

2018



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 this 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.

At the request of the Missouri Supreme Court, in 2015 we began a collaboration with Casey Family Programs to improve timeliness to permanency and safely reduce the number of children in foster care. Casey's Judicial Engagement Project has an ambitious national goal of reducing the number of children in foster care 50% by 2020 by improving systems of care for children. Our local initiative is focused on improving court systems for children in foster care to achieve safe, permanent homes for them. This is a multiyear project.

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 representing 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 Dale Youngs
Administrative Judge

Theresa Byrd
Deputy Court Administrator

Lori Stipp
Juvenile Officer

2018



Grade

A

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.

One and a half percent of the approximately 72,953 juveniles ages 10-17 living in Jackson County were referred to the Family Court for law violations in 2018. In 2018, the Juvenile Officer filed petitions on 311 referrals alleging delinquency. The remainder of referrals were diverted or dismissed.

We examined 462 youth diverted or released from supervision in 2017. Of these youth, 90% did not reoffend in the following year. This analysis excludes youth placed in the custody of the Children’s Division and youth committed to the Division of Youth Services.

In recent years, we have successfully reduced the unnecessary use of secure detention through our involvement with the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative. Since 2007, the number of youth admitted to secure detention annually has declined 76%. In 2018, youth screened but not admitted to detention appeared for their scheduled hearings 98% of the time, with 95% not reoffending while awaiting hearings.

GRADE: The Family Court’s performance regarding community safety was excellent. Throughout the state of Missouri, 78% of youth referred did not commit another offense in the first year following the referral (Office of the State Courts Administrator, 2017 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 referral numbers sent directly to the Juvenile Officer for handling.

Between 1 and 2% of Jackson County Youth Were Referred to the Court for a Law Violation



Law-Abiding Behavior Youth Released in 2017

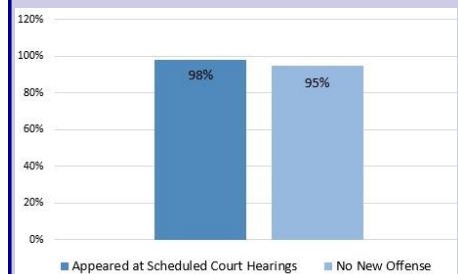
90% of youth diverted or released from supervision were not referred to the Court for a new law violation in the following year.

(Use of 2017 data allows 12 months for recidivism study.)

Youth Released from the Court’s Jurisdiction (2017)

Diverted	245
Released from Probation	175
Released from Residential Treatment (Hilltop and Private Residential Placement)	42

Youth Released from Secure Detention Awaiting Trial in 2018



2018



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 amounts to 6 per 1,000 children ages 0-17 in Jackson County—less than 1% of the population of children aged 0-17.

PERMANENCY OUTCOMES: Permanent homes are secured for children through reunification with a parent, adoption, or guardianship. Of children released from the court’s jurisdiction in 2018, 87% reached permanency (were reunified, adopted or granted guardians). The remaining 13% were released from jurisdiction by transfer to another jurisdiction, commitment to the Division of Youth Services, or another planned arrangement such as independent living.

SAFETY: We examined children released from the court’s jurisdiction in 2017 to allow 12 months following release. Of the 931 children released from the court’s jurisdiction in 2017, 98% were not referred for maltreatment in the 12 months following jurisdiction. The Connections Program, administered by Family Court Resource Services, provided 1,576 supervised and therapeutic visits and arranged 100 monitored exchanges for families in 2018.

FAMILY DRUG COURT: The Family Drug Court Program (established April 1998) provides community-based services, treatment and frequent judicial oversight to parents referred to the Court for substance abuse. The graduation rate for the 2018 Family Drug Court exit cohort was above the 46% national average. An internal study conducted in 2016-17 showed highly favorable outcomes related to custody. Parents were more likely to achieve reunification as a permanency outcome than families in a comparison group, and termination from the program did not delay permanency for children.

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

Child Abuse and Neglect Permanency Outcomes

87% of children released from jurisdiction in 2018 reached permanency.

- 42% were reunified with a parent or parents.
- 45% were adopted or granted legal guardians.

Child Abuse and Neglect Safety Outcomes

Children released from jurisdiction in 2017: 931

No new abuse or neglect in 12 months after release: 98%

(Use of 2017 data allows 12 months for safety reporting. Cases dismissed and transferred to other courts are not included.)

FCRS Services

Supervised and	
Therapeutic Visits:	1,576
Monitored Exchanges:	100

Family Drug Court 2018 Exit Cohort

Families:	113
Children :	253

Graduation Rates

National Average:	46%
16th Circuit:	49%

2018



Grade

B

Accountability

A Report Card to Our Stakeholders

Ensuring Offender Accountability and Victim Restoration

RESTITUTION: In many juvenile courts, youth may be ordered to pay restitution, i.e., money to compensate victims for the expenses they incurred due to the youth’s delinquent act. In 2018, the court released from jurisdiction 33 youth successfully completing supervision that had a restitution order.¹ Eight-five percent of the youth paid their restitution in full. Overall, 91% of ordered restitution dollars were paid to victims.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Community service is a common strategy used by juvenile courts to hold youth accountable and at the same time provide youth with knowledge, skills and attitudes to become active citizens. In 2018, 66 youth performed 1,169 hours of community service (including hours worked to pay restitution).

VICTIM SATISFACTION: In 2018, Research Department staff called 238 victims to determine their level of satisfaction with the Court process. Staff made contact with 80 victims, and 29 victims agreed to be surveyed. Of the 29 interviews conducted, 21 victims (72%) were satisfied with how their case was handled. Sources of dissatisfaction included not receiving the amount of restitution desired and feeling that the juvenile received too lenient a sentence. Many of the victims found the Court staff friendly, courteous, helpful, and responsive. We are working on developing additional strategies for assessing victim satisfaction.

GRADE: The Family Court’s overall performance was 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 (2018)

Ordered: **\$11,201.58**
Paid: **\$10,238.48 (91%)**

85% of youth successfully released in 2018 who owed restitution paid it in full. 97% of youth paid at least part of the restitution ordered.

Restorative Community Service Work (2018)

Hours Worked: 1,169
\$ Value **\$9,176.65**
(at 2018’s minimum wage, \$7.85/hour)

2018



Grade
B

Competency

A Report Card to Our Stakeholders

Developing Youth and Family Competencies

This page primarily presents data on youth released from court jurisdiction in 2018 after successfully completing probation supervision.

RESISTANCE TO DRUG & ALCOHOL USE: At the start of supervision, 49% 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, 32% 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, 93% of youth were actively involved in school or an alternative education program, and another 5% were working.

PARENTING: During youth supervision, 42% of families were found to have moderate or severe parent management problems. Ninety-one percent of these families were offered services, including counseling and parenting education. Additionally, Family Court Resource Services offered three parent awareness courts, serving a total of 3,158 parents and children.

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 2018, 194 volunteers contributed approximately 2,655 hours of service, including 1,426 hours toward mentoring youth and 255 hours in the Office of the Guardian ad Litem. Two volunteers worked in the Office of the Juvenile Officer.

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

Drug & Alcohol Abuse

Youth with a Moderate to Severe Problem

at Intake: 49%
at Case Closure: 6%

School Participation

Youth with Severe Educational Problems at Intake: 32%

Youth Participating in Education or Employed at Case Closure: 98%

Parenting Skills

Of 45 families with moderate to severe parent management problems, 91% were offered services.

Individuals served in FCRS Parent Awareness Courses: 3,158

Citizen Participation

of Volunteers: 194
Hours Contributed: 2,655

Includes:
1,426 Mentoring hours
255 Guardian Ad Litem hours