

Youth Justice Frequently Asked Questions

What is juvenile supervision?

Juvenile supervision is a court ordered agreement with a set of conditions for the youth to follow. Rather than relying on punishment, supervision focuses on accountability through supportive, wraparound services. These services are designed to help youth make positive changes and reduce future involvement in the justice system.

How does my kid get on supervision?

Youth may be referred to Youth and Family Services through three primary ways. The first is a law enforcement referral resulting from a criminal charge, such as theft or disorderly conduct. The second is a parent-initiated JIPS (Juvenile in Need of Protective Services) referral, in which a parent requests additional services and support for their youth. The third is a truancy referral submitted by the youth's school. These referrals do not include municipal citations or tickets. Once the Department receives the referral, an intake meeting is held to discuss the case with the youth and family. The social worker then determines whether it is appropriate for the youth to enter the formal court system or to participate in an informal agreement with the Department. If the youth meets the legal criteria to go through the court system, the Department will work with the youth and family through the court process by providing services to the family.

What is the purpose of Youth and Family Services involvement?

We provide services that focus on developing pro-social skills and strengthening protective factors. Research shows that youth are more successful when they receive guidance, supportive relationships, and positive incentives rather than punishment alone. Services are individualized and selected based on your child's specific needs.

Youth Justice social workers work with both the youth and their family to help successfully complete the conditions of a court order or Deferred Prosecution Agreement. This includes regular meetings, monitoring requirements, skill-building support, referrals to services, and ongoing check-ins.

The level of involvement, frequency of contact, and type of services provided depend on:

- The seriousness of the offense
- The youth's risk of re-offending
- Court-ordered requirements
- The needs of the youth and family

What is expected of the parent/guardian?

It is the obligation of the youth and their caregiver to maintain regular contact with the assigned social worker, notify the social worker of any changes in address or phone number, and sign any release of information forms when information is needed from providers. In addition, parents are expected to actively participate and engage in all required services.

Why do I have to be involved in services?

Parental/guardian involvement is a critical part of your youth's success. Research shows that when parents/guardians actively participate in services and demonstrate efforts toward change, youth are more likely to engage as well. Supporting your child through this process is a team effort, and family involvement strengthens outcomes.

What happens if my kid is not compliant with their court order or Deferred Prosecution Agreement?

Youth Justice social workers focus on community protection, youth accountability, and youth competency development. Generally, if a youth is not responsive to interventions imposed by the guardians and schools, the social worker may collaborate with the family to determine the need for additional services which may include additional referrals for therapeutic services, or other informal and formal interventions. These interventions are not meant to be punitive, but restorative for the youth.

There are a number of options that the social worker may utilize if the youth is not compliant with their court order. The social worker may request a hearing in front of the judge, the judge can then decide if formal sanctions are necessary such as time in Secure Detention or Shelter Care, electronic monitoring, etc. Youth under a Consent Decree or a Deferred Prosecution Agreement cannot be sanctioned but could have their agreement revoked and be placed under a formal court order.

Why can't Youth and Family Services punish my kid?

According to research, punishment is not a successful tool for reformation. Youth and Family Services takes a three-pronged approach to intervening with youth and families including skill building, accountability, and community protection. Accountability achieved through discussion and supportive services has been shown to promote positive change more effectively than out-of-home placement. When youth are placed out of the home, it cuts them off from supportive relationships and does not provide them with service opportunities. Youth and Family Services aims to provide interventions that are sustainable and create long lasting change.

Why is my kid committing crimes?

Adolescents' brains are still developing and are particularly prone to risk-taking and boundary-testing behaviors during this stage of development. Youth involvement in criminal behavior typically results from a complex interaction of individual, family, peer, and community factors. These may include peer influence, limited supervision, mental health concerns such as depression or trauma, exposure to negative role models, and ongoing brain development that can limit the ability to fully anticipate long-term consequences. As a result, youth may be more likely to seek excitement or social acceptance through risky behaviors.

What is the difference between a municipal citation and criminal charges?

When youth are given municipal citations for example, underage drinking citations, they are NOT referred to Outagamie Youth and Family Services. These citations are dealt with through municipal court. They are not able to be placed in Shelter Care or Secure Detention.

COMMON TERMS:

- **REFERRAL:** A law enforcement or non-law enforcement referral of a juvenile who may be delinquent or in need of protection or services (truancy or parent requested).
- **INTAKE NOTICE:** Written notice requesting that the youth and parent attend a meeting to discuss the referral.
- **INTAKE MEETING OPTIONS:**
 - Close Case
 - Deferred Prosecution Agreement: A written agreement outlining conditions/obligations to be met in order to defer filing of a petition with the court.
 - Petition to the court
- **JIPS CASES:** A juvenile alleged to be in need of protection and services who is uncontrollable, truant from school or truant from home, or, a delinquent juvenile under 10 years of age.
- **DELINQUENCY PETITION:** If a juvenile over the age of 10 and under the age of 17 violates the law, this petition initiates juvenile court action.
- **CONSENT DECREE:** An agreement whereby the parties all agree to the disposition recommendations, however, there is no actual finding that the youth is delinquent. The case is held open for a specific period of time and, if there is compliance with the terms of the Consent Decree, the case is then dismissed. If the youth violates the Consent Decree, then it is likely the case will return to court, a delinquency finding may be made by the court, which can include changes to the dispositional recommendations for additional services, evaluations, or changes to the youth's placement.
- **INITIAL HEARING:** Youth & family advised of their legal rights & informed of reason for court involvement.
- **PLEA HEARING:** Youth, along with an attorney, admit or deny the allegations in the juvenile court petition.
- **FACT-FINDING HEARING:** If a youth denies the charges, they have the right to a trial. The trial is in front of the judge. The Judge determines if child will be adjudicated, JIPS or Delinquent.
- **DISPOSITION HEARING:** Judge makes decision on what happens to youth. This can include out of home placement, corrections and/or community supervision.
- **DISPOSITIONAL ORDER:** A formal order imposed by the Judge for up to one year at the dispositional hearing. It consists of conditions the juvenile/family must comply with.
- **COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS:** Uncompensated work a youth must work to pay back the community for his /her previous actions.
- **ELECTRONIC MONITORING:** A non-secure alternative providing additional supervision of a youth in the home. An "ankle bracelet" is placed on the youth to monitor the youth's whereabouts.
- **RESTITUTION:** Amount of money a youth must pay back to a victim for loss(es) incurred as a result of a delinquent act.
- **SECURE DETENTION:** A secure locked facility for holding a youth in custody.
- **SHELTER CARE:** A non-secure facility used for the temporary holding of a youth awaiting juvenile court action.
- **TEMPORARY PHYSICAL CUSTODY:** When a social worker takes custody of a youth. Youth can be placed in-home, within the community, at Shelter Care, and or Secure Detention
- **72-HOUR CUSTODY HOLD:** A short term custody hold pending investigation of an alleged violation.