

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

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Purpose

To establish the basic principles for the development and maintenance of a comprehensive juvenile justice services within the framework of the Board of Supervisors' policies on children and prevention and the juvenile court law.

This policy supports the County's Comprehensive Strategy for Youth, Family and the Community (Comprehensive Strategy). First adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1998, the Comprehensive Strategy is a collaborative and integrated systems approach to reducing delinquency and promoting positive outcomes for youth. A regional partnership of stakeholders from youth-serving government agencies and community organizations developed the strategy with assistance from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The local stakeholders meet regularly to oversee the juvenile justice system's commitment to the principals and mission of the Comprehensive Strategy and advise the Board of Supervisors through the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and the Juvenile Justice Comprehensive Strategy Task Force.

The principles of the County's Comprehensive Strategy, which are reflected in this Board policy, are evidence-based practices focused on family-strengthening and positive youth development, with appropriate sanctions and interventions for serious, violent or repeated delinquency that support the youth, family and community. Youth programs are focused in five areas: prevention, intervention, treatment, supervision and custody.

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

1. The mission of juvenile justice programs is to provide that level of service required in individual cases to protect the public and to best serve the needs of each delinquent youth in the least restrictive environment.
2. Juvenile justice programs will be targeted at the youths who are involved in delinquent behavior that has resulted, or could result in a formal referral to Probation or the District Attorney.
3. Plans for juvenile justice programs will be developed and implemented based on the following principles:

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- a. Clear goals and measurable objectives.
 - b. Provision of services by both the public and private sector whichever is most efficient and effective.
 - c. Coordination of service delivery and program development to best meet the demonstrated needs of the target population.
 - d. Citizen participation through advisory groups.
 - e. Periodic review and evaluation as resources permit.
 - f. Delineation of specific areas of service delivery responsibility for each department or program in coordination with others.
 - g. Through the Juvenile Justice Task Force and the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council encourage the development of new programs which are evidence based or promising practices and have demonstrated effectiveness in rehabilitating juvenile offenders; eliminating or changing programs which have proven to be ineffective.
4. The principles which underlie the decisions made in the juvenile justice area and the goals of services to be provided to delinquent youths are:
- a. To protect the public from the criminal conduct of youth.
 - b. To provide supportive services to prevent youth from entering and further escalation in the juvenile justice system

Remove from the community those youth who are a clear or persistent danger to the person or property of others.

Monitor compliance with court orders and participation in rehabilitation programs to assure that the minor is adhering to conditions imposed by the court and participating in rehabilitation services.

Provide risk-based supervision for probation wards in the community. Risk-based supervision provides appropriate probation supervision and County and community based organization resources to address youths' needs and risk of future delinquency.

Refer delinquent youth to appropriate community programs and services that address their unique needs, so they may develop more pro-social skills and behavior and reduce further delinquency.

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Refer to the adult criminal court those youth who are unfit to be handled as juvenile offenders in order that they may be prosecuted under the general law.

Utilize programs which demonstrate a high degree of success in deterring youth from further criminal behavior.

Continue to identify additional resources in partnership with the community to support evidence based and promising practice programs and services.

c. To impose a sense of responsibility for his/her own acts upon the delinquent youth.

Impose gradual and developmentally appropriate sanctions for continued delinquent or inappropriate behavior. The graduated sanctions should be selected for meeting identified needs from screening tools with the intent of meeting the legislative mandates of public protection and rehabilitation in the least restrictive environment.

Maintain programs which provide redress for victims, payment to the General Fund or public service for the community.

Develop clear rules and regulations for youth who are institutionalized with clear sanctions and supportive services to minimize reoffending.

d. To secure, for each youth, that level of service which is the least restrictive and least disruptive to the child and family which is consistent with public safety.

Divert youth from entering the juvenile system and the formal court process in those cases where the criminal act, past history, family and community resources available indicate that the risk is reasonable and corrective action likely without further intervention.

Maintain youth in his/her own home insofar as possible. Select community-based programs and informal intervention as first choice options where consistent with public safety.

Utilize the most home-like setting available which will provide the required level of service. Utilize family resources, or foster care in preference to institutionalization.

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Provide a variety of sentencing options which offer graduated sanctions for repeated delinquency.

Select the shortest term for service delivery consistent with the youth's needs and public safety.

- e. To preserve and strengthen the minor's family and community ties.

Remove from custody of the parents only when necessary for the welfare of the child or protection of the public.

Provide supportive services-to families.

Provide increased contact with families, including extended families, for youth in institutions as feasible to ensure family connectivity.

Use San Diego based programs whenever feasible in preference to out-of-County placements.

- f. To provide such care and guidance to each delinquent ward as will best serve his/her emotional, spiritual, cultural, gender, sexual orientation and identification, age and physical welfare and, as nearly as possible, the level of care and discipline which should be provided by a natural parent.

Provide resources to reduce criminal behavior, based on identified criminogenic needs and encourage self-improvement, through referrals and linking youth with: treatment; education, academic and vocation; counseling; work and service opportunities; recreation and physical conditioning.

Continue to research national and federal promising and best practice approaches and implement these models in institutions and community services and programs.

Maintain up-to-date information on new programs found to be effective in meeting the various rehabilitation needs of youth, and encourage the development of new programs that fill the gaps in treatment and rehabilitation existing in San Diego.

Provide safe institutional environments with consistent rules for behavior and fair and reasonable consequences for misbehavior.

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Provide opportunities for free practice of religious beliefs.

Provide sound and adequate nutritional programs.

Provide opportunity for healthful physical activities.

Provide adequate medical and mental health support services to meet the needs of the institutionalized youth.

g. To provide programs which serve to rehabilitate the youth, and are proven to be effective at reducing recidivism.

To place juveniles in programs which are best proven to meet the youth's needs, consistent with public safety.

To research, assist in developing and use effective program alternatives.

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-18.

Board Action

- 6-8-82 (137)
- 12-15-82 (70)
- 3-3-92 (23)
- 9-29-92 (36)
- 6-13-06 (7)
- 12-09-08 (33)
- 9-15-15 (5)

CAO Reference

1. Probation Department