

Juvenile Assessment Center: Brevard County's Future Perfect?

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The experiences of law enforcement with problems of juvenile delinquency, with few exceptions, have not changed. Clearly, new and innovative procedures must be created in an effort to change this condition. History shows us that within the criminal justice system, dealing with juveniles is drastically different than dealing with adults. The juvenile offender, by definition, is afforded a more lenient path than the adult offender. What have been the results of this "lenient" path? The law enforcement community has seen an increase in juvenile crime, especially those crimes in the category of "Forcible Felony". Relatively new in the judicial field, the Juvenile Assessment Center is a radical approach to dealing with juvenile offenders. The concept of providing juvenile offenders with alternatives to incarceration is not new. Community service programs consisting of weekend or after school activities, as alternatives to incarceration, are among many choices available to the juvenile justice community. The effectiveness of new solutions to old problems, solutions included inherent in the concept of Juvenile Assessment Centers, are discussed in this paper.