

Improving Public Understanding of the Provisions for Child Detention in the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Based on Law Number 11 of 2012

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Abstract. According to the Child Protection Law (amended by Law Number 23 of 2002), a child is a person under 18 years of age, including unborn children. In the juvenile criminal justice system, based on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law, there are specific provisions regarding children in conflict with the law, including a specific age limit for criminal responsibility. Under Indonesian law, detention of children in conflict with the law can only be carried out as a last resort (*ultimum remedium*) and for the shortest possible time, because detention can have a serious impact on a child's development. The purpose of this Community Service is to discuss increasing public understanding of the provisions for child detention in the Juvenile Criminal Justice System based on Law Number 11 of 2012. The background of this research is based on the still low public understanding of the concept of child detention, which is essentially specific, strict, and makes detention a last resort (*ultimum remedium*). The method used is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, through data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and literature studies. The results of this community service program revealed that after the outreach program, there was an increase in public understanding, marked by increased awareness of the importance of child protection, reduced negative stigma, and increased support for a restorative justice approach. The conclusion of this study is that legal outreach plays an effective role in increasing public understanding regarding the provisions regarding child detention in the juvenile criminal justice system. Therefore, legal education activities need to be carried out continuously to create a legally aware society that supports the protection of children's rights.

Keywords: Child Detention, Child Protection System, Law No. 11 Of 2012, Legal Outreach, Legal Awareness.

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INTRODUCTION

Children are part of the nation's future generation and must receive protection, including when facing the law (Nolan, 2024; Arifin & Rozah, 2021; Said et al., 2025; Suriani et al., 2025; Nur, 2024; Siswanto & Miarsa, 2024). Indonesia, through Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA), emphasizes that the handling of juvenile cases must prioritize restorative justice and avoid deprivation of liberty as a last resort (Rofiq, 2020; Mandalani et al., 2025; Sumarno & Ramadani, 2025).

However, in practice, some people still do not understand that child detention cannot be done arbitrarily and is subject to strict conditions (Van, 2019; Todres & Fink, 2020; Silverman & Molnar, 2016; Perlin & Lynch, 2018). This lack of understanding can hinder the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. The Juvenile Criminal Justice System encompasses the entire process of resolving

cases of children in conflict with the law, from investigation to post-conviction counseling (Majeed et al., 2024; Situmeang et al., 2025; Strutin, 2015; Miller, 2018).

A child is defined as a person aged 12 to 18 years who is suspected of committing a crime. The Child Protection Principles in the SPPA concerning Law Number 11 of 2012 emphasize that the juvenile criminal justice system is based on the principles of protection and the best interests of the child, restorative justice, avoidance of retaliation, deprivation of liberty as a last resort, and non-discrimination (Simatupang & Jamba, 2025; Setyorini & Utomo, 2020; Karangan, 2016; Mahmud, 2020).

Meanwhile, according to the Provisions on Child Detention in Law Number 11 of 2012, Law No. 11 of 2012 stipulates that child detention cannot be carried out arbitrarily (Mustaffa et al., 2020; Simatupang & Jamba, 2025; Miamingi, 2020; Setyowati, 2020). Fambasayi & Moyo (2020) said that, the main provision refers to detention as a last resort. Children may only be detained if there are no other alternatives and it is absolutely necessary (Walandari et al., 2025; Sarkin & Tavela, 2020; Monahan et al., 2014). Age and Criminal Requirement.

Detention can only be carried out if the child is 14 years of age or older and is suspected of committing a crime punishable by 7 years or more in prison. Furthermore, it is considered a guarantee that the child will not flee. Detention is not carried out if there is a guarantee from the parent/guardian that the child will not flee or destroy evidence (Cahyaningtyas, 2020; Iriani & Astuti, 2021; Walandari et al., 2025; Rahawarin & Wattimena, 2022; Siregar et al., 2023). The duration of detention is very limited.

The detention period for children is shorter than for adults. During detention, children must still meet their physical, spiritual, educational, and social needs (Haydon, 2020; Suyoto, 2021; Ahmad et al., 2023; Rawanda, 2021; Borschmann et al. 2020). Based on the Form of Protection During the Legal Process, the Child Protection Law also regulates protections such as the obligation to separate children from adults, the obligation to keep children's identities confidential, the obligation to be accompanied by parents/legal counsel, the trial process being conducted in private, and the prevention of stigma and psychological impact (Rasyid et al., 2025; Rajam & Banerjee, 2021; López-Espino, 2024; Irawati, 2022; Faloygama & Cahyo, 2025; Ramadhani et al., 2025; Huda et al., 2025).

Some problems arise from a lack of public understanding of the detention process for children, including the assumption that all violations of the law result in immediate detention, the negative stigma against children in conflict with the law, the lack of community involvement in child rehabilitation, and the lack of socialization of the Child Protection Law.

STAGES OF SERVICE

Preparation

Identifying community issues related to low understanding of child detention. Determining target locations (villages, schools, or communities). Meeting with local government officials. Conducting coordination meetings with village officials, schools, and the community. Preparing outreach materials based on Law No. 11 of 2012 concerning the Child Protection System (SPPA). Establishing a community service implementation team.



Figure 1. Joint Meeting with Local Government

Survey and Needs Analysis

This stage aims to determine the initial conditions of public understanding. Activities: (1) Interviews with community leaders, teachers, or parents; (2) Observe the level of community knowledge regarding juvenile law; (3) Distribution of simple questionnaires (pre-test); (4) Analyze survey results to determine the focus of outreach materials.



Figure 2. Survey and Needs Analysis

Conducting Legal Education Outreach

This outreach was held at the village office, with speakers and local government officials present. Participants included members of the community, community leaders, and students who also helped prepare the event from start to finish. The outreach event rundown is as follows: (1) Opening remarks by the MC; (2) Welcome remarks: Village Head and Security Officer; (3) Outreach from the Speakers: Presentation of material on, Definition of Child Detention Center, Provisions for Child Detention, Children's Rights in the Legal Process and Principles of Restorative Justice; (3) Discussion or Q&A.



Figure 3. Together with the Community and Students Conducting Outreach

CONCLUSION

Based on the activities carried out, it can be concluded that the local government's participation was very supportive of the implementation of the outreach activities. The community's enthusiasm for participating in these outreach activities was very strong, as evidenced by the numerous questions raised during the activities. Outreach regarding the understanding of child detention in the community plays a crucial role in increasing legal knowledge and public awareness regarding the protection of children in conflict with the law. According to Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, child detention is not a primary measure, but rather a last resort, which can only be undertaken under certain circumstances, with strict conditions and while prioritizing the child's best interests. Through outreach activities, the community will gain a better understanding that children in conflict with the law have rights that must be protected, such as the right to assistance, education, and humane treatment during the legal process. Furthermore, it is hoped that the community will no longer negatively stigmatize children in conflict with the law and instead support their development and recovery process.

SUGGESTION

Community service activities in the socialization of child detention law must be carried out systematically, starting from preparation, needs analysis, implementation, mentoring, evaluation, and reporting to effectively and sustainably increase public understanding. This increased public understanding is expected to create a more caring, just, and supportive social environment for juvenile criminal justice, which is oriented towards restorative justice and protecting the future of children as the nation's next generation.

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