

Guidelines for the Monitoring of Juveniles in Placement

Monitoring juveniles in placement is an essential task of juvenile probation officers. These guidelines are intended to be used in conjunction with the *Monitoring Juveniles in Placement* document that lists questions that should be asked of juveniles to ensure that they are healthy and safe, determine whether they have maintained communication with family members and other supportive people, confirm participation in treatment programs to address criminogenic needs, and whether progress is being made in educational and/or vocational programs. These guidelines are also intended to pertain to contracted service providers who monitor juveniles in placement on behalf of juvenile probation departments.

Juvenile probation officers should keep in mind that upon entering care, youth are faced with traumatic experiences. Some of the questions may be very sensitive to youth. All juvenile probation officers should be prepared to respond appropriately and effectively to both best and worst-case scenarios, particularly if there is an area of imminent concern. Youth should be made aware of what process or procedure they should follow if they have concerns about staff, safety, living conditions, or other serious matters. The more young people understand how juvenile probation officers will respond to serious issues, the more it will build trust, encourage the sharing of information, and improve chances for success.

Juvenile probation officers should visit juveniles committed to residential programs at least every thirty days and maintain monthly contact with the parent(s) of juveniles committed to residential placement as well.

Prerequisites (Before Visiting Juveniles in Placement)

- Juvenile probation officers, juveniles, family members and other support persons need to fully understand the program to which the juvenile is committed.
- Providers should develop comprehensive written program descriptions that can be used to provide information to juvenile probation officers, juveniles and family members.
- Juvenile probation officers should complete enhanced / ongoing mandated reporter training to ensure they understand their responsibilities regarding allegations of abuse.
- Juvenile probation departments should develop policies and procedures to ensure juvenile probation officers understand protocols regarding allegations of criminal activity.

Pre-visit Preparation

- Juvenile probation officers should ensure that the juvenile's assigned counselor will be at the facility during the date/time of the proposed visit whenever possible.
 - If the counselor is unable to be present during the day of the visit, obtain an update by telephone or other means prior to the visit.
- Juvenile probation officers should review all written reports and meet with parents prior to the visit.
- Juvenile probation officers should make unannounced visits to programs (some after hours).
- Best practice is that juveniles are visited by their assigned juvenile probation officer
 - Juvenile probation officers visiting juveniles assigned to another juvenile probation officer should review records prior to the visit to become familiar with the juvenile's background and issues.

During the Visit

- First, meet with the juvenile's assigned counselor when you arrive to obtain the latest information regarding the child such as dosage and duration of treatment received, family contacts, incidents, progress in school or vocational training, and any medical issues.
- Find private space to meet alone with the juvenile.
- When an allegation of abuse is made, or other concerning incident or issue is presented, get detailed information and ask additional questions to fully understand the issue.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse or Criminal Activity

- All juvenile probation departments should develop local policies regarding the reporting of suspected child abuse and criminal activity.
- Juvenile probation officers should immediately report suspected child abuse to ChildLine when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse. It is critical that the juvenile probation officer inform the provider after contacting ChildLine so the provider can take appropriate steps to keep the child safe and ensure that no retaliation occurs against the child.
- JPOs may want to consult with their supervisors when significant issues are presented.
- It is important for juvenile probation officers to "safety plan" with youth if there are noted concerns and the juvenile has to remain in the facility pending further investigation or action.
- There should be some sort of record of the interview.

Prior to Leaving the Agency

- Summarize the meeting that just occurred with the juvenile and program staff, including matters discussed during the meeting along with goals, expectations and assignments to be completed during the next month, or in anticipation of any upcoming events such as home visits or court hearings. The juvenile probation officer should discuss any relevant information received during the visit.

Follow-up

- Juvenile probation officers should follow-up with the juvenile, family, and service provider after the visit regarding anything of significance resulting from the visit.
- The Court should always be informed of any significant matters that occurred during the visit. This notice should be timely and commensurate with the significance of the event.