



# MICHIGAN JUVENILE JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

A project of the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency  
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## Community-based Services: Cost-Effective Juvenile Justice

Michigan's County Child Care Fund currently reimburses counties up to 50% of program costs – however, the majority of funds go toward private residential facilities and programs that have not been validated as evidence-based! Michigan needs a sensible, research-based model of juvenile justice that values cost-effective prevention and intervention programs that work.

**Delinquency prevention programs can save taxpayers \$7 - \$10 for every \$1 invested, primarily in the form of reduced spending on prisons.<sup>i</sup>** In fact, Washington State found that doubling current investments in high-quality programming could eliminate the need for additional adult prison capacity in the future.

The most effective programs at reducing recidivism and promoting positive life outcomes for youth are administered in the community, outside of the criminal or juvenile justice systems. Some of these programs have been shown to reduce recidivism by up to 22 percent and potentially yielding a savings of \$1,900 to \$31,200 per youth.<sup>ii</sup>

**Every year of delay in implementing evidence-based reforms funnels more children into the juvenile justice system, which itself is ill-equipped to deal with the complex needs of kids.<sup>1</sup>**

### Prevention Programs

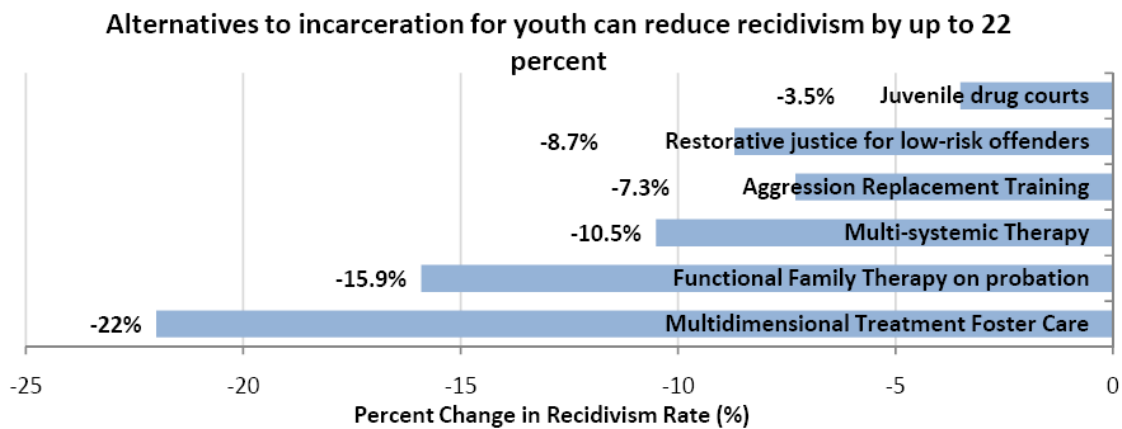
- Proven programs like the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project have found that for every \$1 invested in high quality preschool programs, there is a return of \$7 by increasing the likelihood that children will be literate, employed, and enrolled in post-secondary education, and less likely to be school drop-outs, dependent on welfare, or arrested for criminal activity or delinquency.<sup>iii iv</sup>
- Every \$1 invested in substance abuse prevention saves \$5.50 in costs for health care, law enforcement, and incarceration.<sup>v</sup>
- Every \$1 invested in home visiting programs that target high risk and/ or low-income mothers and children saves \$3 in costs for government assistance and criminal justice.<sup>vi</sup>

### Intervention Programs

Compared to community programs, researchers determined residential facilities “dampen the positive effects of appropriate service while augmenting the negative impact of inappropriate service.” The University of Colorado's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence identified programs in their *Blueprints for Violence Prevention* that improve public safety and are more cost-effective ways to work with youth in need of behavioral intervention.

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<sup>1</sup> Greenwood, P. (Fall 2008). “Prevention and Intervention Programs for Juvenile Offenders.” *The Future of Children: Juvenile Justice*. Volume 18, No. 2.



Source: Elizabeth Drake, *Evidence-Based Juvenile Offender Programs: Program Description, Quality Assurance, and Cost* (Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2007) [www.wsipp.wa.gov](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov)

**Functional Family Therapy (FFT):** This 8-12 week family-based program works as both prevention and intervention, addressing issues from conduct disorder to alcohol/substance abuse.

- Lowered recidivism: 15.9%
- Cost benefits: \$10.69 in benefits for every dollar spent

**Aggression Replacement Training (ART):** This program is designed for youth who exhibit aggressive tendencies and anti-social behavior and are at a high risk of reoffending.

- Lowered recidivism: 7.3%
- Cost benefits: \$11.66 in benefits for every dollar spent

**Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST):** MST works with the family to address the underlying causes of illegal and delinquent behavior and the role that families play in a young person's behavior.

- Lowered recidivism: 10.5%
- Cost benefits: \$13.36 in benefits for every dollar spent

**Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC):** Rather than place youth into a group home, treatment foster families offer individualized programs for one youth at a time.

- Lowered recidivism: 22%
- Cost benefits: \$10.88 in benefits for every dollar spent

<sup>i</sup> Aos, S., Miller, M., Drake, E., *Evidence-based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates* (Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2006.)

<sup>ii</sup> Aos, S. (2004). Benefits and costs of prevention and early intervention programs for youth. Institute for Public Policy.

<sup>iii</sup> Children's Defense Fund 2002 Booklet, Page XII.

<sup>iv</sup> Journal of Extension, Apr. 2005, 43(2). Communicating Program Value of Family Life and Parenting Education Programs to Decision Makers.

<sup>v</sup> Partnership for a Drug-Free Washington (2001). Fact about Drug Use in Washington State referencing Rand Corporation (1999).

<sup>vi</sup> Olds, David, et al. (1986). Preventing child abuse and neglect. A Randomized Trial of Nurse Home Visitation. *Pediatrics*, 78, 65-78.