

Treatment for juvenile offenders essay

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



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Introduction

The main objective behind the formation of juvenile justice system was to administer rehabilitation to young offenders, contrary to subjecting to them to the adult justice system that has the main objective of administering punishment. Because of public outrage, the juvenile system has undergone a number of reforms due to various legislations and social movements that changed the way juvenile offenders are treated when facing the criminal justice system (Springer & Roberts, 2007). The public perception concerning the nature of crimes youths and children committed called for immediate reforms in the juvenile justice system. This essay provides an overview of the various legislations and social movements that changed the way juveniles are treated in the criminal system. In addition, the essay outlines how the above activities contributed to the state of the present juvenile system. One of the most common social movements that had an impact on the juvenile system was the progressive movement of the twentieth century. In fact, the progressive movement was one of the significant driving forces behind the formation of the juvenile justice system due to the push for reforms in the criminal justice system. The progressive movement championed for a new approach to treating juvenile offenders through their separation from the adult criminal justice system. In addition, the movement emphasized on the subject of administering rehabilitation to the juvenile rather than punishment as it was in the adult criminal justice system. A notable legislation that is still followed in the present juvenile system because of the movement was the *Parens patriae*, which gave juvenile courts

the authority to issue directives concerning treatment and care of juvenile offenders (kelly, 2004). Generally, the progressive movement reformed made the juvenile justice system to focus on the welfare of the juvenile offender, rather than punishment; this concept is still in practice in the present juvenile system.

Another legislation that shaped the juvenile criminal justice system was the Juvenile delinquency Control Act, which the congress passed during 1968 with the aim of providing federal funds to states that had already implemented community-based strategies to prevent juveniles from committing crimes. This act issued directives of removing juveniles from adult facilities and laid much emphasis on a clear distinction between adult and juvenile criminal justice systems. In addition, the Act was later amended during 1974 and provided federal grants to states in order to facilitate the separate confinement of juvenile offenders from the adult facilities. A later amendment to this act was a paradigm shift in the sense it allowed various states to try juvenile offenders of certain offenses deemed serious such as weapons violations in the adult criminal courts. This was the onset of a more punitive juvenile criminal justice system, contrary to the initial motives of its establishment (kelly, 2004). In fact, during the 1990s, there were clauses relating to juvenile codes that aimed at fostering punitive measures regarding punishment and ensuring safety of the public. This was a response to the increase in the juvenile crimes.

Conclusion

It is evident that the initial objective of the establishment of juvenile crimes was to emphasize on rehabilitation and the welfare of the juvenile offenders

as seen from the reforms brought about by the progressive movement. The onset of increase in juvenile crime meant that the states had to deploy a punitive approach to combating juvenile crime. This is evident by the legislative act of the 1974 and its subsequent amendments that aimed at administering punishment and ensuring safety of the public.

References

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