

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/in-texas-parents-are-partners-in-juvenile-justice>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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In a [recent survey](#) of youth at a Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) facility, the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition heard from youth that staying connected to their families is more difficult at state facilities as compared to county detention centers, and that they would like more contact with their families. In my role as the TJJD family liaison coordinator, I have been working on several ways to establish and enhance family partnerships.

In 2007, parents, youth, advocacy groups, and agency staff worked together to create the [Parents Bill of Rights](#), which establishes that parents are partners with correctional staff, educators, and treatment providers in their child's rehabilitation and are encouraged and assisted to actively participate in the design and implementation of their child's treatment, from intake to discharge.

With the Bills of Rights as its guide, TJJD offers a number of opportunities for families to learn about the agency, participate in youth's treatment, and spend time together:

TJJD also attends to families' needs in preparation for the youth's return home and during that transition period:

TJJD's staff takes our promise to partner with parents seriously and are committed to creating meaningful ways to inform, involve, and engage parents in their child's rehabilitation. We are happy to be a part of Vera's initiative to [develop family engagement standards for juvenile justice](#) that can help other states enhance their focus on family. What types of family engagement activities are working well in your jurisdiction?

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