

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/identifying-engaging-and-empowering-families-a-charge-for-juvenile-justice-agencies>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

From arrest to probation, placement, and reentry, youth in the juvenile justice system deserve to have their families involved in their care. Studies show that kids in the system are much more likely to succeed long-term when they have frequent contact with their families. Unfortunately, juvenile justice agencies often have difficulty working with families and involving them in the decision-making process. This report offers three major steps agencies can take to improve their engagement efforts:

Youth in the juvenile justice system fare best when their families are directly involved in their care. Agencies often struggle to properly engage families, but through Identification, Engagement, and Empowerment, agencies can ensure families are involved in their youths' juvenile justice outcomes.

Kids who receive frequent visits from their parents often earn better grades, have fewer violent incidents while in custody, and have lower recidivism rates.

Juvenile justice agency leaders need to send a strong, clear and consistent message about the importance of family to succeed.

Family should be defined broadly to reflect all the positive people a young person can have involved in their life, including extended family, mentors, teachers, and coaches.

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