



POSITION STATEMENT

*Adopted by NPJS Board of Directors ~
September 20, 2015*

EDUCATION IN JUVENILE FACILITIES

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS) advocates for quality education for youth in juvenile justice facilities. NPJS believes that every confined youth is entitled to quality education services, offered in a dedicated educational space, delivered by state certified or licensed educational staff, working cooperatively with juvenile justice staff. Education in juvenile justice facilities should meet the academic requirements of the school from which the student would traditionally graduate. Quality services for education in juvenile justice facilities should include assessment, remedial and grade-level instruction, post-secondary and career exploration as well as special education and an approved curriculum utilized for the individual needs of the student. It is essential that a student's educational information and plan follow the youth in preparation for the achievement of future academic and vocational objectives. Quality education in a juvenile justice facility should be delivered utilizing a variety of strategies, in accordance with learning theory regarding at-risk and delinquent youth, including hands-on, experiential learning, social skill development and service learning activities. Funding for the educational program should allow for up to date technology, books, programs, and supplies.

NATURE OF THE ISSUE

1. Educational programming within juvenile justice facilities is fundamental to the future success of at-risk and delinquent youth.
2. Education within juvenile justice facilities should be delivered through best practices, researched-based instruction, and evidence based analysis, in accordance with learning theory that utilizes the most current adolescent brain research for at-risk and delinquent youth.
3. Education within juvenile justice facilities should be provided by educators who are appropriately certified or licensed and uniquely trained with access to current reference materials, media and resources to work with students utilizing an approved curriculum in a dedicated educational space.
4. Education programs in juvenile justice facilities should involve an intake process for collecting a student's academic records, history, and Special Education information. Procedures must be in place to ensure records follow the child throughout their involvement in the juvenile justice system. These records are provided to the student as part of a comprehensive academic plan directed toward graduation, post-secondary education, and career development.
5. Delivery of educational services within juvenile justice facilities must include meeting special education accommodations, addressing individual needs as required in the IEP, and assisting in the identification, assessment, and diagnosis of unrecognized special education needs; this would include subsequent individual treatment planning. All special education services must be in accordance with state and federal

requirements. Educational delivery should also be responsive to the influences of adverse childhood experiences and the associated trauma, which is common in this student population.

6. Credit and academic knowledge deficiency are common among youth in juvenile justice facilities creating a need for comprehensive core educational programming, to maximize recovery. Education in juvenile justice facilities should strive to offer year-round school, and at a minimum be comparable in hours and days to those in public school settings. Credits earned should be approved by the state department of education or other authorizing body and transferable to other educational institutions. Education within juvenile justice facilities should be designed to maximize learning, including knowledge and skills remediation and opportunities for community service and restorative justice.

7. Education in juvenile justice facility programs should be designed to provide a variety of educational delivery options to meet all students' academic and vocational needs, including whole group instruction, individualized work, hands-on learning, online classes, work from home schools, high school equivalency diplomas (GED, TASC, etc), certifications, etc. A strong focus should be placed on incorporating technology, and the use of technology infused instructional methods as an integrated part of the education programming.

8. Educational transition supports for youth in juvenile justice facilities should begin upon entry and involve collaboration with other outside agencies and educational institutions. Transition supports such as helping youth acclimate to new facilities and schools, confirmation of academic transfer of credits and long term individualized follow-up supports are critical to continuing the success gained from quality educational programming within facilities.

9. Education in juvenile justice facilities adds structure to the confinement experience, strengthens youth self-esteem, confidence, and builds usable social skills. Engaging learning environments in a juvenile justice facility increase and improve the relationships between staff and youth. Non-education juvenile justice staff should support and assist in the learning process by being actively engaged in the education classrooms when possible, and by understanding and supporting the philosophy and methods of teaching youth at risk. Every staff interaction with youth has the potential to be a learning opportunity.

10. The benefit of an adult mentor for students and the academic gains is well documented. Educational programs within juvenile justice facilities have a responsibility to maintain and support the mentoring process and facilitate the matching of mentors whenever possible.

11. Education in juvenile justice facilities should be designed to inspire students to become responsible citizens and life-long learners.

POSITION STATEMENT

The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS) recognizes that a quality education is important to the success of at-risk and delinquent youth. NPJS supports quality educational programming that strengthens self-esteem and confidence, builds useable skills and abilities, and adds structure to the confinement experience. A quality education program increases and improves the interaction between staff and youth while reducing boredom and idleness and serves as an effective bridge to community reintegration. Quality developmentally appropriate educational programming in juvenile justice facilities is an important element in the juvenile confinement experience and a critical agent for guiding troubled youth toward life-long learning and productive citizenship.