The Parenting Skills Workbooks were developed as resources that juvenile probation officers could offer the families of the youth with whom they are working. The workbooks would be useful for parent(s), or adult(s), responsible for the care of a child under juvenile probation supervision.

From time to time, most families encounter challenges presented by their children. The workbooks were designed to provide strategies to address common behaviors of children that, if left unaddressed, might increase the child’s risk to reoffend. These strategies are rooted in the understanding of adolescent development and influences, and of the physiology of the brain and how the brain works at various stages of life, commonly referred to as “brain science.”

The workbooks have two basic components: 1) an examination of the issue or problematic behavior; and 2) skills and strategies to address the area of concern. Families are cautioned that the workbooks may not be appropriate for more complex issues or when used in lieu of more formal behavioral health interventions that may be needed.

The workbooks are consistent with the principles of evidence-based practices and with Pennsylvania’s Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES). Many aspects of the JJSES are woven throughout the workbooks, including the:

- use of effective family involvement strategies
- establishment of a professional alliance and the use of Motivational Interviewing techniques
- use of the Family Circumstances domain of the Youth Level of Service (YLS) Inventory to identify behaviors and issues
- transfer of behavior management skills from juvenile probation officer to the family using a graduated responses approach
- teaching and reinforcing of cognitive behavioral skills needed to sustain long-term behavioral change.

**Specifically:**

- The workbooks present an opportunity to effectively engage families in the care and supervision of their child, if framed in a manner that establishes common goals and that is solution-oriented.

- The workbooks can be used when an issue: 1) is identified by the family; 2) is identified through the Youth Level of Service (YLS) assessment; or 3) emerges during probation supervision.

- The workbooks are most effective when families are approached in a manner that is respectful, that acknowledges that the issues or behaviors they are encountering are not uncommon, and recognizes their desire to address the area of concern.

- The application of professional alliance and Motivational Interviewing techniques will help establish the collaborative partnership between the family, child, and juvenile probation officer that is needed to address the behaviors and issues discussed in the workbooks.

- Through the workbooks, families can learn and practice techniques that will reinforce the cognitive behavioral skills that their child is learning during probation supervision. For example, Dealing with Frustration reinforces emotional regulation, problem solving, and coping skills.

- The workbooks reinforce the approach that juvenile probation officers are using with a child. For example, the approach suggested in “Setting Boundaries and Applying Consequences” for responding to negative behavior is complimentary to the probation department’s use of a graduated responses system, and emphasizes that responses to behaviors should be certain, swift, targeted, proportionate, and fair.

- Most importantly, the workbooks are designed to help families assist their child in developing the behaviors that will enable them to successfully fulfill the terms and conditions of probation, reduce the risk to reoffend, and maintain long-term behavioral change.