





Interventions for Child and Adolescent Who Engaged in Crime: A Scoping Review

Suçta Sürüklenen Çocuklara Yönelik Uygulamalar: Kapsamlı Bir İnceleme

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ABSTRACT

This scoping review was conducted to examine which therapy-based interventions have been implemented for children involved in crime over the last decade. This retrospective study involved the analysis of articles published between 2015 and 2025. The study data were collected in January 2025 by searching one international and one national database. Studies conducted with juvenile delinquency and therapy interventions were included. A total of 18 studies were evaluated in detail. The analysis revealed that 50% (n=9) of the interventions for juvenile delinquency in the last decade were conducted in the USA. Furthermore, it was observed that 55.6% (n=10) of these interventions were a quasi-experimental design, while 55.6% (n=10) constituted follow-up study. The analysis revealed that 38.9% (n=9) of the articles contained information about mental disorders, 72.2% (n=13) contained information about crimes. While a wide range of interventions (functional family therapies, aggression replacement therapies, animal-assisted therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy-based trainings) were applied to children, the most frequently applied interventions were family therapy (55.6%, n=10) and structured training/counselling interventions (33.3%, n=6). This scoping review revealed that interventions for children-adolescent were predominantly implemented in the USA and characterized by a quasi-experimental approach. It was further noted that the interventions exhibited significant variation, with a wide range of therapeutic approaches, particularly family therapy, and included information about crime and mental health. In the rehabilitation process of children with delinquency, there is a clear necessity for evidence-based, comprehensive, culturally and legally procedures.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency, psychotherapy, interventions

Öz

Bu kapsamlı derleme, son on yılda suçta sürüklenen çocuklara yönelik olarak uygulanan terapi temelli girişimlerin neler olduğunu incelemek amacıyla yapıldı. Retrospektif olarak tasarlanan bu çalışmada, 2015-2025 yılları arasında yayımlanmış çalışmalar incelendi. Çalışma verileri 2025 yılı Ocak ayında, bir uluslararası ve bir ulusal olmak üzere iki veri tabanı taranarak toplandı. Suçta sürüklenen çocuklar ile yapılan ve terapi girişimlerini içeren toplam 18 araştırma detaylı bir şekilde incelendi. Suçta sürüklenen çocuk ve ergenlere yönelik olarak son on yılda yapılan girişimsel uygulamaların %50'sinin (n=9) Amerika'da yapıldığı, %55,6'sının (n=10) yarı deneysel desende olduğu, %55,6'sında (n=10) girişimler sonrası izlem yapıldığı belirlendi. Makalelerin %38,9'unda (n=7) ruhsal hastalıklar ile ilgili, %72,2'sinde (n=13) suç içerikleri ile ilgili bilgilerin yer aldığı gözlemlendi. Suçta sürüklenen çocuklara yönelik olarak fonksiyonel aile terapileri, agresyon replasman terapileri, hayvan destekli terapi, bilişsel davranışçı terapi temelli eğitimler gibi pek çok farklı girişimin uygulandığı, %55,6'sında (n=10) aile terapisi ve %33,3'ünde (n=6) ise yapılandırılmış eğitim/danışmanlık uygulamaları yapıldığı saptandı. Bu kapsamlı derleme ile suçta sürüklenen çocuklara yönelik olarak yapılan girişimsel uygulamaların çoğunlukla Amerika'da yapıldığı, yarı-deneysel türde planlandığı, suç ve ruhsal hastalıklara ilişkin bilgileri içerdiği ve farklı türde girişimlerin uygulandığı belirlendi. İncelenen araştırmalarda pek çok kuramsal ekolün kullanıldığı görülmekle birlikte, suçta sürüklenen çocukların rehabilitasyon sürecinde, çocukların tekrarlı defa suçta sürüklenmesini önleyecek kanıt temelli, kapsamlı, kültüre ve yasal prosedürlere özgü ve yaygın şekilde kullanılacak uygulamalara ihtiyaç olduğu söylenebilir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Suçta sürüklenen çocuklar, psikoterapi, girişimler

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Introduction

A child's healthy development is closely related to their ability to effectively develop and utilize their skills in the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physical domains. The ability of a child to communicate effectively, develop positive relationships with peers, achieve academic success, and realize their potential is contingent upon their development in a healthy manner. However, the progression of this healthy development may be influenced by specific factors. The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency is known to have deleterious effects on the development of children and adolescents. For instance, it has been established that 70% of juveniles involved in criminal activities exhibit mental health problems (Gogineni et al. 2023). In addition to leading children, who represent future generations, into criminal behavior, this issue poses numerous biopsychosocial challenges, including communication difficulties, school dropout, anger management problems, stigmatization, impaired emotional regulation and coping skills, and substance abuse (Araujo et al. 2012, Moitra and Mukherjee 2012, Underwood and Washington 2016, Pelit and Alkan 2022). Moreover, a child's involvement in crime not only affects the child but also undermines their relationship with society and generates broader social consequences. Crimes such as assault, theft and robbery directly harm members of society and erode social trust (Güler 2010). Children who are stigmatized within their peer groups due to negative behaviors may eventually withdraw from their social environment and face an increased risk of engaging in repeated criminal activities. Therefore, rather than focusing on punitive measures against children who have been drawn into crime, priority should be given to preventive strategies aimed at safeguarding their biopsychosocial development and protecting public health (May et al. 2014). In all systems involving children who have been drawn into crime, it is of strategic importance to implement effective intervention programs, considering the risk factors involved, and to provide therapeutic interventions for children.

A review of international and national statistics reveals a consistent upward trend in the number of children involved in criminal activity (Puzzanchera et al. 2022, Statista 2023, TÜİK 2024). Therefore, it is crucial to develop intervention programs for children involved in crime to support their healthy development. Children and adolescents continue to develop psychologically, biologically, and socially. During this process, it is possible for them to learn what constitutes right and wrong behavior and how it affects individuals and society, to be guided toward right behavior, and to reduce risk through protective interventions and rehabilitative programs (Aslan 2021). Furthermore, it is essential that such programs are recognized by professionals who are involved in the process of reintegrating children into society and who work with those engaged in criminal behavior, as this not only represents a significant contribution but also carries strategic value for broader dissemination. Previous studies have shown that various early intervention programs, such as Multisystemic Therapy, Family Therapies, and the Perry Preschool Project, have yielded effective results, such as reducing children's recidivism and ensuring their return to school life (May et al. 2014). It is also known that there are government agencies such as the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), which is responsible for implementing programs specifically designed to meet the needs of children and families and for improving juvenile justice systems (OJJDP 2025).

In Türkiye, within the scope of protecting children involved in crime and ensuring their healthy development, it is known that the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports are engaged in collaborative efforts. These efforts include the provision of protective measures for children within designated "specialized children's home sites," which prior to 2022 were referred to as child support centers or children's homes (Korkmaz and Demiryürek 2025). The number of children involved in crime in Türkiye is similar to that in other countries. According to 2022 data from the United States, a total of 549,500 children were involved in juvenile courts (Hockenberry and Puzzanchera 2024). According to TÜİK data for 2024, 537,583 children were brought to security units in Türkiye in 2023, while 178,834 children were included in the system because they had committed an act considered a crime under the law. It has been documented that the number of juveniles involved in criminal activity in Türkiye has been on the rise since 2020 (TÜİK 2024). Considering these processes, it is evident that although both preventive and rehabilitative intervention programs are being developed, there remains a need for additional interventions. Research indicates that children involved in

crime face significant challenges in accessing protective, preventive, and rehabilitative services (Karataş and Mavilli 2019). Considering both the difficulties encountered and the evolving needs of a changing world, it is necessary to design new interventions and to conduct comprehensive evaluations of the existing programs implemented in Türkiye. Such efforts would help establish a broader perspective for identifying the requirements essential to supporting children's healthy biopsychosocial development, preventing recidivism, and creating effective programs that are sensitive to social and cultural contexts. Based on this rationale, this scoping review aims to examine the interventions implemented for children involved in crime over the past decade. In line with this objective, the present study seeks to answer the following questions: "What are the characteristics of the articles published in the last ten years that address interventions targeting children and adolescents involved in crime?" and "What are the characteristics of the interventions implemented for children and adolescents involved in crime over the past ten years?"

Method

This study is designed as a retrospective, scoping review. The PRISMA-ScR checklist, designed for comprehensive reviews in the data search and writing process, was used (Tricco et al. 2018). Comprehensive reviews are conducted to map the state of knowledge on a specific topic to summarize the information (Arksey and O'Malley 2005). To facilitate a comprehensive review, several definitions have been formulated, and the research has been framed using the following definitions;

Juvenile delinquency/juvenile offenders refers to an individual aged 0-18, who has been involved in a situation that is considered a crime according to the law. Interventions/initiative refers to a structured course of action, interventions or therapies, that is based on any theoretical school or applied in a systematic manner.

Search Strategy

Study data were collected in January 2025 by searching two databases, one international (Pubmed) and one national (TR-Dizin). The search terms "therapy," "intervention," "implementation," "juvenile delinquency," and "mental disorder" were entered separately into the databases in both Turkish and English to enable filtering (For example, searches have also been conducted that include different combinations such as attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder instead of mental illness.). All search terms have been modified to align with the format and internal search engine of each database. A comprehensive scan has been conducted on each database for subject headings, titles, and abstracts.

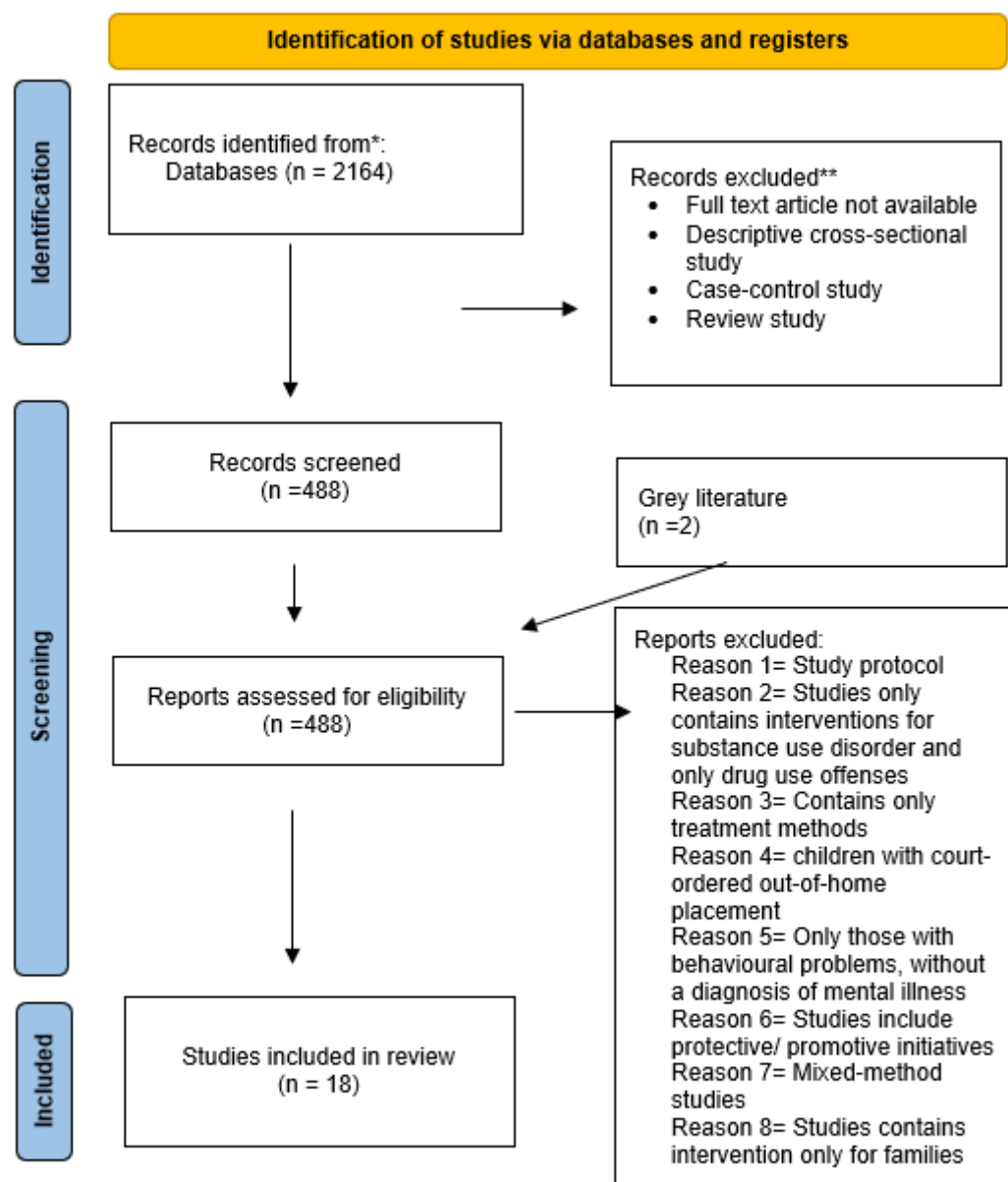
Data Extraction, Eligibility Criteria and Selection of Articles

This scoping review included studies conducted between January 2015 and January 2025 that involved therapy-based interventions with children involved in criminal activities and were published in English or Turkish. The following studies were reviewed as part of this study, articles classified as research that involved adolescents aged 10-24, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), who had been involved in any crime, and that included an intervention/initiative. The study excluded case reports, reviews, and studies with mixed designs, as well as studies involving children and adolescents who had been removed from their homes due to victimization (out-of-home care), who had been abused, who had only substance use, and who had only antisocial behaviors.

All databases were independently screened by two authors. The appropriateness of the screenings was then reviewed and checked by two other authors. The information obtained from the scans was reviewed by two authors based on the title and abstract of the study. When the eligibility of the study could not be clearly determined from the title or abstract, the full text was accessed for further evaluation. Following a thorough review process, all identified inconsistencies were resolved, and all authors confirmed the appropriateness of the included studies. A total of 2,134 studies were identified, and 16 studies were included in the comprehensive review for detailed analysis. Additionally, two studies from grey literature were also included, resulting in a total of 18 studies being analyzed in detail (Figure 1).

Quality Assessment

The methodological quality of randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental studies was assessed using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) critical appraisal checklists. Separate control lists were used for randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental studies (Barker et al. 2023, Barker et al. 2024). Nine methodological domains are evaluated for quasi-experimental studies and thirteen for experimental studies, including critical appraisal checklists, study design, sample selection, and assessment of bias in reporting and analysis. In the studies included in this work, all areas within the JBI assessment tool were evaluated. The quality of the studies was assessed using the JBI, and a percentage score was obtained. This calculated score was added to the table in which the research findings were examined. No financial support was received for the implementation of this study.



*Total number obtained from databases, in a way that includes all combinations of keywords.

**Has been automatically selected and removed from the database.

Figure 1. Research selection algorithm

Data Analysis

A data evaluation form was developed by utilizing the literature to evaluate the data in detail (Aazami et al. 2023). The structure of this form is designed to include the following elements: the type of studies, the characteristics of the sample group, the content and characteristics of the interventions and the results of the interventions. Additionally, statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 22.0.

Table 1. General characteristics of studies conducted with juvenile offenders		
Variables	n	%
Sex		
Male	3	16.7
Female and Male	15	83.3
Country		
USA	9	50.0
Holland	2	11.1
United Kingdom	1	5.6
Norway	1	5.6
Singapore	1	5.6
Türkiye	4	22.2
Research Design		
Experimental	8	44.4
Quasi-experimental	10	55.6
Detailed Information About Mental Health		
Available	7	38.9
Non- available	11	61.1
Detailed Information About Crime		
Available	13	72.2
Non- available	5	27.8
Institutions		
Correctional institutions	2	11.1
Prison	4	22.2
Psychiatric Clinic (Treatment Center)	2	11.1
Child Protection Units, Institutions, and Courts	10	55.6
Interventions		
Family Therapy	10	55.6
Art Therapy	1	5.6
Group Therapy	1	5.6
Structured Interventions	6	33.3
Follow-up		
Yes	10	55.6
No	5	44.4
Total	18	100.0

Results

Characteristics of Articles

The 18 studies published in the last decade and examined in this study were conducted in six different countries: the United States, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Norway, Singapore, and Türkiye. The analysis revealed that 50% of the studies were conducted in the United States (n=9) and 22.2% (n=4) in Türkiye. The studies published in 14 different journals were most frequently (n=3, 16.7%) published in "The

Journal of Family Psychology.” It was determined that 55.6% (n=10) of the studies examined were quasi-experimental in design, 61.1% (n=11) contained information about children's mental health, and 72.2% (n=13) contained detailed information about criminal behaviors (type of crime, number of criminal activities etc.). The analysis revealed that 55.6% of the studies (n=10) were conducted in child protection units/institutions and courts, and 55.6% of the interventions (n=10) were family therapies (Table 1).

Table 2. Family therapies examined within the scope of review

Interventions	Description
Multisystemic Therapy – MST Multisystemic Therapy-Intellectual Disability (MST-ID)	It is a structured, family- and community-based therapy program designed to reduce crime and risky behavior among children and adolescents. Versions designed for children with intellectual disabilities are available.
Functional Family Therapy-FFT Functional Family Therapy -Gangs (FFT-G)	It is a type of therapy consisting of stages such as motivation, behavioral change, and communication. The therapy aims to strengthen the family and improve their interactions. There is a version developed specifically for gang members.
Parenting With Love and Limits - PLL	It is an integrated group and family therapy approach.
Familias Unidas - FU	It is a family-based intervention designed to prevent substance use and high-risk sexual behaviors.

Interventions and Their Effects

It was determined that family therapy, group therapy, art therapy, and structured education programs were implemented for juvenile delinquency. It was determined that most of these interventions were family-focused, involving various therapeutic approaches for families, with Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT) being the most applied. Table 2 presents a list of initiatives that were carried out within the scope of family therapy. Studies have shown that family therapy has a positive effect on children and adolescents involved in criminal activity. For instance, research found that children who received MST had low recidivism rates (Blanckstein 2019, Sheerin et al. 2021). Similarly, Gottfredson et al. (2018) adapted FFT for gang-related crimes. In their study they found that children exhibited positive behavioral changes and had low recidivism rates. Research has shown that family therapy interventions generally have a positive effect on juvenile delinquency. However, it has also been noted that the family therapies are not superior to routine/standard practices. For example, a study by Humayun et al. (2017) compared children and adolescents who received FAT with those who received routine counseling. The study found reductions in antisocial behavior in both groups, indicating that the interventions had similar effects. Similarly, Olseth et al. (2024) found that FAT applications were not superior to other interventions. They demonstrated that both approaches were effective, as they produced similar results when measuring children who received routine treatment and care protocols with FAT at three different times (Table 3).

Within the scope of structured interventions, stress management programs, cognitive behavioral therapy-based anger management programs, Aggression Replacement Training (ART), and clinically based applications were examined. Öztürk and Ocakçı (2017) conducted a 10-session stress management training program for incarcerated children aged 15–18 and found that their stress management and coping skills had improved at the end of the program. Çankaya Çaldırcıoğlu (2023) discovered that anger management training based on cognitive behavioral therapy, which includes practices aimed at recognizing emotions, thoughts, and behaviors associated with anger, is effective in reducing aggressive behavior. Taş and Baysan Arabacı (2020) implemented a psychoeducational program for children involved in violent and non-violent crimes. They reported that this program, which aimed to develop interpersonal relationships, emotion regulation, and social learning skills, had positive effects on children's social-emotional learning skills. ART has been identified as an effective application in addressing aggressive behaviors exhibited by children involved in criminal activities. This assertion is supported by the findings of Kaya et al. (2016), who

have demonstrated the efficacy of ART in promoting positive behavioral development. Similarly, Hosgteder et al. (2018) reported that the implementation of the re-ART program led to a reduction in recidivism rates (Table 3). Another clinically structured, cognitive-behavioral therapy-based program for children and adolescents involved in sexual offenses was evaluated by Viljionen et al. (2017). The programs offer a variety of effective interventions tailored to each child's needs. These interventions include individual therapy, problem-solving and coping skills training, cognitive behavioral therapy, and recreational therapy.

Furthermore, it was observed that art therapy interventions were employed in two studies focusing on group therapy practices and one study implementing animal-assisted therapy. One of the programs included in group therapy is the Community Opportunity Group (COG). According to the seven-year results of a structured, CBT-based group therapy program conducted by Jewel et al. (2015), children and adolescents in the education group were found to be less likely to reoffend than those in the control group. A study by Brogan et al. (2017) revealed that group therapy effectively reduced destructive behaviors in children and adolescents involved in sexually related crimes. The findings from the animal-assisted therapy program known as Teacher's Pet, which was implemented by Seivert and colleagues in 2018, demonstrated an enhancement in empathy skills among juvenile offenders. However, it was noted that analogous outcomes were observed when a comparison was made with the control group. The practices implemented for juvenile offenders were examined in detail within the scope of the data evaluation form, and the results are summarized in Table 3.

Source	Type	Sample	Intervention	Content	Measurement	Results
Hu-mayun et al. (2017) United Kingdom JBI: %85	Family Therapy	10-17 years 111 child-adolescent Two group design; Group 1: 46 individuals received standard treatment, care, and routine counseling Group 2: 65 individuals received Functional Family Therapy in addition to standard treatment care <i>Mixed group with criminal behavior and diagnoses such as conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder</i>	Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a type of family therapy that focuses on the family's strengths, recognizing behavior, and developing alternative thinking.	FFT, consisting of five stages—engagement, motivation, assessment, behavior change, and generalization—was implemented. The sessions included the following: <i>establishing rapport, providing motivation to support change, assessing risk and protective factors, identifying families' relationship styles, teaching techniques for behavioral change such as communication training and problem-solving skills, and supporting reintegration into society.</i>	Self-Report Delinquency Scale, Wechsler IQ, Psychiatric evaluation interviews, Review of official criminal records (national database), Alabama Parenting Practices Scale, Parent-Child relationship observation (Hot topics measurement)	This study found that the group receiving FFT did not show statistically significant and superior improvements in antisocial behavior, delinquency, and parent-child relationships compared to the other group.
Olseth et al. (2024) Norway JBI: %85	Family Therapy	161 children and adolescents aged 11-17 with disruptive behaviors or self-reported criminal behaviors Two group design; Group 1: 88 people, functional family therapy Group 2: 73 people, control group, standard treatment and care	Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a type of family therapy that focuses on the family's strengths, recognizing behavior, and developing alternative thinking.	FFT, consisting of five stages—engagement, motivation, assessment, behavior change, and generalization—was implemented. The sessions included the following: <i>establishing rapport, providing motivation to support change, assessing risk and protective factors, identifying families' relationship styles, teaching techniques for behavioral change such as communication training and problem-solving skills, and supporting reintegration into society.</i>	Child Behavior Checklist and Teacher Report Form, Social Skills Rating System—Parent and Teacher Ratings, Negative Peers Scale, Self-Report Delinquency Scale, Oregon Healthy Teens Survey	Significant improvements were found between the pre-test and post-test for both FFT and control groups in terms of parent-reported aggressive and rule-breaking behavior, internalizing problems, social skills, and self-reported delinquent behavior. However, between the post-test and follow-up, a significant intervention effect in favor of control group was found for parent-reported youth internalization. The findings did not support the assumed superiority of FFT over standard treatment and care.
Gottfredson et al. (2018) USA JBI: %85	Family Therapy	129 male juvenile offenders aged 11-17 <i>Children who have been involved in violent crimes against individuals, who have joined gangs, or</i>	Functional Family Therapy- Gang-FFT-G It is a modified functional family therapy program that addresses issues that are more prominent in the gang population	The basic FFT-G model emphasizes careful preparation and knowledge development regarding gangs and the environments in which young people and their families live. Given the severity	Different measurement methods were used; interviews were conducted with children and their families at the beginning of the study and at the	According to the research results, positive behavioral changes were observed in children who underwent family therapy, and it was concluded that children benefited even when the therapy cost was the lowest.

Table 3. Characteristics of interventions with juvenile offenders

Source	Type	Sample	Intervention	Content	Measurement	Results
		<i>who are at risk of joining gangs</i> Two group design; Group 1: 66 individuals, FFT-G Group 2: 63 individuals, control group, standard treatment and care	than in the general population.	of risk factors among gang populations, the FFT-G model incorporates more direct treatment and greater preparation prior to treatment to address ongoing neighborhood gang pressure.	6-month. Access to crime records was obtained through the Justice Communication Data System, data related to services received from the community services fund was obtained from databases, and data recorded by the therapist after each interview was obtained.	During the 18-month follow-up, the recidivism rate was found to be lower among young people in the FFT-G group.
Q. Gan et al. (2021) Singapore JBI: %85	Family Therapy	120 adolescents aged 13-18 under community-based probation Two group design; Group 1: 57 people in the control group, receiving standard treatment and care Group 2: 63 people receiving standard treatment and care and FFT <i>The types of crimes are not specified in the article.</i>	Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a type of family therapy that focuses on the family's strengths, recognizing behavior, and developing alternative thinking. It has been adapted to Eastern culture.	The FFT has been applied. Information about the intervention details is insufficient.	Youth Outcome Questionnaire—Self-Report, Family Assessment Device—General Functioning Scale, Probation completion rates	Although the group scores for psychological recovery and family functioning were high, there was no statistically significant change. However, children and adolescents who underwent FFT were found to have higher completion rates for probation.
Karam et al. (2017) USA JBI: %78	Family Therapy	Two group design; First group 155 children aged 14-18 juvenile offenders (violence and theft crimes) and their families Second group, 155 juvenile offenders, standard care and treatment	Parenting with love and limits-PLL It is an integrated group and family therapy approach.	Group discussions, video tapes, age-specific break sessions, and role-playing were used in family sessions. This therapy focuses on children's family relationships, boundaries, and love.	Child Behavior Checklist, Statistics and files on the crime rates of children from official sources	PLL had significantly lower rates of criminal behavior compared to the comparison group. Parents also reported statistically significant improvements in their children's behavior.
Perrino et al. (2016) USA JBI: %69	Family Therapy	242 children and adolescents aged 12-17 with a history of crime and their families Two group design; Group 1: 120 individuals, FU intervention Group 2: 122 individuals, control group, routine treatment and care	Familias Unidas-FU It is a family-focused preventive intervention.	It consists of eight 2-hour multi-parent group sessions and four 1-hour family visits over a period of 12 weeks. It is a family-based intervention designed to prevent substance use and high-risk sexual behavior. Family visits include parent education, communication and relationship-supporting practices, and support practices aimed at increasing parental competence.	Anxiety-Withdrawal Subscale of the Revised Behavior Problem Checklist, Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale	While FU intervention does not have a significant effect on communication skills, it has been found to be effective in reducing internalized and externalized symptoms and findings such as anxiety, depression, and aggression in children.
Sheerin ve ark. (2020) USA JBI: %62	Family Therapy	Two group design; Group 1: 68 children and adolescents aged 11-17 without psychotic or developmental disorders Group 2: Children and adolescents who have been drawn into sexual crime	Multisystemic Therapy – MST It is a structured family and community-based therapy aimed at reducing various crimes and risky behaviors among children and adolescents.	It includes family-focused initiatives aimed at supporting effective parenting skills, improving family communication, and reducing antisocial behavior. A total of 4 therapists provide services in the study. There are no specific sessions; each therapist is responsible for approximately 4-6 young people. Services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout	Pittsburgh Youth Study Parenting Scales, Youth Self Report, Child Behavior Checklist, Social Competence subscales of the YSR and CBCL, official court records and crime data	According to the results of an evaluation conducted ten years later, improvements in family and peer relationships among children and adolescents participating in MST were associated with lower rates of delinquency.

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Source	Type	Sample	Intervention	Content	Measurement	Results
				the study period. Visits are made on 2-3 suitable days of the week. Towards the end of treatment, visits are made once a week.		
Blan-kestein et al. (2019) Netherlands JBI: %67	Family Therapy	128 adolescents aged 12–18 years who display antisocial or delinquent behaviour and are at risk of out-of-home placement. Two group design; Group 1: Standard treatment and care Group 2: Multisystemic Therapy -Intellectual Disabilities	Multisystemic Therapy – Intellectual Disabilities (MST-ID) It is a structured therapy based on multisystemic therapy for children with intellectual disabilities.	In addition to multisystemic therapy, the content of MST-ID: defining intellectual disabilities, defining parental stress, techniques for motivating families to enter treatment and involving them in treatment, encouraging active participation in the social network, and placing special emphasis on generalizing acquired knowledge or skills.	Both children-adolescents and their families have applied measurement tools. Wechsler IQ test Screener for Intelligence and Learning Disabilities (SCIL), Child Behaviour Checklist, Burden of Parenting Questionnaire (OBVL)	MST-ID showed effective results in measurements taken 6 months later. Compared to standard MST, MST-ID more frequently resulted in improvements in parenting skills, family relationships, social support, participation with pro-social peers, and maintenance of positive behavioral changes.
Çankaya Çadırcıoğlu (2023) Türkiye JBI: %45	Structured intervention	8 male adolescents aged 15-18 Violence, substance abuse, and theft offenses	BDT-based anger management program	Recognizing the emotion of anger, the relationship between stress and anger, physical reactions, thought patterns, identifying behaviors associated with anger, exercises for managing anger, communication and empathy skills, and applications for coping skills.	Observation, interviews, and data analysis techniques were used.	Psychoeducation improves anger management skills and reduces aggression.
Kaya et al. (2016) Türkiye JBI:%67	Structured intervention	65 children and adolescents aged 14-17 who have been involved in crime Two-group design; Group 1: 32 individuals, intervention group in the ART field Group 2: 32 individuals, control group, receiving standard treatment and care	Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is an intervention program that is based on cognitive theory and designed to help children and adolescents develop adequate social skills, acquire anger management skills, and reduce aggressive behavior.	The training encompasses a range of competencies, including social skills, anger management, and moral reasoning.	The Trait Anger and Anger Expression Scales, Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire, Social Problem-Solving Inventor – Revised Short Form	ART has been shown to have positive effects on problem solving, anger, and aggressive behavior, and can be used to develop positive behavior in adolescents who are prone to crime.
Hoogsteder et al. (2018) Netherlands JBI: %56	Structured intervention	Children and adolescents aged 16-21 who have been drawn into crime Two-group design; Group 1: intervention group; 63 children and adolescents receiving ART Group 2: Control group; 28 children and adolescents receiving standard treatment	Responsive Aggression Regulation Therapy (Re-ART) Re-ART is a multi-dimensional psychoeducational program based on the adaptation of ART. Re-ART combines treatment components that reduce recidivism in adolescents with (severe) aggression problems.	Re-ART consists of two different modules: standard and optional. Therefore, the intervention can be applied to a heterogeneous target group with aggression problems that vary in terms of both the risk of reoffending and the interaction between related issues, risk factors, and learning styles. Standard modules include: Motivation, Aggression Chain, Control Skills, Impact of Thought, and Group Module. Optional modules include: Stress Reduction, Impulse Control, Observation and Interpretation, Emotion Regulation, Conflict Management, and a module for the family (system).	Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) and arrest numbers and characteristics from the justice record system	The study found that aggressive behavior among young people who exhibited severe aggression decreased significantly 2-3 years after the intervention. Compared to the control group receiving, children who underwent re-ART were found to be less likely to be drawn into violence and property crimes during follow-ups 2-3 years. Re-ART is an effective program in reducing recidivism.
Öztürk and Ocakçı (2016)	Structured intervention	73 adolescents aged 15-18 who were involved in crime and were in prison Two-group design	Stress Management Training Program – (SMTP)	The program is structured based on Pender's health promotion model and Bloom's taxonomy.	Adolescent Lifestyle Profile Scale, Stress Coping Styles Scale	The stress management training program has been found to have

Table 3. Characteristics of interventions with juvenile offenders

Source	Type	Sample	Intervention	Content	Measurement	Results
Türkiye JBI: %67		Group 1: 36 adolescents who received education Group 2: Control group of 37 adolescents	This training helps children develop positive behaviors and stress coping skills.	It consists of structured content such as stress-related situations, the relationship between stress and health, coping with stress, positive thinking, anger management, interpersonal relationships, and relaxation exercises. It is a 10-session, two-week program with five sessions per week.		positive effects on stress management and behavioral change for children in prison.
Coldiron et al. (2019)** USA JBI: %70	Structured intervention	65 children aged 14-19 in foster care Two-group design Group 1: 38 individuals receiving WA treatment Group 2: 27 individuals receiving routine care and monitoring Children and adolescents involved in both the foster care system and the justice system	Wraparound program; It is a comprehensive and intensive team-based care coordination process program designed to develop and implement personalized care plans for youth with significant emotional and behavioral challenges.	This is not an educational program, but an intervention carried out by a coordination team. These interventions, run by trained professionals, include individual counseling services and social activities.	The data on arrests and on the child's ability to continue living and receiving an education were obtained through government systems.	It was found that young people in the wraparound group had lower arrest rates compared to the control group, and their first arrest times were longer than those in the control group (the time until arrest was longer).
Tas and Baysan Arabacı (2020) Türkiye JBI: %56	Structured intervention	18 children-adolescents aged 12-15, involved in crime and undergoing treatment at a child-adolescent psychiatric clinic Single-group design	Psychoeducation program; Designed to develop emotion management skills in juvenile offenders	A total of seven individual psychoeducation sessions were conducted twice a week over four weeks. The sessions were designed to address the needs of children and adolescents, covering topics such as self-awareness, emotional expression, problem-solving skills, and communication skills.	Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale, Emotion Management Skills Scale	The psychoeducation program improved the social-emotional learning skills of juvenile offenders who received treatment in the clinic for a mental illness diagnosis. However, it did not significantly affect their ability to manage their emotions.
Viljoen et al. (2017) USA JBI: %45	Structured intervention	173 male children and adolescents aged 13-17 Sexual offenses	Clinically based interventions (Whitehall Psychiatric Treatment Program) are specialized, community-based, CBT-based programs that provide treatment to young people convicted of sexual offenses.	Treatment plans are individualized, tailored to each child and adolescent's strengths and treatment needs, yet there are common themes. Common points include developing insight into past offenses, problem-solving skills, skill development and supporting positive relationships, developing relapse prevention plans, increasing awareness of victim impact, reducing psychopathology, and improving educational success Individual therapy was provided two to five times per week, along with a three-times-per-week relapse prevention group and recreational therapy. Support was also provided through cognitive behavioral therapy, trauma-focused therapy with skills development orientation, and coping and relationship skills groups, depending on the child's needs.	J-SOAP-II, Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY)	Although the research results show a decrease in crime-related risks, the decrease in risk factors and increase in protective factors did not predict a decrease in sexual, non-sexual violent, or any repeat offenses.

Table 3. Characteristics of interventions with juvenile offenders

Source	Type	Sample	Intervention	Content	Measurement	Results
Jewell et al. (2015) USA JBI: %78	Group Therapy	176 adolescents aged 13-17 who had been under probation Two-group design Group 1: 178 individuals, COG field experiment group Group 2: 66 individuals, control group	Community Opportunity Growth -COG CBT-based group therapy program	It focuses on emotions, thoughts, and behaviors related to criminal behavior, identifies cognitive distortions and schemas, and uses Socratic questioning techniques. The COG PROGRAM is a 16-week group therapy program. Each session lasts 1.5 hours.	The registered data of all children referred to the COG program, their case records from official databases, and the characteristics of the crimes	7-year follow-up COG has been found to be effective in reducing recidivism rates among young offenders under probation. Children and adolescents participating in the COG program were found to have lower rates of involvement in crime compared to the control group.
Brogan et al. (2017) USA JBI: %68	Group Therapy	17 children and adolescents aged 14-18 Two-group design Group 1: eight individuals Group 2: nine individuals Children and adolescents with a history of sexual offenses	Group therapy is a form of therapy that encourages individuals to recognize their thoughts when they are together, learned through observation. Each session provided the groups with step-by-step challenging goals (adherence to established rules). Therapists praised children who followed the rules and made neutral reminders when rules were broken. When a rule was broken in the group, it was evaluated as group behavior rather than individual behavior.	The sample group was divided into group 1 and group 2, and group therapy was applied. Group 1 (exercise and mindfulness sessions) was an exercise group in which the therapist gave a 10-minute lesson on exercise, guided the students through various 30-minute exercise routines, and concluded with a 5-minute mindfulness exercise. Group 2 (coping skills training) received coping skills training and did not participate in any Group 1 activities. Children and adolescents learned that if they followed the established rules (e.g., not speaking without raising their hand, staying with the group), they could earn 10 minutes of free time + a snack.	Observational measurements were conducted. A non-participating observer recorded the disruptive behaviors of the adolescents and the therapists' responses. Partial Interval Recording (PIR) was used, with 10-second intervals.	The results showed that the procedures applied were effective in reducing disruptive behaviors exhibited by adolescents in group therapy. A significant reduction in behaviors was observed in both groups. Group 1: Initially 26% inappropriate behavior → less than 5% in the final sessions. Group 2: Initially an average of 23% → determined to be 1% in the final session.
Seivert et al. (2018) USA JBI: %77	Art Therapy	RCT, 138 individuals aged 13-18, children and adolescents involved in violent and non-violent crime Two-group design Group 1: The experimental group, Animal-assisted therapy Group 2: The control group, walked for the same amount of time as a therapy session with one dog.	Teacher's Pet It is an animal-assisted therapy program implemented to increase empathy and reduce behavioral problems in juvenile offenders.	This animal-assisted therapy was implemented on an individual basis with a trained dog. The program aimed to promote a close bond between children and adolescents involved in delinquent behavior and the dog, to teach them strategies for managing both positive and negative social interactions, and to reduce behavioral problems. Over a 10-week period, participants attended two-hour sessions twice a week—comprising one hour of dog training and one hour of interaction and leisure time with the dogs. In the control group, participants merely walked the dogs; no training component was included, and no specific relationship with a particular dog was established.	Internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Teacher Report Form, Youth Self Report, Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment), The Interpersonal Reactivity Index	In both groups, an increase in empathy skills was observed. However, the animal-assisted therapy training did not demonstrate a significant additional benefit in post-intervention measurements compared to merely spending time with the dog. The authors emphasized the need for longer follow-up periods, as well as further implementation and research, to better understand the potential long-term effects.

The order is random based on the type of offense;

**It is known that the children were under protective care when the study was conducted. This study was included because measurements were taken regarding the situation of repeat offenses.; FFT: Functional Family Therapy, CBT: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, RCT: Randomized Controlled Trial, MST: Multisystemic Therapy, FU: Familias Unidas

Discussion

The findings obtained from this scoping review, conducted to examine interventions targeting juvenile offenders, indicate that the interventions implemented in the reviewed studies had positive effects on reducing recidivism, managing aggressive, impulsive, and violent behaviors, improving anger control and problem-solving skills, and promoting healthy behaviors among children. When examining studies conducted over the past decade on juvenile offenders, who experience problems that negatively affect society, family, and social life and often persist in adulthood, it is noteworthy that the number and diversity of interventions specifically designed for this population remain limited.

It has been observed that family therapies are the most frequently implemented interventions for juvenile offenders. MST is a therapeutic approach that combines behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, and family therapy techniques, aiming to enhance interaction and communication among family members. It is commonly applied to children and adolescents exhibiting delinquent behaviors, antisocial tendencies, or risky conditions such as substance abuse (Sheerin et al. 2021, Üstün-Güllü and Erden 2019). Similarly, FFT is other most used interventions for juvenile offenders. FFT is an evidence-based family therapy approach grounded in cognitive-behavioral theories, which focuses on the family's strengths, aims to increase family interaction, and helps identify and address problematic behaviors (Robbins et al. 2016). FFT can be adapted according to the population to which it is applied (Gottfredson et al. 2018). The findings obtained from the studies included in this review revealed that FFT and MST are associated with lower rates of juvenile delinquency (Blanckstein 2019, Sheerin et al. 2021, Gan et al. 2021, Gottfredson 2018). However, in contrast to studies demonstrating these positive effects, some evidence suggests that FFT and MST are not necessarily more effective than existing interventions. Studies conducted with juvenile offenders and adolescents who received either FFT or routine counseling emphasized that the interventions provided to the control group also produced positive outcomes, including reductions in antisocial behaviors (Humayun et al. 2017, Olseth et al. 2024). Fonagy et al. (2020) found that MST applied to children and adolescents with risky antisocial behaviors but who had not been drawn into crime showed no superiority over routine care and treatment in terms of mental health, social interaction, and economic aspects. Despite the families participating in the study indicating that therapy rapidly engendered a favorable domestic environment, objective assessments failed to corroborate this assertion. The implementation of family therapy has been demonstrated to enhance interaction among family members, thereby fostering the development of a more positive family environment. It is noteworthy that children involved in criminal activities are more likely to encounter domestic challenges, which, in turn, heightens the risk of recidivism. This underscores the significance of family therapy in addressing these complex issues. However, while numerous studies have emphasized that routine counseling services provided to children involved in crime and their families can be as effective as family therapy, the scope of routine treatment and counseling services should also be evaluated. Olseth et al. (2024) noted in their research that children were initially referred to child welfare services, and that children and families involved in crime received comprehensive training as standard treatment, including psychiatric treatment, family education, general counseling services, and conflict resolution training. All these studies are important for expanding the scope of routine counseling services. Given the observation that children who have been drawn into crime in Türkiye often return to the same home and environment, there is a need to expand the scope of culturally appropriate counseling services for children and families. Additionally, training programs can be developed to encourage community involvement and social interaction, which can help reduce recidivism rates.

Structured interventions are among the most frequently implemented initiatives for juvenile offenders. Within this scope, educational programs based on theories, structured psychoeducational programs, and clinically based interventions have been examined. The Stress Management Training Program, for example, is a psychoeducational program based on Pender's health promotion model and Bloom's taxonomy. It aims to develop positive health behaviors (Öztürk and Ocakçı 2017). Another structured educational program known to be implemented in many countries is ART. ART is a structured educational program designed to develop social skills, anger management, and moral skills, and has been reported to be effective in developing positive behaviors in juvenile offenders (Hoogsteder et al. 2018, Kaya and Buzlu 2016). These educational programs for juvenile offenders have been shown to reduce rates of violent and

property crime and aggressive behavior. They also support emotional regulation skills and contribute to continued healthy development. Given the high recidivism rate among juvenile offenders, it is clear that programs like Re-ART, which support the rehabilitation process, could be implemented more widely. It is evident that all these education-based interventions are grounded in both theory and practice, focusing on reducing aggressive behavior, recidivism rates, and promoting positive behavior. These programs are designed to address the specific needs of juvenile offenders, with an emphasis on inclusivity. It is believed that it is important to continue implementing these and similar programs among juvenile offenders and to expand them by reaching larger sample groups.

The care and protection of a child involved in crime must extend beyond the provision of a safe environment. Furthermore, it is essential that the treatment services are necessary for the child's healthy development. Given that approximately 70% of juveniles involved in criminal activity have a documented history of mental illness, the significance of clinically based treatment services becomes evident. Findings from the studies reviewed show that structured interventions are not limited to education alone. In this context, the Wraparound Program involves a team-based coordination process designed to implement personalized care practices for children and adolescents with behavioral problems (Coldiron et al. 2019). The program is managed by trained professionals and includes individual counseling services and social activities. In Türkiye, children who have been legally ordered to receive care and treatment are also admitted to inpatient services for treatment and supervision. One of the centers responsible for the continuation of care and treatment is high-security forensic psychiatric hospitals. The importance of the child and adolescent units of high-security forensic psychiatric hospitals in the rehabilitation process of children and adolescents is emphasized, and the need for their development is highlighted (Bozduvan Çelebi et al. 2025). It is possible to treat existing mental illnesses and promote children's health through activities that facilitate their reintegration into society. Treatment and supervision are provided at these centers during this process. Therefore, unlike structured education programs, clinically based interventions can play a key role because they include individualized approaches. Furthermore, these interventions can contribute significantly to the development of new programs designed for specific types of crimes committed by children, serving as a guide for new studies in clinical and community settings.

Among the interventions implemented for juvenile offenders, group therapy and animal-assisted therapy are noteworthy examples of social rehabilitation strategies. These practices can be instructive for such youths, as acting as part of a group promotes social interaction, enhances empathy skills, and helps shape prosocial behaviors within society. Studies examining these interventions have shown that in group therapies, focusing on collective rather than individual behaviors and linking rewards to group performance have been effective in reducing disruptive behaviors among juvenile offenders (Brogan et al. 2017). Although there is evidence supporting their effectiveness, group therapies require careful attention to issues such as the standardized use of measurement tools and observer reliability. Increasing the number of programs that promote social functioning and interpersonal skills, as well as planning studies to evaluate their effects on social competence, could make significant contributions to the rehabilitation processes of children and adolescents involved in delinquent behavior.

In Türkiye, the development of services for children involved in crime emerged in the 2000s. It is known that these services became more effective with the implementation of Child Protection Law. However, examples of structured, clinically or community-based applications are limited. Following the recent announcement, the "Empowering Care Model" program for children involved in crime and substance abuse is set to begin in July 2025, according to protocols signed by ministries (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı). At present, child protection homes and child support centers—recently restructured as specialized child homes—operate under court orders to provide care and protection for juvenile delinquency. These institutions aim to support the psychosocial development of the children, reduce behavioral problems, and facilitate their rehabilitation process. Meanwhile, children aged 12 to 18 who have been convicted of criminal offenses are placed under care and protection in child education institutions, formerly known as juvenile correctional facility. It is recognized that within these institutions, rather than functioning as a punitive system, various activities such as sports, art, education, and vocational training are implemented to support the biopsychosocial development of juvenile offenders. (Bulguroğlu and

Çamur Duyan 2019, Sütçü et al. 2023). Although the practices implemented in these centers are adequate, there is a need for increased initiatives and follow-ups for juvenile offenders. Other important needs include enhancing rehabilitation services for children, particularly after they return home and to their communities; creating service models they can turn to when needed; and determining recidivism rates through repeated measurements. Similar to practices found in the international literature, developing new, comprehensive practices in Türkiye could improve the quality of services provided to children involved in crime.

This scoping review examines articles published over the past decade regarding juvenile offenders. In addition to two databases, it includes articles from Turkish gray literature known to researchers. The findings of this review are limited to studies published over the past decade and retrieved from two different databases. Due to the limited number of available articles, the JBI critical appraisal tool was not used as a criterion; rather, it was employed to guide researchers in the interpretation of the findings. The results obtained from this scoping review indicate that a more detailed and systematic approach to the topic could be implemented in future research.

Conclusion

This scoping review, which examines interventions applied to juvenile offenders over the past decade, reveals that these interventions are predominantly conducted in the United States, planned in a quasi-experimental manner, and include information related to crime and mental disorders, with various types of interventions being applied. The interventions aimed at juvenile offenders have been found to have positive effects on anger control, stress management, behavioral issues, impulse control, recidivism, and the development of positive behaviors. Although multiple theoretical approaches have been employed in the examined studies, it can be concluded that, in the rehabilitation process of juvenile offenders, there is a need for evidence-based, comprehensive, culturally and legally tailored interventions that can be widely implemented to prevent repeated involvement in crime. In research planned to be conducted in Türkiye, there is a particular need to evaluate recidivism over the long period. It is recommended that the existing interventions be planned in a randomized controlled design to assess their effectiveness based on evidence. Additionally, considering the history of criminal behavior within the children's environment, training programs should be designed to encompass social rehabilitation. In order to support the healthy development of children, it is important to expand all current interventions, such as anger management training, while considering legal procedures, and to evaluate their effectiveness for children involved in various types of criminal behavior. The data obtained from this review may serve as a guide for the development of effective services in Türkiye that holistically support juvenile offenders.

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