

# A New Approach to Reducing Room Confinement

## Why Reduce Room Confinement

Room confinement can cause permanent harm to young people. Best practice standards allow room confinement only as a temporary and supervised intervention when youth behavior poses a risk of immediate physical harm.

- The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Standards
- Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA)
- Performance-based Standards (PbS)
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)

Federal courts in New York, Tennessee, and Wisconsin have found room confinement of youth to be unconstitutional and harmful, ordering facilities to limit room confinement in recent court rulings.

Investing in alternatives to room confinement makes kids and staff safer.

### Our Goal

We are a partnership between four national organizations dedicated to ending the unnecessary use of room confinement, or solitary confinement. We focus on helping juvenile justice stakeholders identify and implement safe and workable alternatives.

We define “solitary confinement” as the involuntary placement of a youth alone in a cell, room, or other area for any reason *other than* as a temporary response to behavior that threatens immediate harm to the youth or others. Brief periods of isolation may be necessary in some cases. We focus on the practice, not the term used to refer to it.

### Organizations Leading the Campaign

- Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA)
- Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University (CJJR)
- Center for Children’s Law and Policy (CCLP)
- Justice Policy Institute (JPI)

### What We Do

- Provide technical assistance to agencies and facilities working to reduce room confinement.
- Develop resources for local, state, and national advocates to promote thoughtful alternatives to room confinement.
- Publish information about successful reform efforts in jurisdictions throughout the country.
- Assist law makers develop legislative approaches to help safely end reliance on room confinement.

### How We Work With Facilities

- Work with facilities that have reduced room confinement to share what works.
- Technical assistance: the Room Confinement Assessment Tool (RCAT), identifying drivers and targeted interventions.
- Policy and training revisions.
- Build capacity to collect, monitor, and analyze data.
- Connect facilities with peers who have successfully reduced room confinement.

Stop Solitary for Kids is supported by over 90 professional and trade organizations including:

- American Correctional Association
- American Probation and Parole Association
- American Psychological Association
- Mental Health America
- National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice
- National Commission on Correctional Health Care
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
- National Partnership for Juvenile Services

## Our Goals

We are currently working with facilities in seven states. Agency directors, facility administrators, and medical and mental health experts have identified effective strategies to reduce room confinement. We can help facilities plan and implement these strategies.

### Helping Facilities Develop Solutions

- Assessing a facility's use of room confinement and identifying potential drivers as well as strengths that can be used to reduce room confinement;
- Providing strong leadership and messaging by agency directors and facility administrators;
- Adopting clear limits on the use of room confinement in policies and procedures, and a facility mission and philosophy that reflects rehabilitative goals;
- Developing an institutional culture where room confinement is an intervention to be used in very limited circumstances;
- Prohibiting the use of room confinement for fixed periods of time;
- Providing staff with training and resources to prevent conflict situations and minimize physical confrontations;
- Including training on adolescent development, trauma, conflict resolution, harms of solitary confinement, verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques, and alternatives to room confinement;
- Providing sufficient numbers of staff in the facility and staff-to-youth ratios of at least 1-to-8 to allow staff to fully engage with youth and to prevent and respond to behavioral disruptions;
- Developing alternative behavior management options and responses, including alternative sanctions as well as rewards and incentives for good behavior;
- Providing qualified mental health professionals to identify youth with mental health needs, evaluate youth in crisis, provide counseling, assist in developing individualized behavior plans;
- Identifying, collecting, and analyzing data to manage, monitor and provide accountability for the use of room confinement.

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## Contact Us

If you are interested in sharing your strategies to reduce room confinement or learning more about how we can assist in your facility or jurisdiction, please:

Contact [jlutz@cclp.org](mailto:jlutz@cclp.org) or (202) 637-0377 x106  
or visit [www.stopsolitaryforkids.org](http://www.stopsolitaryforkids.org)