

A Family Guide to Juvenile Justice

Monmouth County

A Handbook for Families
2006



Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative
Youth Services Commission of Monmouth County

Juvenile Detention Alternatives

NEXT COURT DATES/TIMES: _____

JUDGE: _____

ATTORNEY NAME: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

___ Detention Alternatives Coordinator: _____

phone: _____

___ Detention Alternatives contact: _____ phone: _____

___ Detention Alternatives contact: _____ phone: _____

___ Probation officer: _____ phone: _____

___ Other Court Contact _____ phone: _____

___ Other Court Contact _____ phone: _____

___ Youth Case Manager: _____ phone: _____

___ CMO Care Manager: _____ phone: _____

___ DYFS Worker: _____ phone: _____

___ Monmouth Day Program phone: _____

___ DHS School phone: _____

___ Other: _____ phone: _____

___ Other: _____ phone: _____

___ Other: _____ phone: _____

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This is intended to serve as a general guide about the local juvenile justice process and resources that may be of assistance. It is not intended as legal advice and it may not address every question or be applicable to every individual circumstance.

How the Juvenile Justice System Works

1. WHY IS MY CHILD IN THE JUVENILE COURT SYSTEM?

Your child has had a formal complaint signed against him/her and charged with "delinquency". The complaint describes the facts that your child allegedly committed and the violation of the law that he/she is being charged with. You will receive a copy of the complaint.

- If your child is required to have an attorney, you will be required to retain one. If you can not afford to do so, you will need to fill out a 5-A application to determine if you are eligible for a Public Defender. However, if you do not qualify for a Public Defender, you must hire a private attorney.

2. WHAT IS JUVENILE DELINQUENCY?

A juvenile is a person under the age of 18. "Delinquency" is an act that would be a crime, an offense or a violation, if the act had been committed by an adult. When a juvenile commits one of these acts, it is called "delinquency". A juvenile who violates a court order commits an act of delinquency.

3. WHAT IS STATION HOUSE ADJUSTMENT

Station House Adjustment allows police officers to resolve minor disputes without the need to file a complaint with the court. A police officer can ask the parent, guardian, or caregiver of the juvenile, and the victim, if willing, to come to the station house to discuss the offense. The juvenile and the parent or guardian or caregiver is asked to assure the officer that the juvenile will not commit any future offenses. The police officer may refer a child to a variety of services, and, if property has been stolen or damaged, require the juvenile to make restitution in some form. Sometimes community service and written essays are required.

Who is Eligible for a Station House Adjustment?

Any Youth who has been arrested for an ordinance violation or petty disorderly persons offense may be eligible, and in some cases youth with no prior record may be considered even with a fourth degree offense. Youth with more serious charges, or that are on probation, or have charges already filed are not eligible for Station House Adjustment.

4. WHO SIGNS JUVENILE DELINQUENCY COMPLAINTS?

Most juvenile complaints are signed by the police either based on personal knowledge or information supplied by others. Complaints may also be signed by school officials and/or victims of crimes. In cases of Contempt of Court or Violations of Probation, the complaint is signed by the juvenile's Probation Officer.

5. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

A decision is made by the Court as to whether the complaint will be diverted (Please see 6A and 6B below) or be heard by a Juvenile Referee or a Superior Court Judge (Please see 6C & 6Dbelow). The decision as to whether to divert or refer to court is based on the nature of the offense, age of the juvenile, prior record, willingness of parties to cooperate and victim input.

6. WHAT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE COURT FOR HANDLING THE CASE?

A. Juvenile Conference Committee - A Juvenile Conference Committee is a trained group of citizens that volunteer to participate on a panel. All members of the panel are appointed by the Presiding Judge of the Family Division. This volunteer panel acts as an arm of the Court. The parent, the juvenile and the complainant/victim are invited to voluntarily discuss with the Committee the offense and other related factors. The committee does not have the authority to determine guilt or innocence. This is an informal discussion of the events and all parties must be in agreement with the handling of the case. The Committee considers the facts and then makes a recommendation for a resolution that aids in the juvenile's rehabilitation. A resolution will be proposed which may include conditions such as curfew, counseling, evaluation, community service, restitution or any recommendation which will aid in the juvenile's rehabilitation. If all participants (the parent, the juvenile, the complainant/victim and the Juvenile Conference Committee) agree on the proposed recommendation, an agreement is signed which will include a set time frame for completion of any conditions imposed.

B. Intake Services Conference - The Intake Service Conference is conducted by a Probation Officer in Family Court and operates in the same manner as the Juvenile Conference Committee, as to an informal agreement recommended by the Probation Officer hearing the case which may or may not include certain conditions to be completed during a specific time frame.

C. Informal/Juvenile Referee or Counsel Non-Mandatory Court - The Juvenile Referee is a person whose qualifications have been approved by the Supreme Court. This person may be a Judge or a Hearing Officer designated to oversee this informal proceeding. He/she will make a recommendation to the Juvenile Superior Court Judge regarding the conditions he/she feels are appropriate to set for your child. If you disagree with the Juvenile Referee, you must advise the Referee at the end of your hearing and the matter can be moved up and heard by a Judge at a Formal Court Hearing. If there is a dispute of the facts, at a Formal Court Hearing, the Judge will decide the case. If the Judge finds your child guilty, the Judge will impose a disposition. If you disagree with the Judge, you may file an appeal within 45 days.

D. Formal or Counsel Mandatory Court - Only a Judge may preside over a Formal Case. Your child must be represented by an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, you will need to fill out a Public Defender or 5-A application. Your child will be required to plead guilty or not guilty. If your child pleads not guilty, a trial will be scheduled. The Judge will make the final decision on whether your child is guilty or not guilty. If your child is found guilty, the Judge will also make a determination regarding the disposition or consequences. If you disagree with the Judge's decision, you may file an appeal within 45 days.

7. MUST MY CHILD HAVE A LAWYER?

You are always allowed to hire an attorney to represent your child at any Court appearance. However, in all Formal and Counsel Mandatory Court proceedings, your child must have an attorney. Other complaints (Please see 6A and 6C) do not require that an attorney be present. If there is a threat of incarceration, the Court will require that your child be represented by an attorney.

8. WHEN CAN MY CHILD BE DETAINED?

A child can be detained upon the signing of a complaint under appropriate circumstances. In determining whether detention is appropriate, the following factors must be considered: the health, safety and welfare of the juvenile, the nature and circumstances of the offense, the age of the juvenile, the juvenile's ties to the community, the juvenile's record of prior adjudications, if any, and the juvenile's record of appearance or nonappearance at previous Court proceedings.

9. WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD IS DETAINED?

An initial detention hearing must be held no later than the morning following the child's placement in the detention facility. At the initial detention hearing, the first decision about releasing your child is made by a Judge. Factors include the health, safety and welfare of the juvenile, the physical safety of persons' property and the community as well as the need to secure the presence of the juvenile at future court proceedings. A parent is expected to be at all hearings involving their child.

10. WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD IS NOT RELEASED?

If the juvenile is not represented by an attorney at the initial detention hearing and if the Court continues the child's detention after the hearing, the Court shall schedule a second detention hearing called a Probable Cause hearing, to be held within two court days. At that time the child must be represented by an attorney.

Probable Cause means the prosecutor must present enough evidence to prove to the Judge that the offense did happen and that there is "reason" to believe that your child was the one who committed this offense. If the Court is satisfied, the complaint will be listed for a hearing on the charges.

The Judge will then decide whether to continue holding your child in detention. A detention review hearing with counsel must be held within 14 court days of the prior detention hearing. Detention review hearings shall be held thereafter at intervals not to exceed 21 court days.

11. WHAT ARE DETENTION ALTERNATIVES?

Detention Alternatives are options available to the Judge when deciding whether to detain your child in the Youth Detention Center. A Detention Alternative program allows for your child to be supervised within the community while charges are pending before the court. The primary goal of a detention alternative program is to provide supervision and ensure that youth appear in court and do not commit any new offenses. If your child is placed on a detention alternative, he or she will be supervised by the Detention Alternative Coordinator and will be required to follow specific guidelines as set forth in the program description. Non-compliance with a detention alternative program will result in your child being placed in the Youth Detention Center.

Substance Abuse Issues

Youth in our community are using alcohol and other substances such as marijuana, cocaine and heroin at increasing rates. Use of these substances often results in contact with the police or legal system, either due to possession of the substances, or other behaviors related to obtaining, buying or selling substances.

You may be concerned that your child is just beginning to develop a problem with alcohol or substances, or you already may be certain that they have a serious substance use problem. If so, you and your child need help. No one can confront substance abuse alone.

Counseling for substance abuse issues can be done individually, in groups, and with the whole family. At times, participating in a program several times a week, or going away to a residential rehabilitation program may be needed. In addition, there are free support groups in the community, called "12 Step meetings" for youth as well as their families, which include Alcoholics Anonymous, Families Anonymous, and Narcotics Anonymous.

If you suspect your child is using substances, it is important you take the first step and take your child for evaluation by a qualified substance abuse professional. With this professional, you will be able to decide what type of professional services to seek, and develop a plan to intervene in ways that will be most effective.

Recognize some signs of substance use, such as:

- changes in friends, especially if your child is hanging out with others you know or suspect use substances
- staying out late, especially if you don't know where your child is
- avoiding contact with family after being out with friends
- missing school or important family events
- money or valuables missing
- odd behaviors and appearance

Substance Abuse Resources

- **Al-Anon, Alateen** (support groups for family members): **973-744-8686**
- **Alcoholics Anonymous** (support groups): **800-245-1377**
- **Alliances to Prevent Alcoholism and Drug Abuse** **732-431-6451**
- **Community YMCA Family Services** (outpatient therapy): **732-290-9040**
- **CPC Behavioral Healthcare, ACCESS** (outpatient therapy):
732-842-2000, X4221
- **Crossroads at Croyden Hall:** **732-290-9040**
- **Freehold Community Counseling Services** (outpatient): **732-409-6260**
- **Families Anonymous** (support groups): **732-291-1467**
- **Mercy Center** (Asbury Park): **732-774-9397**
- **NJ Substance Abuse Hotline** (referrals): **800-322-5525**
- **Narcotics Anonymous** (support groups): **800-992-0401**
- **New Hope Foundation** (inpatient): **732-946-3030**
(outpatient): **732-308-0113**
- **Ocean Township Community Services** (outpatient): **732-531-2600**
- **Prevention First** **732-663-1800**
- **Project Start** **732-842-2000 x4221**
- **Riverview Adolescent Intensive Outpatient Program**
Addiction Recovery Services **732-450-2900**
- **Wall Township Youth Center** (outpatient): **732-681-1375**

Domestic Violence Issues

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior used to maintain control or assert power over an intimate partner (spouse, former spouse, co-parent, or dating partner), a parent or a present or former household member.

Abusive behaviors are not limited to physical violence such as punching or kicking, they also include psychological, verbal, sexual and economic abuse and THEY AFFECT THE ENTIRE FAMILY.

EXAMPLES OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS INCLUDE:

Physical: Hitting, slapping, pushing, biting, punching, choking and restraining.

Psychological:

- Making partner feel insecure: attacks on self esteem, blaming, criticizing, manipulation, making partner feel crazy, humiliating, & creating feelings of guilt.
- Intimidation: threatening looks or behavior, throwing objects, breaking things, & punching walls, playing on partners fears.
- Isolation: stopping the person from seeing friends and family, sabotaging relationships, pressuring partner into giving up activities or work, & keeping tabs on partner.

Verbal: cursing, swearing, yelling, put downs, name calling, and criticizing thoughts and feelings.

Sexual: Any non-consenting sexual act or behavior, unwanted sexual contact, comments or gesturing within a relationship, manipulating a partner into doing something sexual they do not feel comfortable with.

Economic: Controlling all finances, preventing partner from getting a job.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

Is widespread-one in four women report being sexually or physically assaulted by a spouse, cohabiting partner or date at some point in their lifetime, according to the National Violence Against Women Survey.

Doesn't Discriminate-Domestic violence occurs in people from every ethnic background, educational level, income, age, race and religion regardless of marital status or gender preference.

Rekurs and Escalates over time.

Is all Encompassing it affects the work, school, home and social life of every member of the family.

Domestic Violence Resources

- 180 Turning Lives Around 732-264-4111
- Domestic Violence Hotline (24 hours) 1-888-843-9262
- Sexual Assault/Rape Hotline (24 hours) 1-888-264-RAPE
- 2nd Floor Youth Helpline 1-888-222-2228
- Amanda's Easel 732-787-6503
- Division of Youth and Family Services 1-877-652-2873
- Keansburg Resource Network 732-495-8222
- Long Branch Concordance 732-571-1670
- Parents Anonymous 1-800-843-5435
- FACES Youth Support Line 1-877-NJFACES

Mental Health Issues

Youth getting in trouble with the police or legal system may have unrecognized or untreated behavioral health issues that are contributing to their difficulty staying out of trouble. Issues may include: Attention Deficit Disorder and difficulties with impulse control; depression and other issues with mood; or anxiety or reactions to serious or traumatic events. For some youth, getting in legal trouble can bring a child or family's personal issues to the surface, and getting help to cope with the situation may be needed to prevent further problems.

You might need behavioral healthcare assistance if you notice:

- your child frequently gets into arguments, has difficulty paying attention or staying focused, repeatedly gets in trouble in school for distracting others, and often doesn't complete assignments.
- your child is irritable, feels hopeless, has lost interest in their usual activities, is withdrawing from family and friends, and has difficulty maintaining a regular sleep schedule.
- your child has been through a very distressing event such as the loss of a close family member or friend or was a witness or victim of violence or assault, and experiences changes in their mood, concentration, or sleep patterns after this event.
- your child has difficulty managing their anger; and often seems to have conflict with peers or dealing with conflict within the family.

Many resources are available and listed in this guide to assist you in recognizing, understanding, and getting help. The first step is a comprehensive evaluation and deciding with a behavioral healthcare provider what is the best type of help for your child. Most services are covered by medicaid or private insurance, and sliding scales for payment (based on proof of income) are available when needed. Individual or family counseling, group counseling, and evaluation by a medical doctor (Psychiatrist) may be needed to help. In addition, support groups and case management programs are available in the community to help coordinate services.

Any parent, guardian or caretaker can call 1-877-652-7624 to connect with the NJ Division of Child Behavioral Health Services and ask that a needs assessment be done for their child. The assessment will determine what kind of care your child may need. You could be connected directly to services in your community or, if issues are more challenging, a case manager may be assigned to work with your child and family. The case manager will help you come up with plans to address your concerns.

If your child is at risk for hospitalization or not being able to remain in your home, you can ask for “Children’s Mobile Response” to come to your home to help calm the crisis and help your child remain stable at home. (see the resource section on the next page for contact information)

Please keep in mind that youth who are at immediate risk for harming themselves or others should be taken to the hospital for emergency screening.

It is important that if a doctor prescribes medication for your child that you be certain it is taken. Medication can often help the situation improve faster.

Emotional/Behavioral Health Resources

Information and Referral

- If you are covered by insurance, call your insurance company for a referral to a mental health provider in your area.
- Mental Health Association of Monmouth County 732-542-6422
- Monmouth County Division of Mental Health 732-431-7200
- New Jersey Division of Child Behavioral Health 1-877-652-7624
(Contracted Systems Administrator - Value Options)
- Keansburg Resource Network 732-495-8222
- Long Branch Concordance 732-571-1670

Support

- 2nd Floor Helpline (youth support) 1-888-222-2228
- FACES (youth support) 1-877-NJFACES
- Families Anonymous (support groups) 732-291-1467
- Family Based Services Association 732-571-3272
(parent support groups)
- Youth Partnership 732-571-3272

(See section on Support for additional support resources)

Outpatient Services

- Catholic Charities 732-747-9660
- Community YMCA Family Services 732-290-9040
- CPC Behavioral Healthcare, ACCESS office 732-842-2000, ext 4221
- Family and Children's Services 732-222-9111

- Jersey Shore Behavioral Health Services 732-643-4363
Children's Partial Hospitalization Program: 732-869-2784
- Jewish Family and Children's Services 732-774-6886
- Mental Health Association of Monmouth County 732-542-6422
- Mercy Center (Asbury Park residents) 732-774-9397
- Monmouth Medical Center, Pollak Clinic 732-923-6500
- Riverview Medical Center Behavioral Health 732-530-2900

If there is a crisis:

- Call 911 If an emergency
- Call Monmouth Medical Center Crisis/Emergency Screening for
Psychiatric Hospitalization for Children: 732-923-6999
or
- Take child to local emergency room
 - CentraState (emergency/crisis only): 732-780-6023
 - Jersey Shore Behavioral Health Crisis: 732-776-4555
 - Riverview Medical Center Crisis Helpline: 732-219-5325
- Call Children's Mobile Response and Stabilization to preserve a child's
living arrangement &/or prevent hospitalization: 1-877-652-7624
- Call Mental Health Association/Family Crisis Intervention Unit if child
has a history of legal trouble and current behavioral problems
732-542-2444
or after 5 p.m. call 732-431-7280

Health Issues

Most teenagers are very healthy, but if you or your child are worried about their health, there are resources.

Every youth should have a health practitioner who knows them. This could be a pediatrician, a nurse practitioner, a family doctor, a primary care center or a clinic. Regular routine physicals and health screenings can help the health practitioner know your child.

You should pay attention to your child's healthcare:

- If he or she doesn't have a practitioner who knows them
- If your child hasn't seen a doctor for a routine physical in one year
- If your child has been diagnosed with a chronic illness such as diabetes, asthma, or seizure disorder and does not have follow-up appointments
- If your child needs immunizations
- If your child experiences any adverse physical symptom which can include:
 1. nutritional imbalances (underweight, overweight, eating disorders)
 - 2.. frequent headaches
 3. vomiting, diarrhea, frequent stomach aches
 4. fever
 5. chronic fatigue or tiredness
 6. pain that doesn't go away
 7. anything else that worries you or your child
- If you suspect that your child is sexually active, may have a sexually transmitted disease, or may be having unprotected sex
- If your child may need birth control
- If your child may be pregnant

Many health resources are available to you and your child. Most important is to find a provider who maintains a current health history as well as being available for preventative and acute care service. Most services are

covered by Medicaid or private insurance and sliding scales based on income (proof of income may be required.)

A list of private doctors can be obtained from your local hospital or call your health insurance provider for a list of doctors in your area.

Health Resources

Health Centers- Federally Qualified (which means they are free or sliding scale)

- **VNA of Central Jersey - Community Health Center of Asbury Park**
572 Cookman Avenue, Asbury Park, NJ, 07712 **732-774-6333**
- **VNA of Central Jersey - Keyport Primary Care Center**
35 Broad Street, Keyport, NJ, 07735 **732-888-4149**
- **VNA of Central Jersey - Red Bank Primary Care**
176 Riverside Drive, Red Bank, NJ, 07701 **732-219-6620**
- **Monmouth Family Health Center Inc.**
270 Broadway, Long Branch, NJ 07740 **732-923-7100**

Free care to uninsured

- **Parker Family Health Center**
21 Shrewsbury Avenue, Red Bank, NJ, 07701 **732-212-0777**
- **Paul McGuire Family Health Center**
133 Throckmorton Street, Freehold, NJ 07728 **732-409-0133**

Sexual Health/Pregnancy

- **Planned Parenthood of Central NJ** (Medicaid, Family Care, insurance and sliding scale - covers all of Monmouth) **732-842-9300**

Hospital Clinics

- **Monmouth Medical Center, Long Branch**
Family Health Center - **732-923-7100**
- **CentraState Medical Center, Freehold**
Family Medicine Center - **732-294-2540**
- **Riverview Medical Center, Red Bank**
Family Health Clinic - **732-530-2296**
- **Bayshore Community Hospital, Holmdel**
Outpatient Services - **732-739-5950**

Education Issues

One factor which is crucial to your child's ability to succeed in school is your involvement. The purpose of this section in the Handbook is to assist families in finding the right educational resources for their children.

There is no reason that you must tell the school that your child was arrested or was in Detention. Unless it affects your child's education, you may keep it private. If you decide to let the school know, the place to start is your child's Guidance Counselor. He or she will help you and your child plan what to do with school.

Your child should be able to go back school. If not, you should be given a good reason why not, and another plan should be made immediately.

Under New Jersey Statute 18A-37-8, any pupil that is removed from the regular education program shall be placed in an alternative education program. If placement in an alternative education program is not available, the student should be provided home instruction or other suitable facilities and programs until placement is available.

School districts in NJ have control over the educational programs which are offered to students. If your child is participating in any Detention Alternative program and can't attend school, the School District can use a variety of educational programs to meet the student's current grade requirements.

For Classified Students

If your child is classified, you should have received a booklet called "PRISE" (Parental Rights In Special Education). This booklet outlines all of the steps you can take in working with the staff in the school, your district, and the State. Request this booklet if you don't have it.

For classified students, educational strategies may include placement in an Alternative School, Home Tutoring, the New Jersey Virtual High School (an on-line option) or other district program offering. The ultimate goal of these alternative placements is to allow your child to continue with their educational program.

If the school is not giving you answers or you don't have confidence in the answers, you can take these steps:

- If your child has a Child Study Team case manager, call him or her
- Call the Child Study Team Supervisor if you are not satisfied
- Call the Principal if you are still not satisfied
- Call the Superintendent if you are still not satisfied

If you need the contact name and phone number of your local District, contact the Monmouth County Superintendent of Schools' office in Freehold at 732-431-7810 or visit the website at www.co.monmouth.nj.us/education.

Education Resources

Help From Outside the School District

Outside help is available if you feel frustrated after you have taken the steps above. Here are some contacts

- **The Monmouth County Superintendent of Schools** **732-431-7810**
This office mediates between parents and the school district. They can advise you on how to request formal mediation from the school district. They can inform you on how to make a complaint, or give you information on Due Process.

Parent Peer Support:

- **Statewide Parent Advocacy Network** **1-800-654-SPAN**
www.spannj.org
This group can help you understand your child's educational rights
- **Family Based Services Association of NJ** **732-571-3272**
Parent-run organization offering parent-to-parent support groups and education advocacy for families raising children with emotional or behavioral challenges

Professional Advocates:

- **Community Health Law Project** **732-502-0059**
Legal advocacy (non-criminal) for low income families and individuals that are physically or emotionally challenged
- **The Association for Children of NJ (ACNJ)** **973-643-3876**
This group has school law attorneys on staff
- **The Education Law Center** **973-624-1815**
This group is expert on education law

Support

Support is necessary for everyone. We all need it. We especially need support during times of stress or when we or the people we love are involved in a crisis.

Reaching out for support is sometimes difficult to do. We often think we should be able to handle a difficult situation on our own - that we will appear weak or ineffectual if we ask for help or even a listening ear. Sometimes we wonder what people will think of us or whether we will be judged. At other times we may blame ourselves and decide to tough it out all alone.

No matter what you are going through, you are not alone. There are always many others in the same situation or that have gone through the same thing you are facing right now.

Finding the right support for you in a time of difficulty is easier than you might think. Supportive individuals and organizations are all around you.

- Your church or religious group
- Your school counselor or School-based Youth Services
- Your local counseling or community center
- Your friends and neighbors
- Your extended family network
- Help line and support groups
- Community Collaboratives
 - Keansburg Resource Network
 - Long Branch Concordance

All of these organizations can offer support through direct counseling, one-to-one conversations, groups, family peer contact, information and referral or activities.

Support Resources

- **Al-Anon (support for family members of alcoholics)** **973-744-8686**
www.nj-al-anon.org
- **Alateen (support for teens with alcoholism in family)** **973-744-8686**
www.nj-al-anon.org

- **Second Floor**
The Monmouth County Youth Helpline **1-888-222-2228**
- **FACES - For All Children Experiencing Stress** **1-877-NJFACES**
Supervised chat rooms, message boards, referrals & information on activities
- **Families Anonymous** **1-800-736-9805**
Support groups for relatives and friends of those who have alcohol, drug or behavior problems
- **Family-Based Services Association of NJ** **732-571-3272**
For families of children with emotional or behavioral challenges
Parent-run organization offering parent-to-parent support groups
- **Family and Children's Services** **732-222-9111**
- **Hispanic Affairs and Resource Center** **732-774-3282**
- **Jewish Family and Children's Service** **732-774-6886**
- **Mental Health Association of Monmouth** **732-542-6422**
- **Mercy Center (Asbury Park)** **732-774-9397**
- **Monmouth County Department of Human Services** **732-308-3770**
Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse **732-431-6451**
Division of Employment and Training **732-747-2282**
Division of Mental Health **732-431-7200**
Division of Social Services **732-431-6000**
- **New Jersey 211 First Call for Help** **211**
- **New Jersey Division of Child Behavioral Health Services** **1-877-652-7624**
- **New Jersey Self-Help Clearinghouse** **1-800-367-6274**
Maintains a database of over 4,500 self-help groups statewide
- **Parents Anonymous of New Jersey - 24 Hour Stressline** **1-800-843-5437**
Confidential peer support groups around child abuse and neglect
- **Parents Support Group of New Jersey** **973-736-3344**
Confidential support groups for parents around substance abuse
- **Statewide Parents Advocacy Network (SPAN)** **1-800-654-SPAN**
- **Tough Love International** **1-800-333-1069**

If Things Go Wrong

As a parent having a child involved within the court system, it is not unusual for you and your child to feel overwhelmed. It is important to begin by looking over your court papers and understanding what is expected of you and your child.

Over time, many of our children forget the time when they were in front of the Judge and begin to create their own rules. This is when parental involvement becomes most important. If your child does begin to act out, you want to try to talk to them in a calm, clear manner to try to find out what may be going on. Tell them that you are trying to understand them and want to help them through these tough times. Don't threaten or yell at them because this could only make the situation worse. If this doesn't work, you could use the court system to your advantage. For example, if your child is involved with a Detention Alternatives Program then call the Detention Alternatives Coordinator; if your child is involved with Probation, call the Probation Officer. Talk to them about what is going on.

Keep in mind that if your child is acting out of the ordinary, it could be an emotional or behavioral issue. Therefore, you will want to have the situation assessed by a mental health professional. If you are not involved with any other agency, your first step is to call NJ Division of Child Behavioral Health Services at 877-652-7624 and request assistance with your difficulties. Note that there are plenty of people and services that are set up to help you through this experience so you do not have to do it on your own.

As a child involved within the court system, it is important that you understand that you need to follow what the Judge tells you to do (refer to court

order). You are responsible for your actions, choices, and decisions. Everyone makes mistakes, but it is how you deal with it that counts. The number one thing to remember is that you should never run from your problems because they will catch up to you sooner or later. If you feel you need help or extra support, it is important that you ask for what you need in order to succeed. For example, if you are on Home Detention and are having trouble in school, don't think that cutting the bracelet and running will solve this problem. Instead, call your

Everyone makes mistakes - it's how you deal with it that counts

Detention Alternatives Coordinator and talk to them about your difficulties so that you can avoid getting into trouble down the road. Try to think things out while keeping in mind the consequences instead of acting within the moment. Poor decisions can lead you back to court and possibly to the Youth Detention Center. Try to get involved in positive activities such as school, sports, writing songs, spending time with your family, and finding a job. The busier you are, the less time you will have to get into trouble. Think of yourself as a leader, not a follower and make your own choices. Surround yourself with those who are doing positive things with their lives and do the same for yourself!

Resources

- **Child Behavioral Health:** 1-877-652-7624
- **Probation (main number):** 732-677-4800
- **Detention Alternatives Program:** 732-866-3688
- **Public Defender:** 732-308-4331
- **Division of Youth and Family Services (Northern):** 732-933-1077
- **Division of Youth and Family Services (Southern):** 732-988-2161
- **New Jersey Child Abuse Hotline** 1-877-NJABUSE



Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative
Youth Services Commission of Monmouth County
732 431 7280 fax: 732 294 5932