

Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

Juvenile Justice Task Force

The following document sets forth the vision, mission, and guiding principles of the Juvenile Task Force of the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice. The mission and vision were adopted in January 2011 after the first few meetings of the Task Force. The Task Force then spent several months achieving consensus and drafting its guiding principles. The principles are divided into two categories that set forth the ideal in structure and services of the juvenile system.

The purpose of the statement of guiding principles is threefold. First, it states what an ideal juvenile justice system should look like. Second, it provides a consistent method of evaluating all proposals that the Task Force and its working groups develop. Finally, it provides a guide to working group members and participants that have come to the Task Force subsequent to the development and agreement upon these principles.

Vision

All Colorado children and families live in safe, healthy and vibrant communities that provide for their needs, recognize their strengths and support their success.

Mission

The mission of the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice's Juvenile Task Force is to engage and partner with stakeholders to produce *recommendations supported by research* that promote public safety and delinquency prevention, intervention and treatment. The task force will advocate for strategic alignment and sustainability of policies, resources, and funding of systems which support Colorado children and families.

Guiding Principles

Structural

1. The Colorado Children's code encompasses policies, procedures, and practices that focus on providing accountability, victim reparation, community safety and offer skill development for children, youth and families.
2. Citizens, public policy makers and funders may understand the value of investing in prevention and early intervention services to improve outcomes for children, youth and families. The front-end services (prevention and early intervention) should be designed to be evidence-based, cost effective, and equitable for all youth.
3. Services are delivered through an "outcome orientation" that incorporates shared accountability, process, evidence-based principles, practices and innovation. Collaboration exists at state and local levels.
4. Evaluation of service implementation is critical to ensuring effective use of resources.
5. Appropriate information should be accessed at the earliest time in the process and throughout the process. System responses require access to information and training in the use of that information.
6. Effective and coordinated funding is essential to optimal service delivery.
7. Workforce development is essential to ensuring that appropriate services are delivered through competent staff.
8. Well-trained prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, guardians *ad litem* and other professionals are necessary to support a constitutional and effective judicial system.
9. The Juvenile Task Force identifies other groups that are working on related issues and effectively communicate and collaborate with them to avoid duplication and encourage coordination.
10. Issues concerning DMC have been addressed. Decisions about interventions and services are based on risk and need not on culture, race or ethnicity. Collateral consequences are considered.

Services

11. Evidence-based, evidence-informed services and best practices standards are used to address the specific needs of children, youth and families.

12. Equitable, effective and expedited services and processes ensure:

a. Access to services at the right time, in the right amount, and in the appropriate place.

b. Services and resources are provided and accessed as a continuum based on the assessed risks and needs of Colorado's youth and families.

c. Systems and staff value the role of family and other significant social supports as primary to the well being of the child.

d. Funding is available for services regardless of care system or original source.

e. Services are comprehensive and grounded in current child and adolescent development research.

f. Public agencies, private and non-profit providers work collaboratively to promote access to services in the least restrictive setting as appropriate to ensure community safety and to fill gaps when identified.

g. Commitment is limited to those youth who pose a safety risk to the community or are a danger to others.