minnesota
Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies

Mississippi:

Mississippi Youth Justice Project

Missouri:

Missouri Juvenile Justice Association
Missouri Parent Teacher Association
Youth In Need

Montana:

Disability Rights Montana

Nebraska:

Voices for Children in Nebraska

Nevada:

East Las Vegas Community Development Corporation
Washoe County Juvenile Services

New Hampshire:

Child and Family Services of New Hampshire
Department of Health & Human Services

New Jersey:

Association of Children of New Jersey
New Jersey Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee - The New Jersey State Advisory Group
New Jersey Parents' Caucus
New Jersey Parents' Caucus of Bergen County
New Jersey Parents' Caucus of Camden County
New Jersey Parents' Caucus of Essex County
New Jersey Parents' Caucus of Passaic County
New Jersey Parents' Caucus of Union County
Northeast Juvenile Defender Center

New Mexico:

Hands Across Cultures
New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department— The New Mexico State Advisory Group
New Mexico Council on Crime and Delinquency
New Mexico Public Defender Department, Juvenile Division - Las Cruces

New York:

City of New York Department of Juvenile Justice
New York Juvenile Justice Coalition
Goodhope Youth Home, Inc.
Jewish Child Care Association
Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem
Center for Community Alternatives
Youth Represent

North Carolina:

Action for Children North Carolina

Independent Living Resources
Juvenile Justice Clinic of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law
National Association of Social Workers- NC Chapter
One Village ~ One World, Consulting, Inc.
Youth Homes

North Dakota:

Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota

Ohio:

Alliance of Child Caring Service Providers
Children's Defense Fund of Ohio
CONNECTIONS Health Wellness Advocacy
Franklin County Public Defender Office
Guernsey County Juvenile Court
Juvenile Justice Coalition (Ohio)
Law Office of the Montgomery County, Ohio Public Defender
North East Ohio Health Services
Office of the Ohio Public Defender
Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies
Voices for Ohio's Children Juvenile Justice Initiative

Oregon:

Partnership for Safety and Justice
Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality

Pennsylvania:

Community Commitment Inc.
Congreso de Latinos Unidos
Juvenile Detention Centers' Association of PA
One Hood

Puerto Rico:

Sociedad para Asistencia Legal de Puerto Rico

Rhode Island:

Rhode Island Kids Count
Parent Support Network
Tides Family Services

South Carolina:

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health of SC
South Carolina Parent Teacher Association

South Dakota:

Parents Who Care Coalition

Tennessee:

Latino Memphis, Inc.
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)– The Tennessee State Advisory Group

The Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare

Texas:

Children at Risk
Southwest Key Program
Tejano Center for Community Concerns
Texas Coalition Advocating Justice for Juveniles

Utah:

Salt Lake County Commission on Youth (COY)
Utah Commission on Criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice— The Utah State Advisory Group

Vermont:

Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs— The Vermont State Advisory Group
New England Juvenile Defender Center
Office of the Juvenile Defender
South Royalton Legal Clinic at Vermont Law School

Virginia:

Children's Law Center at the University of Richmond School of Law
Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants-Virginia, Inc.
JustChildren Program of the Legal Aid Justice Center
Families & Allies of Virginia's Youth (FAVY)
Mid-Atlantic Juvenile Defender Center, University of Richmond Law School
NAMI - NoVA
The Urban Passage, Inc.
Virginia Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Voices for Virginia's Children

Washington:

Partners with Families & Children: Spokane
TeamChild
Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
Washington Defender Association
Washington State PTA

West Virginia:

Byrne, Hedges & Lyons
West Virginia PTA
West Virginia Public Defender Services

Wisconsin:

Counseling Center of Milwaukee, Inc.
Freedom, Inc.
La Casa de Esperanza, Inc.
La Causa
Teen Build Up
Wisconsin Community Services
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association

Wyoming:

UPLIFT, Wyoming's Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

-- as of 3-24-2008