



# OJJDP FACT SHEET

John J. Wilson, Acting Administrator

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## Curriculum for Training Educators of Youth in Confinement

by Carol Cramer Brooks and Carter White

Education programs can improve overall conditions in juvenile confinement facilities. Education should be the cornerstone of a juvenile confinement facility's programs through emphasis on cognitive development, behavioral skills, vocational training, and active learning and relearning. Yet educators in these facilities often feel isolated, alienated, and ill-prepared to teach incarcerated juvenile offenders.

Research indicates that educators are indeed seldom prepared for the juvenile confinement setting, where students are rarely uniform in age, grade level, academic competency, or behavior. Youth in institutional settings often have a host of problems that may emerge as difficult, sometimes violent behaviors in the classroom. Teachers in these settings also are expected to serve on service delivery teams with other juvenile justice professionals (e.g., counselors, direct care staff, court workers, probation officers, and medical and mental health personnel) and to integrate aspects of treatment plans and institutional discipline into the classroom.

To help teachers address these issues, the National Juvenile Detention Association's Center for Research and Professional Development (CRPD) has developed a National Training Curriculum for Educators of Youth in Confinement Facilities (Educator's Curriculum). With funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and assistance from educators in confinement facilities, CRPD created and field-tested this 40-hour core training curriculum that is designed to assist and train teachers, aides, principals, and others involved with education programs in juvenile detention and corrections facilities.

More than 30 experienced educators from State agencies, school districts, corrections facilities, and county and State detention centers tested the curriculum in 2 pilot sites in Colorado and Michigan. They used the curriculum, critiqued and edited its content, and evaluated its efficacy for detention and corrections educators.

The Educator's Curriculum is primarily designed for use in pre-service training of teachers new to juvenile confinement education programs. It also can be used for inservice training of veteran teachers and other institutional staff. The Educator's Curriculum

addresses the essentials of confinement education and provides ample practice activities to help educators apply the lessons in the curriculum. The Educator's Curriculum contains the following nine modules:

- ◆ **Current trends and issues in juvenile justice and education of juvenile offenders.** This module provides information about current trends and issues in the juvenile justice system, characteristics of juvenile offenders, and best practices in detention and corrections education. The module includes fact sheets, guided group discussions, and a questionnaire on attitudes about delinquents.
- ◆ **Institutional culture.** This section includes information on team-building activities, contraband searches, and rewriting lesson plans from a safety and security perspective. The information will help educators understand the goals of the institution and learn the importance of maintaining relationships with all employees in the institution.
- ◆ **Student assessment.** This module teaches new educators how to identify and apply standards for assessing students and how to develop informal assessment instruments.
- ◆ **Curriculum.** Research-based discussions in this section emphasize the need for curriculums designed to meet specific needs of students and that comply with national standards.
- ◆ **Teaching and learning.** This section examines how students learn and identifies learning and teaching styles. It helps educators match instructional strategies to specific learning styles and develop systematic methods for presenting information to students.
- ◆ **Behavior management.** Demonstration and role-play activities in this module provide pointers and practice on achieving better behavior management and developing specific skills for managing crisis situations.
- ◆ **Social skills.** This section discusses an educator's role in developing students' social skills and provides a model for teaching these skills to all students, regardless of their skill level.

◆ **Transition.** Teachers of confined youth play an important role in helping students make the transition back into their communities. This section helps educators define their role as a member of a transition team and provides guidelines on completing a transition plan for a student leaving a confinement facility.

◆ **Program and classroom evaluation.** Checklists in this module offer suggestions on how to use program and classroom evaluations to gauge effectiveness and improve teaching.

The National Training Curriculum for Educators of Youth in Confinement is available in a three-ring binder or on compact disk from the National Juvenile Detention Association, CRPD, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. To order the

curriculum or obtain information about training opportunities using the curriculum, contact CRPD at 517-432-1242 (phone) or njda@ssc.msu.edu (e-mail).

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