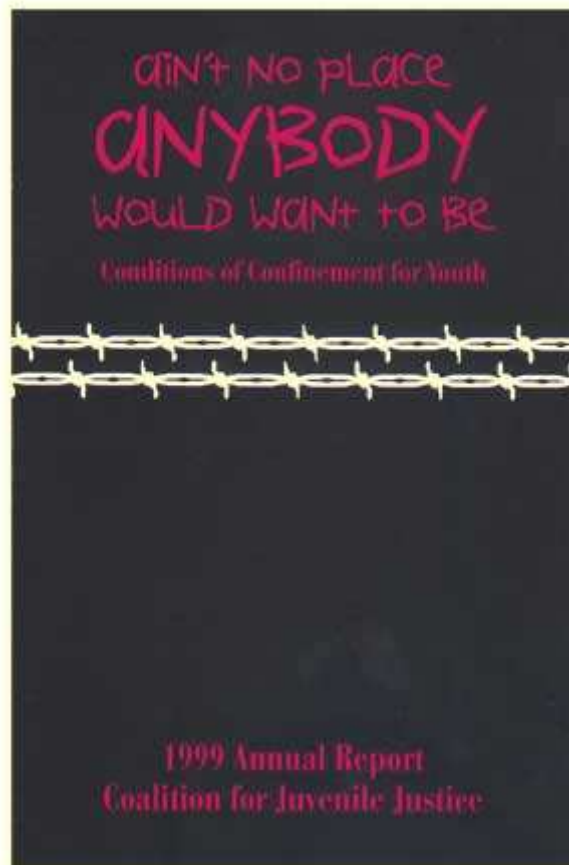


*Ain't No Place Anybody Would Want to Be:*  
*Conditions of Confinement for Youth*  
Coalition for Juvenile Justice 1999 Annual Report



*Ain't No Place Anybody Would Want to Be* reaffirms the effectiveness of rehabilitation in the juvenile court system. The CJJ report profiles four facilities: the District of Columbia Jail, an adult facility with inadequate services for youth; the Ferris School in Wilmington, Delaware, which has remade its program in response to legal action; the Giddings State Home and School, an exemplary Texas institution; and one of the nation's oldest juvenile institutions, the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) in Chicago. Juvenile justice programs that hold offenders accountable and provide rehabilitative, educational and health care services are found to be highly successful in warding off future offenses.

Reports cost \$5 each; discount for bulk purchases. To order copies of the report, contact the CJJ national office: 202-467-0864 ext. 0, or [info@juvjustice.org](mailto:info@juvjustice.org).

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### 1999 Annual Report Excerpt (page 9-11)

All totaled, there are 84,000 juveniles being held in custody in public and private juvenile and adult facilities on any given day. Of these, more than 20,000 are housed in one of the nation's secure detention facilities (or juvenile halls), pending disposition of their charges. There are thousands of others who have already passed through the court system and are serving sentences in one of the nation's juvenile correctional facilities, ranches, youth authorities, boot camps or state schools.

At its inception a century ago, the juvenile justice system was given a unique mandate to separate youth from adult criminals and to operate differently from the adult criminal justice

system. The goal was to balance public safety with the compelling need for humane treatment and rehabilitation of youthful offenders. A substantial body of law and professional guidelines have arisen specifying minimum conditions for institutions housing juveniles. Youth have a right to protection from violent inmates, abusive staff, unsanitary living quarters, excessive isolation and unreasonable restraints. Under most circumstances, they must also receive adequate medical and mental health care, education (including special education for youth with disabilities), access to legal counsel, recreation, exercise and other programs.

However, few among the public know if these noble goals are being met. Like much of the juvenile justice system, facilities housing incarcerated youth are shrouded in a cloak of confidentiality. Closed to the public eye and to media scrutiny, there are few witnesses to what goes on behind the closed doors.

Many facilities do not have substantive monitoring by professional, independent, objective evaluators. Many facilities are self-monitored, which inevitably raises questions of biased findings. There are several national organizations, such as the American Correctional Association (ACA), the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, and the American Bar Association that have developed standards for children in custody. But compliance is typically voluntary (except as a consequence of legal action) and only a small minority of facilities are accredited or monitored by these organizations. For example, only 27 of the nation's 800-plus juvenile detention facilities are accredited by the ACA.

Juvenile institutions tend to be isolated from each other. The focus is on getting through the next 24 hours. Staff, low-paid and poorly-trained, often do not know what is going on during a different shift, let alone how another facility operates. It is rare when line staff leave the institution to attend a conference where they can compare conditions, problem-solve and share ideas with others in the field.

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