

ENHANCING PROGRAMMING EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH DATA- AND OUTCOME-DRIVEN REFORM

Mark A. Greenwald
Director, Research and Planning
(850) 717-2627
Mark.Greenwald@djj.state.fl.us

During the last three years the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has embarked on an aggressive research agenda to provide relevant information to stakeholders and the public through academic journal publication, web-based interactive dash-boarding and delinquency briefings posted on the FDJJ website. The purpose of these tools is to detail the implications and results of reform initiatives, as well as provide empirical guidance for prevention, intervention, and policy. Perhaps the two most significant and measurably effective reforms in the history of the FDJJ have been the Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project and the Civil Citation initiative. The following section outlines highlights from the most prominent current FDJJ initiatives.

The Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project (JJSIP)

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) was selected as one of four sites to participate in the Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project (JJSIP), a national initiative to reform the juvenile justice system by translating "what works" into everyday practice and policy. Administered by Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, the JJSIP provides a framework for implementing best practices throughout the entire juvenile justice system. The JJSIP is composed of two tiers: the *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*, which includes having a graduated sanction continuum of services and an evaluation component achieved through the *Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP)*. The Comprehensive Strategy stresses adequate resource allocation at each stage of a continuum from universal prevention through prevention, diversion, probation, residential placement, and re-entry. Youth are served in the least restrictive placement appropriate, reserving residential placement for the highest risk youth. Prevention services are made available to at-risk youth with intervention services and a system of graduated sanctions targeted for arrested youth. A goal of the Comprehensive Strategy is to have a range of sanction options available in each community in order to match youth to appropriate services based on assessed risk and needs.

The FDJJ uses a suite of risk/need assessments that include the Community Positive Achievement Change Tool (C-PACT) for all youth arrested in Florida, the Residential Positive Achievement Change Tool (R-PACT) to assess changes in risk factors and strengths during residential placement, and the newly developed and implemented Prevention Assessment Tool (PAT). The C-PACT has been evaluated through five validation studies, including two peer-reviewed criminology/academic journal articles, one independent research agency report, a National Center for Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) comparison of risk assessments across the country validation, and a doctoral dissertation (Baglivio, 2007; Baglivio, 2009; Baglivio & Jackowski, 2013; Winokur-Early, Hand, & Blankenship, 2012; Baird, Healy, Johnson, Bogie, Dankert, & Scharenbroch, 2013). The R-PACT was recently validated by the Florida State University, College of Criminology and Criminal Justice (Hay, 2013). The purpose of the PAT is to assess risk factors and strengths of prevention and civil citation/alternatives to arrest youth to

ensure services can be tailored to individualized needs to stop the progression of delinquency into the formal juvenile justice system. Validation of the PAT will commence during the 2015 calendar year.

Having accurate assessment of risk factors and protective factors/strengths allows for the provision of services that address each individual youth’s specific constellation of needs while providing supervision levels that maximize public safety. The intersection of risk, need, and accountability has been coalesced in the recent development, implementation, and validation of the FDJJ Disposition Matrix (see Figure 1). The Disposition Matrix is a structured decision-making tool that provides guidelines for juvenile probation officers to make disposition recommendations to the court in terms of restrictiveness/supervision levels for a given youth. The Disposition Matrix takes into account the severity of the presenting offense, as well as the youth’s overall risk to re-offend from the validated C-PACT. The Disposition Matrix provides a range of supervision options for a given youth. Juvenile probation officers are trained to recommend the least restrictive option that has not previously been tried with a youth whose offense and risk level fall into a given cell of the Disposition Matrix.

FIGURE 1.



Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Disposition Recommendation Matrix

(Staff must always begin with the least restrictive setting within a particular disposition category. See Structured Decision-Making guidelines.)

Most Serious Presenting Offense	PACT Risk Level to Re-Offend			
	Low-Risk to Re-offend	Moderate-Risk to Re-offend	Moderate- to High-Risk to Re-offend	High-Risk to Re-offend
1st TIME MISDEMEANOR ¹	Level 1	Level 1	N/A	N/A
Minor ²	Level 2 or 3a	Level 2 or 3a	Level 2 or 3a-c	Level 3a-c or 4
Serious ³	Level 2 or 3a	Level 2 or 3a-b	Level 3a-c or 4	Level 3a-c or 4
Violent ⁴	Level 2 or 3a-b	Level 2, 3a-c or 4	Level 3a-c, 4 or 5	Level 3a-c, 4 or 5

¹ - First time misdemeanor offenders with no history of participation in alternatives to arrest. Under § 985.12, F.S., all first-time misdemeanants are eligible for civil citation. Youth deemed ineligible for civil citation (based on community standards) should be reviewed under the "Misdemeanor" category, based upon the PACT Risk Level to Re-offend.

² - All misdemeanor offenses.

³ - Felony offenses that do not include violence.

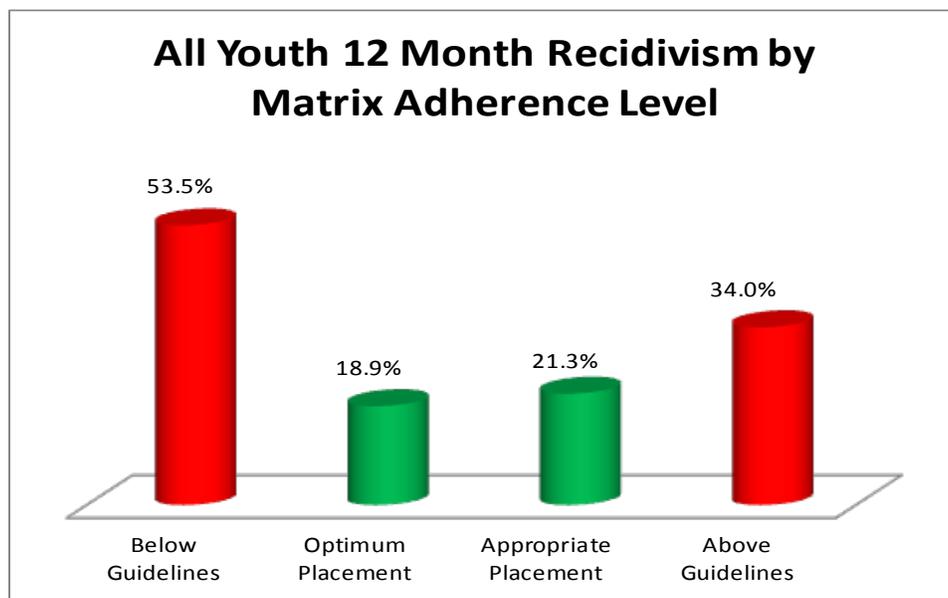
⁴ - Violent felony offenses (do not include misdemeanor assault and battery, which is captured under "minor").

- | | |
|--|--|
| Level 1 - Alternatives to Arrest | Level 2 - Diversion & Non-DJJ Probation |
| Level 3 - Community Supervision | Level 4 - Non Secure Residential Commitment (Low- & Moderate-Risk Programs) |
| (3a) - Probation supervision | Level 5 - Secure Residential Commitment (High- & Maximum-Risk Programs) |
| (3b) - Probation enhancement services (ART, LifeSkills, etc.) | |
| (3c) - Day Treatment, MST, FFT, Minimum Risk Commitment | |

Adherence to the Disposition Matrix is displayed on the FDJJ website in an interactive dashboard that allows users to filter by circuit, county, gender, race/ethnicity, C-PACT risk to re-offend level, and disposition. This interactive dashboard allows users to compare circuits, view adherence over time, and examine demographic differences (for example gender or race/ethnicity) in adherence levels to the Disposition Matrix. (see [http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/latest-initiatives/juvenile-justice-system-improvement-project-\(jjsip\)/disposition-matrix/disposition-matrix-dashboard](http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/latest-initiatives/juvenile-justice-system-improvement-project-(jjsip)/disposition-matrix/disposition-matrix-dashboard)).

The Disposition Matrix validation study (see <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/news/press-releases/press-release-detail/2014/06/26/new-study-finds-youth-less-likely-to-re-offend-with-systems-improvement-tool>; See also Baglivio, Greenwald, & Russell, 2014 for a published version) indicated the best outcomes in terms of public safety (lowest recidivism rates) are for dispositions that are optimal (defined as the least restrictive option not previously attempted prior with a given youth), followed by those dispositions that fall within the Disposition Matrix range of a given cell (defined as “appropriate”). Dispositions that are above guidelines, meaning those that are more restrictive than the Disposition Matrix calls for were shown to increase recidivism almost two-fold (see Figure 2). The worst outcomes were found for dispositions below guidelines, meaning those that were less restrictive than the Disposition Matrix calls for. These result validate the Risk Principle (Baglivio, 2013), and illustrates the need for higher risk youth to receive more intense services, while deeper-end sanctions are counterproductive (potentially harmful) for lower risk youth.

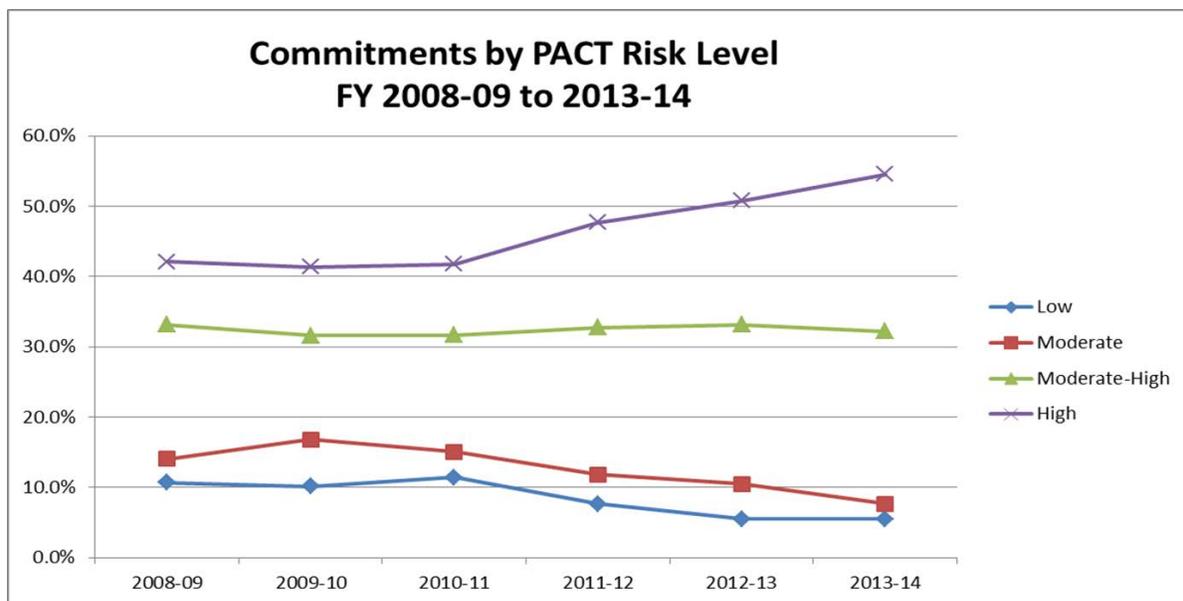
FIGURE 2.



Additional policies have been implemented in concert with the JJSIP. These policies have included prioritizing higher risk youth for residential placement. Before a moderate-risk to re-offend youth can be recommended to the court for residential commitment, there must be a local staffing with the Chief Probation Officer or designee. All low risk to re-offend youth being considered for residential placement must be staffed with the local team, as well as the Assistant Secretary for Probation and Community Intervention and the Assistant Secretary for Residential Services. The purpose of this staffing is to examine whether residential placement is

truly the most appropriate setting, or whether additional resources can be leveraged to allow the youth to remain in the community while meeting the youth's needs and protecting public safety. These policies have resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of low and moderate risk to re-offend youth being placed in residential commitment over the last three years. Comparing January to December 2011 to January to December 2013 there was a 61% reduction in the number of moderate risk youth, and a 76% reduction in the number of low risk youth placed in residential commitment (see Figure 3). These policies have resulted in prioritizing the most expensive and intensive resources toward the highest risk youth, as dictated by a vast body of empirical research. It should be noted that these policies have not resulted in an increase in juvenile offending as the declines in juvenile crime in Florida continue to outpace the national declines in juvenile offending.

FIGURE 3.



The second essential component of the JJSIP is the implementation of the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP). The SPEP component of the JJSIP enhances accountability to stakeholders by systematically evaluating services provided to youth, as they are actually implemented throughout the state (Lipsey, Howell, Kelly, Chapman, & Carver, 2010; Howell, Lipsey, & Wilson, 2014). The SPEP assesses each primary intervention provided at a given program across the following dimensions:

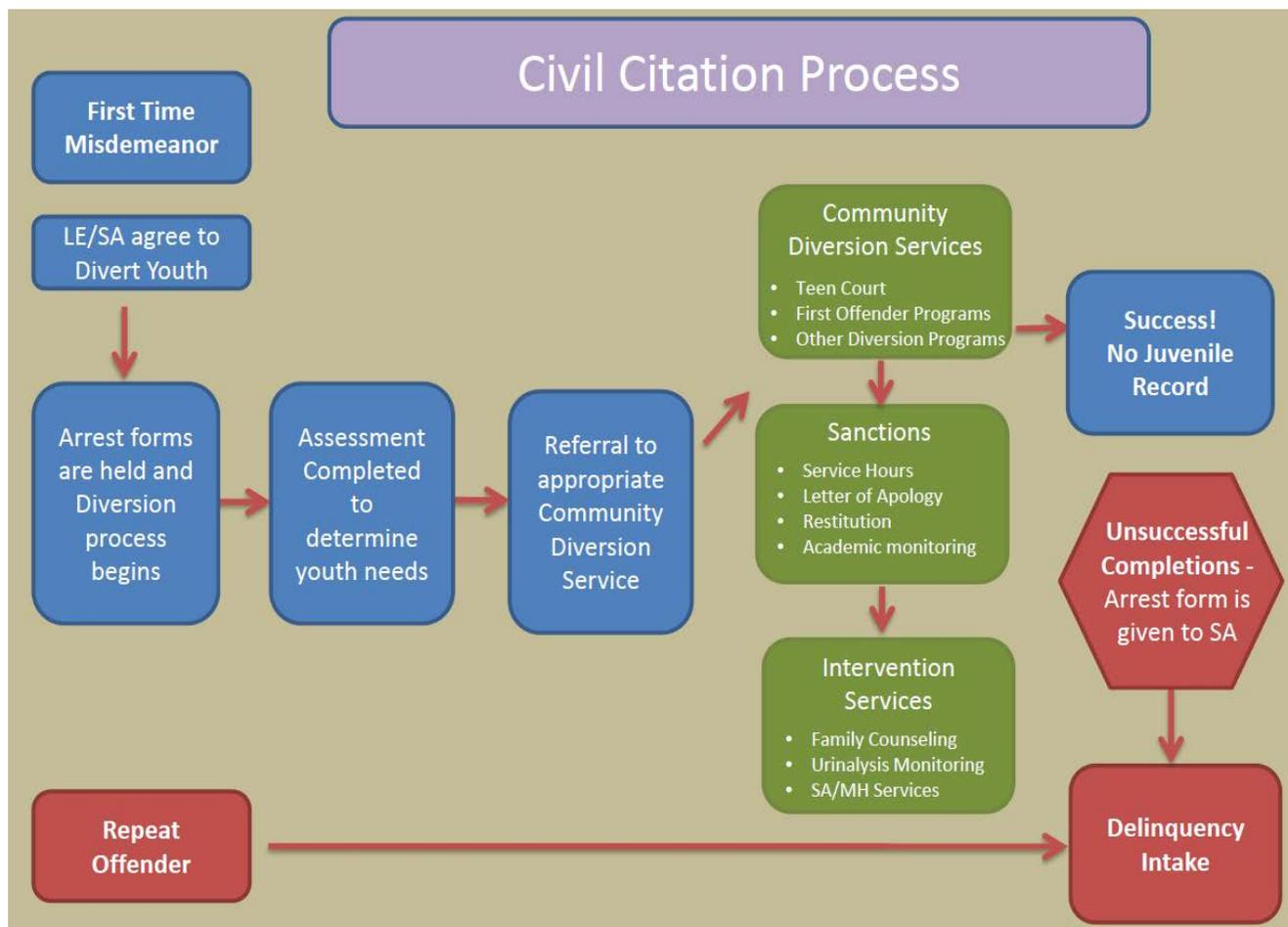
- Service Type (e.g., cognitive behavioral; group counseling)
- Service Quality (e.g., written protocols/manuals; training; fidelity monitoring; corrective action)
- Amount of Service/Dosage (duration and intensity of contact hours)
- Juvenile Characteristics (e.g., risk to re-offend level of youth served)

Prior validation studies of the SPEP show the higher the SPEP score, the lower the recidivism rates of youth served (Lipsey, 2008; Lipsey, Howell, & Tidd, 2007; Redpath, & Brandner, 2010). The SPEP evaluation ensures that when the FDJJ makes a recommendation to the court, the service being recommended has been evaluated on how optimally that service is operating. The FDJJ began assessing each primary service within all

residential programs in July 2013 on service type, quality of service delivery, and risk level of youth served. Due to the implementation of the Evidence-based Services Dosage Module, which tracks dosage in terms of contact hours and duration of intervention service for each youth, the SPEP assessments beginning July 2014 have included amount of service as well (meaning complete SPEP assessments for all primary services within all residential programs began in July 2014). The SPEP highlights strengths and provides unambiguous recommendations to improve services in order to maximize intervention effectiveness, thereby increasing public safety.

Civil Citation Initiative

FIGURE 4.



Florida State Statute 985.12 provides law enforcement with an alternative to arrest for youth who commit first-time, non-serious delinquent acts. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) civil citation initiative addresses a youth's behavior at his or her first encounter with the juvenile justice system and provides an alternative to arrest for that child. Civil citation is vital to DJJ's efforts to reform the juvenile justice system by giving first-time, nonviolent misdemeanor offenders the opportunity to participate in intervention services at the earliest stage of delinquency. Diverting first-time misdemeanants through civil citation will save millions of taxpayer dollars that would otherwise be spent if youth were arrested and required to go through formal delinquency processing. Sanctions and services for civil citation youth are based on assessment and may

include: up to 50 community service hours, restitution, letter of apology, monitoring school progress, intervention services, substance abuse or mental health services, youth and/or family counseling, urinalysis monitoring, and teen court. Civil citation receives the benefits of holding youth accountable for their actions with swift and effective sanctions, while providing services to address assessed needs. Furthermore, the justice system processing costs are avoided which frees up limited resources to focus on more serious, violent, and chronic offenders. Youth who successfully complete the civil citation process have no arrest record to impede military, educational, or employment opportunities in the future. Additionally, civil citation reduces disproportionate minority contact (reducing ethnic disparities) of entry into the justice system.

Civil citation data is available on the FDJJ website in an interactive dashboard that examines the percent of eligible youth that were issued a civil citation vs. being arrested. Data can be filtered by circuit, county, gender, race/ethnicity, whether school-based or community-based, and by agency issuing the citation (for interactive dashboard see <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/delinquency-data/civil-citation-dashboard/cc-dashboard>). Recent FDJJ research indicates civil citation youth have significantly better outcomes than youth who were eligible for civil citation but were arrested and diverted (Pla, 2014). The recidivism rate for civil citation youth was 4%, in comparison to 9% for youth who were eligible for civil citation yet were formally arrested and then received diversion services.

Victims of Human Trafficking Initiative

The FDJJ, in concert with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), has recently developed a screening tool for identifying potential victims of human trafficking (both sex and labor trafficking). Currently, this Human Trafficking Screening Instrument is being coded into the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS), the FDJJ centralized database. Training on the tool and the accompanying administration guide will be standardized to ensure fidelity across the state. This process will make Florida the first state in which each youth processed after arrest is screened for human trafficking. Mandatory “hits” on the C-PACT risk/need assessment, as well as any indication based on professional judgment from the arresting officer, parents, or FDJJ staff, will trigger a human trafficking assessment. A tri-county pilot project implementing a draft of the current screening tool found 12% of the youth screened were ultimately verified by DCF as commercial sexual exploitation of children victims (Baglivio, Morrell, Russell, & McCowen, 2014). Results of the pilot showed DCF-verified victims had extensive abuse histories compared to non-verified youth, including more physical abuse, greater likelihood of witnessing violence, and were 3.5 time more likely to have identified themselves as victims of sexual abuse. Recommendations from the pilot study included statewide expansion of the screening, strict adherence to screening protocol, and increased efforts at identifying male victims. These recommendations, as well as legislative mandates led to the creation of the current tool being developed and implemented.

Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPCIS)

Probation and Community Intervention has piloted EPICS to strengthen the effectiveness of juvenile probation officers work with youth on probation supervision. EPICS is a unique protocol for structuring face-to-face contacts between officers and youth, ensuring the majority of the contact is focused on behavior change.

EPICS was developed by the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute (UCCI). The EPICS process involves teaching the juvenile probation officer to identify high-risk thinking and antisocial attitudes that lead to criminal behavior. An EPICS face-to-face contact has four key components:

- **Check-in** – A time to build rapport, discuss compliance and determine if the offender is encountering any crises situations that could lead to criminal behavior
- **Review** – Discussing the prior session and building on skills to success
- **Intervention** – The parole officer identifies continued areas of need and trends in problems that the offender experiences. This part of the session is also a time to examine skill-building and target the thinking that can lead to criminal behavior.
- **Homework and Rehearsal** – The offender is given opportunities for role playing as well as instructions to follow before the next visit.

EPICS aims to help probation and parole officers structure face-to-face interactions with offenders, increase dosage with higher-risk offenders, target criminogenic needs, and use cognitive-behavioral and social-learning approaches within officer-offender meetings (Smith, Schweitzer, Labrecque, & Latessa, 2012). Supervisors and peer coaches are engaged in the training and implementation process of EPICS. Prior studies of EPICS have found, compared to non-trained probation officers, officers trained in the EPICS model were more likely to target criminogenic needs during sessions and reinforce prosocial behavior and comments (Labrecque, Smith, Schweitzer, Thompson, 2013; Smith et al., 2012). Currently, EPICS has been implemented in 4 circuits, reform specialists have been trained in every circuit, and FDJJ staff scheduled to become trainers of EPICS (to ensure sustainability) beginning 2015.

Alternatives to Secure Detention

The FDJJ identified a group of youth being detained in secure detention for which alternative placements may be viable alternatives. Each year many youth are placed in secure detention due to a domestic violence-related offense where the youth is not able to remain in the home as the arresting officer is required to remove the youth. Between October 2013 and September 2014 there were 913 youth placed in secure detention for misdemeanor domestic violence. These youth often do not score for secure detention based on the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI). One feasible alternative to secure detention for these misdemeanor domestic violence cases is the utilization of “respite” beds. Pursuant to Florida Statute 985.03 – definitions subsection (47) “Respite” is defined as a placement that is available for the care, custody, and placement of a youth charged with domestic violence as an alternative to secure detention or for placement of a youth when a shelter bed for a child in need of services or a family in need of services is unavailable. While secure detention placement may stabilize youth, there are minimal interventions and services provided during those placements. Respite settings provide safe environments more capable of delivering specialized therapeutic respite services to address the issues surrounding the family dynamics and youth and family risk factors. Additional justification to reroute the detained youth to respite alternatives include findings from FDJJ research indicating 46% of the youth detained for misdemeanor domestic violence were under 16 years of age, 56% had never been placed in secure detention previously, and an additional 18% had been detained only once prior (Taylor, 2014). FDJJ research examining the prevalence of misdemeanor domestic violence youth being placed in secure detention supported an allocation from the Legislature for additional respite bed funding. Diverting these youth to respite bed alternatives reduces secure detention placements and the high associated costs.

From the start of the respite Domestic Violence Alternatives Program in February 2013 to December 31, 2013 there were 534 youth who received respite services, yet still 849 youth placed in secure detention for a misdemeanor domestic violence-related offense. The vast majority of the detained youth could have been effectively served in a respite bed alternative. FDJJ research examined re-offending rates comparing the youth who received respite bed alternatives with the similar youth who were eligible for those alternatives but were instead placed in secure detention. Results indicated that placement in the DV-Respite bed was associated with a lower probability of re-arrest within 92 days than youth placed in secure detention (Greenwald and Wolff, 2014; available from:

[http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/research2/briefing-sheet-effectiveness-of-dv-respite-placements-\(mg\).pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/research2/briefing-sheet-effectiveness-of-dv-respite-placements-(mg).pdf?sfvrsn=0)).

14% of youth receiving the respite services were re-arrested within the 92-day follow-up, compared to over 18% of the youth who were detained. Not only is respite a safe alternative for these DV cases, it is actually associated with better outcomes. The FDJJ is continuing to work jurisdictionally and in concert with the Florida Network in seeking 'respite bed alternatives' for all appropriate juvenile justice domestic violence (DV) cases.

Progress and Accountability

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice continues to provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of major initiatives, as well as juvenile arrest trend data to stakeholders and the public. The Bureau of Research and Planning (<http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research>) provides myriad links to reports, as well as the interactive dashboards described above, and several others. The most accessed Research resource has been FDJJ's "electronic release" of data on delinquency referrals, the Delinquency Profile (available at <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/delinquency-data/delinquency-profile>), which examines Florida's juvenile justice system at several points of the juvenile justice continuum including:

- Civil Citation;
- Intake;
- Disposition;
- Judicial/Non-Judicial Handling;
- Court-Diversion Programs;
- Juvenile Probation;
- Residential Commitment; and
- Transfers to the Adult Court System.

Information regarding the risk to re-offend of arrested youth as well as the prevalence of common risk/need factors is available from the interactive PACT Profile (<http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/delinquency-data/pact-profile>). The FDJJ Research also provides answers to questions in its Myth vs. Facts resource (<http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/fast-facts/myths-vs-facts>). Topics include whether FDJJ assessments are valid, Scared Straight programs, peak months of juvenile crime, secure detention, and many others. More detailed analysis concerning relevant practice and policy issues are outlined in delinquency briefings using the latest FDJJ data to ensure applicability to Florida youth (<http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/fast-facts/delinquency-briefings>). Recent briefings include the effectiveness of civil citation, prevalence of sex trafficking victims, effectiveness of direct-commitment by judges, and examination of gang-affiliated offenders. Additionally, the FDJJ has an Institutional Review Board (IRB) (<http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/irb-requests>) which encourages and supports research efforts conducted

by qualified researchers that contribute to our knowledge about juvenile delinquency and criminal justice. However, because the children under the care and custody of the Department lack the legal capacity to consent to participate in research, the Department is responsible to protect their rights and ensure their well-being, which is filtered through the FDJJ IRB.

References

- Baglivio, M. T. (2009). The assessment of risk to recidivate among a juvenile offending population. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37: 596-607.
- Baglivio, M. T. (2013). *The risk principle*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. Available from <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/research2/briefing-report-the-risk-principle.pdf?sfvrsn=0>.
- Baglivio, M. T., Greenwald, M. A., & Russell, M. (2014). Assessing the implications of a structured decision-making tool for recidivism in a statewide analysis: A disposition matrix for court recommendations made by juvenile probation officers. *Criminology & Public Policy*, in press.
- Baglivio, M. T., & Jackowski, K. (2013). Examining the validity of a juvenile offending risk assessment instrument across gender and race/ethnicity. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 11: 26-43.
- Baglivio, M. T., Morrell, R., Russell, M., & McCowen, C. (2014). Prevalence of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. Available from <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/research2/briefing-report-csec-revised.pdf?sfvrsn=0>.
- Baird, C., Healy, T., Johnson, K., Bogie, A., Dankert, E. W., & Scharenbroch, C. (2013). *A comparison of risk assessment instruments in juvenile justice*. Madison, WI: National Council on Crime and Delinquency.
- Greenwald, M. A., and Wolff, K. T. (2014). Effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Alternative Placement Program. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. Available from [http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/research2/briefing-sheet-effectiveness-of-dv-respite-placements-\(mg\).pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/research2/briefing-sheet-effectiveness-of-dv-respite-placements-(mg).pdf?sfvrsn=0).
- Hay, C. (2013). *Residential Positive Achievement Change Tool (R-PACT) Validation Study*. Sponsored by Florida State University and the State of Florida, Department of Juvenile Justice.
- Howell, J. C., Lipsey, M. W., & Wilson, J. J. (2014). *A handbook for evidence-based juvenile justice systems*. Lexington Books.
- Labrecque, R. M., Smith, P., Schweitzer, M., & Thompson, C. (2013). Targeting antisocial attitudes in community supervision using the EPICS model: An examination of change scores on the Criminal Sentiments Scale. *Federal Probation*, 77, 15-20.
- Lipsey, M. W. (2008). *The Arizona Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) for assessing the effectiveness of programs for juvenile probationers: SPEP ratings and relative recidivism reduction for*

the initial SPEP sample. Nashville: Vanderbilt University, Center for Evaluation Research and Methodology.

Lipsey, M., Howell, J. C., Kelly, M. R., Chapman, G., & Carver, D. (2010). *Improving the effectiveness of juvenile justice programs: A new perspective on evidence-based practice.* Washington, DC: Center for Juvenile Justice Reform; Georgetown University.

Lipsey, M. W., Howell, J. C., and Tidd, S. T. (2007). *The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP): A practical approach to evaluating and improving juvenile justice programs in North Carolina. Final evaluation report.* Nashville: Vanderbilt University, Center for Evaluation Research and Methodology.

Pla, J. (2014). *Civil citation effectiveness review.* Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. Available from [http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/research2/briefing-report-cc-\(8-6-14\).pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/research2/briefing-report-cc-(8-6-14).pdf?sfvrsn=0).

Redpath, D. P., & Brandner, J. K. (2010). *The Arizona Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) for assessing the effectiveness of programs for juvenile probationers.* Phoenix: Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts, Juvenile Justice Service Division.

Smith, P., Schweitzer, M., Labrecque, R. M., & Latessa, E. J. (2012). Improving probation officers' supervision skills: An evaluation of the EPICS model. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 35, 189-199.

Taylor, K. (2014). Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) ad-hoc data analysis. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

Winokur-Early, K., Hand, G. A., & Blankenship, J. L. (2012). *Validity and Reliability of the Florida Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) Risk and Needs Assessment Instrument: A Three-Phase Evaluation (Validation Study, Factor Analysis, Inter-Rater Reliability).* Tallahassee, FL: Justice Research Center.