

## | Appendix C: Key Milestones in Georgia’s Juvenile Justice System

### | 1905

- » Georgia State Reformatory opened in Milledgeville to serve delinquent boys, who had previously been housed in the adult penitentiary.

### | 1908

- » Georgia passed its first Juvenile Court Act.

### | 1911

- » Georgia’s first juvenile court opened in Fulton County.

### | 1930s

- » Adamsville Reformatory (Atlanta) opened to serve females; Augusta Reformatory opened to serve Black males.

### | 1946

- » White primaries were invalidated by the U.S. Supreme Court.<sup>423</sup>

### | 1954

- » *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.

### | 1963

- » The first Youth Services Unit was created under the DFCS, which was part of the Department of Social Services. Delinquent youth were placed in one of three training schools (formerly reformatories) located in Atlanta, Augusta, and Milledgeville. These served as long-term facilities.

### | 1964

- » The Civil Rights Act was enacted by the U.S. Congress.
- » The Macon Training School for Girls was opened.
- » Male training schools were desegregated: Atlanta Training School served boys ages 11–13; Augusta served boys ages 13–15; and Milledgeville served older male youth who had committed violent offenses.

### | 1965

- » The Voting Rights Act was enacted by the U.S. Congress.

### | 1967/1968

- » The first RYDCs were built in Albany, Rome, Sandersville, Waycross, Augusta, and Gainesville. Each RYDC had 18 rooms for males and 12 for females, creating a total state capacity of 180.

### | 1971

- » The first Community Treatment Center (CTC) opened in Columbus to serve youth in the community after school.<sup>xxxii</sup>
- » The Department of Human Resources (DHR) was created by merging several state agencies, including DFCS. Youth Services remained under DFCS.
- » Georgia also adopted its Juvenile Court Code, which defined “child” as an individual under the age of 17 and gave juvenile court jurisdiction over deprivation, delinquency, and status offense cases.<sup>xxxiii 424</sup>

<sup>xxxii</sup> By 1991, there were 23 CTCs in operation.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Despite Georgia raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction to include 17-years-olds in 1973, due to “a lack of juvenile court resources”, the legislature amended the code to exclude 17-year-olds that same year.

## | 1972

- » YDCs were created from former training schools. Community schools opened in Fulton, DeKalb, and Chatham counties.
- » The Youth Services Unit was upgraded to the Division of Youth Services (DYS) within DHR.

## | 1973

- » DYS began taking over county-run facilities.

## | 1974

- » DYS instituted a “Serious Offender Policy.”

## | 1976

- » Contract detention homes opened to provide emergency shelter for non-delinquent youth who could not return home.

## | 1977

- » **SB 100** was signed into law, setting guidelines for handling status offenses, providing statewide 24-hour intake, and prohibiting long-term jailing of children except under extraordinary circumstances.

## | 1979

- » Determinate sentencing was implemented, classifying offenders into four categories to determine length of stay.
- » The *Hall v. Skelton* ruling led to improved diagnostic orientation and counseling services, and restricted the use of detention and isolation in YDCs.
- » DYS began contracting with private psychiatric facilities for behavioral health services.

## | 1981

- » A new system for determining placement and length of stay, based on commitment offense and court history, was implemented.
- » The Designated Felony Act was passed, increasing commitments for violent offenders from two to five years.

## | 1982

- » The General Assembly approved provisions for the creation of a statewide juvenile court system.

## | 1985

- » The Public Risk Score<sup>xxxiv</sup> and Needs Assessment<sup>xxxv</sup> were created.

## | 1990

- » The Georgia General Assembly capped the YDC population. Age and weight distributions were eliminated, and early release procedures were introduced.

## | 1992

- » The General Assembly created the Department of Children and Youth Services (DCYS) based on recommendations from the Joint Study Committee on Children and Youth.
- » Placement Assessment Score<sup>xxxvi</sup> and Risk Assessment Score<sup>xxxvii</sup> were implemented.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> A 5-point scale, with 1 being least at risk to 5 being most serious, based on the most serious committing offense

<sup>xxxv</sup> Reflects need for: (1) residential support, (2) medical, (3) mental health, (4) alcohol and drug, (5) vocational, and (6) educational needs of the youth.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Ranging from 0-26, based on most serious current offense, most serious prior offense, and number of prior adjudications.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Ranging from 1-23, based on gang affiliation, sibling/parent offense history, age at first adjudication, and other factors.

## | 1993

- » Community Schools, CTCs, and Court Service Offices were merged to create Multi-Service Centers.
- » The Safe Schools Act<sup>xxxviii</sup> was passed.

## | 1994

- » SB 440 was passed, mandating that youth aged 13 or older who commit certain felonies be tried as adults. It also created the STP, allowing judges to place youth in a boot-camp-style program instead of committing them to a YDC, and extended designated felony sentences.<sup>xxxix</sup>

## | 1997

- » DCYS became DJJ.
- » The USDOJ investigated conditions within DJJ facilities.

## | 1998

- » A Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the USDOJ and DJJ, outlining specific operational guidelines. The final inspection report was issued in 2009, finding DJJ in substantial compliance.

## | 2001

- » [HB 201](#) was passed, giving judges more flexibility to place youth based on their risks and needs when issuing 90-day sentences.

## | 2005

- » DJJ schools became accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- » [Senate Resolution 161](#) created a study committee on the juvenile code, with a proposed model code completed in 2008 that later served as a foundation for 2013 reforms.<sup>425</sup>

## | 2006

- » [HB 1145](#) was enacted, providing guidance on the treatment of incompetent youth.
- » [SB 135](#) required that youth charged in superior court have their cases presented to a grand jury within 180 days.
- » [SB 136](#) allowed for bail options for youth at the discretion of the judge and prosecutor.

## | 2007

- » DJJ established a full-time Victim Advocate position to assist victims of juvenile crime.
- » [HB 153](#) ensured that youth with deprivation-related issues could not be committed to DJJ unless they had also committed a delinquent act.

## | 2011

- » [HB 265](#) established the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform for Georgians and the Special Joint Committee on Georgia Criminal Justice Reform. Among the first-year recommendations was a full review of the juvenile justice system.<sup>426</sup>

## | 2012

- » [HB 1176](#) incorporated many of the Special Council's recommendations regarding the adult criminal justice system.
- » Governor Nathan Deal expanded the Special Council's mandate to include juvenile justice. The Council's report detailed rising recidivism rates, excessive out-of-home placements for low-level offenses, and ineffective use of assessment tools. It recommended prioritizing high-risk offenders for facility placement and strengthening community-based supervision and evidence-based programs.<sup>427</sup>

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Initially intended to punish youth for carrying weapons or selling drugs at school but later amended to include disrupting schools, possession of drugs, vandalism on school property, and battery on a school official.

<sup>xxxix</sup> From 12-18 months to 9-60 months with time served in RYDC as part of length of sentence.

**| 2013**

- » [HB 349](#) created the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform with a five-year mandate.<sup>428</sup>
- » [HB 242 \(Juvenile Justice Reform Act\)](#) was passed, creating the CHINS category, expanding behavioral health services, increasing judicial discretion, and prioritizing community-based alternatives for nonviolent youth.<sup>429</sup>
- » The first JJIG grants were awarded to 49 counties.<sup>430</sup>

**| 2014**

- » [SB 365](#) was passed, implementing reentry reforms for adults, revising child dependency definitions, creating a special school district for DJJ youth, and making several procedural and oversight updates.<sup>431</sup>
- » Juvenile courts began using the PDRA and DAI tools, codified in O.C.G.A. § 15-11-505(A) and O.C.G.A. § 15-11-601.<sup>432</sup>
- » The CSG Program launched to reduce criminogenic behavior and out-of-home placements.<sup>433</sup>

**| 2015**

- » Governor Deal appointed the Georgia JDAI Steering Committee.<sup>434</sup>
- » JDEX, a statewide legal and assessment data repository, was launched to provide juvenile courts with comprehensive legal history and assessment data.<sup>435</sup>

**| 2017**

- » [SB 174](#) reformed accountability courts, sentencing guidelines, and laws related to assessments, court fees, parole, and probation.<sup>436</sup>