

2014



16th Judicial Circuit

Family Court Division

Jackson County, Missouri

A Report Card to Our Stakeholders

On behalf of everyone working within our juvenile justice system, we are proud to present our second report card to the community. From discussions with citizens and community leaders, common threads emerge. Citizens want their juvenile justice system to improve community safety. They want their juvenile justice system to assure justice for all participants. They want juvenile offenders to end their delinquent behavior, develop appropriate skill sets, and become productive community members. They want children to have safe and permanent homes.

The purpose of this report card is to provide our stakeholders with an overview of how their juvenile justice system is performing in four key areas:

Furthering Community Safety

Keeping Children Safe

Ensuring Offender Accountability

Building Juvenile and Family Competencies

We have established a set of benchmarks to inform the community about our work in these areas. By measuring our performance, we can hold ourselves accountable to stakeholders, our fellow citizens. Taxpayers want government programs to be effective and efficient. By using evidence-based practices, we anticipate better outcomes in terms of improved offender accountability and rehabilitation and reduced recidivism. Evidence based practices such as Annie E. Casey's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative help us to safely reduce the population of juveniles detained in a secure detention facility. Practices such as using an objective risk assessment instrument help assure that secure detention is used only for the right kids, at the right time, for the right purpose.

This year we began a collaboration with Casey Family Programs to improve timeliness to permanency and safely reduce the number of children in foster care. The Judicial Engagement Project has an ambitious national goal of reducing the number of children in foster care 50% by 2020.

We are learning that we achieve the best outcomes and the highest degree of community safety when we involve families and community members in decisions. Working together we can build a safe and more just Jackson County. To perform better on every one of these benchmarks we need citizen participation. The Family Court has volunteer opportunities for citizens who wish to be involved with youth that range from participation in Community Accountability Boards to working with lawyers to represent the best interests of children in child abuse/neglect cases. Our volunteers reside in areas all over the county. If you wish to become involved with these efforts, please contact Sonja Potter, Volunteer Coordinator, at (816) 881-4863. If you wish to volunteer with our Office of Guardian ad Litem, please contact Adam Zaiger at (816) 435-4870.

Respectfully,

The Honorable John Torrence
Administrative Judge

Mary A. Marquez
Deputy Court Administrator

William R. Jackson III
Juvenile Officer

2014



Grade

B

Public Safety

A Report Card to Our Stakeholders

Furthering Community Safety

Family Court Services provides intervention and treatment services to youth referred to the court for law violations. We define recidivism as new law violations in the first year following a referral.

Less than 2% of the approximately 70,448 juveniles ages 10-17 living in Jackson County were referred to the Family Court for law violations in 2013.

750 youth were diverted or released from supervision. Of these youth, 80% did not reoffend in the following year.

In recent years, we have successfully reduced unnecessary use of secure detention due to our involvement with the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative. Since 2006, the number of youth admitted to secure detention has declined 80%. Concurrently, youth appeared for their scheduled hearings 94% of the time, with 93% not reoffending while awaiting hearings.

GRADE: The Family Court’s performance regarding community safety was above average. Throughout the state of Missouri, 78% of youth referred did not commit another offense in the first year following referral (Office of the State Courts Administrator, 2013 Juvenile and Family Division Annual Report). In this circuit, numerous law enforcement agencies work directly with community youth courts to further divert cases from informal court supervision. Those numbers are not reflected in the referrals numbers sent directly to the Juvenile Officer for handling.

Law-Abiding Behavior Youth Released in 2013

Use of 2013 data allows 12 months for recidivism study.

80% of youth diverted or released from supervision were not referred for a new law violation in the following year.

Case Outcomes Youth Released in 2013 Total 750

Diverted:	449
Probation:	242
Residential:	59

(Others included: Supervision or custody of the Children’s Division; commitment to a private residential treatment center; commitment to the custody of the MO Division for Youth Services; transfer of jurisdiction.)

2014



Grade

A

Child Safety

A Report Card to Our Stakeholders

Keeping Children Safe

The Juvenile Officer files approximately 1,000 cases alleging child abuse and/or neglect each year. This is a rate of about 6 per 1,000 youth ages 0-17 in Jackson County, less than 1% of the youth population.

PERMANENCY OUTCOMES: Permanent homes are secured for children through reunification with their parent or parents, adoption, or guardianship. Of children released from the court’s jurisdiction in 2014, 93% reached permanency. Fifty-six percent of the children released were reunified with a parent.

SAFETY: In order to measure safety, we examined all children released from the court’s jurisdiction in 2013 to allow 12 months following jurisdiction. Of the 1,063 children released from the court’s jurisdiction in 2013, 91% were not referred for maltreatment during jurisdiction and 97% were not referred for maltreatment in the 12 months following jurisdiction.

FAMILY DRUG COURT: The Family Drug Court Program (established April 1998) provides judicially managed community-based services, close supervision, and treatment to parents whose substance abuse places their children at risk. The 2014 graduation rate for Family Drug Court was slightly below the 47% national average, but an internal study conducted in 2013 showed highly favorable outcomes related to custody. Parents were more likely to keep or regain custody than families in a comparison group.

GRADE: The Family Court’s performance in regard to child safety was excellent.

Child Abuse and Neglect Permanency Outcomes

93% of children released from jurisdiction in 2014 reached permanency.

- 56% were reunified with a parent or parents.
- 36% were adopted or granted legal guardians.

(Percentages are rounded.)

Child Abuse and Neglect Safety Outcomes

Children released from jurisdiction in 2013: 1,063

- No New Abuse or Neglect:
- While under jurisdiction: 91%
 - In 12 months after release: 97%

Family Drug Court 2014

Families Released:	92
Children Released:	192
Graduation Rate:	41%

A 2013 study of the Family Drug Court found participants 2.3 times more likely to keep or regain custody of their children compared to families in traditional child dependency court.

2014



Grade

B+

Accountability

A Report Card to Our Stakeholders

Ensuring Offender Accountability and Victim Restoration

RESTITUTION: Crime victims expect offenders to pay to repair the harm they've caused. At disposition, the judiciary at times orders monetary restitution for damages. In 2014, the court released from jurisdiction 35 successful completers who had a restitution order.¹ Eighty-three percent of the youth paid their restitution in full.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Offenders perform work to repay the community for the loss of peace suffered by the community. In 2014, youth worked 306 hours of community service, more than the 275 hours ordered.

VICTIM SATISFACTION: In 2014, 358 victims were referred to Family Court Victim Services. The court surveyed the victims to determine their level of satisfaction with restitution services. Due to a very low response rate, the Family Court is working to improve its efforts to hear from victims. We will report this measure next year.

GRADE: The Family Court's overall performance regarding accountability, while not excellent, was significantly above average.

¹ Other youth released from jurisdiction who did not successfully complete Family Court programming and were committed to the Division of Youth Services might have continued to earn restitution.

Restitution to Victims (2014)

Ordered: \$23,137.48
Paid: \$20,594.98 (89%)

83% of youth successfully released in 2014 who owed restitution paid it in full.

Restorative Community Service Work (2014)

Hours Ordered: 275
Hours Worked: 306
Fulfillment: 100%
\$ Value \$1,952

(at student wage, \$6.38/hour)

2014



Grade
B-

Competency

A Report Card to Our Stakeholders

Developing Youth and Family Competencies

This page presents data on youth released from court jurisdiction in 2014 after successfully completing probation supervision.

RESISTANCE TO DRUG & ALCOHOL USE:

At the start of supervision, 36% of youth were found to have moderate to severe drug or alcohol problems. After completion of supervision and treatment, 6% of youth continued to have a moderate to severe drug or alcohol problem.

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION: At the start of court supervision, 39% of youth were found to have severe education issues. These youth were not participating in school or (for those 16 and older) working. At case closure, 88% of youth were actively involved in school or an alternative education program. Another 4% were working.

PARENTING: During youth supervision, 65% of families were found to have moderate or severe parent management problems. Sixty-five percent of these families were offered services including counseling and parenting education. A plan to increase the number of families offered parenting skills training is being developed.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: One of the best ways to reduce citizen and community victimization is to prevent crime from happening in the first place. Citizen participation in justice system efforts is essential to furthering public safety. During the year 2014, 199 volunteers contributed in excess of 4,000 hours of service, including 3,355 hours towards mentoring youth. We have made a goal to significantly increase the number of volunteer hours for our juveniles.

GRADE: The Family Court's overall performance regarding skill development was average.

Drug & Alcohol Abuse Moderate to Severe Problem

Youth at Intake: 36%
Youth at Case Closure: 6%

Grade: B+

School Participation

Youth with Severe Educational Problems at Intake: 39%

Youth Participating in Education or Working at Case Closure: 92%

Grade: A

Parenting Skills

Of 63 families with moderate to severe parent management problems, 65% were offered services.

Grade: D

Citizen Participation

of Volunteers: 199
Hours Contributed: 4,056

Grade: C