

# CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING JUVENILE JUSTICE POLITICS

## INTRODUCTION

Juvenile justice is the government mechanism set up to treat cases of juvenile delinquency adequately and fairly. Juvenile justice system exists to enforce the "lenient punishment" rule that applies to juveniles. Juveniles are perceived to be less accountable and responsible to or their actions, thereby deserving lenient punishment. Juvenile justice politics is a complex and controversial topic. There are many different perspectives on how best to deal with juvenile offenders, and these perspectives often clash in the political arena.

Some people believe that juvenile offenders should be treated the same as adult offenders, while others believe that they should be treated differently because they are still developing and may not be fully responsible for their actions. There is also debate about the role of rehabilitation and the use of detention facilities.

The juvenile justice system is constantly evolving, and new laws and policies are being enacted all the time. This can make it difficult to keep up with the latest developments. However, it is important to stay informed about these issues so that you can make informed decisions about how to deal with juvenile offenders. Implementing juvenile justice policies often comes with several challenges. These include:

1. Inadequate Funding: Many juvenile justice systems face financial constraints, limiting their ability to provide rehabilitation programs, facilities, and proper legal representation for minors.
2. Overcrowding in Juvenile Facilities: Many countries experience overcrowded detention centers, which hinders the effective rehabilitation of young offenders.
3. Lack of Rehabilitation Programs: In some systems, there is an overemphasis on punishment rather than rehabilitation, which is critical for reintegrating juveniles into society.
4. Inconsistent Laws and Policies: Variations in juvenile justice policies across states or regions can lead to unequal treatment of offenders.
5. Stigma and Marginalization: Juveniles who go through the justice system often face societal stigma, making reintegration into their communities difficult.
6. Inadequate Training of Personnel: Many officials working in the juvenile justice system lack specialized training to handle the unique needs of minors.
7. Cultural and Social Barriers: Societal attitudes towards crime and punishment can hinder the implementation of policies aimed at rehabilitation rather than retribution.

8. Weak Implementation Mechanisms: Even when policies exist, their enforcement may be weak due to corruption, lack of political will, or inadequate monitoring systems.

9. Limited Access to Legal Aid: Many juveniles do not have access to quality legal representation, which affects their ability to navigate the justice system.

10. Family and Community Challenges: Dysfunctional family environments or lack of community support can lead to repeated offenses and failure of rehabilitation efforts.

11. Lack of Alternatives to Incarceration: There is often a shortage of diversion programs or community-based alternatives that focus on rehabilitation instead of detention.

Addressing these challenges requires strong political will, adequate funding, public awareness, and a focus on rehabilitation and reintegration.

Inadequate Funding is a significant challenge in implementing juvenile justice policies. Without sufficient financial resources, many aspects of the system suffer, such as infrastructure, personnel, and program development. Here's a breakdown of how inadequate funding impacts the system:

1. Poor Facilities: Many juvenile detention centers and rehabilitation facilities are outdated, overcrowded, or in disrepair, making it difficult to create a safe and conducive environment for reform.

2. Lack of Rehabilitation Programs: Funding shortages often result in limited or no access to vocational training, educational programs, or counseling services, which are critical for the rehabilitation and reintegration of juveniles into society.

3. Understaffing and Low Salaries: Juvenile justice systems often face staffing issues due to budget constraints. Low salaries and lack of resources lead to high turnover rates, understaffing, and a workforce that may lack adequate training.

4. Inadequate Legal Representation: Many juveniles cannot afford legal representation, and public defenders often lack the resources to provide comprehensive support due to heavy caseloads and limited funding.

5. Limited Aftercare Services: Post-release programs, such as mentorship, job placement, or mental health support, are often underfunded, increasing the likelihood of recidivism.

6. Training Deficits: Judges, social workers, law enforcement, and other personnel involved in the juvenile justice system may not receive specialized training in dealing with young offenders due to budget cuts.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation: Without proper funding, the system lacks mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of policies, track outcomes, and make data-driven improvements.

### Solutions to Funding Challenges

Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborating with non-governmental organizations, private donors, and international bodies can provide additional resources.

Government Commitment: Increased budgetary allocation to juvenile justice and transparent spending can make a difference.

Grant Programs: Governments and organizations can create grant systems to support local initiatives in juvenile justice reform.

Community Involvement: Engaging communities to support prevention programs reduces the long-term costs of addressing juvenile delinquency.

Addressing political challenges in implementing juvenile justice requires a multi-faceted approach. \*Building Bipartisan Support\* is crucial to overcome partisan politics and election cycle pressures. This can be achieved by fostering collaboration among policymakers, scholars, and practitioners to develop evidence-based policies <sup>1</sup>.

\*International Collaboration\* is also vital in addressing common challenges faced by jurisdictions worldwide. Sharing best practices, research, and innovative solutions can help jurisdictions learn from each other and develop more effective juvenile justice systems <sup>1</sup>.

\*Cultural Sensitivity\* is essential in implementing juvenile justice policies. It's crucial to consider the unique cultural nuances and practices of each community to ensure fair and equitable treatment of young offenders <sup>1</sup>.

\*Addressing Systemic Biases\* is also necessary to ensure that juvenile justice systems are fair and equitable. This can be achieved by implementing policies and programs that address disparities in resource allocation, human rights concerns, and cultural biases <sup>1</sup>.

\*Evidence-Based Practices\* should guide the development of juvenile justice policies. This includes conducting thorough research and analysis to identify effective solutions and programs that address the unique needs of young offenders <sup>2</sup>.

By addressing these political challenges, jurisdictions can develop more effective and equitable juvenile justice systems that prioritize rehabilitation, protect rights, and foster the positive development of young individuals.

Lack of Rehabilitation Programs is a major challenge in juvenile justice systems and significantly undermines the primary goal of reforming young offenders. Juvenile justice should prioritize rehabilitation over punishment, but many systems fail to provide effective programs due to various constraints. Here's a deeper exploration of this challenge:

Causes of Limited Rehabilitation Programs:

1. Inadequate Funding: Rehabilitation programs, such as education, therapy, and vocational training, require significant resources, which are often unavailable.
2. Focus on Punishment: Some systems emphasize punitive measures over rehabilitative approaches, treating juveniles like adult offenders.
3. Insufficient Personnel: A lack of trained professionals, such as counselors, social workers, and educators, hinders the implementation of these programs.
4. Overcrowding: Overcrowded facilities make it difficult to provide individualized care and attention to juveniles.
5. Cultural and Social Stigma: Societal views that see rehabilitation as “soft” on crime may discourage investments in such programs.
6. One-Size-Fits-All Approach: Some systems fail to design programs tailored to the diverse needs, backgrounds, and crimes of young offenders.

## IMPACT OF TRUANCY, SCHOOL DROPOUT AND BULLYING ON DELINQUENCY

1. Truancy: Truancy is a form of delinquency, typically referring to the act of skipping school without a valid excuse. It's considered a type of minor delinquent behavior especially when it becomes frequent or habitual.

Truancy can be a sign of underlying issues such as problems at school, family issues, or social challenges. If it continues over time it might lead to more serious legal consequences or contribute to other forms of delinquent behavior.

There are several key ways in which truancy impacts delinquency:

1. Weakening Academic Engagement and Success: Truancy often leads to academic underachievement, which can foster

feelings of failure or frustration in students. This lack of academic success can lead to disengagement from the school environment, increasing the likelihood of involvement in delinquent activities as a form of escape or rebellion.

2. Exposure to Negative Peer Groups: Truancy frequently correlates with hanging out with peers who are also disengaged from school or who exhibit risky behaviors. This association with deviant peer groups increases the likelihood of delinquent behavior, as these peers often encourage or normalize such actions.

3. Increased Time Outside Supervision: Students who skip school spend more time away from positive adult supervision, which exposes them to situations where they are more likely to encounter negative influences or engage in criminal activities. This lack of structured time makes it easier for students to fall into delinquency.

4. Psychosocial Factors: Truancy is often a symptom of deeper issues such as mental health problems, family instability, or poor socio-economic conditions. These underlying factors can exacerbate the likelihood of delinquency, as children may seek ways to cope with or escape their challenging environments.

5. School-Related and Systemic Factors: Ineffective school policies or lack of support for students with specific needs can contribute to truancy. When schools fail to address factors like bullying, academic struggles, or social alienation, students may turn to delinquent behaviors to gain a sense of belonging or purpose.

Key reasons why truancy can lead to delinquency:

1. Lack of structure and supervision: When students are not in school, they lack the structure and supervision provided by teachers and administrators, which can leave them more susceptible to engaging in risky activities.

2. Association with delinquent peers: During periods of truancy, students may spend time with peers who are already involved in delinquent behavior, increasing their exposure to such activities.

3. Boredom and frustration: Chronic truancy can stem from boredom or frustration with school, leading to a search for excitement or validation outside of school, which can manifest as delinquent behavior.

4. Negative self-esteem: Frequent absences from school can contribute to feelings of isolation and low self-esteem, which can further increase the likelihood of engaging in delinquent acts.

5. Disengagement from positive social norms: When students habitually skip school, they may become less connected to positive social norms and expectations, making them more likely to engage in deviant behavior. Important considerations:

6. Not all truant students become delinquents: While truancy is a significant risk factor for delinquency, it is not a guaranteed pathway; many students who occasionally skip school do not engage in delinquent behavior.

7. Underlying causes matter: Addressing the root causes of truancy, such as academic difficulties, family problems, or mental health issues, is crucial to prevent delinquency.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF TRAUNCY ON DELIQUENCY

1. Early intervention: Identifying students at risk of truancy early and providing targeted support systems. Positive school climate: Cultivating a positive school environment with strong student-teacher relationships and engaging curriculum.

2. Parent involvement: Actively engaging parents in their child's education and addressing any concerns about school attendance.

3. Addressing underlying issues: Providing support services to students experiencing academic challenges, family difficulties, or mental health concerns.

"Forced Truancy and Its Impact on Youth Delinquency" Forced truancy is a risk factor that influences juvenile behavior, requiring the joint efforts of school authorities, parents, and court to address Truant solution: In the short term truancy can predict maladjustment, poor education, school dropout, substance abuse, delinquency and teenage pregnancy.

## SCHOOL DROPOUT

School dropouts can have a significant impact on delinquency, as dropping out of school can increase a young person's likelihood of engaging in delinquent behavior. Here are some potential impacts of school dropouts on delinquency: # Social Impacts

1. \*Increased risk of delinquency\*: School dropouts are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior, such as vandalism, theft, or violence.

2. \*Social isolation\*: Dropping out of school can lead to social isolation, which can increase the likelihood of delinquent behavior.

3. \*Gang involvement\*: School dropouts may be more likely to join gangs, which can lead to increased delinquent behavior.

### # Economic Impacts

1. \*Limited job opportunities\*: School dropouts may struggle to find employment, leading to financial instability and increased likelihood of delinquent behavior.

2. \*Increased reliance on crime\*: Without a stable income, school dropouts may turn to crime as a means of supporting themselves.

3. \*Increased burden on society\*: School dropouts may rely on government assistance programs, which can place a burden on society.

### # Psychological Impacts

1. \*Low self-esteem\*: Dropping out of school can lead to low self-esteem, which can increase the likelihood of delinquent behavior.

2. \*Increased stress\*: School dropouts may experience increased stress, which can lead to delinquent behavior.

3. \*Mental health issues\*: School dropouts may be more likely to experience mental health issues, such as depression or anxiety, which can increase the likelihood of delinquent behavior.

## # Factors Contributing to School Dropouts and Delinquency

1. Poverty: Poverty can increase the likelihood of school dropouts and delinquency.

2. Family instability: Family instability, such as parental conflict or substance abuse, can increase the likelihood of school dropouts and delinquency.

3. Lack of academic support: A lack of academic support, such as tutoring or mentoring, can increase the likelihood of school dropouts and delinquency.

4. Bullying: Bullying can increase the likelihood of school dropouts and delinquency.

# Prevention and Intervention Strategies 1. \*Early intervention\*: Early intervention programs, such as tutoring or mentoring, can help prevent school dropouts and delinquency.

2. \*Academic support\*: Providing academic support, such as tutoring or study skills programs, can help prevent school dropouts and delinquency.

3. \*Family support\*: Providing family support, such as counseling or parenting programs, can help prevent school dropouts and delinquency. 4. \*Alternative education programs\*: Alternative education programs, such as vocational training or online education, can provide school dropouts with alternative education options. The impact of dropping out of school on delinquency is a complex and multifaceted issue. Research has consistently shown that dropping out of school is a significant risk factor for delinquent behaviour \*Theoretical Frameworks\* 1. \*Social Control Theory\*: This theory suggests that individuals who are bonded to society through social institutions, such as schools, are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior.

2. \*Strain Theory\*: This theory proposes that individuals who experience strain or stress, such as that caused by dropping out of school, may be more likely to engage in delinquent behavior as a way to cope with their emotions.

3. \*Learning Theory\*: This theory suggests that individuals learn delinquent behavior through interactions with others, such as peers or family members Risk Factors 1. Lack of Educational Attainment\*: Dropping out of school can limit future educational and career opportunities, leading to frustration and disillusionment . 2. Unemployment and Economic Instability\*: Dropouts are more likely to experience unemployment and economic instability, which can increase stress and lead to delinquent behaviour .

3. Social Isolation\*: Dropping out of school can lead to social isolation, reducing exposure to pro-social influences and increasing the likelihood of delinquent behavior. 4. Family and Peer Influences: Dropouts may be more likely to associate with delinquent peers and family members, increasing exposure to delinquent behavior and norms. \*Consequences\* 1. Increased Crime and

Violence: Delinquent behavior can lead to increased crime and violence, posing a threat to public safety.

2. Substance Abuse: Delinquency can increase the risk of substance abuse, which can have serious physical and mental health consequences.

3. Mental Health Problems: Delinquency can increase the risk of mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety.

4. Reduced Life Chances: Delinquency can reduce life chances, including educational and career opportunities, and increase the risk of poverty and unemployment.

\*Interventions and Prevention Strategies\* 1. Alternative Education Programs: Alternative education programs can provide dropouts with a second chance to complete their education and acquire skills .

**Topic: THE ROLE OF TEACHERS, COUNSELLORS, PEER EDUCATORS ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.**

**Who is a Juvenile?**

Juvenile is a person who is not yet an adult, typically referring to someone under the age of 18.

**Meaning of Delinquency?**

Delinquency means a minor crime, especially that is committed by young people.

Now combining the two words together.

Juvenile delinquency encompasses illegal act socially unacceptable behaviors or violation of the law committed by individuals below the illegal adult age .

**Who is a teacher?**

A teacher is someone who educates, guides, and supports students in learning new knowledge, skills and values .

**Who is a counselor?**

Counselor is a professional who provides guidance, support, and advice to individual facing personal, social or emotional challenges.

**Who is a peer educators?**

Peer educators is someone who educates, supports , and encourages others within their own community or peer group.

Teachers play a significant role in addressing juvenile delinquency, often acting as front- line support systems for students. Here are the roles of teachers on juvenile delinquency:

**\*Roles of Teachers\***

1. **\*Early Identification\***: Teachers can identify students who are at risk of becoming delinquent.
2. **\*Support and Guidance\***: Teachers can provide support and guidance to students who are struggling.
3. **\*Positive Role Modeling\***: Teachers can be positive role models for students.
4. **\*Classroom Management\***: Teachers can create a positive and structured learning environment.
5. **\*Parent-Teacher Collaboration\***: Teachers can work with parents to identify and address potential issues.

**\*Examples\***

1. **\*Mentorship Program\***: A teacher starts a mentorship program to pair students with positive role models.
2. **\*After-School Program\***: A teacher starts an after-school program to provide support and guidance to students who are struggling.
3. **\*Classroom Rewards\***: A teacher uses a reward system to encourage positive behavior in the classroom.

**Peer educators.**

Peer educators are individuals, typically within the same age group or community, who are trained to provide guidance, support, and information to their peers on various topics. These individuals serve as role models and educators, often influencing their peers' attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making by offering advice, sharing experiences, and facilitating discussions. Peer educators are generally not professionals, but they use their relatability and shared experiences to help others make informed choices and navigate challenges.

**Roles of Peer Educators:**

1. **Providing Information**: They inform their peers about important topics, such as mental health, substance abuse, sexual health, or life skills.
2. **Promoting Healthy Behavior**: Peer educators encourage healthy, responsible behaviors and decision-making.
3. **Offering Emotional Support**: They listen to the concerns of their peers, offering emotional support and guidance in times of need.
4. **Facilitating Discussions**: They create open, safe spaces where peers can discuss challenges, share experiences, and support one another.
5. **Encouraging Positive Activities**: Peer educators can help others find positive activities or outlets for stress, such as sports, arts, or community service.

**Counsellors.**

Counselor plays a crucial role in addressing juvenile delinquency by providing support and guidance to help young individuals navigate challenges and make positive choices .

#### Roles of Counsellors

##### (A) Crisis Intervention

1. Provide immediate support and intervention during crisis situations.
2. Help juveniles develop coping strategies to manage stress and anxiety.

##### (B) Rehabilitation Therapy

1. Work with families to address dynamics and relationships contributing to delinquent behavior.
2. Foster healthy communication and problem-solving skills.

##### (C) Group Counseling

1. Lead group sessions focused on specific issues, such as anger management or substance abuse.
2. Encourage social skills development, empathy, and positive relationships.

##### (D) Academic Support

1. Collaborate with educators to address academic challenges and promote educational success.
2. Help juveniles develop study skills, time management, and goal-setting strategies.

##### (E) Community Outreach

1. Develop partnerships with community organizations to provide resources and support.
2. Facilitate referrals to external services, such as mental health treatment or vocational training.

#### **Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice**

Juvenile court in Nigeria Juvenile courts in Nigeria are specialized courts that handle cases involving minors, typically children and adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17, who are either accused of committing criminal offenses or are in need of care, protection, or rehabilitation. These courts are a part of Nigeria's broader juvenile justice system, which focuses on reforming and rehabilitating young offenders rather than punishing them as adults. Here's a more detailed explanation of juvenile courts in Nigeria: 1. Legal Framework Juvenile courts in Nigeria are established by laws aimed at protecting the rights of children and providing a system that supports their welfare. The primary legal framework includes: The Child's Rights Act of 2003: This Act provides a comprehensive set of rights for children, including the right to protection from exploitation, the right to education, and the right to be treated with dignity. It also allows for the establishment of juvenile courts, specifically targeting minors who come into conflict with the law. Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA): This law governs the treatment of children and young persons in the justice system in some parts of Nigeria. It also sets out the age range for juvenile offenders, typically those under the age of 17.

States that have adopted the Child's Rights Act are required to establish juvenile courts that handle cases involving children, while others rely on the older CYPA. 2. Purpose and Focus of Juvenile Courts The key aim of juvenile courts in Nigeria is to rehabilitate rather than punish young

offenders. The courts aim to reform minors by addressing the root causes of their offenses and rehabilitation of the minors. Structure of juvenile court in Nigeria Here's an overview of the structures of the Juvenile Court System in Nigeria: The structure of Juvenile courts in Nigeria is outlined in the Child's Rights Act of 2003 and the Administration of Criminal Justice Act of 2015. The primary objective of the Juvenile Court in Nigeria is to provide a specialized court (formal settings) that caters to the unique needs of children and young persons below the age of specified age(18) who come into conflict with the law. Juvenile Court in Nigeria consists of: • Family Courts: has jurisdiction over matters involving children, including juvenile delinquency cases. • Juvenile Court: are specialized courts that deals with juvenile offenders • Magistrates' Court: have jurisdiction over Minor offenses committed by Juveniles The structures of the Juvenile Court System in Nigeria is as follows: 1. Supreme Court: The supreme Court is the highest court in the land and has final appellate jurisdiction over decisions made by the Court of Appeal. 2. Court of Appeal: has appellate jurisdiction over decisions made by the High Court. 3. High Court: has appellate jurisdiction over decisions made by the Family Courts, juvenile courts and Magistrates' Courts and others. Moving on, it will be pertinent to discuss the Components of the Court System that is the people that made up the Court, Here's a breakdown of the key components: \* Juvenile courts are typically presided over by a Magistrate or Judge, often with the assistance of social workers and psychologists.

2. Key Personnel: \* Judges/Magistrates: They preside over the court proceedings and make legal decisions. \* Probation Officers: They conduct investigations, prepare reports, and supervise children placed on probation. \* Social Workers: They provide counseling, support, and guidance to children and their families. \* Legal Aid Counsel: They represent children who cannot afford legal representation. \* Prosecutors: They represent the state in juvenile court cases. \* Child Protection Officers: They investigate cases of child abuse and neglect and provide support to children in need. The Administration of the Juvenile Court System in Nigeria is overseen by: 1. The National Judicial Council (NJC): is responsible for the administration of justice in Nigeria including the Juvenile Court System. 2. The Ministry of Justice: is responsible for the formulation of policies and laws related to the Juvenile Court System.

Furthermore, in the structures of Juvenile court system the Procedures is really important they includes: \* Intake: Cases are initially screened to determine if they should be referred to court or handled informally. \* Diversion: Many cases are diverted from formal court proceedings through programs like counseling, community service, or restitution. \* Adjudication: If a case proceeds to court, a hearing is held to determine if the child is responsible for the alleged offense. \* Disposition: If the child is found responsible, the court determines an appropriate disposition, which may include probation, community service, or placement in a residential facilities. Functions of juvenile court in Nigeria 1. The juvenile court aims to reduce crime in Nigeria 2. It aims to maintain public safety through ensuring that minors are rehabilitated so they won't turn to adult criminals 3. It helps youth develop skills through rehabilitation programs 4. It helps in the protection of children involved in delinquent act 5. It helps to ensure legal aid for a child who committed defiant behaviour 6. It aims to save minors from living a life of crime and the conservation and preservation of a child to himself, parent and society as large. Challenges face by juvenile court in Nigeria Juvenile courts in Nigeria face several challenges that hinder their effectiveness in administering justice for minors. Some of the key issues include: 1. Lack of Specialized Courts and Facilities Many states in Nigeria do not have designated juvenile courts, leading to cases being handled in regular courts

that may not prioritize the unique needs of children. There is also a shortage of rehabilitation centers and detention facilities designed for juveniles. 2. Delay in Justice Delivery Cases involving juveniles often face delays due to the slow judicial process, leading to prolonged detention of children. Limited resources and inadequate personnel contribute to these delays. 3. Inadequate Legal Framework and Implementation Although Nigeria has adopted the Child Rights Act (2003), not all states have fully implemented it. Some states still rely on outdated laws that do not align with modern child protection standards. Enforcement of child-friendly judicial procedures remains weak. 4. Poor Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs Juvenile correctional centers often lack proper educational, vocational, and psychological support for rehabilitating young offenders. Many juveniles re-enter society without necessary support, increasing the risk of reoffending. 5. Corruption and Abuse of Process Corruption within the judicial system may result in wrongful detentions, bribery, and exploitation of minors. Some children are tried inappropriately as adults due to lack of proper age determination procedures. 6. Social and Cultural Factors Some communities view juvenile offenders as criminals rather than children in need of guidance and rehabilitation. Traditional justice systems in some areas do not align with formal legal protections for children. 7. Lack of Trained Personnel Many judicial officers, police, and social workers lack adequate training on child rights and juvenile justice procedures. There is also a shortage of specialized child psychologists and welfare officers. 8. Police Brutality and Unlawful Detention Many juveniles are arrested and detained alongside adults, exposing them to abuse and negative influences. Police officers sometimes fail to follow due process, such as informing parents or guardians upon arrest. Solutions to challenges face by juvenile court in Nigeria Juvenile delinquency is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to effectively address it. Here are some potential solutions: 1. Prevention Programs: Implementing community-based programs that focus on at-risk youth can help prevent delinquency. These programs can include mentoring, after-school activities, and sports, which provide positive outlets for energy and foster a sense of belonging. 2. Education and Awareness: Educating young people about the consequences of their actions and the importance of making positive choices can deter delinquency. Schools can incorporate life skills training, conflict resolution, and decision-making workshops into their curricula. 3. Family Support Services: Strengthening family dynamics through counseling and support services can reduce the likelihood of delinquent behavior. Programs that involve parents and guardians in the rehabilitation process can help create a more supportive home environment. 4. Restorative Justice: Implementing restorative justice practices can help young offenders understand the impact of their actions on victims and the community. This approach promotes accountability and encourages reconciliation rather than punishment. 5. Access to Mental Health Services: Providing access to mental health resources for young people can address underlying issues such as trauma, depression, or anxiety, which may contribute to delinquent behavior. Early intervention can lead to better outcomes. 6. Community Engagement: Encouraging community involvement in youth activities can create a sense of responsibility and ownership among young people. Engaging local businesses and organizations in supporting youth initiatives can foster a positive community atmosphere.

## DEFINITION OF CHILD RIGHTS ACT

Rights are fundamental freedoms and advantages that all human beings are entitled to. A child is a person under the statutory age usually 18 years old depending on the country. Acts are formal laws or statutes passed by a government or legislative body. The Nigeria Child Rights Act (CRA) is a law enacted in 2003 to domesticate the United Nations Convention on the Rights Charter on the Rights and welfare of the Child. It provides a comprehensive legal framework for the protection, promotion and enforcement of the rights of Children in Nigeria. The Act defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 and guarantees their rights to survival, development, protection and participation, including access to education, healthcare and freedom from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

**CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS** (Nigerian Constitution). The Nigerian Child's Right Act of 2003 is primarily validated by section 12(3) of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution as amended. This section of the Constitution makes provision for the including international treaties into Nigerian Law. The Nigerian Child's Right Act derives its authority from Nigeria's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991 and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 2001. Some sections of the Nigerian Constitution from which the Child's Right Act finds its validity include: 1. Cap IV, Section 33 [Right to Life]: This protects the right to life of every child. 2. Cap IV, section 34 [Right to Dignity]: This prohibits the neglect, abuse, and maltreatment of children. 3. Cap IV, section 35 [Right to Personal Liberty]: This ensures that children are not unlawfully detained or deprived of their liberty. 4. Cap IV, section 42 [Freedom from Discrimination]: This protects children from discrimination on the basis of their birth, gender or other grounds. The Nigerian Child's Rights Act harmonizes Nigeria's obligation under international law with domestic legislation in order to ensure that the rights of children are upheld in accordance with these constitutional provisions. However, the implementation of the Child's Right Act depends on its domestication in individual states, as child welfare is a matter under the Residual Legislative List.

**KEY PROVISIONS OF THE NIGERIAN CHILD'S RIGHTS ACT** 1. Part XXIV, section 277 of the Child's Right Act, defines a child as a person who is under the age of 18 years. 2. Part II, section 11, protects a child from torture, inhumane treatment, or forced labour.

3. Part II, sections 19 and 20 emphasise the responsibility of parents and guardians to provide proper care and guidance for their children. 4. Part III, section 21 explicitly prohibits child marriage and declares betrothal of children illegal. 5. Part V, section 50, states the power of certain persons to bring children in need to care and protection before a court in certain cases. 6. Part II, section 4 states the right of a child to survival and development. 7. Part II, section 5, makes provision for a child to be entitled to a name and registered birth.