

Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators

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Mission

To connect, develop and strengthen youth corrections leaders to maximize their capacities to implement and sustain reforms in their systems that will improve outcomes for youth, families and communities.

Vision

“We believe every youth should leave a correctional program in a better place than when he or she came in.”

Core Values

- Continuous Learning
- Collaboration
- Rehabilitation
- Parental Engagement
- Supportive Communities
- Diversity

Executive Director

Michael P. Dempsey

Elected Officers

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Fariborz Pakseresht, Oregon

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Family Engagement

Understanding the needs of families and encouraging their involvement is crucial in working with juveniles. The importance of family involvement in juvenile justice approaches has been recognized by several national groups (National Research Council, 2014, Anne E. Casey Foundation, 2014, Vera Institute, 2016, and the Youth in Custody Practice Model through CJCA and the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, 2016). The National Research Council, after reviewing research on adolescent development and juvenile justice interventions, identified family engagement as one of seven hallmarks that can serve as a template to guide system reform (Implementing Justice Reform: The Federal Role 2016). The report noted “the juvenile justice system has the opportunity and responsibility to encourage family involvement whenever possible, including interactions with law enforcement, court proceedings, service delivery, and re-integration, in order to produce successful outcomes and reduce re-offending” (page 3).

Research on family involvement has been associated with improvements in the functioning of juveniles, both in residential programs and in the community. A study by the Vera Institute (2016) found that youth in custody who received regular family visits performed better academically and were involved in fewer violent incidents. Supportive family involvement has also been associated with decreases in recidivism when juveniles return to the community. The Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) 2014 Standards encourage increased family involvement noting that “success in the community is often linked to supportive relationships that youth have with family and others” (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014).

Engaging and empowering families is one of the guiding principles in the Youth in Custody Practice Model (YICPM, 2016) sponsored by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform and the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators. The key practices outlined in YICPM to increase family engagement include:

- Broadly Defining and Identifying Families
- Encouraging Youth-Family Connections
- Engaging Families in the Treatment Process
- Empowering Families to Improve Systems

As it is clear that family engagement can serve as a critical factor in supporting long-term outcomes and aid in reducing the likelihood of recidivism, CJCA affirms the need for juvenile justice agencies to engage families across the juvenile justice continuum in order to improve services and to support the youth being served.