

# Positive Youth Justice Initiative Year 2 Evaluation Findings: San Joaquin County

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## San Joaquin County

This summary reviews the implementation of the Positive Youth Justice Initiative (PYJI) in San Joaquin County during Year 2 of the initiative's implementation phase. The summary includes an overview of the County's implementation and structure; a synthesis of key strengths and challenges based on data from interviews, focus groups, staff surveys, and documentary data; and a description of results from the Year 2 youth and caregiver surveys and youth focus groups.

The Year 2 evaluation data collection included the following activities. The number in parentheses represents the number of respondents who participated in each of the activities. See **Error! Reference source not found.** for more detail about the evaluation participants.

- Key Informant Interviews with PYJI Leadership (8)
- Focus Group with County Line Staff (10)
- Focus Group with CBO Leadership and Line Staff (6)
- Staff Survey (110)
- Youth Survey (61)
- Caregiver Survey (22)
- Documentary Data

## Implementation Plan and Structure

### Implementation Plan

San Joaquin County's PYJI is led by the **San Joaquin County Probation Department**. The County's PYJI centers on broad system-level change designed to build organizational capacity and strengthen service delivery, with a focus on the county's medium- and higher risk crossover youth. As such, San Joaquin County has defined crossover youth as **youth who have experienced documented neglect, abuse and/or trauma, have a history in the child welfare and/or foster care system, and who are currently engaged in the juvenile justice system**. According to their July 2015 data report, in 2014, of the 1,059 youth on probation supervision (including informal supervision), 677 were identified as crossover youth.

In its implementation plan San Joaquin County

### Implementation Highlights

During the second year of PYJI implementation, San Joaquin County:

- Initiated Youth Development Groups at 3 partnering community- based organizations
- Created quarterly PYJI orientations for crossover youth and families that are referred to the Youth Development Groups
- Initiated monthly meetings between PYJI leadership from Probation and community-based organizations
- Updated Probation policies and procedures to include PYJI elements
- Conducted trainings on PYD and TIC for probation and partnering agencies
- Implemented the Girls Health Screen tool
- Created a PYJI Interagency agreement with 17 agencies serving crossover youth
- PYJI Learning Communities hosted by Probation Department

discussed a number of key activities to enhance organizational capacity, including standardizing tracking of crossover youth in County agency databases, implementing multi-agency staff trainings on positive youth development (PYD) and trauma-informed care (TIC), and developing new tools and protocols to support data-driven decision making. Cornerstones of the County's plan to strengthen services for crossover youth included expanding wraparound services to include broader eligibility, implementing the Girls Health Screen tool, and increasing engagement of community-based partners and crossover youth leaders in service planning and delivery. In Year 2, a key component of the County's implementation plan was to initiate Positive Youth Development Groups—supportive groups for crossover youth facilitated by the Probation Department's contracted community-based organizations (CBOs).

### Implementation Structure

San Joaquin County's PYJI Executive Steering Committee is comprised of leadership from Probation, Child Protective Services (CPS), Mental Health Services, Healthcare Services, Public Health, Correctional Health, County and City education stakeholders, as well as several CBOs. The Steering Committee meets monthly and has held several subcommittee meetings related to particular components of the County's PYJI plan. The implementation process is facilitated by an external consultant and supported by a Management Analyst within Probation.

#### San Joaquin County Key Strengths and Progress

- Continued leadership support and collaboration
- Increased inclusion of and support from line staff
- Collaborative approach to achieve concrete changes in practice
- Formalization of PYJI elements in policies and procedures

#### San Joaquin County Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Line staff buy-in and skills
- Involvement of county partner agencies
- Communications and data sharing among partners
- Sustainability and resources for expansion

### Key Strengths and Progress in Implementation

#### Continued Leadership Support and Collaboration

Key informant interviews with County agency leadership indicated that as in Year 1, San Joaquin County benefited from its pre-existing collaborative relationships. Leadership from County and community-based partners observed that the consistency in leadership throughout the initiative, coupled with longstanding consistency in leadership in Probation, Child Protective Services, and Wraparound Services contributed to the success and partnership of agencies in Year 2 of implementation.

In May 2015, Probation created a PYJI interagency agreement with representatives from Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health, Employment and Economic Development, Health Care Services (Child Welfare), District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, County Office of Education, Stockton Unified School District, Public Health Services, Chamber of Commerce, Superior Court, Wraparound Service Providers, and the three partnering PYJI CBOs. In this agreement, the partners agreed to be active members of the Executive Steering Committee, commit to including youth voice in implementation activities, collect and data related to PYJI services, and maintain confidentiality of information shared through PYJI.

As an example of collaboration supporting Year 2 implementation, conversations with the Probation Chief, leadership from CPS, and community-based partners surfaced a need for greater family support of crossover youth. The departments and CBOs worked together to create a Parent Partner position whose role is to contact families of children attending the Youth Development Groups and conduct a needs assessment of necessary resources and support. Leadership from the PYJI wraparound service provider, Victor Community Services, allocated funding for a Parent Partner position fully dedicated to PYJI.

### Increased Inclusion of and Support from Line Staff

Probation leadership acknowledged that increasing buy-in for PYJI among line staff was one of several priorities in Year 2, and both leadership and line staff highlighted that the County had made progress in this area. Leadership from multiple County and community-based agencies reported experiencing a shift in how Probation staff viewed and interacted with youth, observing that probation officers were starting to move from the punitive lens of, "What did you do?" to the trauma-informed care (TIC) lens of "What happened to you?" Leadership from Behavioral Health Services shared:

*What I see is that stigma is getting reduced. It is a shift with Probation certainly—I can see that. It is nice to see professionals' eyes light up when they talk about youth. That is different than what's happened in the past; it's like they are part of it [stigma reduction] and they believe they are making a difference—and they are.*

County agency leadership and community-based partners recalled that direct involvement from top leadership to support PYJI, including consistent participation of the Chief of Probation in PYJI Executive Steering Committee meetings; regular interfacing with CBOs; and PYJI community events helped to foster buy-in and support from line staff and partner agencies. CBO leadership reported that because Probation leadership embodied a consumer and family friendly philosophy, PYJI elements had started to trickle down to line staff.

In addition to the role of high-level leadership support in fostering culture change, Probation leadership shared their belief that when mid-level and line staff had more opportunities for involvement in decision making meetings and activities for PYJI, they became more invested in their work. In order to facilitate these opportunities for involvement, Probation initiated a supervisor symposium for

*"It is nice to see professionals' eyes light up when they talk about youth. That is different than what's happened in the past."*

- County leadership

first-level supervisors, in which supervisors had the opportunity to brainstorm ways to better serve crossover youth. These meetings led to the creation of a release form with the Office of Education to facilitate more expeditious school re-enrollment and plans for a library at the juvenile detention facility in the summer. Probation line staff were also invited to attend the Executive Steering Committee meetings that had been previously reserved for leadership.

Survey findings lend support to findings that staff from Probation and CBOs believe PYJI is an important initiative that will positively impact the juvenile justice system and their own work within it. Over three-quarters of survey respondents from probation reported that they somewhat agreed (23%) or agreed (54%) that PYJI has the potential to advance juvenile justice system policy and practice. Nearly all (94%) CBO staff agreed that PYJI has the potential to advance juvenile justice system policy and practice. In addition, Probation and CBO staff who participated in the staff survey largely indicated that they were satisfied with how PYJI has been rolled out in their agency or organization. Almost three-quarters of respondents from Probation reported they somewhat agreed (34%) or agreed (40%) that they feel satisfied with how PYJI has been rolled out in their agency, and 84% of respondents from CBOs indicated they somewhat agreed (11%) or agreed (74%).

## Collaborative Approach to Achieve Concrete Changes in Practice

### Team-Based Decision Making

Leadership from County agencies and community-based partners indicated that the County has both prioritized and made progress in implementing team-based decision making meetings. Probation leadership described the implementation of team-based decision meetings at the Juvenile Detention Center in which youth-serving agencies (e.g., social workers, behavioral health specialists) meet with family members and crossover youth to work on case planning for youth during and post custody. Probation also continued to leverage their pre-existing partnership with Behavioral Health Services, through which on-site clinicians at the Probation Department are able to join in case planning meetings.

*"In the beginning of PYJI, we couldn't get a PO on the phone, and now we have a few that are incredibly responsive, and coming to training, events, and groups. It's a slow progress."*

- CBO leadership

Additionally, Probation leadership initiated a monthly CBO meeting for its contracted service providers, in which CBOs met with Probation's PYJI coordinator to discuss referral issues, share resources, and collaborate on activities. As one CBO leader shared:

*[A]ll the CBOS meet with Probation and talk about what's going on, how are referrals going. That wasn't going on at first; we were a little bit siloed. But once [the CBO meeting] became a requirement, it helped us be collaborative with each other and for Probation to understand our needs.*

Survey findings indicate that Probation (93%), CBOs (80%), and other PYJI partner agencies (75%) at least somewhat agreed that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth in San Joaquin

collaborate effectively. In focus groups and interviews, CBOs reported feeling like legitimate partners with Probation in the implementation and design of PYJI. Partner agencies that were involved early on in the planning of PYJI also had strong participation during the implementation.

### **Integration of TIC in Practice**

County agencies reported that the TIC and PYD trainings the County held for Probation and partner agency staff had a significant impact on how line staff interacted with crossover youth. Probation leadership noted the impact of TIC on their department and observed that probation officers were Survey findings underscored the inclusion of TIC, with a majority of survey respondents from Probation (92%) and CBOs (85%) reporting that they have heard about TIC being introduced in their agency or organization.

While many County partnering agencies reported that the TIC lens was already in alignment with their core values and practices as youth-serving agencies, they did note that the training opened up new discussions about vicarious trauma and engaging staff in self-care. Other partner agencies even implemented new internal training practices after receiving PYJI-supported TIC training. Leadership from CPS shared:

*We made [TIC training] mandatory. We had 120 child welfare workers and 90 or more of them in attendance of the series; three-fourths of staff took the TIC training. Once we did that, I set [out to] redesign our foster care parent training and seek more training for staff. That would not have happened without the PYJI focus—that was clearly the catalyst.*

### **Incorporation of PYD and Youth Involvement**

Most staff survey respondents from probation (96%) and CBOs (85%) reported that they have heard about the application of PYD in their agency or organization. In Year 2 of PYJI implementation, San Joaquin County initiated PYJI Youth Development Groups, in which crossover youth attend weekly group sessions and receive incentives for their attendance. According to CBO leadership, Youth Development Groups provide a safe, non-judgmental environment in which crossover youth can connect with each other, engage in culturally enriching practices, and work on college and career readiness.

The structure of the groups is inclusive of many partners. Probation holds an orientation for youth and their families in which they explain what the group sessions entail, select a CBO service provider based on the type of services and location, and Parent Partner offers guidance and support. CBOs and Probation are working in tandem to track monthly attendance in the youth development groups. This in turn has led to increased referrals and follow-up by Probation Officers to encourage participation.

Interviews with CBO line staff indicated that the youth development groups seemed to improve trust between youth and authority figures, and shift their view of probation. One leader in the Probation Department described a situation in which she assigned a probation officer the task of bringing an incentive to one of the crossover youth. She recalled that the youth said, *“I thought my PO was going to*

*arrest me, and he gave me a Baskin Robbins gift card!”* The County also integrated youth participation into its model by including a former crossover youth at the Youth Development Group orientation, and several of the contracted CBOs hire youth as mentors or staff.

### **Continued Partnership with Wraparound Services**

County partner agencies and Probation shared that the increased use of different levels of wraparound services, which began in Year 1, has enhanced how youth on probation are served, as youth are referred to services earlier on in their case flow. Both County partner agencies and Probation reported an increase in referrals to pre-wraparound services as well as increased identification of alternatives to out of home placement for crossover youth. Nearly all survey respondents from Probation somewhat agreed (33%) or agreed (63%) that they understand the referral process to get youth into formal wraparound services.

### **Formalization of PYJI Elements in Policies and Procedures**

PYJI leadership has made a number of concrete changes to their policies and procedures to include PYJI elements. Several of these changes included updating Juvenile Probation policies to reflect trauma informed assessment, screening, and programming, incorporating a youth and family orientation into the referral process for Youth Development Groups, implementing the Girls Health Screening tool and screening all girls in Juvenile Hall.

Probation leadership emphasized that the sustainability of the initiative has been their main focus during Year 2 of implementation. To this end, Probation leadership incorporated best practices for TIC and PYD in their department’s policies and procedures in the following areas: Assessment, Investigations, Supervision, and Placement units, and the Department plans to revise policies and procedures for Detention Intake and Camp Aftercare. In order to support the implementation of these changes, unit supervisors were involved in reviewing and revising the policies and procedures, updating their job duties, and training line staff on the new policies and procedures.

## **Key Challenges and Opportunities**

### **Line Staff Buy-in and Skills**

While leadership and line staff noted substantial culture shift among probation officers, they also observed some remaining hesitation to fully embracing PYJI. Some Probation leadership hypothesized that this was due to the later involvement of Probation line staff in PYJI implementation. One survey respondent commented:

*I believe we are still not fully on board with our organization fully accepting PYJI. The line staff still have reservations and are resistant to embrace PYJI philosophies, fully. I think the line staff should have been included in the planning phases and on the Executive Steering Committee from the beginning. Their buy-in is critical to the success of the paradigm change.*



County and partner agencies reported that earlier involvement in the planning stages of PYJI seemed to bolster their respective organizations' involvement at the implementation stages and impacted buy-in among their staff. The varying level of involvement of staff in the planning of PYJI was also seen in survey findings: over half of survey respondents from Probation indicated that they disagreed (41%) or somewhat disagreed (12%) that they were actively involved in the planning for the new policies and procedures related to PYJI (15% somewhat agreed and 24% agreed). Conversely, almost two-thirds of survey respondents from CBOs reported they somewhat agreed (36%) or agreed (37%) that they were involved in the planning.

Some focus group participants also identified a gap in staff training on how to integrate TIC into practice. Staff survey findings suggest that even though PYJI has increased probation officers' awareness of PYD and TIC, most staff do not feel confident in their ability to implement these practices. While 67% of line staff from probation somewhat agreed that they feel well trained to implement TIC practices in their work with crossover youth, only 19% reported that they agreed. Similarly, 70% of line staff from probation somewhat agreed that they feel well trained to provide PYD-informed services with crossover youth, while 19% reported that they agreed. Conversely, most staff from CBOs agreed (71%) that they feel well trained to implement TIC practices and provide PYD-informed services, with 29% reporting that they somewhat agree.

### Involvement of County Partner Agencies

As previously indicated, San Joaquin County has many strong partnerships across agencies and CBOs. However, participants in the key informant interviews, focus groups, and the staff survey observed that there was room for development. While many of the partner agencies sit on the Executive Steering Committee meetings, several reported that the Steering Committee was their agency's only involvement in PYJI. Staff survey respondents also indicated that PYJI partner agencies were less involved with PYJI

*"There is a school to prison pipeline, we need to get the school district on board and it's not going to be something we can do overnight."*

- CBO leadership

than Probation and CBOs. While nearly all of Probation line staff (96%) and all CBO line staff (100%) reported hearing about PYJI, less than a third (30%) of line staff from other PYJI partner agencies indicated that they had heard of PYJI.

According to interviews with PYJI leadership, County partner agencies that were less involved in the planning year or did not have specific roles or responsibilities continued to have limited involvement in Year 2 implementation. Some agencies specified that they did not have the funding to dedicate staff to PYJI. For example, leadership from the County Office of Education, which joined the partnership after the initiative had started, reported that they did not have designated staff for PYJI. CBO partners acknowledged the importance of having the school districts involved, but noted that it would take time to increase school participation in PYJI. Leadership from Child Welfare indicated that only top level leadership are familiar with PYJI and that CPS line staff likely would not interface with PYJI unless they worked with youth involved in some level of Probation.

Staff survey findings also demonstrated more limited involvement of line staff from County partner agencies, with only about a quarter of staff from these agencies reporting that they somewhat agreed (10%) or agreed (15%) that leadership from their agency regularly communicates with staff about changes related to PYJI, and 44% responding that they do not know.

### Communication and Data Sharing among Partners

While leadership and line staff highlighted effective communication between many PYJI partners, particularly Probation and CBOs, line staff from Probation and CPS discussed continued challenges with communication, especially around the need to clarify roles and responsibilities related to 241.1 joint assessment hearings and dual status cases. County staff from the focus group recommended that CPS and Probation identify representatives from each agency to work on strengthening communication and triaging crossover youth through resourcing committees prior to 241.1 joint assessment hearings.

Agencies also reported differing degrees of data sharing. Some CBOs reported receiving only basic information on crossover youths' histories because of privacy regulations, while other CBOs reported having complete access to crossover youth mental health records because of data sharing agreements with the youths' providers. Additionally, while edicts like the Katie A settlement required data sharing between Child Welfare and Mental Health, other agencies that are not party to the settlement and do not have established data sharing MOUs, such as CPS and Probation, tend to engage in informal case-by case data sharing.

*“Obviously, there is a huge communication issue between Probation and CPS and we have to make the alliance stronger, but what one person is going to be elected on both sides to work out these kinks? There needs to be a better understanding or relationship.”*

- County line staff

Staff from a variety of agencies noted that while Probation can identify crossover youth, other systems like CPS and Behavioral Health Services do not have a formal way to identify crossover youth. In this vein, a higher percent of survey respondents from Probation (81%) reported that they at least somewhat agree that the agencies and organizations serving crossover youth in San Joaquin collect and share data effectively, compared to survey respondents from CBOs (65%) and other partner PYJI agencies (64%).

### “Death by Success”: Sustainability and Resources for Expansion

Leadership from Probation and CBOs reported an increase of excitement and interest around PYJI activities in Year 2. More referrals from probation officers have led to more crossover youth attending the Youth Development Groups. At the same time, leadership and line staff voiced concern that a system-change initiative like PYJI would take ongoing resources, training, and time to achieve concrete and sustainable changes in practice. Participants from CBOs reported that because PYJI was attempting to dismantle years of punitive practices that it would also take equal time if not more to shift culture that actually leads to changes in concrete practices. According to interviews, as PYJI grows and becomes more successful, more resources and increased staff support is needed to support these growing efforts:

*It's getting to a point where PYJI has grown bigger than anybody anticipated here, and I don't think anyone realized it was going to get this big. It's too big for one person.*

As previously mentioned, many partnering agencies reported that they are less involved in PYJI because the grant does not fund their participation or ability to leverage staff time to support the initiative. In survey responses and focus groups, line staff reported that PYJI has created more work for staff and that more resources are needed. Additionally, in key informant interviews and focus groups, staff reported having competing duties to their PYJI work and many respondents suggested having more staff designated for PYJI work.

Some leadership from partner agencies reported having challenges hiring staff qualified for the PYJI initiative. Because PYJI elements are infused with a TIC and PYD lens, partnering agencies reported issues staffing for the initiative when interviewees demonstrated having a philosophies not in alignment with PYJI.

While Probation leadership reported allocating funding to sustain the initiative within the Probation Department, they stated their concern sustaining for PYJI outside of their budget, particularly around funding the partnering CBOs running the youth development groups. Some county partnering agencies are leveraging their own resources to support the initiative, but reported feeling that those arrangements might not be sustainable if their funding streams were to shift.

## Youth and Caregiver Experiences

Sixty-one youth and 22 caregivers responded to the survey. Nine youth participated in the youth focus group.

### Key Findings

- Across youth serving systems, youth and caregivers generally reported that that the adults with whom they interact want things to go well for youth.
- At the same time, they also suggested that these adults do not consistently talk with youth about how things they have been through affect them, or about programs that might be helpful to them—questions designed to capture whether adults exemplified a TIC or PYD approach, respectively.
- While youth and caregiver responses aligned in some respects, overall, caregivers identified more positive feelings about their experiences with adults across systems, other than for caseworkers who they felt ambivalence toward. Across all areas, youth survey responses and focus group responses were generally aligned.

## Experience with Juvenile Justice System

Youth and caregivers shared very positive feelings toward supervisory probation officials in their survey responses, reporting that these officers wanted things to go well for youth and talked with youth about their life experiences and programs that might be helpful.

- Almost all youth (95%) and caregivers (100%) responded that it is very true or mostly true that their supervisory probation officer wants things to go well for them/their child.
- Almost all youth (98%) and caregivers (100%) responded that that it is very true or mostly true that their child's supervisory probation officer treats them/their child fairly.
- Nearly two-thirds of youth (65%) and over three-quarters of caregivers (81%) indicated that that is very true or mostly true that their/their child's probation officer talks with them about how what they have been through affects them—a question designed to capture whether probation officers exemplified a TIC approach.
- Over three-quarters of youth (79%) and caregivers (83%) expressed that it is mostly true or very true that probation officers are easy to get in touch with. Similar proportions of youth (81%) and caregivers (83%) reported that probation officers tell youth about programs that might be helpful to them—a question designed to capture whether probation officers exemplified a PYD approach.

Youth and caregivers survey responses suggested that probation officers used somewhat of a team-based approach.

- Over half of youth respondents (62%) and over three-quarters of caregivers (83%) reported always or sometimes having a caregiver present at meetings with their (their child's) probation officer.
- Considerably less than half of youth (38%) and caregivers (30%) reported having someone other than their caregivers (social workers or caseworkers and therapists, as well teachers and mentors, among others) at the meetings as well.

Youth and caregiver responses toward judges and officers in juvenile hall did not align; youth responses about their experiences with judges and probation officers in juvenile hall were mixed, while caregivers reported mostly positive feelings.

- While most (82%) youth indicated that that it is very true or mostly true that the decisions made by judges on their case were fair, almost half of youth also expressed that it is not at all true, or only a little true, that judges listen to them (48%) or their family (37%) when making decisions.
- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of youth responded that it is mostly true or somewhat true that officers in juvenile hall want them to succeed, but at least one-quarter suggested that it is not at all true or only a little bit true that they were treated fairly by officers in juvenile hall (25%),

had an officer (or other staff person) they could go to in juvenile hall (34%), or talked to an officer (or staff person) about a plan for when they got out (41%).

- Over three-quarters of caregivers (80%) conveyed that the decisions made by judges on their case were mostly fair or totally fair, and that is very true or mostly true that judges listen to them (82%) and their children (82%) when making decisions. Similarly, the majority of caregivers articulated mostly positive feelings about officers' work with their children in juvenile hall.

Youth perceptions captured from the youth focus group mostly aligned with survey responses. Many of the youth focus group participants communicated positive perceptions of supervisory probation officers, although they elaborated that relationships with probation officers largely depended on specific probation officers, and discussed some negative experiences with probation officers such as having a difficult time contacting them, feeling like their probation officer did not care about their wellbeing, and having their probation officers show up at their school. Similar to survey respondents, youth focus group participants described having mixed experiences with officers in juvenile hall; they described some officers in juvenile hall were "cool," viewing youth as individuals and treating them fairly, while others administered punishment that felt random and disproportionate to their behavior.

### **Experience with Child Welfare System**

Caregivers indicated mostly ambivalence toward caseworkers, while youth provided more positive feelings about their experiences with caseworkers. However, youth and caregivers alike reported that caseworkers did not talk with youth about how what they have been through in their life affects them, or about programs that may be helpful to them.

- Most youth (85%) stated that it is very true or mostly true that social workers listen to them, and almost all youth (95%) responded this way about whether social workers want things to go well for them (95%). Only two-thirds of caregivers (67%) remarked the same way.
- Approximately one-third of youth (36%) and caregivers (33%) reported that it is not at all true or only a little true that their/their child's social worker talks to them about how what they/their child has been through affects them.
- Approximately one-third of youth (32%) and half of caregivers (50%) responded that it is not at all true or only a little true that their/their child's social worker tells them about programs that might be helpful to them/their child.

### **Experience with School**

Youth and caregivers reported mostly positive feelings about how teachers and adults at school respond to youth, although caregivers' responses were more positive overall.

- Over three-quarters of caregivers responded that it is very true or mostly true that there is an adult at school that wants things to go well for their child (94%), informs their child of programs

that may be helpful to them (82%), and talks with their child about how their experiences affect their life (76%).

- Youth survey responses echoed caregivers' responses, although nearly one-quarter (24%) of youth indicated that there is not an adult at their school that talks with them about the effects of their life experiences, 14% indicated that there is not an adult that at schools that tells them about programs, and 4% indicated that there is not an adult at school that wants things to go well for them.

In addition, focus groups findings demonstrated that some youth felt that teachers treated them differently because of their probation status, especially in schools where there are not many students on probation.

### Experience with Programs

Despite indicating that a judge or probation officer ultimately decided what programs youth participate in, youth and caregivers also indicated some inclusion in the decision making process.

- Almost all youth (90%) and caregivers (90%) reported that the programs they/their child participated in were determined by a judge or probation officer.
- Over half of youth (60%) and caregivers (53%) indicated that youth helped decide what programs they participate in, and 43% of youth and nearly three-quarters of caregivers (72%) of indicated that caregivers helped decide what programs youth participate in.

Youth focus group participants also suggested that their probation officers told them which programs they would participate in. Youth in focus groups commented that they largely appreciated the programs they were involved in, and many observed that the various programs provided them with emotional support, helped them develop new skills, and shifted how they think about themselves and their lives. Overall, youth and caregiver survey respondents shared this sentiment.

- Over three-quarters of youth (79%) and caregivers (86%) suggested that it is mostly true or very true that the programs they/their child are (or were) involved in are a good fit.
- Most youth (87%) and caregivers (86%) of caregivers believed that it is very true or mostly true that the programs they/their child are (or were) involved with help them/their child build skills for the future.
- Nearly three-quarters of youth (73%) and almost all caregivers (90%) expressed that the programs they/their child are (or were) involved with help them/their child improve their relationships with family.
- Nearly three-quarters of youth (70%) and almost all caregivers (95%) expressed that the programs they/their child are (or were) involved with help them/their child do better in school.

## **Overall Support from Adults**

Overall, youth respondents indicated that they felt supported by the adults in their life.

- Most youth suggested that it is very true or mostly true that the adults in their life respect them (89%), that when they are feeling sad or lonely there are people who can help them (87%), and if they need help in school they know where to find it (90%).