

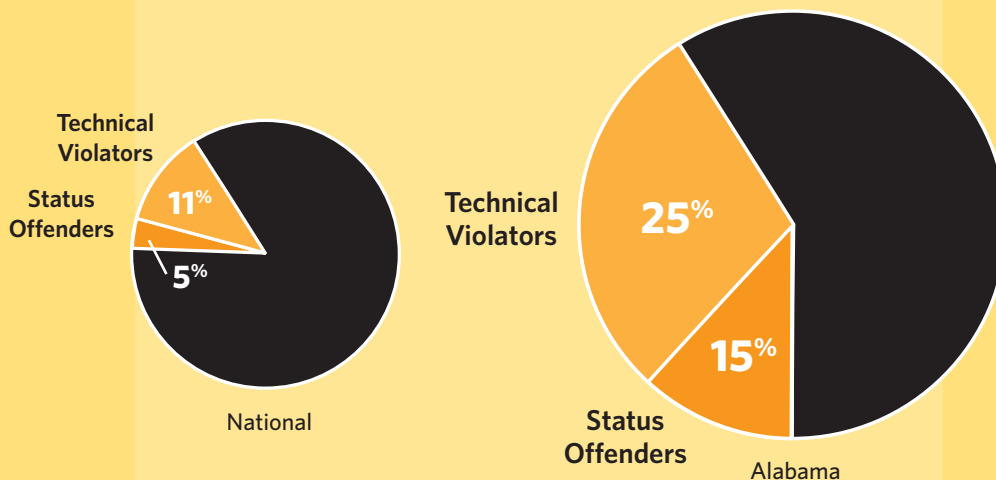
Why does Alabama treat so many children like criminals?

Every year, Alabama's juvenile justice system spends millions of taxpayer dollars on residential facilities for children who have been removed from their homes. **An alarming percentage of those children have not even committed a crime — 40% in all.** (*national average: 16%*)

15% are committed to the Department of Youth Services for "status offenses" — conduct that would not be an offense if committed by an adult. (*national average: 5%*)

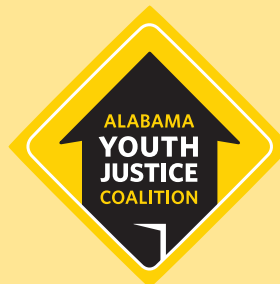
Another 25% are committed to DYS for "technical violations" — failing to comply with the terms of a probation or aftercare agreement. (*national average: 11%*)

The situation for girls is even worse. Of all girls in DYS residential facilities in Alabama, 64% have not committed a crime. (*national average: 29%*)

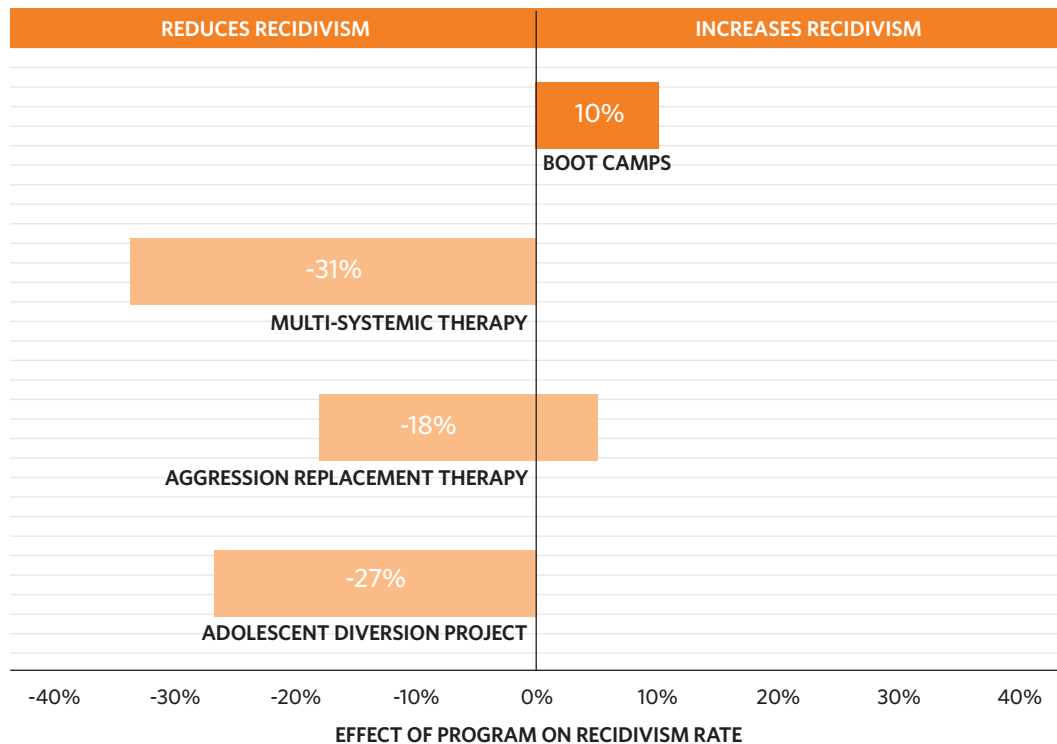


This practice is not only unnecessarily expensive, but also tends to increase juvenile crime. Experts agree that confinement in secure institutions with serious offenders encourages delinquent behavior. When youth return home, they are more likely to break the law.

To learn more, contact the
Alabama Youth Justice Coalition
Post Office Box 4516
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36103-4516
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Boot Camps Increase Juvenile Crime



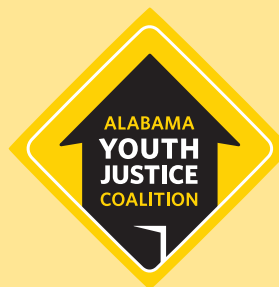
SOURCE: Meta-analysis conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy

“‘Scare tactics’ don’t work and there is some evidence that they make the problem worse rather than simply not working. ...When young people with delinquent proclivities are brought together, the more sophisticated can instruct the more naive in precisely the behaviors that the intervener wishes to prevent.”

On the other hand, community-based clinical treatment and family therapy “have demonstrated reductions in long-term rates of rearrest, violent crime arrest, and out-of-home placements.”

— National Institute of Health

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Children with mental health conditions need treatment — not punishment

An overwhelming majority of children involved in the juvenile justice system have mental health needs that require specialized treatment.

70% or more of court-involved youth have a diagnosable mental health disorder.

66% of court-involved youth with mental health problems also have co-occurring substance abuse disorders.

52% of youth in the juvenile justice system have current suicidal ideation.

20% of youth in the juvenile justice system have a serious mental health disorder.

But all too often, these vulnerable youth get locked up in expensive juvenile prisons that do not provide adequate treatment.

“We have a moral and legal responsibility to provide rehabilitative programs and treatments.”

— Walter Wood, Executive Director
Alabama Department of Youth Services

Community-based sanctions that focus on the family and employ evidence-based practices not only cost far less than juvenile prisons, but are also proven to reduce crime and help children succeed. Experts agree:

Community-based clinical treatment and family therapy “have demonstrated reductions in long-term rates of rearrest, violent crime arrest, and out-of-home placements.”

— National Institute of Health

“[Family and community-based] intervention programs can be cost-effective and can reduce the likelihood that youths will become repeat offenders. . . . Reclaiming youths from a violent lifestyle has clear advantages over warehousing them in prisons and training schools.”

— U.S. Surgeon General

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