

2024



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:

Helping Families Reunify and Keeping Children Safe

Furthering Community Safety

Practicing Restorative Justice

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 our 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.

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 our Volunteer Coordinator, at (816) 435-7074.

Respectfully,

The Honorable Jennifer Phillips
Administrative Judge

Theresa Byrd
Deputy Court Administrator

Monica Hutchinson-Penrose
Juvenile Officer

2024



Grade

A-

Child Safety

PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR CHILD PROTECTION

A Report Card to Our Stakeholders

Helping Families Reunify and Keeping Children Safe

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 2024, 91% reached permanency. Most of the remaining 9% were released from jurisdiction with another planned arrangement such as independent living, while a few were released for other circumstances such as being on the run. The most common permanency outcome was reunification, with 45% of children returning to live with at least one parent.

SAFE BABIES COURT: Safe Babies Court (formerly Child Protection & Permanency Unit) seeks the goal of safely reducing time to permanency for children ages 0-3. Of the 37 infants and toddlers released from jurisdiction in 2024 after participating in the program, 68% were safely reunified with parents compared to 42% of comparable infants and toddlers served in a baseline group.

FAMILY TREATMENT COURT: The Family Treatment Court, established in 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 2024 exit cohort was 55%—higher than the national average of 46%. Of the 40 children from this cohort that have seen achieved permanency, 88% were reunified.

SAFETY: Of the 720 children released from the court's jurisdiction in 2023, 98% were not referred for maltreatment in the following year. To ensure that children involved with the court can safely visit non-custodial parents, the Connections Program, administered by Family Court Resource Services, provides supervision for visits and exchanges. The program provided 979 supervised and therapeutic visits in 2024.

GRADE: With 45% of families reunifying, our performance on this measure was slightly below average when compared with the national and statewide reunification rates of 47% and 46%, respectively. (Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data 2021, Children's Bureau.)

Child safety outcomes were much better than average. Nationally, about 8% of child abuse victims are referred for maltreatment again within 12 months. That rate is 3% for the state of Missouri and about 2% in Jackson County. (Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data 2020.)

Child Abuse and Neglect Permanency Outcomes

Cases filed in 2024: 328
Rate per 1,000 children: 4.4

91% of children released from jurisdiction in 2023 reached permanency.

- 45% were reunified with a parent or parents
- 46% were adopted or appointed a legal guardian

Family Treatment Court 2024 Exit Cohort

Families: 40
Children: 65

Graduation Rates
16th Circuit: 55%
National Average: 46%

Child Abuse and Neglect Safety Outcomes

Children released from jurisdiction in 2023: 720

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

(Use of 2023 data allows 12 months for safety study)

FCRS Connections Program

Supervised and Therapeutic Visits: 979

2024



Grade

A

Public Safety

PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR FAMILY COURT SERVICES

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.

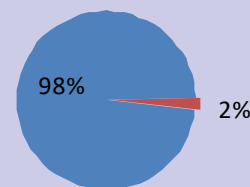
Around two percent of the approximately 75,154 juveniles ages 10-17 living in Jackson County were referred to the Family Court for law violations in 2024. The Juvenile Officer received 1,370 referrals alleging delinquency and has filed petitions on 305 (22%). The remaining referrals were declined (40%), diverted (25%), transferred (1%), or have not yet been disposed (11%).

To measure public-safety outcomes, we examined 352 youth diverted or released from supervision in 2023. Of these youth, 89% were not referred for new allegations 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. The recidivism rate for diverted youth was comparable to that of youth released from probation. The rate for youth released from residential treatment was about 17% lower than for youth on probation.

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 has declined by 71%. In 2024, 300 youth were admitted to secure detention, while 152 youth were detained at Hilltop, the Court's non-secure residential facility, and 274 were placed on home detention with electronic monitoring. Youth assessed as low risk to public safety were released to the community. Youth screened but not admitted to secure detention appeared for their scheduled hearings 94% of the time, with 94% not referred for new offenses while awaiting hearings.

GRADE: The Family Court's performance in community safety was very good. Throughout the state of Missouri, 79% of youth referred were not referred for another offense in the following year (Office of the State Courts Administrator, 2023 Juvenile and Family Division Annual Report).

Two percent of Jackson County Youth Were Referred to the Court for a Law Violation

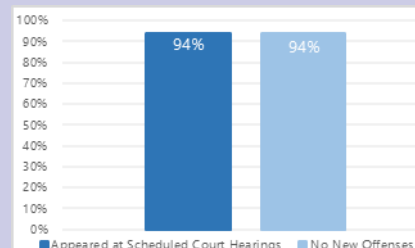


Law-Abiding Behavior for Youth Released from Jurisdiction in 2023

Diverted	182
No new referrals 1 yr	92%
Released from Probation	137
No new referrals 1 yr	90%
Released from Residential Treatment (Hilltop and Private Residential Placement)	33
No new referral 1 yr	73%
Total	352
No new referrals 1 yr	89%

(Use of 2023 data allows 12 months for recidivism study.)

Youth Released from Secure Detention Awaiting Adjudication



2024



Grade
C+

Accountability

PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

A Report Card to Our Stakeholders

Practicing Restorative Justice

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 behavior. In 2024, the court released from jurisdiction 39 youth who had a restitution order. Twenty-seven of these youth paid their restitution in full.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Juvenile courts often order youth to complete community service as a way to hold them accountable for their actions while providing them with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become productive citizens. Of 168 youth released from probation in 2024, 97 (58%) were ordered to complete community service. Seventy-four of these youth (76%) completed all of the hours assigned.

VICTIM EMPATHY: Most youth ordered to probation are required to attend victim empathy classes delivered by Restitution Services or the Field Services counselor. In 2024, 126 youth participated in victim empathy classes.

COMMUNITY SUPERVISION: Family Court Field Services supervises youth ordered to probation and provides programming that holds youth accountable for their actions. The Day-Evening Reporting Program operates the Educational Drop-In Center, which offers youth who are not attending school a structured daytime environment. The program also provides intensive after-school supervision in partnership with community organizations. Youth receive skill-building and treatment opportunities and may participate in victim empathy classes and perform community service. Attendance at the Drop-In Center averaged around 6 youth per day, and attendance at Evening Reporting averaged 6 youth per week when programming was held, split between Girls' and Boys' Groups on different days of the week.

Of youth exiting community supervision in 2024, 84% were released successfully, completing court orders for treatment, restitution, and/or community service.

GRADE: The Family Court's performance on restorative justice was average.

Restitution and Community Service

for youth released in 2024

Restitution

Ordered: **\$19,653.54**

Paid: **\$12,348.29 (63%)**

Community Service

Ordered: **2,537 hrs.**

Completed*: **2,073 hrs. (82%)**

*Includes hours ordered for youth who fulfilled the community service requirement by maintaining employment or a C average.

Victim Empathy and Accountability

126 youth under Court supervision participated in victim empathy sessions

Community Supervision

% of youth successfully released: **84%**

Average Attendance

Drop-In Center: **6 youth**

Evening Reporting: **6 youth**

2024



Grade
A-

Competency

PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR FAMILY COURT SERVICES

A Report Card to Our Stakeholders

Developing Youth and Family Competencies

This page presents data on youth released from court jurisdiction in 2024 after probation supervision. It includes youth successfully and unsuccessfully released.

RESISTANCE TO DRUG & ALCOHOL USE: At the start of supervision, fewer than two-thirds of youth were engaged in or strongly suspected of regular or intermittent drug or alcohol abuse. After completion of supervision and treatment, this rate was reduced to less than a fifth. The Field Services Clinical Unit's Substance Abuse Counselor provides drug abuse assessments as well as individual and group education to youth on probation and those referred from Prevention and Diversion.

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION: At the start of court supervision, a quarter of youth were not participating in any sort of educational program. These youth had either dropped out or were suspended or expelled. Probation officers work to get youth actively involved in school or an alternative education program (such as Job Corps or the Missouri Option Program) and help them identify job opportunities as appropriate. By case closure, 82% youth had completed or were enrolled in an educational program. Of 31 youth not attending school, 8 were working.

PARENTING: At the beginning of court supervision, 29% of youth had parents with identified support and supervision challenges. Eighty-one percent of these youth were offered services, including counseling and parenting education, were receiving treatment in a private residential facility, or were in Children's Division custody with no parent available.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: The best way to reduce citizen and community victimization is to prevent crime from happening in the first place. Citizen participation in justice-system efforts is important to furthering public safety. In 2024, 27 new volunteers were trained, and volunteers contributed 509 hours of service to the Family Court.

GRADE: The Family Court demonstrates strong overall performance in promoting skill development and stability among youth and families.

Drug & Alcohol Abuse

Drug and/or Alcohol Concerns at Intake:	64%
at Case Closure:	18%

School Participation

Youth Not Involved in Education Program at Intake:	24%
at Case Closure:	18%

Parenting Skills

Need for Services to Support Positive Parental Structure and Discipline at Intake:	29%
% of youth with parent available who were offered services:	81%

Citizen Participation

# Volunteers Trained:	27
Total Volunteer Hours:	509