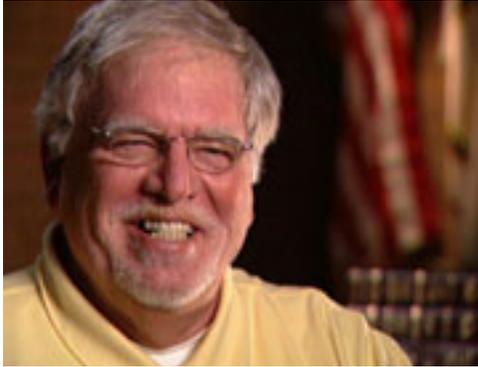


Earl L. Dunlap

Executive Director

National Juvenile Detention Association

1988 - 2007



Mr. Dunlap is the co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of the National Partnership for Juvenile Services and the former Executive Director of the National Juvenile Detention Association. He worked within the juvenile justice, detention and correction services from 1968 to 1991, first as a probation officer, and continuing in youth detention and corrections as a practitioner working directly with the administration of juvenile justice. Since 1991, his career has had a more aggressive focus on NJDA and NPJS. He has traveled across the nation to advocate for and educate others on the priorities of the organization.

Mr. Dunlap stated that he saw NJDA as “an opportunity to work with the best people in the business and to have an impact on a national level in terms of establishing best practice and shaping important policies in the country.” He became the Executive Director of the organization in 1986 and laid the groundwork for the organization. One of his many objectives was to ensure that people working in juvenile detention services were able to have a voice in national policy issues. He believed in the importance of helping people understand that juvenile detention was a process—not just a place where you send kids and lock them up. By process, he means that there are different approaches for different instances; it’s a continuum of care.

NJDA’s voice on the national level helped the field to rethink what detention really should be. This was one of the most critical issues identified by Mr. Dunlap during his tenure with NJDA. He strongly believed that juvenile detention needed to be redefined by bringing together some of the best minds through the national organization. He emphasizes forward thinking as a key asset of the Presidents and Board Members in order to formulate and implement change. Diversity is also needed to address differences across the states. Strength of the leadership of the Board has been very important to the growth of the organization. One of his proudest accomplishments while working within NJDA was achieving national recognition, including substantial grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice. It took 25 years to get to that national level, and every step along the way was critical, he said.

Since his time as NJDA Executive Director, Mr. Dunlap sees two significant advancements in detention services. The first pertains to the number of kids confined in facilities. A reduction in this number along with availability of more alternatives gives the detention system more flexibility to work along a continuum of care. The second major advancement was training available to workers. NJDA has developed a national training curriculum for direct care staff that has the potential to impact every jurisdiction of the country. In collaboration with the highly skilled Center for Research and Professional Development at Michigan State University, training programs were developed which

provide a good education and training background in both law enforcement and care of youth. Mr. Dunlap expressed a major concern about availability of future funding for the organization to keep moving forward since funding priorities have changed. He also sees developing young leadership as very important to the survival of the organization.

Mr. Dunlap declared that the most important thing that people need to understand with any organization is that the successful people involved in it are not only highly respected, but really good people. One of the most important components of the juvenile detention system is good people being able to implement programs and services for kids that make a difference. The continued success of NJDA requires good people with good values who have a vision about what they want these kids to receive.

He offers these words of wisdom about the impact of the organization:

"You do this because you care. Having met so many good people over the past 48 years has been a blessing. Working with these people...it's been an opportunity to work with good people and share good ideas. We're all in this together."