

June 14, 2023

Adolescent Development: Proficiency & Application of Developmental Reform



RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice
<https://rfknrcjj.org/>



RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

ABOUT US

The RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice provides training, technical assistance and consultation to local, state, and national leaders, practitioners and youth-serving agencies.

In partnership with communities and jurisdictions across the nation, we guide and inform youth justice system improvement, leading to better outcomes for children and families, through our commitment to ***adolescent development science, best-practice methods and approaches, and evidence-based treatment and services.***

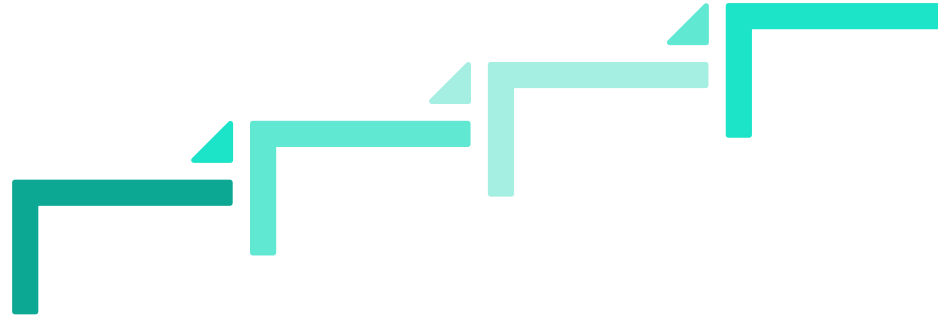


RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice

Step-by-Step Decision Making to Achieve Positive Youth Justice Transformation



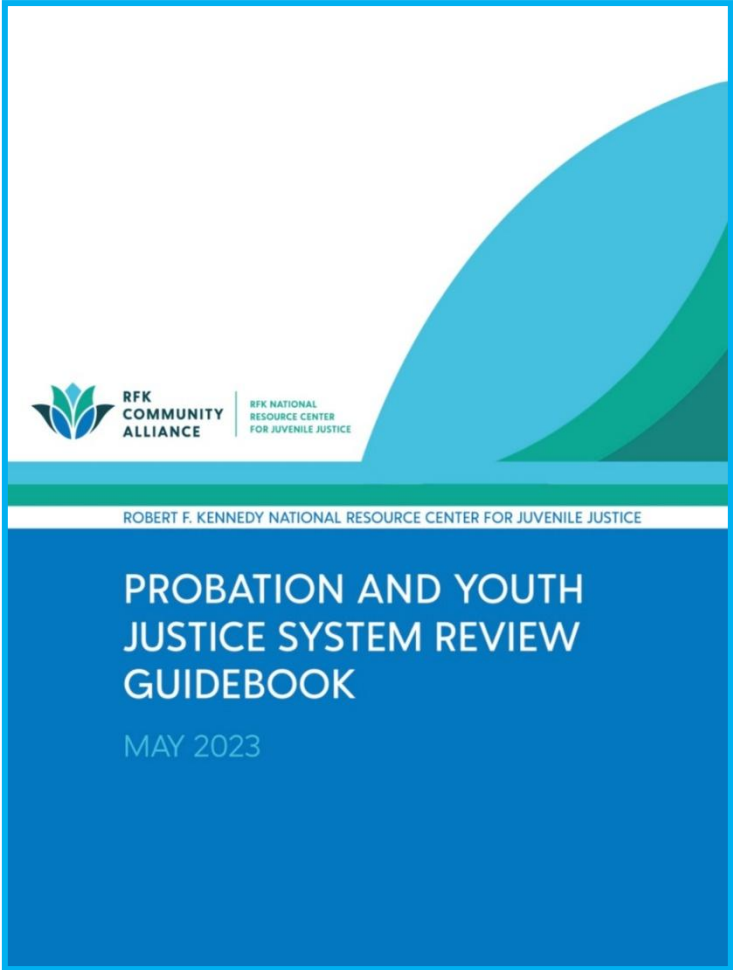
The Dennis M. Mondoro Probation and Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Project is supported by Grant #2018-CZ-BX-K002 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. DOJ. The opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this announcement are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.



**RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE**

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Probation and Youth Justice System Guidebook



<https://rfknrcjj.org/our-work/probation-system-review/>



**RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE**

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Youth Justice / Probation System Best Practices Alignment

Adolescent Development

Collaborative Leadership

Risk-Need-Responsivity (Structured Professional Judgement)

Trauma Screening & Treatment

Alternative Responses to System Involvement (Status & Low-Moderate Risk)

Graduated Response/Sanctions and Dispositional Matrix

Positive Youth Development

Family Engagement

Quality Assurance – Youth Outcomes *and* System Performance

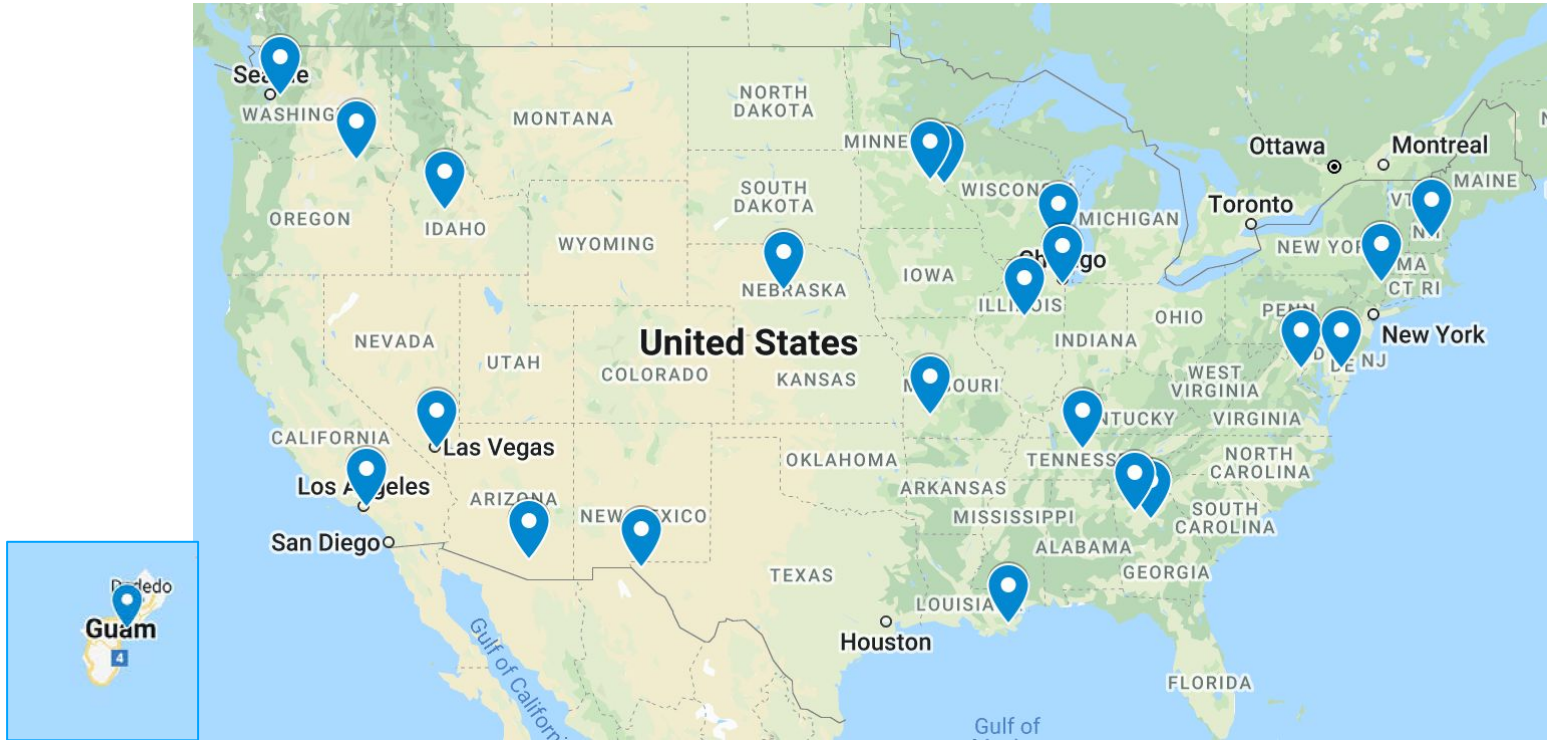
Implementation Science – Change Management



**RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE**

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

PROBATION and JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM REVIEW



2005 Los Angeles Co., CA
 2010 Newton Co., GA
 2010 Jefferson Parish, LA
 2012 New Hampshire
 2014 Hammond Region, LA
 2015 Territory of Guam
 2015 Illinois (3 sites)
 2016 Idaho (2 sites)

2016 Arkansas (3 sites)
 2017 Milwaukee Co., WI
 2017 El Paso Co., TX
 2017 Clark Co., NV (Las Vegas)
2017 Fairfax Co., VA
 2017 Davidson Co., TN
2017 Lancaster Co., NE
 2018 Delaware

2018 Cook Co., IL (Chicago)
 2018 Cobb Co., GA
 2018 Washington Co., MN
 2018 Pascua Yaqui Tribe, AZ
 2019 Hennepin Co. MN
 2019 Umatilla Indian Tribes, OR
 2019 Dutchess Co., NY
 2019 Greene Co., MO

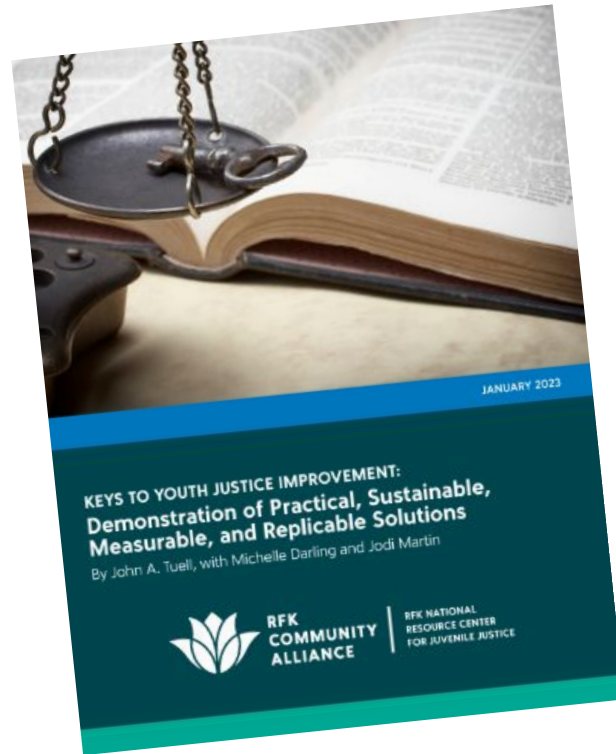
2019 King Co., WA (Seattle)
 2020 Hennepin Co., MN - Implementation
 2020 Cobb Co., GA – Implementation
 2020 Milwaukee Co., WI – Implementation
2021-24 Nebraska
 2022-24 Arkansas



**RFK
 COMMUNITY
 ALLIANCE**

RFK NATIONAL
 RESOURCE CENTER
 FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Replicating Success



- Readiness / Leadership
- Process
- Priorities
- Challenges / Obstacles
- Achievements / Successes
- Measurement
- Sustainability



**RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE**

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Developmental Reform in Juvenile Justice: Translating the Science of Adolescent Development to Sustainable Best Practice



Adolescents differ from adults and children:

- Less capacity for self-regulation in emotionally charged contexts
- Heightened sensitivity to proximal external influences (e.g., peer pressure and immediate incentives)
- Less ability than adults to make judgments and decisions that require future orientation

Tuell et. al., 2017.



**RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE**

**RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE**

Emerging Adulthood – Brain Science

(generally recognized age 18 – 25 years)

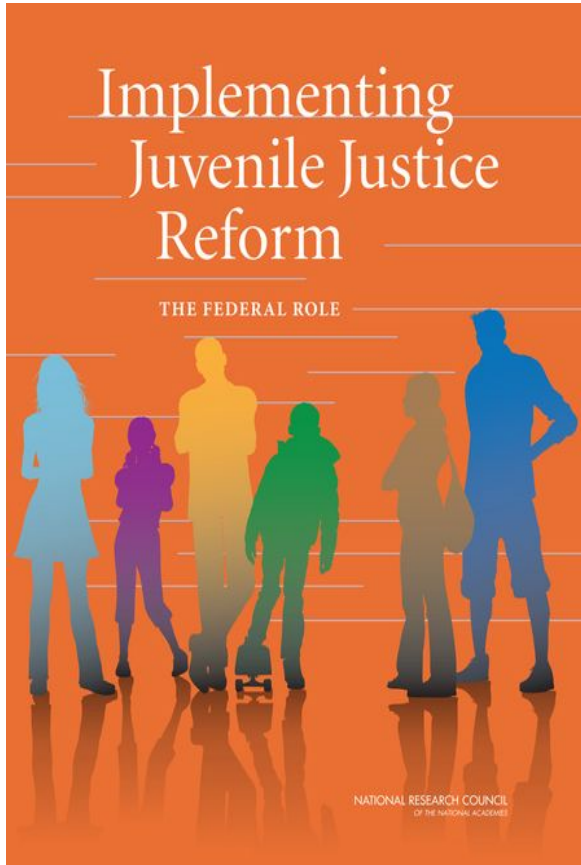
- Although general cognitive ability matures by approximately age sixteen, the areas of the brain that continue to develop during this period ***govern judgment, reasoning and impulse control.***
- Emerging adulthood is characterized by five distinctive features: ***identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and possibilities/optimism.***
- ***Peer influence*** continues to play an important role in emerging adulthood.
- A wide variety of ***psychological disorders and behavioral problems (such as substance abuse) reach their peak*** during the emerging adult years.
- Because the brains of young adults are still in development, those in this age group ***remain amenable to appropriate rehabilitative interventions.***



RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Strategic Plan for Developmentally Informed Youth Justice Reform



7 Hallmarks of a Developmental Approach to Youth Justice

- Accountability without criminalization
- Alternatives to justice system involvement
- Individualized response based on assessment of needs and risks
- Confinement only when necessary for public safety
- A genuine commitment to fairness
- Sensitivity to disproportionality & disparate treatment
- Family engagement



**RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE**

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Practice Profile for Adolescent Development

Courtesy: Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court (VA)

Brain Science		
Expected/Proficient Use	Developmental Use	Unacceptable Practice
<p align="center">Engages Includes all staff (AAs, Intake, POs, clinicians)</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treats clients with respect while showing them the parts of their life they have control over; doesn't tell them how to think. Maintains calm body language to help regulate a heightened emotional client. Adjusts language and behaviors to clients understanding and needs. Understands that clients and families are not familiar with the system and may need more time and help to accomplish tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs supervision, coaching or prompting Defaults to own language or uses acronyms and assumes the client understands. Understands the client and family is not familiar with the system, yet rushes them through the process, without explaining it or what the family can expect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes an authoritarian approach and tells the client what to do. Does not take into consideration the client's age or process abilities when interacting with them. Escalates when the client escalates to attempt control of the situation. Uses negative language when referring to a client (calling them delinquent, defendant, inmate, abuser, etc.) Assumes that a client is an adult at the age of 18, instead of understanding that adolescence mindset continues into the 20s. Does not consider that client and families may be unfamiliar with the process, leading to increased levels of concern



**RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE**

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Probation Manual - Adolescent Development

Courtesy: Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court (VA)

When making decisions and case planning, the three ways in which adolescents differ from adults must be considered:

- i. Adolescents are less able to regulate their own behavior in emotionally charged contexts.
- ii. Adolescents are more sensitive to external influences such as the presence of peers and the immediacy of rewards.
- iii. Adolescents are less able to make informed decisions that require consideration of the long term.

These ***adolescent characteristics provide the foundation for the adoption and implementation of developmentally informed practice as well as policies and procedures that have proven effective achieving the primary responsibilities of the juvenile justice system*** which include accountability, prevention of re-offending, and fairness and equitable treatment. A required reading for all new POs will be:

https://rfknrcjj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Developmental_Reform_in_Juvenile_Justice_RFKNRCJJ.pdf



RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Juvenile Probation - Adolescent Development

Courtesy: Lancaster County, Nebraska District 3J Probation

3J Principles of Practice

1. Youth need support and guidance to achieve their potential
2. Develop highly skilled staff who build and value authentic relationships
3. The voice and choice of youth and families is critical throughout their probation journey
4. Diversity, equality and individuality is embraced and valued
5. ***Apply knowledge of positive youth development principles, adolescent brain development*** and impact of trauma



RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Training Curriculum - Adolescent Development

Courtesy: Lancaster County, Nebraska District 3J Probation



Training Curriculum Objectives:

- Develop knowledge in the five areas of adolescent behavior and development.
- Recognize the importance of adolescent brain development and how it affects youths' interactions with the world.
- Understand how each of the five areas of development impact different roles within the Youth Justice system.

Focus Areas for Training Modules

1. Physical
2. Cognitive
3. Emotional
4. Social
5. Moral



**RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE**

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Probation Practice Guidance - Adolescent Development

Courtesy: Lancaster County, Nebraska District 3J Probation

Probation Supervision

Probation Officers will make decisions with a trauma-informed lens and ***with the knowledge of adolescent brain development***. Probation Officers will practice a balanced approach to case management with attention to skill building and usage of incentives/sanctions to achieve behavior change.

Probation Officer, youth and family will create a Success Plan to help reduce the identified criminogenic need. The supervising officer, youth and family collaborate to create goals and action steps which will help the youth develop skills and complete their court ordered conditions. It is important to consider ***factors including developmental age*** and using youth friendly language when forming goals and actions steps.



RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Probation and the Courts in the youth justice system must ***"strike a balance between rehabilitating youth and protecting community safety by measuring what actually works to reduce recidivism and improve well-being"***

"Judges are making decisions every day about youth, and they need to be making those decisions based on science—not on fear or assumptions that may be irrelevant to long-term outcomes"

Elizabeth Cauffman, PhD,
Professor, Psychological Science
University of California, Irvine

Cauffman, Baetz, Kinscherff, & Steinberg are just a few of renowned researchers and psychologists who devoted more than two decades to conducting and interpreting research on adolescent brain science and its application in the youth justice system.



RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Dialectical Behavior Group Therapy (DBT) - teaches emotion regulation techniques such as the “stop skill” (stop, step back, observe, proceed mindfully) and provides cognitive tools and skills addresses self-esteem and identity issues.

Tracey Wheeler, Psy.D, Clinical Psychologist at Yale University

Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET) - framework that uses a shared language to teach youth, staff, and caregivers about trauma and emotion regulation.

Carly Baetz, JD, PhD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, New York University

Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS) – therapeutic intervention targeting decreases in self-harm and aggression among youth across genders, ages, and ethnicities.

Mandy Habib, PsyD, Co-Director, Institute for Adolescent Trauma Treatment, Adelphi University

Young Adult Court (YAC) – established for first-time offenses and low- or moderate-level risk for an intervention through and assist with behavioral health care, special education, stable housing, and other forms of support. Support also includes cognitive behavioral therapy, substance use treatment, mentorship, and training on basic skills.

Elizabeth Cauffman, PhD, Professor, Psychological Science, University of California, Irvine

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) - a common type of psychotherapy with a therapist assisting in the development of improved cognitive skills so you can view challenging situations occurring in multiple domains with more clarity and exercise judgement to respond to them in a more effective way.



**RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE**

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

Adolescent Development: Proficiency and Application of Developmental Reform

Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice
<https://rfknrcji.org/>

John A. Tuell, Executive Director
jtuell@rfkcommunity.org / 571-261-0435

Jodi Martin, Deputy Executive Director
jmartin@rfkcommunity.org / 360-241-4860



RFK
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

RFK NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE