

Merrimack College

**Merrimack ScholarWorks**

---

Criminology Student Work

Criminology

---

Spring 2022

## **Preventing and Responding to Juvenile Crime: Importance of Intervention and Rehabilitation**

Michaela Noviello

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/crm\\_studentpub](https://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/crm_studentpub)

---

Michaela Noviello  
Criminal Justice, Merrimack College  
CRM 8900G Capstone Seminar  
Professor St. Louis  
March 11, 2022

**Abstract**

With about 2.1 million juveniles arrested per year, it is important for researchers and juvenile justice employees to consider, protect and maximize the full potential of juveniles from their early adolescence up until release from detention centers or foster care. This paper highlights early traits and behaviors consistent in juveniles who commit crime as well as factors that may contribute to crime. While focusing on early indicators that may lead to juvenile crime, the paper also discusses rehabilitation and intervention after juvenile crime has been committed. After discussing the research on preventing and responding to juvenile crime, the paper outlines careers within the scope of juvenile crime and how these careers are ongoing and developing to provide maximum treatment and positive outcomes for the youth. The careers reviewed in this paper range from preliminary intervention careers, such as social workers for the Department of Children and Families, to juvenile probation officers assigned after a juvenile appears in court. Overall this paper discusses why juvenile crime occurs and how we can work to provide treatment and rehabilitation and decrease reoffending.

Every year in the United States, about 2.1 million juveniles are arrested for crimes as severe as murder or as simple as running away from home (“Youth Involved With the Juvenile Justice System,” 2022). A juvenile, described as a person under the age of 18, can come in contact with the justice system in various ways such as being arrested, being placed on probation, navigating court proceedings, or being sent to a detention/rehabilitation center, depending on the severity or consistency of their crimes or status offenses (Youth Involved With the Juvenile Justice System, Youthgov, 2022). Crime is inevitable, but the Juvenile Justice System is designed to rehabilitate, treat and decrease recidivism of juvenile offenders. Juvenile crime has decreased since the 1990s and more research has been conducted on the causation of juvenile crime and proper interventions to lower rates of recidivism (Olsson et al., 2021). Further research has been conducted involving prevalent consistencies in youth who come in contact with the Juvenile Justice System, including the foster care system and mistreatment during childhood (Yang and Corrado, 2021). Overall, this research suggests that there are multiple preliminary risk factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency. The research also suggests that encountering the justice system as a juvenile can be intimidating, but there are countless workers dedicated to providing rehabilitation and treatment.

This paper discusses the developmental stages of juvenile crime and potential consequences and outcomes of involvement with the juvenile justice system. The importance of intervention and treatment for the adolescents are mentioned as well as the benefits of rehabilitation. Furthermore, a handful of careers in the scope of juvenile justice are discussed in great detail. These include Department of Children and Family social workers, juvenile probation officers and juvenile correctional facility employees. Along with the discussion of juvenile justice careers, the impact of the dedicated employees’ work on juveniles is touched upon.

## **Juvenile Delinquency Path**

There are multiple risk factors during child development that can contribute to juvenile delinquency and crime, but the most persistent are effects of child abuse and neglect (Stewart et al., 2002). Children who are abused, whether physically, mentally, emotionally or sexually, are more likely to commit crimes in their youth that may start of minor and persist as they age; exposure to additional authority figures is vital for intervention to curb juvenile crime (Alltucker et al., 2006). Child abuse and neglect affect cognitive, behavioral and emotional functioning which could consequently hinder how a child thinks and behaves in the future (Milojevich et al., 2018). For example, emotional neglect in childhood can lead to a lack of empathy if it was not shown by caregivers, giving reason to believe that juvenile offenders lack empathy when committing crimes (Milojevich et al., 2018, Bender, 2010). Children who are neglected in their homes are more likely to commit crimes while disregarding potential consequences and punishment because they experience the lack of attention at home (Milojevich et al., 2018). Maltreated children are 38% more likely to commit crimes in their childhood and into adulthood than non-maltreated children; interestingly, Bender, (2010) also stated that juveniles who were maltreated repeatedly were more likely to recidivate repeatedly even after receiving rehabilitation. Juvenile offenders who are homeless or "runaways" are ones who are more likely to commit crime, for example theft or substance abuse; studies have found a correlation to "runaways" as youth who are escaping abuse or who are neglected (Bender, 2010).

Exposure and intervention can come from a child's teachers, peers or family and friends who can notify child protective services who may be able to intervene to stop the abuse, whether it is made sure that it is stopped in the home, or removing a child from their home (Alltucker et al., 2006). Social workers, along with a handful of other professions working with children, are

classified as mandated reporters (Mass.gov). A mandated reporter is someone who is required to provide an oral and written report to DCF if they have reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused (Mass.gov). Once a report of abuse is reported to DCF, an investigation must be sought out to determine the wellness of the child (Mass.gov). Removing a child from their home is never a desired situation, but it may be the only way to escape a child from abuse. Many neglected and abused children are placed in the foster care system where for a lot of youth, it can lead to later problems and behavioral issues (Simmons-Horton, 2021).

Juveniles who have encountered both the foster care system and the juvenile justice system are often referred to as “dual-status youth” (Simmons-Horton, 2021). Both experiences, separately and paired together, can have negative effects on a child’s development and intervention and guidance throughout both processes is vital for juveniles (Simmons-Horton, 2021). Many juveniles who enter the foster care system have also come in contact with social workers who work with child protective services, who intervene when these children have been maltreated (Baidawi & Sheehan, 2020). Studies have shown that juveniles who are dual-involved have a higher risk of being involved with the Juvenile Justice System; more specifically, as stated by Baidawi and Sheehan (2020), group-based offending, residential care-based offending and adolescent family violence. Researchers found that youth who were placed in the foster system and who were also maltreated had higher rates of physical altercations that led them to being arrested, as well as having more frequent involvement with the Juvenile Justice System DeGue & Wisdom, (2009). Interestingly enough, early behavioral problems have been associated with foster care involvement which have been seen to later develop into delinquency; data does not specify what age youth are predicted to commit crime (DeGue and Widom, 2009). Delinquent behaviors committed by juveniles, who have experienced childhood maltreatment, can be

described as problematic and then develop into early crime and delinquency (Jones & Pierce, 2021). Some of the delinquent behaviors that can further develop into crime include substance use, truancy, poor relationship/friendship mannerisms and acting out at school (Jones & Pierce, 2021). Early intervention, at home or in foster care, is important to address in order to rehabilitate and treat behaviors and tendencies that commit crime in youth (Degue and Widon (2009).

Dual-status juveniles have a harder time escaping the juvenile justice system and have higher rates of recidivism (Simmons-Horton, 2021). They tend to have worse court outcomes and a lesser chance of probation opposed to incarceration; these factors stem from higher rates of child maltreatment and behavioral issues (Simmons-Horton, 2021). Poor behaviors and outcomes can lead juveniles to be sentenced harsher and receive time in detention facilities (Simmons-Horton, 2021). A high percentage of youth who were in the foster care system became involved with the Juvenile Justice System after they had been placed into foster care (Simmons-Horton, 2021).

More interventions and attention needs to be diverted into children who are in the foster care system to have the juveniles become more independent and aware of the possible consequences of frequent involvement in criminality (Simmons-Horton, 2021). The issue of minimal publicly known possible outcomes for youth need to be implemented and diversion programs and treatments need to be pushed in order to keep juveniles out of the system (Janssen et al., 2019). It is important to involve court authority figures and public defenders the importance of diversion and treatment because ultimately they have a large impact on a juvenile's future (Janssen et al., 2019). Abrams (2005) continues to present the idea that "restrictive care" and treatment have more positive outcomes, both in the youth and Juvenile

Justice System, than incarceration and forms of punishment. Incarceration of the youth is something that becomes more prevalent and a cycle rather than being rehabilitated, informed and treated for prior issues (Abrams, 2005). Baetz et al., (2021) suggests that PTSD treatment for juveniles who are involved in the Juvenile Justice System would be effective for both system involvement and trauma they have experienced in their earlier years. Specifically, cognitive-based therapy and treatment in juveniles has been proven to lessen PTSD symptoms and alleviate behavioral mishaps that juveniles portray when they commit crime (Baetz et al., 2021). Using therapy and treatment to focus on trauma from criminal involvement and exposure and maltreatment is useful for keeping juveniles out of detention centers and has a more positive impact on a child's wellbeing and self-image (Baetz et al., 2021).

Youth in areas with more poverty tend to be more absent in school, leading to higher rates of crime (Lane 2018). The author also suggests that school-based intervention programs would be effective to diminish crime both inside and outside of school (Lane, 2018). Juveniles who dropout of school or who are significantly absent tend to turn to crime because they do not wish to complete their education and turn to deviant activities (Lane, 2018). Educational intervention and programs that steer juveniles away from crime and relation to peer-based activities have been effective to reduce crime that is early onset (Janssen et al., 2019). The authors explain how these educational programs can be focused during the school hours and students will be more likely to participate and be involved if it occurs during the time they would already be at school (Janssen et al., 2019).

Although rehabilitation is implemented during incarceration, the difference between the two is that rehabilitation focuses directly on treatment, and helping a juvenile focus on positively progressing their behaviors and actions; incarceration is a punitive measure based on retaliation

for a criminal act committed (Correctionalofficer.org, Sprague et al., 2020). Rehabilitation has more positive effects on juveniles compared to incarceration (Piquero & Steinburg 2010). Early intervention makes a difference in later crime, but juvenile offenders, once released from correctional facilities, should be implemented treatments, rehabilitation programs and centers, medical treatment and learning experience rather than just a straight punishment of incarceration (Piquero and Steinburg, 2010). Many studies and experience from juveniles in juvenile and adult correctional facilities relay the negative outcomes of incarceration, where there are many behavioral and mental health effects (Lambie & Randell, 2013). Piquero and Steinburg (2010) highlight the cycle of reoffending and higher recidivism rates when proper care and treatment at an early age is not proposed. Incarcerating youth, especially those who have been in the foster care system, further hinders their cognitive development, healthy lifestyle and improvement of poor behavior (Jolivette et al., 2020). Correctional facilities are not places where faith and hope are present, it is more of a punishment with no explanation of how to act better or a place where guidance is practiced (Jolivette et. al (2020). Juveniles in correctional facilities with mental health disorders tend to spend longer time incarcerated than those without mental health disorders (Jolivette et. al, 2020).

It is imperative for juvenile correctional facilities to have staff, programs and directors who work in unison in order to rehabilitate, teach and treat juveniles before they turn to recidivism (Jolivette et al., 2020) Mental health providers' main goal is to lessen the severity of mental health disorder symptoms, but Baetz et al., (2021) highlights how effective clinicians and professionals in a juvenile justice setting can be while focusing on past traumas and current behavioral problems. Clinicians in juvenile settings during rehabilitation focus on future outcomes while balancing issues they face while they are receiving treatment (Baetz et al.,

2021). Outcomes that mental health providers for juveniles, as well as other professionals in the rehabilitative setting, focus on decreasing the crime rate, reducing recidivism, decreasing “in-program” re-offending and providing support post-release (Baetz et al., 2021). With more implementation of positive reinforcement and engagement of activities in a rehabilitative setting, in a correctional facility, there will be better outcomes with how the juveniles perceive their future (Jolivette et al., 2020). It is also mentioned that all staff members of correctional facilities and local authorities and mental health clinicians should be on the same page for individualizing plans for juveniles who need treatment (Jolivette et al., 2020). If there are positive interventions in correctional facilities and more focus on treatment and rehabilitation in juvenile correctional centers, there will be more positive outcomes and it is possible to lower recidivism rates for crime (Jolivette et al., 2020).

### **Careers Positively Impacting Juveniles**

Juvenile justice careers are a small scope of careers in the realm of criminal justice; yet they carry a large impact and importance on the criminal justice system. In order to facilitate the best possible outcomes for juveniles who enter the foster care system and/or the juvenile justice system, it is imperative to have people dedicating their research, time and careers to protect and guide the youth. Correctional facility staff are trained to encourage juveniles to engage in community support programs as well as vocational programs that correctional facilities offer in order to practice behaviors the juveniles will carry out once they are released (Sprague et al., 2020). There are different steps, happening at different stages in juveniles’ lives where they need support; prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and retribution (Mass.gov). Community based programs, family intervention therapy, personal therapy and other plans of action are in place in most communities to help rehabilitate juveniles who commit crime; more research needs to be

done in order to enhance these programs and community outreach (Lane 2018). There are many jobs and careers to explore that involve working with or for juveniles; these careers take dedication, patience and strength to endure. This paper will focus on social workers in the Department of Children and Families and the foster care system, juvenile correctional correctional officers, juvenile probation officers and a scope of careers associated with post-offending and treatment.

### **Social Workers**

The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) is an organization that provides protective services to children, who have been abused or neglected, from the age or birth to the age of 21 (Mass.gov, 2017). DCF social workers intervene at a point of concern in a home where child abuse or neglect is taking place; removing a child from an abusive home and providing support and help to find a safe home (Mass.gov). Although removing children from abusive homes is a large portion of work social workers for DCF do, they also offer in-home services such as family therapists, mentors and forms of transportation for families in need (Mass.gov). The main goal for DCF social workers is to provide the utmost protection for the youth, whether it is providing services to families; in the home or removing a child from their home. The children that DCF social workers serve may be living at home, live in foster care or are homeless (Mass.gov, 2017). The mission statement of DCF requires its employees to “uphold the most protection and care to children at risk of harm; to allow children to grow up in a safe environment, have access to education, food and shelter and be able to thrive wherever they will be living” (Mass.gov). Social workers with DCF will not only work with the children, but they will work with the children’s family or caregivers and school to ensure commitment to safe environments for children to grow up in (Mass.gov). DCF social workers are an important factor

when it comes to intervention and protection; they serve as a voice for the youth who cannot always defend or protect themselves (Mass.gov).

Being a DCF social worker is not an easy job, and can sometimes be overwhelming, but the efforts of people in this career goes far and beyond and saves the lives of children every day (Masslegalhelp, 2021). According to Mass.gov, the general social worker job description varies with duties, but has an overall census and direction of tasks and direction. Generally, a DCF social worker in Massachusetts should be expected to evaluate, assess and conduct “initial and ongoing case management” of children and families’ needs and services while encouraging families to commit to their children by engaging in programs and counseling and services that are provided (Mass.gov). Social workers should work together with their agency, including other social workers, to help develop and update recommended services and service-based plans for children in custody of DCF, while completing all documentation of investigations made (Mass.gov). A DCF social worker should be able to provide transportation for children to health appointments, services and therapy appointments (Mass.gov). These employees must keep communication with other DCF workers, juvenile courts and remain focused on how to improve care and services to children who come in contact with DCF (Mass.gov).

The focus of a DCF social worker is not to remove children from their families, but to encourage families to provide adequate care to their children; if that is not possible, then removal from the home is necessary for the well-being of the children (Mass.gov). DCF social workers are one of many employees who qualify as mandated reporters (Mass.gov). Mandated reporters are described as any employee who comes in contact with children; they must report any instance of child abuse and neglect in the form of an oral or written statement to DCF and action must be taken by social workers (Mass.gov, 2017). A formal report of child abuse and

neglect to DCF is also known as a 51A report, which explains how DCF receives a report of abuse or neglect and action must be taken upon it. A DCF social worker will evaluate the child, family and home life and conduct an investigation to determine the child's well-being (Mass.gov, 2017). If, through the 51A report DCF finds evidence of abuse and neglect, a follow up investigation will follow, and DCF will determine the removal process from the home or foster care (Mass.gov, 2017). The 51A reports can come from juvenile courts and probate courts, if a juvenile has come in contact with the Juvenile Justice System (Mass.gov, 2017).

Once a child is removed from their home, DCF social workers will create a long-term plan for housing, whether with other family members, shelter-care programs, foster care families for pre-adoptive care or a licensed family that is approved for custody by DCF (Mass.gov, 2017). DCF works with district attorneys and child advocates to plan and determine action that should be taken and secure plans for children who are addressed by DCF (Mass.gov, 2017). In a case of child abuse and or neglect, law enforcement will work together with DCF to gather evidence for prosecution (Pence & Wilson, 1992). It is noted that it can be hard to gather evidence from victims of these cases, children, because they are not as cognitively developed to understand the realm of what has happened in these situations (Pence & Wilson, 1992). With evidence from law enforcement and DCF, cases can be brought to court for criminal prosecution to the perpetrators (Pence & Wilson 1992). If the perpetrators are found guilty, DCF will automatically remove the child from the home; if not they will keep a close eye on familiar or repeating parents to ensure the child is being well taken care of (Pence & Wilson, 1992). At the time that a juvenile in custody of DCF is preparing to be released from DCF's custody at the age of 18, the Discharge Support Program funded and created by DCF provides financial and emotional support, and budgeting and life management skills in order for the youth to find

secure housing (Mass.gov). The Department of Children and Families has additional adolescent support programs preparing them for factors that are in their control, such as life skills curriculum, community partnered internships and an outreach program which specializes in developing a healthy adjustment into their young adult lives (Mass.gov).

### ***Hiring Process***

Different states carry different qualifications to be a social worker in their respective foster care systems, yet each state has a general census of what they desire in an employee. When applying to be a social worker for DCF in Massachusetts, an applicant must have a completed bachelor's degree, or higher, in social work, psychology, counseling, criminal justice, sociology or a closely related human services degree (Mass.gov.). In addition to having a stated degree, an applicant must also have "current and valid Licensures as a Licensed Social Work Associate, Licensed Social Worker, Licensed Certified Social Worker or Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker issued by the Massachusetts Board of Registration" (Mass.gov.). In Massachusetts, to receive a social work license, you need to obtain a degree in social work and complete clinical practice during your time in school (Mass.gov). The licensed social worker associates exam must be taken and passed to receive a license in social work in Massachusetts (Mass.gov). The correct licensure must be obtained within the first nine months of being hired in Massachusetts (Mass.gov.)

The pre-hire process also indicated that an applicant must pass a criminal background check, and current licenses and degrees will be verified by the human resources department in DCF (Mass.gov). According to a job description for a social worker with the Department of Children and Families in Massachusetts (mass.gov), an ideal candidate for the position will be committed to DCF's core values which include: being child driven, family centered, community

focused, strength based, committed to diversity and committed to on-going learning. The mission of a social worker is to dedicate their career to helping the youth maintain and live a safe and healthy life. Social workers strive to keep families together in a healthy and stable relationship and offer dedicated service to vulnerable people in need.

### **Correctional Officers**

Juvenile correctional officers are in charge of incarcerated juveniles who have committed a crime and have been sentenced to a correctional facility by a juvenile court judge (Correctionalofficer.org). On a daily basis, juvenile correctional officers maintain order in facilities and ensure that the incarcerated juveniles are behaving, following their daily routines, attending meetings they are required to, keeping peace and serving as protectors (Correctionalofficers.org). Additionally, juvenile correctional officers are able to provide services to incarcerated juveniles in ways that improve their behaviors; they guide the juveniles mentally and physically and can act as guides rather than just detention workers (Correctionalofficers.org). Adult correctional officers differ from juvenile correctional officers because the point of juveniles being in a correctional facility is to absolutely ensure that justice is served, but also for the juvenile to receive rehabilitation and treatment that will prepare them for their adult life. Juvenile correctional officers have the duty to prepare these juveniles to correct and fix their behavior and guide them to adapt to better ways of life (Correctionalofficers.org).

In some facilities, juvenile correctional officers will help engage in in-house programs and activities in order to gain a level of trust from incarcerated juveniles, while keeping them engaged and focused on the main goal of incarceration (Correctionalofficers.org). Juvenile correctional officers along with other correctional staff can implement positive reinforcement tactics for good behavior and engagement in treatment and vocational activities, creating a more positive atmosphere (Sprauge et al., 2020). Correctional staff training that focuses on responses

to juveniles' behaviors can help the staff to have appropriate engagement and problem solving (Sprauge et al., 2020). The term "youth specialist" is assigned to juvenile correctional officers who provide further psychological support and rehabilitation to incarcerated juveniles under their supervision with behavioral and mental health problems (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). The term youth specialist is incorporated in this career position to lighten the term of correctional officer and reiterate the importance of mental health and wellness while being incarcerated (correctionalofficer.org). A youth specialist in a juvenile corrections facility would provide more inter-personal engagement with incarcerated juveniles and aid with developing personable skills and integrating relationships with their peers and families (Correctionaloffers.org). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the "protective services" provided by juvenile correctional officers is required for all who obtain this position, with the purpose of reuniting juveniles with their families and ensuring the juveniles are prepared to reenter society and do not recidivate after release (Correctionalfacilities.org).

According to Indeed, a major outlet for applying to jobs and careers, the daily routine for juvenile correctional officers is genuinely uniform, unless there are special circumstances (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). These tasks include but are not limited to: properly booking inmates into the facility and preparing them for their routines and daily life while they are incarcerated, recording and storing the inmates' personal property while also conducting cell searches and training and coordinating other staff on procedures and protocols for the facility. Juvenile correctional officers will also maintain and update the inmates records, attendance records and incidents while enforcing the safety protocols for all staff and inmates, they will also shut down altercations and incidents that may happen, keep all areas of the facility safe and clean and operate any medical equipment that needs to be used. The more intimate, supportive and

involvement aspect that juvenile correctional officers provide is serving as good examples with excellent behavior and enforcing that to the inmates, being involved in crisis intervention programs, group counseling, private counseling and support to all inmates. Juvenile correctional officers should also expect to provide service to juveniles with activities outside the facility such as appointments and they should communicate with inmates' families and other important people in their lives who can provide additional support after release (Indeed Editorial Team 2022).

### ***Hiring Process***

There are two different levels of juvenile correctional officers, federal and state or local; the two different levels carry different requirements given that federal level juvenile correctional officers work with juveniles charged with more intense and serious crimes (Correctionalofficer.org). At the state or local level, the minimum requirements for a juvenile correctional officer are being a U.S. citizen, be at least 21 years old, have a high school diploma or GED, pass a background check with no felony convictions and be physically fit (Correctionalofficers.org, Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). To work as a juvenile correctional officer at a federal level, the same requirements are expected at state/local level, along with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice or closely related field, ability to possess a firearm, pass a drug test, medical exam, psychological exam, written exam and pass a fitness test (Correctionalofficers.org, Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). At the federal level, the Bureau of Prisons may waive the bachelor's degree for time served in the military or other experience in law enforcement (Correctionalofficer.org).

After a person is hired as a juvenile correctional officer at the state or local level, they will receive what is called "in-service training" at a local training facility to undergo training on juvenile facilities, procedures, skills, administration and situational learning purposes (Corectionalofficer.org). At the federal level, after one has been hired, they will be sent to an

intensive, but short three week program at the Bureau of Prisons Staff Training Academy at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, located in Georgia (Correctionalofficer.org). The last step in the hiring procedure, completed after training, is being sworn in, taking an oath of office with police powers such as carrying a firearm, making arrests and escorting inmates to juvenile court proceedings (Correctionalofficers.org). Juvenile correctional officers have an important role in shaping the duration of stay at a correctional facility for juveniles; they have the opportunity to guide juveniles to a positive experience and correct and rehabilitate their behaviors and previous actions. It is imperative during the hiring and training process for an employee to acknowledge that they can take on the role of being a rule enforcer as well as a mentor and form of guidance for juveniles in a correctional setting.

### **Probation Officers**

A juvenile probation officer works directly with the juvenile trial courts, under the supervision of the given chief probation officer, with juveniles, ages 18 or younger, who have committed a crime and have been sentenced to probation, rather than to a correctional facility (The Career Project, 2020). A juvenile probation officer will work with the courts, social services, schools and other law enforcement to create a better path diverting away from crime for a juvenile (The Career Project, 2020). The role of a juvenile probation officer is important because they bridge the gap between juvenile courts and juvenile detention centers, assuring that the juvenile will abide by the rules given to them by the court and keep a steady track on the right path to adulthood. A juvenile probation officer serves as both a mentor and a rule enforcer; a healthy balance is required to achieve the goal of serving a sentence while providing guidance and rehabilitation (The Career Project, 2020).

There are many duties listed by the Massachusetts Court System (Mass.gov) that a juvenile probation officer will comply with. The juvenile court expects juvenile probation officers to handle all cases prior to their date to appear in court, while keeping a communicative relationship with the head of probation, the judge and their probationers (Mass.gov). A juvenile probation officer must keep in order all of their cases and take detailed notes on each case; background information must be noted for future investigations (Mass.gov). An important duty is contacting outside organizations that can provide different types of treatments and programs designated to help any of their probationers; a relationship must be maintained with coordinators and mentors to ensure growth and attendance to any meeting the probationer must attend (Mass.gov). An example of outside activities or programs may be participation in drug court, or group therapy. Juvenile probation officers must keep a tight relationship with their probationers and meet with them to work on their progress and any updates that may come up regarding a specific case or task given by the juvenile court (Mass.gov). The Massachusetts Court System (Mass.gov) has many duties for juvenile probation officers that focus on collaboration and communication which is important, so cases do not get mixed up and information does not get lost.

### ***Hiring Process***

To become a juvenile probation officer in Massachusetts, an applicant must have a completed bachelor's degree in criminal justice or a closely related human services field along with two years of experience in a criminal justice career, human services career or being an associate juvenile probation officer, (January 2022). An associate probation officer helps with scheduling meetings, prepares reports for probation officers, collaborating paperwork and assisting, or shadowing, probation officers (January 2022). Someone applying for this position

who has a graduate degree in administration, education, criminal justice, law, management, or the behavioral sciences may be exempted for the prior experience requirement, as long as all educational requirements were met (January 2022). A candidate for this position will also undergo an extensive background check as part of the hiring process; a basic skills assessment will need to be passed for further consideration for the position of a juvenile probation officer before the hiring process begins (Mass.gov). Once a person is hired for this position in Massachusetts, they will have to complete a 120-hour orientation training. To further their position as a Juvenile Probation Officer II, they will need to complete 40 more hours of continuing education and training (January 2022). A Juvenile Probation Officer II will have more case management duties and experience to provide more insight through their experience (January 2022).

The Career Project (2020) explains the most relevant skills that a juvenile probation officer can have, in order to provide the best service and progression opportunities for juveniles on probation. The skills include excellent decision-making skills, where there are many times that quick decisions need to be made while also providing the greatest interest of the juvenile (The Career Project, 2020). An example of a juvenile probation officer being quick to react is de-escalating a situation where a juvenile is negatively reacting to their sentence in a courtroom. Juvenile probation officers must also keep an open mind to diversity and not be biased towards any gender or race, providing equal opportunity (The Career Project, 2020). Two very important skills that were listed were excellent listening and communication skills; it is important for the juvenile offender to trust their probation officer and have an equal relationship of communication (The Career Project, 2020). The juvenile probation officer must also excel in communicating with other colleagues in order to keep track of progress and stay on the same page (the Career

Project, 2020). Lastly, The Career Project (2020) states that a juvenile probation officer should carry empathy and take in consideration the negative or traumatic experiences a juvenile has endured and focus on how they can change their lives for the better. The Massachusetts Court System (Mass.gov) provides a more extensive list of skills, some including collaboration, self-awareness and enhancing positive behaviors.

## **Conclusion**

Working with juveniles can be difficult for many reasons; it takes a lot of work, strength and dedication. On both sides, the child victim and the employee, experiences can be heavy and traumatizing. This is why it is so important for juvenile employees to carry the strength for the reward for positively changing and impacting a child's life. Although there are many jobs catered to benefit the youth after they are abused or have committed crimes, there is always room for improvement and change for the best possible outcomes. The protection of juveniles, legally, mentally and physically, is imperative in whatever stage they are at in their adolescent lives. The careers discussed in this paper highlighted different realms of what it is like working with juveniles in different settings. A DCF social worker is someone who intervenes, at any point of time in an adolescent's youth. Intervention at a point of abuse, neglect or alternative problems stemming from home is important to address early on, and ensure the problem will be taken care of at all costs. A juvenile probation officer is someone who is a mentor, as well as a rule enforcer, who guides juveniles and keeps them on track through their sentence determined by the juvenile court. Juvenile probation is a time for juveniles to reflect and improve their issues that they are facing; it serves as a chance to adopt new skills and motivation to get out of the system. Juvenile correctional officers serve as rule and structure enforcers, while juveniles are incarcerated. Correctional officers can also have a great impact on the experience incarcerated

juveniles have; with the training they receive they are able to not only physically de-escalate situations, they are able to provide emotional support and encourage the juveniles to engage and rehabilitate with options that are available to them in the correctional facilities.

With community groups, in-home and out-of-home treatment and therapies, and engagement programs provided by social services, juveniles have many opportunities to get on the right path to adulthood. However, there is always room for improvement both in treatment and rehabilitation options and justice for juveniles. The Department of Youth services and DCF work closely with agencies that work for and with juveniles such as mental health services, emotional support, clinical treatment, education and career exploration, and victim services (Mass.gov). With more research and opportunities to facilitate more programs, both preventative and after a crime has been committed, it could be foreseen that juvenile crime rates will go down and more children have the possibility for positive futures. A great resource for being informed and educating on juvenile justice issues and reforms comes from The Sentencing Project website ("Youth Justice", 2022). One topic that is controversial to many people and is a topic of debate is juveniles in adult courts or serving adult sentences ("Youth Justice | The Sentencing Project", 2022). There is a debate whether violent juvenile criminals should serve as adults in court and with their sentences; some argue they should and some argue that it is unjust to have juveniles in adult courts and prisons ("Youth Justice | The Sentencing Project", 2022). The issue of juveniles being tried as adults in court is an issue that is prevalent in the scope of juvenile justice and deserves more research and accountability for the consequences that may arise from treating children as adults.

As a criminal justice major with interest in juveniles and juvenile crime, I could see myself in a position potentially working with the Department of Children and Families. I believe

it is very important to address wrongful doig to innocent children who are vulnerable and cannot always protect themselves. I believe it is devastating to hear stories about children who were abused and end up in a state of mind they do not want to be in. Every child deserves a nurturing family, home and hope for the future. I think social workers are the backbone of the criminal justice system, as they provide around the clock service to children of all kinds. DCF is an important resource because intervening with youth who have troubled backgrounds can hopefully prevent extending abuse or neglect in the future as well as potentially preventing youth from entering the criminal justice system; with the provided resources and treatment options. DCF social workers detect youth who, from negative childhood experiences, have a higher risk of committing crime given the risk factors and circumstances of the reason(s) for intervention. With more resources, research, and accountability, the juvenile justice system is one that can ongoingly improve and grow for the rights and justice of the youth.

## References

- Abrams, D. E. (2005). Reforming Juvenile Delinquency Treatment to Enhance Rehabilitation, Personal Accountability, and Public Safety. *Oregon Law Review*, *84*(4), 1001–1092.
- Alltucker, K. W., Bullis, M., Close, D., & Yovanoff, P. (2006). Different Pathways to Juvenile Delinquency: Characteristics of Early and Late Starters in a Sample of Previously Incarcerated Youth. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *15*(4), 475–488.
- Baetz, C. L., Branson, C. E., Weinberger, E., Rose, R. E., Petkova, E., Horwitz, S. M., & Hoagwood, K. E. (2021). The effectiveness of PTSD treatment for adolescents in the juvenile justice system: A systematic review. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*.
- Baidawi, S., & Sheehan, R. (2020). Maltreatment and Delinquency: Examining the Contexts of Offending Amongst Child Protection-Involved Children. *British Journal of Social Work*, *50*(7), 2191–2211.
- Bender K. (2010). Why do some maltreated youth become juvenile offenders? A call for further investigation and adaptation of youth services. *Children & Youth Services Review*, *32*(3), 466–473.

DeGue, S., & Spatz Widom, C. (2009). Does out-of-home placement mediate the relationship between child maltreatment and adult criminality? *Child Maltreatment, 14*(4), 344–355.

*Department of Children and Families*. Mass.gov. (2022). Retrieved 9 April 2022, from <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/department-of-children-and-families-dcf#:~:text=DCF%20Services%20for%20Children%2C%20Youth%2C%20and%20Families&text=For%20children%20who%20cannot%20remain,child%20or%20applying%20for%20guardianship>.

*DYS Programs and Services*. Mass.gov. (2022). Retrieved 10 April 2022, from <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dys-programs-and-services>.

Indeed Editorial Team. *How do I become a juvenile correctional officer?* Indeed Career Guide. (2022, January 10). Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/how-to-become-juvenile-correctional-officer#:~:text=Juvenile%20correctional%20officers%20are%20law,to%20those%20under%20their%20supervision>.

Janssen, J., Wagage, S., Cole, L. M., Gale, B. E., & Goldstein, N. E. S. (2019). Collateral Consequences for Juveniles in the Justice System: Change in Perceptions after an Educational Intervention. *Analyses of Social Issues & Public Policy, 19*(1), 456–475.

Jolivette, K., Swoszowski, N. C., Sprague, J., Boden, L. J., & Wang, E. (2020). Implementing Facility-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in Secure Juvenile

Correction Settings: Results of an Evaluation Study. *Remedial & Special Education*, 41(2), 70–79.

Jones, C. G. A., & Weatherburn, D. J. (2011). Willingness to pay for rehabilitation versus punishment to reduce adult and juvenile crime. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 46(1), 9.

*Juvenile corrections officer*. CorrectionalOfficer.org. (n.d.). Retrieved April 7, 2022, from <https://www.correctionalofficer.org/career/juvenile-corrections-officer>

*Juvenile probation officer*. The Career Project. (2020, November 3). Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <https://www.thecareerproject.org/job-title/juvenile-probation-officer/>

Lambie, I., & Randell, I. (2013). The impact of incarceration on juvenile offenders. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 33(3), 448-459.

Lane, J. (2018). Addressing Juvenile Crime: What Have We Learned, and How Should We Proceed. *Criminology and Public Policy*, 17(2), 283–308.

Mass.gov (2022). Adolescent Support Programs. Retrieved 9 April 2022, from <https://www.mass.gov/guides/adolescent-support-programs-0>.

Mass.gov. (n.d.). *Job Description and Qualifications for Probation Officer Juvenile Court Department*. MASSACHUSETTS COURT SYSTEM. Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <https://www.mass.gov/doc/probation-officer-examination-information/download>

*Massachusetts Juvenile Probation Officer Jobs: How to become a juvenile probation officer in Massachusetts through training*. How to Become a Probation Officer | Education | Certification and Training. (2022, January 20). Retrieved April 7, 2022, from <https://www.probationofficeredu.org/massachusetts/massachusetts-juvenile-probation-officer>

Milojevich, H. M., Russell, M. A., & Quas, J. A. (2018). Unpacking the associations among maltreatment, disengagement coping, and behavioral functioning in high-risk youth. *Child Maltreatment*, 23(4), 355–364.

*Overview of the department of children and families*. Mass.gov. (2017, December 17). Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/overview-of-the-department-of-childrenand-families#:~:text=OCA's%20mission%2C%20according%20to%20its,new%20Child%20Advocate%20is%20appointed.>

Pence, D., & Wilson, C. (1992). *The Role of Law Enforcement in the Response to Child Abuse and Neglect*. childwelfare.gov. Retrieved 5 May 2022, from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/law.pdf>.

Piquero, A. R., & Steinberg, L. (2010). Public preferences for rehabilitation versus incarceration of juvenile offenders. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38(1), 1–6.

Reilly, A. (2016, January 10). *A day in the life of a DCF caseworker*. News. Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <https://www.wgbh.org/news/post/day-life-dcf-caseworker>

*Review DCF policies*. Mass.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <https://www.mass.gov/lists/review-dcf-policies>

Simmons-Horton, S. Y. (2021). “A Bad Combination”: Lived Experiences of Youth Involved in the Foster Care and Juvenile Justice Systems. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 38(6), 583–597.

*Social Worker I - southern region - pipeline*. MassCareers. (n.d.). Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <https://massanf.taleo.net/careersection/exm/jobdetail.ftl?job=210000HU&tz=GMT07%3A00&tzname=PST8PDT>

*Social Worker - Social and Human Services*. Job Opening: Social Worker - Social And Human Services - Department of Administrative Services. (n.d.). Retrieved April 8, 2022, from [https://www.jobapscloud.com/CT/sup/bulpreview.asp?](https://www.jobapscloud.com/CT/sup/bulpreview.asp?R1=210324&R2=7713SH&R3=002)

R1=210324&R2=7713SH&R3=002

Sprague, J., Jolivet, K., Boden, L., & Wang, E. (2020). Implementing Facility-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in Secure Juvenile Correction Settings: Results of an Evaluation Study. *Remedial And Special Education, 41*(2), 70-79.

*The Department of Children and Families Investigates abuse or neglect*. MassLegalHelp. (2021, June). Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <https://www.masslegalhelp.org/children-andfamilies/dcf>

Yang, J., McCuish, E., & Corrado, R. (2021). Is the Foster Care-Crime Relationship a Consequence of Exposure? Examining Potential Moderating Factors. *Youth Violence & Juvenile Justice, 19*(1), 94–112.

*Youth Justice | The Sentencing Project*. The Sentencing Project. (2022). Retrieved 6 May 2022, from <https://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/juvenile-justice/>.