



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Division of Juvenile Justice

Eaves Perdue, Governor
Reuben F. Young, Secretary

Linda W. Hayes, Chief Deputy
Secretary

Division of Juvenile Justice Overview And Selected Policy Considerations Legislative Research Commission - Age of Juvenile Offenders Committee

Robin Jenkins, Ph.D.
0/17/12

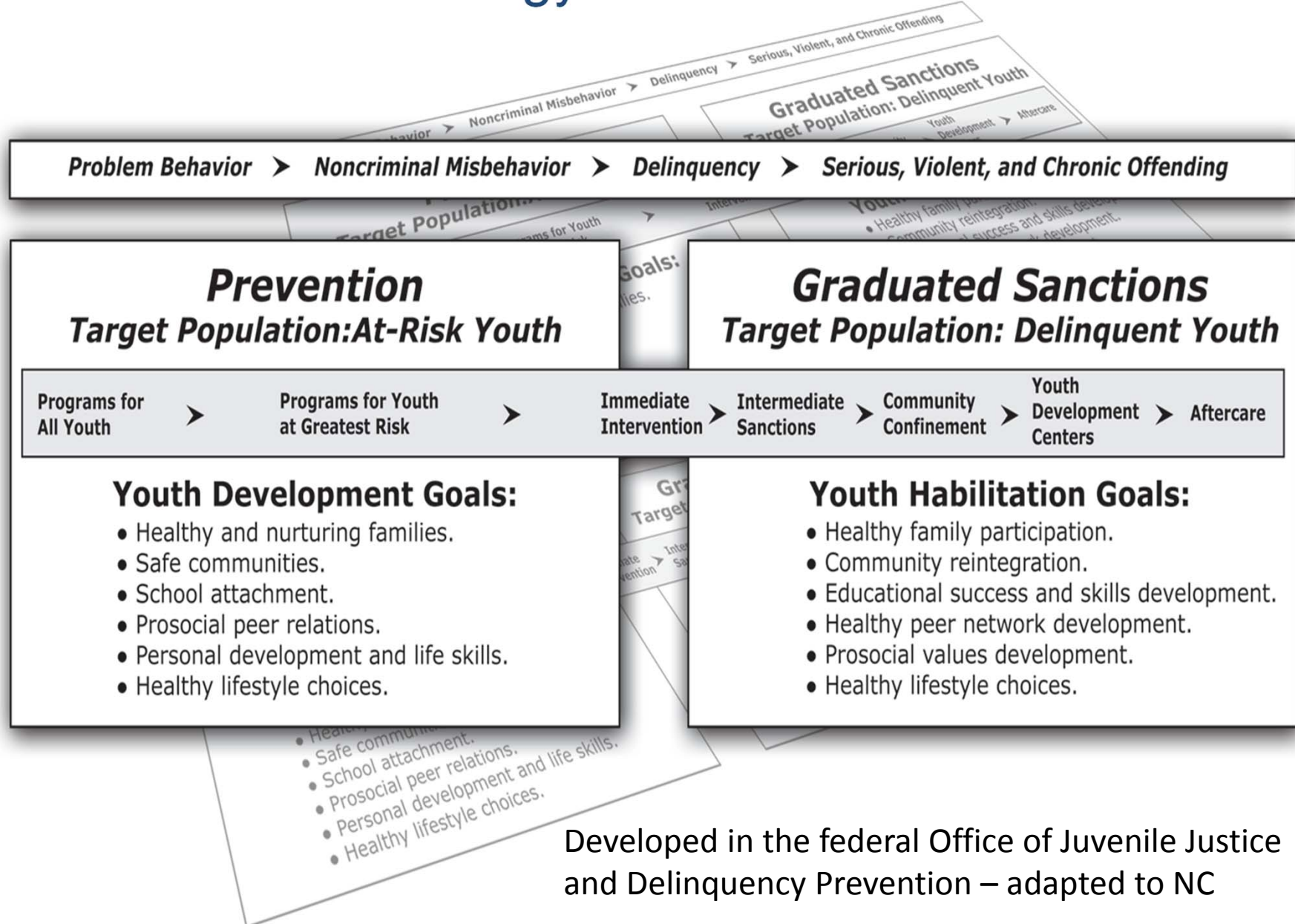


Overview Notes:

- NC's juvenile justice "system" is really a compilation of multiple systems interacting at multiple levels
- The system *is integrated*, however, from beginning to exit and built around a comprehensive management model that relies on partnerships at local, regional and state levels (e.g., the Comprehensive Strategy, District Attorneys, law enforcement, etc.)
- It is an evidence based, or evidence supported system designed to hold youth accountable for their behaviors by using research-supported tools driven by risk, needs and responsivity theory. Once into the actual system, a unified service plan is fashioned for each youth that spans key life domains and follows the youth through the agency's services across sections if needed
- It is a treatment oriented, habilitative focused system designed to change criminogenic thinking and behavior – it is not correctional in nature -- ***this approach is the single most important feature that predicts success for youths that become involved***



Overview of DJJ's Use of the Comprehensive Strategy for Juvenile Justice





System Flow Numbers

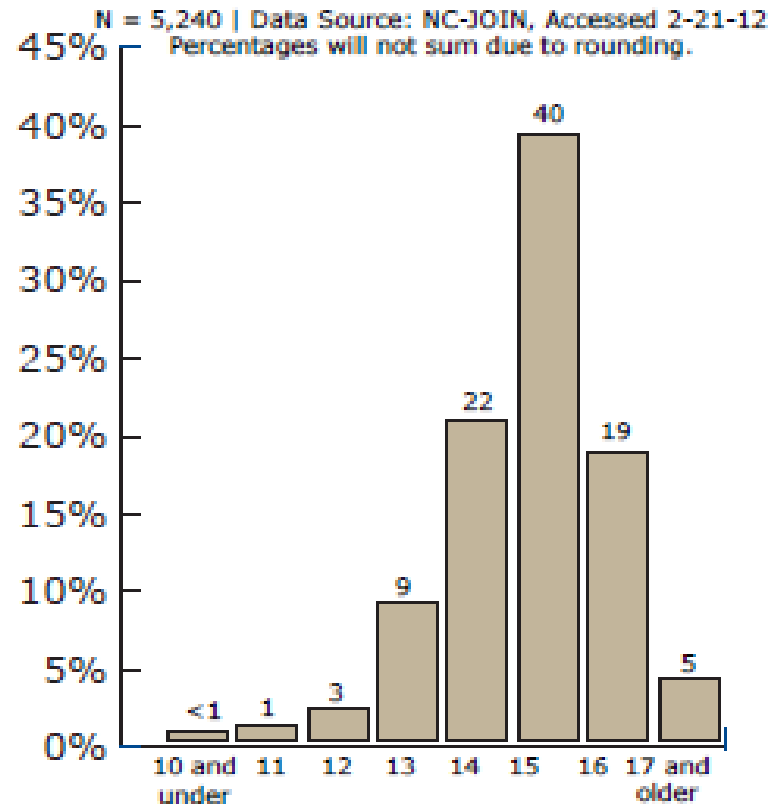
- Important to note that juvenile crime in NC **has dropped by 37%** over the past 10 years. This is *more than double the national average. NC's system works!*
- Last year, DJJ processed approx. 37,000 delinquency complaints involving approx. 19,000 youth (school-based referrals accounted for 43%)
 - S434 would ultimately add up to 33,000 additional complaints and 9000 youth by 2019-2020)
 - Diverted 17.5%
 - Sent 82.5% to court
 - 67% were misdemeanor complaints



System Flow Numbers -- 2

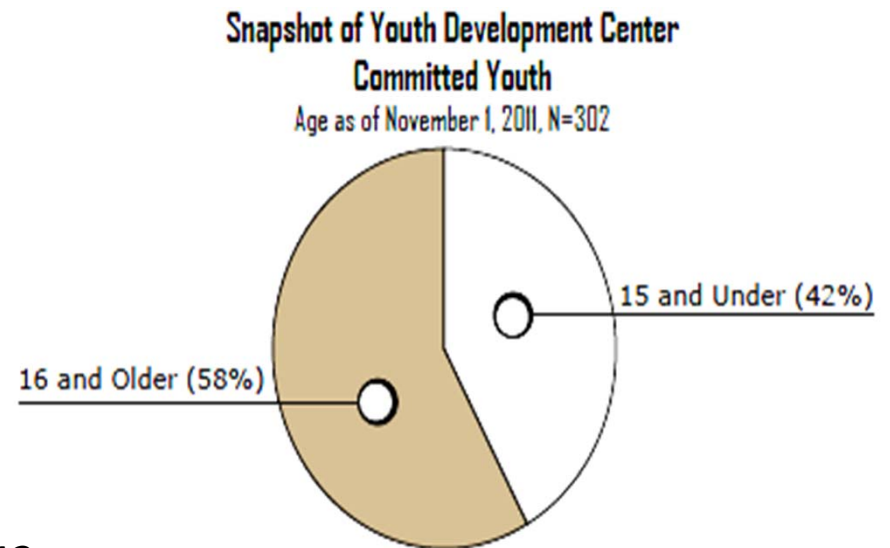
- Community Programs section serves 30,000+ youth
- Detention services are primarily consumed by youth 14 and older
- Detention use has declined by 20% in the past 2 years through the use of graduated responses, better policy administration and oversight

Juveniles Admissions by Age in 2011 (By Percentage)





16 and 17 Year Olds Currently in DJJ (this is not a new population)



16 & 17 Year-olds in NC Juvenile Justice as of 10/8/12

Measure	N
32% of Supervised Juveniles [e.g., under community court supervision] (reference date 10/8/12)*	<i>1,965 out of 6,192 supervision records</i>
25% of Detention Admissions (CY's 2010 and 2011)	<i>1,000 Admissions per Year (approximate)</i>
69% of YDC youth (reference date 10/8/12)	<i>180 out of 260 juveniles in YDC status</i>

*Excluded YDC commitment supervision records from count.

GED Info

In school year 2011-12....

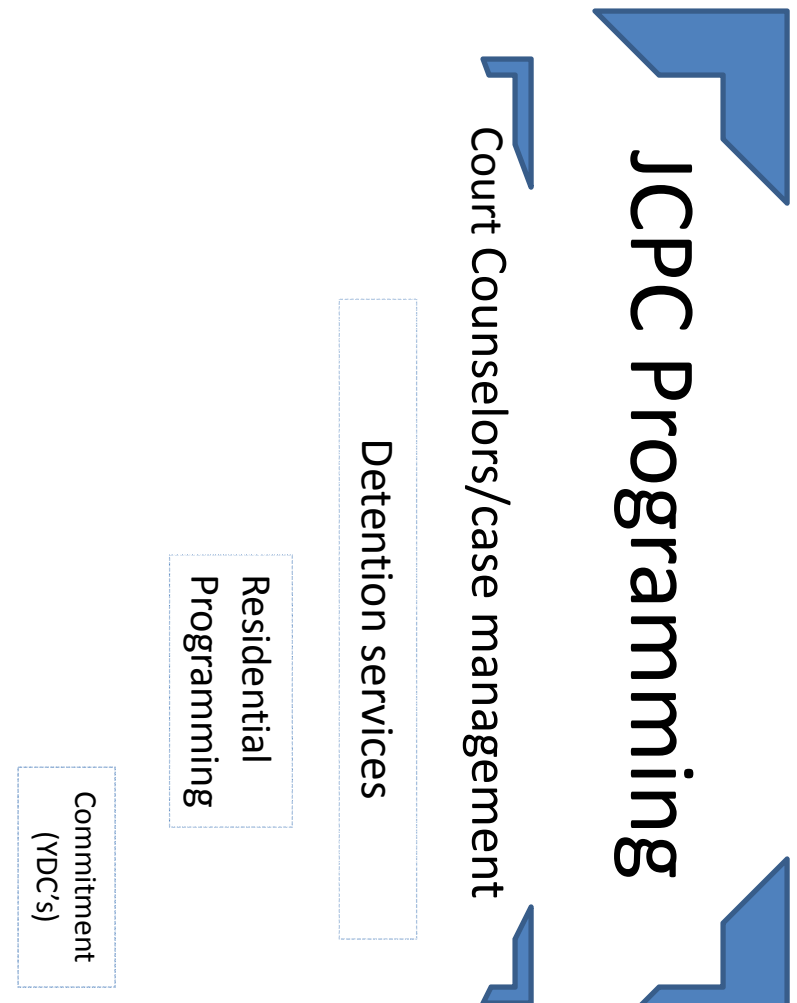
59 students were enrolled in the GED program (approx. 1/5th of YDC population).

25 earned a GED.



Major Components of Supervision

- At-risk
- Early intervention
- Complaint/petition
- Diversion
- Intake/Court Supervision (Level I)
- Level II
- Level III
- Re-entry and Aftercare



Note: only about 300 to 320 youths are committed. **96-97% of all juvenile justice work is done at the community or regional level – 66% of our most violent offenders are being dealt with at the community level**



Supervision Model Differences

Juvenile Justice system

- Court supervision/case management throughout entire experience – must see every month or sooner
- Must be enrolled in school, undergo treatment, drug testing/treatment, and an array of community service options; families always involved where possible; residential treatment also an option – always supervised by court counselor
- Levels of supervision:
 - Modified
 - Standard
 - Intensive
 - Interstate
- Caseloads lower; community based; accountability focused involving schools, treatment provider, vocational, and the courts
- Technical violations may result in extensions, new terms, detention or commitment or recommitment

Adult system

- Court supervision, but primarily only if new charges or major technical violations occur and if on Level 3 or lower
- Depending on offense, 5 levels of supervision ... Levels 4 and 5 don't require face to face supervision (may be eligible for Offender Accountability Reporting by mail or computer)
- Technical violations may result in additional terms/conditions or jail
- Limited systemic ties between courts, community programs and educational environments
- The overwhelming majority of youths entering the juvenile justice system have mental health and/or substance abuse needs, educational deficits, histories of personal trauma and years of family problems --- the adult system isn't geared toward assessing or intervening in these issues in a comprehensive fashion



Juvenile Crime Facts

- Approximately 2-3% of juvenile crimes each year are for A-E felonies (approx 17% in youthful offender population commit all felony offenses – not just the A-I)
- Approximately 69% of complaints received are for misdemeanor offenses; and 12% are for infractions or status offenses
- Of complaints received annually, approximately 75% are committed by males
- 58-67% of committed youths are 16+

16 – 17 Year Olds Under S434

- S434 will only deal with misdemeanants
- Jurisdiction continues under court supervision beyond age 18 – plenty of opportunity to bring the youth to adult court if new crimes are committed
- Approx 83% of youthful offenders are misdemeanor offenders
- Provides real opportunity for lower recidivism, costs, better educational outcomes



Some Key Policy Notes

- Under S434, the greatest expansion in the juvenile system would occur in the community programs, court counselors, and intermediate sanctions (including juvenile detention) – *but this is also where the greatest likelihood for success occurs...this is exactly what is desired based on research and best practice*
- Supervision methods and models would likely evolve into more complex approaches
- Intermediate sanctions would need to be adjusted to account for the older youth
- There **will be** time/caseload impacts on law enforcement, District Attorneys, Public Defenders and the courts
- Evidence supports developmentally targeted services, sanctions and public safety approaches --- we are not doing this now in NC with 16 and 17 year old youth as well as we could.
- The NC JJ system has a history as documented in recent reports regarding reductions in crime, of implementing Justice Reinvestment strategies that have just come into the adult system. Since this approach is recognized nationally as best practice (from an economic as well as programmatic perspective), it makes sense to strengthen systems and processes that are demonstrating higher degrees of success



More on Policy

- According to research Justice Reinvestment (and JR is what has been occurring in the juvenile system for over a decade) accomplishes:
 - Higher degrees of public safety (lowers crime, reduces recidivism)
 - Long term cost savings to society and the state
 - More effective programming and services based on research and evidence
- *DJJ has been implementing evidence-based programs and doing alternatives to detention now for over 3 years ---- detention admissions are down by 22%, cognitive behavioral, trauma informed intervention approaches have been integrated in courts and community programs, youth development centers, and through contract providers --- and graduated responses which drive the entire system are being developed and implemented statewide*
- *Maximizes public-private partnerships* through community programming and intermediate sanctions. This drives cost-efficiencies and cost-effectiveness (for example in community programs, for every state dollar appropriated, at least another local dollar is contributed)
- Reduces harm to youth --- it is not about costs, it is about kids --- creating productive, tax-paying and law abiding citizens for the future.
- Over-reliance on correctional measures has repeatedly been shown to worsen offending behavior. This is true in both juvenile and adult systems. Matching risk, needs, responsivity (e.g., “readiness to change”) and community resources to the youth’s developmental situation is absolutely the best public policy to follow.



And Finally ---

- *PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) will drive substantial changes to the adult jail and prison system for 16 and 17 year olds --- it is a great opportunity to use PREA to catalyze changes in the juvenile system to accommodate 16 and 17 year old youth*
- The Juvenile Justice system is, in effect, “shrinking” as a result of a myriad of factors but most probably due to NC’s effective community based philosophy of juvenile justice program delivery – now is a perfect time to integrate 16 and 17 year olds into that process
- From a developmental, moral, and public policy perspective, using a well constructed juvenile justice system to address low to medium risk 16-17 year old youth is the right thing to do. It isn’t about capability – the NC juvenile justice system has proven its capability; it is about capacity – and this is a political decision. Making decisions that 1) don’t harm youth, 2) give them greater opportunity for long term success, and 3) reduces public liability / risk *just makes sense*