

### ***How does NJPC support parents raising justice-involved youth?***

NJPC provides parents, caregivers, family members with:

- On-going support
- Parents Coalition of Justice-Involved Youth
- Assistance in understanding your rights and responsibilities in the juvenile justice system
- Opportunities to share information, ideas, and resources
- Free legal advice from a qualified attorney
- Help in a time of crisis
- Advocacy

### ***What can a NJPC Advocate do for you?***

NJPC Advocates accompany parents, caregivers and family members to court appointments, probation meetings, attorney meetings, and help with transportation issues for family visits if necessary.

The New Jersey Parents' Caucus is a non-profit organization governed and staffed by parents and caregivers of children with serious emotional and behavioral challenges. Since 1990, NJPC has worked diligently with parents, caregivers, family members, government agencies, legislators, interested professionals and other organizations to ensure that the needs of New Jersey families raising children with emotional and behavioral challenges are met. NJPC provides information & referral services, outreach, training, educational programs, advocacy and evaluation in Mental Health, Juvenile Justice, DCP&P and Special Education.



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*If your child is currently charged with a crime, please contact us at 908-994-7471.*

***“Families have the potential to be the greatest source of positive change and support for youth involved in the Juvenile Justice System”***

## ***New Jersey Parents Caucus*** ***Helping Parents Help Their Children***



## ***NJ Youth Justice Initiative***

*“It’s important that people know that these are just kids, and young kids too.”*

*NJPC is collaborating with organizations throughout the state to reform the practice of juvenile waiver, solitary confinement, youth transfers and racial and ethnic disparities in New Jersey. We support parents and caregivers raising justice-involved youth through advocacy, support groups and educational training so they may better understand their rights and responsibilities.*

## ***Racial & Ethnic Disparities***

In New Jersey's adult and juvenile justice system, youth of color\* are over-represented and often receive disproportionately punitive responses compared to their white counterparts, and for the same crimes. This is a direct result of crime policy and a combination of policy and practice in schools, police departments and juvenile courts.

### ***Racial & Ethnic Statistics\*\****

- Of 225 youth, ages 0-17, in the Juvenile & Adult System
  - 73% are African-American
  - 17% are of Hispanic/Latin origin
  - 10% are Caucasian
- Of 230 youth, ages 0-17, in the Juvenile & Adult System
  - 21% are from Camden County
  - 14% are from Hudson County
  - 10% are from Middlesex County

### ***Racial & Ethnic Breakdown of Juveniles***

- Of 378 committed youth
  - 70% are African-American
  - 18% are of Hispanic/Latin origin
  - 10% are Caucasian
- Of 378 committed youth
  - 18% are from Camden County
  - 15% are from Union County
  - 10% are from Essex County

\*Defined as African American, Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Native American.

\*\* Based on data collection by the New Jersey Parents' Caucus, 2014

‡ New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission – “Juvenile Demographics and Statistics” – July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014

## ***Judicial Waivers***

One of the ways in which youth can be transferred to the adult system is through a *judicial waiver*. In New Jersey, kids as young as 14 can be waived. The process is initiated by the prosecutor by filing a waiver motion to the Court. The Court then determines probable cause and decides whether or not to waive.

If the accused youth is 14 years of age or older, they alone can make the decision to have their case waived to the adult court, without their families knowledge or permission.

If a youth is waived, they will be treated in the exact same manner and face the same punishments as an adult, which includes serving their sentence in an adult prison.

### ***Statistics on Youth Sentenced As Adults\*\****

- 34% more likely to commit crimes
- 5 times as likely to be sexually assaulted and abused
- Make up 21% of all substantiated sexual violence
- 36 times more likely to commit suicide in an adult jail than in a juvenile facility

\*\* In a recent report published by the CDC and led by the Task Force on Community Preventive Services



## ***Juvenile Transfers***

It is not uncommon to find that a youth incarcerated in a juvenile facility has been *transferred*, or moved, to an adult prison without going through the waiver process, any other sort of due process, or even the parent's knowledge of the event.

Once a youth in a juvenile facility reaches the age of 18, it is entirely possible that they can be transferred to an adult facility based on the recommendation of a correctional officer.

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### ***Solitary Confinement***

*Solitary confinement*, or “The Box,” or “BAU” is a form of imprisonment in which an individual is isolated from any human contact.

In New Jersey, juveniles are locked away for up to five days as disciplinary punishment, ***but can be held there for much longer if safety is at risk.***

### ***Why should we not subject juveniles to solitary confinement?***

The risk is real that young people in confinement face new or exacerbated mental disabilities or other serious mental health problems\*\*\*. Solitary Confinement causes unimaginable stress, anxiety, and discomfort, and young people simply have fewer psychological resources than adults to deal with these conditions\*\*\*.

***“Nowhere is the damaging impact of incarceration on vulnerable children more obvious than when it involves solitary confinement.”***

US Attorney General's National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence

\*\*\*“Growing Up Locked Down” - ACLU, Human Rights Watch – October 2012