



State of Florida

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE USE OF DETENTION

1. Detention should be a continuum of supervision – not a building – that ranges from secure custody for dangerous youth to less restrictive options for juveniles who pose little risk of reoffending and not appearing in court.
2. There are two purposes of pre-dispositional detention:
 - To prevent juveniles from committing additional offenses while charges are pending.
 - To ensure juveniles appear in court.
3. Overcrowding in secure juvenile detention is dangerous and not in the best interest of youth, staff or the general public.
4. Efficient case processing of juveniles held in secure detention and detention alternatives is critically important as a means of expediting cases and preventing overcrowding.
5. Placements in secure detention should conform to the laws of Florida and should be rational and objective rather than arbitrary and subjective.
6. Disproportionate minority confinement exists in Florida's secure detention facilities. A community dialogue and thoughtful attention to this condition by law enforcement, court services, prosecutors, defense attorneys, etc. is needed.
7. Any cost savings achieved by reducing the historical utilization of secure detention should be reprogrammed to develop and maintain needed and effective detention alternatives.
8. Detention improvement is an incremental process, in which the goal is not to make large sudden overnight leaps, but rather to make progress on a daily process



State of Florida Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)

The intent of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) is to change policies, practices and programs so as to ensure that only those youth who are the greatest risk to public safety are held in secure detention. The overall goals are to protect public safety, reduce the unnecessary or inappropriate use of secure detention and to redirect public finances to more effective purposes. The effort, a partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is grounded in eight core strategies including collaboration; reliance on data; objective admissions screening; alternatives to secure detention; expedited case processing; rigorous facility inspections; and strategies to reduce racial disparities where they exist. DJJ serves as a coordinating center for detention reform efforts at the local and state level, accomplished through partnerships among all stakeholders.