

2015



# 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 third 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 will be 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 David Byrn  
Administrative Judge

Mary A. Marquez  
Deputy Court Administrator

Lori Stipp  
Juvenile Officer

2015



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.

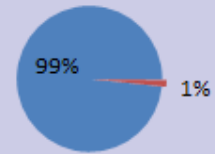
One percent of the approximately 70,959 juveniles ages 10-17 living in Jackson County were referred to the Family Court for law violations in 2015. About one third of referrals are filed. In 2015, the Juvenile Officer filed 361 petitions alleging delinquency. The remainder of referrals were diverted.

We examined 787 youth diverted or released from supervision in 2014. Of these youth, 82% did not reoffend in the following year. This analysis excludes youth committed to the Children’s Division and 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 2006, the number of youth admitted to secure detention annually has declined 66%. In 2015, youth screened but not admitted to detention appeared for their scheduled hearings 94% of the time, with 96% not reoffending while awaiting hearings.

**GRADE:** The Family Court’s performance regarding community safety was above average. Throughout the state of Missouri, 79% of youth referred did not commit another offense in the first year following the referral (Office of the State Courts Administrator, 2014 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.

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



Law-Abiding Behavior Youth Released in 2014

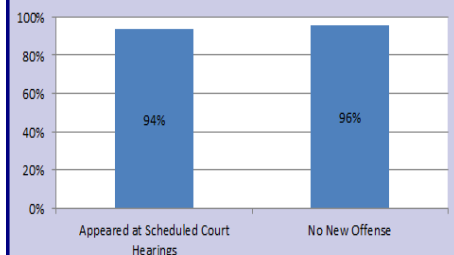
82% of youth diverted or released from supervision were not referred to the Court for a new law violation in the following year.

(Use of 2014 data allows 12 months for recidivism study.)

Youth Released from the Court’s Jurisdiction (2014)

Diverted	565
Released from Probation	166
Released from Residential Treatment	56

Youth Released from Secure Detention Awaiting Trial in 2015



2015



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(s), adoption, or guardianship. Of children released from the court’s jurisdiction in 2015, 88% reached permanency (were reunified, adopted or granted guardians). The remaining 12% were released from jurisdiction with outcomes for reasons such as independent living, transfer to another jurisdiction and commitment to the Division of Youth Services.

**SAFETY:** We examined all children released from the court’s jurisdiction in 2014 to allow 12 months following release. Of the 990 children released from the court’s jurisdiction in 2014, 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 2015 graduation rate for Family Drug Court was 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

88% of children released from jurisdiction in 2015 reached permanency.

- 53% were reunified with a parent or parents.
- 35% were adopted or granted legal guardians.

### Child Abuse and Neglect Safety Outcomes

Children released from jurisdiction in 2014: 990

No New Abuse or Neglect:

- While under jurisdiction: 91%
- In 12 months after release: 97%

### Family Drug Court 2015

Families Released:	111
Children Released:	241

Graduation Rate	
National Average:	47%
16th Circuit:	39%

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

2015



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 2015, the court released from jurisdiction 38 successful completers who had a restitution order.<sup>1</sup> Eighty-seven 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 2015, youth worked 664 hours of community service, more than the 335 hours ordered.

**VICTIM SATISFACTION:** Mid-year 2015, the Research Department initiated a new phone survey. We called 85 victims to determine their level of satisfaction with the Court process. Research staff made contact with 25 victims and 18 victims agreed to be surveyed. Of the 18 interviews conducted, 14 victims (78%) were satisfied with the experience overall. Sources of dissatisfaction included waiting times, continuances and stressful experiences testifying in Court. Many of the victims found the Court staff friendly, courteous and responsive. We are working on developing additional strategies for assessing victim satisfaction.

**GRADE:** The Family Court's overall performance was above average.

<sup>1</sup>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 (2015)

Ordered: \$19,150.06  
Paid: \$17,916.46 (94%)

87% of youth successfully released in 2015 who owed restitution paid it in full. Two-thirds of the remaining youth paid part of the restitution ordered.

#### Restorative Community Service Work (2015)

Hours Ordered: 335  
Hours Worked: 664  
Fulfillment: 100%  
\$ Value \$4,236  
(at student wage, \$6.38/hour)

2015



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 2015 after successfully completing probation supervision.

**RESISTANCE TO DRUG & ALCOHOL USE:**

At the start of supervision, 44% of youth were found to have moderate to severe drug or alcohol problems. After completion of supervision and treatment, 11% of youth continued to have a moderate to severe drug or alcohol problem.

**SCHOOL PARTICIPATION:** At the start of court supervision, 48% 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, 84% of youth were actively involved in school or an alternative education program. Another 6% were working.

**PARENTING:** During youth supervision, 61% of families were found to have moderate or severe parent management problems. Seventy-eight percent of these families were offered services including counseling and parenting education, an improvement over 65% last year. A plan to increase the number of families offered parenting skills training has been 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 2015, 340 volunteers contributed in excess of 3,000 hours of service, including 1,770 hours towards mentoring youth. Additional volunteers worked in the Office of the Guardian Ad Litem and the Office of the Juvenile Officer.

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

**Drug & Alcohol Abuse**  
Moderate to Severe Problem

Youth at Intake: 44%  
Youth at Case Closure: 11%

**School Participation**

Youth with Severe Educational Problems at Intake: 48%

Youth Participating in Education or Working at Case Closure: 90%

**Parenting Skills**

Of 79 families with moderate to severe parent management problems, 78% were offered services.

**Citizen Participation**

# of Volunteers: 340  
Hours Contributed: 3,164