



Myers JDC  
Brookdale

# **Participation of Service Recipients in the Public Committee for the Examination of Treatment Methodologies and Procedures for Children at Risk Under the Youth Law (Care and Supervision)**

Yael Sabag    Anna Reznikovski-Kuras  
Yael Bachar    Tal Arazi

Editor (Hebrew): Revital Aviv Matok  
English editing: Suzanne Brown  
Graphic design: Efrat Speaker

The report was commissioned by the Public Committee for the Examination of Treatment Methodologies and Procedures for Children at Risk under the Youth Law (Care and Supervision)-1960 and was funded with the assistance of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs.

**Myers JDC Brookdale Institute**

P.O.B. 3886, Jerusalem 9103702, Israel

Tel: 02-6557400

[brookdale.jdc.org.il/en](http://brookdale.jdc.org.il/en) | [brook@jdc.org](mailto:brook@jdc.org)

Jerusalem | April 2025

# Abstract

## Background

In January 2021, a public committee was established to examine the treatment methodologies and procedures for children at risk under the Youth Law (Care and Supervision)-1960 (hereinafter the Committee). The committee's role is to examine the changes and updates that should be implemented in the Youth Law in order to adapt it to current perceptions and knowledge. An integral part of the adaptation and updating of the law is the implementation of the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore, the process of examining and updating the law should be carried out in light of the principles of the Convention. Against this background, the committee's representatives requested that the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute lead a research process centered on making the voices of service recipients heard (minors who are currently being treated under the Youth Law, adults who were treated under the law in the past, and their parents).

## Goal

The main purpose of the study was to reflect to the committee members the experiences and attitudes of past and present service recipients regarding the interventions made on their behalf under the Youth Law, with an emphasis on critical decisions made during their treatment and meetings with treatment professionals operating within the framework of the law. The logic underlying this process was rooted in the perception that the knowledge available to service recipients is unique and valuable, is difficult to extract in other ways, and is directly related to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 12 – The Right of the Child to Participate). The study is in line with this principle and seeks to ensure that the procedures for reviewing the law and the recommendations regarding it consider the voices and experiences of those whose lives and fates are directly affected by it.

## Methodology

The study was conducted using the qualitative method and included 20 semi-structured in-depth interviews with minors (ages 12-18) and parents of minors (up to the age of 18), who are currently being treated under the Youth Law, as well as with adults aged 18+ and parents of adults who were treated under the Youth Law in the past.

For the study, two manuals for conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews were developed which addressed specific circumstances for interventions under the Youth Law (Care and Supervision), the participants' experiences,

and their perceptions of the type and quality of the interventions of the Youth Law Social Worker and the Juvenile Court.

This study deals with a sensitive and vulnerable population of at-risk children and adolescents and their parents, and as such, poses unique challenges from a professional, methodological and ethical perspective. Therefore, the interviewees chosen for the study were social workers who were thoroughly versed with the Youth Law and who received specialized training for this purpose.

The study was approved by the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute's Ethics Committee.

## **Findings**

The findings of the study emphasize the tensions involved in the implementation of the Youth Law as well as the challenges in implementing the law as seen through the eyes of service recipients. In addition to the fact that the law is a framework for ensuring protection and rehabilitation, and that there are cases in which the system has succeeded in ensuring and protecting children's rights, there are also significant gaps between official policy and its implementation, including a lack of adequate supervision, a lack of adaptation to complex needs, and feelings on the part of the service recipients that the system has abandoned or is not paying attention to them. The findings shed light on the complexity of the implementation of the Youth Law, particularly on the sensitive interplay between the urgent need to protect children at risk and the challenges of protecting their other rights, in general, and of integrating them into decision-making processes, in particular. Despite these challenges, a comparison between interviews conducted with adults and their parents (former clients of the law) and between minors and their parents (current clients) clearly shows the change that has taken place over time, both with regard to protecting minors and preventing harm to them while they are under the aegis of the Youth Law as well as in the implementation of participation – ranging from accessible information, through consultation, to giving real weight to their attitudes and wishes.

## **Recommendations**

1. The protection of children in out-of-home placements must be ensured as well as strengthening the perception that the Youth Law Social Worker is as an address in cases where the protection of the child has been compromised or the child's sense of security has been undermined. For this purpose, it is important to ensure physical visits by professionals and social workers to the institutions in order to closely monitor the children's situation.

2. Further, the relationship between the child and the Youth Law Social Worker should be strengthened and defined as the primary point of contact for the child.
3. Children's participation in formal processes that take place in committees and juvenile courts must be improved, adapted and made accessible.
4. Structured mechanisms should be developed for the continuous participation of children at all critical junctions and with all the professionals they interact with, so that they are meaningful and suited to the child's preferences, wishes and emotional and cognitive state.
5. It is important to develop and assimilate awareness, knowledge and skills to promote partnership with children among all relevant professionals who come into contact with the child under the Youth Law.
6. In cases in which children and youth are placed in an out-of-home setting, it is important to maintain contact with parents, siblings, and family members (subject to the child's best interests). Although the family social worker bears the responsibility for this, it is important that the Youth Law Social Worker confirms that contact is maintained and supervises it.
7. A systematic and ongoing measurement and evaluation system should be implemented to evaluate the success of interventions and identify challenges, both in the community and in out-of-home settings, while ensuring the conceptual connection between them (the concept of common indicators).