

COLORADO JUVENILE RISK ASSESSMENT

The Division of Youth Corrections, SB 94 Advisory Committee and SB 94 Coordinators, as part of their ongoing efforts to systematically pursue and utilize the most advanced strategies available for juvenile rehabilitation, have launched the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA). The CJRA is a state-of-the-art criminogenic risk assessment based on principles of juvenile justice strategy. The instrument has been validated in other sites as highly predictive of future offending. Its effectiveness has been proven through research and practice and it has become one of the leading juvenile risk assessment tools in the country.

How Does the CJRA Fit In?

Thousands of young people enter the Colorado juvenile justice system each year, some in need of intensive supervision and strict sanctions, others who would benefit more from a lower level of intervention. In addition, youth in detention may be considered for emergency release prior to the conclusion of their detention sentence. In order to make those determinations, decision makers across the system need reliable, valid data. The CJRA responds to this need with targeted criminogenic information.

The CJRA is made up of two parts – a **Pre Screen** and a **Full Screen**.

The CJRA Pre Screen – The CJRA Pre Screen is made up of 32 items – 12 related to Criminal History and 20 related to Social History. A single, directed interview at intake, supplemented with legal history data and targeted collateral contacts, provides information sufficient to make a risk classification that triages youth into low, moderate or high risk to re-offend.

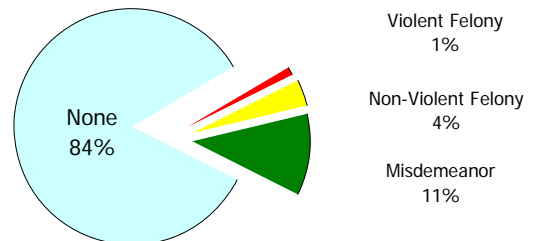
Youth classified as low risk by the CJRA have less than a 5% chance of committing a felony and less than a 16% chance of re-offending in any way.

The Pre Screen also helps identify those youth in need of further mental health or substance abuse evaluation, and provides empirical data for informed and uniform disposition and placement recommendations. Only youth who are classified as moderate or high risk by the Pre Screen are typically assessed using the Full Screen which provides a more detailed assessment to develop case plans that guide and follow service and supervision from intake through case closure.

Pre-Screen – Predictive Validity

Percentage of Low Risk Youth Who Re-Offended
Within 18 Months of Start of Supervision

Allowing Six Months For Adjudication



Assessment of criminogenic risk factors and treatment directed toward changing these dynamic characteristics offers the best chance of reducing recidivism.

The CJRA Full Screen – Through the CJRA, each youth’s unique criminogenic needs are identified by a series of questions that probe the areas of a youth’s life that have been proven to predict pro- or anti-social behavior.

The CJRA full-screen gives a clear picture of a youth’s whole range of risk and protective factors.

It is designed to make the assessment and case planning process more interactive and productive, and identifies the strengths that help the youth overcome adversity in addition to delineating risk factors. For example, the assessment may identify strengths that would suggest the type of service or community involvement that would be likely to lead to success. Similarly, the CJRA provides useable information about the youth’s community and family and helps determine if there is someone who can be supportive and help with the youth’s rehabilitation while also alerting us to risks in the family which need to be addressed.

CJRA Full Screen Assessment Domains

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|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Criminal History | 7. Family |
| 2. Demographics | 8. Alcohol and Drugs |
| 3. School | 9. Mental Health |
| 4. Use of Free Time | 10. Attitudes/Behaviors |
| 5. Employment | 11. Aggression |
| 6. Relationships | 12. Skills |

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the CJRA Pre Screen used?

The Colorado State Legislature has mandated risk assessment to inform emergency release decisions. The CJRA has been selected to fulfill this mandate and will be used to assess all youth admitted to detention. Each jurisdiction may also determine additional decision points to administer the CJRA. Some are already using the CJRA (pre screen and full version when indicated) to assess all young people entering the juvenile justice system and to inform placement and case planning decisions.

How will I benefit from the CJRA?

The Court will benefit through reliable and specific information to inform decisions regarding detention or release to the community. Emergency release teams will benefit through detailed information that will support decisions that will maximize community safety. All stakeholders will benefit through specific and reliable information pinpointing risk factors to address in order to reduce the risk of re-offending, maximize the youth’s chances for success and most effectively use limited resources. Because CJRA results will be available through the TRAILS system, information will be widely available to stakeholders across child-serving systems.

How does the CJRA work with the JDSAG?

Use of the JDSAG will continue; in most cases the JDSAG will be completed prior to the CJRA. While both tools have the word “assessment” in their names they serve very different functions. The JDSAG, both in structure and function, is a placement decision tree based on Colorado statute. The CJRA is a standardized, validated risk assessment that identifies a young person’s risk to re-offend based on multiple, proven criminogenic factors.

Effective use of the CJRA will help avoid spending too much time and resources providing supervision and treatment for low-risk youth with interested and involved parents, rather than focusing on youth who are more likely to commit future offenses.

How does the CJRA fit with the CYOLSI?

The CYOLSI and CJRA are both validated risk assessment tools. The CJRA, developed much more recently, reflects a state-of-the-art understanding of the multiple factors affecting youth behavior and is better suited to supporting case management over the whole course of a youth's involvement with the juvenile justice system. While the tools overlap, the CJRA goes beyond the CYOLSI's emphasis on levels of supervision to support planning and monitoring of intervention. Tools like the CYOLSI are commonly referred to as "2nd Generation" risk assessment models – the CJRA represents a "4th Generation" tool.

Will the COMPASS still be used?

Jurisdictions piloting the COMPASS need not continue. The CJRA, while providing similar basic information, offers additional information to support decision making and has proven reliability.

How long does it take?

In the context of a standard intake assessment, completion of the Pre Screen typically adds another 20 – 30 minutes. If the Pre Screen is being administered alone, expect closer to an hour to collect all necessary information and complete the assessment.

How is the CJRA Pre Screen completed?

Information for the Pre Screen is gathered through a targeted interview at intake, supplemented with legal history data and targeted collateral contacts. The assessment is then completed by entering the information into the CJRA application on the TRAILS system.

How many items make up the CJRA Pre Screen?

The Pre Screen is made up of 32 items – 12 related to Criminal History and 20 related to Social History.

When should the CJRA Full Screen be used?

Individual districts and jurisdictions are not required to use the CJRA Full Screen. However, jurisdictions may choose to use the Full Screen and training will be offered through DYC in spring 2008. The Full Screen is typically used only with youth who are classified as moderate or high risk to re-offend by the Pre Screen. Low risk youth most often will be unable to benefit from further assessment, supervision and treatment, so use of the Full Screen may not represent effective practice with these youth.