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Justice-Involved Youth: What Can WE Do?

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In this month's *Pediatrics* Monthly Feature ([10.1542/peds.2020-002857](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-002857)), Sims and Dooley address justice-involved youth (JIY) and the role of pediatricians in caring for these children. Authors note that pediatricians will see JIY in their practice and should be aware of the concerns for those children and their families.

What can we do for these children? We can educate ourselves. We can find local incarceration/arrest rates, and we can determine how many JIY might be in our practice area. We can understand the appropriate language for these children: for example, using JIY instead of "juvenile delinquents". We can recognize that JIY are at high risk for insurance gaps, and we can provide resources for them.

Incarceration and involvement with the juvenile justice system can be traumatic, and we can ensure that JIY are receiving appropriate mental health care. Finally, for those pediatricians who are interested in advocacy and/or find their practice with a larger number of JIY, one area for further advocacy is **Restorative Justice**. This is an international movement whose purpose is to bring victims and perpetrators together in a safe space to tell their stories and to attempt to heal and prevent further trauma. Pediatrician involvement in restorative justice projects can help ensure continued community support and growth of these movements to combat the exceedingly high incarceration rates in our country.

Looking for further reading? A recent policy statement from the AAP Committee on Adolescence provides guidance on approaching these children in our practice .¹ Remember, JIY are still children and with the appropriate care and support, they can thrive. Passionate pediatricians should be able to find opportunities to get involved and make a difference in the lives of these children.

References

1. Mikah C. Owen, Stephenie B. Wallace and COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE. Advocacy and Collaborative Health Care for Justice-Involved Youth. *Pediatrics*. July 2020, 146 (1) e20201755

- [Advocacy and Collaborative Health Care for Justice-Involved Youth](#)
- [Justice-Involved Youth: The Newest Target for Health Equity Approaches?](#)
- [Preventive Care Use Among Justice-Involved and Non-Justice-Involved Youth](#)
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