

The Juvenile Justice System Demands More Than the Adult Justice System



The adult system is typically thought to be more punishment-oriented than the juvenile system, but the minor crimes that youth commit mean that the majority of youth are only given an adult probation sentence as well as a lifelong adult criminal record that makes it hard for them to get jobs in the future. In contrast, the juvenile justice system holds youth accountable for their crimes by placing more requirements on youth and their families. The juvenile justice system often requires that youth attend school, pay community and victim restitution, and receive the counseling, mentoring, and training they need to turn their lives around. The adult justice system completely fails those youth who would benefit from the services of the juvenile system by letting them “slip through the cracks.”

Comparison of Requirements between the Adult and Juvenile System in North Carolina

	In the Juvenile System	In the Adult System
Parent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/guardian must be involved. • Youth released from detention center <i>only</i> to parent/guardian. Youth have no right to pretrial release, no right to bond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/guardian need not be notified. • Youth can make bail and leave county jail on own recognizance.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth must attend school or get a GED. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No education requirement.
Age-Appropriate Services, Treatment, and Punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth receive assessments, have frequent contact with court counselors, and report regularly for rehabilitative services. • Youth and families often receive court-ordered evidence-based therapies: counseling, training, mentoring, tutoring, and parenting skills. • Youth with mental health and substance abuse issues receive intensive services. • Regular contact with court counselors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services not required or, often, never even offered. • Those offered are intended for adults and therefore are not developmentally appropriate for youth.