



Justice for Families Set to Release National Report

## New Report Exposes Crisis in Juvenile Justice System and its Devastating Impacts on Families – Solutions Proposed!

By DataCenter On September 10, 2012 · Add Comment

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Hot off the press! [Justice for Families \(J4F\)](#) and [DataCenter](#) are proud to release a new report on the juvenile justice system. The report, titled “[Families Unlocking Futures: Solutions to the Crisis in Juvenile Justice](#),” offers **first of its kind analysis** on how the juvenile justice system actually does more to feed the nation’s vast prison system than to deter young people from system involvement. Based on over **1,000 surveys** with parents and family members of incarcerated youth and **24 focus groups** nationwide, the report presents a body of **data never captured or examined before**.

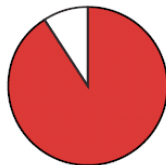
Using a participatory model, DataCenter co-led a research process that supported both the leadership development for family members of affected youth and the expansion of J4F’s nationwide network. The report **examines the juvenile justice system from the perspectives of those who are most impacted – the involved youth and their families**.

This comprehensive study reveals the incredible damage that the system causes to families and communities. It aims to correct misperceptions about system-involved youth. It demonstrates the need for families to redesign the juvenile justice system. The report uncovers crucial flaws that burden, alienate, and exclude families from the treatment of system-involved youth. Here are a few of the report’s findings:

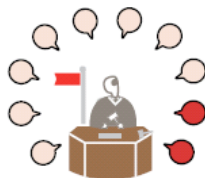
- States spent **\$5.7 billion** locking up **64,558 youth** in 2007. That’s \$88,000 per year per youth or \$240.99 each day.



Approximately one in three families said they have had to choose between paying for basic necessities like food and making court-related payments.



91% of survey respondents said that courts should involve families more in decisions on what happens to a child found delinquent/guilty.



More than eight in ten family members surveyed reported that they were never asked by a judge what should happen to their child.

The report illustrates how declining social services and public education combined with aggressive police tactics, zero-tolerance policies, and the rapid growth of the prison system wreak havoc on low-income communities and communities of color.

But Families Unlocking Futures goes beyond elucidating problems of the juvenile justice system—it puts forth viable, proven solutions and offers a blueprint for Youth Justice Transformation.

For more, check out the [Executive Summary \(PDF\)](#) or [Complete Report \(PDF\)](#).

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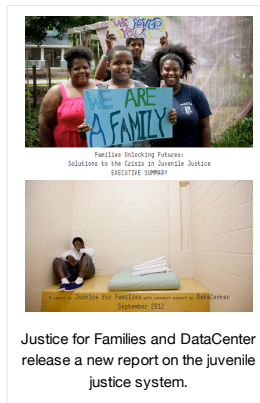
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Justice for Families and DataCenter release a new report on the juvenile justice system.

From research design and data collection to messaging and story-telling, DataCenter supports the community participation process in each of our national research projects. As a result, DataCenter's approach builds the power of community-based organizations to engage both locally and nationally while generating evidence to back up what they know.

Do you need hard-hitting numbers or stories to give evidence to a reality you already experience? Contact the Research Justice experts [here](#).

This **extraordinary report is a must-read for people of conscience**, people who know that young people who make mistakes

and struggle in school deserve our care, compassion and concern — not humiliation, prison cells, relentless shame, and all their family supports stripped from them.

— **Michelle Alexander**, Associate Professor of Law, Ohio State University and Author, *The New Jim Crow*

This report is a **wake-up call to juvenile justice practitioners**. Through the words and experiences of relatives of court-involved youth, it poignantly highlights how the system's policies and practices undermine the ambitions of families to guide and support their children and to make their communities safer.

— **Bart Lubow**, Director of Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Justice Strategy Group

This report provides **powerful analysis and insights from voices too often ignored in the formal youth justice system**. It rejects the notion that parents are often to blame for youthful misbehaviors and provides specific approaches to involving parents and families in responses that are equitable, restorative and effective.

— **James Bell**, Founder and Executive Director, W. Haywood Burns Institute

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