

Welcome to...  
*Ohio Communities*  
4  
*Kids*





# Community- Based Prevention and Diversion

# Populations of Concern

- Children and adolescents **at risk** for contact with the Juvenile Justice system, e.g., youth with persistent and serious externalizing (“acting-out”) conditions
- Children and adolescents **with an initial contact** with the Juvenile Justice system
- Children and adolescents disconnected from school

# Why Diversion and Prevention Matter

At its heart, juvenile justice is a form of “future victim prevention” intended to secure safety for individuals and communities by intervening with youth whose misconduct has already compromised the rights and interests of others.

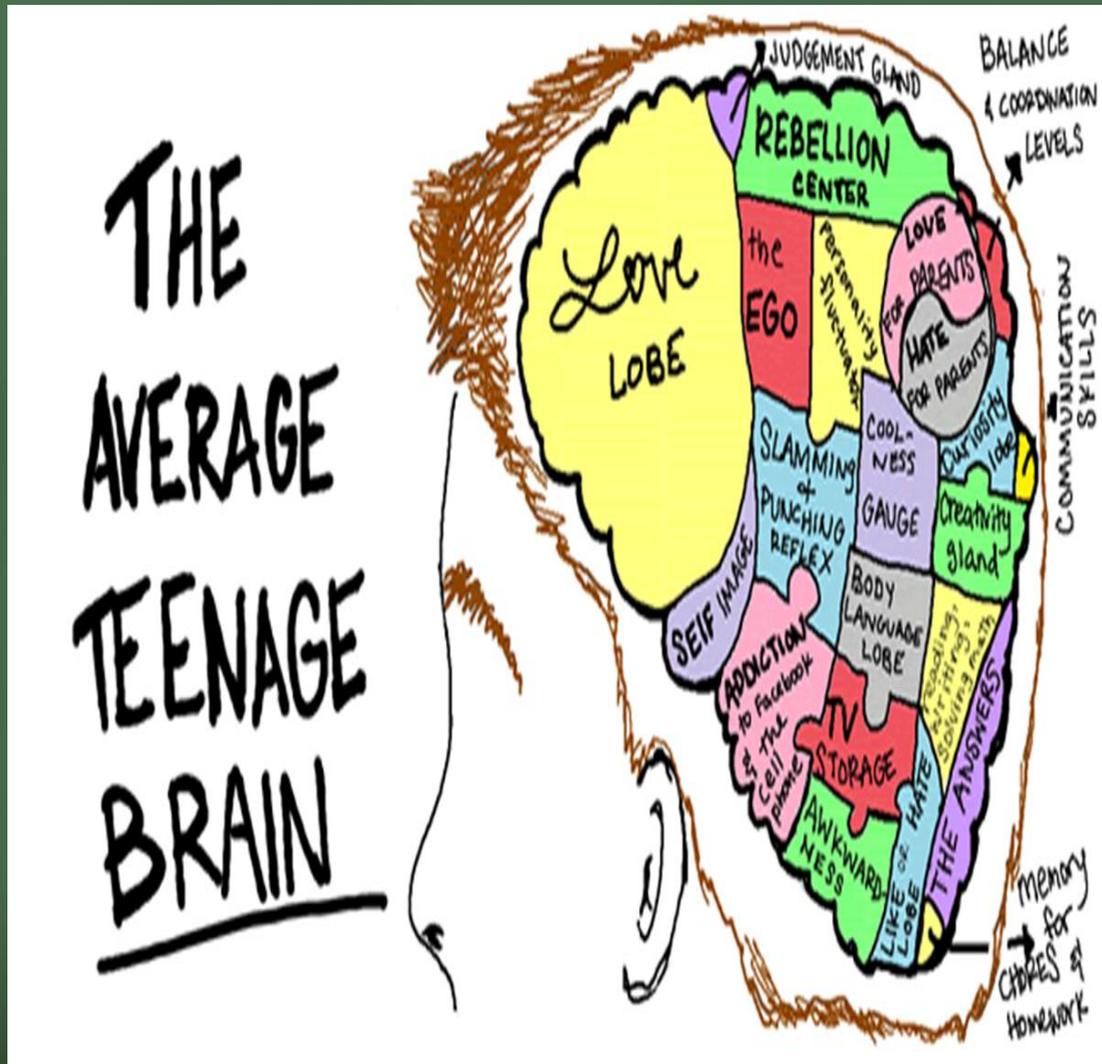


It is crucial that the core mission not be compromised by devoting limited juvenile justice resources to youth who can be responsibly diverted at a variety of points from unwarranted penetration deeper into the juvenile justice system.

## What the Research Says...

- Youth with serious and ongoing disruptive behavior (“acting out”) are at particular risk for early contact and involvement with the JJ
- Prevention and Early Intervention programs should include and address the needs of children who have serious disruptive behaviors
- These programs should also include youth who have early experience with the JJ system

# •Adolescent Brain Development

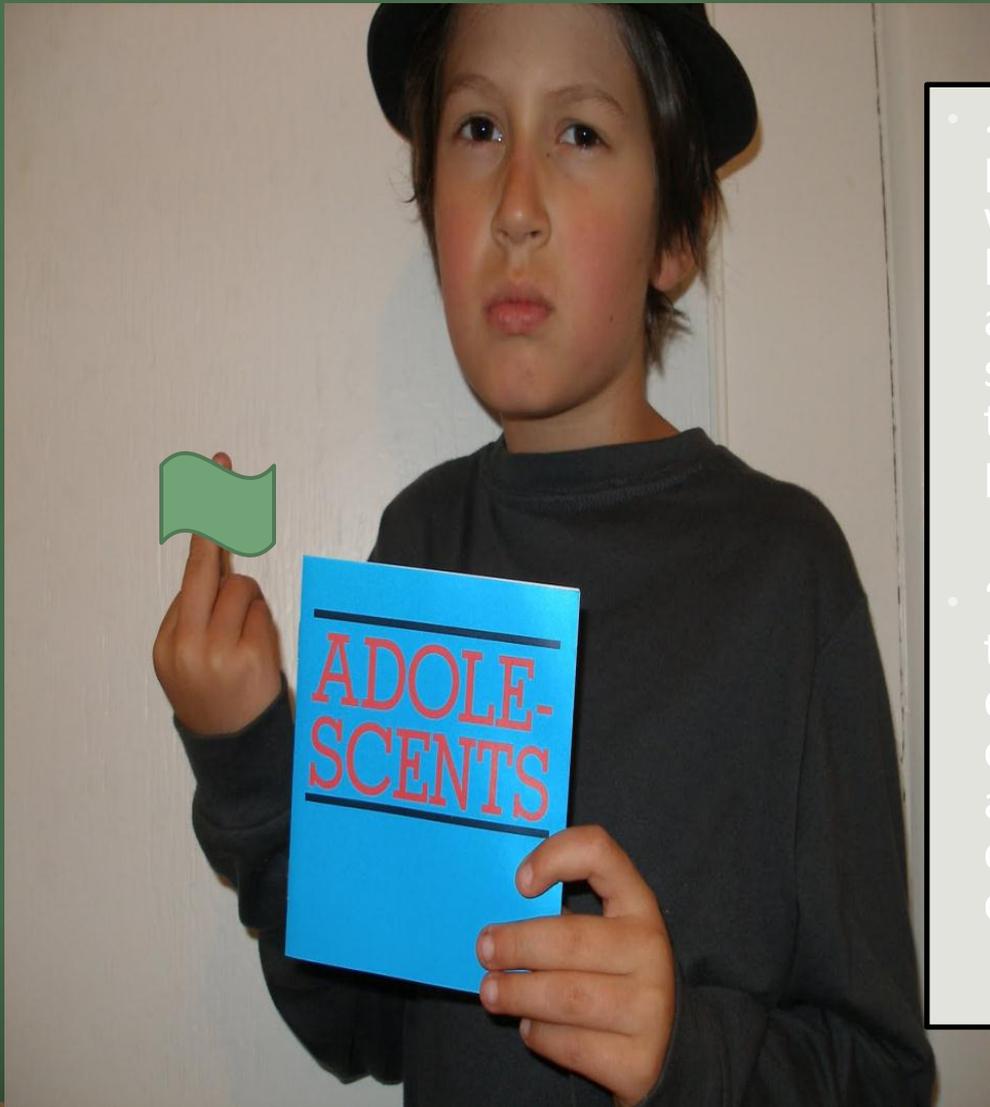


- Physical coordination, emotion & motivation develop first.
- But, reasoning and impulses - the Prefrontal Cortex - develop last & do not fully mature until age 25.

Drugfree.org

## •Adolescent Behavior

## ≠ Delinquency



- ...the very behaviors that frustrate parents and other adults working with adolescents are critical to learning how to deal with adversity and positioning young people to successfully operate within a world that will largely be run by their peers...'
- '...the National Standards warn that...over-responding to non-delinquent or low-risk behavior often does little benefit, and it can actually unintentionally harm children and ultimately increase costs to society.'

# What Does Science Tell Us?

## Science Talk:



## Translation

“According to our model, in emotionally salient situations, the more mature limbic system will win over the prefrontal control system. In other words, when a poor decision is made in an emotional context, the adolescent may know better, but the salience of the emotional context biases his or her behavior in opposite direction of the optimal action.”

Even though a youth may actually ‘know better’, when in emotional situations, risky decision-making trumps ‘thinking.’

- Focus on Community Prevention and Diversion

**Prevent**



**Divert**



## What the Literature Says About the Need for Prevention and Diversion

- Just one detention experience increases the odds for future juvenile justice involvement.
- Youth who come in contact with the JJ system are at risk of reduced academic achievement, reduced opportunity for healthy development, and increased risk for more serious behavior and further JJ involvement.

# Why Prevention and Diversion Strategies Are Important to Youth Development

- Early identification of 'at risk' youth helps direct more appropriate support
- Limits further engagement with the JJ system while responding to the youth's needs
- Supports the value of responsibility in a developmentally appropriate way that can shape future positive behavior
- Promotes resilience through the development of protective factors

Domain	Risk Factors	Protective Factors	Supports and Interventions (examples)
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early antisocial behavior and emotional factors such as low behavioral inhibitions</li> <li>• Poor cognitive development</li> <li>• Hyperactivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ High IQ</li> <li>❑ Positive social skills</li> <li>❑ Willingness to please adults</li> <li>❑ Religious and club affiliations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Faith based youth groups</li> <li>➤ Behavioral consultation in community settings such as day care and pre-school</li> </ul>
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate or inappropriate child rearing practices</li> <li>• Home discord</li> <li>• Maltreatment and abuse</li> <li>• Large family size</li> <li>• Parental antisocial history</li> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Exposure to repeated family violence</li> <li>• Divorce</li> <li>• Parental MH</li> <li>• Teenage parenthood</li> <li>• A high level of parent-child conflict</li> <li>• A low level of positive parental involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Participation in shared activities between youth and family (including siblings and parents)</li> <li>❑ Providing the forum to discuss problems and issues with parents</li> <li>❑ Availability of economic and other resources to expose youth to multiple experiences</li> <li>❑ The presence of a positive adult (ally) in the family to mentor and be supportive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Incredible Years curriculum</li> <li>➤ Big Brother/Big Sisters</li> <li>➤ Health Education</li> <li>➤ Identification and referral for domestic violence</li> <li>➤ Functional Family Therapy</li> <li>➤ Multisystemic Therapy</li> <li>➤ Brief Strategic Family Therapy</li> <li>➤ Strengthening Families</li> <li>➤ Homebuilders</li> <li>➤ Other family based interventions</li> </ul>

Domain	Risk Factors	Protective Factors	Supports or Interventions (examples)
Peer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spending time with peers who engage in delinquent or risky behavior</li> <li>• Gang involvement</li> <li>• Less exposure to positive social opportunities because of bullying and rejection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Positive and healthy friends to associate with</li> <li>❑ Engagement in healthy and safe activities with peers during leisure time (e.g., clubs, sports, other recreation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Membership in neighborhood youth group, i.e., Boys and Girls Club</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living in an impoverished neighborhood</li> <li>• Social disorganization in the community in which the youth lives</li> <li>• High crime neighborhoods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ A community and neighborhood that promote and foster healthy activities for youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Community centers with service projects for youth to contribute</li> <li>➤ Youth groups for positive peer development</li> <li>➤ Arts and athletic opportunities</li> </ul>
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor academic performance</li> <li>• Enrollment in schools that are unsafe and fail to address the academic and social and emotional needs of children and youth</li> <li>• Low commitment to school</li> <li>• Low educational aspirations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Enrollment in schools that address not only the academic needs of youth but also their social and emotional needs and learning</li> <li>❑ Schools that provide a safe environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Life Skills Training</li> <li>➤ Conflict resolution skill building</li> <li>➤ Kognito</li> <li>➤ Families and Schools Together</li> <li>➤ Good Behavior Game</li> </ul>

# •Resilience is Real

“An inner capacity that when nurtured, facilitated, and supported by others, empowers children, youth, and families to successfully meet life's challenges with a sense of self-determination, mastery, hope, and well-being.” Resiliency Leadership Ohio

“Resiliency is knowing when you are falling and how to catch yourself.” Youth member of Resiliency Leadership Ohio

“All children and families have individual strengths that can be identified, built on, and employed” to prevent future delinquency and justice system involvement. Osher, 1996, p. 186

[www.resiliencyohio.org](http://www.resiliencyohio.org)



# What Works in Communities?

- Mentoring
- Opportunities for pro-social engagement
- Life skills training
- Job placement services
- After school and recreational programs
- Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)
- Respite
- Transportation
- Medical assistance
- Recovery and natural support networks
- Positive youth development

# What Works in Behavioral Health?

## Treatment

- Family based treatment interventions
- In-home and community based treatment
- Cognitive behavior therapy
- Individualized Wrap Around planning
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment that is integrated, for co-occurring disorders

## Support

- Parenting skill/family relationship development
  - Mentoring
- Skill building in the areas of self-efficacy and self-regulation
- Conflict resolution, mediation and other social competence programs
  - Comprehensive school/community interventions

# • Families at the Center

“When families are viewed and treated as **partners** in both their child’s care and in the operations of the juvenile justice system itself, the child, the family, and the system benefit. **The most effective interventions for youth in the justice system are those that engage families in a strength-based partnership.** A trauma-informed system builds on that fact by adopting a collaborative approach to the families and youth with whom they interact.”

National Child Traumatic Stress Network



# • Families at the Center

“In an important document on diversion, McCord and colleagues suggest that the success of diversion programs requires providing **intensive and comprehensive services that include the youths’ families** and take into account community, school, and peer interactions, as well as use experienced caseworkers.”

McCord, J., Widom, C., Crowell, N. (2001). Diversion. In J. McCord, C. Widom, and N. Crowell (eds.), *Juvenile crime, juvenile justice*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

## Juvenile Diversion Guidebook

Prepared by the Models for Change Juvenile Diversion Workgroup

**Models for Change**  
Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice

# Changing the Frame

## PRIMARY LENS

### ASSUMPTIONS

Youth as Victim

Youth as Villain

Youth as Resource

**Origins of Most Delinquent Behavior**

Symptom of underlying disturbance

Anti-social impulses, lack of restraint due to permissiveness and the absence of punishment

Normative response to adolescent needs for status, belonging, power & excitement, lack of empathy

**How Delinquent Youth Compare with Other Adolescents**

Fundamentally different in psychological and emotional makeup

Fundamentally different motivations and impulses toward deviant behavior

Largely similar to other adolescents but with fewer social assets

**Delinquent Youth Capacity for Behavior Change**

Incapable of conventional behavior without therapeutic interventions

Incapable of conventional behavior without strict discipline and the threat of punishment

Inherently capable of conventional behavior with sufficient access to supports and pro-social opportunities

**Principal Intervention Strategy**

Individual or family-based therapeutic treatment

Deterrence and retributive punishment

Skill development, attachment and engagement

**Role of Treatment**

Primary

Secondary

Secondary

**Risks of Treatment**

Could fail to address underlying cause(s)

Could delay or impede deterrence

Could introduce stigma or harm—i.e., iatrogenic effects