

Alternatives to Commitment Programs

These programs provide residential and/or community-based intensive services to Level III youths who are committed to the Department for placement in a youth development center; youths who are re-entering the community on Post-Release Supervision status after receiving commitment programming in a youth development center; and Level II youths who are most at-risk of a Level III disposition and commitment to a youth development center. This type of programming provides effective and cost-efficient alternatives to placement in a youth development center.

Commitment

Term used to describe the placement of a juvenile in the long-term care of the department, typically at a youth development center (see Level III).

Complaint

All juveniles enter the juvenile justice system by having a formal complaint lodged by a law enforcement officer or private citizen. There are two types of complaints – the delinquency complaint alleges that a juvenile committed a criminal offense, while the undisciplined complaint alleges non-criminal behavior (e.g., running away, unlawful absences from school, incorrigible behavior within the home).

Criminogenic Needs

Criminogenic needs are dynamic risk factors such as antisocial attitudes, values, and beliefs, delinquent associates, substance abuse, personality traits, low levels of educational or vocational achievement, and certain family characteristics, that have been established through research to be predictive of involvement in delinquent activity, and which are also amenable to change. Meta-analytic studies have established that the greater the number of criminogenic needs addressed in treatment, the greater is the impact on rates of subsequent criminal re-offending.

Crisis Beds

An alternative to detention that allows a youth in crisis to be assessed and determine the best long-term service plan and the most appropriate service for a child moving forward.

Community-Based Programs

Services offered in a child's community that provide more cost-efficient and effective dispositional alternatives to commitment to a youth development center or a detention center admission. These services consist of a continuum of programs including: Juvenile

Crime Prevention Council programs, state contractual programs for level II disposed youth, school-based programs, Department of Social Services programs, or mental health programs.

Delinquent

Any juvenile who, while less than 18 years of age but at least six years of age, commits a crime or infraction under state law or under an ordinance of local government, including violation of the motor vehicle laws.

Dispositional Alternatives

Level I (Community) - A Level I, or community, disposition offers the court less restrictive dispositional alternatives such as probation, community-based programs, non-residential and residential treatment programs, lower degrees of community service and restitution, and sanctions that place specific limitations on a juvenile (e.g., curfew, no association with specified persons, not be in specified places).

Level II (Intermediate) - Level II, or intermediate, dispositions are generally more restrictive than Level I dispositions, as they include options such as intensive probation, group home placements (e.g., multipurpose group homes), regimented training programs, and house arrest. For Level II dispositions, a juvenile can be ordered to make restitution in excess of \$500 or perform up to 200 hours of community service. The court can also utilize any Level I dispositional option for a juvenile adjudicated at Level II.

An even more restrictive option is available for Level I or II dispositions in the form of intermittent confinement in a detention center. The court can impose intermittent confinement for no more than five 24-hour periods as part of a Level I disposition; when a Level II disposition is authorized, the court can impose confinement on an intermittent basis for up to fourteen 24-hour periods. Because of the short-term nature of detention, programs and services offered in these centers are limited.

Level III (Commitment) - A Level III, or commitment disposition, provides the most restrictive sanction available to a juvenile court judge with commitment to the placement in a youth development center. Unless a youth is under the age of 10, a court exercising jurisdiction over a juvenile for whom a Level III disposition is authorized must commit the juvenile to placement in a youth development center. However, G.S. 7B-2513(e) states that the department, following assessment of a juvenile, may provide commitment services to the juvenile in a program not located in a youth development center or detention facility (i.e., community placement). Another exception gives the court discretion to impose a Level II disposition rather than a Level III disposition if the court makes written findings that substantiate extraordinary needs on the part of the juvenile in question.

The length of a juvenile's commitment must be at least six months; however, there are statutory provisions for extended jurisdiction for committed youth. Upon completion of the

term of commitment, juveniles are subject to a minimum of 90 days of post-release supervision.

Diversion

At the completion of an intake evaluation, if there is need for referral and follow-up, which may be accomplished without court intervention, the court counselor may retain the complaint and develop a diversion plan with the juvenile and the juvenile's parent/legal guardian/custodian. This process diverts the juvenile from court while still holding the child and family accountable through a plan or contract.

Evidence-Based Treatment

A treatment model that has been shown to have strong evidence indicating achievement of intended outcomes when fully implemented as described in a manual or curriculum developed to operationalize the program.

Intake Evaluation

Any juvenile who is subject to a delinquency complaint must go through the intake process for the complaint to be screened and evaluated by a court counselor. During the intake phase, a court counselor conducts interviews with the juvenile, the parent, guardian, or custodian legally responsible for the juvenile, and other individuals who might have relevant information about the juvenile. The court counselor conducts a risk and needs assessment to help determine whether to approve or not approve a complaint for filing, as well as for use at disposition. These assessments contain information pertaining to the juvenile's social, medical, psychiatric, psychological, and educational history, as well as any factors indicating the probability of the juvenile engaging in future delinquency. With the information gathered during the evaluation, the court counselor determines if the complaint should be closed, diverted, or approved for filing as a petition and brought before the court.

JCPC

Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils exist in every county in the state and fund those services that are needed in a local community to provide court-ordered sanctions and services for juveniles. JCPC programs are funded through a state and local partnership in all 100 counties. These partnerships produce programs that create a local continuum of needed sanctions and services to address the issues of delinquent juveniles, those juveniles most likely to become delinquent, and their families.

Juvenile Court Counselor

The case manager for a juvenile from the time a juvenile complaint is filed to the time court supervision or a diversion plan or contract ends with a juvenile.

Juvenile Detention Center

Juvenile detention centers are secure facilities that temporarily house youths alleged to have committed a delinquent act or to be a runaway. Youths are generally placed in a juvenile detention center while awaiting a court hearing, or until another placement can be found, either in a community-based program or service or in a youth development center.

Multipurpose Juvenile Home

The Multipurpose Juvenile Home Program is designed to provide non-secure, long-term, residential care as an alternative to secure detention and youth development centers. The homes primarily serve court-ordered, Level II youth in the judicial districts they are located.

Probation

The status of a juvenile who has been adjudicated delinquent, is subject to specified conditions under the supervision of a juvenile court counselor, and may be returned to the court for violation of those conditions during the period of probation. A juvenile remains on probation as long as the juvenile is under the supervision of the court including at each dispositional level. (See Level I through III). Supervised community probation is often used as an alternative to placing a juvenile in a youth development center or a detention center.

Residential Contractual Services

State-funded residential programs that often are used as a last resort court order sanction before committing a juvenile to a youth development center. All referrals made to these residential programs have a Level II disposition, have been assessed as medium and high risk, and can be defined as serious, chronic juvenile offenders. This residential treatment concept combines promising and evidence-based practices with a strong family transition component. Intensive, short-term services include individualized treatment and academic plans that combine formal and experiential education, vocational education, community service, behavioral health, and family counseling designed to address the youth's behavioral challenges through a strength-based approach.

Reentry and/or Transition

A group of services ordered by the court to ensure the success of juveniles returning from residential placements or youth development centers. Post-release services are set up along a continuum based on the juvenile's needs and risk of reoffending. Services range

from transitional homes to community-based/intensive services designed to support the educational and vocational development of youth while also providing appropriate therapy to change the youth's thought processes and behaviors. A comprehensive system of reentry and aftercare services can make a critical difference for youth leaving institutional confinement. Youth who are released from institutional confinement are more likely to succeed if they have access to services that can help them thrive in a non-institutional environment. When high-quality reentry and aftercare services are available, youth need to spend less time in confinement, and the overall cost of juvenile corrections can be reduced. Effective reentry/aftercare programs begin before a youth leaves the facility and involve the family and the community.

Service Planning Team

Youths at all youth development centers are assigned to a service planning team consisting at a minimum of a social worker, a licensed mental health clinician (a staff psychologist or a licensed clinical social worker), a court counselor, the youth, his or her parent or guardian, and an educator. Each team holds a service planning conference within 30 days of admission to craft an individualized service plan for each youth that identified goals, means of achieving them, and ways to measure progress toward goal attainment. Service planning teams at all youth development centers subsequently meet every 30 days at a minimum to review progress on service planning goals, and to make adjustments to plans as needed.

Status Offender

An undisciplined juvenile.

Undisciplined

A juvenile who, while less than 16 years of age but at least six years of age, is unlawfully absent from school; or is regularly disobedient to and beyond the disciplinary control of the juvenile's parent, guardian, or custodian; or is regularly found in places where it is unlawful for a juvenile to be; or has run away from home for a period of more than 24 hours; or a juvenile who is 16 or 17 years of age and who is regularly disobedient to and beyond the disciplinary control of the juvenile's parent, guardian, or custodian; or is regularly found in places where it is unlawful for a juvenile to be; or has run away from home for a period of more than 24 hours.

Youth Development Center (YDC)

Youth development centers are secure facilities that provide education and treatment services to prepare committed youth to successfully transition to a community setting. This type of commitment is the most restrictive, intensive dispositional option available to the juvenile courts in North Carolina. The structure of the juvenile code limits this disposition

to those juveniles who have been adjudicated for violent or serious offenses or who have a lengthy delinquency history.