

YOUTH  
JUSTICE  
BOARD

A Project of the Center for Court Innovation and  
the Center for Courts and the Community



STRONG  
FAMILIES,  
SAFE  
COMMUNITIES

Recommendations to Improve New York City's Alternative to Detention Programs

This publication was written by Youth Justice Board members and staff. The Youth Justice Board is a project of the Center for Court Innovation and the Center for Courts and the Community. It was founded to give young people a voice in policies that affect their lives. Each year a team of youth from across New York City investigates a current juvenile justice or public safety issue, formulates policy recommendations and works to promote and implement key ideas.

The Youth Justice Board is supported by The Cricket Island Foundation, The W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation, the New York City Council, and the New York State Unified Court System.

Points of view and opinions expressed in this document are the opinions of the Youth Justice Board members and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Center for Court Innovation, the Center for Courts and the Community or the above-named entities.

Dear Reader,

We are a group of teenagers who came together to study the juvenile justice system and Alternative to Detention (ATD) programs in New York City. We all had different reasons for joining, but our common goal is to change the system for the betterment of youth.

Our goal is to expand and improve ATD programs in New York City. We want more youth to be placed in ATD programs rather than in detention so that they can stay in their communities. We spent several months researching this topic. We conducted interviews with stakeholders, visited ATD programs and held focus groups with young people who have been involved in the juvenile justice system. We then developed ten recommendations that we believe can improve the system and the lives of young people.

Our recommendations can help make the juvenile justice process and ATD programs more effective and in turn improve the lives of youth who enter the system. They can also help improve communities, save money and help young people make better choices.

Thank you for reading our report and recommendations.

Sincerely,

The Youth Justice Board

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*Guillermo*  
*Dalesa*  
*Zuerdera*  
*Joseph*  
*Janae'*  
*Syeda*  
*Shantu*  
*Claudia*

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Annelly, Kevin, Marc, Nadica, Nelson, Rocina, Shane and Taquan.

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<sup>1</sup> The names of the youth in the focus groups are withheld to protect their privacy.

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## About the Youth Justice Board

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Launched by the Center for Court Innovation in 2004, the Youth Justice Board is an after-school program that brings together teenagers from around New York City to study and devise policy recommendations on an issue affecting youth in the City. Members represent the diversity of New York City, coming from different neighborhoods and schools and bringing varied personal experiences to the Board. After several months of fieldwork the young people present their findings directly to key City and State officials. In the past four years, Board members have presented their recommendations to the City's Schools Chancellor, the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinator, the Commissioner of the City's Department of Youth and Community Development, the Commissioner of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, and the Administrative Judge of New York City Family Court.

In previous years the Youth Justice Board studied the challenges faced by youth returning home after confinement for juvenile delinquency, safety problems in New York City high schools and the experiences of youth who go through New York City Family Court's permanency planning division. This year's cohort investigated how to expand and improve Alternative to Detention (ATD) programs in New York City.

# Executive Summary

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In 2006, New York City introduced a new initiative to decrease the number of youth who are placed in detention while their cases are being heard in family court. The initiative includes the creation of Alternative to Detention (ATD) programs in each borough. These programs allow some young people who have been arrested to remain at home before their disposition hearings in family court while they receive relevant services and curfew monitoring. At the core of ATD programs is the concept of giving young people a chance—that is, giving them opportunities to succeed outside the confines of detention. The Youth Justice Board believes that community-based ATD programs are critical to improving outcomes for young people involved in the juvenile justice system.

## **The Youth Justice Board’s Research**

Over five months, the Youth Justice Board conducted interviews with over 30 stakeholders involved in the ATD initiative. The Board visited four ATD programs and conducted three focus groups with young people involved in the juvenile justice system to learn about the experiences and perspectives of youth.

## **Recommendations**

The Youth Justice Board developed ten recommendations to strengthen and expand existing ATD programs and help youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system.

### **A. Provide youth and families with the tools they need to participate meaningfully in delinquency cases.**

1. Give young people information and resources to help them understand the juvenile justice process.
2. Provide more information to families and encourage active participation in the court process.

### **B. Maximize use of resources to ensure young people receive appropriate supervision.**

3. Utilize up-to-date information to ensure that services and supervision are responsive to the needs of youth.
4. Increase access to ATD programs and make it easier for youth to transition to lower levels of supervision.
5. Consider creating the option of short-term housing resources for youth who cannot return home immediately.

### **C. Increase the availability of individualized services in ATD programs.**

6. Partner with other community-based organizations to provide activities, services and referrals that are appealing and meaningful to young people.
7. Strengthen relationships with schools to improve educational supports for ATD program participants.
8. Offer mental health services, screenings and referrals.
9. Provide every young person with an exit plan that includes aftercare services.
10. Conduct long-term research to test the impact of ATD programs on dispositions, recidivism and the social service needs of participants.

The recommendations put forth by the Board are not meant to be static—they are intended to be a starting point for change. The Board hopes its recommendations will spark conversation with New York City Family Court, the Mayor’s Office, community-based programs, the Department of Probation and other partners. Over the next year, the Youth Justice Board will work with system stakeholders in an effort to encourage the implementation of the ideas contained in this report.



## Background

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This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Youth Justice Board, a group of New York City teenagers who study public policies that affect young people. Since August 2008, the Youth Justice Board has focused on how to improve outcomes for young people involved in New York City's juvenile justice system. Specifically, the Youth Justice Board has studied programs designed to decrease the number of youth confined in detention facilities while they await disposition of their juvenile delinquency cases.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, the Board's goal is to identify opportunities to strengthen and expand existing community-based ATD programs.

The Youth Justice Board undertook its research on ATD programs at a pivotal moment for juvenile justice reform in New York City. In 2006, the City introduced a major initiative to decrease the number of youth in detention, the main components of which were the development of an empirically-based assessment tool known as the Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI), which measures juveniles' risks of re-offending and failing to appear in court, and the establishment of community-based ATD programs. The initiative, a result of collaboration between the Mayor's Office, City agencies and community-based programs, was meant to reduce the use of pre-disposition detention. In 2008, there was an average daily population of 322 young people with pending juvenile delinquency cases in New York City detention facilities.<sup>2</sup> That year, 5,265 delinquency petitions were filed in New York City Family Court<sup>3</sup> and approximately 84.1 million dollars were budgeted for detention services which are run by the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).<sup>4</sup>

The RAI is administered by the New York City Department of Probation (DOP) to young people after arrest.<sup>5</sup> The City contracted with the Vera Institute of Justice to create this assessment tool. The Vera Institute collected data from nearly 2,000 delinquency cases to identify the factors that most accurately predict young people's risk of re-arrest and failure to appear. While other jurisdictions have used similar tools in connection with juvenile justice reform efforts,<sup>6</sup> New York City's RAI was designed using empirical evidence to determine each young person's level of risk. The RAI collects and analyzes information about factors associated with re-arrest or failure to appear in court including prior arrests, adjudications, warrants and school attendance.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for an overview of the juvenile justice system in New York City.

<sup>2</sup> New York City Mayor's Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator. "NYC Juvenile Justice Monthly Indicators." (December 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The average daily cost per youth in secure detention in 2008 was \$588. New York City Independent Budget Office. "The Rising Cost of the City's Juvenile Justice System." 2008. 3 May 2009. <<http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/JJpath.pdf>>

<sup>5</sup> DOP conducts intake for all alleged juvenile delinquents between the ages of 7 and 15. Young people 16 years old or older are processed as adults.

<sup>6</sup> Rust, B. "Juvenile Jailhouse Rocked: Reforming Detention in Chicago, Portland, and Sacramento." *Advocacy* 1.3 (2000): 21-35.

Every assessment yields a rating of low-risk, mid-risk or high-risk, which is used to determine the level of supervision a youth receives while his/her case is pending.

In addition to the information provided by the RAI, judges now have an expanded range of supervision options for young people awaiting disposition of their cases. This “continuum of supervision” ranges from parental supervision to secure detention and includes new ATD programs that allow young people to stay in their homes while their delinquency cases are pending. Judges consider the RAI score and other factors such as parental support, school attendance, severity of charge and community involvement to determine the appropriate level of pre-disposition supervision for each youth.

Over the past two years, the Mayor’s Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator has funded and overseen the development of ATD programs in every borough. These programs are open to young people whose RAI scores designate them as mid-risk of re-arrest and failure to appear. Youth assigned to ATD programs are placed in one of three tiers. Each tier provides increasing levels of supervision. Community-based organizations run Tier I and Tier II ATD programs, which are intended for young people whose RAI scores reflect lower levels of risk. The Tier III program is intended for young people whose RAI scores reflect a greater risk, but who do not need to be detained.

Tier I programs are community monitoring programs. ATD program staff perform curfew checks and communicate with parents, schools and other relevant organizations to ensure that participants comply with all requirements and court-imposed mandates, including school attendance, court appearances and curfews. Tier II programs supplement the compliance monitoring of Tier I with a daily after-school program. After-school supervision programs offer academic enrichment and assistance, art and recreational activities, life skills training, field trips, and individual and group counseling. Programs offer a range of additional services, including ongoing case management and referrals for youth participants and their family members. Programs encourage family engagement by inviting parents and guardians to attend family meals, discussions and other events. DOP operates the Tier III ATD program, called “Intensive Community Monitoring” (ICM). This program features frequent curfew checks, home visits and phone check-ins, but does not have an after-school component. Each tier has the capacity to serve 600 young people throughout New York City per year.<sup>7</sup> Young people may spend up to 60 days in each tier.

At court hearings, ATD program staff report on participants’ compliance with program rules and court orders. Judges respond to non-compliance through a system of graduated sanctions that include increasing levels of supervision and detention. Judges also may reduce the level of supervision depending on a youth’s conduct.

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<sup>7</sup> DOP does not run an alternative to detention program in Staten Island.

New York City's ATD initiative is part of a growing movement in New York and nationwide to rethink business as usual in the juvenile justice system. In September 2008, New York State Governor David Paterson appointed a Task Force on Transforming the Juvenile Justice System. In fall 2009, the Task Force will issue recommendations for reforming a number of aspects of the juvenile justice system, focusing on the placement of young people in residential facilities, the conditions of confinement and re-entry into the community. The Task Force will also look at the impact of detention practice on placement rates.

## Findings

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The findings and recommendations in this report are based on five months of research conducted by the Youth Justice Board, including interviews, site visits and focus groups. The members interviewed more than 30 policymakers and practitioners, conducted site visits to New York City's ATD programs<sup>8</sup> and led focus groups in which 18 system-involved young people shared their experiences and opinions of the juvenile justice system and ATD programs.<sup>9</sup> The Youth Justice Board identified several challenges to ensuring the best outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system:

- Young people and their families often lack sufficient and necessary information to participate meaningfully in juvenile delinquency cases.
- Imperfect communication among key agencies and gaps in the supervision continuum limit the ability of the juvenile justice system to meet the changing needs of young people.
- ATD programs need additional information and resources to comprehensively address the needs of the young people they serve.

The Youth Justice Board's findings reflect the juvenile justice system policies and practices in place from October 2008 to March 2009.

### **Young people and their families often lack sufficient and necessary information to participate meaningfully in juvenile delinquency cases.**

- *Youth do not understand the juvenile justice process and do not know what to expect in court.* A young person's actions after arrest may affect how the case proceeds and whether he/she is released or remanded. Yet many young people in the focus groups said that no one clearly explained to them how the juvenile justice system works or how their actions could affect the outcomes of their cases.
- *Young people and their lawyers often do not communicate effectively.* Young people often do not understand or value the importance of communicating with their lawyers. Mistrust of lawyers was a prominent theme in the focus groups. Young people reported being confused by the complicated legal process and cautious about accepting advice on difficult decisions. Many youth reported that seeing their lawyers talking to judges or other people in the courtroom made them suspect that their lawyers were working against

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<sup>8</sup> One ATD program, Project READY, opened in April 2009, after the Board concluded its research.

<sup>9</sup> The research design and all protocols were reviewed and approved by the Center for Court Innovation's Institutional Review Board. See Appendix 3 for a complete description of the research.

their best interests. Without a clear understanding of the process, young people may hold their lawyers accountable for decisions they do not like.

Lawyers also spoke about the need for improved communication. Poor communication undermines lawyers' abilities to represent their clients and deprives judges of information they need to make informed decisions. Youth can be difficult to contact by phone or email and often do not reach out to their lawyers before court dates.

- *Parents do not understand the juvenile justice system and the impact their actions have on judges' decisions.*<sup>10</sup>

Judges explained that they factor parental involvement into decisions about whether to release or remand youth. Judges expect parents to attend all court hearings with their children. Yet parents often do not have a clear understanding of the juvenile justice process or of the pivotal role they play in ensuring the best outcomes for their children. Most cases involve multiple hearings that take place over several months. During focus groups, youth explained that their parents often had difficulty attending hearings because of work and other commitments. Lawyers said that they often have trouble contacting parents.<sup>11</sup> Youth said that they feel ill-equipped to explain their cases to their parents, or are reluctant to “add more stress” to their parents' lives.

- *ATD programs struggle to engage parents and family members.*

ATD program staff discussed challenges they face in involving family members in services and program activities that may be viewed favorably during the adjudicatory process. ATD program staff described a variety of strategies they use to engage parents, including organized informational dinners, breakfasts and group sessions. However, parents are often unable to attend these activities. Program staff reported that they are making progress in this area, but still have difficulty connecting with parents in a meaningful and sustained way.

### **Imperfect communication among key agencies and gaps in the supervision continuum limit the ability of the juvenile justice system to meet the changing needs of young people.**

- *The RAI is not updated after it is administered at intake.*

The RAI was designed to measure a young person's risk of re-arrest and failure to appear in court while a case is pending.<sup>12</sup> It provides a detailed picture of a young person's circumstances at the time of intake, but is not updated to reflect changes in a young person's life between arrest and arraignment, which can be anywhere from a few days to several months, depending on the case. The RAI score is based partly on information that often

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<sup>10</sup> Throughout this report, the term “parents” includes any guardians.

<sup>11</sup> Young people and their lawyers have confidential relationships. However, in some cases the lawyer can be a source of information for parents about what to expect related to their child's case. They can also help to answer parents' questions about court and the juvenile justice process.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendices 1 and 2 for a description of how the RAI score connects to supervision options.

changes between arrest and arraignment, such as school attendance, outcomes of other pending cases and family engagement. While judges are not required to follow the RAI when they decide whether to release or remand a young person, the RAI does determine eligibility for ATD programs. Currently, judges may not send young people to ATD programs when they have RAI scores that fall outside the mid-risk range. Updated information may affect the RAI score and, therefore, program eligibility.

- *Current practice does not utilize up-to-date information to ensure that young people are receiving appropriate supervision.*

Planners of New York City's ATD programs envisioned that young people would move along a continuum of supervision options according to their risk levels and needs. In practice, mid-risk youth move between Tiers I and II of ATD programs, but young people rarely move between other points along this "supervision continuum," such as from secure detention into non-secure detention facilities. This is due in part to the limited information available at hearings. For example, when judges request information about children in custody of DJJ the agency provides an "adjustment report" that includes basic information about the young person, but does not indicate whether he/she may be eligible for or benefit from a less restrictive supervision option. Staff from DJJ expressed the belief that the availability of more information in hearings would help remove barriers to movement for youth.

- *The juvenile justice system tends to focus more on young people who are not meeting expectations than on young people who are doing well.*

Too often young people in detention who are doing well and behaving as expected do not move to less restrictive levels of supervision, precluding them from having the opportunity to prove themselves at home in their communities. Focus group participants perceived that young people who behave badly and do not meet expectations often receive more attention from the system as a whole. While some programs have incentives for good behavior, the system does not always provide young people who are doing well with positive rewards.

- *Agencies should communicate more with one another about young people's progress.*

Professionals from many agencies have contact with young people as they move through the juvenile justice process. While these agencies have overlapping responsibilities, they often do not communicate with one another about young people's progress. Youth who participated in focus groups expressed frustration about being asked the same questions many times and receiving what appear to be duplicative services. In addition, agencies might not have vital information about services that young people are receiving, which limits their abilities to offer appropriate support. ATD program providers also said that better communication with both DJJ and schools would help them to ensure that judges have access to up-to-date information and that they can provide appropriate services for youth who move from detention to ATD programs.

- *Judges sometimes remand young people because they do not have an appropriate place to live, rather than because of their individual risk levels.*

After arrest, some young people cannot or do not want to go home. Judges discussed circumstances that might lead them to remand a young person who is otherwise eligible for an ATD program, including cases where it appears to be in the best interest of all parties for the youth not to return home. Judges further noted that they can only order services for families upon disposition of the case, which prevents them from providing families with supports earlier in the process.

**ATD programs need additional information and resources to comprehensively address the needs of the young people they serve.**

- *Participants have difficulty traveling to and from ATD programs.*

Currently only one ATD program exists in each borough. As a result, participants often must travel long distances to attend them. ATD program staff and young people said that distance prevents some participants from attending after-school program activities and from meeting court-imposed curfews. Some judges expressed reluctance to assign eligible youth to ATD programs when travel might undermine their participation. Finally, ATD program staff said that some young people and parents have safety concerns about traveling long distances between ATD programs and home at night.

- *ATD programs do not have access to all of the information they need from schools to fully address educational needs.*

Many young people in the juvenile justice system are not performing at grade-level or have other unmet educational needs.<sup>13</sup> While most ATD programs offer tutoring and homework help, many lack resources to address more complex educational issues. Judges noted that school attendance is a crucial factor in their decision-making. Some focus group participants said that going to ATD programs had a positive impact on their school attendance. However, the absence of formal mechanisms for communication between ATD programs and schools leaves programs unable to monitor participants' attendance, consistently offer individualized educational supports or provide up-to-date attendance information to judges.

- *ATD programs do not provide adequate screening and services for mental health issues.*

Youth in the juvenile justice system have a substantially higher rate of mental health issues than youth in the general population; research suggests that 40% of young people within the

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<sup>13</sup> A 2005 City Council report stated, "Children who have been involved with the courts are challenging to teach: 90% are behind in school, 40% require special education, 25% read below the fifth grade level." New York City Council. "Correcting Juvenile Injustice: A Bill of Rights for Children Released from Custody." (2005). 5 May 2009. <[http://www.nycouncil.info/html/pdf\\_files/reports/04\\_27\\_05\\_childbor.pdf](http://www.nycouncil.info/html/pdf_files/reports/04_27_05_childbor.pdf)>

juvenile justice system nationwide have mental health issues.<sup>14</sup> In 2008, 40% of young people in New York City detention facilities received mental health services.<sup>15</sup> ATD programs do not have adequate resources to screen participants for mental health issues or address their mental health needs. Recently, the Center for Court Innovation introduced QUEST Futures, an initiative that offers comprehensive mental health screening, referrals and treatment to young people in the juvenile justice system, including participants in QUEST, Queens County's ATD program. This program has helped to highlight the need to extend mental health services to young people in all ATD programs.

- *Young people leaving ATD programs would benefit from ongoing services and supports.* Many juvenile delinquency cases are not resolved within the 180 days young people can remain in ATD programs. This leaves some youth without services while their cases are still pending. Program staff said that many young people come to rely on the supports and services ATD programs provide and want to continue to participate even after their time in the program expires. Staff try to accommodate these young people, but do not have adequate resources to offer services to all youth exiting their programs. The need for ongoing services extends to young people who receive community-based dispositions.
- *Evaluations of ATD programs do not include important measures of impact.* The current evaluation scheme for ATD programs in New York City focuses on two indicators: the number of young people who attend their hearings and the number of young people re-arrested prior to disposition. Stakeholders suggest that additional outcome measures that focus on issues such as how programs address educational and mental health needs, the types of dispositions young people receive after participation in ATD programs, and long-term recidivism rates would provide a more complete basis to assess programs and to make decisions about ATD programs' structure, practices and resources.

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<sup>14</sup> Skowrya, Kathleen and Coccozza, Joseph J. "Blueprint for Change: A Comprehensive Model for the Identification and Treatment of Youth with Mental Health Needs in Contact with the Juvenile Justice System." The National Association for Mental Health and Policy Research, Inc. 2007. 15 May 2009.

<<http://www.ncmhjj.com/Blueprint/pdfs/Blueprint.pdf>>

<sup>15</sup>New York City Mayor's Office of Operations. "Mayor's Management Report." 2009. 27 April 2009.

<[http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/downloads/pdf/\\_mmr/djj.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/downloads/pdf/_mmr/djj.pdf)>



## Recommendations

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### **A. Provide youth and families with the tools they need to participate meaningfully in delinquency cases.**

1. Give young people information and resources to help them understand the juvenile justice process.
2. Provide more information to families and encourage active participation in the court process.

### **B. Maximize use of resources to ensure young people receive appropriate supervision.**

3. Utilize up-to-date information to ensure that services and supervision are responsive to the needs of youth.
4. Increase access to ATD programs and make it easier for youth to transition to lower levels of supervision.
5. Consider creating the option of short-term housing resources for youth who cannot return home immediately.

### **C. Increase the availability of individualized services in ATD programs.**

6. Partner with other community-based organizations to provide activities, services and referrals that are appealing and meaningful to young people.
7. Strengthen relationships with schools to improve educational supports for ATD program participants.
8. Offer mental health services, screenings and referrals.
9. Provide every young person with an exit plan that includes aftercare services.
10. Conduct long-term research to test the impact of ATD programs on dispositions, recidivism and the social service needs of participants.

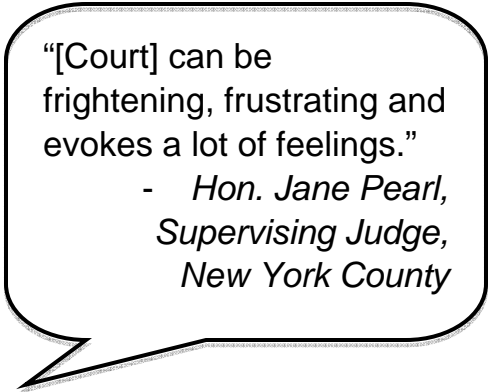
## **1. Give young people information and resources to help them understand the juvenile justice process.**

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Young people need additional information about the juvenile justice process after their arrests but do not always know where to get this information or who can answer their questions. To help young people better understand the process, we recommend that:

- DOP should provide youth and families with basic information about the juvenile justice process at intake.
- Someone should be available in family court to speak with unrepresented youth and their families about how the juvenile justice process works.
- Lawyers should use plain language and clearly explain how confidentiality works.

The court process is very difficult to understand. Many of the young people in our focus groups expressed that they felt confused during the process because they did not know what was coming next, who they should talk to for help, or what to do to ensure the best outcomes for their cases. Young people are not assigned lawyers unless and until their cases reach family court, so most do not receive counsel after arrest. Several judges agreed that court cases can be scary for youth. Supervising Judge Jane Pearl, New York County, said that for youth, entering court "...can be frightening, frustrating and evokes a lot of feelings." Young people feel more prepared and less overwhelmed when they understand the whole process.



"[Court] can be frightening, frustrating and evokes a lot of feelings."

- *Hon. Jane Pearl,  
Supervising Judge,  
New York County*

*DOP should provide youth and families with basic information about the juvenile justice process at intake.*

DOP can play a key role in helping young people understand and navigate the juvenile justice system. DOP officers, who conduct intake for all young people arrested for delinquency, are well positioned to provide information to youth entering the juvenile justice system. At intake, officers should distribute information about the juvenile justice process.<sup>16</sup> These informational materials should be produced with input from young people. The materials should also be available in other areas youth might congregate such as the detention rooms in family court. All young people who are arrested should receive the following information:

- A diagram of the juvenile justice process;
- Tips for youth and families to ensure the best case outcomes;
- An explanation of rights during and after arrest;

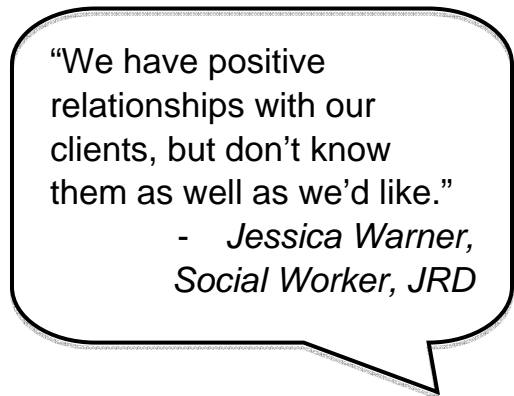
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<sup>16</sup> Not all cases will ultimately make it to family court. Some cases are adjusted by DOP or declined by the New York City Law Department. However, if cases are prosecuted, probation officers may be the only people youth come into contact with before their cases are arraigned.

- A glossary of important terms; and
- A list of answers to frequently asked questions. For example, youth might wonder:
  - ◆ What happens after intake?
  - ◆ How does the juvenile justice process work?
  - ◆ How long does the juvenile justice process take?
  - ◆ What is my lawyer’s role?
  - ◆ What do I do if I have problems with my lawyer?
  - ◆ What happens when my case is over?
  - ◆ Why is it important for my parents to participate in court hearings?
  - ◆ What is my role in the process?
  - ◆ What are the roles of other people in the court?

*Someone should be available in family court to speak with unrepresented youth and their families about how the juvenile justice process works.*

Since young people are not assigned lawyers unless a formal case is filed in family court, there should be someone available to answer questions and provide general information to youth and families. This person should be stationed at family court, where youth and families already must



“We have positive relationships with our clients, but don’t know them as well as we’d like.”  
 - Jessica Warner,  
 Social Worker, JRD

go for probation intake after arrest. This person could explain steps youth can take before their cases enter court to help ensure successful outcomes, such as attend school, not re-offend and participate in positive social activities. While this person would not be able to give legal advice or comment on individual cases, he/she could describe the process and answer questions to help prepare young people for what comes next. This position could be filled by volunteers, possibly from law schools, Bar Associations, the Legal Aid Society’s Juvenile Rights Division (JRD) or other organizations.

*Lawyers should use plain language and clearly explain their role and how confidentiality works.*

Once a petition is filed in family court, lawyers are the primary sources of information for young people and their families. Even though young people with juvenile delinquency cases have lawyers, during focus groups many young people shared that they felt their lawyers did not effectively communicate with them. Legal Aid Society lawyers acknowledged that communication presents a challenge. Jacqueline Deane, Director of Training, JRD, explained that this may be due to high caseloads – because lawyers are in court all day, it is hard for them to build good relationships with clients. Jessica Warner, a social worker at JRD, said, “We have positive relationships with our clients, but don’t know them as well as we’d like.” As a result, lawyers and social workers do not always have a chance to convey important information to their clients prior to their court hearings.

Supervisors at JRD said that despite their efforts, many young people do not understand that the lawyer-client relationship is confidential. Young people need to understand that their lawyers, and the social workers who partner with them, are the only people in the juvenile justice system with whom they have a confidential relationship. Trust must be established between the lawyers and their clients. Lawyers and other parties who talk to young people and families should do so in plain language. Lawyers should encourage youth to ask questions and to repeat information back to them to make sure the young person understands.

Young people should also take some responsibility for building relationships with their lawyers by asking for their lawyers' contact information, staying in touch and making sure their lawyers have information that could help the case. Youth should also make sure that their lawyers have up-to-date contact information for them. Lawyers at JRD said that their clients often do not share information that could be helpful for their cases. For example, information about young people's positive involvement in their communities or schools can influence judges' decisions. Lawyers should ask their clients questions to learn about this information and explain why it is important for youth to keep them up-to-date on developments in their lives. Ultimately, young people will be more likely to contact their lawyers when they need help and share important information if they understand their lawyers' responsibilities and trust them.

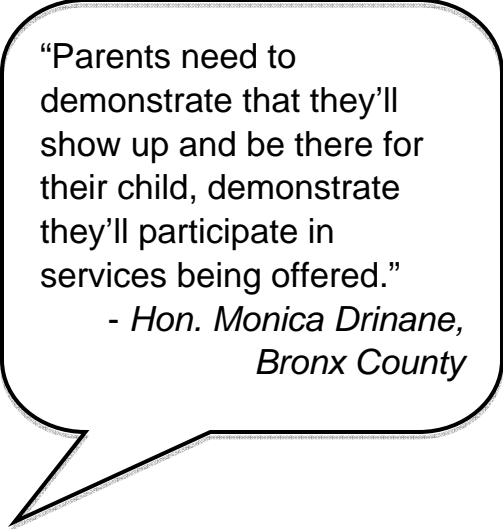
## **2. Provide more information to families and encourage active participation in the court process.**

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Family court judges make decisions about whether to release or remand a young person based in part on parent participation in court hearings, yet many parents do not understand the importance of their involvement. To increase family participation we recommend that:

- Parents should receive information about the juvenile justice process at probation intake.
- Lawyers should contact parents to explain their children’s cases.
- ATD programs should offer incentives for parents to participate in programming.
- Young people should understand the importance of family involvement.

Judges are unlikely to release youth to parents who do not attend arraignments. Judge Monica Drinane, Bronx County, said, “Parents need to demonstrate that they’ll show up and be there for their child, demonstrate they’ll participate in services being offered.” Several lawyers and judges told us that parents need to be more involved. Also, ATD programs reported that family engagement can be challenging. We learned in several interviews that families do not always participate in court hearings because parents can be angry at the system, not know how to advocate for their children, worry that they might say something that could be used against their children, or simply not understand the court process or the important role that they play.



“Parents need to demonstrate that they’ll show up and be there for their child, demonstrate they’ll participate in services being offered.”

- Hon. Monica Drinane,  
Bronx County

Parents need to know how important their involvement is and who may be able to answer their questions. They also must understand how the court process works and what steps they should take to help their children achieve the best possible case dispositions.

*Parents should receive information about the juvenile justice process at probation intake.*

Parents should receive basic information about the juvenile justice system, independent from their children. This information should be delivered directly to parents during or soon after intake to ensure that parents do not have to rely on their children to explain the court process. The materials for parents should clearly explain why attending their children’s appointments and court hearings is important and how they can help ensure the best outcomes for their children. For example, parents should understand their roles in helping children comply with curfew checks and how they can benefit from communication with community-based organizations offering services to their children. This information should be available in multiple languages.

*Lawyers should contact parents to explain their children's cases.*

Young people in our focus groups explained that their families are often overwhelmed with other obligations – their involvement in the juvenile justice system adds another layer of stress. Young people do not want to be in the position of explaining the juvenile justice process to their parents or trying to answer their parents' questions. Youth in our focus groups, therefore, explained that they wanted their parents to have stronger communication with their lawyers.

Attorneys for youth should make multiple attempts to contact parents. If parents do not respond to phone calls or letters, a social worker should visit the young person's home. Lawyers can help advocate for young people to be moved from detention to ATD programs, but they need parents to participate and help plan for their children's return home.

*ATD programs should offer incentives for parents to participate in programming.*

ATD programs can further increase parents' turnout at family functions by offering opportunities to see their children engaging in positive activities and by encouraging parents to take part in recreational activities, like bowling. Programs can also provide incentives including food and raffles. These events encourage parents to trust ATD programs and get to know the staff. Additionally, activities like these provide opportunities for parents and children to interact in a positive way. ATD programs may also be able to encourage parent involvement by inviting them to request services in which they would like to participate. Successful strategies should be shared among ATD program providers. For example, BronxConnect has found some success by holding parent meetings without young people present, and QUEST has increased turnout by making multiple phone calls and sending letters to parents.

*Young people should understand the importance of family involvement.*

Young people should understand the consequences of not involving their parents in their cases. Some youth in our focus groups explained that they did not want their parents to face the stress of their cases or be burdened by something that "they got themselves into." But youth might feel differently if they knew some of the factors in judges' decision-making. Any material provided to young people about the juvenile justice system should emphasize the importance of family involvement to remaining in the community both during and after disposition. Lawyers, social workers, probation officers and others should stress the importance of family involvement to young people in the juvenile justice system.

### **3. Utilize up-to-date information to ensure that services and supervision are responsive to the needs of youth.**

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Young people's circumstances and behaviors often change during the periods between arrest, arraignment and disposition. However, service providers, ATD programs, detention facilities and schools do not consistently share information about these changes with judges. Throughout cases, judges should have current, comprehensive information about young people's lives in order to make decisions about the right levels of supervision. Specifically, we recommend that:

- The RAI should be updated before arraignment.
- Resource coordinators should collect information from service providers between arraignment and disposition and should present information in court to facilitate review of supervision levels.

*The RAI should be updated before arraignment.*

The purpose of the RAI is to calculate a young person's risk of re-arrest and failure to appear in court. However, in some cases, DOP administers the RAI up to several months before arraignment. If certain circumstances have changed during that time, the RAI score may be inaccurate when considered by the judge in determining pre-disposition supervision. If more than two weeks pass between arrest and arraignment, the RAI should be updated before arraignment to reflect the young person's current circumstances. In particular, the RAI should reflect changes in: school attendance, outcomes of other pending cases, probation status and family involvement.

In one example, Patricia Brennan, Deputy Commissioner, DOP, explained that if a youth has multiple open cases in court, a judge might not know that he/she was rearrested and presents a higher risk level than indicated on the RAI. Young people who might benefit from or require more supervision might not receive it if judges do not have their full and complete arrest histories (not including sealed cases).

*Resource coordinators should collect information from service providers between arraignment and disposition and should present information in court to facilitate review of supervision levels.*

While judges consider the RAI score when they decide whether to release or remand a young person, it is not intended to be the sole determining factor. Therefore, judges should have access to more complete information when determining pre-disposition supervision. For example, Judge Fran L. Lubow, Queens County, said that the RAI does not include the youth's school attendance information after arrest. Judges weigh school attendance heavily when deciding whether to release or remand a youth; if a youth had poor attendance at the time of the arrest, but worked hard and improved his/her attendance before arraignment or between hearings, this information does not reach the judge. Currently, the judge would not necessarily know about the change and might think attendance continues to be a problem. Additionally, judges should have access to

current and complete information between arraignment and disposition to assess the progress young people may be making in their supervision assignments.

With the introduction of the supervision continuum, a new position called the resource coordinator was funded to facilitate communication between agencies involved in young people's cases and family court. At the time of this report's publication, no resource coordinators had yet been hired.

After arraignment, the resource coordinator could collect up-to-date information about young people from supervision agencies and service providers to share during court hearings. The resource coordinator could collect information during "case conferences," informal meetings attended by the agencies and possibly the young person to identify and discuss challenges that need to be addressed, particularly if the young person has another open case. Agencies should also be allowed to call for case conferences when young people demonstrate they may be able to move to less restrictive levels of supervision. This would help improve communication with agencies that are not parties to a case. Currently, DJJ cannot request court dates for young people under its care because it is not a legal party to the case. A case conference would give DJJ an opportunity to provide information about a youth's current circumstances that would provide a more complete picture of the young person than the RAI score alone.

The resource coordinator could then provide information to the judge in court. This could help to ensure that judges have all the information they need to make decisions about the appropriate level of supervision for youth throughout the case.



## **4. Increase access to ATD programs and make it easier for youth to transition to lower levels of supervision.**

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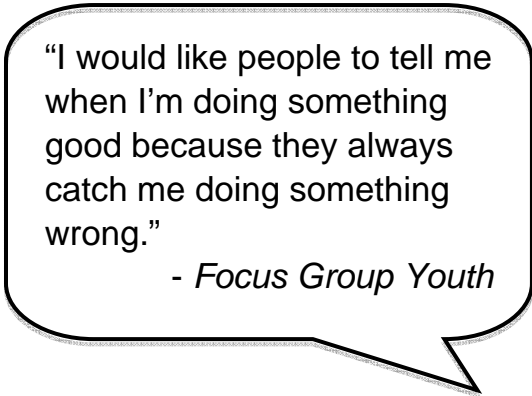
New York City’s supervision continuum for youth was designed to allow young people to move up and down in response to their compliance and behavior. Currently, it is easier to increase a youth’s level of supervision than to decrease it. We recommend:

- Increasing access to community-based programs for high- and low-risk youth.
- Recognizing and rewarding young people for good behavior and meeting expectations.

### *Increasing access to community based programs for high- and low-risk youth.*

Contractual rules present the greatest obstacle to movement along the supervision continuum. ATD programs can only serve mid-risk youth under current policy. However, judges felt that high- and low-risk youth could benefit from community-based supervision.

We discussed how ATD programs could serve high- and low-risk youth. Risk levels should not prohibit judges from assigning youth to ATD programs if these programs are best suited for the youth’s needs. While an increase in ATD program participants may add costs upfront, the City may find savings by reducing the number of young people in detention.<sup>17</sup> Providing community-based services for low-risk youth could also realize savings over time, as youth who participate in structured activities may be less likely to re-offend.



“I would like people to tell me when I’m doing something good because they always catch me doing something wrong.”

- *Focus Group Youth*

### *Recognizing and rewarding young people for good behavior and meeting expectations.*

Our focus group participants said they want to be recognized for good behavior. As one youth said, “I would like people to tell me when I’m doing something good because they always catch me doing something wrong.” Young people should know that if they do not do what they are supposed to they will end up in a more restrictive setting, but it is equally important for them to know that good behavior can result in a positive change.

As the juvenile justice system currently works, it can be difficult for young people in detention to move into ATD programs even if they are doing well. Judith Pincus, First Deputy Commissioner, DJJ, said, “the system already has perfected how to move kids up, but hasn’t given as much thought about moving kids down.” The barriers to moving youth into ATD programs should be examined to identify ways to reward youth who perform well. DJJ can use

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<sup>17</sup> The New York City Independent Budget Office estimates the cost of detention per young person to be between \$25,000 and \$29,000 per year, whereas ATD programs cost approximately \$1,333 per young person per year. New York City Independent Budget Office, “The Rising Cost of the Juvenile Justice System.” 2008.

the adjustment reports that it submits to court to share information that would indicate whether youth in detention are appropriate for community-based supervision. Additionally, when DJJ staff feel that a young person is ready to step down from detention, they should be able to ask the resource coordinator to schedule a hearing or a case conference to move the youth into an ATD program.

## **5. Consider creating the option of short-term housing resources for youth who cannot return home immediately.**

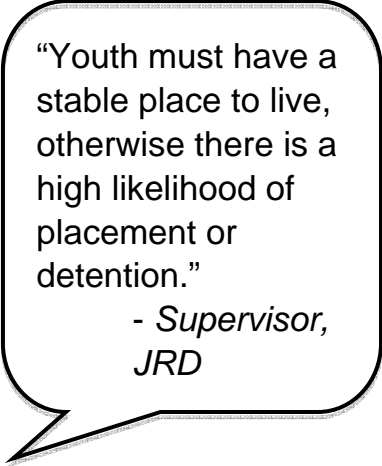
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Young people sometimes cannot or do not want to go home after arrest because of issues with their families. In this situation, we recommend that:

- Judges should have the option to release young people to short-term housing facilities while family issues are addressed or other appropriate housing is found.

There are many reasons why a young person might not be able to go home after arrest. For example, court professionals may have child welfare concerns or a young person may have allegedly committed an offense that involves a family member. But as one JRD supervisor said, “Youth must have a stable place to live, otherwise there is a high likelihood of placement or detention.” Many interviewees confirmed that if a child does not or cannot go home, the only options are to place the child in foster care or in detention.

Michael Rohan and Steven Eiseman of the Cook County (Illinois) Department of Juvenile Probation and Court Services described Chicago’s respite care facilities, which serve as temporary shelters for youth in the juvenile justice system. Respite care allows for a “cooling off” period that stabilizes young people and families. Facilities are close to the community where the young person lives and families are able to engage in services designed to help the young person return home. Respite care facilities are very much like non-secure detention facilities in New York, with two key differences: youth can stay for a maximum of 15 days and youth attend their regular schools while in the facility.



“Youth must have a stable place to live, otherwise there is a high likelihood of placement or detention.”

- Supervisor,  
JRD

*Judges should have the option to release young people to short-term housing facilities while family issues are addressed or other appropriate housing is found.*

New York City should consider adding respite care to its supervision continuum. Respite care could be run by community-based programs and provide a range of services, such as family counseling, tutoring, anger management and mediation. As in Chicago, there should be a limit on the number of days that youth can stay in respite care; ideally, youth should stay in respite care for one month or less.

Though respite care may look different in New York City than in Chicago, we believe that it is essential to give young people and their families the time, space and resources to work on the issues that prevent young people from returning home after arrest. Although a respite care program costs money, it may prevent young people from entering detention and placement.

## **6. Partner with other community-based organizations to provide activities, services and referrals that are appealing and meaningful to young people.**

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ATD programs should seek to build partnerships with other community-based organizations that offer resources that are appealing and relevant to youth. Specifically, we recommend that ATD programs:

- Find opportunities for young people to pursue their interests in their own communities.
- Hold discussions about topics meaningful to youth in the juvenile justice system.
- Designate staff at each ATD program to conduct outreach to other community-based organizations.
- Identify activities that young people enjoy.

*Find opportunities for young people to pursue their interests in their own communities.*

Focus group participants said that going to after-school programs helps them keep out of trouble. It is important to make sure that youth can participate in these activities in the long-term. ATD program staff said that they work to provide individual services to participants and help them find programs to attend after they finish the after-school program. Pat Riley, Director, BronxConnect, explained that the program tries to enroll young people in programs in which they have a particular interest. She gave an example of one case in which BronxConnect paid for a boxing class for a young person to build his interest in a new, productive activity.

To make it easier for young people to participate in programs tailored to their interests, ATD programs should increase referrals to services and activities in the communities where participants live. This will help address many issues:

- A staff member at Choices said that one challenge for ATD programs is to keep youth who exit the program engaged in services. By linking young people to services in their communities, ATD programs can build long-term relationships with these organizations which can support aftercare.
- Many youth who go through the court process have trouble at home. Having services close to where they live would give young people a place to go when something happens at home. Here, they would have time to calm down and to get help with the situation.
- Many young people told us that they completed mandated community service in communities that were not their own and had nothing to do with their offenses. They asked, “What’s the point? What am I supposed to get from this?” Doing community service locally gives young people a better understanding of how their behavior affects their neighborhoods and communities.

- ATD staff, young people and judges all said that travel was a big problem. Young people said that they do not want to go far to get services, especially because many already commute long distances from home to school. Arriving at the ATD program on-time is essential to comply with the program; court-mandated curfews limit the amount of time youth can spend travelling at night. Judges may factor travel time into their decisions about whether to assign a young person to an ATD program. For example, Judge Fran L. Lubow, Queens County, explained that she might hesitate to send a young person from Far Rockaway, Queens, to an ATD program in Jamaica, Queens, because of the travel time it would require.
- QUEST program staff said that participants sometimes do not get along or cannot be in the program together because of their cases. In addition, some young people are already involved in other positive after-school activities. Letting participants attend appropriate and carefully screened off-site services, including those they participated in prior to joining the ATD program, could create room for more youth in ATD programs. Young people's attendance at these programs should be verified and information from these programs should be shared with ATD program providers.

*Hold discussions about topics meaningful to youth in the juvenile justice system.*

ATD programs often bring in guest speakers to talk with program participants. Youth in the focus groups said that hearing stories from people who had been through the justice system would make these conversations more meaningful and that they want advice on how to reach positive outcomes in their cases. Young people in the focus groups said that some of the small groups and the guest speakers were "boring" or a "waste of time" because they were not learning anything new.

*Designate staff at each ATD program to conduct outreach to other community-based organizations.*

ATD programs should learn about other programs and organizations in the borough and in a variety of neighborhoods to ensure they are pairing youth with relevant services. If possible, one person from each ATD program should be designated to do community outreach to build relationships and partnerships with other local organizations.

*Identify activities that young people enjoy.*

Young people in our focus groups said that access to a variety of services and activities could make a positive difference in their lives. ATD programs are required to provide recreation, tutoring and meals, and most offer other activities including music, art, creative writing and field trips. However, some youth in our focus groups said that they do not find the activities offered to be relevant or beneficial. ATD programs should focus on offering activities and providing referrals to other services that will keep individual youth engaged. Young people entering ATD programs should fill out a form that specifies their hobbies and interests so that staff can work to find services and activities that the youth will enjoy and from which they will benefit.

## 7. Strengthen relationships with schools to improve educational supports for ATD program participants.

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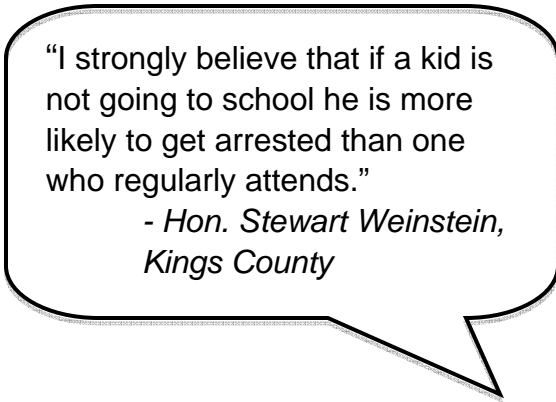
ATD programs provide a range of educational services and supports for participants, such as tutoring and support with schoolwork. But many have trouble obtaining regular up-to-date information from schools on attendance, conduct and academic progress. To strengthen academic supports for ATD program participants, we recommend that ATD programs:

- Strengthen relationships with schools.
- Identify and coordinate educational services for program participants.
- Facilitate school transfers when appropriate.

Education is an important issue for all youth in the juvenile justice system. Judge Stewart Weinstein, Kings County, and Supervising Judge Jane Pearl, New York County, said that school attendance is a key factor in their decisions. Judge Weinstein explained, “I strongly believe that if a kid is not going to school he is more likely to get arrested than one who regularly attends.” Judge Pearl added that she is particularly concerned about linking young people with educational services and vocational training.

### *Strengthen relationships with schools.*

ATD programs need better information about students’ academic strengths and weaknesses to provide appropriate educational support. If possible, each ATD program should designate a staff



“I strongly believe that if a kid is not going to school he is more likely to get arrested than one who regularly attends.”

- Hon. Stewart Weinstein,  
Kings County

member to build relationships with schools to identify young people’s educational needs.

Currently, many ATD programs have trouble getting the information about attendance, behavior and grades that they need to have a positive impact.

One young person from our focus group stated,

“The ATD programs really do not have any information on my education but my report card.”

This made the youth feel like the ATD program staff did not know what was going on in his life and that the program could not support his schoolwork.

Communication between schools and ATD program staff can have a real impact on young people. For example, one ATD program has an education specialist who is responsible for verifying young people’s school attendance and performance, visiting schools and finding out why youth are missing school. This level of communication makes youth accountable for school attendance and performance. One ATD participant described the impact of having staff involved in his education: “[they] come to school, check on your grades, I have to go to all my classes.”

*Identify and coordinate educational services for program participants.*

Having a staff person responsible for educational services could especially help ATD program participants who are performing below grade level in school. This person should be familiar with the range of available programs and resources in the New York City public school system so that youth receive appropriate services.

*Facilitate school transfers when appropriate.*

In appropriate situations, ATD programs should help youth who want to transfer to other high schools that can better support their interests or offer a fresh start. Specifically, ATD programs should help young people who want to find a school that meets their academic or professional interests. This may also be beneficial to youth who entered the juvenile justice system because of a school-based incident.

## **8. Offer mental health services, screenings and referrals.**

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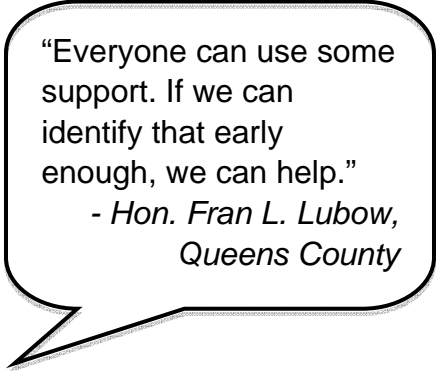
Mental health issues are prevalent among youth in the juvenile justice system, yet not all ATD programs offer mental health screenings and assessments of program participants. We recommend that:

- Judges should receive training about mental health issues in adolescents.
- ATD programs should screen young people for mental health issues and provide referrals for mental health services in young people’s communities.

We learned that many youth and families do not seek mental health services because of the stigma attached to mental illness. In the past, only DJJ offered comprehensive mental health services, so judges would often remand young people who needed treatment for mental health issues. ATD programs are beginning to address this problem by offering services such as anger management classes and discussions about self-perception and how to deal with problems. But these services are not enough for some young people who have mental health issues, especially if they need medication.

*Judges should receive training about mental health issues in adolescents.*

Mental health issues often contribute to young peoples’ involvement in the juvenile justice system. One judge said that some youth “self-medicate” for untreated mental health problems with drugs and alcohol. Carolyn Torres, Clinical Director, QUEST, also explained that mental health problems manifest differently in adolescents than they do in adults. For example, depression often causes young people to be angry and act out. Judges should receive training on how mental health issues influence a young person’s actions so that youth are not punished for conditions that should be treated with medication and/or therapy.



“Everyone can use some support. If we can identify that early enough, we can help.”

- Hon. Fran L. Lubow,  
Queens County

*ATD programs should screen young people for mental health issues and provide referrals for mental health services in young people’s communities.*

QUEST recently started a program, called QUEST Futures, which evaluates all young people who enter QUEST for mental health issues using a computer-based screening tool. If the screening indicates potential mental health issues, a social worker interviews the young person and, if necessary, refers them to services. These services, through community-based providers, can provide ongoing support to young people after they leave the ATD program. Youth and families also receive support from QUEST Futures for as long as their case is open. Until recently, QUEST Futures was open only to youth in QUEST; it recently expanded to serve other youth referred by DOP, judges and law guardians. While not every ATD program has the resources to offer comprehensive services on-site, each could screen participants for mental



health issues when they enter the program and offer referrals to local services.<sup>18</sup> As Judge Fran L. Lubow, Queens County, said, “Everyone can use some support. If we can identify that early enough, we can help.”

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<sup>18</sup> QUEST Futures staff cautioned that these programs must respect the confidentiality of young people. QUEST Futures staff do not report on voluntary mental health services.

## **9. Provide every young person with an exit plan that includes aftercare services.**

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ATD programs are only able to work with young people during the short time their cases are in family court. In order to have a more meaningful, long-term impact on young people's lives, ATD programs should create exit plans that envision aftercare for participants when they leave the program. We recommend that:

- Whenever possible, aftercare services should be an extension of services or programs in which the young person is already engaged.
- Services should be located close to young people's homes.
- ATD programs should partner with DOP to ensure that youth on probation receive appropriate services.

When young people finish ATD programs, they do not always have continuing services in place. Aftercare, including after-school programs and continued mental health and education services, can help young people avoid re-arrest. Aftercare can take stress off of parents because they know that their children are safe and engaging in positive activities. In addition, judges may look favorably upon youth who are successful in aftercare programs and may be more likely to give community-based dispositions. Many ATD program staff stated that they would always like their doors to be open, but they do not have the resources to offer aftercare to every participant.

*Whenever possible, aftercare services should be an extension of services or programs in which the young person is already engaged.*

Planning for aftercare should start when youth enter ATD programs. While youth are in ATD programs, staff members should learn about their interests and needs to make sure aftercare activities respond to them. Helping youth develop hobbies while in the ATD programs will make it easier for them to move from a mandatory program to a voluntary program.

*Services should be located close to young people's homes.*

ATD program staff should partner with other community-based service providers to enable a smooth transition into aftercare. Many agencies that interact with young people could participate in building a network of aftercare services. Resource coordinators may know community programs throughout each borough that can work with young people after they finish their ATD programs. Resource coordinators should be familiar with local services and should be ready to provide help arranging referrals for youth while in community-based supervision and for youth when they return home from detention. Judges may also be able to recommend specific services to meet a young person's needs. Activities and services should include a variety of options that provide positive opportunities for youth. Ideas include:

- Pairing youth with adult mentors who can serve as role models, offer guidance and expose them to cultural, educational and social opportunities;
- Offering yoga and other activities to help troubled youth relieve stress;

- Providing job training and placement help; and
- Helping youth join sports teams so they learn how to work with their peers.

*ATD programs should partner with DOP to ensure that youth on probation receive appropriate services.*

Many youth who attend ATD programs receive dispositions assigning them to probation. DOP should communicate with ATD programs and resource coordinators to place youth in relevant post-disposition services and ensure that there is not a disruption in the services already being provided to young people.

## **10. Conduct long-term research to test the impact of ATD programs on dispositions, recidivism and the social service needs of participants.**

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Currently, ATD programs are evaluated solely on their ability to prevent re-arrest and ensure youth attend their court hearings, not on their impact on disposition or on post-disposition recidivism. To understand how ATD programs affect young people's lives, we recommend that the City conduct research and facilitate development of best practices by:

- Identifying long-term evaluation measures for ATD program participants.
- Collecting information on the outcomes of ATD program participants.
- Facilitating discussions of results among ATD program provider agencies and sharing best practices.

The Vera Institute of Justice is doing short-term research on how ATD programs affect recidivism rates and rates of failure to appear in court for youth with open cases. A new study should go further and look at the long-term impact of ATD programs. Michael Rohan, Director, Cook County (Illinois) Juvenile Probation and Court Services Department, confirmed the need for long-term evaluation, saying that, "research and empirical studies that show efficacy of programs" would help build support for expansion of programs. A study of the impact of ATD programs can show what works, what does not and what changes can help.

### *Identifying long-term evaluation measures for ATD program participants.*

ATD programs offer services that can have a lasting positive impact on the lives of the young people they serve, yet current evaluations might not capture the full impact of programs. Many of our focus group participants said that ATD programs do more than help them attend their court hearings and prevent them from committing crimes. A long-term evaluation could study:

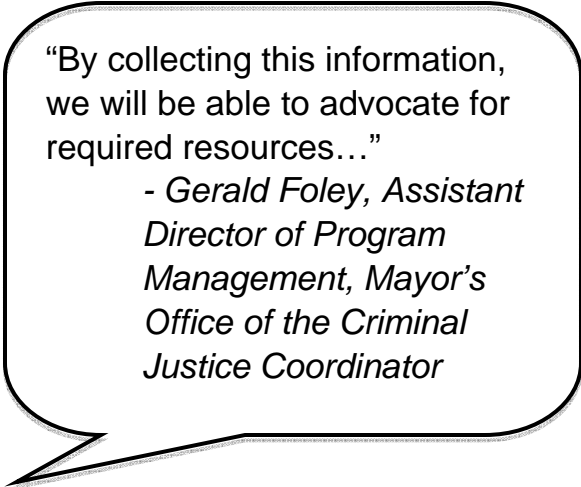
- Re-arrest and recidivism rates post-disposition;
- Whether ATD program participants are more likely than other youth involved in juvenile delinquency proceedings to receive community-based dispositions;
- Young people's perceptions of the helpfulness of ATD program interventions;
- The impact ATD providers have on school attendance and performance; and
- ATD programs' impact on participants' self-confidence, teamwork and time-management skills.

### *Collecting information on the outcomes of ATD program participants.*

ATD programs already use data to evaluate whether they are meeting their goals. Michele Sviridoff, Deputy Criminal Justice Coordinator, Mayor's Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, explained that she wants programs to be very data-driven. She said that data played an unusually large role in ATD program development and that programs are watched and evaluated closely. Data not only helps improve programming, but also helps bring resources to these programs. Gerald Foley, Assistant Director of Program Management, Mayor's Office of

the Criminal Justice Coordinator, said that, “By collecting this information we will be able to advocate for required resources to City Hall and state and federal partners.” A long-term study of ATD programs would complement the current short-term evaluation these programs are undergoing and present a full picture of how participation in ATD programs affects participants.

Positive results would have an important impact on existing ATD programs. Jennifer Gilroy Ruiz, Borough Chief, Queens County Family Court, and Laurence Busching, Chief, Family Court, both at the New York City Law Department, said that it is important for ATD programs to prove they are effective to build support among stakeholders for their work. Demonstrating that ATD programs can not only meet their short-term goals but also have long-term effects will give judges and prosecutors confidence in the ability of ATD programs to improve young people’s behavior and lives.



“By collecting this information, we will be able to advocate for required resources...”

- *Gerald Foley, Assistant Director of Program Management, Mayor’s Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator*

*Facilitating discussions of results among ATD program provider agencies and sharing best practices.*

The results of this evaluation should be used to share successful practices among ATD programs. A guide to best practices should be developed for New York City ATD programs. These best practices could help similar programs nationally.

## Conclusion

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Thank you for reading our report. We joined the Youth Justice Board because we felt ATD programs could be improved with the input of young people. Over the year that we have worked on this, all of us have shown a lot of interest in the topic, and are committed to positive change in ATD programs. The research and recommendations presented in this report are proof of our hard work and dedication.

We want more youth to be placed in ATD programs rather than in detention so that they can stay in the community and hopefully avoid placement. Young people who have been arrested should be able to move into lower levels of supervision and be rewarded for good behavior if they are doing well. We also want young people who attend ATD programs to lead successful lives and have the tools they need to move forward. After finishing our report, we hope that you consider how you can play a role in implementing our recommendations.

In 2009-10, the Youth Justice Board will work on promoting these recommendations and helping to implement some of these ideas. The Board will work closely with ATD program staff, the Mayor's Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, lawyers and other stakeholders to expand and improve ATD programs. Ultimately, we hope to improve the lives of our peers in New York City.

## The Youth Justice Board

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### **Claudia**

Hello, my name is Claudia. I am 16 years old. I am a sophomore at Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics. I joined the Youth Justice Board for various reasons. One reason why I joined the Board was because I wanted to learn more about the juvenile justice system in hopes that I would be able to help my peers make better decisions. When I finish high school I would like to study international law. The Youth Justice Board has made a large impact on my decision to study law. If I stay in the City for college I would like to attend Columbia University. I enjoy playing sports, learning about different cultures and being active in my school.

### **Dalesa**

My name is Dalesa. I am 16 years old. I live in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn. I attend Freedom Academy, where I study law. I joined the Youth Justice Board because of my passion for law. I was also very interested in learning about the alternative to detention system. I also enjoy teamwork and helping others. By joining the Youth Justice Board I feel I was able to bring about a voice for youth in ATD programs. Being on the Youth Justice Board has taught me teamwork and leadership skills.

### **Dora**

Hey guys, my name is Quendera, but everyone calls me Dora for short. I'm currently a senior at High School for Public Service Hero of Tomorrow in Brooklyn. This coming fall I will be going to college, majoring in Business Management and hoping to create a non-profit organization impacting youth nationwide. This is why I joined the Youth Justice Board, to have a positive effect on youth through a non-profit organization. Also, I wanted to work with my peers to change policies and people and show that youth and adults can get together to make a difference. I enjoy watching movies with friends, doing community service and talking on the phone. I enjoy being on the Youth Justice Board because I gain knowledge of the juvenile justice system and learn about myself as a leader. Thank you to everyone who supported me during this process.

### **Giovanny**

My name is Giovanny and I am a 16 year old junior at Freedom Academy High School in Brooklyn. I applied to the Youth Justice Board because I was interested in law; I decided to invest my time in this program. As a child I was highly interested in law and as I entered high school I began enjoying fashion design, so at college, I plan on choosing between the two. At the moment, I do not know what college I want to go to, but I have broad goals. Well enough about education, more about what I like to do: I enjoy playing basketball, talking to friends and surfing the web. I always seem to give people this piece of advice so decided to share it here: "You can do whatever you want in life, however you want, as long as you can think about it and smartly act on it."

**Janae**

Hi, my name is Janae. I am 17 years of age. I attend August Martin High School located in Jamaica, Queens, and I am a senior. I am so proud of myself for going through high school and graduating on time. My school is known for a very low graduation rate and young people dropping out. As for me, I stayed and did what I had to do. When I graduate I am going to college and majoring in criminal justice. When I heard about the Youth Justice Board, I knew I had to join. I joined because I have a passion for law and I wanted a new experience. I wanted to step out of my box and broaden my horizons. This program has taught me so much about the juvenile justice system and how it operates. Every week I learn something new. This experience in the Youth Justice Board has been the best experience of my life. I would like to thank my family and friends for their love and support. Also special thanks to Matt and Linda for allowing me to be a part of the Youth Justice Board.

**Joseph**

Hola, my name is Joseph and I am a freshman at Hunter College. I currently live in Woodhaven in Queens, a borough I love because of its diversity and uncrowdedness. I immigrated to this country in June of 2001 from the Dominican Republic. Being part of the school system and the community in this city helped me realize that there are so many opportunities for me out there. I made a personal decision to give myself the opportunity to try new things and explore the different fields that exist within this society. This is one of the reasons why I joined the Youth Justice Board. It is a program which allows me to explore the fields of law and policymaking. In addition, it gives me the opportunity to help youth (my peers) when it comes to dealing with the juvenile justice system. I have a strong passion for helping people and I hope to do this as a social worker once I graduate from college. My experience in the Youth Justice Board has been unique. I am very thankful for having been part of this program and I want to thank everyone who made this possible for me, especially Matt and Linda who were ever patient and understanding with every member of the Board.

**Kiara**

Hi, my name is Kiara, I am 15 years old and I live in the Bronx. I attend Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice and I enjoy reading, listening to music and hanging out with my friends. All my life I wanted to help people who are involved in the criminal justice system and when I found out about the Youth Justice Board I knew it would be a great opportunity. One thing that really got me interested in the program was that it deals with young people's experiences in the system. I didn't know much about the criminal justice system, but I knew even less about what youth have to go through in the system. Living in a time where a lot of youth are committing crimes, resorting to violence and making bad decisions, I think that making changes in their lives will make changes in their actions. Being in the Youth Justice Board has taught me a lot about myself and even more about youth in the system. The program has helped me become a better public speaker and become better at working with others. This is an experience that I will remember for the rest of my life.



**Shantu**

My name is Shantu, I'm 18 years old and I live in the Bronx. I attend school at Bard High School Early College and plan on going to Hampshire College in the fall to study Outdoor Education and Urban Environments. I joined the Youth Justice Board because I enjoy community organizing and advocacy. I also did not know much about law and felt like this was a good opportunity to learn more about it, especially the aspects that affect my peers. This year in addition to learning about the juvenile justice system and getting to know my Youth Justice Board friends, I also learned a lot about myself. I learned in what settings I do well and how to handle different types of people. This I feel will ultimately help me in my college and future job experiences. The Youth Justice Board is a good opportunity to learn the background of the juvenile justice system, make and strengthen relationships and learn about yourself.

**Syeda**

Hey, my name is Syeda. I'm 17 years old and am currently a senior at my school. I come from the Bronx and have been living there for half of my life. I joined the Youth Justice Board because I'm interested in law and thought that the program would be a great experience for me to pursue my dreams. As young people from all over the City, we came to help other youth and make their lives easier during their hard times. I've learned that youth are going through a tough time and are hoping to reestablish themselves after they've been through the process. I would like to thank my family for being there for me whenever I needed them and my friends for always being my foundation that I would be able to stand on no matter what. I would also like to thank the Youth Justice Board for being able to treat each other as family and getting to know each other on a personal level. One of my main hobbies is to help everyone or anyone in any way that I can because I'm the type of person that could never stop caring about someone who came into my life and I like to help make a difference. In the near future, I hope to attend a college that would do anything for me to help me become a more successful and knowledgeable person.

**Linda Baird, Program Coordinator**

Linda Baird has served as the Program Coordinator of the Youth Justice Board since 2007. Prior to joining the Center for Court Innovation, Ms. Baird was the National Policy Coordinator for the After-School Corporation, where she organized a six-city initiative to increase the scale, funding and sustainability of after-school programs. She has extensive experience working with young people, having served as a counselor at The Thurber House youth writing camp in Columbus, OH, and as a Citizen Schools AmeriCorps Teaching Fellow in Boston, MA. Ms. Baird has a B.A. from Sarah Lawrence College and an M. Ed. from Lesley University.

**Matt Canfield, Program Associate**

Matt Canfield is the Program Associate of the Youth Justice Board. Prior to working with the Board, Mr. Canfield served as Program Coordinator of the Human Rights Summer Institute, a six-week intensive summer program for high school students, at the International Center for Tolerance Education. He received a B.A. from Johns Hopkins University.

## Appendix 1: Overview of New York City’s Juvenile Justice System

National trends and federal regulations affect juvenile justice systems across the country, but state governments have substantial latitude to develop and implement juvenile justice policy. Due to the size and multi-county jurisdiction of New York City, the City has its own institutions to create juvenile justice policy. The following is an overview of the juvenile justice system in New York City.

As illustrated in Figure I, the first step after arrest in New York City’s juvenile justice process is an intake. The New York City Department of Probation (DOP) conducts intake for all youth between the ages of 7 and 15 after arrest, in effect serving as the gatekeeper to the juvenile justice process. At intake, DOP assesses each young person and determines whether he/she is eligible for diversion or “adjustment.”<sup>19</sup> Eligibility for adjustment depends on a number of factors, including parent involvement, the type and circumstances of the alleged offense and the assent of the victim. A little less than one third of all cases are adjusted. If the adjustment is successful, the case is dismissed. If, however, a youth is rearrested or violates other conditions set by DOP during the 60 day supervised release period, or DOP determines that they cannot adjust the case, DOP sends the case to the New York City Law Department.

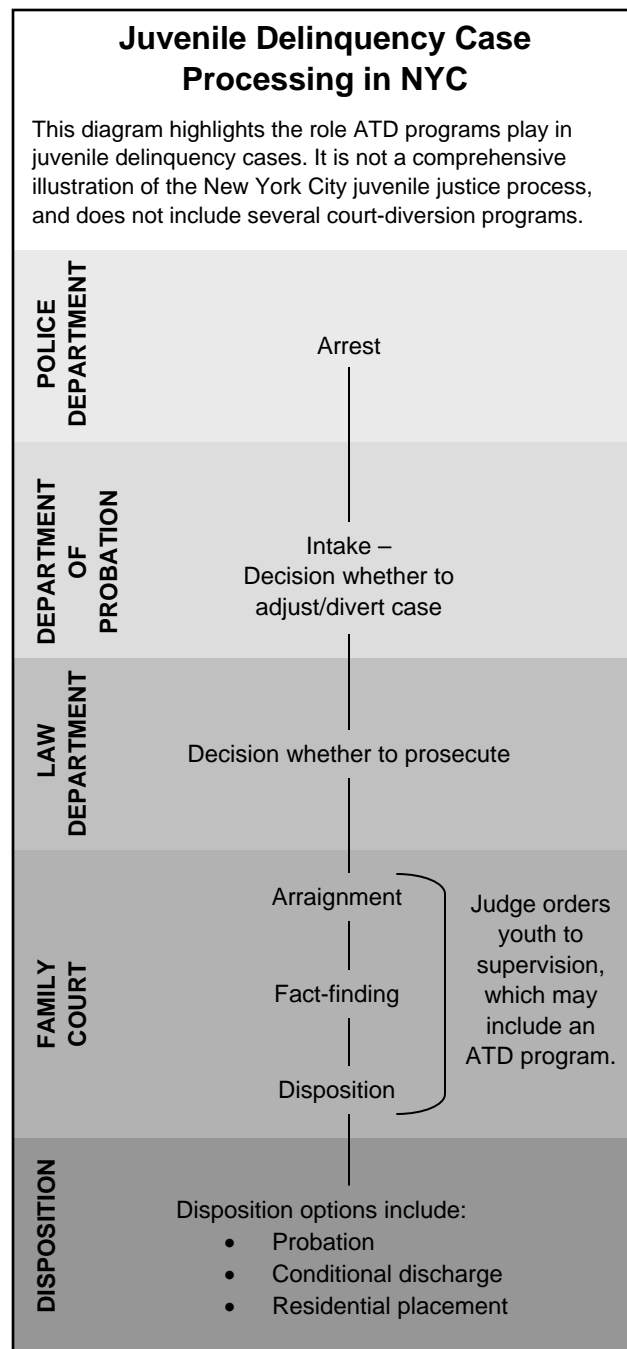


Figure I

<sup>19</sup> Adjustment usually entails a 60 day supervised release period. If a young person avoids being rearrested, the case is dismissed. If the youth violates the conditions set forth by DOP, his/her case may be referred to the Law Department for prosecution.

The Law Department is the City's prosecutor in New York City Family Court. After receiving a case, Law Department attorneys review the strength of the evidence and the viability of the case and decide whether to prosecute. The Law Department declines to prosecute approximately one third of the cases that it receives.<sup>20</sup> It may send these cases back to DOP for adjustment or simply close the cases.

When the Law Department decides to prosecute, it files a petition in family court.<sup>21</sup> New York City Family Court, a branch of the New York State Unified Court System, has jurisdiction over delinquency proceedings. Each of New York City's five boroughs has its own family court. Once the Law Department files a petition, the young person has a right to counsel. If a young person cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided to him/her, most often from the Legal Aid Society.

At arraignment, the judge determines the appropriate level of supervision for an alleged juvenile delinquent<sup>22</sup> while his/her case is pending. The judge decides whether to remand the alleged juvenile delinquent to detention or to release the young person. If the youth is remanded, the judge can choose to place the young person in secure or non-secure detention. The judge can also issue an order known as an "open remand," which gives New York City Department of Juvenile Justice discretion to choose the most appropriate form of detention. If the young person is released, the judge can choose from community-based supervision options that range from parental supervision to "Intensive Community Monitoring" programs run by DOP. The judge determines the young person's pre-disposition supervision by consulting the Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) and considering other factors such as parental support, school attendance, the severity of the charge and the youth's involvement in his/her community. Throughout the case, the judge may revisit the decision to release or remand.

The fact-finding process begins after arraignment. In this process, the prosecution and defense present arguments and evidence about the alleged juvenile delinquent's culpability. After this process, the judge decides whether the young person is responsible for the offense.<sup>23</sup> If the young person is found responsible, the judge orders DOP to conduct an investigation to help craft a disposition, the equivalent of a sentence. The disposition options in juvenile delinquency cases include probation, conditional discharge or placement in a residential facility.

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Law Department staff. (December 16, 2008).

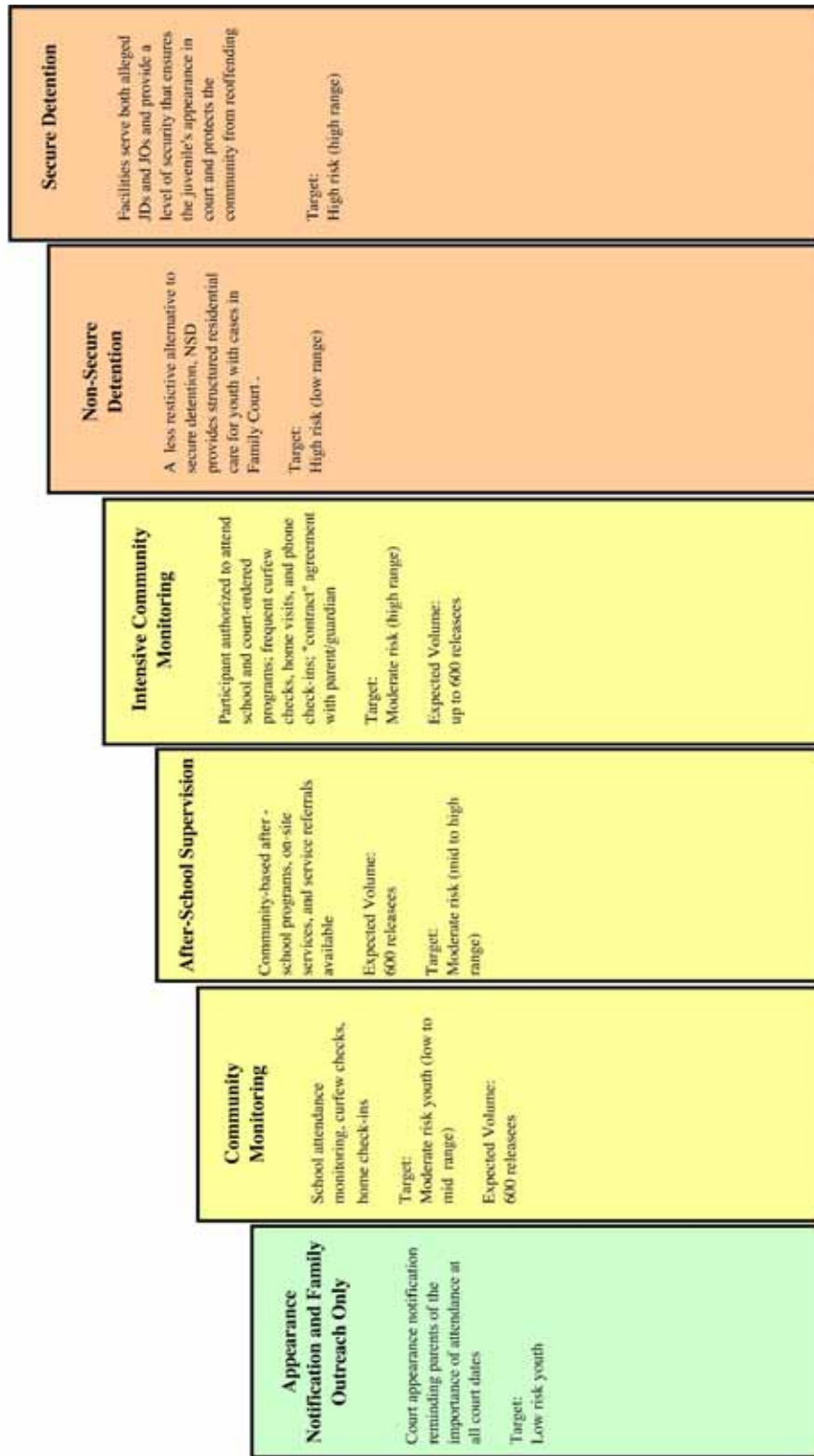
<sup>21</sup> A young person who is 13, 14 or 15 years old who commits a more serious or violent act(s) may be prosecuted as an adult. These cases are heard in supreme court but may sometimes be transferred to family court.

<sup>22</sup> A juvenile delinquent is a young person between the ages of 7 and 15 years old who the court determines committed a "delinquent act."

<sup>23</sup> The burden of proof in juvenile delinquency proceedings is the same as the burden of proof in criminal matters.

# Appendix 2: New York City Supervision Continuum and Risk Assessment Instrument

## Graduated Supervision Options for Court-Involved Juveniles in New York City



←.....→  
*Juveniles can be moved up or down the continuum based on performance*

# NYC Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI)

## Demographic Data

RIN#: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Intake: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
CASE#: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Probation Officer Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Arrest#: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (Enter as first initial last name, as in JSmith)

## Section A. Risk of Failure to Appear (FTA)

*One point will be added for each of the following that apply:*

- A1. The youth has an open JD warrant  Yes  No  
A2. The youth has a prior JD or PINS warrant  Yes  No  
A3. An adult did not appear on behalf of the juvenile at probation intake  Yes  No  
A4. The youth's school attendance was less than 30% in the last full semester  Yes  No  System Down

**Total Risk of FTA Score (Total Yes responses for QA1 through QA4):** \_\_\_\_\_

## Section B. Risk of Re-Arrest

*One point will be added for each of the following that apply:*

- B1. The youth has an unsealed prior arrest  Yes  No  
B2. The youth has an unsealed prior felony arrest  Yes  No  
B3. The youth has a prior JD adjudication  Yes  No  
B4. The youth has a prior designated felony adjudication  Yes  No  
B5. The youth is currently on JD probation  Yes  No

*One point will be subtracted if the following applies:*

- B6. The youth's school attendance was 80% or more in the last full semester  Yes  No  System Down

**Total Risk of Re-Arrest Score:**  
*(Total Yes responses for QB1 through QB5, minus 1 point if Yes response for QB6)* \_\_\_\_\_

## Total

*Mark the cell corresponding to the Risk of FTA and Risk of Re-Arrest scores, as recorded above.*

		Risk of FTA			
		0	1	2	3+
Risk of Re-Arrest	-1	Low	Low	Mid	Mid
	0	Low	Mid	Mid	High
	1	Mid	Mid	Mid	High
	2	Mid	Mid	High	High
	3	High	High	High	High
	4+	High	High	High	High

RAI Score (check only one):  Low  Mid  High

## Additional Factors

*None of the following will factor into the scoring:*

- C1. Homicide or Attempted Homicide  Yes  No  
C2. Designated Felony  Yes  No  
C3. Possession or Use of Firearm  Yes  No

## For Probation Court Liaison Use Only

Court Outcome:

- Release to Home  
 Alternative to Detention →  CM  AS  ICM  
 Detained →  Non-Secure  Secure

Court Docket #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Arraignment Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3: Research Design

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Prior to conducting their fieldwork, Youth Justice Board members learned about New York City's juvenile justice system and the function of ATD programs. Members also received training in skills such as interviewing, note-taking, teamwork and focus group facilitation.

### Interviews

The Youth Justice Board met with a wide range of stakeholders to understand the goals, methods and needs of ATD programs and how they fit into the larger context of local and state juvenile justice systems. Members, working in small groups, interviewed:

#### Alternative to Detention Programs

*BronxConnect, operated by Urban Youth Alliance International*

- Pat Riley, Program Director

*The Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) ATD Program*

- Rebekah E. Heilman, Director of Youth Services

*Choices, operated by the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)*

- Sharieff Clayton, Youth Worker
- Robert DeLeon, Program Director
- Ana Dopazo, Education Specialist

*Queens Engagement Strategy for Teens (QUEST) and QUEST Futures, operated by the Center for Court Innovation<sup>24</sup>*

- Winter Drayton, Case Manager
- Tongo Eisen-Martin, Program Coordinator
- Monerra Hosin, Research/Clinical Assistant
- David Long, Project Director
- Vanessa Lynch, Court Liaison
- Shernette Pink, Compliance Monitor
- Nadine Sylvester, Compliance Monitor
- Carolyn Torres, Clinical Director
- Elizabeth Walker, Social Worker

#### Center for Court Innovation

- Raye Barbieri, Director of Implementation
- Carol Fisler, Director, Mental Health Court Programs
- Alfred Siegel, Deputy Director

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<sup>24</sup> The Center for Court Innovation is also the parent organization of the Youth Justice Board.

### Cook County (Illinois) Juvenile Probation and Court Services Department<sup>25</sup>

- Steven Eiseman, Deputy Chief Probation Officer
- Michael J. Rohan, Director

### The Legal Aid Society

- Jacqueline Deane, Director of Training, Juvenile Rights Division
- Tamara Steckler, Attorney-in-Charge, Juvenile Rights Division
- Jessica Warner, Social Worker, Juvenile Rights Division
- 30 Supervisors, Juvenile Rights Division

### New York City Department of Probation

- Patricia Brennan, Deputy Commissioner for Family Court Services

### New York City Family Court

- Harold Barr, Court Attorney, Bronx County
- The Honorable Monica Drinane, Bronx County
- The Honorable Joseph M. Lauria, Administrative Judge (ret.)
- The Honorable Fran L. Lubow, Queens County
- The Honorable Jane Pearl, Supervising Judge, New York County
- The Honorable Daniel Turbow, Kings County
- The Honorable Stewart H. Weinstein, Kings County

### New York City Department of Juvenile Justice

- Sarah Graizbord, Director of Strategic Planning
- Judith Pincus, First Deputy Commissioner

### New York City Law Department

- Laurence E. Busching, Chief, Family Court
- Jennifer Gilroy Ruiz, Borough Chief, Queens County Family Court

### Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, Office of the Mayor, City of New York

- Gerald Foley, Assistant Director of Program Management
- Hannah Laqueur, Juvenile Justice Coordinator
- Michele Sviridoff, Deputy Criminal Justice Coordinator

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<sup>25</sup> The Cook County (Illinois) Court System's alternative to detention programs are a national best practice model. Between 1996 – 2005, Cook County, Illinois reduced its average daily population in locked detention from 682 to 420 and its overall admissions to detention from 10,200 to 4,960. Additionally, Cook County's youth violent arrest rate fell 54 percent between 1993 and 2000. For more information, visit the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative's website:

<http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/JuvenileDetentionAlternativesInitiative.aspx>

Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, City of New York

- Wendy Perlmutter, Deputy Family Services Coordinator

Vera Institute of Justice

- Yumari Martinez, Senior Program Associate, Center on Youth Justice

**Site Visits**

The Youth Justice Board observed ATD programs in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens. During some visits, Board members participated in programming alongside ATD program participants. Members documented their observations and interviewed program staff.

**Focus Groups**

The Board conducted focus groups with 18 young people. The Board recruited participants through ATD programs, legal service organizations and the members' own social networks. Members planned and facilitated the focus groups. They asked participants a range of questions about their experiences in the juvenile justice system with a particular focus on ATD programs; youth and parent understanding of the process; and the value of services offered by ATD programs. The members also sought feedback from focus group participants on the Board's ideas for policy recommendations.

**Synthesis and Analysis**

After each interview, members identified key information learned and presented this information to the entire group. Members then discussed how each interview fit into the larger context of the ATD program initiative and juvenile justice policy. As their body of knowledge grew, members reviewed common challenges and innovative solutions to current issues and themes. The Board then prioritized areas where members, as young people, could contribute meaningful insights and ideas. The members developed scores of ideas from a combination of existing ATD practices and national best practices, and through brainstorming. Finally, staff at the Center for Court Innovation advised the Board on which ideas were strongest and would be most consistent with the goals of ATD programs. The recommendations presented in this report are the Board's final product.



## Appendix 4: The Youth Justice Board Program

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The Youth Justice Board is an after-school program that gives young people a voice in policies that affect their lives. Each year, a team of youth from across New York City investigates a current juvenile justice or public safety issue, formulates policy recommendations, and works to implement its recommendations. The program has two primary goals: first, to help members develop leadership, knowledge and civic engagement skills that will benefit their communities, their families and their futures; and second, to contribute young people's perspectives to public policy discussions. The project aims to foster ongoing dialogue between policymakers and informed youth leaders.

In the first year of the program's two-year cycle, Board members conduct extensive research on a selected issue, develop and publish informed policy recommendations, and present them to policymakers and key stakeholders. During the second year of the program members work to implement the recommendations. Each year new teens are selected to join the program based on their experiences with the topic of study, personal interest in the issue and commitment to working on a long-term project. After completion of the project, many alumni stay engaged with the program and pursue other civic engagement activities in their neighborhoods or at school.

### **How It Works**

At the beginning of the program a topic of study is selected after surveying youth and policymakers about relevant and timely issues. A four-phase curriculum builds the Board members' teamwork, research and presentation skills and helps members develop substantive and actionable policy recommendations.

*Training:* During the first weeks of the program, members receive intensive training on research strategies, consensus building, listening, interviewing and public speaking. Members also learn how local government works. The training phase includes a kick-off weekend retreat that provides members with background information on the topic and lays a foundation for teamwork.

*Fieldwork:* The Board designs and implements a research plan that includes interviews, focus groups and site visits with a wide range of stakeholders. During this stage, members meet with professionals in the field, community stakeholders, experts and public officials. Members design and lead focus groups of young people affected by the issue under investigation to learn how the issue affects their peers.

*Recommendation Development:* The Board's research culminates in the development of targeted policy proposals. The Board issues a final report and presents its policy recommendations directly to government officials and policymakers. In past years, the Board has presented to the New York City Department of Education, the Mayor's Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, the New York City Council, New York City Family Court, the New York State

Assembly, the New York State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children, the New York State Office of Children and Families, and the New York State Judicial Training Institute.

*Taking Action:* The Board works to influence practice in the field by convincing decision-makers to implement its recommendations. Strategies include campaigning directly to officials at key agencies, piloting initiatives and collaborating with stakeholder organizations.

### **Youth Justice Board Publications and Selected Activities**

*Stop the Revolving Door: Giving Communities and Youth the Tools to Overcome Recidivism (2005)* The first Board focused on improving the reentry process for young people returning to New York City from upstate placement facilities. Its report recommended improvement of the reentry planning process in three areas: timing, responsiveness to individual needs, and coordination among city and state agencies. Several Board members went on to intern for the New York State juvenile placement agency and others joined advisory boards for related agencies.

*One Step at a Time: Recommendations for the School Community to Improve Safety (2006)* Through an analysis of their own experiences and interviews with a variety of stakeholders, Board members studied New York City public school safety. The Board published ten recommendations in three categories: prioritizing positive relationships with school safety personnel, expanding responses to conflicts and negative behavior, and giving students a formal voice in safety policies and procedures. The Board presented its recommendations at a kick-off event that included officials from the Office of the Mayor, the Department of Probation, the Police Department, and the Department of Education. The Board created a toolkit to help schools develop student school safety advisory boards that was used by five high schools. Additionally, Board members participated in a Department of Education youth working group on school safety.

*Stand Up, Stand Out: Recommendations to Improve Youth Participation in New York City's Permanency Planning Process (2007)* The Board studied youth involvement in the permanency planning process—the process by which New York City Family Courts determine permanent living arrangements for young people in foster care. The Board developed 15 recommendations in three categories: preparing young people to take more active roles in their cases; creating stronger partnerships between lawyers for youth, caseworkers, and young people; and creating court environments that facilitate meaningful youth involvement. During the second year of the program, members developed a curriculum and offered informative workshops to young people in foster care and designed and published informational materials about the permanency planning process. The Board also advised the New York State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children on the design and content of the State's first family court waiting area dedicated exclusively to teens' use. At its opening in December 2008, New York State Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye (ret.) commended the Board for its contributions to the project.

**Past and Current Funding**

Funding for the program has come from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, The Cricket Island Foundation, Edward & Ellen Roche Relief Foundation, Helena Rubinstein Foundation, New York City Council, New York State Unified Court System, Surdna Foundation, The Taconic Foundation, U.S. Department of Justice, and The W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation.

For more information, please visit us online at [www.courtsandcommunity.org/youthjusticeboard](http://www.courtsandcommunity.org/youthjusticeboard).

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