Functional Family Therapy® to Expand Statewide

In February of 2017, Functional Family Therapy (FFT®) services will be available in all 105 counties and 31 judicial districts across the state of Kansas. KDOC-JS entered into two contracts with vendors to provide FFT® services in the west-central and northeast regions of the state.

- In December 2015, KDOC-JS contracted with Ecker Youth Alternatives to provide FFT® services in the southeast region of Kansas (to include the 4th, 6th, 11th, 13th, 14th, 19th, and 31st judicial districts). In August 2016, the contract with Ecker Youth Alternatives was amended to include the 3rd, 7th, 10th, and 18th judicial districts in the southeast region Eckerd contract.

- In December 2016, KDOC-JS contracted with Embertone Inc. (formerly known as United Methodist Youthville, Inc.), to provide FFT® services in the west-central region of Kansas (to include the 15th/17th/23rd, 16th, 20th, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, and 30th judicial districts).

- In December 2016, KDOC-JS contracted with Cornerstones Inc. to provide FFT® services in the northeast region of Kansas (to include the 1st, 2nd, 5th, 8th, 9th, 12th, 21st, 22nd, 28th, and 29th judicial districts).

FFT® is an intensive therapy model program administered across 9 countries to evidence-based practices to achieve sustainable outcomes that reduce individual recidivism and improve the quality of life for the family and the youth who completes the treatment. The FFT® model provides therapy in three major phases (engagement, behavior change, and generalization), all of which must be completed to finish treatment. The average time it takes to complete treatment is 12 weeks. By providing FFT® services within the community, high and moderate risk juvenile offenders (and their families) are given the tools to receive treatment in their home where they are provided the skills and support they need to overcome delinquency, substance abuse, and violence. In the past, these same youth would likely have been removed from their home for an out-of-home placement or secure confinement in a juvenile correctional facility.

By making FFT® available statewide, the state of Kansas makes significant progress towards better meeting the needs of the youth, families, and communities in a consistent and comprehensive manner across the state with a reliable evidence-based community program.

How KS Can Raise the Bar on Juvenile Justice

Last April, our son was falsely accused of pulling the school fire alarm. As a parent, hearing that your child may have broken the law is terrifying. But when you’ve dedicated your life to understanding Kansas’ justice system, only to learn that your son was taken into custody without evidence Read more . . . .

Alternatives to Placements: Functional Family Therapy and Multisystemic Therapy

Family Focused: Opposite of ‘Scarred Straight,’ Intervention Helps Youth Connect and Feel Understood

“I thought my life was coming to an end. Oh my God, he’s a good kid.” said Geselle Colón, recounting the story of her son when he was a juvenile in detention in Columbus, Georgia. Sixteen-year-old Esteban De Jesus-Colón is a stellar athlete, popular and a good student at school. But early into adolescence, his anger was spiraling out of control. A Determined Grandmother Does Whatever it Takes to Help Her Grandson Succeed

Multisystemic Therapy (MST) therapists and supervisors engage all families and do whatever it takes to build a trusting relationship. They know how important it is to connect to families and their needs in a direct and efficient way from day one. This connection was made with a 68-year-old grand- mother who referred to herself as “Guerrera,”—Spanish for warrior. Read more . . . .

National News

The Future of Youth Justice: A Community-Based Alternative to the Youth Prison Model

For 170 years, since our first youth correctional institution opened, America’s approach to youth incarceration has been built on the premise that a slightly modified version of the adult correctional model of incarceration, control, coercion, and punishment — with a little bit of programming sprinkled in — would rehabilitate young people. Sometimes this attempt to camouflage the nature of the facility, but whether they are called “training schools” or “youth centers,” nearly all of these facilities are youth prisons. Read more . . . .

Human Trafficking in Kansas

Woman Makes Plea in Topeka-Based Sex-Trafficking Operation

A Topeka woman, who was a member of a Topeka-based prostitution business operating in three states, made a plea on Monday to District Court in Topeka to trafficking a female minor for sex. Read more . . . .

New Home, Sharpened Focus for Agency Battling Human Trafficking

Jennifer White would be thrilled if her grassroots organization ICT S.O.S. to help combat human trafficking, the need is greater than ever. “If you had asked me five years ago if we would be where we are right now, I would have told you you’re crazy,” White said. “It has grown so fast.” Read more . . . .

HT Victims to Receive Assistance

Authorities at Saint Francis Community Services should be commended for taking the initiative and opening their home, the first facility in Kansas and one of the first in the nation for victims of human trafficking. Read more . . . .

Advocacy Group: Kansas Doing More to Fight Human Trafficking

An advocacy group that works to combat sex trafficking says Kansas has made significant improvements when it comes to fighting human trafficking. Shared Hope International gives Kansas a letter grade of B after making changes in recent years. In 2011, Kansas received a grade of F. Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt says the state has created new tools to prosecute people involved in human trafficking and added better support for victims. Read more and listen to report . . . .

Federal Juvenile Justice Legislation

President Obama Signs 21st Century Cures Act

President Barack Obama signed the 21st Century Cures Act today after it passed the House and Senate with bipartisan support. Describing an effort to address the nation’s challenges with mental health in the criminal justice system, among other medical priorities. Read more and watch video . . . .
State and Federal Policy: Incarcerated youth

This policy analysis provides descriptive information about incarcerated youth populations, explores their educational challenges, reviews currently enacted state and federal policies designed to address their needs, and provides policy considerations for state governments. Read more ...

National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges

Creating a Trauma-Informed System: Important Collaboration Between CACs and the Courts

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges partnering with the Children’s Advocacy Center to create this webinar highlighting the importance of collaboration between children’s advocacy centers (CACs) and the courts.

Juvenile Justice Information Exchange

Report: Communities Must Switch to Local Care, Not Prisons, for Young Offenders

Many policymakers and advocates know they want to close youth prisons, where they say young offenders are often isolated, unsafe and go without the services they need to thrive when they return to their communities. But what would the alternative look like? A new report released by The National Collaboration for Youth lays out the case for investment in a community-based continuum.

Substance Use, Mental Health & the Road to Recovery: ‘Like Juggling Explosives Blindfolded’

When Corey Roberts came out of prison, he hit the ground running. In short order, he found a job at a chicken joint. He found a girlfriend. And at 21, after an 18-month stretch in Georgia correctional facilities, including nine months in a drug rehabilitation program, he began the process of rebuilding a life away from the legally constrained horizons of an ex-con.

But like a lot of people who struggle with drugs, depression and a criminal record, Roberts soon hit some setbacks. He went through several jobs in the year after his release. “I was too far gone,” he says. “I had a hard time finding a stable job.”

A bipartisan consensus has emerged in Congress and state governments. With 18 to 24-year-olds going through similar experiences, policymakers are coming to a personal kind of conclusion: The youth justice system is broken — not quite what you’d expect from a seemingly model college student with a stellar grade point.

Calif. Wraparound Program Reduces Juvenile Recidivism by Focusing on Mental Health

Manuel Dircio, 20, a business administration student at Fullerton College boasts a 4.0 GPA. He is also a recovering alcoholic with a history of arrests and incarceration in juvenile detention — not quite what you’d expect from a seemingly model college student with a stellar grade point. Dircio credits the Youthful Offender Wraparound program (YOW), which he says “helped [him] grow successfully.”

National News

Why the U.S. Juvenile Justice System Needs Reform

In A&E’s infamous show, Beyond Scared Straight, “at-risk” kids with major behavioral problems are thrust into adult prisons for a day to literally scare them into never wanting to see the inside of a jail cell again. The juvenile justice system needs a serious reform, and the biggest change must be coming to a personal kind of relationship and family,” she says.

Is Juvenile Justice Beyond Repair?

The Youth First Initiative wants to help end the use of youth prisons. The justice-advocacy group works from the premise that detaining minors—whether in youth facilities or in prisons—is not just a poorly executed practice—it is simply beyond repair. “This model of incarceration is broken—it does not work,” says Liz Ryan, the president and CEO of the Youth First Initiative. “It actually has never worked.”

Editorial: Ending the Juvenile Crime Spiral

When a 13-year-old shoplifts candy or a group of 16-year-olds creates a ruckus that cops are called, they may well find themselves on a conveyor belt that eventually drops them into real prison doing real time for hurting real people. The juvenile justice system doesn’t do well the job of keeping kids like that away from the influence of serious offenders.

Task Force Begins Weighing Overhaul of Nevada’s Juvenile Justice System

A task force of judges, prosecutors, legislators, youth advocates and juvenile probation officials on Tuesday began considering options to improve Nevada’s juvenile justice system and break a cycle of recidivism.

Human Trafficking

High Hopes for Farm for HT Survivors

Pecan trees rustled in the wind as Leannora Cox, a 22-year-old survivor of sex trafficking, discussed the importance of helping her place around her. “You’re coming into a community; you’re coming into a personal kind of relationship and family,” she said. “Deep down that’s what a survivor wants." Read more and watch video.

Discussion on Combating Child Trafficking

The Center for Strategic and International Studies hosted a discussion examining policy and law enforcement strategies to combat child trafficking in the U.S. and abroad.

Education Commission of the States

Moving from Research to Policy and Practice to Improve the Lives of Youth

Georgetown University April 6 & 7, 2017

Join with a national group of policymakers, practitioners, researchers, educators, judicial officials, community leaders, family members, foundation representatives and others to explore cutting-edge innovations in child-serving fields. The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform is hosting the event in commemoration of its 10-year anniversary. Over the course of two days the conference will examine current research across systems of care and how to best apply it to develop and implement sound policies and practices that meet the needs of at-risk youth/families.

For more information and to register...

The National Survey of Teen Relationships and Intimate Violence (STRiV), was to build the evidence base for policies and systems of care and how to best apply it to develop and implement sound policies and practices that meet the needs of at-risk youth/families. For more information and to register, visit...

Center on Juvenile Justice Reform

Adult Earnings of Juvenile Delinquents: The Interaction of Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Juvenile Justice Status on Future Earnings

Whites and males tend to have higher incomes than non-Blacks and females. A recent study by the U.S. Census Bureau estimated earnings of individuals with high school degrees and found that White males had the highest earnings followed by Asian males. White Black and Hispanic males earned less than their other male counterparts, while women groups earned more than all female groups.

Restorative Justice in the States: An Analysis of Statutory Legislation and Policy

A paradigm-shift has occurred in the past two decades as punitive models no longer avail in present-day justice systems. Such a paradigm-shift challenges traditional methods which hinder the possibility of solutions that articulate new values and goals in an effort to challenge, rethink, and refocus current systems, policies, and practices.

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice

Harnessing Data and Information Can Lead to a Better Justice System

A bipartisan consensus has emerged in Congress and state legislatures on the need to focus on finding ways to reduce the over 2 million people in our prisons and jails and make our communities safer. With 18 to 24-year-olds... Read more ...

Stand Up Against Failed Policies: The Youth Prison

We often hear of the exceptional nature of the justice system in the United States. Indeed, our Constitution is meant to ensure that the rule of law holds sway above all else. As such, we are committed to treating our people fairly – without consideration of their age, gender, race, or religion. While our founding document has not always protected the most vulnerable among us, it has – over time – come to be the safeguard against the worst forms of abuse by government.

Read more ...

Center on Juvenile and Family Court Reform

Collaboration – Fine ARA as Physical, Emotional, Psychological, or Sexual Abuse Perpetrated by an Adolescent against another adolescent with whom they are in a dating/romantic relationship.

The purpose of this project, the national survey of teen relationships and intimate violence (STRiV), is to build the evidence base for policies and systems of care and how to best apply it to develop and implement sound policies and practices that meet the needs of at-risk youth/families.

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