

Building Relationships Between Youth and Law Enforcement: A National Curriculum

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Introduction

A Prosecutor's Role in Building Relationships Between Youth and Law Enforcement

The role of the prosecutor as a community leader has evolved over time. More and more, prosecutors are participating in prevention efforts, diversion efforts, community outreach, youth programs, reentry initiatives, etc. Additionally, prosecutors collaborate with law enforcement not only on individual cases, but on crime prevention efforts, crime strategies, addressing community concerns, and overall efforts to keep communities safe. Prosecutors often work with youth in a variety of areas, including conducting school presentations, hosting mock trial competitions, and participating in youth programs. Prosecutors continue to educate the public about the criminal and juvenile justice system through a variety of mechanisms, including speaking at public events (live and virtual), sharing information on their offices' websites, and publishing reports. As a result of this work that is mainly done outside the courtroom, prosecutors are uniquely positioned to play a leadership and positive role in building relations between youth and law enforcement (LE).

Building relationships between youth and LE is important for any community; youth and police may encounter each other frequently in a variety of places/situations, such as schools, shopping centers, parks, fast food restaurants, parades, marches, community events, sporting events, traffic stops, etc. and it is important that such encounters are peaceful, positive, and respectful. When contentious interactions occur, youth and police are negatively impacted, and the interaction may lead to an arrest, injury, and/or the youth developing a lack of trust in law enforcement. Positive police and youth engagement on the other hand, can increase public safety, reduce crime victimization and recidivism, and foster trust between youth and law enforcement. It is important that youth see officers as an entity they can seek help from and that officers serve as positive role models in the communities they serve.

The relationship between youth and LE can be complex; it is often influenced by how individual officers are trained, and how youth view officers, which can be influenced by family members, friends, television shows, social media, observations, and other societal factors. It is also influenced by our nation's history including but not limited to, slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and incidents of police brutality over a long period of time. It is important to understand the complexities of relations between law enforcement and communities of color. Below are links to video clips that are being provided to help inform this work.

- "A Conversation About Growing Up Black," *The New York Times*
www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSAw51caEeg
- "How parents talk to their African-American sons about the police," *The New York Times/PBS NewsHour*
www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4CAfHdBK7Y&t=98s
- "Parents on the struggle of having 'the talk' with kids and what it means to be black in US," ABC News
www.youtube.com/watch?v=kD6VAF_bXiI

Section I

Guiding Principles from NDAA's Law Enforcement and Youth Advisory Board Pertaining to the Creation of the Curriculum and Video

Many prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, and communities are already involved in initiatives that focus on building relationships between youth and others may just be starting to work in this area. The curriculum and video that NDAA has developed are designed to assist and support jurisdictions whether they are new or experienced in this work. To the extent possible, the following steps should be taken to create or expand programs that build relationships between youth and LE.

- Engage and encourage youth and law enforcement to come together, have conversations, humanize each other's experience, and form positive relationships.
- Make sure both youth and law enforcement are involved in the planning and implementation of the curriculum, making it specific to their communities' needs.
- Consider diversity when deciding who should be involved in the planning and implementation. The prosecutors and law enforcement members who are chosen to participate should be individuals who are committed to working with young people, people of diverse backgrounds, and with communities in general, in the interest of improving relationships between youth and law enforcement. They must be able to facilitate and navigate difficult conversations, including conversations in which there may be wide disagreement; they must be able to make children and youth feel comfortable around them and be able to encourage children and youth to ask them questions.
- Start and end every session with something positive to help open hearts and minds.
- Recognize the historic and current problems that affect relationships between youth populations and law enforcement, including but not limited to slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, police brutality, and racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile and criminal justice systems).
- Ensure that during discussions with youth about interacting with LE, youth take away from the experience the knowledge and understanding that they have rights when interacting with law enforcement, but that it may be beneficial to exercise those rights by making a formal complaint subsequent to the incident rather than act in a manner that may escalate an ongoing situation.
- Ensure that LE take away from experience ways to interact with youth that will keep a particular situation from escalating, and ways to interact as a department in the community that can help build trusting relationships.

Section II

Form a Collaborative

An important first step in developing a local program focused on building relationships between youth and LE is for the prosecutor's office to form a Collaborative of community leaders, community groups, and other community stakeholders to assist in the development or expansion of the program. Engaging other stakeholders and obtaining input from youth as well as other community entities will result in a well-informed and resource-rich program. The size of the Collaborative will vary with each jurisdiction and will depend on factors such as the size of the jurisdiction and available partners and resources.

Recommended partners include, but are not limited to, representatives from:

- Middle Schools and High Schools—Youth members who work with local schools, camps, youth activity organizations, etc. to identify youth of different backgrounds, experiences, etc. to help guide the initiative/program. Advertise on social media and in public places.
- Police Departments—Representatives from different units, including patrol, detectives, community affairs, school resource officers, etc.
- Schools—A teacher, guidance counselor, assistant principal, etc.
- Youth Organizations—Adults who work with youth, including but not limited to at-risk youth
- Social Service Organizations—Adults who work with youth and/or youth and families
- Clergy
- Libraries
- Probation
- Child Welfare Agency
- Youth Detention Service
- Judiciary
- Defense Bar
- Local Businesses or Business Development/Improvement Districts

The prosecutor's office should host several meetings with middle and high school youth of different backgrounds and experiences to learn about relationships between youth and LE from the youth perspective. The prosecutor's office should advertise that it is hosting meetings and should provide the information to schools, camps, youth activity organizations, etc. The meeting space should be conducive to the sharing of ideas and open dialogue. Participation should be voluntary. Parental consent forms may be needed. Community service hours should be offered where applicable. A prosecutor who has experience working with youth should host the meetings, and wherever possible, should be joined by a social worker, victim advocate, etc. or other professional who has received trauma training, should any of the youth discuss traumatic events at these meetings

These meetings should start with an introduction by the prosecutor's office that includes NDAA's video, about the role of the prosecutor. The video can be found [HERE \(www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_ZdbJVpejQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_ZdbJVpejQ).

A discussion should follow regarding how your jurisdiction carries out the responsibilities in the video, and what the differences are between the role of an adult prosecutor and a juvenile prosecutor. The prosecutor should explain the role of the prosecutor's office in conducting community outreach, and as part of that, the importance of building relationships between youth and law enforcement. That discussion should be followed by general icebreakers (e.g., share a fun fact about yourself; what is your favorite TV show/movie/video game; what is your favorite dessert; etc.), and then a collaborative conversation about relations between youth and LE. An open discussion is the recommended format; these questions can be used to help guide the discussion (flexibility should be exercised in facilitating the conversation, as the direction of the conversation may depend on the answers given). It is important to stress that no one should feel like they *have to* answer any question that they do not want to answer:

1. How often do youth interact with LE?
2. At what locations?
3. Are your interactions positive, negative, or neutral?
4. Do you have any family members who are members of LE?
5. Do you have any family members or close friends who have been negatively impacted by law enforcement?
6. In general, do you have a positive, negative, or neutral impression of LE? What has influenced that impression?
7. For those willing to share, could you share an interaction you had with LE that had an impact on you, or that you remember well (positive or negative)?
8. Do youth trust or distrust LE? What does it depend on?
9. For youth who feel negatively about LE, what types of things make them feel that way?
10. When youth and LE interact, are there things LE could do differently?
11. When youth and LE interact, are there things youth could do differently?
12. If there was an event that youth and LE would attend to build or improve relationships, what types of activities would be appropriate for them to do?

The prosecutor's office should also meet with members of law enforcement. The meeting should start with an introduction by the prosecutor's office about the importance of building relationships between youth and law enforcement, followed by general icebreakers, and then a collaborative conversation about relations between youth and LE. An open discussion is the recommended format; these questions can be used to help guide the discussion (flexibility should be exercised in facilitating the conversation, as the direction of the conversation may depend on the answers given):

1. How often do you interact with youth while on duty?
2. At what locations?
3. Are your interactions positive, negative, or neutral?
4. In general, do you have a positive, negative, or neutral impression of youth? What has influenced that impression?
5. For those willing to share, could you share an interaction you had with a youth that had an impact on you, or that you remember well (positive or negative)?
6. For those who feel negatively about youth, what types of things make them feel that way?
7. When youth and LE interact, are there things youth could do differently?
8. When youth and LE interact, are there things LE could do differently?
9. If there was an event that youth and LE would attend to build or improve relationships, what types of activities would be appropriate for them to do?

Once these conversations are completed, the prosecutor's office should convene a meeting of the Collaborative, share the responses of youth and LE, and begin to plan the development or expansion of a program(s) to build relationships between youth and LE.

NDAA has developed a curriculum (*see below*) that can be used as a model program that jurisdictions can build upon and/or adapt to their needs. The curriculum should be shared with the Collaborative who can help guide its implementation and any adaptation to local needs and circumstances.

The NDAA curriculum is based on the premise that a program involving a series of interactions between youth and LE starting when youth are very young and continues into the teen years will be more effective in building long-term relationships and trust than a one-time event or a series of events built around one specific activity or sport. Thus, there are several components of the curriculum, divided by age and within each age category there are different components/segments. Jurisdictions may decide to implement some components and not others, however NDAA recommends that the program be implemented in its entirety. Many of the components can be implemented as a one-time event so that jurisdictions have flexibility in what they want to implement. The curriculum can be implemented in schools, afterschool programs, camps, and other youth programs.

NDAA has collaborated with an advisory board on the development of this curriculum. NDAA has made efforts to ensure that each segment of the curriculum is developmentally and age-appropriate for the specific age range of youth. NDAA has also worked to ensure that this curriculum is inclusive. NDAA has developed this curriculum so it can be easily adopted anywhere in the country, no matter the population of the jurisdiction, but encourages that local communities adjust and tailor the program in ways to fit the needs of specific community.

Section III

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum Broken Down by Age Groups

Ages 7–8

By starting the program in early grades, children will be introduced to LE in a positive way at a young age.

Programming at this age should begin with a program where prosecutors and LE visit classrooms, (or other locations such as afterschool programs, camps, youth programs, etc.) monthly throughout the school year. Wherever possible, it should be the same prosecutor and LE member visiting the same classroom(s) over the course of the school year to build the relationship over the time.

Try to identify in advance any children that may have an adverse reaction to seeing a police officer or prosecutor in their classroom. Make sure that child's parent or guardian is aware of the program, the goals of the program, and consents to the child's participation. Should consent be gathered from all parents/guardians? This is something for each jurisdiction to figure out as some student populations may have been impacted by an event requiring police to respond and seeing police in the school again could be triggering/dysregulating and interrupt their entire school day.

Segment 1: What a Police Officer Does/What a Prosecutor Does; What is a Rule?

- Introductions should include a very brief explanation of what a police officer does and what a prosecutor does along with a statement that in future classes they are going to learn more about those roles.
- Have the children write on a sticky note, a law or rule they must follow.
- Post the notes on a board.
- Facilitate a conversation with the children about the laws/rules; focus on the importance of the individual laws/rules; ask them why they think each one is important.
 - What if they do not understand a rule? What should they do?
 - What if they don't like a rule? What should they do?
 - What if they have an idea for a new rule for home or school or their community? What should they do?
- Facilitate a conversation with the children about who enforces those laws/rules: teachers, parents/andparents/guardians, other family members, police, etc.
- Facilitate a conversation about the positive things that happen when laws/rules are not followed.

- Share examples of other laws/rules that adults must follow.
 - Are grown-ups expected to know the rules?
 - What can happen to adults if they do not follow the rule?
 - What if the grown up did not mean to break the rule? Does it matter? Sometimes it does, sometimes it does not. It depends on the rule.
- Praise the children for following the law/rules.
- Let them know that you will come back to the classroom next month.

Segment 2: Reading a Book about the Police, Laws, or United States Supreme Court

- Read an age-appropriate book to the children about the police, laws, or the United States Supreme Court. Consider utilizing the *Supreme Court of the United States Kids' Activity Booklet* for K-4 which can be found [HERE \(www.supremecourt.gov/visiting/activities/pdf/KidsActivityBook_Jul2022_web.pdf\)](http://www.supremecourt.gov/visiting/activities/pdf/KidsActivityBook_Jul2022_web.pdf).
- Facilitate a conversation with the children about the book, including how it relates to what the officer and prosecutor do in their roles, and types of cases the Supreme Court may hear involving police officers and/or prosecutors.
- Ask to see a show of hands of students who have seen TV shows or movies with police officer characters or prosecutor characters/courtroom. What shows? What did think about it? Discuss what parts of the show are real or made up for audience entertainment.

Segment 3: What a Police Officer Does; Learn about Calling 911

- Ask the children to write down things a police officer does and ask for volunteers to read their answers to their class.
- Facilitate a conversation about what a police officer does, that incorporates the children's responses.
- Go over different assignments within a police department that an officer, detective, etc. may have.
- Go over what the 911 system is and how it works.
- Go over how to call 911 in an emergency, such as a fire, accident, when someone is seriously injured.

Segment 4: Courtroom Roles

- Use an example of a non-violent crime such as stealing from a store to illustrate in basic terms what a prosecutor does on a case, such as talking to witnesses from the store; watching video from the store; writing/typing out charges; looking for a program; going before the judge; explaining what the judge does, etc.
- Ask them to talk about TV shows they may be familiar with that include court cases and/or courtrooms.
 - Roles in the courtroom: have the classroom set up like a courtroom or go to the local courthouse if a courtroom is available. Give each student an opportunity to sit in the judge's seat and take a picture of each student sitting there (assuming you have parental permission to take a picture). This video may be helpful in explaining what a courtroom looks like and what the various roles are of the people who may be observed in a courtroom. Note that jurisdictions may differ in terms of what a courtroom looks like and who may be observed in a courtroom. www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MCArcEr5Hk

- Explain the roles of a Judge, court reporter, prosecutor, defense attorney, respondent/ defendant, witnesses, etc. and where each one sits. Include the role of a facility dog if your jurisdiction has one. Use the case of a theft of a store to explain in simple terms what each role would do during a trial. Ask questions of the students throughout to get their input on things such as:
 - What evidence would the prosecutor want to use to prove the case?
 - What would the defense attorney want to say, if anything, about the case?
 - If the respondent/defendant is found to have committed the theft, what disposition/sentence should the court impose?
- Give options such as community service, restitution, probation, and an explanation of what each one involves.

Segment 5: What Police Use to Do Their Jobs

- Facilitate a conversation about what police use to do their jobs: include the different types of vehicles officers may have: cars, vans, bikes, scooters, etc.
- Explain how a body camera works and what officers like about them.
- Explain how police radios and computers work.
- Explain how police use dogs such as canines and how canines are taken care of.
- Explain what officers do at parades, large sporting events, etc. and how they help keep people safe.

Segment 6: Safety for Children

- Go over how to stay/how to be safe:
 - Bicycle safety.
 - Crossing the street.
 - Carrying a phone/knowing their home phone number and emergency numbers.
 - Stranger danger.
 - On-line safety (e.g., keeping phones/computers/tablets out of bedrooms, bathrooms, etc. and letting parent/guardian see what you are doing on it).

Segment 7: Interact with the Children

- Play with the children during recess or play games in the classroom with them.

Segment 8: Art Project

- Do an art project with them in their classroom. Have them draw or paint pictures pertaining to laws/ rules; staying safe; what a police officer does; or what a prosecutor does; what a safe world looks like to them. Offer an option for children to write a poem if they prefer that to drawing or painting.

Segment 9: Careers in Law Enforcement/Certificate Ceremony

- Discuss careers in law enforcement and the law and all the positive aspects of those careers.
- Provide the children Certificates of Appreciation for participating in the program and let them know how much you enjoyed working with them. Invite the parents/guardians to the school to attend the certificate ceremony and have a celebration when the ceremony ends.

Ages 9–13

This section is similar to Segments 1–9 above with some modifications to make it age and developmentally appropriate for the age group. Wherever possible, it should be the same prosecutor and LE member visiting the same classroom(s) over the course of the school year to build the relationship over the time.

Segment 1: Three Branches of Government

- Reintroduce the idea of rules (rules were covered with younger age group)—introduce new words for rules like “laws,” “policies,” and “regulation.” Ask students to share who they think makes the rules, laws, policies, and regulations?
- Describe the three branches of the federal government. They are explained [HERE \(www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/three-branches/three-branches-of-government\)](http://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/three-branches/three-branches-of-government).
- Hang up three posterboards, all representing a different branch of government; randomly provide the students with name tags with different professions on them such as “U.S. Senator,” “U.S. President,” “Federal District Court Judge,” “Member of President’s Cabinet,” “Circuit Court of Appeals Judge,” etc.; have the students stand under or near the branch of federal or state government their job falls under. Help students develop a vocabulary and understanding of who holds these positions and about these different roles in civic life.
- Host a discussion: Who gets paid to do their job? Where does that money come from? Taxes. Who pays taxes? (Everyone over 18; sometimes minors, may have to pay taxes depending on their income.)
- Who thinks they will enjoy paying taxes? What do taxes pay for? Firefighters come to house; roads are paved/fixed; streetlights work; EMT/police come in an emergency. Do these things help you in your day to day?
- Discuss civic engagement, how to be a positive, contributing member of the community by voting, paying taxes, jury service/showing up for jury duty (the role of juries will be discussed later on), helping others in your community, running for office, working in public service, serving the community in a number of ways.

Segment 2: What Happens When Laws Get Broken

- Discuss how the accused would have the right to representation so that all of his/her rights are protected.
- Discuss the presumption of innocence which applies until a guilty finding or verdict (use juvenile terminology when discussing juveniles).
- Help kids understand that facts are not always black and white. There is usually more than one side to every story. The truth can often be found somewhere in between.
- Make sure the students learn what credibility is and who the judges of credibility are in the court of law. Discussion points: Who decides credibility outside the court of law? Can you tell when someone is lying? How? If you were not there, would you know for sure?
- Did someone get hurt on purpose? Did something get stolen? How do we as a community repair the harm? How do we prevent it from happening again? Stress the presumption of innocence.
- Break into small groups of 4–5 and brainstorm—if you were the first people here, creating a court system for the first time, what would it look like? Use a case example to facilitate the conversation, such as a theft from a store, or a person who punches another person in the face; some groups can brainstorm about a juvenile court system while others brainstorm about an adult court system.

- Ask each group to present what they came up with in their brainstorming sessions. Facilitate a conversation about the similarities and differences between the systems each group came up with.

Segment 3: What a Police Officer Does

- Invite different officers into the classroom from different units to speak about what they do.
- Ask to see a show of hands of students who have seen TV shows or movies with police officer characters. What shows? What did they think about it? Discuss what parts of the show are real or made up for audience entertainment. Were they all good police officers, were there bad police officers? In what way?
- Ask the students to write down things a police officer does and ask for volunteers to read their answers to their class.
- Facilitate a conversation about what a police officer does, that incorporates the students' responses.
- Go over different assignments within a police department, having each officer describe a different assignment.
- Go over what the 911 system is and how it works.
- Go over how to call 911 in an emergency, such as a fire, accident, when someone is seriously injured.
- Incorporate a field trip to dispatch center, if possible.
- After the break, have the officers describe what TV shows they watch, whether there are youth in the show, what the officer thinks about youth.
- Ask the officers to write down things students do and have a volunteer read the answers to the class.
- Facilitate a conversation about when youth really do—what officers may not realize they do.
- Have students draw a picture of and show the officers a typical day in their life.
- Facilitate a group discussion on what things could be done to improve each other's perceptions.

Segment 4: Roles in the Courtroom/Conducting a Trial

Allow additional time for this.

Roles in the courtroom: Have the classroom set up like a courtroom or go to the local courthouse if a courtroom is available.

- The NDAA video on the *Role of the Prosecutor* found [HERE \(www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_ZdbJVpeJQ&t=1s\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_ZdbJVpeJQ&t=1s) and the *Courtroom Tour for Children* video found [HERE \(www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MCArcEr5Hk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MCArcEr5Hk) can be utilized to explain the various roles of individuals in a courtroom. A discussion should follow regarding the differences between an adult prosecutor and a juvenile prosecutor, as well as a discussion about how the roles in your jurisdiction may differ from the roles in the video. Differences may include for example, whether you have a court advocate, whether juveniles are entitled to jury trials, whether audio or video recorders are used in lieu of court reporters, etc.
- Randomly assign roles to the students prior to this day and give them a factual scenario for a trial. Random assignments will avoid any appearance of labeling. (See Appendix A for a hypothetical scenario to use for the trial.) Break the students up so that there is a prosecution team, defense team, judge, victim, accused, police officer, and jurors.
- Give the students time to work together in groups and prepare for the trial.
- Have the students conduct the trial.

Segment 5: Getting to Know the Police and Police Getting to Know Students

- Review what police use to do their jobs: include the different types of vehicles officers may have: cars, vans, bikes, scooters, etc., how a body camera works and what officers like about them, how police radios and computers work, how police use dogs such as canines and how canines are taken care of. Review what officers do at parades, large sporting events, etc. and how they help keep people safe.
- Then let students ask questions—have students write down their questions and put them in a box.
- Take a break and review the questions. Decide how to answer the questions and answer them upon return from the break. Be prepared for students to ask about school shootings, drills, officer-involved shootings, racial inequities, whether officers are ever scared, police brutality, etc. Have some prepared answers in advance for these topics. Include what the local agencies are doing about these issues or in response to them. Explain how incidents are investigated and who in your jurisdiction is responsible for the investigation. Explain the relevant laws surrounding the situation they are asking about. Discuss what happens if an officer does something wrong that causes harm to a person; is that officer disciplined? How does that work? Make sure students understand that if they have a bad experience with an officer or a prosecutor, they can make a complaint about it; provide information to them about where and how to do that. Explain what services are available to anyone who has suffered trauma. (See Section I: Guiding Principles for information on the qualifications of the prosecutor and officer hosting these discussions.)
 - Review how to stay/how to be safe: Bicycle safety, crossing the street, carrying a phone, stranger danger, etc.
 - Getting into a car with young drivers—youth may not be able to drive yet but perhaps older siblings or older friends can drive. Making sure they are licensed, insured, make sure they are old enough to drive. Making sure they are not impaired to drive—if they are acting strangely, or if their speech is not clear, they may have had an alcoholic beverage or ingested drugs; do not get in the car.
 - On-line safety. Resource materials are available [HERE \(www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/resources#presentations\)](http://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/resources#presentations).

Segment 7: Interact with the Students

- Play games with the students during recess or play games in the classroom with them.
- Work with the students to plan a clothing drive, book drive, or food drive them, and stress the importance of everyone working together to help communities and community members.

Segment 8: Art Project

- Do an art project with the students in their classroom. Have them draw or paint pictures pertaining to laws/rules; staying safe; what a police officer does; what a prosecutor does; how youth and law enforcement interact, or what a safe world looks like to them. Offer an option for students to write a poem if they prefer that to drawing or painting.

Segment 9: Careers in Law Enforcement/Certificate Ceremony

- Discuss careers in law enforcement and the law and all the positive aspects of those careers.
- Provide the students Certificates of Appreciation for participating in the program and let them know how much you enjoyed working with them. Invite parents/guardians to the certificate ceremony and have a celebration after the ceremony.

Ages 14–17

The NDAA Curriculum for this age group is a 9-segment (2 hours per segment) program hosted by the prosecutor's office that includes learning sessions on the juvenile justice system, discussion, and interactions with LE and project, and opportunities for youth to effectuate change in their communities. The curriculum envisions approximately 20 youth participants per segment and approximately 10 LE members, broken down into small groups of approximately 4 youth and 2 officers per table.

NDAA recommends that the same members of LE attend each session but that they rotate tables over the course of the 9 segments. The segments should be hosted by one prosecutor and one LE member, both of whom should have experience working with youth, preferably the same prosecutor and LE member for each segment. The LE member should also have expertise in police procedure and policies so that s/he may contribute to conversations about whether certain aspects of police conduct are compliant with policy and procedure.

Segment 1: The Juvenile Justice System

The segment starts with the prosecutor and LE introducing themselves and providing an overview of what the program will involve and stressing that one of the goals of the program is to build relationships between youth and law enforcement. At the tables, each person is asked to put their answers to general icebreakers (e.g., share a fun fact about yourself; what is your favorite TV show/movie/video game; what is your favorite dessert, etc.) on a piece of paper and share their answers with the other people at the table. The LE members from each table will then introduce the youth at the table by sharing their answers to the icebreaker questions and vice versa. The prosecutor and LE member then conduct a learning session on the juvenile justice system (*see* Appendix A for a PowerPoint presentation that can be adapted for each jurisdiction) and cover topics such as:

- What types of behavior/conduct do LE get called to locations about? What types of calls do they get about or involving youth specifically?
- What options does LE have with respect to a juvenile who has committed a crime/delinquent act. The LE member should speak about what options s/he has, including issuing a warning, contacting a parent, referring to a program, etc. and under what circumstances those options can be utilized.
- Age of juvenile court jurisdiction.
- Purpose of juvenile justice system (rehabilitative as opposed to punitive).
- How a case flows through the system.
- Victim rights.
- What disposition/sentencing options exist.
- Differences between the juvenile justice system and the criminal justice system.

Segment 2: Dialogue between Law Enforcement and Youth/How to Stay Safe Project

The purpose of this segment is to continue a dialogue between the youth and LE members and then work on a team project. Write the questions out on paper and provide them to the youth and LE participants. Each person should answer the first question followed by the next one until the group members have answered all the questions that pertain to them. In the second part of the segment, ask the youth and LE members to begin to work on a project together (described further below).

Part 1

- Do you play video games? If so, which is your favorite?
- What is your favorite thing to do in the summertime?
- Do you play sports? If so, which is your favorite?
- What is your favorite board game?
- What app do you use the most?
- If you were going to a costume party this weekend, what would you go as? Why?
- Who is your favorite musician/singer/band?
- What is the best part of being a teenager? (youth only)
- What is the worst part? (youth only)
- What types of things do you think adults who interact with teenagers should know about teenagers? (youth only)

LE Member Questions Only

- Do you like wearing a police uniform?
- Why did you become a police officer?
- What is the best part of your job?
- What is the worst part?
- Do police officers ever get scared? If so, of what?
- Do police officers ever cry? If so, over what?
- Did you ever get stopped by the police when you were a teenager?
- What was the worst thing one of your friends did when you were in high school?

Part 2

The second part of Segment 2 involves a team project of creating materials regarding how youth can stay safe. Each table should discuss how youth can be safe, and should then create a one-page poster, meme, or other visual tool that can be distributed to teens through social media and other mechanisms, upon approval by the Collaborative and the prosecutor's office. There are many different aspects of safety this tool can address including but not limited to, walking home alone, on-line safety, safety on trains/buses, etc. Encourage participants to voluntarily create a picture, poster, etc. on their own that can be incorporated into the project.

A group may also want to consider the same project but with the focus on how officers can stay safe when they are working. What types of things do they do (per policy or otherwise) to stay safe or healthy while working? What do they do before arriving on scene to stay safe? What can and do they do on scene? What can and do they do following a traumatic event for their emotional health?

Provide art supplies and paper for this purpose, and other resources can be identified at a later point through the Collaborative to create electronic versions of what is created. This is an ongoing project that can be worked on at future sessions.

Segment 3: Hypothetical Traffic Stop and Discussion

This segment involves the acting out and discussion of a hypothetical situation involving youth and LE during a traffic stop. There are several roles to play and participation of youth and LE members is needed. The roles of the officers (2) should be given out to youth through a random process, and the roles of the teen driver and passengers (3) should be given out to LE members, also through a random process. The random process will avoid any appearance of labeling. Chairs should be set up to resemble a driver's seat, front passenger seat, and back passenger seat. This can also be done for a larger audience as part of an assembly; drama or theatre students could play the roles and classroom discussions could follow.

Hypothetical Scenario

Officer 1 receives a call over the radio to a 911 call at 9pm regarding a yellow SUV driving erratically. A partial license plate # is provided and Officer 1 sees a car matching that description. Officer 1 proceeds to pull over the car which has tinted windows. The car pulls over to the shoulder of the road. Officer 1 approaches the driver and says, "Get out the car"; has hand on gun; yelling, "I said get out." The teen driver says, "what did I do?" There is a teen passenger who reaches into the glove compartment, takes out a cell phone and starts to video the officer, saying "this is why we don't trust you." Ultimately, the driver gets out of the car and is very nervous; his hands are in his back pockets. Another police car approaches and Officer 2 gets out and has a conversation with Officer 1. Officer 2 says "I know you just came from that gruesome scene; do you want me to handle this?" Officer 2 approaches the driver and calmly says "Where were you heading?" and asks the driver for his license and registration. Officer 2 gives the driver a warning, and tells the driver to drive more carefully, particularly with a passenger in the car.

After the scenario is acted out, the prosecutor should facilitate a discussion about the scenario, including the officer's perspective and the youth's perspective, and should discuss what each could have done differently in this situation. The notes below can be used to help facilitate that discussion.

Officer Perspective

- Stressful situation; high anxiety
- Nighttime, tinted windows; cannot see inside
- May have concern that there is a weapon in the car
- Some officers may admit fear in that situation

Youth Perspective

- Did not do anything wrong
- Had no idea 911 had been called
- Did not understand why officer gave order to get out of the car
- Officer's actions made youth very fearful

What Youth Can Do Differently

- Signal when pulling over
- Put hands on 10:00 and 2:00 on the steering wheel
- Roll windows down
- Put interior car lights on
- Turn the engine off
- No furtive movements

What Officer Can Do Differently

- Use a calmer approach
- Explain why the driver was stopped
- Ask if everything is all right—why is the driver all over the road? Is the driver feeling okay? Is something going on in the vehicle?
- Remove hand from gun
- Discuss these points including driver and occupant safety during traffic stops

Ask the police officer to share with the youth 3 things s/he would like the driver of the car to know about the officer.

Ask the youth to share 3 things about them if they were the driver in the above hypothetical that they would like the officer to know.

Have a group discussion about whether anyone in the room learned something from the exercise or would do anything differently during a traffic stop because of the exercise.

See Appendix C for an alternate exercise scenario regarding juvenile justice decision-making.

Segment 4: Electronic Booklet Creation: “How to Prevent Youth Crime”

This segment involves further teamwork, including continued work on the Staying Safe project, as well as work on an additional project entitled “How to Prevent Youth Crime.” The teams of youth and LE will create an electronic booklet from the perspective of the youth and LE containing recommendations of what youth need in their communities to stay out of trouble. Recommendations may include programs, counseling, tutoring to succeed in school, activities, mentors, etc. that would be beneficial to youth. The prosecutor’s office can share this booklet with appropriate government stakeholders so that the recommendations can be considered.

Segment 5: Hypothetical: At the Park After School

This segment involves a second hypothetical scenario to be acted out in the same way as the first, with the parts being given out through a random process.

Two teens agree to fight after school in a park. It gets posted on social media and at least 10 kids show up at the park to watch/film the fight. The police receive a call about it and respond the park. When they arrive, they approach with their arms at their sides but they shout and start running when they see fists being thrown.

The girlfriend of one of the teens who agreed to fight starts mouthing off to the responding officers that they should get the [bleep] out and stop harassing kids. This leads to others in the group throwing rocks at the officers. One officer gets hit in the face. The kids are all detained until the one who threw the rock is identified and s/he is placed under arrest for assaulting a peace officer/assault with a weapon.

The prosecutor should facilitate a discussion about what the police should do in this situation, including how they should handle it in a manner that does not escalate the situation. The discussion should also include what the youth should do when the police arrive, and what decisions youth can make to avoid a situation like this getting worse

The prosecutor should explain how this case would be handled in the juvenile justice system.

Segment 6: Career Informational

This segment involves a career event where the LE members are paired with and introduce individuals in different professions who will talk about their respective professions and job responsibilities. As part of the introduction, have the LE members explain how LE interacts with individuals in those professions in the normal course of police work.

Examples:

- Firefighter
- EMS
- Social Worker
- Court Officer
- Nurse
- Bank Employee
- Restaurant Manager
- Defense Attorney
- Judge

Segment 7: Project Completion

The projects on Staying Safe and Preventing Youth Crime should be finalized. The final project of the program should be worked on and completed during this segment; the youth and LE members should develop a list of activities that youth and LE can work together on in the future.

Segment 8: Safe Driving

The police office and prosecutor should discuss safe driving. Topics that should be covered include:

- Obeying speed limit
- Wearing seat belts-driver and passenger
- Dangers of texting while driving (and other distractions)
- Dangers of driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Review the traffic stop safety tips from Segment 3

Segment 9: Closing Ceremony and Presentation

This segment is the final segment. The collaborative and parents/guardians of the youth should be invited to this event, which is a closing ceremony. There should be an opportunity for youth and LE to share their views on the program, tell whether they learned anything, and if the program changed their viewpoints about anything. Students should give a presentation on the Staying Safe and How to Prevent Youth Crime projects. Certificates of appreciation/completion should be given to the youth and there should be a celebration where the youth, parents/guardians, and LE members can sit and talk with each other informally over a meal or dessert.

Section IV

Suggestions from Youth about What Activities Youth and Law Enforcement Can Do Together

Youth we spoke with during the course of developing this curriculum provided many suggestions for what communities can do to build and improve relationships between youth and law enforcement. They are provided here as a resource to communities.

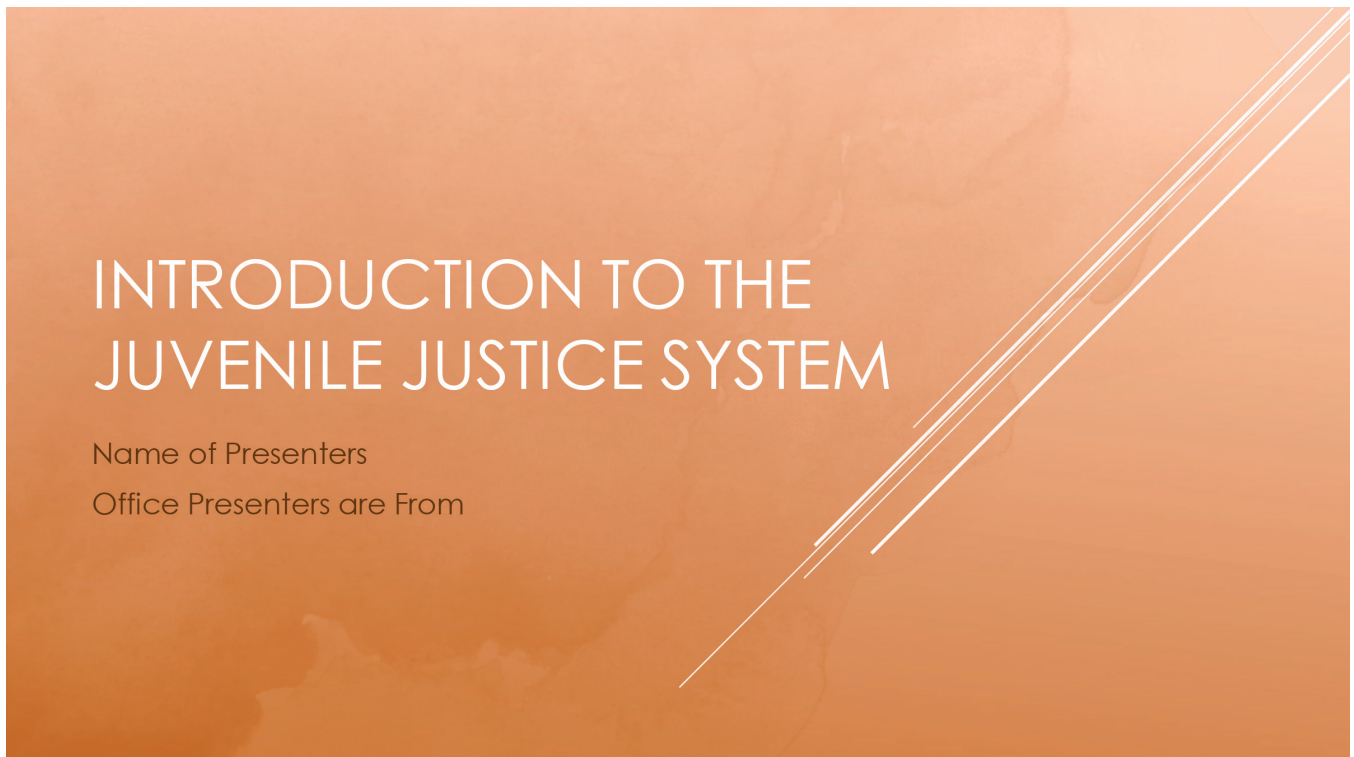
- Play sports, including playing on teams together and in tournaments, allowing relationships to be built over time, and the officers can be seen out of uniform, as people. Sports suggestions included basketball, football, soccer, pickleball, badminton and bowling.
- Have schools open after the school day and into the evening and on weekends, offering opportunities for youth and officers to play sports together in one part of the gym, and do other activities together in another part, since not all youth like sports. Suggestions included jewelry-making, informal dance, chess, painting, acting, STEM, and board games.
- Youth attend classes taught by officers on positive decision-making.
- Officers help children/youth with reading.
- Hold scavenger hunts in nature.
- Do gardening together.
- Officers teach youth how to camp and how to build a campfire.
- Movie nights; with respect to older youth, have discussion after movie.
- Hold community events where officers bring ice cream, such as “Neighbors Night Out” designed to have people meeting their neighbors and police officers.
- Have a large community event such as a cookout.
- Sing together.
- Play in an orchestra together.
- Officers serve as mentors.
- Have lunch in a restaurant together.
- Do activities in a park together so that officers can get to know their communities better.
- Take a pottery class together; talk to each other during the class; have officers drive youth to the class so that they have transportation and can talk on the way there and back.
- Have discussions about what police do, including what they do in a single day, what type of calls they respond to, etc. Have officers provide tips on what to do during police encounters. Hear officer perspectives on police brutality.

Appendix A

PowerPoint Presentation: Introduction to the Juvenile Justice System

This PowerPoint presentation for use in Section III, Ages 14–17, can be adapted for each jurisdiction.

The PPT file may be downloaded from Templates [HERE](https://nda.org/programs/juvenile-justice/publications/) (nda.org/programs/juvenile-justice/publications/).



Attribution and Disclaimer

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JUVENILE JUSTICE OVERVIEW

- ▶ Purpose of the Juvenile Justice System (e.g. Rehabilitation)
- ▶ Age of Jurisdiction; definition of “juvenile”
- ▶ Importance of having dedicated juvenile prosecutors(s) who understand the adolescent brain, accountability to victims and communities, and the rehabilitative and treatment needs of youth
- ▶ # of Cases Prosecutors’ Office handles per year
- ▶ Name and location of Juvenile Courthouse

ARREST AND POST-ARREST PROCESS

- ▶ Standard to arrest a juvenile
- ▶ Alternatives to an arrest
- ▶ What happens after an arrest
- ▶ Where youth goes after arrest
- ▶ What happens at that location?
- ▶ Are parents contacted?
- ▶ Where does case go next?

DIVERSION OPTIONS

- ▶ What options exist to divert the case?
- ▶ What is the criteria for diversion?
- ▶ Can police divert? Probation? Juvenile Counselor? Prosecutor?
- ▶ What programs exist for diversion?*
- ▶ How long does youth have to complete diversion program?
- ▶ How many times can a youth participate in diversion?

*See NDAA's prosecutor led diversion map:
<https://diversion.ndaa.org/>

PROSECUTOR FILING DECISIONS

- ▶ How the case gets referred to the Prosecutor's Office
- ▶ What the prosecutor does upon receiving the case:
 - What documents are reviewed?
 - What interviews are conducted?
 - What factors are considered?

JUVENILE COURT PROCESS

- ▶ Arraignment/Detention Hearing
- ▶ Probable Cause Hearing
- ▶ Motion Practice
- ▶ Pre-trial hearings; suppression hearings
- ▶ Plea Bargaining
- ▶ Trial/fact-finding hearing
- ▶ Disposition/Sentencing

DISPOSITION/ SENTENCING

- ▶ What factors are considered at disposition:
 - Seriousness of charge
 - Harm to victim and/or community
 - Age of youth
 - Prior history
 - Family/home life
 - School records
 - Peers

Hypothetical Trial Scenario: Theft of a Cell Phone

Case

Randy is 14-years-old and was traveling to school on a bus. Randy stepped off the bus near school holding a cell phone in a case that also contained a bus pass and \$24. Kelly, who attends the same school, walked by briskly with another youth, grabbed Randy's phone, and ran away with the other youth, in the opposite direction of school. Randy reported what happened to the School Resource Officer/Safety Officer. Randy described the clothing Kelly was wearing—blue jeans and a purple shirt with a yellow stripe across the front—and told the officer it happened quickly. Randy said to the officer, "I think the kid who took my phone was Kelly from my 3rd period math class, but I didn't get a good look at the other kid." Kelly arrived late to school that day, wearing black jeans and a purple shirt with a yellow stripe across the front. Later that day, during 2nd period, another youth from Randy's 3rd period math class, who always sits with Kelly, goes to the principal's office and turns in Randy's phone, saying, "I found this on the ground on my way to school today."

Discussion Questions

- Is there enough evidence to charge Kelly?
- Did the youth with Kelly do anything wrong?
- What other evidence might exist?
- Does it make a difference that Kelly was wearing black jeans upon arrival to school?
- Would it make a difference if the school colors are purple and yellow and that most kids were wearing purple and yellow that day due to a sporting event?
- What else would you want to know about 3rd period math class?
- What gender is Kelly? What about Randy? (Discuss what assumptions may have been made and why.)
- Assume, for purposes of the trial, that Randy was 100% sure the kid who took the phone was Kelly from 3rd period math class.

Alternate Exercise Scenario: Hypotheticals Regarding Decisions in Juvenile Cases

Case 1

AB is 15-years-old and has been arrested for robbing a 20-year-old by taking that person's phone. AB approached the 20-year-old who was walking home from work on a dark street at 10:00 pm. AB showed the 20-year-old a knife and threatened to use it if the 20-year-old did not give up the phone.

AB lives at home with a parent and an 8-year-old sibling. When AB was arrested, the parent was at work in a hospital that is approximately twenty miles away from the home and could not come to the police precinct.

AB has an open Robbery case involving the display of a knife. In that case, the 42-year-old victim had just left an ATM machine and was counting cash on the way out. AB displayed the knife, grabbed the cash, and ran. AB is being charged as an adult in that case. When AB went before the judge in that case, the judge released AB with the conditions that AB: (1) stay out of trouble; (2) go to school every day; and (3) call in every night at 8:00 pm to a court-run program that monitors AB's 7:30 pm curfew.

Discussion Questions

- What gender is AB? (discuss what assumptions students may have made and why)
- What gender is the 20-year-old? (discuss what assumptions students may have made and why)
- Why might AB be committing robberies?
- Is AB in compliance with the conditions of release in the other case?
- If not, should the court on the current case take that into consideration in deciding whether AB should be detained in a juvenile facility or be released?
- Which parent does AB live with? (discuss what assumptions students may have made and why)
- What job does AB's parent do at the hospital? (discuss what assumptions students may have made and why)
- Should AB be detained or released to a parent?
- Assume the court makes a finding that AB took the phone at knifepoint. What should happen to AB? (Go through options available in your jurisdiction including Probation, Probation with a program, Residential Placement, etc.)
- Assume that AB is also on Probation for breaking into a school and stealing laptops.

Mock Court Proceeding

The decision whether to hold AB in detention pending trial.

The prosecutor should interview the police officer in front of the class about the case to demonstrate a prosecutor's interview of a police officer.

Select students randomly to play the prosecutor, the defense attorney/attorney for the juvenile, and the judge. Have the students playing the prosecutor and defense attorney make arguments to the judge about whether to detain AB. The prosecutor should argue that AB should be detained and the attorney for AB should argue that AB should be released. The judge should decide whether AB should be detained and should explain his/her reason as part of the proceeding.

Mock Court Proceeding

The decision whether to put AB on Probation or to place AB in a Juvenile Facility.

Select students randomly to play the prosecutor, the defense attorney/attorney for the juvenile, and the judge. The prosecutor should make arguments that AB should be placed in a juvenile facility to receive rehabilitative services and the attorney for AB should argue that AB should be given another chance on Probation and should be given a higher level of Probation this time.

Case 2

CD is 14-years-old and has been arrested for stealing a wide variety of hair products (valued at \$375) at 12:15 am at a 24-hour drugstore. CD was caught after leaving the store and calmly opening the car door of a car that was blasting loud music and was parked in the fire lane outside the store. The person driving the car appeared to be approximately 6–7 years older than CD. That person took off very quickly in the car when CD was apprehended by the store’s loss prevention officer. When CD gets to the police station and the police call CD’s guardian to come pick up CD, the guardian says, “I am not coming this time; I have spent enough time chasing after CD and have younger kids to take care of, kids who still have a chance in life; maybe CD’s older friend with the fancy car (nicer than my car!) can come instead of me; if not, isn’t that what juvie is for?”

Discussion Questions

- What gender is CD? (Discuss what assumptions students may have made and why.)
- Why might CD be stealing hair products? Why so many?
- Should the guardian have to come to the precinct?
- If the guardian does not come, should the police release CD without an adult?
- Is the guardian doing anything wrong by not coming to the precinct?
- What might the relationship be between CD and the 21-year-old?
- Why might that person leave the store?
- Assume the person in the car is CD's 21-year-old friend.
- What gender is that person? (Discuss what assumptions students may have made and why.)
- Should the police try to get that person to come back to pick up CD?
- Assume the court makes a finding that CD stole the hair products.
- What should happen to CD? (Go through options available in your jurisdiction including Probation, Probation with a program, Residential Placement, etc.)
- What would you want to happen to CD if you worked for the store?

The police officer should discuss all efforts that are made in juvenile cases to get a parent/guardian, etc. to come to the precinct to avoid having to detain a juvenile.

