

Best Practices in Juvenile Justice Transition: Utilizing Data

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Overview

- Transition - key component of the educational services in Florida's juvenile justice programs
- Utilizing Data to measure outcomes and improve services
 - ◆ Data sources
- Findings
 - ◆ Descriptive data from two cohorts
 - ◆ ESE-relevant findings
 - ◆ Educational attainment, attendance, employment, and rearrest
- Conclusion



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Educational Services for Florida's Committed Youth

- **Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program**
 - ◆ Annual quality assurance reviews of all educational programs in juvenile justice facilities (detention, day treatment, and residential)
 - ◆ Provide technical assistance
 - ◆ Conduct research that identifies promising practices with this population
 - ◆ Provide recommendations to the Department of Education
 - ◆ Program is in its 11th year
 - ◆ Standards (indicators and benchmarks) are reviewed and revised annually with input from the field



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Toward Accountability: Utilizing Data

- Previous research studies document the positive relationship between educational achievement and employment; and the relationship between educational attainment (graduation) and future delinquency and crime.
- Returning to school and/or employment post release – both depend on successful transitions back into the community
- Florida's quality assurance system includes transition as a critical standard to assess the presence of necessary and appropriate activities to ensure successful entry into and exit from DJJ programs.
 - ◆ Testing and assessment
 - ◆ Student planning
 - ◆ On-site transition services
 - ◆ Community reintegration



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Data Sources

- On-site data collection and self-report data
- Department of Education
 - ◆ Student demographics, end of year status, transcripts, discipline data, attendance, dropout program data, vocational course data, etc.
- Florida Education & Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP)
 - ◆ Employment data (quarterly earnings)
- Florida Department of Law Enforcement
 - ◆ Arrest histories (arrest charges and dates)
- Florida Department of Corrections
 - ◆ Offense and conviction data; placement
- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice



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Findings

- Developed two cohorts: 4,066 youth who were released from DJJ programs during 2000-01 and 5902 youth released in 2001-02
- Descriptive analysis of the combined cohorts:
 - ◆ 85% male
 - ◆ 46% white
 - ◆ 61% low SES
 - ◆ 36% noted disability (under-reported)
 - ◆ 7% received a diploma/GED while incarcerated
 - ◆ 41% returned to public school following release
 - ◆ 43% arrested within 1 year of release



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Findings

■ **2000-01 release cohort (4,066) - Special Education findings:**

- ◆ 3 years follow up
- ◆ Return to school and employment trajectories correlated with youth's age: older youth are less likely to return to school after release – more likely to be employed
- ◆ Younger youth are more likely to return to school after release; however, many school-aged youth never return to school or return but dropout before graduating
- ◆ Youth with EBD and SLD returned to school at higher rates; but are not persisting in school

| School, Employment, and Re-Arrest Outcomes | | | |
|--|----------------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| Returned to School | 39% | 43% | 44% |
| Diplomas earned* | Within DJJ: 7% | 11% | 13% |
| Employed | 28% | 31% | 31% |
| Re-Arrested | 47% | 64% | 70% |

*66% GEDs



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Findings

- Do higher levels of educational attainment while incarcerated increase their likelihood of post release return to school?
 - ◆ Yes - The odds of youth returning to school were 69% higher for youth with above average attainment while incarcerated
- Do higher levels of post-release attendance in school reduce the likelihood of being rearrested within 12 and 24 months?
 - ◆ Yes - Sustained attendance resulted in significant reductions in the likelihood of rearrest at 12 and 24 months
- Does post release return to school increase the likelihood of employment?
 - ◆ Yes – Youth who returned to school had a 52% greater likelihood of being employed compared to youth who did not return to school
- Does post-release employment reduce the likelihood of rearrest within 12 and 24 months?
 - ◆ Within the first year of release, each additional quarter of employment reduces the likelihood of rearrest by 8.7% (by 4.1% within two years)
- Does the combination of post release education and employment reduce the likelihood of rearrest within 12 and 24 months?
 - ◆ Yes – the combination of post-release education and employment results in greater levels of desistance from crime.
 - ◆ Post-release education and employment may interact and lead to greater desistance in crime



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Conclusion

- **These findings support the argument that higher levels of educational attainment among incarcerated youth results in greater likelihood of post-release education, which, together with employment, contributes to crime desistance.**
- **Integrating data and research has been invaluable in JJEEP's continued effectiveness over the past decade.**
- **Utilizing data helps to impose order and identify what we do and do not know.**
- **JJEEP utilizes data to inform policy and program recommendations made to the Department of Education each year.**



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