



Prevention: Saving Lives and Dollars

Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) Position on Prevention:

- Prevention—mentoring initiatives, after-school programs, family support services, youth leadership development—is the most constructive way to build safe communities.
- The largest possible share of federal funding for the juvenile court system should go toward prevention and rehabilitation, rather than interdiction and incarceration.

The Facts on the Effectiveness of Prevention:

- When considering youth and young offenders, 90% of the public supports a focus on prevention and rehabilitation rather than imprisonment.¹
- Taxpayers save \$2 million for each child who is prevented from beginning a life of crime.²
- Early education programs—like the Perry Preschool Program in Michigan— increase educational achievement while sparing the public nearly \$150,000 in juvenile crime costs per child.³
- Family-based therapy for young offenders—like that done by Youth Villages in Tennessee—reduces youth crime at a cost that is less than 10% of the typical cost of confinement.⁴
- Intensive probation reduces youthful offending while exacting only one-third the cost of incarceration.⁵
- To decrease the likelihood of delinquency, children need:
 - Protective factors in the family, including parents who demonstrate love and care for their children, are involved in their children's activities, and monitor and supervise their children's behavior.
 - To develop positive personal attributes such as intelligence, a steady disposition and social skills (including the ability to solve problems without resorting to violence).
 - Schools that positively shape behavior of young children and teenagers with high standards and positive, safe school environments.
 - Communities that provide opportunities and social controls. For example, communities with active PTAs, after school activities, faith institutions and youth social clubs.
 - Youth participation in and acceptance by healthy peer groups.
 - Adult supervision of and involvement in youth peer group activities, to provide added protection against developing delinquent behavior.

¹ Building Blocks for Youth, *Public Opinion on Youth, Crime and Race*, Washington, DC, October 2001.

² American Youth Policy Forum, *Less Hype, More Help: What Works—And What Doesn't*, Washington, DC, June 2000.

³ Ibid.

⁴ [Handle With Care: Serving the Mental Health Needs of Young Offenders](#), CJJ, 2000.

⁵ American Youth Policy Forum, *Less Hype, More Help: What Works—And What Doesn't*, Washington, DC, June 2000.