



Navigating the Juvenile Justice System in New Jersey: A Family Guide

New Jersey Parents Caucus, Inc.

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Contributors

*Valorie Gallagher
Greer Gurland, Esq.
Victoria Hill
Linda McConneyhead
Erin Nadeau, Esq.
Debbie Potenti
Dr. Helene Robbins
Evelyn Torres
Kathy Wright
NJPC Board of Trustees
NJPC Parents Executive Council*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

*American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey
Cathy Mirra, Youth Services Commission Administrator, Bergen County
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)
New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission
Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
Sandra Simkins, Esq., Rutgers Children's Justice Clinic
Trinitas Regional Medical Center*

A Family Guide to Navigating the Juvenile Justice System in New Jersey is a guide for parents and caregivers and is intended to serve as a general guide about New Jersey's juvenile justice process and resources that may be of assistance. The information provided in the Guide is generic and not intended to replace legal advice from a qualified attorney nor intended as legal advice, and it may not address every question or be applicable to every family's circumstance.



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Introduction

Voices of NJ Families & Youth Involved in Juvenile Justice

These “voices” tell the stories of real families. Some families had good experiences. Others did not. Every family member and youth who contributed a “voice” came to the point at which they could talk about and share their experiences with others. Some of these voices are from adults, and some are from youth. Even though your experiences may be different, these families have contributed their stories so that you will know how they felt. We hope their stories will be helpful.

...I'm only 16, I'm about to turn 17 July 8, but I want to [know] why I'm down here with people that's like thirty...can you do ya best to get me out of this facility, because this prison [is] not for me? --- Anonymous Incarcerated Youth

I asked at our county detention center if there was a support group for parents and I was told no. I asked the social worker at the center if we could start one and never received an answer. That was three years ago --- Leslie

My daughter was sentenced to serve 60 days at the JDC. She has a dual diagnosis, and I was impressed that she received therapy and substance abuse treatment as part of their Commitment Program. However, when she was released, she came home to no substance abuse treatment because she had turned 18 and had aged out of the available services --- Debbie

I had to call the social worker at the detention center and my child's school, to expedite the process of receiving his IEP and books because he was sitting in the detention center for more than 12 days without appropriate schooling. Parents should not assume anything --- Theresa

Something needs to be done about checking children's immunization records when they enter the detention center. If a child is arrested and may have been visiting the US, the center is not aware if the child has had proper immunization and this is a serious health issue. --- Kathy

My son has drug and mental health issues and has Medicaid. When he was released from the detention center, the case manager that came to our home told us that he would have to choose between substance abuse services and mental health services because of the Medicaid issue of “double dipping.” --- Cynthia



Purpose of the Guide

Welcome to *A Family Guide to Navigating the Juvenile Justice System in New Jersey*. If you are reading this, your family is most likely involved with the juvenile justice system, or perhaps you know a family who is. We hope the *Guide* addresses any questions or concerns that you may have. Our goal is to ensure that family members better understand the Juvenile Justice System and their rights and responsibilities. It is our hope that better understanding will help families reach a more positive solution for their children, reduce recidivism and lead to greater family involvement. Consequently, families and youth will be able to better inform the system which will help reduce juvenile delinquency in our communities and have a positive impact on public safety.

When your Child is arrested it can be difficult, traumatic, emotional, confusing and overwhelming. A significant part of this response is the absence of information to family members which fuels parents' fear and often their anger. Unfortunately, from the first contact with the juvenile justice system and/or local law enforcement the result is often dissension as parents feel that they must make decisions that they are not fully informed or educated about. Reading the *Guide* is one way to get information. It can help you become involved and feel empowered within the system. It may help to ease any fear and anger that you may have.

Families involved in the juvenile justice system and other individuals came together to create this *Guide* because they didn't want other parents to go through this process the way they felt they had to – blind to their rights, confused and alone. We hope you find it helpful and encourage you to reach out to NJPC to share your story.

Think of the Guide as a Tool to Help you Learn About:
Experiences other families have had with the juvenile justice system
Laws and policies that direct the actions and decisions of the Court system and juvenile justice personnel
People whom you will meet, the service systems they work in, and their roles with you and your family
Ways to advocate for your own rights and your child's rights
Your responsibilities as a parent when involved with the juvenile justice system
Practical tips from other parents
Ways to educate juvenile justice stakeholders on the importance of family involvement
Ways to create systemic change in the juvenile justice system

The *Guide* is designed to follow a family's path through the juvenile justice system from first contact with law enforcement. Depending on your situation, you might find some sections of the *Guide* more useful for you and your family than other sections. The *Guide* asks and answers questions that other families thought would be of interest to you. We hope the *Guide* will make it easy for you to find the information you need.

How Will the *Guide* Help my Child & Family?

There are many ways that you can use this *Guide*. Some of them are listed below:

- You can use it on your own as a resource.
- You can talk about it with other members of your family or with friends.
- You can share it with your Child’s attorney.
- You and your Child’s probation officer and/or social worker can review it together.
- You can talk with other families involved with the juvenile justice system about the *Guide*.

***“Families have the potential to be
the greatest source of positive change and support
for youth in the juvenile justice system”***

How Will the *Guide* Help to Inform NJ’s Juvenile Justice System?

The *Guide* can be used by the juvenile justice system:

- In its work with families and youth.
- In training juvenile justice staff.
- In helping other child and family-serving agencies to understand how the juvenile justice system works.
- In teaching students who are studying to become involved in the juvenile justice system as police officers, probation officers, Court personnel, social workers, attorneys, judges, etc.



Section I

Understanding the Juvenile Delinquency Process

How the Juvenile Justice System Works

What is juvenile delinquency¹?

Delinquency is defined as an act by a juvenile under the age of 18 that if committed by an adult would constitute a crime, a disorderly persons offense, a petty disorderly persons offense, or a violation of any other penal statute, ordinance or regulation.

Why is my Child in the Juvenile Justice System?

Your Child enters the juvenile justice system when someone has accused your Child of committing an act which is against the law in New Jersey.

Who signs juvenile delinquency complaints?²

Police and Local Law Enforcement sign most complaints. Complaints may also be signed by school officials or victims.

What happens if my Child is Disobedient but Not Delinquent?

Juvenile/Family Crisis Intervention Units (JFCIU) help divert youth from Court proceedings for matters involving family related problems such as truancy, runaway and/or serious family conflict. Referrals can be made by schools, families, and/or local law enforcement.

The JFCIU's provide short-term intervention services with the goal of stabilizing your family and/or referring your child and family to appropriate community services. Services are free and include:

- Assessment and stabilization
- Referrals and case management
- In extreme situations, there may be involvement with the Family Court for short-term out-of-home placement.

¹ New Jersey Judiciary, *Juvenile Delinquency Proceedings and Your Child*, 2012

² Appendix C: *NJ Juvenile Delinquency Complaint Form*
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What happens if my Child is accused of committing a delinquent act?

Local law enforcement may take your Child into custody with or without your knowledge, if there is probable cause.

Your Child will be advised of their rights (right to an attorney, right to remain silent, etc.)

Instead of signing a formal delinquency complaint, the officer may divert your Child's case and:

IMPORTANT: Your Child has the right to remain silent. Anything your Child says can be used against them in a Court of law.

- *Issue a Warning:* The Officer may detain your Child and then release your Child to you or a guardian, with or without a warning. This is often referred to as the “counseled and released” alternative.
- *Conduct a station house adjustment:* The police officer will not file a complaint, as long as certain conditions are satisfied. A juvenile officer should conduct the station house adjustment, but if one is not available, it can still be conducted.

What happens if a complaint is signed against my Child?

If a complaint is signed, the officer refers the case to the Court intake service. The Court will review the matter and determine how the case will be handled. The Court decides whether a complaint will be diverted, sent to the Juvenile Referee/Informal Court or sent to the Superior Court.

Diversion Options

If this is your child's first or second offense of a minor nature, their complaint may be diverted and referred to the Juvenile Conference Committee or Intake Services Conference.

The Juvenile Conference Committee is comprised of community residents appointed by the Court to review certain delinquency complaints. Intake Services Conferences are conducted by the Superior Court intake staff in order to review slightly more serious delinquency allegations.

The parent, the child and the person who filed the complaint are invited to discuss the offense, and other related factors. This is an informal discussion of the events and attorneys are not required. The disposition recommendations will be placed in an agreement/court order signed by your child, their parent or legal guardian and the person who filed the complaint. This agreement will then be forwarded to the Court for final approval. You will receive a notice in the mail informing you of their decision. The resolution of these types of cases may include conditions

such as curfew, counseling, community service, restitution or any condition that will aid in your child's rehabilitation.

If all agree to the conditions, a Juvenile Conference Committee or Intake staff person will monitor the completion of the conditions. Upon successful completion of the conditions, the case is dismissed. However, if your child fails to complete the conditions and/or new complaints are signed prior to dismissal, the original complaint will go back to Court and heard by a Judge.

Another diversion option available to the juvenile justice system is the Juvenile Referee/Informal Court – the highest hearing level for informal court matters. A Juvenile Referee conducts a hearing at which your child will be expected to admit or deny charges in the complaint. Juvenile Referees can recommend dismissal of a complaint or make an adjudication (finding) of delinquency. Ultimately, dispositions that the referee recommends are subject to approval by the Judge.

Can my Child be placed in a Juvenile Detention Facility based upon the signing of a complaint?

Once your child is taken into custody, the officer may request admission into a juvenile detention facility. They can be held in a juvenile facility based on the nature of the offense, the need to protect society, a past record of delinquency, a recent failure to appear in Court, or a failure to remain where placed by the Court.

If your child is not held in a detention setting or shelter, you will receive notice of when and where to appear to address the charge.

Does my Child need a lawyer?

As a parent, you should always consider consulting an attorney for any legal matter or Court appearance. Not all cases require an attorney. Complaints handled by a Juvenile Conference Committee, Intake Services Conference or a Juvenile Referee do not require an attorney, but ultimately, it is your decision to make.

All formal Court hearings before a Judge require an attorney. This type of proceeding is known as a counsel mandatory hearing. If you cannot afford an attorney, you can fill out an application to apply for public defender which is based on financial need.

"A young person's placement in the juvenile justice system should not depend on whether he or she comes from a suburb or one of our urban centers.

It should not depend on race, ethnicity or gender..."

Former Attorney General Chiesa



What are Detention Alternatives?

Detention alternatives provide short-term levels of supervision to youth in the community while they await the final disposition of their case. The goal is to ensure the youth's future appearance at Court hearings, and to maintain public safety.

In New Jersey, the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) was designed to “reduce the unnecessary confinement of youth” in detention. The Initiative currently exists in the following counties – Cape May, Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren.

If you live in one of these counties, your Child may be afforded some additional alternatives to being placed in detention. You should ask your child’s attorney and the Courts, if necessary, about this initiative. The alternatives to detention may include home detention, evening reporting, and/or electronic monitoring in some cases.

. "The primary reason many of these youth are in detention is because the county detention center, unlike the schoolhouse, is the only place that cannot say no,"

Kevin Ryan, First and Only New Jersey Child Advocate



What happens if my Child has a Mental Health or Substance Abuse Disorder?

As a parent, caregiver or family member whose child is involved in the juvenile justice system, you should be aware of the fact that a very large number of children with emotional, behavioral, mental health and/or substance abuse issues become involved in the juvenile justice system.

Studies have found that

- approximately 65-70% of justice-involved youth have a diagnosable mental health disorder
- over 60% of youth with a mental health disorder also have a substance use disorder
- almost 30% of youth have disorders that are serious enough to require immediate and significant treatment.
- youth in the juvenile justice system have higher rates of exposure to traumatic experience, with 75% having experienced traumatic victimization
- some of the most common mental health disorders for justice-involved youth include ADHD, conduct disorder, depression, anxiety disorder, PTSD, learning disability and substance abuse disorder.

Your child may be unnecessarily placed in or referred to the juvenile justice system for relatively minor, non-violent offenses, often in an attempt to obtain treatment services that are lacking in the community.³ However, the unfortunate irony of this approach is that the mental health services typically available to your child in the juvenile justice system are often inadequate or simply unavailable.⁴

Understand that You know your Child best! Information about your child's disability helps the Court to choose an appropriate placement for your child. Your child's disability may interfere with their understanding of the charges brought against him or her, the understanding of questions from the police or an attorney and the ability to participate in their own defense.

If your Child has a mental health or substance abuse disorder, recognize that you may have to:

- Make all those involved aware of your Child's challenges.
- Advise them if your Child is taking medication for his/her disabilities.
- Educate juvenile justice professionals on your Child's disability.
- Educate your Child's lawyer on your Child's disability.
- Provide prior psychiatric, psychological, neurological, behavioral, social, and/or educational evaluations to court personnel and your child's attorney.
- Work with juvenile justice professionals to help craft treatment plans for your Child, or present your plan to them for review.

³ National Mental Health & Juvenile Justice Collaborative, *Better Solutions for Youth with Mental Health Needs in the Juvenile Justice System*, 2014.

⁴ Ibid

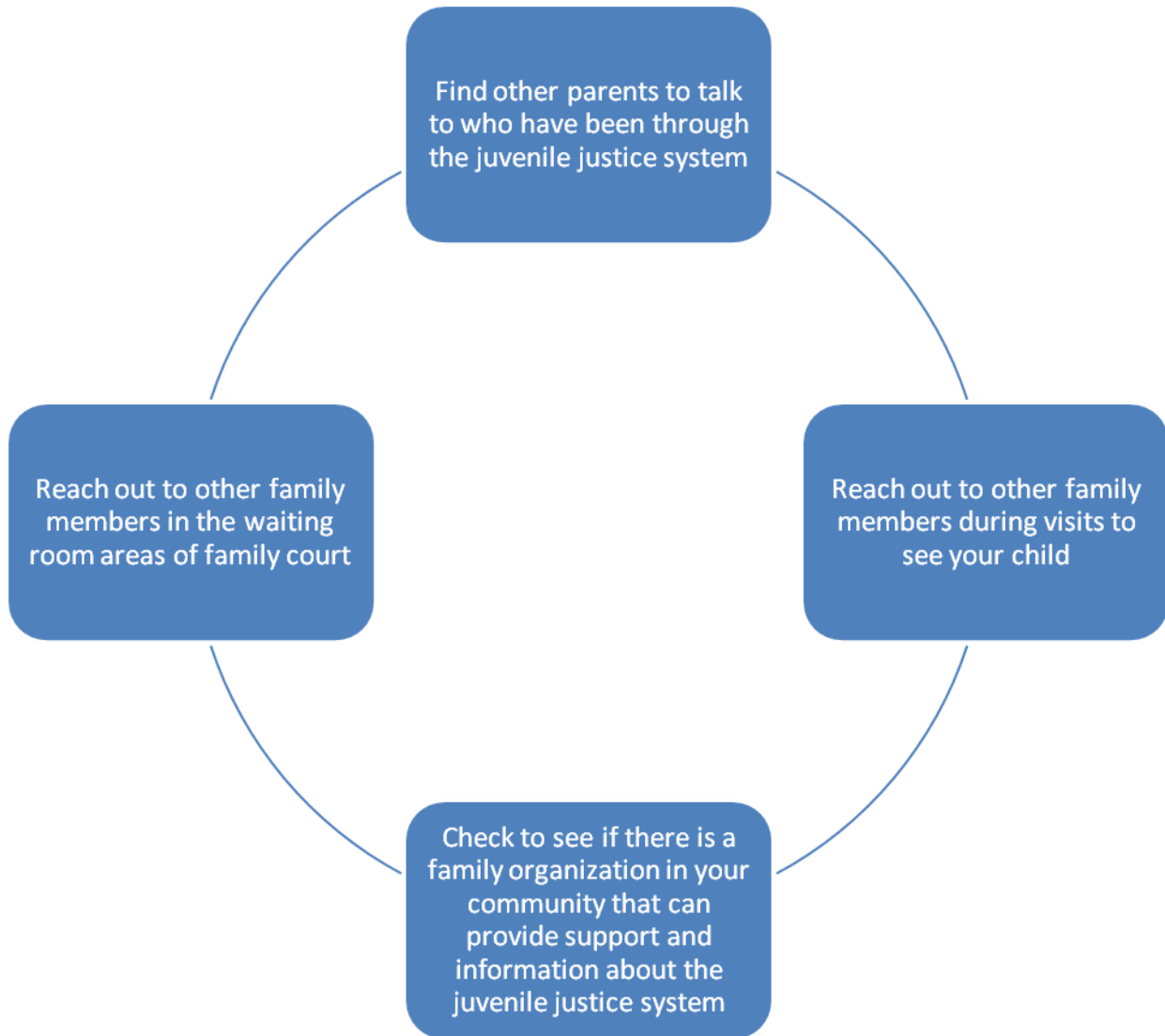
What happens if my Child is Involved in Special Education or has an IEP or a 504 Plan?

If your Child has received Special Education Services in the past, they may qualify for special education services while living in an out-of-home corrections setting. If your child has taken special classes because of behavior, learning or other problems, and/or you requested testing for your child, you should inform your child's attorney. If you have copies of notices, signed documents, or copies of letters you have written related to special education services for your child, make additional copies for the attorney.

If your child already has an IEP or 504, they are entitled to services through age 21, even if they are in a juvenile or adult correctional placement. Children and young adults may still qualify for special education services ***even if they have quit school prior to their involvement with the juvenile justice system.*** These can include:

- Residential treatment settings
- Hospital programs
- Group homes
- Behavioral Assistance
- Mental Health Treatment
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Help with school work
- Medication management
- Counseling
- Speech and language therapy
- Recreation services
- Occupational or physical therapy
- Training

***The Juvenile Justice System is very complicated!
Let no question go unanswered.
Be Proactive!
You should feel free to ask questions
and to ask the same questions over and over if you need to***



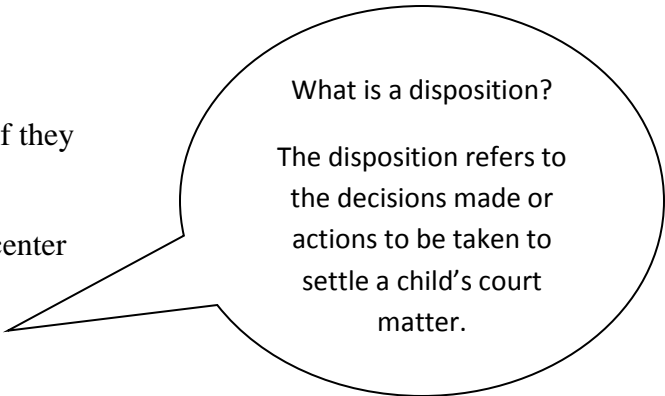
The Family Court Process in New Jersey

What happens if my Child is detained?

NJ law mandates that Courts can only detain your Child if they are considered a danger to the community or a flight risk.

They may temporarily place your Child in the detention center

- Prior to the disposition of their case
- After their disposition while they are awaiting program placement



In some counties, your Child may be placed in a short-term commitment program which serves as a disposition option.

If your Child is held in a detention facility, an initial detention hearing will take place within 24 hours of their admission to the detention center. The Family Court is required to hold hearings for children and youth charged as delinquents, with specific mandated time limitations, particularly regarding youth held in secure detention.

At the initial detention hearing, you and/or your Child will be told what the charges are, and whether or not an attorney will be required. The Court will make the decision as to whether to release or detain your child.

If Your Child Is Placed in the County Detention Center Consider the Following
Identify the social worker at the detention center and their phone number
Notify the detention center of any medications that your Child is taking
Notify the detention center if your Child has any significant health issues
Notify the detention center if your Child has an emotional or behavioral challenge
If your Child has an IEP, provide the detention center, social worker or personnel with a copy (even though they will request it from the school)
If your Child has a psychiatric/psychological/behavioral evaluation provide them with a copy
Identify the teacher at the detention center and their phone number
Identify the family Court Judge, their mailing address and their phone number
Notify your Child's school so that they may expedite sending their school records



What happens if my Child is not released after the Initial Detention Hearing?

If your Child is not released following the initial detention hearing, the initial probable cause hearing and second detention hearings are to be held within two Court days. At that time, your Child must be represented by an attorney.

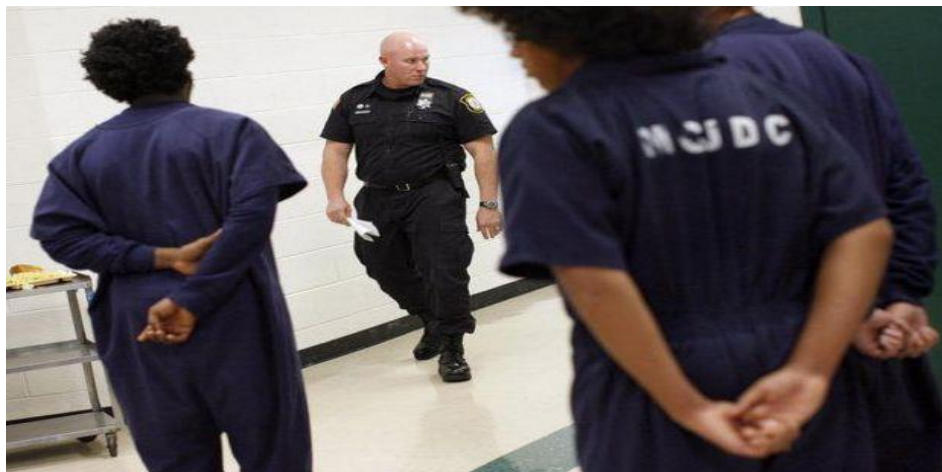
If probable cause is not found by the Courts, the Judge may release your Child from detention pending an adjudicator hearing.

If probable cause is found, the case will be scheduled for a hearing. The Judge will also decide whether or not your child will continue to be held at the detention center or return home.

If your Child is held, a detention review hearing, with your Child's attorney present, must be held within 14 days of the prior hearing. If your Child stays in detention, the Judge must hold detention review hearings at intervals of 14 and 21 Court days. At each hearing, your Child's status will be reconsidered by the Judge.

What is Probable Cause?

A reasonable ground to suspect that your Child has committed or is committing a crime or delinquent offense or that a place contains specific items connected with crime. A Judge requires probable cause in order to issue an arrest warrant or a search warrant. Similarly, a police officer must have probable cause to conduct an arrest or a search without a warrant.



What happens during a Formal Court Proceeding?

A Judge oversees the Court hearing. In most New Jersey counties, your Child will be sent an initial notice ordering them to appear for a "counsel hearing." This allows you to apply for a public defender or retain a private attorney. Next, you will receive a notice to appear for a "counsel mandatory plea hearing". Your Child must be represented by a lawyer at this hearing. All juvenile delinquency hearings in New Jersey are conducted in the Superior Court- Family Part.

What Happens If My Child and I Cannot Keep a Court Date?

Notice of court dates will be provided to your family in advance. You, your Child, or your Child's attorney, must notify the court when your Child is unable to appear. Please note that if the Court is not notified, the Judge may issue a warrant for your child's arrest.⁵

Plea Hearing

The plea hearing is similar to an arraignment in criminal Court. Your attorney will be provided the discovery in the case (the discovery is the evidence). You are entitled to the evidence the police have. At this hearing, your Child will be expected to enter a plea admitting or denying the charge. Sometimes, a case can be resolved at a plea hearing. Your Child may be offered a plea deal. If you accept the deal and enter into a plea agreement, your Child will have to admit to some or all of the charges, and follow certain conditions. If the case is not resolved, then an adjudicator/adjudication hearing will be scheduled.

Adjudicator Hearing

If the case goes to *trial -- called an adjudicator/adjudication hearing in a juvenile case --* then both sides present evidence and the attorneys argue the case. In most states, the hearing is before a Judge and the State has the burden to prove the allegations against your Child, beyond a reasonable doubt. If the allegations are proven, your Child will not be found guilty, but rather adjudicated delinquent.

At this time, your Child may be found to be delinquent on one or more of the charges and/or some charges may be dismissed.

If your or your Child disagrees with the Judge's decision, you have 45 days from the final court order to appeal this decision. Information on appeals can be found on www.njcourts.com.

What happens at the Adjudicator Hearing?

The Juvenile Court Judge determines whether or not your Child has committed a delinquent offense.

⁵NJ Courts, *Juvenile Delinquency Proceedings & Your Child*

After an adjudication of delinquency, the Judge will order a disposition hearing. At this hearing, the Judge decides what is in the best interest of the juvenile, and may order any number of outcomes as part of the disposition. If your Child is currently in detention, the disposition hearing is to occur within 60 Court days of admission to detention, unless extended by the Court for good cause.

Disposition Hearing

Your child will have a disposition hearing *only if he/she pleads guilty to an offense or is found guilty by the Judge*. Based on information provided by your child's defense attorney, the prosecutor and the local probation department, the Judge will determine your child's needs and how best to meet them while still ensuring public safety.

Usually, the Judge will place your child under some type of supervision such as probation or placement in a secure confinement facility, and mandate services and/or participation in certain treatment or programming.

The Court can order any disposition to aid in your child's rehabilitation. In some instances, formal dispositions can be deferred or delayed for up to one year. During this period, your Child must complete any special conditions ordered by the Judge and must not be charged with a new offense. If he or she meets all conditions during the deferral period, the complaint will be dismissed. If conditions are not met, the original complaint will go back to Court and be heard by the Judge.

In addition, for cases on the formal calendar only, the Judge also has the option to order a period of confinement in a juvenile detention facility, incarceration in a correctional facility, out-of-home placement, clinical residential treatment or residential drug and alcohol treatment program.

Can We Present Witnesses?

Yes, you have the right to invite and present witnesses; however, if your Child's case is being held in formal court, you should consult your Child's attorney. You also have the right to present witnesses during informal court, but they are not required.

What Dispositions or Consequences Can the Court Impose on my Child?

Dispositions are similar to "sentences" in adult Court. Dispositions can be given to a juvenile during informal or formal Court. Disposition sentences vary greatly depending on the juvenile's offense. Some dispositions that the Court could impose on your Child may include:

adjourned disposition	community service
finances	probation
counseling	suspension of driver's license
transfer of custody	required parental involvement
restitution	diversion
release to parent or guardian	secure confinement/incarceration
residential mental health and/or substance abuse treatment	work, outdoor, academic and/or vocational programs

The most common disposition is probation supervision. Probation is often ordered along with other requirements such as performing community service or paying financial restitution. In addition, probation may be ordered along with more restrictive requirements such as entering a residential program or undergoing counseling. The duration of supervision and services varies, but cannot extend beyond the Juvenile Courts maximum age of jurisdiction (typically, age 21). Short of waiving children to the adult system, commitment to the JJC for incarceration is the most severe disposition available to the Family Court. The average sentence in committed cases is two years, although terms can range from 30 days to 20 years or more.

In cases where commitment is suspended, adjudicated youth are often placed on probation and, in addition, may be ordered into a JJC non-institutional residential program.

What happens if my Child is placed on Probation?

Probation offers juveniles the opportunity to remain in the community under supervision by a probation officer who oversees their compliance with rules and conditions imposed by the Judge. Probation may last up to 3 years.

If your Child does not obey the conditions of probation, there will be consequences, such as increased reporting or curfew, and your child could be charged with a violation of probation (VOP). If all the conditions are met and your Child shows progress, your Child may earn an earlier end to the probation term.

How Does the Court Decide Where to Place My Child?

Following the commitment of your Child by the Court, they will be assigned to a specific custody level and treatment program based on assessments of their supervision requirements and service needs.

For the JJC, this means first determining whether your Child is appropriate for institutional or structured non-institutional placement.

The team identifies specific sanctions and services that have been utilized for your Child, as well as ongoing or new service needs, and makes a recommendation for an appropriate placement.

The team will complete a unified intake assessment packet for your Child which includes the recommendation for either institutional care or structured non-institutional program placement.

Can My Child Be Charged as an Adult?

In the state of New Jersey, a **youth 14 or older at the time of the charged delinquent act** can be waived and charged, sentenced and incarcerated in the adult prison system. Waiver is the practice of transferring jurisdiction over a juvenile from Family Court to adult Criminal Court. (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-26). If your Child is waived, they will be treated in the same manner as an adult. Your Child can be held in an adult jail and, if found guilty, is subject to the same penalties as an adult.

The prosecutor initiates the process by filing a waiver motion. The Court then determines probable cause and decides whether or not to waive.

If your Child is sentenced to a term of incarceration, once they are waived, the sentence is served in either an adult or (in some instances) a juvenile facility.

Some parents may decide to have their Child waived to the adult system as they can receive bail, possibly be released and return home. ***Please be very careful in considering and making this decision as the implications and ramifications can be far reaching, significant and may impact you and your child for the rest of their life. As with all decisions pertaining to your Child's involvement in the juvenile justice and adult criminal justice system, you should obtain legal advice prior to making this type of decision.***

PLEASE NOTE:
If your child is 14 years of age or older, they alone can make the decision to have their case waived to the adult court.

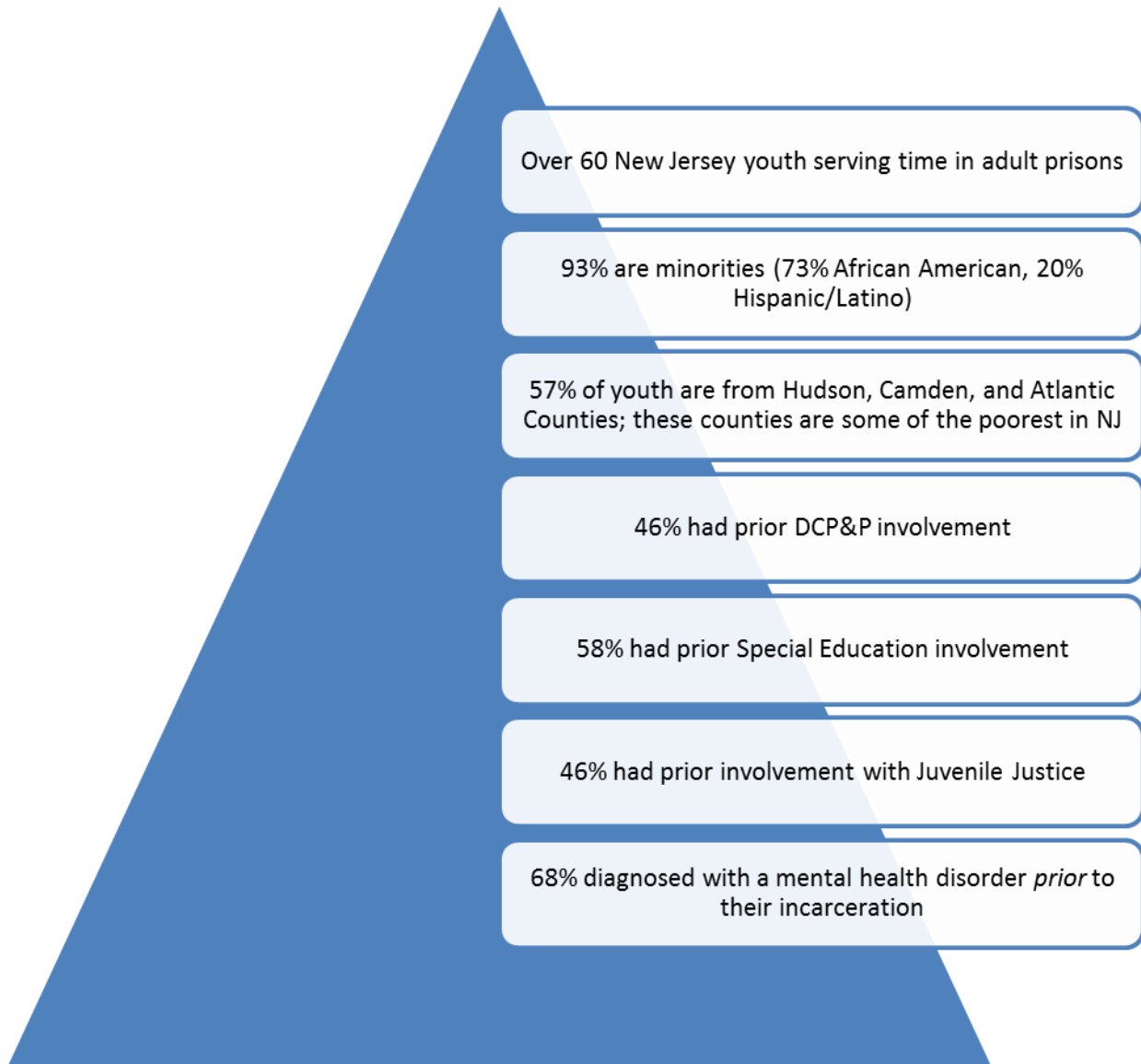
***I'm only 16, I'm about to turn 17 July 8,
but I want to [know] why I'm down here with people that's like thirty
...can you do ya best to get me out of this facility, because this prison [is] not for me? ---
Anonymous Incarcerated Youth***

YOUTH TRIED, SENTENCED & INCARCERATED IN THE ADULT CRIMINAL SYSTEM



**In a recent report published by the CDC and led by the Task Force on Community Preventive Services*

NJPC Youth Justice Initiative Fact Sheet – NJ 2010



* NJPC Youth Justice Initiative Data Collection 2010, NJ Department of Corrections – Offender Statistics)

Can My Child's Records be Expunged?⁶

When a complaint is signed against your Child, their name, information and charges enter the juvenile justice system and becomes part of their permanent juvenile record.

In certain cases, your Child's juvenile records can be expunged. If your Child is adjudicated delinquent, they may have their entire record of delinquency adjudications expunged if:

- Five years have passed since the final discharge, including payment of fines, from legal custody or supervision and ***no new offenses have occurred in the past five years.***
- Youthful Drug Offender: If your Child's conviction/adjudication was only for possession or use of a controlled dangerous substance and it occurred while you were 21 or younger, then you may be eligible for expungement after only one year. Distribution offenses are not eligible to be expunged as a Youthful Drug Offender.

However, some offenses cannot be expunged. They include the following:

Criminal Homicide	Kidnapping
Luring or Enticing	Human Trafficking
Aggravated Sexual Assault	Aggravated Criminal Sexual Contact
Criminal Restraint	False Imprisonment
Robbery	Arson & Related Offenses
Selling or Manufacturing Child Pornography	False Swearing
Perjury	Prostitution of A Child
Terrorism	Endangering the Welfare of a Child
Producing or Possessing Chemical Weapons, Biological agents or Nuclear or Radiological Devices, Conspiracies or Attempts to Commit such Crimes	

For more information and to obtain the forms needed, please go to www.njcourts.com/prose.

⁶ NJ Juvenile Justice Commission, *Understanding Expungement and its Benefits*, 2014

Section II

The Juvenile Justice System in New Jersey

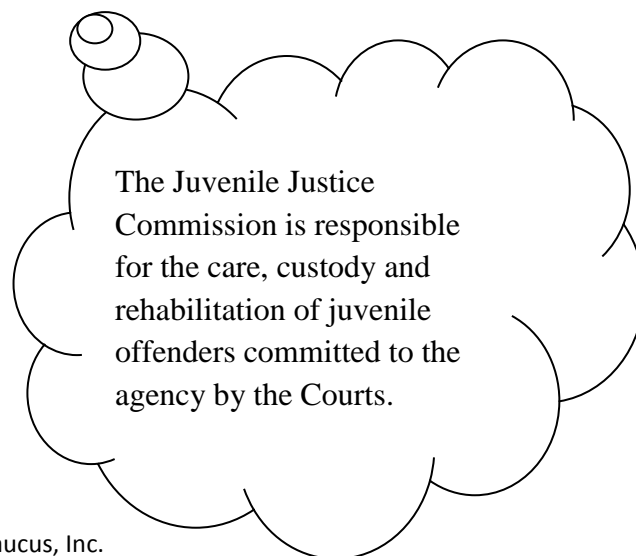
What is the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission?

The Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) was created in 1995 by statute to lead the reform of the juvenile justice system in the State of New Jersey. The JJC is the single agency of State government with centralized authority for planning, policy development and provision of services in the juvenile justice system. As the centralized authority for planning, policy development and the provision of services in the juvenile justice system, the JJC's primary goal is to maintain personal safety, promote responsibility and build stronger communities in the state of New Jersey. Although this responsibility has been given to the Juvenile Justice Commission, ***they can't do it alone***. The Courts, local law enforcement, private agencies, other systems (such as mental health, education, substance abuse, child welfare, healthcare) and families are all partners in serving children and families who come into contact with the juvenile justice system.

The JJC's three primary responsibilities are the care and custody, and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders committed to the agency by the courts, the support of local efforts to provide services to at risk and court involved youth, and the supervision of youth on juvenile parole.

Woven through all JJC efforts is its charge to protect the citizens of the State of New Jersey. Every decision is made with the understanding that it is their responsibility to maintain personal safety, promote responsibility and build stronger communities. In order to achieve that goal, the JJC has undertaken diverse measures to address the multifaceted issue of juvenile justice.

The JJC emphasizes accountability and offers programming that afford young people the opportunity to become independent, productive and law abiding citizens.



What Services and Supports For My Child Are Offered by the Juvenile Justice System?

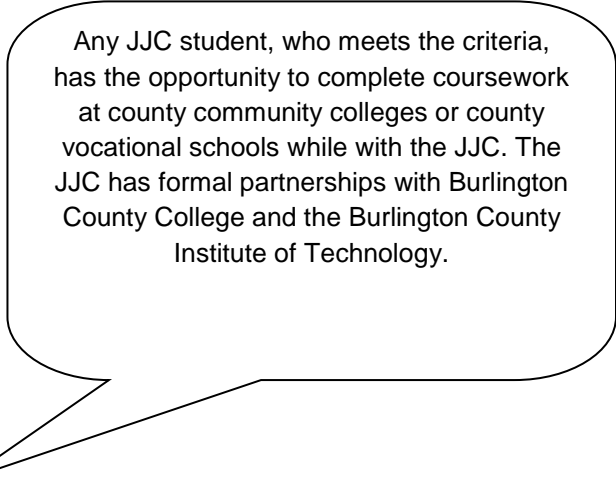
The Juvenile Justice Commission offers a myriad of educational offerings, day programs, residential facilities, secure care facilities, transitional and re-entry services, and specialized mental health services for children and youth involved in the juvenile justice system⁷.

Educational Services

JJC's Office of Education provides educational services and supports to students in all of its programs – including secure facilities, residential community homes, and day programs -- with equal access to high quality educational instruction.

Many of the children and youth who enter a JJC program come with poor school attendance records and varying abilities. Each child is tested and placed in appropriate classes depending on their skill levels. Individualized Education Plans are developed for each student coordinating with their curriculum in their local school. The academic programs offered are aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and include an array of vocational programs. Program goals include the student's successful return to school and participation in their community.

JJC's program of study is designed to lead each student to obtain a high school diploma, GED, enrollment in a community college, or a recognized credential, including an industry-based certificate, college transcript and/or associate of arts degree.



Any JJC student, who meets the criteria, has the opportunity to complete coursework at county community colleges or county vocational schools while with the JJC. The JJC has formal partnerships with Burlington County College and the Burlington County Institute of Technology.

⁷ Appendix B: *NJ JJC – Facilities Site Map*

Day Programs⁸

If your Child is placed on probation by the Courts, the Judge may determine that your Child needs more structure and supervision, but does not need to be removed from the home. In these cases, the Judge may sentence your Child to what is referred to as a “unique community-based sentencing option.” Instead of attending their local school, your Child may attend one of the JJC Day Programs for education, counseling, work readiness, life skills and community service projects during the day and return to their homes in the evening.

Day Programs	Prerequisites / Program Specifics
Elizabeth Day Program	Community-based program located in Newark Serves the children and youth of Union and Essex Counties Program can accommodate up to 20 adjudicated probationers between the ages of 13-18. Youth who have completed a RCH program may be assigned to the Elizabeth Day Program to prepare them for the transition back to the community. Average length of stay is six to eight months.
Ocean/Monmouth Day Program	Community-based program located in Forked River Serves the youth of Monmouth and Ocean Counties Program accepts youth male and female parolees and probationers between the ages of 14 to 18 who have been sentenced to probation by the Courts. Youth who have completed a RCH program may be assigned to the Ocean/Monmouth Day Program in order to prepare them for the transition back to the community. Average length of stay is five months.



⁸ Please visit <http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/index.html>. as information concerning programs and facilities is updated on a weekly basis.

Residential Community Homes⁹

Your Child may be placed in a Residential Community Home (RCH), an alternative sentencing option that is available to the family Court. If your Child has committed a less serious offense and/or on probation, but needs to be removed from the home, the Judge may sentence your Child to a RCH – a less restrictive environment for children and youth offenders. In addition, children and youth offenders who are nearing the end of their sentences and preparing to return to their local community may be placed in a RCH.

Your Child may be placed in a certain Residential Community Home based on their emotional and/or behavioral disability, such as serious substance abuse problems, serious emotional disorders and sexual disorders.

Residential Community Home (RCH)	Prerequisites / Program Specifics
Albert Elias RCH at Johnstone	Work Readiness Program / Youth must have either a high school diploma or GED prior to acceptance
Costello Prep RCH	35 adjudicated male youth between the ages of 16 and 19
D.O.V.E.S. RCH	Female children and youth with behavioral and substance abuse issues between the ages of 13 to 18
Essex Transitional Program	25 male youth between the ages of 16 to 18
Green RCH	28 male children and youth between the ages of 13 to 16
Ocean RCH	18 male youth with severe substance abuse issues between the ages of 16 and 19
Pinelands RCH	18 male youth sex offenders between the ages of 14 and 17.6 at the time of entry
Southern RCH	30 male youth between the ages of 15 and 19
Vineland Preparatory Academy	60 male youth with various needs, including those identified as substance abusers and those preparing to transition back their communities
Voorhees RCH	27 youth between the ages of 15 to 18
Warren RCH	30 youth between the ages of 16 to 18

⁹ Please visit <http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/index.html>. as information concerning programs and facilities is updated on a weekly basis.

Secure Care Facilities¹⁰

If your child commits a serious offense, the Courts may sentence them to be removed from the home and remanded to a Secure Care Facility – the most restrictive environment. Secure Care Facilities are full-care institutions and provide all services on their grounds, including year-round education, vocational programming, counseling and medical services.

Secure Care Facilities	Prerequisites / Program Specifics
New Jersey Training School (NJTS)	The largest secure care facility in NJ, serves up to 200 male children and youth, between the ages of 12 to 23 with the vast majority of residents being 16 to 18 years old. The primary focus is the rehabilitation of young offenders and the provision of care, treatment and custody for children and youth offenders committed by the Courts.
Juvenile Medium Security Facility - North Compound	Serves up to 118 male children and youth offenders with chronic and persistent mental health disorders who are also in need of secure care placement.
The Juvenile Medium Security Facility - South Compound	Serves up to 24 children and youth offenders
The Juvenile Female Secure Care and Intake Facility	Serves as the intake and secure care unit for all female children and youth offenders sentenced to terms of incarceration in NJ. Only secure facility that provides education, treatment and custody for committed juvenile females. Can accommodate up to 48 females with the primary goal of preparing them for a less restrictive environment.



Courtesy of Richard Ross Photography

¹⁰ Please visit <http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/index.html>. as information concerning programs and facilities is updated on a weekly basis

Office of Juvenile Parole and Transitional Services (JP&TS)

When your child is placed on parole or reaching their time to return home, you may be introduced to the Office of Juvenile Parole and Transitional Services (JP&TS). JP&TS is an agency which partners with community organizations to ensure that your child's re-entry back to their home and community is successful. JP&TS ensures aftercare services including treatment, accountability, protection and enforcement. In addition, JP&TS provides parole supervision to children and youth offenders and assists them as they transition back to their home and community.

Office of Specialized Needs Services

If your child has an emotional and/or behavioral challenge, they may be sentenced to one of the following facilities which are specific to your child's special needs, such as mental health, substance abuse or sexual disorder.

Mental Health & Substance Abuse Facilities	Population Served	Prerequisites / Program Specifics
Fresh Start RCH	Male	Treatment of 20 male children and youth offenders with serious emotional disorders and special needs
New Jersey Training School	Male/Female	24-bed secure treatment program for children and youth offenders with serious mental health issues
	Male	Secure substance abuse treatment program located on the grounds of the New Jersey Training School serving 52 male and youth offenders
DOVES Residential Community Home (Developing Opportunities and Values through Education and Substance Abuse Treatment)	Female	Treatment of female substance abusers. Serves a maximum of 24 residents with 2 relapse beds, for those who have previously completed the program. Length of stay varies from 4 to 12 months
Pinelands RCH*	Male	18-bed residential treatment program for male youth between the ages of 14-18 with a history of sex offenses
Ocean RCH Residential Group Center	Male	Serves male youth offenders with severe substance abuse issues between 16 and 19. Youth participate in New Freedoms Curriculum to break addiction & remain substance free.
Campus RCH Residential Group Center	Male	Serves male youth offenders with severe substance abuse issues between 16 and 19, utilizing New Freedoms Curriculum to help break addiction & remain substance free.

*JJC provides sex offense-specific treatment in all secure facilities.

Is Solitary Confinement Used In NJ's Juvenile Justice System?

Yes, New Jersey currently allows for juvenile offenders to be locked away in their rooms for up to five days as disciplinary punishment, or for much longer if safety is at risk.

The American Civil Liberties Union and a coalition of religious, social services and children's groups are asking New Jersey to ban using solitary confinement as punishment for children in state and county detention facilities. ¹¹

What is the County Youth Services Commission?

The Youth Services Commission develops programs and sentencing options for children and youth in their county. Their mission is to improve the health, safety and well-being of referred children and youth through community-based programs and services which strengthen family values, prevent delinquency and promote positive youth development.

The Youth Services Commission exists in all 21 counties in the state of New Jersey. Your County Youth Services Commissions typically meets monthly to address issues concerning youth in their individual counties. Parents and family members are encouraged to attend meetings and provide additional insight to further inform the juvenile justice system in your county.

How Does the JJC Work With My County?

The Juvenile Justice Commission:

- ✓ Serves in an oversight role in county juvenile justice issues
- ✓ Coordinates with your County Youth Services Commissions
- ✓ Establish the standards for county detention facilities and monitors their compliance
- ✓ Oversees the implementation of educational programs in county detention facilities
- ✓ Provide services to at-risk and court-involved youth

"The Youth Service Commission's plan services and fund programs across the Continuum of Care for Juvenile Justice: (Delinquency Prevention, Diversions - Juvenile/Family Crisis Intervention Units, Stationhouse Adjustments and Intake Service Conferences by the Superior Court - Family, Juvenile Intake Unit, Detention/Alternatives, Dispositions and Reentry (juveniles returning from NJ JJC programs, Parolee or Probationer)."

Cathy Mirra, YSC Administrator, Bergen County

¹¹ Star Ledger Newspaper, July 2013



Section III

Family Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System: Building Consensus & Collaboration

NJPC Philosophy of Family Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System

The New Jersey Parents Caucus believes that the process of engaging parents, family members and youth involved the juvenile justice system through ***meaningful family involvement will ultimately lead to more positive outcomes for Children and Families.***

Although the responsibility for the juvenile justice system has been given to the Juvenile Justice Commission, Courts, local law enforcement, private agencies, and other service systems, ***they cannot do it alone.*** Families and youth involved with the juvenile justice system must play a strong and active role as critical collaborators in order to strengthen the system to reduce juvenile delinquency and maintain public safety throughout our State.



While families are uniquely poised to create systemic change, we first must become educated on the systems that serve our children and families, value and recognize our expertise as parents regardless of the circumstances, be prepared to work with professionals in a collaborative manner and understand that we know our Children best. As parents, caregivers and family members, we are most familiar with our Child's:

- Treatment history
- Medication
- Strengths & needs
- Pattern of responding to people
- Culture
- Educational History
- Transition and support services essential for successful reentry
- History, i.e. learning disabilities, etc.
- Capacity to participate in process and services
- Environment into which the Child will transition back after release

Although families have a significant impact and powerful influence over their children and are the greatest source of prevention and intervention of juvenile delinquency, they continue to be the missing dynamic in juvenile justice programs.

With the goal of maintaining public safety, reducing delinquency rates, reducing recidivism and building stronger communities, parents and family members must be given the opportunity to play a strong and active role in the conceptualization, development and delivery of services for their children on all levels.

What can I do as a Parent, Caregiver or Family Member?

- Educate yourselves on the systems that serve your family, including juvenile justice, mental health, special education, child welfare, etc.
- Recognize that you may have to educate juvenile justice professionals on how the system impacts your Child, family and ultimately, the services and treatment that your Child receives
- Work with juvenile justice professionals to help craft treatment plans for your Child, or present your plan to them for review

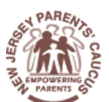
- Educate juvenile justice stakeholders on the experience of children and families involved in the juvenile justice system
- Recognize that you may have to educate professionals on your family's culture
- Educate juvenile justice professionals on family and youth involvement
- Work with local Courts who are still considering joining the JDAI initiative
- Work with current JDAI sites to impress upon them the importance of having family engagement specialists in their county
- Work with state and local legislators to educate them on the juvenile system and its impact on your Child and family
- Create focus groups throughout the state to ensure parent and youth involvement on all levels
- Create support groups throughout the State, specific to your Child's placement in the juvenile justice system or to your Child's disability, community, county, etc.
- Serve on advisory boards, commissions, etc. within the juvenile justice system and other systems which serve your Child and family
- Work with professionals to ensure cultural and linguistic competency
- Empower other families in your individual communities whose children are involved in the juvenile justice system



Section IV

Resources For Families

Title	Source
NJ Office of the Attorney General: Guidelines for Stationhouse Adjustment of Juvenile Delinquency Offenses	http://www.nj.gov/lps/dcj/agguide/directives/directives_2005/dir-2005-4-station-guide.pdf
NJ Judiciary/Office of the Courts: Juvenile Delinquency Proceedings and Your Child: A Guide for Parents and Guardians	https://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/prose/11358_juv_delq_proc_child.pdf
NJ Judiciary/Office of the Courts	http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/index.html
NJ Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC)	http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/index.html or www.njjjc.com
NJ JJC - Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)	http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/localized_programs_jdai.html
NJ JJC – Gang Awareness	http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/gangs.html
NJ JJC – “Moving Through the System” Flowchart - Appendix A	http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/thru_system.htm
NJ JJC – Facilities Site Map – Appendix B	http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/pdf/jjc_print_statemap.pdf
NJ JJC - The Family Court / Court Process	http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/fam_court_process.htm
NJ JJC – Classification & Placement: Justice-Involved Youth	http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/classification.htm
NJ JJC Office of Education	http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/offices_education.htm
NJ JJC Understanding Expungement & its Benefits	www.njcourts.com/prose
NJ Division on Criminal Justice	http://www.nj.gov/oag/dcj/index.html
NJ Youth Services Commission	http://www.nj.gov/oag/jjc/localized_programs_ysc.html
NJ Office of the Public Defender	http://www.state.nj.us/defender/
NJ Division on Civil Rights	http://www.nj.gov/oag/dcr/index.html
Rutgers Children's Justice Clinic	https://camlaw.rutgers.edu/childrens-justice-clinic
American Civil Liberties Union	http://www.aclu-nj.org
Legal Services of NJ	http://www.lsnj.org/
Disability Rights of New Jersey	http://drnj.org/
Education Law Center	http://www.edlawcenter.org/



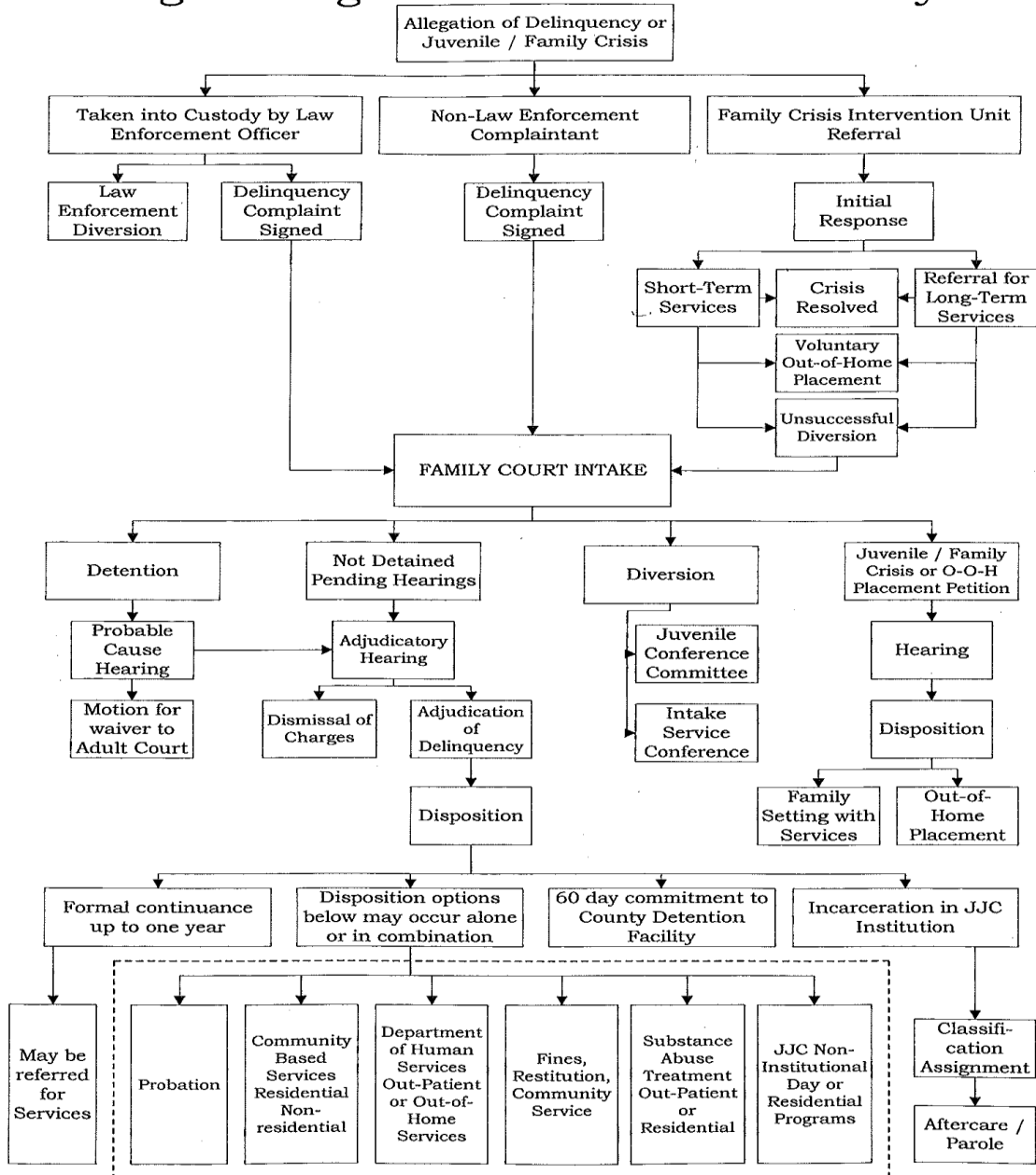
Monmouth County Family Guide to Juvenile Justice	http://www.visitmonmouth.com/documents/41/FamilyGuideToJuvenileJustice2009.pdf
Essex County Family Guide to Juvenile Justice	http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/essex/family/FamilyGuide_to_JuvenileJustice_Handbook.pdf
NJ DCF Office of Advocacy	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/about/divisions/oa/
NJ DCF Children's System of Care (CSOC)	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/families/csc/ ; http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/Childdata/csc/
NJ CSOC Substance Abuse Treatment Providers	http://www.performcarenj.org/pdf/provider/substance/substance-use-provider-list.pdf
Perform Care	http://www.performcarenj.org/
CIACC - Children's Interagency Coordinating Councils	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/providers/resources/interagency/
NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities	https://www.njcdd.org/
NJ Domestic Violence Services	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/women/domestic/
NJ Department of Education	http://www.state.nj.us/education/
NJ Division of Child Protection & Permanency (formerly DYFS)	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/about/divisions/dcpp/
NJ Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/about/divisions/iaiu/
NJ Kinship Navigator Program	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/families/support/kinship/
NJ Division of Family & Community Partnerships	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/about/divisions/dfcp/
NJ Family Success Centers	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/families/support/success/
NJ DCF Office of Adolescent Services	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/about/divisions/oas/
NJ Department of Human Services	http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/
NJ 2 nd Floor Youth Helpline	www.2ndfloor.org
NJ Services for Pregnant & Parenting Youth	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/adolescent/parenting/
New Jersey Parents Caucus	http://www.njparentscaucus.org
Renewed Minds	http://www.renewedmindsdcinc.com
Families Anonymous	https://www.familiesanonymous.org/
SPAN	http://www.spanadvocacy.org
Family Support Organizations	http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/families/support/support/
SAMHSA: Keeping Your Teens Drug-Free: A Family Guide	http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Keeping-Your-Teens-Drug-Free-A-Family-Guide/PHD1114
OJJDP Family Listening Sessions	http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/241379.pdf



Section V

Appendix A – NJ JJC Moving Through the Juvenile Justice System

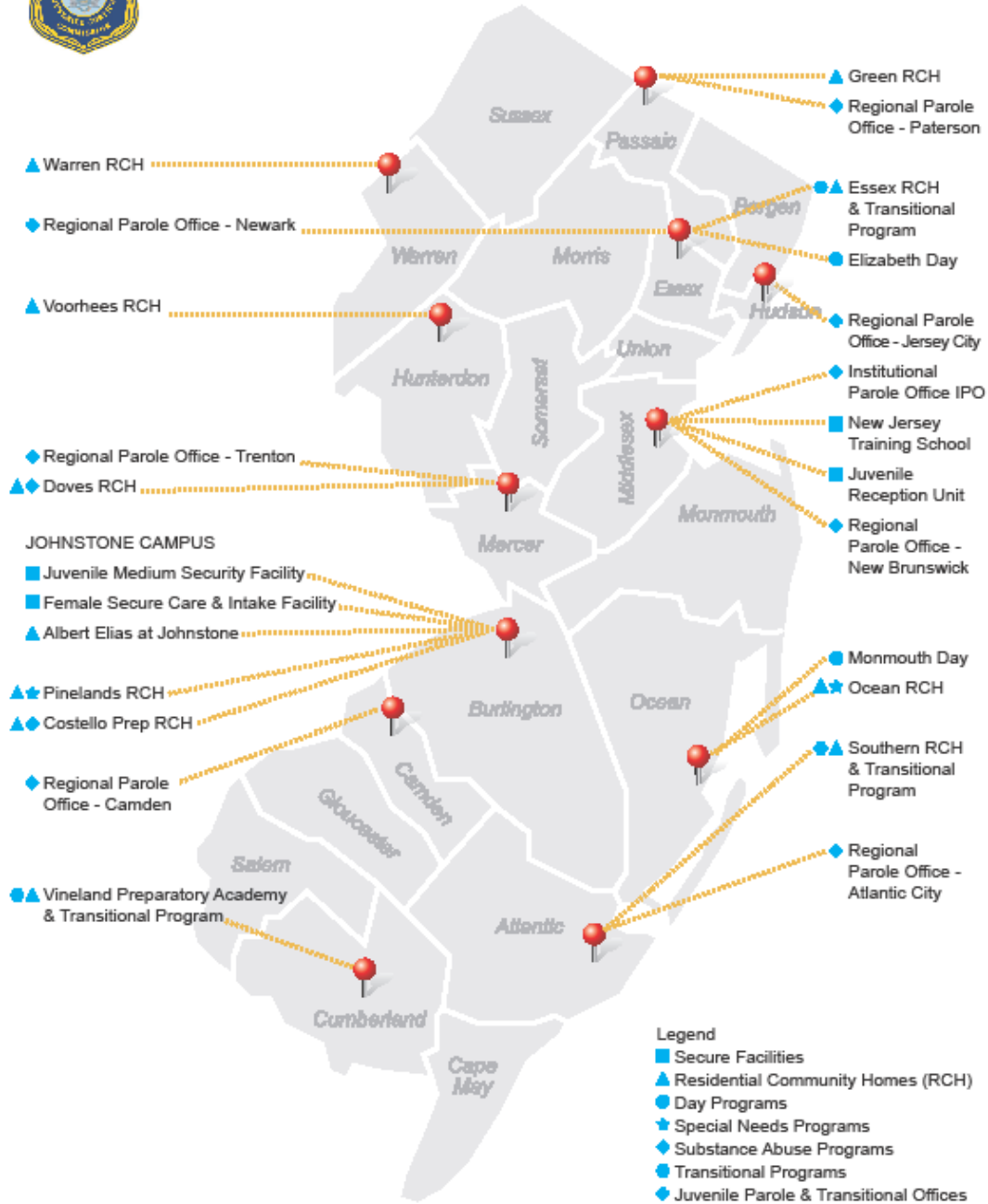
Moving Through The Juvenile Justice System




Appendix B – NJ JJC Facilities Site Map



Juvenile Justice Commission



Appendix C – NJ Juvenile Delinquency Complaint

 COMPLAINT – JUVENILE DELINQUENCY Chancery Division, Family Part County of _____			
The State of New Jersey in the interest of:		Docket number: FJ- _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ - _____	
Mailing address: (Street)		Juv/Party ID number:	
City, state and zip code:		Name and address of school (and grade) or employer:	
Residing in: (township or municipality)	Phone:	Race:	Height:
Age:	Date of birth:	Sex:	Weight:
AKA:		Color of eyes:	
		Color of hair:	
1. The parent(s) or guardian of the above named juvenile are: (first name, last name)			
Address:		Phone:	Relationship:
2. If the above named juvenile is not residing with parent or guardian, he/she is residing with: (name)			
Address:		Phone:	Relationship:
Charge No.:		The undersigned complainant: (first name, last name)	
Of: (identify department or agency)		Address:	
says: the above named juvenile is alleged, upon <input type="checkbox"/> personal knowledge, <input type="checkbox"/> information supplied by others, to be delinquent in that, on or about _____ / _____ / _____ at _____ a.m. / p.m. the above named juvenile did: [Set forth facts regarding time, manner, place and the essential elements of the alleged act.]			
Co-Defendant(s) Name, Address and Phone No.:			
Witness(es) Name, Address, and Phone No.:			
Violation of (statutory citation and title):			Degree:
<small>I certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.</small>			
Signature of Complainant/Date:		Officer and Department filing police report	
Charge No.:		The undersigned complainant: (first name, last name)	
Of: (identify department or agency)		Address:	
says: the above named juvenile is alleged, upon <input type="checkbox"/> personal knowledge, <input type="checkbox"/> information supplied by others, to be delinquent in that, on or about _____ / _____ / _____ at _____ a.m. / p.m. the above named juvenile did: [Set forth facts regarding time, manner, place and the essential elements of the alleged act.]			
Co-Defendant(s) Name, Address and Phone No.:			
Witness(es) Name, Address, and Phone No.:			
Violation of (statutory citation and title):			Degree:
<small>I certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.</small>			
Signature of Complainant/Date:		Officer and Department filing police report	

Revised Form Promulgated by Directive #10-09 (09/28/2009), CN: 10207-English (JD-01)

page 1 of 1



Appendix D – County Superior Court/Family Division Contact Information¹²

County	Family Division/Superior Court	Juvenile Intake Unit	Ombudsman
Atlantic	609-594-3446	609-594-3318 or 3305	609-594-3346
Bergen	201-527-2502	201-527-2322	201-527-2263
Burlington	609-518-2691	609-518-2661	609-518-2530
Camden	856-379-2200 x2204	856-379-2200 x3651	856-379-2238
Cape May	609-463-6600	609-463-6612	609-594-3346
Cumberland	856-453-4580	856-453-4558	856-453-4538
Essex	973-693-6667	973-693-6775	973-693-5728
Gloucester	856-686-7553	856-686-7430	856-453-4538
Hudson	201-795-6779	201-795-6745	201-217-5399
Hunterdon	908-237-5919	908-237-5922	908-203-6131
Mercer	609-571-4390	609-571-4389 or 4379	609-571-4205
Middlesex	732-519-3266	732-519-3266	732-519-3344
Monmouth	732-677-4050	732-677-4096	732-677-4209
Morris	973-656-4367	973-656-4308	973-656-3969
Ocean	732-929-2042	732-929-4717	732-288-7212
Passaic	973-247-8458	973-247-8506	973-247-8651
Salem	856-935-7510	856-935-7510 x8574	856-453-4538
Somerset	908-231-7600	908-231-7637	908-203-6131
Sussex	973-579-0630	973-579-0616	973-656-3969
Union	908-659-5800	908-659-5860	908-659-4644
Warren	908-475-6167	908-475-6167	908-203-6131

¹² New Jersey Judiciary, *Juvenile Delinquency Proceedings and Your Child*

