



Performance-based
Standards



Reentry Standards Project Summary

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Overview

Recognizing the need to measure and better understand what works to prevent youths from reoffending after juvenile justice system involvement and what keeps them on the path to successful adulthood, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice¹ launched the Juvenile Reentry Measurement Standards project (RS) in October 2015. OJJDP called for the development of standards to provide research-based, best practice guidance for assessing and measuring reentry services and outcomes for youths in secure placement through release of post-placement supervision.

The Performance-based Standards Learning Institute, Inc. (PbS) was selected with its partners the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA), now the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJJA), and Vera Institute of Justice to develop the standards and measures. The work was completed in four activities:

- Activity 1 – Synthesize and analyze the current literature in implementation science, juvenile reentry and youth development with current practice in juvenile reentry and data collection across the nation to identify key indicators for measuring the juvenile reentry process.
- Activity 2 – Translate key indicators identified in Activity 1 into a user-friendly and understandable draft juvenile reentry measurement standards to pilot test.
- Activity 3 – Pilot test the measurement standards to learn if they are meaningful, feasible, valuable and understandable to professionals and identify strategies to recommend for broad/national implementation.
- Activity 4 – Revise and provide final recommended measurement standards to OJJDP that incorporate the findings and feedback gathered during the pilot phase and suggest strategies for national implementation.

Project Vision

Before embarking on the four specific activities listed in the request for proposals, the team borrowed from the approach taken by the child welfare system² to design outcomes and monitoring for services and practices to nurture a caring and productive 19-year-old. Similar and aligned with PbS' vision that all youths should be treated as one of our own, the team and OJJDP created a vision for a healthy, purposeful and productive 25-year-old to guide the reentry standards' development:

- They will be high school graduates pursuing further education: anything less than that would likely result in a life of under employment and low-paying jobs.

¹ This report was prepared by the PbS Learning Institute, Inc., a national non-profit established in 2004 to expand and sustain the Performance-based Standards (PbS) continuous improvement system, and was supported by the cooperative agreement # 2015-CZ-BX-K002 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

² Biglan, Anthony. (2014). *A Comprehensive Framework for Nurturing the Well-Being of Children and Adolescents*. US Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. Washington, D.C.





- They will have succeeded in school, developed the self-management skills and social relations that enable them to complete schoolwork, get support from others and avoid conflict. They will have developed the relationship skills and employment competencies to obtain and sustain employment.
- They will be physically healthy and have healthy diet and exercise habits.
- Any dynamic risk factors have been identified and addressed.
- They have developed self-regulation skills enabling them to persist in the face of challenges and cope with distress without having to avoid or suppress it.
- Finally, they will be caring young adults whose families and communities will nurture and they will be strongly committed to helping others and contributing to their community's well-being.

Research continues to improve our understanding of the need to identify different practices and new strategies to respond to the unique needs and strengths of youths, to hold them accountable, strengthen their relationships with families, increase their skills and competencies and improve their perceptions of the fairness of the juvenile justice system to reduce reoffending. The reentry standards and measures were developed by translating the research into a set of standards and measures that identify the reentry practices most likely to result in reduced reoffending and positive outcomes for youths.

Project Activities

Literature Review and Field Scan

The project team created a framework to focus and coordinate the literature review and field scan. In consultation with OJJDP and well-known reentry and positive youth development research and field experts, the team first identified a set of common practice domains for reentry services or practices standards and youth reentry outcome standards. Within each domain, the team identified specific, notable practices to include in the literature review and field scan. Establishing domains provided a common framework for coordinating and learning simultaneously from both the literature review and field scan. It also allowed for the analysis and comparison of the findings from both efforts that led to the identification of practice themes from which the standards could be developed.

A total of 134 practices within the 11 domains were identified as the focus of the literature review and field scan. Vera conducted the literature review that identified and coded 173 studies looking at reentry practices, PbS and CJCA conducted an in-depth scan of 29 states and the District of Columbia for the prevalence of the practices; and PbS conducted a targeted scan for the 22 practices not found to be prevalent in the in-depth scan by looking at federal funding, legislation, national organizations and training and technical assistance centers.

The literature review and field scan findings were each classified into three categories for analysis and identification of practice themes to develop the standards: strongly supported by research/prevalence, moderately supported by research/prevalence and little/no support in research/prevalence. The classification showed both convergence and divergence in reentry research and field practices.



Translating the Results

Committed to a transparent and explicit process for developing reentry measurement standards that are grounded in research, reflect current values and experiences of the field and to prevent any conflict of interest and biases toward any conclusion, the project team agreed on the following guidelines for analyzing the results of the literature review and field scan and translating the lessons learned into the first draft of standards:

- Research evidence was prioritized over other evidence (e.g., experiential);
- The research findings were rated to indicate quality and strength of evidence;
- The field scan findings were rated by the prevalence of the practice and data quality;
- To best guide practices now and in the future, the recommended standards intentionally set expectations for the highest quality services and practices and the resulting youth outcomes;
- The standards serve both to provide direction for reentry services and practices and to educate the field. For example, ensuring youths leave with a sense of hope is a concept that has been in practice in many juvenile justice reentry services informally. The reentry standards offer ways to operationalize and measure efforts to do so;
- The standards must be written and implemented in a way that promotes continuous improvement and provides real-time, user-friendly information; and
- The standards must be based on extensive field input to ensure they are relevant, meaningful, measurable and marketable. The team was very clear that the final recommendations need to convince juvenile justice agencies and service providers to use the standards and measures to make data-driven decisions, improve practices and continually improve outcomes for youths.

Prior to field testing, the project team continued to collect feedback and adjust as part of its commitment to a continuous feedback loop. For example, some of the feedback from the project's Technical Working Group (TWG) and other selected experts included adding new domain areas to recognize the importance of fairness and accountability, minimizing data entry, streamlining overlapping service areas and being very clear about the desired youth outcomes. Generally all feedback supported PbS' strategy of including newer practices as a way to promote the new developmental research in juvenile justice.

Field Testing

PbS developed a field testing strategy to gather information from professionals who would most likely use and benefit from the reentry standards and measures. The response was essential to ensuring the standards and measures are meaningful, feasible, comprehensive and simple – all at once. The strategy also set out to field test at a variety of different reentry systems and settings, in a variety of geographic locations and with varied data collection capacities. The team used specific field testing protocols to gather feedback on the: 1) standards and domains, 2) data elements' ability to indicate performance, 3) implementation of the standards, 4) ease/difficulty of data collection and 5) strategies for buy-in.

PbS conducted field testing of the draft reentry standards at over 30 programs in six states during a 10-month period. PbS continually collected feedback to meet the project's overarching objectives and those



identified during earlier activities including: how the new standards work in real life situations, how they can be modified to be more effective and easier to use and the best ways to introduce them to the rest of the field to facilitate understanding of and widespread implementation. Approaching the field testing through agencies allowed for the inclusion of the most sites and broadest testing across different settings and system approaches. Lessons learned from the field testing included:

1. The final product must balance the need for a comprehensive and holistic set of standards and the need to avoid overwhelming the field.
2. Data elements expected to be non-existent and potentially problematic to access and report were perceived to be easy to add to existing records and data collection efforts.
3. Implementation was seen as feasible largely due to existing efforts underway, though support was needed to build capacity and provide training, technical assistance and other support.
4. Data collection was most feasible in statewide agencies and most difficult for small, individual reentry service providers.

Following the field testing, a set of 33 reentry standards were included in a framework with guiding principles and two types of measures: individual youth-level outcomes and program performance indicators to assess how well agencies and services are meeting the reentry standards.

Project Framework

The standards are presented within a framework for implementation of four areas that can be adopted separately or together: principles, practices, youth outcomes and long-term outcomes.

- Principles are overarching beliefs that guide agencies and organizations in all circumstances. The principles include fairness, accountability, family engagement and collaboration.
- Practices describe an agency’s reentry services that can be assessed at the program level to determine performance and quality of implementation. The practice domains include assessment, reentry planning, case management and continuous quality improvement.
- Youth outcomes measure the immediate, short-term impact of practices research identified as most likely to prevent young people from subsequent offending, including education and employment, well-being and health and community connection and contribution.
- Long-term outcomes look at the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire juvenile justice system from arrest through reentry. While included in the framework, the outcomes were covered by other complimentary OJJDP projects, including the Juvenile Justice Model Data Project (MDP). The long-term outcomes include reduced reoffending, community safety and cost effectiveness.

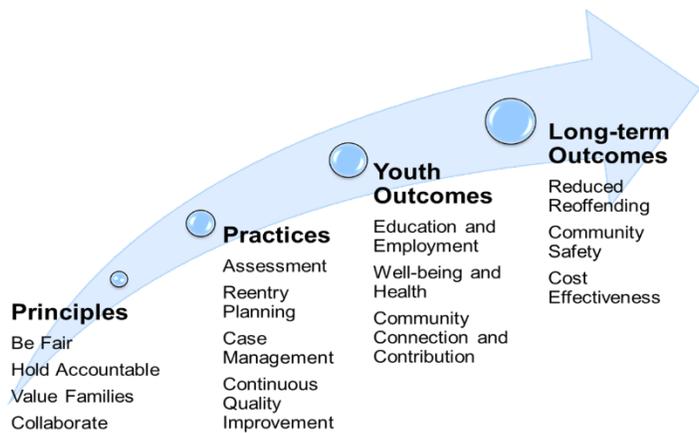


Figure 1: Project Framework with Principles, Practices, Youth Outcomes and Long-term Outcomes



Implementation Strategy

PbS recommends an incremental strategy to adopt the standards and implement a data collection approach to measure performance meeting the standards. The standards and measures provide agencies with a comprehensive and holistic picture of the skills, competencies, perceptions, values, experiences, knowledge, relationships and resources the youths have with them, in a metaphorical backpack, when they leave residential care and/or community supervision.

Reentry teams begin with an open discussion to establish their vision of a successful 25-year-old, as the project did, then assess how well their agency currently prepares a young person to become that successful 25-year-old and what they need to put into their backpack. Next reentry teams select one or more of the domains to focus their work on based on their resources and needs and aligning with reentry initiatives to maximize impact. PbS has developed a customized reentry improvement plan that provides an online structure for teams to implement the reentry standards and improve reentry outcomes. Working with a reentry coach, the team uses the plan structure to set goals and targets, develop strategies and approaches, identify responsible individuals and deadlines and the data to continually assess progress and impact. Reentry teams also can select individual data collection components for implementation, such as the Youth Reentry Survey, which can be administered using a tablet, to all youths leaving residential placement or ending community supervision and provides an abundance of information about a young person's preparedness and readiness for reentry.

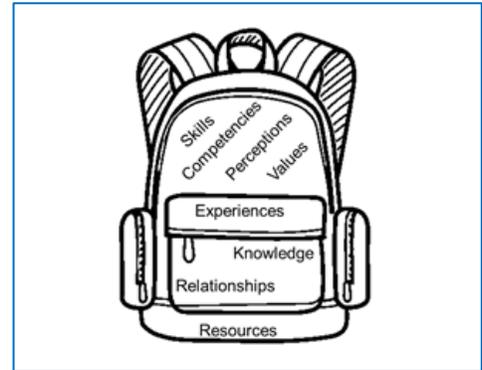


Figure 2: A youth's backpack with skills, competencies, perceptions, values, experiences, knowledge, relationships and resources



The Standards

Assessment

1. Assess all youths using empirically-validated tools that are guided by the principles of risk-need-responsivity, are appropriate for the youths and administered by trained and qualified staff.
2. Complete additional assessments to gather information relevant to youths' successful reentry planning.
3. Use risk-need-responsivity assessments to match youths with the appropriate level of supervision and types and dosage of services and how to intervene effectively.

Reentry Planning

1. Begin reentry planning as soon as all youths arrive in placement.
2. Establish a multi-disciplinary/agency team to develop, implement and continually monitor all youths' case management and reentry plans.
3. Use assessments, prior history, progress reports and collateral contacts to inform case management and reentry planning.
4. Identify and prioritize youths' needs and set clear goals, objectives and action steps that can be measured and adjusted.
5. Ensure youths and families participate in reentry planning meetings and understand the expectations and responses to non-compliance.

Case Management

1. Assign a reentry case manager as soon as every child arrives in placement.
2. Ensure the case manager engages youths in a developmental relationship.
3. Ensure the case manager develops a real and sustainable connection with families.
4. Ensure all services indicated as needed by the multi-disciplinary/agency team have been provided.
5. Ensure all youths and families have meaningful, prompt access to the services and supports needed to make the youth's reentry successful.

Continuous Quality Improvement

1. Ensure fidelity of youths' assessment and their seamless transition to services, school and employment in the community.
2. Match youths appropriately to the program's target population.
3. Ensure staff are qualified, well-trained and well-supervised.
4. Provide appropriate treatment dosage and duration.
5. Collect and use data regularly to assess, monitor and adjust practices to adhere to the program model.

Education and Employment

1. Ensure all youths have a clear plan for their long-term education and employment.
2. Ensure all youths complete their academic goals including higher education.
3. Ensure all youths complete their career technical education or skills goals.
4. Ensure all youths master employability skills necessary to obtain and sustain employment.
5. Connect all youths to meaningful employment.
6. Ensure all youths have access to all documents necessary to obtain and sustain employment.
7. Ensure all youths have access to all supports necessary to obtain and sustain employment.

Well-being and Health

1. Ensure all youths feel safe physically, emotionally and psychologically.
2. Ensure all youths are healthy physically, emotionally and psychologically.
3. Ensure all youths cultivate a sense of hope and purpose.
4. Ensure all youths have mastered social competencies and resiliency skills.
5. Teach youths lifelong healthy habits.

Community Connection and Contribution

1. Ensure all youths develop trusting, reciprocal relationships with prosocial adults and peers.
2. Ensure youths develop strategies to negotiate with negative peers and gang relationships.
3. Ensure all youths develop civic awareness and promote positive values.



The Standards and Measures Format

Each domain area spreads across two pages to connect the goals, standards and measures. The measures include both outcomes and indicators and the require perception survey and administrative data.

Domain Area

Goal

A broad statement of purpose that defines the program's hopes and vision of the future. They are ambitious and general by design.

Standards

The aspirational level of quality or performance that is desired; the implementation of practices expected to achieve positive results.

Brief summary of literature review, field scan and pilot testing findings that supported the direction of the standards and measures.

Domain Measures

Youth Outcomes and Indicators

The measures needed to quantify the results or impacts of activities, processes and programs. Designed as percentages and rates that change over time to reflect changes in skills, competencies, perceptions, beliefs, knowledge and resources research has identified as able to affect the long-term outcome of reoffending but available earlier to be used for case planning and similar adjustments to services provided.

Practice Indicators

The measures needed to quantify the extent to which an activity has occurred, the program practices and processes that connect the initial identification of key risk-need-responsivity factors into their integration into a youth's case plan and the interventions, programming and services the youths received.



Standards and Measures by Domains

Assessment

Goal

To determine appropriate placements, levels of supervision and services and what personal strengths and/or specific individual factors might influence their effectiveness.

Standards

1. Assess all youths using empirically-validated tools that are guided by the principles of risk-need-responsivity, are appropriate for the youths and administered by trained and qualified staff.
2. Complete additional assessments to gather information relevant to youths' successful reentry planning.
3. Use risk-need-responsivity assessments to match youths with the appropriate level of supervision and types and dosage of services and how to intervene effectively.

Research highlights the significance of empirically-validated assessment tools to identify a youths' risks of reoffending, the specific needs that must be addressed to decrease that risk and the individual factors that may affect the youth's ability to respond to interventions.³ Research also notes the importance of using tools based on the principles of risk-need-responsivity to ensure youths are matched with appropriate levels of supervision and services.⁴ The risk-need-responsivity framework has been shown to improve decision-making and promote fairness and unbiased decisions.⁵

The reentry Assessment standards build on the evidence for gathering comprehensive information to design youths' individualized case management and reentry plans and ensuring they are connected to culturally-responsive and gender-responsive programming. The standards recognize the growing research and availability of tools to identify and address youths' exposure to trauma and traumatic stress and promote the inclusion of information that assesses youths' individualized needs that, if addressed, will reduce recidivism and maximize positive responses to services. The standards promote use of the assessment results to inform decisions about placement/supervision level (risk) and for reentry/case management planning (needs and strengths). Appropriate use of assessments and the need to reassess youths is addressed in the Continuous Quality Improvement domain.

³ Bechtel, K., Lowenkamp, C. T., & Latessa, E. (2007). Assessing the risk of reoffending for juvenile offenders using the youth level of service/case management inventory. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*. 45(3/4). 85-108.

⁴ Schmidt, F., Hoge, R. D., & Gomes, L. (2005). Reliability and validity analyses of the youth level of service/case management inventory. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*. 32(3). 329-344.

⁵ Lipsey, M.W., Conly, C.H., Chapman, G., & Bilchik, S. (2017). *Juvenile Justice System Improvement: Implementing an Evidence-Based Decision-Making Platform*. Washington, DC: Center for Juvenile Justice Reform.



Assessment Measures

Youth Outcomes and Indicators

- Percent of youths who report they had access to supports that honored their cultural traditions and language
- Percent of youths who report they had experiences that honored their cultural traditions and language

Service Indicators

- Percent of youths assessed at placement intake using a tool guided by risk-need-responsivity
- Percent of youths assessed prior to a change in supervision status using a tool guided by risk-need-responsivity principles
- Percent of youths assessed using empirically-validated tools
- Percent of youths assessed by trained and qualified staff
- Percent of professional overrides with comments or explanations
- Percent of youths assessed for educational needs/abilities
- Percent of youths assessed for employment aptitude/interests/skills
- Percent of youths who were identified by a mental health screen as needing a follow up assessment who were assessed for mental health needs
- Percent of youths who were identified by a substance use screen as needing a follow up assessment who were assessed for substance use needs
- Percent of youths who were assessed for strengths and needs
- Percent of youths assessed for prosocial development needs
- Percent of youths assessed for physical health needs
- Percent of youths who were identified by a trauma screen as needing a follow up assessment for exposure to trauma and/or traumatic stress
- Percent of youths whose families were assessed for strengths and needs
- Percent of youths with high criminogenic risk/needs scores who were matched with the most intensive services/supervision
- Percent of youths with moderate criminogenic risk/needs scores who were matched with moderate services/supervision
- Percent of youths with low criminogenic risk/needs scores who were diverted or matched with least intensive services/supervision
- Percent of youths whose case management and reentry plans included individualized interventions to address assessed responsivity issues

Four Main Principles of Risk-Need-Responsivity⁶

Risk: Focuses on matching the level of supervision and service to the youth's risk of reoffending;
Need: Targets a youth's dynamic risk factors in treatment;
Responsivity: Tailor interventions to a youth's specific characteristic, learning style, motivation, mental health; and
Professional discretion: Professional judgment considering factors other than risk and needs scores, e.g., legal, ethical and service availability.

⁶ Vincent, G. M., Guy, L. S., & Grisso, T. (2012). Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation. National Juvenile Justice Network. Retrieved from http://njjn.org/uploads/digitalibrary/Risk_Assessment_in_Juvenile_Justice_A_Guidebook_for_Implementation.pdf





Reentry Planning

Goal

To develop reentry plans that provide the roadmap for youths to transition from juvenile justice custody/supervision to living and thriving post-system involvement.

Standards

1. Begin reentry planning as soon as all youths arrive in placement.
2. Establish a multi-disciplinary/agency team to develop, implement and continually monitor all youths' case management and reentry plans.
3. Use assessments, prior history, progress reports and collateral contacts to inform case management and reentry planning.
4. Identify and prioritize youths' needs and set clear goals, objectives and action steps that can be measured and adjusted.
5. Ensure youths and families participate in reentry planning meetings and understand the expectations and responses to non-compliance.

The literature review found strong support for reentry planning that begins when a youth is placed in detention or placement and that implementation of a comprehensive reentry planning process improved reoffending outcomes.⁷ The findings also supported integrated case management strategies that design individualized reentry plans that incorporate information from assessments into clear, goal-oriented, measurable and well-monitored road maps for success.⁸ Effective reentry planning requires a designated multi-disciplinary team that includes family members and the youth, shares information, ensures timely access to appropriate services and meets regularly to discuss youths' plans and progress.

The reentry planning goal and standards are designed to emphasize the importance of an inclusive and comprehensive planning process that results in a meaningful, measurable plan. The reentry planning process offers opportunities to promote perceptions of fairness by partnering with youths and families to develop reentry plans and priorities and demonstrate they are valued, listened to and respected.

⁷ See Appendix A, References for Literature Review.

⁸ Olver, M. E., Stockdale, K. C., & Wong, S. C. P. (2012). Short and long-term prediction of recidivism using the youth level of service/case management inventory in a sample of serious young offenders. *Law and Human Behavior*. 36(4). 331-344.





Reentry Planning Measures

Youth Outcomes and Indicators

- Percent of youths who report participating in their multi-disciplinary team meetings
- Percent of youths who report it will be easy to comply with or meet expectations in their reentry plan
- Percent of youths who agree with the goals and expectations in their reentry plan

Service Indicators

- Average time between youths' admission and reentry case manager's initial contact with family
- Average time between admission and start of reentry planning
- Average time between youths' admission and reentry case manager's initial contact with youth
- Percent of youths whose reentry plans started on the day they were admitted
- Number of different disciplines represented by members of multi-disciplinary team
- Percent of multi-disciplinary team meetings with families participating
- Percent of multi-disciplinary team meetings with youths participating
- Percent of multi-disciplinary team meeting with different agencies participating
- Percent of youths whose case management plans include a reentry plan component
- Percent of youths whose case management plans were updated monthly
- Percent of youths whose case management plans were developed by a multi-disciplinary team of facility staff, post-placement supervision staff and service agencies
- Percent of youths whose reentry plans had individuals assigned to coordinate tasks within designated timeframes
- Percent of youths whose reentry plans were updated to reflect progress, offer ongoing feedback and make revisions accordingly
- Percent of youths whose case management and reentry plans include assessment results and recommendations
- Percent of youths whose case management and reentry plans include case history
- Percent of youths whose case management plans include current progress updates
- Percent of youths whose case management and reentry plans include collateral contacts
- Percent of youths who were allowed more than one chance in response to non-compliance or other behavioral issues
- Percent of youths whose reentry plans progressively increase their freedom and responsibility
- Percent of youths whose reentry plans document opportunities for autonomous decision-making and critical thinking



Case Management

Goal

To provide consistent, relationally-grounded support and meaningful, prompt access to services.

Standards

1. Assign a reentry case manager as soon as every child arrives in placement.
2. Ensure the case manager engages youths in a developmental relationship.
3. Ensure the case manager develops a real and sustainable connection with families.
4. Ensure all services indicated as needed by the multi-disciplinary/agency team have been provided.
5. Ensure all youths and families have meaningful, prompt access to the services and supports needed to make the youth's reentry successful.

Research showed that case management, when done well, results in desired outcomes and reduced reoffending. Research also supports a continuum of care approach that starts on day one of admission to the facility with a case manager assigned soon thereafter who is consistent and available in the youths' lives. Effective case managers can become an intervention in and of themselves. They use time with the youths as opportunities to promote long-term behavior changes and support youths' self-defined goals.⁹ The case worker knows the youths' strengths and interests, backgrounds and communities and helps them set short-term goals and practice problem-solving. The case manager knows adolescents have a hard time understanding long-term consequences and making mistakes is part of normal development.

The reentry Case Management goal and standards are written to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear and no youth's case falls through the cracks. The multi-disciplinary team brings expertise and information together to develop and monitor the youths' individual plans. The case manager is responsible for making sure the plan is implemented as designed. The standards promote recent research showing relationships are at the heart of what youths need to learn, grow and thrive and that has been operationalized to understand and document what makes a relationship developmental – meaning it helps youths discover who they are, develop abilities to shape their own lives and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them.¹⁰

⁹ National Research Council. (2013). *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach*. Committee on Assessing Juvenile Justice Reform, Richard J. Bonnie, Robert L. Johnson, Betty M. Chemers and Julie A. Schuck, Eds. Committee on Law and Justice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

¹⁰ Roehlkepartain, E.C., Pekel, K., Syvertsen, A.K., Sethi, J., Sullivan, T.K., & Scales, P.C. (2017). *Relationships First: Creating Connections that Help Young People Thrive*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.



Case Management Measures

Youth Outcomes and Indicators

- Percent of youths who reported their case manager¹¹
 - Takes them seriously
 - Lets them know they like being with them and expresses positive feelings toward them
 - Makes it a priority to understand who they are and what they care about
 - Is someone they can count on and trust
 - Helps them see future possibilities for themselves
 - Stands up for them when they need it
 - Is an example they can learn from
 - Asks for and listens to their opinion and considers them when making decisions
 - Understands and supports their needs, interests and abilities
 - Works with them to accomplish their goals and solve problems
 - Exposes them to new ideas, experiences and places
 - Introduces them to people who can help them grow
 - Helps them work through barriers that could stop them from achieving their goals
 - Makes it clear they want them to live up to their potential
 - Recognizes their thoughts and abilities while also pushing them to strengthen them
 - Holds them accountable for appropriate boundaries and rules
 - Provides practical assistance and feedback to help them learn
 - Praises their efforts and achievements

Service Indicators

- Percent of youths who were assigned a reentry case manager upon intake to placement
- Percent of youths whose reentry plans include identification of assessed and continuing service needs
- Percent of youths with assessed or continuing mental health needs who received mental health services
- Percent of youths with assessed or continuing substance use needs who received substance use services
- Percent of youths with assessed or continuing adolescent or criminogenic needs who received and completed evidence-based programming
- Percent of youths with assessed or continuing skills development needs who received and completed evidence-based curricula
- Percent of youths with assessed academic needs who received educational support and services
- Percent of youths whose education plans were in place immediately upon release or change of location
- Percent of youths whose families were referred and connected to appropriate agencies to address basic needs, reduce environmental stressors and improve parenting skills
- Percent of youths whose reentry plans include resources and strategies to address areas identified in the family assessment
- Percent of youths whose reentry plans include at least one verified long-term adult support
- Percent of youths whose reentry plans include more than one verified long-term adult support
- Percent of youths whose reentry plans include verified stable housing
- Percent of families who reported they could easily access services and supports identified the reentry plan
- Percent of families who reported that their youth was easily re-enrolled in their home school

¹¹ Leffert, N., Benson, P.L., Scales, P.C., Sharma, A.R., Drake, D.R. & Blyth, D.A. (1998). Developmental assets: Measurement and prediction of risk behaviors among adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science*, 209-230.





Continuous Quality Improvement

Goal

To apply a continuous quality improvement process based on ongoing data collection and analysis of program fidelity.

Standards

1. Ensure fidelity of youths' assessment and their seamless transition to services, school and employment in the community.
2. Match youths appropriately to the program's target population.
3. Ensure staff are qualified, well-trained and well-supervised.
4. Provide appropriate treatment dosage and duration.
5. Collect and use data regularly to assess, monitor and adjust practices to adhere to the program model.

Juvenile justice agencies are operating in an era of demands for evidence-based practices and data demonstrating accountability. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes provide a framework to continually improve practices and services with the goal of achieving the best possible outcomes for youths. It provides a way to regularly assess organization performance and understand how current programs, practices and policies are impacting the quality and delivery of services and outcomes produced.^{12, 13}

The increasing numbers of evaluations examining the effectiveness of juvenile justice programs and practices to reduce reoffending and improve youth outcomes has shed light on the need for research examining implementation practices to better understand the differences between what research has shown to work, and policy had prescribed, and what is actually implemented and practiced. The reentry standards model promotes overall CQI practices.

¹² Loeffler-Cobia, J., Deal, T. & Rackow, A. (2012). *Continuous Quality Improvement Guide for Juvenile Justice Organizations*. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

¹³ Rudes, D. S., Lerch, J., & Taxman, F.S. (2011). Implementing a reentry framework at a correctional facility: Challenges to the culture. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*. 50. 467-491.



Continuous Quality Improvement Measures

Youth Outcomes and Indicators

- None

Service Indicators

- Percent of personnel administering risk-need-responsivity assessment tools who have completed the recommended training by an approved trainer for proper administration of the tool
- Percent of youths who were able to meaningfully participate in the assessment process
- Percent of assessments observed by a supervisor
- Percent of youths appropriately matched to the program's population
- Percent of caseloads/group sizes that are consistent with the model
- Percent of staff who have completed the necessary training in the model by an approved trainer and in a timely manner
- Percent of staff who have received the recommended level of supervision
- Percent of staff who have the required qualifications to implement the program
- Percent of program sessions observed by a supervisor
- Percent of youths who received the correct intensity (frequency) for the model
- Percent of youths who received the correct duration (length of program) for the model
- Percent of programs that occurred as scheduled
- Number/frequency of fidelity monitoring tools used regularly and consistently
- Number/frequency of other processes for monitoring, such as observation
- Percent of youths surveyed for feedback (annually or more frequently)
- Percent of staff surveyed for feedback
- Percent of families surveyed for feedback
- Percent of youths who achieve improved outcomes aligned with the program's purpose



Education and Employment

Goal

To develop a long-term career pathway with primary input from the youths that lays out the sequence of education, training and workforce skills they need to obtain and retain employment.

Standards

1. Ensure all youths have a clear plan for their long-term education and employment.
2. Ensure all youths complete their academic goals including higher education.
3. Ensure all youths complete their career technical education or skills goals.
4. Ensure all youths master employability skills necessary to obtain and sustain employment.
5. Connect all youths to meaningful employment.
6. Ensure all youths have access to all documents necessary to obtain and sustain employment.
7. Ensure all youths have access to all supports necessary to obtain and sustain employment.

Research has consistently shown poor school performance is a significant indicator of delinquency and that delinquency is a strong predictor of poor school performance.¹⁴ Research also has shown that youths who succeed in school while incarcerated are less likely to reoffend and any involvement in the juvenile justice system from attending court hearings to incarceration disrupts learning. Being attached to a school can be a protective factor and discourage delinquent behaviors; education is a critical factor in determining the risk of reoffending.¹⁵

The research on justice-involved youths shows lack of employment to be one of the biggest predictors for unsuccessful reentry and access to employment and job training opportunities help youths avoid continued involvement in juvenile justice.¹⁶

The reentry Education and Employment goal and standards were developed based on the mounting evidence showing the benefits of appropriate, individualized education programming and services that allow for the variation in youths' needs, ages, interests and abilities. Similarly, the integrated academic and technical skills plan recognizes youths' unique skills and abilities, capitalizes on their unique talents and interests and provides a long-term framework for gaining meaningful employment and sustainable financial health.

¹⁴ Ramirez, S., & Harris, A. (2010). Success and failure in education and criminal justice: Identifying common mechanisms. In Penelope Peterson, Eva Baker and Barry McGaw (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* 3rd ed. (pp. 874-880). Oxford, U.K.: Elsevier; Academic Press.

¹⁵ Lee, S., & Villagrana, M. (2015). Differences in risk and protective factors between crossover and non-crossover youth in juvenile justice. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 58, 18-27.

¹⁶ Maseelall, A., Petteruti, A., Walsh, N., & Ziedenberg, J. (2007). *Employment, Wages and Public Safety*. Retrieved from http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07_10_REP_EmploymentAndPublicSafety_AC.pdf





Education and Employment Measures

Youth Outcomes and Indicators

- Percent of youths who report having a plan for their education and employment that leads to a career
- Percent of youths who report having a plan for their education and employment they believe they will follow
- Percent of youths who report their education and employment plan will help them achieve their career goals
- Percent of youths who completed the academic goals listed in their reentry plan
- Percent of youths who completed the technical education programming as identified in their reentry plan
- Percent of youths who report they were told about ways to help pay for college or technical school
- Percent of youths with demonstrated career readiness skills (measured by assessment)
- Percent of youths whose career readiness skills improved while at the program
- Percent of youths who have resumes
- Percent of youths who have had one or more job interviews
- Percent of youths who report they feel ready to get a job
- Percent of youths who report they were confident they would get a job they liked
- Percent of youths who are employed
- Percent of youths who are employed in the community
- Percent of youths who have held a job
- Percent of youths who have a job in the community they will continue after release from secure placement or post-placement supervision
- Percent of youths who have proper identification such as a driver's license or government-issued ID
- Percent of youths who have/can access their social security card
- Percent of youths with transportation
- Percent of youths who are parents who have access to day care
- Percent of youths who report they can pay their living expenses

Practice Indicators

- Percent of youths whose long-term education and employment plan included documentation of their input
- Percent of eligible youths who earned high school diploma
- Percent of eligible youths who earned a GED or equivalent
- Percent of youths who completed post-secondary courses
- Percent of youths who reported they received assistance with Pell Grants and funding for higher education
- Percent of eligible youths who earned certifications
- Percent of youths who completed employability assessments
- Average hourly wage for employed youths
- Average length of employment (overall not just at program)
- Percent of youths employed by type of job



Well-being and Health

Goal

To respond to all youths' needs and experiences to establish well-being and good health.

Standards

1. Ensure all youths feel safe physically, emotionally and psychologically.
2. Ensure all youths are healthy physically, emotionally and psychologically.
3. Ensure all youths cultivate a sense of hope and purpose.
4. Ensure all youths have mastered social competencies and resiliency skills.
5. Teach youths lifelong healthy habits.

Recent science provides insights into factors for both children and adults that are universal to our well-being and health. Well-being refers to the essential human needs for social connectedness, stability, safety, access to resources and hope. Well-being tells us about overall life satisfaction, resiliency, the quality of our relationships and realization of our potential. It indicates the presence of positive emotions, absence of negative emotions and general perceptions of quality of life.¹⁷

Physical health – feeling healthy and full of energy – is shown to be a key component of well-being. Physical health refers to both immediate conditions of the body, mind and heart and the understanding that healthy living is essential. It is a concept beginning to emerge in juvenile justice and is strongly supported as a holistic approach that recognizes youths' exposure to trauma and traumatic events.¹⁸

The reentry Well-being and Health goal and standards are based on the well-being literature in general and current practices at a small number of juvenile justice settings. They are intended to promote increasing attention to factors such as social connectedness, resiliency and hope in juvenile justice settings, concepts not historically part of services for young offenders. The standards and measures offer suggestions that expand on the traditional practices for safety and physical health and add cultivating hope and purpose alongside social competencies to continue juvenile justice's efforts to increase public safety and decrease delinquent behavior by giving youths skills, competencies and tools to succeed.

¹⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). *Health-Related Quality of Life: Well-being Concepts*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/wellbeing.htm>

¹⁸ The Full Frame Initiative. (2015). *The Five Domains of Wellbeing*. Retrieved from <https://fullframeinitiative.org/>



Well-being and Health Measures

Youth Outcomes and Indicators

- Percent of youths who report feeling healthy
- Percent of youths who report at least one hour of physical exercise most days of the week
- Percent of youths who report they had completed a course on nutrition, exercise and making healthy choices
- Percent of youths who report eating healthy foods, getting exercise most days and maintaining a healthy weight is important to them
- Percent of youths who report they know their talents and skills
- Percent of youths who report they know how to use their leisure time appropriately
- Percent of youths who reported it was easy to be themselves
- Percent of youths who report they feel safe at home
- Percent of youths who report they feel safe right now
- Percent of youths who report they feel their lives have a purpose
- Percent of youths who report they have goals and expect to achieve them
- Percent of youths who report they feel confident they can succeed
- Percent of youths who report they will have a good life as an adult
- Percent of youths who report they value diversity (getting to know people who are different from themselves)
- Percent of youths who report people who know them would say they don't give up when things get hard for them
- Percent of youths who report that when things don't go their way, they are good at finding a way to make things better
- Percent of youths who reported they are likely to smoke tobacco, use drugs or drink alcohol when they leave
- Percent of youths who consider themselves to be good learners
- Percent of youths who like to learn or problem solve

Practice Indicators

- Percent of youths with identified physical health issues that were treated in placement and who are connected to an accessible, appropriate community service to continue treatment in the community
- Percent of youths with identified emotional health issues that were treated in placement and who are connected to an accessible, appropriate community service to continue treatment in the community
- Percent of youths with identified psychological health issues that were treated in placement and who are connected to an accessible, appropriate community service to continue treatment in the community
- Hours per week registered or licensed medical staff is available in placement
- Percent of youths who have access to medication as needed
- Percent of youths who have a primary care physician
- Percent of youths who have health insurance
- Percent of youths who have a permanent verified living arrangement
- Percent of youths who have demonstrated interpersonal skills, e.g., conflict resolution
- Percent of youths who have demonstrated mental processing skills, e.g., decision-making
- Percent of youths who have demonstrated compassion for others
- Percent of youths who have demonstrated positive self-worth



Community Connection and Contribution

Goal

To ensure youths develop long-term social connections and a sense of belonging in the community.

Standards

1. Ensure all youths develop trusting, reciprocal relationships with prosocial adults and peers.
2. Ensure youths develop strategies to negotiate with negative peers and gang relationships.
3. Ensure all youths develop civic awareness and promote positive values.

Connection to people and communities is an essential human need. Research from the 1990s¹⁹ showed that a relationship with at least one positive adult could be enough to prevent a youth from reoffending and the benefits of ensuring continuity of care to address needs such mental health and substance use treatment. More recent reentry initiatives are expanding the description of community connection to being mutual – giving and receiving – to address the human need for belonging. When youths are connected to prosocial adults and peers they find reasons to invest in societal norms. When youths connect to the wider community through experiences and opportunities to contribute and participate they learn they have value and experience the feeling of belonging.^{20, 21}

However, while juvenile justice research makes clear the importance of youths socializing with prosocial peers instead of negative peers to prevent recidivism, the more common practice emerging in the field is to teach youths the strategies, skills and tools to deal with the negative peers.²² For most youths, they get a sense of belonging from their old friends or youths in their neighborhoods and lack opportunities to meet “new” prosocial peers.

The reentry Community Connection and Contribution goal and standards are grounded in developmental and social research showing connection and relationships are critical to a youth’s growth, learning and thriving and designed to make addressing youths’ needs for connection and sense of belonging a priority in juvenile justice.

¹⁹ Center for Research on Health Care (CRHC) Data Center. (n.d.). *Pathways to Desistance*. Retrieved from <http://www.pathwaysstudy.pitt.edu/>

²⁰ Jacobi, T. (2008). Writing for change: Engaging juveniles through alternative literacy education. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 59(2), 71-93.

²¹ Center for Promise (2015). *Don't quit on me: What young people who left school say about the power of relationships*. Washington, DC: America's Promise Alliance.

²² Casarjian, B., & Casarjian, C. (2003). *Power Source: Taking Charge of Your Life*. Boston, MA: Lionheart Press.



Community Connection and Contribution Measures

Youth Outcomes and Indicators

- Percent of youths who report there is at least one adult in their life, other than their case worker or paid professional, who they can go to for advice or emotional support
- Percent of youths who report having people in their neighborhood who care about them
- Percent of youths who report they can identify one or more prosocial adults who they talk to for help solving problems
- Percent of youths who report they have one or more prosocial adult they look forward to spending time with
- Percent of youths who report their family encourages them to do well
- Percent of youths who report most of their friends do well in school
- Percent of youths who report most of their friends do not carry a weapon
- Percent of youths who report most of their friends do not use drugs/alcohol
- Percent of youths who reported they had completed a gang/negative peer prevention class/curriculum/program
- Percent of youths who report they knew how to stay out of trouble when pressured from negative peers to engage in negative behavior
- Percent of youths who report they were confident they would not join/rejoin a gang
- Percent of youths who report having the skills to avoid getting into trouble again
- Percent of youths eligible for voter registration who have registered to vote
- Percent of youths who report participating in political events, community organizing, national or local civic work
- Percent of youths who report participating in politics, volunteer work or national or local civic work was important to them
- Percent of youths who report having attended a special event in the community
- Percent of youths who report that helping other people was important to them
- Percent of youths who report having done volunteer work that made them feel proud that they could contribute to the community
- Percent of youths who report they were given chances to make their neighborhood a better place

Practice Indicators

- Percent of youths whose reentry plans have identified one or more prosocial adult they will go to for problem-solving
- Percent of youths who are engaged with prosocial peers
- Percent of youths who participated in activities in the community led by community organizations and/or agencies

