



Family Participation

Why is it important to involve families?

- ◆ Families and facilities share the common goal of helping youths return to the community with the skills and supports needed to stop re-offending;
- ◆ Research has shown that supportive family contact during incarceration is associated with better behavior while in facilities and better outcomes once released, including reducing the involvement of siblings; and
- ◆ Families want and are ready to participate!

How do I get families involved?

- ◆ Create a Family Council—For suggestions, refer to PbS' guide: "Developing a Family Council;"
- ◆ Establish a family night, family dinners or other events bringing families into the facility for informal fun;
- ◆ Reach out to the family as soon as the youths comes to the facility to answer questions and address any concerns the family may have about the facility or the juvenile justice system; and
- ◆ Include family members on the treatment team and communicate with them regularly.

What have other facilities done?

- ◆ Assessed youths' family and social supports through formal survey or informal questions;
- ◆ Created new orientation packets for families;
- ◆ Offered free weekly phone calls home;
- ◆ Revised of visitation policies to include siblings and increase visiting hours;
- ◆ Provided transportation to the facility; and
- ◆ Implemented parenting programs for youths with children.



Important tip:

Be sure to promote the events and opportunities for families!



Think outside the box! There are simple things you can do to increase family involvement. For example, one facility included families in treatment team meetings simply by buying extension cord so the telephone could be moved to the conference room! Another increased visitation by changing the dress code policy to allow visitors to wear blue jeans.