

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

Resolution 4

In Support of Implementation of the Recommendations of the *Defending Childhood* Report

WHEREAS, in 2011, the United States Department of Justice established a multi-disciplinary Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence and charged the task force with making specific recommendations on how to effectively address the needs of children who have been exposed to violence within and outside the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, the task force conducted hearings and listening sessions across the country to gather information; and

WHEREAS, in December 2012, the task force released the *Defending Childhood* report, which included research-based findings and recommendations for trauma-informed approaches and practices in regard to children and youth involved in the justice system who have been exposed to violence; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations fall within six categories: (1) Ending the Epidemic of Children Exposed to Violence; (2) Identifying Children Exposed to Violence; (3) Treating and Healing of Exposure to Violence; (4) Creating Safe and Nurturing Homes; (5) Communities Rising Up Out of Violence; and (6) Rethinking Our Juvenile Justice System; and

WHEREAS, the task force calls for a national initiative to promote professional education and training on the issues of children exposed to violence and for training on trauma-informed services and evidence-based treatment; and

WHEREAS, the task force also has several recommendations related to increased collaboration, including a call for the creation of multi-disciplinary councils and coalitions to assure systemwide collaboration and community response to children exposed to violence, collaborative responses to victims of violence, working together to create protocols and policies that protect children and adult when domestic violence and child sexual or physical abuse co-occurs, and the organization of local coalitions to assess local challenges and resources and developing coordinated responses to reduce violence; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations related to rethinking the juvenile justice system call for making trauma-informed screening, assessment, and care the standard in juvenile justice

services, using detention and incarceration as a last resort for youth that pose a safety risk or cannot receive effective treatment in the community, providing individualized services based on assessment for each violence-exposed child, implementing policies that keep children in school; guaranteeing that violence-exposed children accused of a crime have legal representation, helping child victims of sex trafficking, and prosecuting young offenders in the juvenile justice system whenever possible;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators commend the work of the task force and encourage state court leaders to consider the recommendations of the task force as they undertake juvenile justice system reforms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conferences encourage state court leaders to collaborate with representatives of the executive and legislative branches of government and other stakeholders to develop and implement reforms in the juvenile justice system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conferences are committed to working with the United States Department of Justice to develop training for court personnel on the issues and recommendations contained in the *Defending Childhood* report and to promote the practices proposed in the report.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Courts, Children, and Families Committee at the 2013 Annual Meeting on July 31, 2013.