

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/respice-care-an-alternative-to-foster-care-for-status-offenders-in-new-york-city>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

Most adolescents who skip school, run away, or rebel in other ways do not need to be placed in foster care. Across the country, however, parents desperate to control children who engage in what the justice system calls "status offenses" are turning to government as a last resort. Their children might spend months in a foster care group home, but these families are unlikely to receive the help they need. This publication explores the problem nationally and in New York and outlines a potential alternative: respite care. As defined by Vera, a respite care program specifically for status offenders would briefly separate parents and children and use mediation to reunite and prepare them to take advantage of services in their communities. The success of such a program would provide a real solution for families in crisis and conserve scarce, expensive public resources. Vera's research and planning leading up to this publication are steps toward mounting a demonstration of respite care in New York City.

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