

41st Annual InterCourt Conference



Session 3C:
Standards for Juvenile
Probation

March 13, 2025
3:15 p.m.— 4:45 p.m.

Hilton Columbus at
Easton Town Center
Columbus, OH

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FACULTY BIOGRAPHY

STUART M. BERRY, MSW, LISW is a licensed independent social worker in Ohio and served as the Court Administrator for the Delaware County Juvenile and Probate Court(s) from 1984- 2003. He was instrumental in developing management and operational systems to guide the court's growth during two decades in which referrals increased ten fold, staff size grew from eight to ninety-five, and the Court's budget grew from three hundred thousand to 3.5 million. Mr. Berry oversaw the development of model programs of classification, differential supervision, in-home services, and intensive probation and piloted programs in locally based Aftercare, In-Home Family Therapy, Wraparound Service Delivery, Out of School Suspension Alternatives, Day Treatment and Juvenile and Family Drug Courts. The Court received the prestigious Outstanding Juvenile Probation Program award from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in 1992, and has been recognized with national awards for model efforts in court administration, programming, and alternatives to incarceration. Mr. Berry was also the Family Court Administrator for Logan County (Ohio), where, for three and a half years, he was involved in the inception of a comprehensive Family Court.

For 27 years, Mr. Berry has been a teacher, trainer and consultant to Juvenile Courts, State/Federal government and social welfare agencies; providing training, evaluation, planning and facilitation. Mr. Berry was involved in the recovery efforts for the child welfare system in Louisiana- and specifically in New Orleans- where he worked from December of 2006- 2009 under the auspices of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. His work there was directed at practice reform, organizational improvement, best practice implementation and improving permanency outcomes for children in foster care and residential placement. Since 2008, Mr. Berry has been involved in strategic consulting work, on statewide reform efforts for Juvenile Justice- through both the Casey Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; with juvenile justice reform projects in Alabama, Illinois and New York City. He is currently also the Special Projects Director for the Lucas County Juvenile Court- where he has played an integral role in developing a comprehensive Juvenile Sex Offender Treatment and Management program for Lucas County.

Mr. Berry received his Masters of Social Work from the Ohio State University in 1978 and is a licensed marital and family therapist, and Diplomate of the American Psychotherapy Association. He has worked in a wide range of public and private settings in both direct service and management. Mr. Berry has been an Adjunct Faculty member at Ohio Wesleyan University, Ohio State University and Antioch College.

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Standards for Juvenile Probation

Stu Berry, MSW, LISW
Consultant



STANDARDS AND MILESTONES

TO GUIDE JUVENILE PROBATION TRANSFORMATION

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

TEN STANDARDS

The following ten areas of concentration are essential for youth justice stakeholders engaged in transforming juvenile probation. Each standard includes a description and specific milestones that can be used as guideposts on the journey toward transformation.

1. **Partnership with Youth, Families and Communities**
2. **Explicit Focus on Race Equity**
3. **Leadership Commitment**
4. **Staff Engagement and Support**
5. **Reliance on Probation for Most Serious Offenses**
6. **Diversion**
7. **Relationship-Based Probation**
8. **Few and Focused Probation Conditions**
9. **Alternatives to Confinement in Response to Violations**
10. **Active Data Use**

STANDARD 1: PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUTH, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Our probation department is committed to engaging and partnering with youth, families and communities and relies on community-based organizations as the primary vehicle for the delivery of services, support and interventions for young people.

MILESTONES

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- 1 The department maintains partnerships with community organizations and other caring adults in neighborhoods where young people on probation live. Probation staff rely on those non-system partners to connect young people with positive opportunities, such as exploring their interests, building skills and contributing to the well-being of their communities.

 - 2 The department employs or contracts with peer mentors or navigators to support families.

 - 3 Fines and fees are not imposed on young people or their families.

 - 4 Youth and families served by the system are involved in juvenile justice planning and compensated accordingly.

 - 5 Probation and other court actors routinely examine and revise their own policies and practices to better accommodate the needs of families.

STANDARD 2: EXPLICIT FOCUS ON RACE EQUITY

Our probation department is committed to reducing and/or eliminating racial and ethnic disparities.

MILESTONES

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- 1 Staff culture encourages courageous conversations about the intersection of race and the department's work.

 - 2 Data is disaggregated by race, and results are analyzed to identify decision points exacerbating disparities and opportunities to advance racial equity.

 - 3 A high-level committee or work group within the department is empowered to pursue an agenda to promote racial and ethnic equity.

 - 4 Equity problems are identified and monitored, and strategies are developed to make meaningful and measurable improvements.

STANDARD 3: LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

Our probation department leadership is committed to transforming juvenile probation.

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- 1 Training programs for new probation staff include the essentials of probation transformation: expanding the use of diversion, minimizing out-of-home placements, limiting probation supervision time, regarding probation officers as coaches not referees, focusing probation on promoting youth

MILESTONES

well-being, achieving equity for youth of color, and relying on community-based organizations, youth and families as true partners.

- 2 System leaders approach annual budget processes as opportunities to support probation transformation and increase funding for positive youth development services.
- 3 Department leadership continually seeks and responds to feedback from young people, families, staff and other stakeholders.
- 4 Department leadership holds annual convenings to evaluate and plan for probation transformation that include participation by staff, community members, family members and young people with lived experience.

STANDARD 4: STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Our probation department is committed to engaging and supporting staff as key actors in probation transformation.

MILESTONES

- 1 Department leaders include staff with active caseloads in planning for new or revised policies.
- 2 Probation leadership prioritizes communication between staff and management and offers mechanisms to support it, such as team meetings.
- 3 Probation leadership makes trend data available to staff and encourages staff to share ideas, identify issues and hold leaders accountable for solutions.
- 4 Probation administration provides incentives for staff to contribute to probation transformation and supports emerging leaders.

STANDARD 5: RELIANCE ON PROBATION FOR MOST SERIOUS OFFENSES

Our probation department is committed to minimizing out-of-home placement and conserving probation resources for youth with serious charges who pose a significant risk to public safety.

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- 1 At least 70% of new probation cases are based on an underlying felony adjudication.

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- 2 Department policy and/or court practice provides that probation officers may not recommend disposition to an out-of-home placement until a family team meeting and/or case staff meeting has been convened to explore all possible alternatives, including emergency intervention strategies.

 - 3 Funding mechanisms at the county and state levels exist to incentivize the use of probation over placement, and local decision-makers leverage those funding mechanisms to maximize resources for community-based support and interventions.

 - 4 Department policy does not mandate out-of-home placement for any youth, regardless of offense or risk profile. Statutory mandates are narrowly applied and tracked annually.

STANDARD 6: DIVERSION

Law enforcement, prosecutors and the probation department are committed to partnering with and resourcing community-based organizations to steer young people away from the formal system and toward an array of community-led diversion options and services.

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- 1 At least 60% of youth accused of delinquent conduct are diverted from juvenile probation, including all youth who do not pose a significant risk to public safety.

 - 2 Law enforcement and schools use alternatives-to-arrest for youth involved in disruptive behavior.

 - 3 Following an arrest, prosecutors, probation departments and/or court-based intake staff have options to divert young people away from juvenile probation and toward community-based support, services and accountability.

 - 4 Youth have access to an array of diversion options, which may include simple warnings, restorative justice interventions and referrals for individual services.

 - 5 There is no informal probation (whereby youth diverted from formal court processing are overseen by probation officers and required to comply with probation conditions).

 - 6 Diversion opportunities are not conditional (non-compliance doesn't pull the youth back into the system).

 - 7 A single community-based organization or a coalition of organizations oversees and coordinates diversion from juvenile court.

STANDARD 7: RELATIONSHIP-BASED PROBATION

Probation is a time-limited, relationship-based intervention, with probation officers serving more as coaches than referees. Both families and young people are engaged in case planning. Case plans are individualized and rely more heavily on incentives than sanctions.

MILESTONES

1	Young people and families, defined broadly, are included in case planning.
2	Case plans address identified needs, engage young people in positive youth development activities and contain realistic expectations and goals that are meaningful to young people and their families.
3	Probation staff who supervise youth act more like coaches than referees.
4	The duration of probation supervision rarely exceeds six to nine months, and almost never exceeds one year.
5	Case management prioritizes incentives to encourage positive behavior by offering opportunities and rewards valued by youth.
6	Incentives are used more than sanctions within every youth case development plan based on a 5-1 ratio.

STANDARD 8: FEW AND FOCUSED PROBATION CONDITIONS

Our probation department limits the number of standardized conditions of probation to five or fewer.

MILESTONES

1	In collaboration with the court, probation orders limit the number of conditions to five or fewer.
2	Probation orders are framed in terms of individualized expectations and goals, rather than boilerplate conditions.

STANDARD 9: ALTERNATIVES TO CONFINEMENT IN RESPONSE TO VIOLATIONS

Technical violations of probation are anticipated as youth learn to navigate a positive and often challenging way forward. Our probation department is committed to eliminating the use of detention for technical violations of probation.

MILESTONES

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- 1 The department uses a structured decision process that eliminates the use of confinement as a consequence for technical violations.
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- 2 A supervisory review, including an immediate discussion of available alternatives to confinement, is conducted for every youth who repeatedly violates probation rules.
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- 3 The department invests more heavily in person-based alternatives to confinement than in technology, such as electronic monitoring. Person-based alternatives to confinement include referrals to services, connection to a mentor, restorative practices and/or evening reporting centers.
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STANDARD 10: ACTIVE DATA USE

Our probation department is committed to continually assessing data to make improvements that enhance and promote probation transformation.

MILESTONES

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- 1 The juvenile probation department compiles annual statistics on basic measures, including incoming referrals, formal prosecutions, dispositions to probation and out-of-home placement, admissions to detention, and length of stay in detention, on supervision and in placement. Each of those basic measures is broken down in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, ZIP code and most serious alleged offense.
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- 2 In addition to quantitative data, the department uses surveys or focus groups to collect qualitative data from staff, family and young people. Qualitative data are reviewed, evaluated and used to inform policy, practice and programs.
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- 3 On an annual basis, the department conducts case reviews on a random sample of 10% of out-of-home placements to ask what policies, practices, programs or partnerships would have been required to avoid placement.
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- 4 On an annual basis, the department leads or participates in a root-cause analysis to identify underlying causes for racial and ethnic disparities and devises strategies to address imbalances in the quality, availability and cultural responsiveness of programs and services.
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PRIORITY PLANNING FORM

Measurement _____

Date Created: _____

Date Modified: _____

Domain	Goal	Next Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurement

Domain	Goal	Next Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurement			
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