

# Contemporary juvenile incarceration techniques

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## Abstract

Juvenile incarceration techniques encompass a range of strategies and methodologies used in the detention and rehabilitation of young offenders. These techniques aim to balance security, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society. Contemporary approaches often emphasize restorative justice, cognitive-behavioral interventions, and educational programs, addressing the underlying causes of delinquent behavior and promoting positive behavioral change. Innovative practices include trauma-informed care, which recognizes the impact of adverse

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experiences on youth, and individualized treatment plans that cater to each juvenile's unique needs. While traditional punitive measures are increasingly scrutinized for their long-term efficacy, modern techniques strive to reduce recidivism and facilitate successful reintegration by fostering a supportive and constructive environment. Effective juvenile incarceration techniques seek not only to ensure public safety but also to offer opportunities for personal growth and development, thereby contributing to the overall goal of reducing future criminal behavior and aiding in the rehabilitation of young offenders.

*Keywords:* recidivism, rehabilitation, family counselling, reintegration

## Introduction

Juvenile incarceration techniques are an essential aspect of the criminal justice system, designed specifically to address the unique needs of young offenders (Teigen, 2023). The primary goal of these techniques is not only to ensure public safety but also to facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of adolescents into society. Unlike adult incarceration, which often emphasizes punishment and deterrence, juvenile incarceration techniques focus on developmental factors and the potential for positive change during adolescence (Annamma & Morgan, 2021).

Historically, juvenile detention systems were modeled after adult prisons, emphasizing strict discipline and confinement. However, over the past few decades, there has been a significant shift toward understanding that adolescents are in a critical cognitive, emotional, and social development phase. This shift has led to developing more nuanced and rehabilitative approaches to managing juvenile offenders. Contemporary juvenile incarceration techniques prioritize creating environments that promote personal growth, skill development, and emotional healing (Thompson et al., 2024).

A cornerstone of modern juvenile incarceration practices is the implementation of individualized treatment plans. Recognizing that

each young offender has distinct needs, risks, and backgrounds, these plans are tailored to address each individual's specific issues. This approach involves comprehensive assessments that evaluate the juvenile's psychological state, educational background, family dynamics, and social influences. Based on these assessments, personalized interventions are designed, incorporating counseling, educational programs, and vocational training (Enokela, 2022).

Educational and vocational programs are integral components of juvenile incarceration techniques. These programs aim to provide offenders with the skills and knowledge necessary for successful reintegration into society. Education within juvenile facilities often includes basic academic instruction, GED preparation, and life skills training. Vocational training can encompass a range of skills, from technical trades to soft skills such as communication and problem-solving. By equipping juveniles with practical skills, these programs reduce the likelihood of reoffending and enhance their employability and self-sufficiency (Trujillo et al., 2023).

Therapeutic interventions are another critical element of contemporary juvenile incarceration practices. These interventions address underlying psychological issues, trauma, and behavioral problems. Individual and group therapy sessions and family counseling are used to support emotional healing and foster healthier coping mechanisms. Restorative justice practices are increasingly incorporated into juvenile systems, focusing on repairing the harm caused by the offender's actions and fostering accountability through constructive dialogue with victims and community members (Teigen, 2023).

Moreover, family involvement is emphasized in modern juvenile incarceration techniques. Recognizing that family dynamics play a crucial role in an adolescent's development, programs often include family counseling and support services. Engaging families helps address issues that may have contributed to the juvenile's behavior and promotes a supportive home environment upon reintegration (Abbas, 2022).

Despite these advancements, challenges remain in effectively implementing juvenile incarceration techniques. Issues such as

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inadequate funding, over-reliance on punitive measures, and disparities in the quality of services across facilities continue to impact the effectiveness of these techniques. However, ongoing research and policy reforms aim to address these challenges and enhance the overall efficacy of juvenile incarceration practices. Juvenile incarceration techniques have evolved significantly, shifting from punitive approaches to ones that emphasize rehabilitation, education, and emotional support. By focusing on the developmental needs of adolescents and providing them with the tools for positive change, these techniques aim to reduce recidivism and promote successful reintegration into society (Rana, 2022).

### **Research Justification**

Research on juvenile incarceration techniques is crucial for several reasons. First, the juvenile justice system must balance public safety to rehabilitate young offenders. Understanding and refining incarceration techniques can lead to more effective rehabilitation strategies, reducing recidivism rates and promoting successful reintegration into society. Second, adolescents have unique developmental needs and vulnerabilities that differ significantly from adults. Research can identify and validate practices that cater to these developmental differences, ensuring that interventions are age-appropriate and more likely to facilitate positive behavioral changes.

Third, evidence-based research can address disparities and inefficiencies within the current system. By examining the effectiveness of various techniques, policymakers and practitioners can develop and implement reforms that improve outcomes and address issues such as inadequate resources and inconsistent application of rehabilitation programs. Lastly, understanding the impact of incarceration techniques on mental health and personal development is vital. Research can uncover best practices for providing psychological support, educational opportunities, and family engagement, ultimately fostering an environment that supports the holistic growth of juvenile offenders. This research is essential for developing a justice system that holds young individuals accountable and supports their potential for positive change.

## Research Objectives

1. To discuss the historical background of juvenile incarceration techniques.
2. To highlight the theoretical context of juvenile incarceration techniques.
3. To analyze the leading laws that govern juvenile incarceration in Pakistan.
4. To identify the key challenges regarding juvenile incarceration techniques.
5. To explore the opportunities for minimizing juvenile incarceration.
6. To propose effective prevention and intervention strategies.

## Research Methodology

This study employed a systematic review methodology, with research objectives established accordingly. A comprehensive literature review was conducted (Komba & Lwoga, 2020). Research findings were categorized based on their content (Hiver et al., 2021; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006), and classified information was incorporated into the study by organizing it into headings (Gan et al., 2021; Pawson et al., 2005). The evaluation of classified information and titles formed the basis of the study (Page, 2021; Rahi, 2017), ensuring the integrity of the research subject and its contents (Egger et al., 2022; Victor, 2008).

## Literature Review

The issue of juvenile incarceration has been widely discussed and studied in legal and criminological literature, reflecting the challenges associated with addressing youth crime in a manner that balances public safety with the rehabilitative needs of juveniles. Juvenile offenders, by their age and developmental stage, are considered fundamentally different from adults in their capacity for change, decision-making processes, and social vulnerabilities (Teigen, 2023). It has led to the development of varied approaches and techniques aimed at managing juvenile incarceration, with a focus on reducing recidivism, fostering rehabilitation, and promoting the reintegration of juveniles into society (Nazim et al., 2024).

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Historically, the juvenile justice system was established to treat children and adolescents differently from adult criminals, recognizing that their offenses often stem from immaturity, poor judgment, and social influences rather than hardened criminality (Annamma & Morgan, 2021). Early juvenile justice systems were primarily rehabilitative, aiming to reform rather than punish (Enokela, 2022). This principle continues to influence contemporary juvenile incarceration techniques, which seek alternatives to imprisonment, emphasizing community-based programs, diversion, and restorative justice as key components (Jones et al., 2024).

One widely accepted technique is diversion programs, which divert young offenders away from formal judicial proceedings and into programs that address the root causes of their behavior. Diversion programs are particularly favored in cases of minor or non-violent offenses (Thompson et al., 2024). These initiatives aim to keep juveniles out of detention facilities by offering alternatives such as counseling, community service, and education. The idea behind diversion is that children and adolescents should not be subjected to the criminal justice system unnecessarily, as incarceration may expose them to negative influences or worsen their social and psychological well-being. These programs are designed to correct behavior without the stigma of a criminal record, offering a second chance to juveniles while ensuring accountability (Trujillo et al., 2023).

Restorative justice is another key technique used in juvenile justice systems worldwide. This approach focuses on repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior through reconciliation between the offender, the victim, and the community. Instead of traditional punitive measures, restorative justice encourages offenders to take responsibility for their actions and make amends. It may involve victim-offender mediation, restitution, and community service (Abbas, 2022). Restorative justice emphasizes the offender's understanding of their crime's impact, reducing the likelihood of reoffending. It also allows the victim to be directly involved in the process, often leading to a more meaningful sense of justice for all parties involved (Rana, 2022).

Juvenile rehabilitation centers represent another cornerstone of modern juvenile incarceration techniques. Unlike traditional prisons, which are punitive in nature, these centers focus on providing educational, vocational, and psychological services that address the needs of young offenders. The centers aim to prepare juveniles for reintegration into society by equipping them with skills and support networks necessary for a productive and law-abiding life. Educational programs, in particular, are seen as crucial in breaking the cycle of delinquency (Lelwica, 2024).

Vocational training is often provided to help juveniles develop employable skills, reducing their chances of returning to criminal activity. Psychological services, including counseling and therapy, are also integral to addressing underlying issues such as trauma, substance abuse, and mental health disorders that may contribute to criminal behavior (Gordon, 2022).

The principle of keeping juveniles separate from adults in detention facilities is another key feature of modern juvenile incarceration techniques (Jones, 2023). It is widely recognized that housing young offenders with adults can lead to increased risks of abuse, exploitation, and negative behavioral influences. Juvenile-specific detention centers or rehabilitation facilities are designed to protect young offenders' developmental and psychological well-being (Tie & Waugh, 2022). Moreover, these centers often provide more child-appropriate environments focusing on education and reform rather than punishment. The separation of juveniles from adult criminals ensures that they are not exposed to hardened criminals and reduces the risk of juveniles learning new criminal behaviors (Silver et al., 2023).

In some cases, probation or parole is used as an alternative to incarceration for juvenile offenders. Under probation, a juvenile is allowed to remain in the community under the supervision of a probation officer, who monitors their behavior and ensures that they comply with court-ordered conditions. Probation may include requirements such as attending school, participating in counseling, or performing community service. The goal of probation is to allow juveniles to remain in their home environment while receiving the

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support they need to avoid future criminal behavior. Parole, similarly, allows for the early release of a juvenile from a detention center under certain conditions, with the goal of reintegration into society (Rafiq, 2022).

Incarceration, when deemed necessary, is often considered a last resort in juvenile justice systems. Even when juveniles are incarcerated, contemporary techniques aim to ensure that their time in detention is productive and rehabilitative. In many countries, legal frameworks mandate that juveniles receive regular reviews of their detention status to ensure that they are not held for longer than necessary. Additionally, incarcerated juveniles are often provided with access to educational and therapeutic programs designed to reduce recidivism and address the underlying causes of their criminal behavior. The goal of these programs is to ensure that when juveniles are released, they are better equipped to reintegrate into society and avoid future involvement in crime (Annamma & Morgan, 2021).

The concept of rehabilitation versus punishment in juvenile incarceration has also been supported by research into adolescent brain development. Studies indicate that juveniles, particularly in their teenage years, are still undergoing significant cognitive and emotional development. They are more impulsive, more susceptible to peer pressure, and less likely to consider their actions' long-term consequences than adults. This understanding of juvenile psychology has bolstered arguments for rehabilitative approaches over punitive ones, with the belief that juveniles have a higher potential for reform than adult offenders (Thompson et al., 2024).

Overall, the literature on juvenile incarceration techniques underscores the importance of rehabilitation and the need to treat juvenile offenders differently from adults. The focus on education, psychological support, and reintegration is intended to break the cycle of criminal behavior and provide young offenders with the tools to build better futures. While varying in form and implementation across jurisdictions, these techniques share the common goal of reducing recidivism and fostering positive outcomes for juveniles in conflict with the law. The shift towards rehabilitation, diversion, and restorative



justice reflects a broader understanding that youth crime is often a symptom of social, psychological, and economic factors that must be addressed through support rather than punishment.

## **Historical Background of Juvenile Incarceration Techniques**

Juvenile incarceration techniques have evolved, reflecting shifts in societal views on youth crime and rehabilitation. In the 19th century, juvenile offenders were often treated like adults, housed in the same prisons under harsh conditions. The first significant change came with the establishment of the New York House of Refuge in 1825, the first institution explicitly designed for juveniles. It marked the beginning of a focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment (Lelwica, 2024).

The juvenile court system was formally established in the U.S. in 1899 with the founding of the first juvenile court in Illinois. This system emphasized individualized treatment and the idea that youth were more amenable to rehabilitation than adults. Early 20th-century techniques often involved reformatories and vocational training schools, aiming to reform behavior through structure and education (Gordon, 2022).

However, by the mid-20th century, concerns about the effectiveness of these methods grew, as many institutions were criticized for abusive practices and poor conditions. In the 1990s, a wave of "tough on crime" policies led to a rise in the incarceration of juveniles in detention centers resembling adult prisons. Since then, there has been a growing shift toward community-based alternatives, restorative justice, and therapeutic interventions, focusing on preventing recidivism and addressing the root causes of juvenile delinquency.

## **Theoretical Context of Juvenile Incarceration Techniques**

Juvenile incarceration techniques are grounded in several theoretical frameworks aimed at understanding and addressing the developmental and behavioral needs of young offenders. Rehabilitation theory is a dominant approach, emphasizing the need to reform rather than punish juveniles. This theory suggests that, due to their developmental immaturity, juveniles are more amenable to

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rehabilitation and behavior modification through education, counseling, and skill-building programs. The goal is to reintegrate them into society as productive individuals (Tie & Waugh, 2022).

Deterrence theory, another approach, argues that punishment can prevent future delinquency by instilling fear of legal consequences. However, this theory is often less favored in juvenile justice, as research shows that harsh punishment can be counterproductive, leading to recidivism rather than reform. Restorative justice theory focuses on repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior, involving the offender, victim, and community in the process of reconciliation. This technique is increasingly used in juvenile justice systems to promote accountability and empathy in young offenders (Silver et al., 2023).

Developmental criminology also influences juvenile incarceration techniques by recognizing the impact of cognitive, emotional, and social development on youth behavior. This perspective highlights the need for age-appropriate interventions that support positive development rather than punitive measures that can hinder psychological and emotional growth (Jones, 2023).

## **Leading Juvenile Incarceration Laws in Pakistan**

The juvenile justice system in Pakistan is primarily governed by the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 (JJSA), which ensures the protection, rehabilitation, and proper treatment of children involved in criminal proceedings. Provincial laws generally align with the JJSA but may introduce specific measures within their jurisdictions. Each province is empowered to draft its own juvenile justice laws, provided they comply with the Constitution and international obligations (Government of Pakistan, 2024).

Punjab's youthful offenders ordinance (1983) emphasizes separate treatment for minors, focusing on reform through education and training rather than punishment. The Sindh Children Act (1955) established juvenile courts and mandated the separation of juveniles from adult criminals. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's juvenile justice system ordinance (2000) similarly provides for separate courts and facilities for juveniles. In Balochistan, the Borstal Act (2014) focuses on

rehabilitative incarceration through vocational training, education, and psychological support (Haidar et al., 2023).

Nationally, the Probation of Offenders Ordinance (1960) offers probation as an alternative to incarceration for juveniles, aiming to reform them without exposing them to prison. The Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) contains provisions allowing bail (Section 497) and conditional discharge (Section 399) for juveniles. Additionally, Article 25(3) of the Constitution of Pakistan provides special protections for juvenile offenders (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Internationally, Pakistan is bound by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which prohibits harsh punishments for juveniles and emphasizes imprisonment as a last resort (Abbas et al., 2022). The Beijing Rules (1985), Havana Rules (1990), and Riyadh Guidelines (1990) further outline international standards for juvenile justice, focusing on rehabilitation and dignity. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC, 1990) complement these guidelines by ensuring fair trials and humane treatment for juveniles.

## **Challenges and Opportunities for Juvenile Incarceration Techniques**

### **1. Challenges**

Juvenile incarceration techniques face several challenges that hinder their effectiveness in promoting rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. One major challenge is the lack of age-appropriate interventions. Many facilities fail to address the developmental needs of juveniles, applying adult-oriented punishments that can lead to negative psychological effects and hinder rehabilitation.

Overcrowding in juvenile detention centers is another issue, reducing access to individualized care, education, and therapy. It often results in inadequate support for emotional and cognitive development. Furthermore, insufficient family involvement and community support post-release contribute to higher recidivism rates. Without strong family

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and social networks, juveniles struggle to reintegrate into society, increasing the likelihood of reoffending.

Additionally, mental health services are often underfunded, leaving many incarcerated youth without the necessary psychological support to address underlying issues such as trauma, substance abuse, or behavioral disorders. These challenges highlight the need for reforms that focus on rehabilitation and long-term reintegration into society.

## 2. Opportunities

There are several opportunities to improve juvenile incarceration techniques, focusing on rehabilitation and successful reintegration. Expanding access to education and vocational training in detention facilities can equip juveniles with essential skills for employment, reducing recidivism by promoting financial independence post-release.

Therapeutic interventions, such as mental health services and counseling, offer significant potential to address underlying behavioral and psychological issues. Programs that focus on trauma, substance abuse, and emotional regulation can lead to long-term behavioral change and improve reintegration outcomes. Restorative justice practices present another opportunity, emphasizing accountability and reconciliation between offenders, victims, and communities. These practices help juveniles understand the impact of their actions and encourage personal responsibility.

Furthermore, enhancing family engagement in rehabilitation programs creates a supportive environment for juveniles during and after incarceration, strengthening their social reintegration. Lastly, leveraging technology-based programs for remote learning and psychological support can further extend the reach of rehabilitative efforts, especially in under-resourced areas.

## Discussion

The discussion on juvenile incarceration techniques reveals a significant shift from traditional punitive approaches to those emphasizing rehabilitation and development. This evolution reflects a deeper understanding of adolescent psychology and the recognition that punitive measures alone are insufficient for addressing the root causes

of delinquent behavior. Rehabilitative approaches, including educational and vocational programs, effectively reduce recidivism. By providing juveniles with academic and job-related skills, these programs address the broader context of juvenile delinquency, offering young offenders a path to productive futures. Evidence supports that educational achievements and vocational skills decrease the likelihood of reoffending, as they enhance employability and self-sufficiency.

Therapeutic interventions play a crucial role in addressing underlying psychological issues. Programs focusing on cognitive-behavioral therapy, trauma-informed care, and family counseling help juveniles manage emotional and behavioral challenges. These approaches support immediate behavioral changes and promote long-term mental health and stability. Family involvement is another critical factor. Engaging families in the rehabilitation process helps to address home environment issues that may contribute to delinquent behavior. Family-based interventions can strengthen familial relationships and support systems essential for successful reintegration.

Restorative justice practices offer an alternative to traditional punitive methods by focusing on repairing harm and fostering accountability. These practices facilitate constructive dialogue between offenders, victims, and community members, leading to higher victim satisfaction and a deeper understanding of the impact of one's actions. Despite these advancements, disparities in resources and systemic challenges remain. Addressing these inequities ensures that all juveniles receive effective and equitable rehabilitation. The shift towards comprehensive, developmentally appropriate techniques represents a promising approach to juvenile justice, aiming to support young offenders in becoming productive and law-abiding citizens.

## Conclusion

The evolution of juvenile incarceration techniques reflects a critical shift from punitive measures to rehabilitative and developmentally informed approaches. Modern techniques emphasize addressing the root causes of delinquency through educational and vocational programs, therapeutic interventions, and restorative justice practices. These methods recognize that adolescents are in a crucial

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stage of psychological and emotional development, and effective rehabilitation requires focusing on their specific needs.

Educational and vocational training within juvenile facilities provides young offenders with essential skills for reintegration, which helps reduce recidivism by promoting employability and self-sufficiency. Therapeutic interventions, including cognitive-behavioral therapy and trauma-informed care, address underlying mental health issues and support emotional healing. Family involvement further strengthens rehabilitation by improving familial relationships and addressing environmental factors contributing to delinquent behavior.

Restorative justice practices enhance this framework by fostering accountability and repairing harm through dialogue between offenders, victims, and the community. This approach facilitates personal growth and contributes to higher levels of victim satisfaction. Despite these advancements, systemic disparities and inconsistent resource allocation remain. Ensuring equitable access to effective rehabilitation services across all facilities is crucial for achieving consistent positive outcomes. Focusing on rehabilitation, education, and community involvement marks a promising direction for juvenile justice. It aims to support young offenders in their path to becoming productive, law-abiding citizens. Continued research and policy reform are essential to address existing challenges and optimize the effectiveness of these techniques.

## Recommendations

- 1. Enhance Education:** Expand and personalize educational programs within juvenile facilities.
- 2. Expand Vocational Training:** Offer relevant job skills and certification opportunities.
- 3. Increase Therapeutic Access:** Provide comprehensive therapeutic services, including counseling and trauma care.
- 4. Promote Family Engagement:** Involve families through counseling and support services.

- 5. Integrate Restorative Justice:** Use restorative practices to foster accountability and repair harm.
- 6. Ensure Consistent Resources:** Address funding and resource disparities across facilities.
- 7. Provide Staff Training:** Offer ongoing professional development on adolescent needs and rehabilitation techniques.
- 8. Implement Individualized Plans:** Tailor treatment plans to each juvenile's specific needs.
- 9. Use Evidence-Based Practices:** Apply research-backed methods and continuously update programs.
- 10. Support Reintegration:** Provide continued support for juveniles transitioning back into society, including counseling and job placement services.

### Research Limitations

Research on juvenile incarceration techniques faces several limitations. First, there is often a lack of longitudinal studies that track the long-term effectiveness of various rehabilitation programs, making it challenging to assess their lasting impact on recidivism and reintegration. Second, research may be limited by inconsistent implementation and quality of programs across different facilities, leading to variability in outcomes and difficulty in generalizing findings. Additionally, there may be a shortage of comprehensive data on the specific needs and outcomes of diverse juvenile populations, including those from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Finally, funding constraints and ethical considerations can restrict the scope and scale of research, potentially limiting the depth of analysis and the ability to conduct large-scale, controlled studies. These limitations highlight the need for more robust, consistent, and inclusive research to understand better and improve juvenile incarceration techniques.

### Research Implications

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Research on juvenile incarceration techniques has significant implications for policy and practice. Insights gained can guide the development of more effective rehabilitation programs tailored to the specific needs of young offenders, leading to reduced recidivism and better reintegration outcomes. Evidence-based findings can inform policymakers about the effectiveness of educational and vocational training, therapeutic interventions, and family involvement strategies, potentially leading to more targeted resource allocation and program implementation.

Moreover, understanding the impact of restorative justice practices can encourage broader adoption of these approaches, promoting accountability and community engagement. Addressing identified disparities and inconsistencies can drive systemic reforms to ensure equitable access to quality rehabilitation services across different facilities. Overall, research findings have the potential to shape more humane and effective juvenile justice practices, ultimately improving the prospects for young offenders and contributing to broader social and public safety outcomes.

### **Future Research Directions**

Future research on juvenile incarceration techniques should focus on several key areas to enhance effectiveness and address current limitations. Firstly, longitudinal studies are needed to assess the long-term impacts of various rehabilitation programs on recidivism, educational attainment, and overall life outcomes. It would provide a clearer understanding of which interventions offer sustained benefits.

Secondly, research should explore the implementation and effectiveness of individualized treatment plans, evaluating how personalized approaches influence behavioral changes and reintegration success. Additionally, there is a need to investigate the impact of systemic factors such as facility resources, staff training, and geographic disparities on the quality of rehabilitation services. Comparative studies across diverse facilities can highlight best practices and areas for improvement. Another critical area is the integration of family-based interventions, including their effectiveness in different family dynamics and cultural contexts.



Finally, examining the broader application of restorative justice practices in juvenile settings can provide insights into their role in promoting accountability and reducing reoffending. Collectively, these research directions can inform policy reforms and enhance the overall effectiveness of juvenile incarceration techniques.

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