

# The JJDPAs As Context for Broadening Evidenced Based Prevention Implementation: Translating Science to Practice through Federal Juvenile Justice Policy

## National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives

Dr. Diana Fishbein, Co-Chair

[dfishbein@c-trans.org](mailto:dfishbein@c-trans.org)

Ph: (667) 214-2010

Dr. Neil Wollman,

Co-Chair

[nwollman@bentley.edu](mailto:nwollman@bentley.edu)

Ph: (260) 568-0116

### Vision Statement

Our vision is a national mentality that prioritizes the prevention of problems before they occur and reduces government expenditures by implementing efficient, proactive approaches that confront problems before they develop. The ultimate goals are that conditions are supported under which children, adolescents, families and communities thrive and governments systematically enact policies to foster these conditions.

For This Handout, See:

Robert H. (Robin)

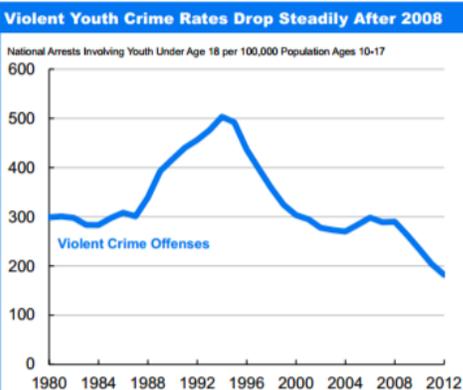
Jenkins, Ph.D.

Contact:

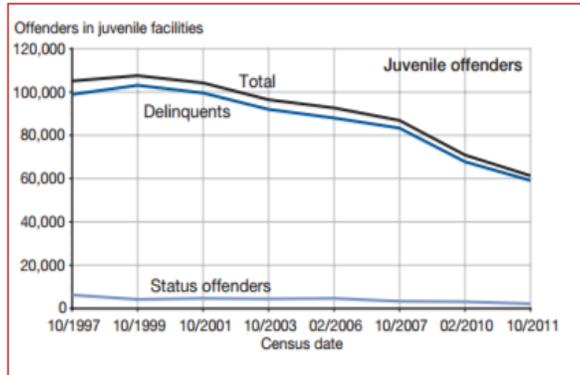
[rjenkins2338@gmail.com](mailto:rjenkins2338@gmail.com)

Ph: (910)987-4071

**Policy Point #1: JJDPAs are good policy; let's reauthorize and improve (crime is down, the federal/state/local partnerships are in some way credited with these trends)**



(Butts, 2013)



(Hockenberry, 2014)

**Policy Point #2: JJDPAs Help By Working With States to Focus on Public Safety While Protecting Youth -- It Creates Opportunity For Good Investments (Prevention). Incarceration As a Juvenile Justice Primary Strategy Is "Bad Economics" and Bad Policy (generally).**

Our country's youth incarceration rate (juveniles) is five times higher than the next closest developed country (Aizer & Doyle, 2013). We spend over **\$6 billion** annually. More telling is that a substantial number of low to moderate risk youths are sent to high security environments, exacerbating their behavior, behavioral health or education problems --- dramatically increasing the risk they will reoffend. Cohen & Piquero (2009) estimate lifetime crime costs to society in the billions for each youth if not deterred by effective solutions. We also do not always know exactly what we are spending and what outcomes are accomplished. A better economic and social policy includes well implemented prevention frameworks in each state and territory. Such a safety net would allow for local planning, use of federal/state/local funds in evidence-based ways, and if done well would result in much lower cost-per-youth services and significantly better societal outcomes.

**Policy Point #3: Prevention Science Principles Can Further Strengthen a Reauthorized JJDPAs.**

- Prevention science emphasizes population (e.g., public health) and subpopulation impacts as well as individual, family and community outcomes
- Preventive interventions focus on the range of development—recognizing that the earlier the intervention, the more likely the potential for improved life long impacts (**this is already included in the JJDPAs**). Prevention science has taught us to tailor and apply developmentally appropriate strategies at appropriate stages; intervene early and comprehensively where possible – match risk to intervention in very measured [data driven] ways using scientifically proven approaches implemented with fidelity (**somewhat included in the JJDPAs**)
- Prevention science emphasizes interventions that reduce risk *and* foster resilience (protective factors) because the higher exposure to risk (or adverse childhood experiences) with limited 'protection' – the greater the likelihood of poor social functioning (school failure, juvenile delinquency/adult crime, substance use-abuse, etc.) (**already included in the JJDPAs**) -- Equally important to focus on BOTH risk and protection
- Prevention science recommends that interventions come *at the earliest possible point in the trajectory of concern where risks manifest and become potentially additive, or when protective factors erode or are missing in potentially harmful ways*. Well implemented prevention efforts could dramatically reduce issues of disproportionate minority contact, over-incarceration, and expenditures on deep end services (**should be included in the JJDPAs**)

#### **Policy Point #4: More States Would Have Prevention Frameworks Incorporated into their SAGs if the JJDP and Federal Resources More Significantly Helped to Address .....**

- Resource challenges (federal, state, local)
- Knowledge and experience/expertise (federal, state, local)
- Infrastructure challenges at federal and state levels (data systems, professional training and competency maintenance capacities, evaluation tools, SAG structure, etc.)
- Strategies being unclear as to how to actually make it happen (language in the Act is aspirational and encouraging, no existing prevention standards, guidelines or metrics for what “developmentally appropriate”, “prevention-focused” systems should look like)
- Perceived imbalance of focus – states *perceive* a heavier emphasis on compliance with the 4 core protections, and less of a focus on capacity building toward effective prevention solutions (not saying that OJJDP fosters this...it is a reported perception). Financial penalties tend to focus on core protections and SAG general administrative elements

#### **Policy & Strategy Recommendations to Strengthen a Reauthorized JJDP Using Prevention Science:**

- Invest in building prevention science expertise and technology transfer as a core function within OJJDP (e.g., provide the needed personnel and resources to do so)
- In a reauthorized JJDP strengthen the expectation to require effective prevention science strategies and principles in states’ 3-year plans and updates (with the caveat being that OJJDP is able to provide the training/t.a. to help get them there)
- Transform OJJDP’s state relations and support operations to include a balanced set of capacities between compliance monitoring, and capacity building and maintenance for the states so that they can implement and scale up more evidence-based programs – Connect OJJDP to federal and other partners to strategically grow and sustain their prevention science expertise (NAS, 2014) [Move to an additional emphasis on building prevention capacity/competencies, collaborative partnerships, data systems, implementation capability/expertise. Foster strategic alliances to make it so]
- Create the “enabling context” (Aldridge et al., 2014) (sufficient federal appropriations, improved OJJDP prevention infrastructure, inter-agency tools and data sharing between OJJDP and other branches of federal and state governments, a “climate” amenable to prevention strategies and work)
- Expand or change the “DNA” of State Advisory Groups to incorporate prevention science expertise (not just knowledge of, but experience with implementation and contexts); incentivize model local prevention partnerships through SAG grants or other programs (Uninsky, 2014)
- Create *incentives and flexible federal accounting systems* that allow states to reinvest dollars as savings occur, or if programs are not successful and require different strategies; this includes changing reporting metrics to account for these spending outcomes
- Establish overall metrics to evaluate system reforms (developmentally appropriate; prevention and EBP diffusion). Monitor federal and shared state costs; reinvest savings; know what is being spent and whether or not it is cost beneficial and effective.

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