American Juvenile Justice System

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**Short- and long-term confinement facilities**

Juvenile facilities are different from adult facilities as their aim is rehabilitation. These facilities are designed based on legal, ethical, social as well as psychological principles. They have a dual concern; for the individual child and society. These are not only aimed to exercise control and punishment but these also rehabilitate young people as this youth has experienced failure in a variety of settings (McCarthy, Schiraldi, & Shark, 2016). Accordingly, these facilities balance the interests of public safety with the requirements of youth.

Juveniles can be confined in short-term confinement facilities such as jails, detention centers, and shelter care facilities to provide them short-term confinement. Jails are principally meant for adult offenders and Juveniles are placed in jails when there is no other facility available. Jails do not have such conditions that can support the juvenile’s rehabilitation. Moreover, juveniles are placed in detention centers to provide them physically restricting environment when there is pending court disposition or they are waiting for transfer to another jurisdiction. These centers are aimed to support them emotionally and physically. Likewise, there are shelter care facilities that do not have physically unrestricted environment such as runaway/homeless shelters and other types of shelters.

However, juveniles can also be placed in the long-term confinement facilities such as boot camps, ranches and forestry camps, and training schools for one or more felonies or multiple misdemeanor offenses. Long-term juvenile correctional facilities function a different purpose than short-term confinement facilities. For example, boot camp refers to a secure facility that has a function similar to military basic training. Youth’s resistance is broken down in these camps with physical activity, drills, and manual labor. On the other hand, ranches are also a long-term residential facility with the opportunity of greater contact with the community and this also includes forestry camps. Delinquents who require strict confinement are sent to training schools. These are those that are not charged with crimes, rather they are found with delinquencies.

Besides, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) provides juveniles many legal and other rights as adults have in prisons. They have the right to education, medical and mental healthcare, counseling, as well as access to families. Facility personnel is required to protect these rights otherwise they have to face costly litigation and financial and administrative sanctions. Additionally, their constitutional rights are due process, freedom from cruel and unusual punishment, equal protection as well as free speech.

**Juvenile aftercare**

Juvenile aftercare refers to the reintegrative services that prepare juvenile offenders to come back into the community. Youth offenders are placed in detention, secure confinement, wilderness or boot camps, group homes as well as in residential treatment. Youth in these facilities are placed in these facilities during their detention and transition into the community. For this, the Juvenile Corrections Agent (JCA) advances a personalized aftercare contract which is then reviewed and approved with a juvenile, their parents/guardian/ and the facility treatment staff.

After their correction, the state uses different methods to release juveniles from prisons. Law enforcement arrest youth for their offense. Then, there starts a formalized court process that if require some kind of intervention, it is provided by the justice system (CrimeSolutions.gov, n.d.). Conversely, many issues affect different types of aftercare release decisions. These are the concerns for adolescents of their living in the community, their social status as well as their educational career.

With this, different programs are very effective for juvenile aftercare. Youth are required to be incarcerated for longer periods and thus require such programs that can help them in their rehabilitation. Juveniles can also face different shocks upon release to the community. For example, they remain out of the community for a longer period. When they return, they may face different issues such as their weak link with the community, their association with the family and unemployment. Juveniles do not have the same constitutional rights as adults have in regular criminal court cases. Police officers are required to have a search for the probable cause before arresting a juvenile. They have the right to counsel, right to notice of the charges and the right to confront witnesses.

**Evolution of juvenile correctional treatment**

The juvenile justice system has an extended history of rehabilitation to punishing uneasy or delinquent children. Earlier, there was the use of ineffective warehouse types of institutions such as houses of refuge. Then in later 18th and early 19th centuries, there was a shift from punishment to rehabilitative paradigm (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 2017). These efforts also resulted in the establishment of the juvenile courts.

Youthful offenders got the legal protections due to the intent of Gault, and other due process decisions. The juvenile system was moving towards retribution as a method to address the delinquency (Cullen, 2013). Now adolescents were being treated as adults in prosecution. There was a message of “nothing works” in rehabilitating youthful offenders.

Then there came a stage when it was decided to have the same treatment for these juveniles as is given to the adults. Furthermore, there was numerous program and innovations work stage that provide different types of treatment to juvenile offenders in secure corrections. For example, there are behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, cognitive, education, and non-behavioral treatments. For example, the juvenile can get counseling services for different issues such as substance abuse. For this purpose, counselors and prison administrators inaugurate different long term and comprehensive programs that assist youth in overcoming these issues (Lowenkamp, Makarios, Latessa, Lemke, & Smith, 2010). Furthermore, they are also provided educational and vocational training to make them responsible family and community members. Different skills such as basic literacy and GED certification increases their chances of employment.

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