

SOCIAL JUSTICE SERIES

Key Takeaways

Social Justice Series - Part III School-to-Prison Pipeline

Take Action Beyond the #Hashtag

A juvenile record is a gateway to mass incarceration. How do we stop the school-to-prison pipeline? An average of \$33,000 is spent on an incarcerated individual. Imagine if we could reinvest those dollars into our children and their education.

Prevention

1. **Maslow's hierarchy of needs** – We need to provide food, stable housing, healthcare and administer basic needs to children.
2. **Increase literacy rates** – A child is 4x more likely to drop out of school if they can't read.
 - a. 1 in 4 of American children are not reading at grade level
 - b. 85% of children in juvenile detention centers are illiterate
 - c. 60-80% of the adults in incarceration facilities are illiterate
1. **Alternatives to juvenile detention, known as restorative justice** – Create circles at schools to bring families, teachers and the community together.
2. **Address and recognize racial bias** – Treat all children in an equitable manner. Disciplinary action should be equal regardless of race, gender or disability.

Strategies of intervention

1. **Create peer courts** – Instead of sending a child directly to a juvenile detention center, allow the student to appear before a group of their peers.
2. **Radical transformation of the juvenile justice system** – Create community-based alternatives for detention. Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiatives (JDAs) have been created across the nation and provide a community-based alternative for detention.
3. **Ask yourself, "What if that was my child?"** – Learn to recognize biases to avoid treating any child different from another.

Make a difference

1. **Review your school's disciplinary policy and help develop a new policy** by involving school administrators, teachers and the community
2. **Get involved** – Support literacy, connect with your school district or write to your school's board and/or principal
3. **Ask questions** – How often does your school use their disciplinary policy, how often are school administrators and teachers being trained, what resources do they have available to them?
4. **Look critically at the data and identify trends** – What is the rate of suspension/expulsion, how does it correlate to demographics like race or gender, is one group over-represented?
5. **Identify the root cause and create actionable goals to make changes**

Guidelines from:
Dr. Artika R. Tyner
www.artikatyner.com