

Note: This is a description of additional services offered to youth in the electronic monitoring and home detention alternatives. This extension of services was proposed in late 2005 and was in the process of being implemented as of February 1, 2006.

Family Connections- Job Power Program Extension of Program to Detention Alternatives

This program is funded by the Essex County Division of Training and Employment as a special initiative designed to provide services for families and at-risk youth involved in the juvenile justice system that are part of a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grant.

The program was originally funded to provide services to TANF youngsters who are temporarily housed at the Essex County Juvenile Detention Center. More recently, the program was expanded to provide services to TANF youngsters who may be participating in the Detention Alternatives initiative (i.e. Home Detention and Electronic Monitoring).

The reason this initiative was developed was to provide intensive services to youngsters who are at-risk and are part of TANF households. Study after study has shown that participation in the welfare system is often inter-generational and the current welfare reform initiative focuses primarily on engaging adults in “to-work” activities with little or no emphasis on working with youngsters who face the prospect of continued dependence on the “system.” Moreover, the program attempts to connect TANF families with available resources which are paramount to household stability which may include emergency and rental assistance, access to job training and adult education, job placement and substance abuse or mental health treatment.

In addition to the Family Connections program, the Division of Training and Employment employs a full-time Case Manager, outstationed at the Juvenile Detention Center, whose primary responsibility is to ensure that the TANF eligibility of youngsters and provide supportive services to the target families.

Family Connections- Services/ Program Methodology

- 1) Bio-Psycho-Social Intake Assessment which identifies risk behaviors
- 2) Master Contract for Change which youth’s strengths and participation in the program
- 3) Positive Skills-Building through the use of Power Source curriculum
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Impulse control/ anger management
 - Stress reduction/ coping strategies
 - Developing personal insight and sense of self
- 4) Individual Counseling
 - Track progress on MCC
 - Identify triggers to high-risk behavior
 - Emphasize strengths
 - Address special needs and sensitive issues

A Case Management Review team has been established which consists of the representative from Family Connections, Division of Training and Employment Case Manager, Supervisor of Social Work Essex County Juvenile Detention Center and a representative from the Detention Alternative Initiative. The group will meet bi-weekly to discuss the progress of participating youngsters.