Reducing Recidivism for Youth in the Juvenile Services Division of the Kansas Department of Corrections

Analyses and Recommendations

Josh Weber, Juvenile Justice Program Director
Nancy Arrigona, Research Manager

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Overview

Background and Overview of Assessment

Findings

Recommendations
The Council of State Governments Justice Center

National nonprofit, nonpartisan membership association of state government officials

Represents all three branches of state government

Provides practical advice informed by the best available evidence
Progress in Reducing State Juvenile Confinement Rates

*Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement. Available at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp
Importance of Youth Outcomes

July 2014
WHITEPAPER PUBLISHED
Identifies core principles demonstrated by research to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes

August 2014
PILOTS LAUNCHED IN FIVE STATES
Piloting checklists to help government officials assess whether policies and practices align with the core principles
## Core Principles for Improving Youth Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle 1</th>
<th>Principle 2</th>
<th>Principle 3</th>
<th>Principle 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Base supervision, service, and resource allocation decisions on the results of validated risk and need assessments</td>
<td>Adopt and effectively implement programs and services demonstrated to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes, and use data to evaluate the results and direct system improvements</td>
<td>Employ a coordinated approach across service systems to address youth’s needs</td>
<td>Tailor system policies, programs, and supervision to reflect the distinct developmental needs of adolescents</td>
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Assessment of Policies and Practices
Youth in the Custody of the Kansas Department of Corrections

No juvenile justice system has fully implemented all or even most of “what works” to reduce recidivism

KDOC has engaged in a robust and transparent evaluation of its efforts and is committed to improvement

- Reviewed KDOC policies and procedures
- Analyzed recidivism and other outcome data
- Conducted over 25 focus groups with KDOC staff and external stakeholders
- Identified key barriers to reducing recidivism and recommendations for improvement
Data and Information Used for Assessment

**Data Analyzed**

- Intakes
- Disposition to ISP, case management and JCFs
- Length of stay (LOS)
- Releases/completions from case management and JCFs
- Discharges from ISP
- YLS scores
- Sex offenders in JCFs and LOS
- Dispositions and prison admissions to calculate recidivism

**Information Reviewed**

- Juvenile system flow chart
- Juvenile Intake and Supervision Standards
- KDOC 2014 annual report and outcome reports
- Provider Policy Handbook
- Strategic Action Plan, 2012
- YRCII Cost Study
- Juvenile YLS scores
- Subcommittee on JJ Reform Proposals to the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice, 2014
Focus Group Participants

Community Advisory Council (KDOC)
Community Supervision Agencies Line Staff and Supervisors
Court Services Staff
Kansas Department for Children and Families
Juvenile Court Judges
Juvenile Corrections Advisory Board members
Juvenile Intake and Assessment Line Staff
Kansas Advisory Group
KDOC Leadership, Program Managers, and Research Staff
Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services
Kansas Appleseed
Legislators
Office of Judicial Administration
Parents and Youth
Providers Advisory Group (KDOC)
Prosecutors
Staff and Leadership at the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex and Larned Juvenile Correctional Facility

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Kansas Juvenile Justice System

Focus of assessment primarily on KDOC operated and funded activities

- Detention
- Placement
- Pre-Charge
- Diversion
- Post-Charge
- Diversion

Disposition Decision by Prosecutor / Judge

- Sanction House
- Court Services Probation
- Intensive Supervised Probation (ISP)
- Case Management
- Secure Facilities (JCF)

Parole/Re-entry

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High Recidivism Rates for Youth in KDOC Custody

30% of youth on case management

42% of youth in JCFs are reincarcerated within three years of release

FIGURE 1: Re-incarceration Rates for Youth Released from Case Management and Juvenile Correctional Facilities, 2010
Overview

Background and Overview of Assessment

Findings

Recommendations
Steps Taken Towards Adopting and Using Validated Risk Assessments

**Principle 1: Use Validated Assessments**

- Court services recently required to conduct risk assessments (YLS) as part of pre-disposition investigations
- ISP officers required to conduct a YLS and develop case plans for all youth on ISP and in KDOC custody
- Implemented YLS statewide
- Most districts use a validated mental health/substance use screen at intake
- Training is provided by KDOC to ISP officers on conducting risk assessments with fidelity
- KDOC conducts quality assurance audits of YLS assessments
Areas in Need of Improvements

**Limited use of objective criteria to guide key decisions**

- Risk assessments are not the primary determining factor for supervision decisions
- Youth’s treatment needs are not assessed fully or in a timely manner
- YRCIIIs may not be aware of or able to effectively address youth’s needs
- Lengths of stay in residential placements and reentry decisions are not based on youth’s risks and needs and the efficient use of resources
- Quality assurance concerns may limit the usefulness of the YLS
No Standard Assessment Identifies Youth for Diversion at Intake

“The data collected via the Intake and Assessment process could potentially provide a wealth of knowledge for the juvenile justice system. However, given the large amount of missing data, it is clear that the assessment process is not being implemented uniformly across the state.”

Source: Objective Advantage LLC, Kansas State DMC Assessment, 2013
Risk Assessments Are Required But May Not Occur Before Disposition

Based on interviews, many judges don’t order pre-disposition investigations so dispositions occur without a YLS.

No statewide criteria exists to distinguish between one of four supervision levels based on offense severity and risk to reoffend and to match youth with the appropriate supervision level accordingly.
Less than a Quarter of Youth on ISP and in KDOC Custody Are Assessed as High Risk

FIGURE 2: Assessed Risk Level of Youth under KDOC Jurisdiction, 2014

Majority of youth under jurisdiction of KDOC are assessed as being at moderate risk of reoffending
Dispositions to JCFs Not Due to Violent Offenses for Most Moderate Risk Youth

Sex offenses are significant driver of JCF placements for low-risk youth

FIGURE 3: Offense Severity of Youth Placed in JCFs by Assessed Risk Level of Youth, 2014

- **High Risk**
  - Sex Offense: 21%
  - Violent Offense: 15%
  - Other Offense: 64%

- **Moderate Risk**
  - Sex Offense: 21%
  - Violent Offense: 17%
  - Other Offense: 62%

- **Low Risk**
  - Sex Offense: 48%
  - Violent Offense: 10%
  - Other Offense: 42%
Unidentified Mental and Substance Use Disorders

Insufficient Communication
Youth receive a mental health screening at intake, but districts don’t always share the results with the court

Lack of Formal Assessments
Courts don’t use validated assessments and/or know when to use them based on screening results

Uninformed Decision Making
Disposition, placement, and service decisions made without knowing treatment needs
Youth Are Not Assessed in a Timely Fashion or at All If in a Residential Placement

Youth Entering Case Management

On average, youth entering a case management placement had their last YLS from an ISP officer 327 days before placement

Average number of placements after disposition before release to home 4.2

Youth Entering JCFs

On average, youth entering a JCF had their last YLS from an ISP officer 222 days before placement

Average number of placements after disposition before release to home 4.4
Youth Do Not Appear to be Matched to Appropriate Services

Youth’s needs are not fully assessed so youth are placed in facilities that are unaware of their treatment needs and/or not equipped to address them effectively.

$16 million
Per year spent on YRCIIs

FIGURE 4: Discharge Location for Youth Leaving YRCII Placements, 2014
### Lengths of Stay Are Not Based on the Time Needed for Effective Treatment and Efficient Use of Resources

**FIGURE 5: Distribution of Youth’s Lengths of Stay in JCFs and YRCIIs, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JCF*</th>
<th>YRCII</th>
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<tr>
<td>0 to 3 months</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 6 months</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 12 months</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 to 24 months</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 24 months</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Stay</td>
<td>349 Days</td>
<td>80 days</td>
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*For youth admitted to a JCF for a new offense (not for violation of conditional release)*

- LOS in JCFs are determined by statute, judges, “good time” and “time served”
- 9% of youth in JCFs stay less than 3 months, 37% stay more than 12 months and 11% more than 2 years
- LOS in YRCIIs are based on judge, district, and service provider discretion
- 53% of youth in YRCIIs stay less than 3 months; 70% of these youth are discharged unsuccessfully
Low Risk Youth Have the Longest Lengths of Stay

- Lengths of stay in JCFs or YRCIIIs are not determined by youth’s risk of reoffending.
- YRCIIIs LOS are longest for youth assessed as low risk to offend and shortest for the highest risk youth.
- LOS for low risk youth in JCFs are primarily driven by statutory minimum lengths of stay for youth who commit sex offenses.
Youth Leaving JCFs Often Transition to Other Residential Placements for Reentry

• 33% of all youth are released from a JCF to another residential placement as part of their reentry plan.

• High risk youth transition to another residential placement 46% of the time and low and moderate risk youth 33% of the time.

• Facility staff cite that residential placements are often used as a default reentry plan for all youth returning to certain counties.
Quality Assurance Concerns About the YLS May Limit its Usefulness

- Similar distribution of low, moderate, and high risk youth across ISP, case management, and JCFs raise concerns about tool validation/scoring
- District staff question the YLS accuracy, which may distort the thoroughness of their assessments and use of the results
- KDOC conducts YLS quality assurance reviews, but does not analyze data to identify districts that may be using the tool inappropriately and target training and more intensive reviews accordingly
Steps Taken Towards Adopting Effective Programs and Evaluating Youth Outcomes

**Principle 2: Programs that Work**

- Implemented MST pilot project in Wyandotte County to divert youth from residential placement in September 2013
- Provides Aggression Replacement Training (ART) and evidence based sex offender treatment in JCFs
- Conducts quality assurance case audits of services provided to youth in YRCII placements
- Tracks return to custody and incarceration for youth leaving JCFs and reports annually
Areas in Need of Improvements

Lack of evidence-based programs in community and data on youth outcomes

- Kansas lacks a statewide strategy for ensuring that evidence-based programs are available in the community for use as alternatives to residential placement and for reentry

- The implementation of evidence-based programs is not required for case management providers

- KDOC does not use a validated tool to assess service quality and lacks formal processes for reviewing and using this data for outcome improvement

- Recidivism and other youth outcomes are tracked in an incomplete manner or not all for youth under KDOC jurisdiction, and data is not used to guide key decisions and to hold staff, districts, and providers accountable

- Data collection is fragmented and inconsistent across the juvenile justice continuum and locales
Few Evidence Based Services Are Available to Youth in the Community

- Mental Health
- Substance Use
- Females
- Youth Who Commit Sex Offenses

“There is only one provider for drug treatment. That provider is not good but I have to send my kids there anyway.”  (family member of youth in custody)

“A lot of females could be better served in the community but are placed instead.”  (KDOC staff member)

“There is no sex offender treatment in the community. Kids have to drive 31/2 hours one way to go to counseling.”  (ISP officer)
Limited Services in Community May Impact Overall Confinement Rate

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>2011 Confinement Rate per 100,000 Youth</th>
<th>State Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>196</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>8th highest</td>
</tr>
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- Kansas lacks a statewide approach for ensuring that youth are maintained in the community through the use of evidence-based programs/practices:
  - 35 states have implemented the “big 3” evidence-based programs (MST, FFT, MTFC) at some scale statewide
  - 12+ states use the Standard Program Evaluation Protocol or Correctional Program Checklist to assess and improve the quality of local services
  - States such as Ohio, Illinois, and Washington have established fiscal incentives for locales to implement EBPs and keep youth out of state custody
Limited Community Services May Impact Confinement and LOS Specifically for Youth Who Commit Sex Offenses

Disproportionate commitment of youth who commit sex offenses

40% of entire JCF population

FIGURE 7: Median Lengths of Stay in a JCF, 2014
Service Providers Are Not Required to Offer Evidence-Based Services

Facility administrators and key staff are required to have “a knowledge and understanding of evidence based practices for working with juvenile offenders”

Policies do not require the use of effective programs
There has been recent training for JCF staff on ART but some staff report receiving minimal ongoing training, monitoring, or feedback on whether ART is being implemented with fidelity.

Lack of a validated assessment tool to evaluate JCF and case management service quality.

Minimal formal processes to share and use service data to address quality concerns.

Key Quality Assurance Gaps That Negatively Impact Program Fidelity
Insufficient Data for Outcome Measurement and Accountability

Lack of standardized data collected in an electronic system on the dosage and quality of services that youth receive.

Recidivism is not tracked for youth on ISP or in YRCIIIs, and only reincarceration is tracked for youth in JCFs.

Data is not regularly analyzed and used for improvement or accountability purposes.
Data Collection and Lack of Systems Integration Make Analysis Difficult

- Redundant data entry
- Difficulty linking information across separate electronic systems
- Historical data overwritten so difficult to identify youth’s needs versus services at a specific point in time
- No program participation/service data captured and service providers don’t have direct system access
- No mental health or substance use data available
- Data difficult to extract/use
Steps Taken Toward Government Agency and Service System Collaboration

Principle 3: Collaboration across Systems

- Partners with the Kansas Advisory Group, Community Advisory Council, and Provider Advisory Group
- Attends some meetings of Juvenile Corrections Advisory Boards in districts
- Participates in Governor’s Behavioral Health Subcabinet
Areas in Need of Improvements

Insufficient collaboration across agencies to address youth’s needs

- The juvenile justice system structure is a barrier to consistent decision making, coordinated delivery of supervision/services, and resource efficiency
- There is a lack of accessible and high-quality treatment services for youth with mental and substance use disorders and limited agency collaboration
- Youth in case management placements may not be enrolled in school in timely manner, stay in school, and make reasonable academic progress
Complex System Structure a Barrier to Collaboration and Efficiency

KDOC, court services, and district staff all cite inconsistent coordination with each other on supervision, placement, service, reentry, and revocation decisions.
Limited Availability of Mental Health and Substance Use Services

Youth’s treatment needs not addressed in timely or effective manner

Medicaid funding essential to access services

System coordination and partnerships limited

YRCII placements can’t offer behavioral health services but refer to community

Few behavioral health services available in community or in facilities

Limited Medicaid eligibility for evidence-based community services

“Mental health treatment and placements are not available so kids are placed inappropriately and fail repeatedly”
(KDOC facility staff member)
Local Schools May Not be Receptive to Enrolling Youth in KDOC Custody

YRCIIs and District Staff Cite:

- Youth are not enrolled in a timely fashion in local schools
- Schools records are not shared
- Credits are not fully transferred
- Youth are disproportionately suspended or expelled
- Enrollment/academic progress data is not collected for youth in YRCIIs

“Getting education records can take 2 to 3 months. It creates real problems when you think a youth will be released to one district and then there is a last minute change.” (YRCII provider staff member)

“If a youth is suspended or expelled they can’t go to school anywhere. We try to find them a placement with an online school.” (YRCII provider staff member)
Steps Taken Toward a Developmentally-Appropriate Approach

Principle 4: Policies and Practices Developmentally Appropriate

- Developed visitation policies that enable greater family involvement
- ISP officers required to make monthly contact with families
- Provides training for ISP officers in techniques such as Motivational Interviewing for engaging youth and promoting positive behaviors
Areas in Need of Improvements

Lack of consistent, developmentally appropriate approach to supervision, services, and technical violations

- Youth and families are not consistently a part of case planning decisions, reentry planning, and treatment
- KDOC secure facility staff are committed to rehabilitation but cite a lack of collaboration and shared training as obstacles to effective treatment
- Some districts do not supervise youth with officers who only have youth on their caseloads and are appropriately trained on how to promote positive youth behavior change
- Kansas lacks a statewide graduated response policy, and thus, technical violations are significant driver of KDOC custody and residential placements
Families Are Not Consistently Engaged

- KDOC does not provide family therapy to youth in JCFs
- Families are not regularly involved in case planning meetings, treatment progress review meetings, or to develop reentry plans
Lack of Collaboration amongst JCF and District Staff on Youth’s Treatment

All key parties to youth’s successful treatment and reentry do not receive the same training on how to advance youth’s treatment goals or engage in regular team meetings.

“Program staff teach and try to change but JCOs see their role as discipline. They say my job is to consequence and your job is to change.” (KDOC facility staff member)
Lack of Graduated Responses to Technical Violations

23% of all admissions to JCFs in 2011 were due to a technical violation of conditional release.

22% of all youth released from a JCF in 2011 were reincarcerated within three years due to a technical violation of conditional release.

Court service and ISP violators are also likely to comprise a significant proportion of the JCF population.

Disproportionate reliance on KDOC custody and expensive residential placements as a response to technical violations.
Overview

Background and Overview of Assessment

Findings

Recommendations
Key Recommendations
High recidivism rates but significant opportunities for improvement

1. KDOC should establish **specific metrics and related policy/practice requirements** for district block grants and service provider contracts to ensure that youth’s needs are assessed and effectively addressed.

2. KDOC should develop more regular and sophisticated **data collection processes** to hold itself, districts, and providers accountable for implementing high-quality services and improving youth outcomes.

3. Policymakers should establish **statewide criteria** for matching youth with the appropriate level of supervision and services and invest in **evidence-based community services**.
Strengthen Requirements for District Block Grants

1. Identify and use a **risk screening tool** at intake and develop guidelines to divert low-risk youth
2. Conduct YLS **assessments every six months** for all youth
3. Share mental health **screening results** with court services and/or allow court services view access to JJIAMS
4. Develop and use a standard **case planning tool** to match youth to services based on their YLS results
5. Develop and use a **service matrix** to determine appropriate case management placements so resources are used efficiently
6. Require that a youth’s **default reentry plan is to return home** unless certain risk/need criteria are met and written approval is given by KDOC
7. Hold regular **treatment team meetings** with facility line and treatment staff, facility and district supervision officers, and families
8. Hold a **mandatory reentry planning meeting** with youth and families 30-60 days prior to release
9. Develop and use a statewide **graduated response matrix** to match appropriate sanctions to youth’s risk level and severity of their behaviors
Strengthen Requirements for Service Provider Contracts

**Key changes for provider contracts**

1. Demonstrate that services provided are **based on what research has shown works** to reduce recidivism.

2. Document a **program framework** that specifies the population served, expected outcomes, service intensity, and quality assurance.

3. Accept for admission only youth whose risks and needs match this documented **referral criteria**.

4. Maintain **average lengths of stay** that adhere to treatment “dosage” criteria.

5. KDOC should identify risk/need criteria for LOS adjustments and establish a formal **approval process**, with KDOC having final LOS decision-making authority.

6. Track and **report data** on admissions, service delivery, and program completions/failures in an electronic management system.
Improve Data Collection Processes

1. Identify **key data points** to measure program quality and youth outcomes for case management contractors and district block grants.

2. Assess the quality of JCF and case management services using a **validated service quality assessment tool** (e.g. SPEP or CPC).

3. Maintain **contracts** with only providers that rate as high quality.

4. Measure **re-adjudication**, re-incarceration, and technical violation rates for all youth in custody and on ISP.

5. Measure **school enrollment and outcomes** for all youth, specifically those on case management and ISP.

6. Analyze recidivism and other outcome data **by youth’s risk level**, youth demographics, facility/provider, and lengths of stay.

7. Establish separate annual **data review** and improvement/corrective action processes with KDOC staff, service providers, and districts.

Changes to KDOC data practices
Establish Statewide Criteria for the Efficient Use of Supervision and Services

1. Establish a cohesive vision for Kansas’ juvenile justice system and identify the governance and funding structure that best supports it.
2. Require that all youth receive a risk assessment prior to disposition and that the results are shared with the court.
3. Establish guidelines for the use of court services probation, ISP, case management, and JCFs based on offense severity and assessed risk level.
4. Restrict the population of youth eligible for admission to JCFs to primarily include youth who commit felony/violent offenses.
5. Align minimum and maximum required LOS with the average time needed to accomplish treatment goals and use resources most efficiently, and give KDOC authority to adjust LOS for most youth based on objective criteria.
Invest in Evidence-Based Community Services

Policy and funding changes to use service resources more efficiently

1. Consider how existing resources used for YRCII ($16 million) can be most efficiently allocated to develop evidence-based programs in the community that reduce recidivism and keep youth close to home.

2. Reinvest savings from reduced KDOC placements in competitive grants for districts to implement EBPs.

3. Adjust the state funding formula for district block grants so districts are incentivized to establish EBPs that serve as alternatives to placements.

4. Require that youth receive a validated behavioral health assessment prior to disposition when warranted.

5. Amend the state Medicaid plan to cover more community-based, evidence-based behavioral health services.
Looking Ahead

Over the next few months, the CSG Justice Center will support KDOC to:

- Form a working group of KDOC staff and other system stakeholders
- Establish an action plan to advance key policy and practice changes
- Determine highest priority and most viable recommendations and best way to achieve them
- Leverage resources and technical assistance from Models for Change
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Additional Resources
Core Principles:

Juvenile Reentry and Resources:
http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/juvenile-reentry/

Juvenile Justice Project:
http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/juvenile-justice-project/

For more information, contact Josh Weber (jweber@csg.org)

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