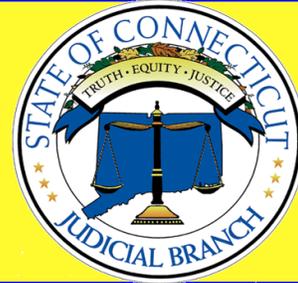


# CSSD Chronicle

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Court Support Services Division  
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## Juvenile Probation Early Intervention Initiative for Children



Juvenile Justice research has shown that child delinquents between the ages of seven and 12 have a two to threefold greater risk of becoming serious, violent, and chronic offenders than adolescents whose delinquent behavior begins in their teens. Child delinquents tend to have longer offending careers, and as a result, these children will constitute a disproportionate threat to public safety and property. They consume

a disproportionately large amount of the resources of schools, the juvenile justice system, and child welfare and mental health agencies. These children are potentially identifiable either before they begin committing crimes, or at the very early stages of criminality, when interventions are most likely to succeed. Treatment services and intervention programs that target these very young offenders offer an exceptional opportunity to improve their long term outcomes, and to reduce the overall level of crime in a community.

In 2012, there were 317 children, aged 12 or younger, referred to Juvenile Court throughout the state. Cases of child delinquency in Connecticut have historically been dismissed because of a child's age, and parents have been encouraged to seek assistance on their own outside of the judicial setting. However, in an effort to decrease the number of delinquency and Families with Service Needs (FWSN) petitions filed, and Orders of Temporary Custody (OTC), the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) are collaborating to promote an Early Intervention Initiative for these children.

The initiative was launched in all 12 juvenile court locations on August 1st. A Gender Responsive Juvenile Probation Officer (GRJPO), is available in each court to provide a more substantive intervention in the cases of children aged 12 or younger. Working with the family, DCF, and the child's school, the GRJPO will develop a case plan that may include referring the family to community and educational services, assisting the family to apply for DCF Voluntary Services, or filing the necessary paperwork for services if there is suspected abuse or neglect.

The officers will also use an assessment tool that has been specially designed to identify the risk and needs of children aged 12 or younger. The Early Assessment Risk List—Pre-Checklist (EARL-PC) was

developed by the Child Development Institute in Toronto, Canada. It is a general checklist designed to determine potential risk for disruptive behavior problems and will enable GRJPOs to identify high risk children early in order to connect them to appropriate services within their community. Officers will be trained by the Child Development Institute to use the EARL-PC during one-day seminars scheduled in October and November. Statistics from Connecticut's use of the EARL-PC will be collected to determine the initiative's effect on risk reduction, and the data will also be shared with the Child Development Institute to further their research.

Julia O'Leary, Deputy Director of Juvenile Services, sees this initiative as an opportunity to assist court-involved children who may commit serious crimes, like fire setting, without further enmeshing them in the juvenile justice system. It also helps ensure that early offenders receive the services necessary to prevent them from returning to the court for other offenses. "But, the biggest and best piece of this initiative," said O'Leary, "is the DCF component to access services that CSSD cannot provide. This is a great opportunity to partner with DCF social workers so young kids don't fall through the cracks."

For more information on the Early Intervention Initiative, contact Juvenile Supervisor Kimball Robbins at [Kimball.Robbins@jud.ct.gov](mailto:Kimball.Robbins@jud.ct.gov).



*The CSSD Chronicle is a regular publication of information and news about the Court Support Services Division. Questions or comments on this edition, or suggestions for future articles, can be directed to [Linda.Grzeika@jud.ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Grzeika@jud.ct.gov)*