What’s Going On at NJJEC?

In June, the NJJEC project said farewell to staff member Dr. Carrie Williamson, who left JRSA for other employment. We are actively recruiting for a new NJJEC staff person. In the meantime, Dr. Stan Orchowsky, Dr. Shawn Flower and the team at JRSA will carry on where Carrie left off. We wish Carrie the best of luck in all her future endeavors!

Don’t forget to check out our Webinars! All of the NJJEC webinars are available online. Visit the NJJEC website to view the webinar, read a transcript, or download the presentation slides.

Upcoming Events of Interest

26th Annual Crimes Against Children Conference
August 11-August 14

The Dallas Children’s Advocacy Center will host the 26th Annual Crimes Against Children Conference August 11 through 14 in Dallas, Texas. The conference provides training for justice practitioners involved in investigation, prosecution, and treatment, and includes specialized tracks for practitioners focused on internet-related crimes. Check the conference website to register.

37th National Child Welfare, Juvenile, and Family Law Conference
August 18-20

The 37th National Child Welfare, Juvenile, and Family Law Conference will be held by the National Association of Counsel for Children August 18 through 20 in Denver, Colorado. Youth service providers and advocates across a range of disciplines will
participate in the training, which provides information about legal work and youth engagement in the court system. The agenda and registration information are available on the conference website.

National Kinship Care Conference September 17-19

The Child Welfare League of America will hold the National Kinship Care Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana September 17 through 19. The theme of the conference is Building Communities of Caring for Children and Families. Session topics include cross-system collaboration, trauma-informed care, and best practices in Tribal communities. Registration details are available on the conference website.

Featured Resource: Resources for Providers Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Minors

A number of resources are available for youth service providers who work with or may encounter child or youth victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Webinars

The National Girls Institute hosted a webinar entitled Child Trafficking, Girls, and Detention: A Call to Reform about the extent of child sex trafficking in the United States and appropriate responses to system-involved girls who have been victims of human trafficking. Presenters discuss the need to provide trauma-informed care rather than incarcerate these youth, who are often detained on prostitution charges.

The Vera Institute of Justice, Just Detention International, and the PREA Resource Center collaborated on a webinar entitled Developing Partnerships with Community-Based Service Providers. This webinar specifically addresses the issue of sexual abuse of youth in confinement settings, and explains ways correctional administrators can partner with social service agencies to prevent and respond to this problem.

Resource Kits

The Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (both of the National Academies) have provided an extensive set of materials related to sex trafficking of minors. Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States includes an infographic, a brief, a list of related myths and facts, a slide presentation, and a Guide for Providers of Victim and Support Services. These resources provide information about the extent of the problem, best practices and the integration of social services to support victims, and troubleshooting some of the most prominent challenges to working with child sexual exploitation and trafficking victims.

Evaluation Feature: Safely Home

Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP) recently released an assessment of community-based programs for youth. With funding from the Public Welfare Foundation, the YAP report describes how communities and systems can safely support high-need youth in their homes and
communities, rather than housing them in locked facilities.

YAP administered a survey to youth, juvenile justice and child services providers, advocates, and policymakers to determine their perspectives on best approaches to system-involved youth and their families. The youth surveyed were actively involved in both YAP and non-YAP programs around the country, and the survey data were supplemented with outcome metrics and site visit interviews.

The report provides a list of strategies and techniques necessary for effective community-based interventions. These techniques include flexible and individualized services that account for each youth’s strengths and needs, engagement with the youth’s community services, giving back to the youth’s community through active civic engagement, and a “No Reject Policy” that encourages the inclusion of all youth in a community-based approach. The report notes that many exclusions are a result of gaps in services, and that it is a better long-term approach to adapt services to meet unique needs in community settings rather than choose confinement solely based on a lack of resources.

In addition to its assessment of general community-based services, *Safely Home* highlights specific community-based programs including Black Family Development; Community Connections for Youth; Roca, Inc.; and Youth Advocate Programs; as well as state, city, and county efforts in Alabama; Middlesex, New Jersey; Lucas County, Ohio; and Newburgh, New York.


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**Local Spotlight:**
**Washington, DC**

The Mentoring Today program serves high risk, repeat youth offenders from Washington DC both before and after they are released from incarceration to support their successful reintegration into their families and community. Through a partnership with Students United, a student organization at American University’s Washington College of Law, Mentoring Today begins working with youth four months prior to their release from New Beginnings Youth Development Center (operated by DYRS, the DC Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services) and continues these relationships throughout the reentry process. Law student mentors advocate for youth at court hearings and discharge/re-entry planning meetings and continually monitor service provision after youths’ release for a minimum of 12 months of weekly mentoring and advocacy services. By working with a dedicated mentor and advocate, mentees learn to advocate for themselves – building their sense of self-worth and learning through the example and encouragement of their mentors’ individually tailored advocacy efforts.

Among the 61 youth served since the program began, all are young men of color, primarily African-American, and come from neighborhoods plagued by violence, staggering unemployment, and high incarceration rates. Most face additional risk factors such as living in single-parent households, suffering abuse or neglect, being surrounded by drug use, and coping with a learning or mental disability. Mentoring Today uses a web-accessible database to capture program data, including all contacts with youth, case workers, service providers, and family members. Reports are generated...
that summarize youth service hours, education and employment outcomes, youth achievements, and recidivism data. Nearly one-third of all New Beginnings residents are convicted of a new crime within six months of release. Mentoring Today’s 12-month reconviction rate is 12.5%, which means that in twice the amount of time, this program cuts the reconviction rate by more than half. While DYRS has not published its reconviction rate beyond six months, the national two-year reconviction rate for similar youth is 81%. Overall, 70% have increased their employment and 85% have re-enrolled in school upon release. Over the last year, 82% were either employed or enrolled in school. On a national level, 43% of incarcerated youth never return to school at all.

For more information about Mentoring Today, visit their website at http://mentoringtoday.org.

Featured resources and programs are not endorsed by the National Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center or the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.