



Georgia's Child Protection and Public Safety Act Protects Our Youth!

In 2013, the Child Protection and Safety Act (former [House Bill 641](#)) was passed. It made a comprehensive revision to Georgia's collection of laws or "Juvenile Code" that impacts virtually every facet of a child's life from birth until age 18. The current Juvenile Code, adopted in 1971 and revised many times since, was considered so out of date that the Georgia General Assembly passed a resolution in 2005 calling for its complete overhaul.

- **The Child Protection and Safety Act reorganizes our Juvenile Code and better delineates the types of children in need of court assistance.** The Code governs how our state responds to children and their families in cases of abuse, neglect, violations of law by children, and other circumstances requiring court intervention. Previously, the provisions relating to children who are victims of abuse and neglect were intermingled with provisions relating to children guilty of a crime, creating contradictions and confusion. Because these children may have different needs, the Act reorganizes the Code for ease of understanding and application.

- **The Act brings Georgia into full compliance with federal laws, which means more help for our children.** We want our federal tax dollars to come back to Georgia whenever possible, especially if the money helps our children. The Act ensures our laws meet federal requirements related to juvenile court proceedings, which enables our state to access millions of tax dollars for kids in need.

- **The Act reflects advances in research and best practices on how to treat children, which improves a child's chances of success.** There has been significant new research on child brain development, education and disciplinary policies, and the negative impact of juvenile incarceration since 1971 when the Juvenile Code was first adopted. The Act modernizes our Juvenile Code and integrates best practices, including how the court deals with children and what types of evaluations are requested, among other things.

- **The Act enhances public safety and improves better outcomes for children while saving money long term.** Did you know that locking kids up in juvenile detention is not only more expensive, but will almost double the chances of them committing other crimes than if we rehabilitated or placed them in less restrictive facilities? Oregon instituted a community-based program that worked with law enforcement to intervene in the lives of troubled youth – their program saved that state \$1 million dollars by diverting kids from entering their juvenile system and preventing runaway kids from becoming homeless. Providing community-based, holistic services for kids enhances public safety, provides long-term savings, and most importantly is the right thing to do for our kids and their future.

For more information, visit www.AdvancingJustice-Atlanta.org