

About the Center for Children & Youth Justice



The Center for Children & Youth Justice is shaping better lives for youth involved in Washington's foster care and juvenile justice systems. In partnership with parents, advocates and policymakers, we develop and advance innovative approaches to systemic changes that will support kids, stabilize families and strengthen communities.

What We Do: Established in 2006 as a private nonprofit organization, the Center develops and coordinates programs and initiatives reform our child welfare and juvenile justice systems – changes that can be shared with other organizations and states nationwide to help create better systems and better lives for children and youth everywhere. Our goal is to create systems that are integrated, unbiased, fueled with revolutionary ideas, and backed by programs proven to achieve the best results. By supporting the groundwork of emerging innovative thinking and sharing model practices with others in the field, the Center drives statewide reform efforts and helps to achieve replicable and lasting change. By sponsoring research, targeting grant funding toward evidence-based programs, proposing legislation, developing partnerships, and providing better training and information, we help everyone who cares about our youth to make better decisions about their care and their future.

Who We Are: The Center was founded by retired Washington State Supreme Court Justice Bobbe Bridge, who has been a leading advocate for children and families throughout her 35-year career as an attorney, jurist and civic activist. Our Advisory Board and Board of Directors include some of our state's most respected and experienced leaders in the courts, law enforcement, child welfare, business and nonprofit organizations. A staff of experts in juvenile justice, foster care and children's advocacy manage our programs and initiatives.

Among Our Key Initiatives:

- **Models for Change** – In May 2006, the Center was selected by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to lead its efforts in Washington State to accelerate the development and replication of model programs for change in the juvenile justice system. Working in partnership with other public and private entities in six counties – Benton, Clark, Franklin, King, Pierce and Spokane – the Center is helping to advance local efforts to ensure that the juvenile justice system not only holds young offenders accountable for their actions, but keeps them from harm, provides for their rehabilitation and increases their chances to succeed in life.
- **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** – The Center has assisted the world's largest philanthropic foundation in identifying proven and promising programs that prevent at-risk youth from entering the juvenile justice system or that lead to better lives for those already in the system. The Center advised the Foundation on programs that best serve the most vulnerable youth, investment strategies for advancing promising efforts, and opportunities for collaboration with other public agencies and funders.
- **Infant, Children and Youth Mental Health** – In partnership with mental health agencies, the courts and local school districts, we are working to ensure the mental health of children involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. One program helps parents court-referred to the child welfare system learn to nurture and bond with their infants so they are better prepared to be good parents when they reunite with their children. Another is developing partnerships with public schools to create teams of principals, truancy officers, security staff and others who will intervene – in lieu of police or court action – when mental health issues result in student truancy.
- **Lawyers Fostering Independence** – A program to recruit, train and retain a cadre of King County attorneys to provide pro bono civil legal services to youth involved in or aging out of the child welfare system.
- **Child Welfare Meta-Analysis** – We have developed and soon will share with system stakeholders a comprehensive database of 1,957 recommendations from 256 reports issued over the past 10 years issued by government panels, nonprofit organizations, task forces, etc., regarding the child welfare system.