



Responding to the Pandemic

PbS Issue Brief 1: Testing Practices
June 2021

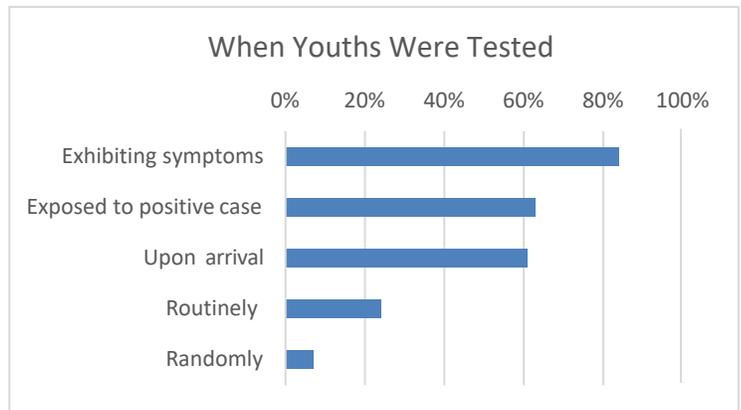
One year into the pandemic, data from 148 facilities across the country show a 4% positive test rate for the COVID-19 virus among youths and less than 2% among staff during the month of April 2021.

PbS collects data on facility operations, conditions, services and quality of life to help agencies meet PbS' aspirational standards and continuously improve. In the month of April 2021, more than 2,250 young people and about 7,000 staff were tested in facilities participating in the [Performance-based Standards](#) (PbS) program. PbS requested additional pandemic-related data from the participants in 32 states to better understand and track practices and policies related to COVID-19 prevention, testing and positive testing rates and add to the information available to help juvenile justice move forward into the next normal. The data will be collected again in October for comparison.

Only one facility experienced more than 20 positive cases among youths in April. The majority of facilities (84%) reported zero youths who tested positive and 64% of facilities reported zero staff who tested positive. Twenty-three facilities reported one or more youth who tested positive and 52 facilities reported one or more staff who tested positive. The spread of COVID-19 did not appear to be related to the location, size or type of facility.

Juvenile justice agencies used several different testing strategies to mitigate the spread of the virus:

- Most facilities tested youths when they exhibited symptoms (84%).
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the facilities tested youths if they were exposed to a positive case or through contact tracing.
- About two-thirds of the facilities tested youths upon arrival (61%). About one-quarter (24%) of the facilities tested youths routinely and few (7%) tested youths randomly.



Data from 148 participating correction, detention, assessment and community residential programs for the month of April 2021

Similarly, most staff were tested when exhibiting symptoms (65%) or exposed to a positive case or because of contact tracing (56%). Nearly half of all staff were tested routinely (44%) and a small group (9%) were tested randomly.

We are just beginning to learn from the data about the impact of the pandemic. PbS will continue to dig deeper into the data to share the lessons learned.

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