

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

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Purpose

To establish the principles for the development and maintenance of a comprehensive juvenile justice system of care within the framework of the Board of Supervisors' policies on children and youth at-risk of, or in, the juvenile justice system.

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 and their families. 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 and the 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-informed practices focused on rehabilitation, family-strengthening and positive youth development, with appropriate sanctions and interventions for serious, violent offenders. 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 the juvenile justice system is to provide a level of service and programming needed in individual cases to protect the public and to promote positive youth development in a therapeutic and rehabilitative manner in the least restrictive environment.
2. Juvenile justice programs and services will be provided to at-risk and delinquent youth to prevent them from entering or escalating within the juvenile justice system.
3. Juvenile justice programs and services will be developed and implemented based on the following principles:

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- a. Clear goals and measurable outcomes.
- 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. Resident and stakeholder participation through advisory groups.
- e. Annual 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. In collaboration with the Juvenile Justice Task Force and the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council develop new programs which are evidence-informed or promising practices that have demonstrated effectiveness in rehabilitating justice-involved youth or changing programs which have proven to be ineffective.

4. The principles which underlie the decisions made in the juvenile justice system of care 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 and persistent danger to themselves or others.

Promote positive outcomes for youth on probation by developing a strength-based supervision model that encourages successfully completing all court-ordered requirements and rehabilitative programming.

Provide risk-based supervision for probation youth 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 at-risk youth to appropriate community programs and services that address their unique needs, so they may develop more pro-social skills and behaviors and reduce further delinquency.

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Refer to the adult criminal court those youth who are unfit to be handled as juvenile delinquents 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.

Provide restorative justice practices, when appropriate, to address negative behaviors in the community and custodial environments.

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

c. To foster a sense of responsibility and accountability for his/her own delinquent acts.

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 financial redress for victims.

Provide a trauma-informed environment and supportive services for all youth in the juvenile justice system both in and out of custody.

Develop clear and achievable case plans and goals for custodial youth to ensure a successful transition to the community.

d. To secure, for each youth, a level of service which is the least restrictive and least disruptive to them and their families which is consistent with public safety.

Divert youth from entering the juvenile system and the formal court process in cases where the criminal act, past history, family and community resources are available and indicate that the risk is reasonable and corrective action will result in positive outcomes.

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Exhaust all efforts to maintain youth in his/her own home as possible. Select community-based programs and informal interventions as first choice options where consistent with public safety.

Develop and utilize community-based intervention programs and services to provide youth alternatives to detention.

Utilize family resources, and/or foster care in preference to custodial care when feasible.

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

Select the most appropriate custodial length of stay that is consistent with the youth's needs and public safety.

e. To preserve and strengthen the youths' family and community ties.

Remove from custody of the parents only when necessary for community safety.

For youth committed to the Probation Department's long-term custody, begin the reentry process when they enter detention.

Provide supportive services-to families.

Provide increased contact with families, including extended families, and positive adult role models for youth in institutions to ensure family connectivity and long-term success.

Develop and use San Diego based programs when possible in preference to out-of-County placements.

f. Provide care and guidance to each delinquent youth that will best serve his/her emotional, spiritual, cultural, gender, sexual orientation and identification, age and physical welfare.

Provide resources to reduce criminal and at-risk behaviors, based on identified criminogenic needs and encourage positive youth development, through referrals and linkage youth with: treatment; education, academic and vocation; counseling; work and service

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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 trauma-informed, safe, and therapeutic institutional environments with consistent rules for behavior and fair and reasonable consequences for misbehavior.

Provide an equitable and evidence-informed behavior incentive program for youth in custody.

Provide opportunities for practice of all religious beliefs. Provide appetizing and nourishing meals and snacks.

Provide consistent, age appropriate and varied physical activities.

Provide high-quality prevention and intervention for medical, dental, vision, and mental health 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 and probation violations.

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

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

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-25.

Board Action

6-8-82 (137)

12-15-82 (70)

3-3-92 (23)
9-29-92 (36)
6-13-06 (07)
12-09-08 (33)
9-15-15 (05)
12-11-18 (06)

CAO Reference

1. Probation Department