

Juvenile Delinquency Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Juvenile Delinquency Cases

Published in 2005 by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, *Juvenile Delinquency Guidelines* is a comprehensive guide for use by judges and others. It is available online at <http://www.ncjfcj.org/content/view/411/411/>.

16 Key Principles of the Juvenile Delinquency Guidelines

1. Juvenile delinquency court judges should engage in judicial leadership and encourage system collaboration.
2. Juvenile delinquency systems must have adequate staff, facilities, and program resources.
3. Juvenile delinquency courts and juvenile abuse and neglect courts should have integrated one family-one judge case assignments.
4. Juvenile delinquency court judges should have the same status as the highest level of trial court in the state and should have multiple year or permanent assignments.
5. All members of the juvenile delinquency court shall treat youth, families, crime victims, witnesses, and others with respect, dignity, courtesy and cultural understanding.
6. Juvenile delinquency court judges should ensure their systems divert cases to alternative systems whenever possible and appropriate.
7. Youth charged in the formal juvenile delinquency court must have qualified and adequately compensated legal representation.
8. Juvenile delinquency court judges should ensure crime victims have access to all phases of the juvenile delinquency court process and receive all services to which they are entitled by law.
9. Juvenile delinquency courts should render timely and just decisions and trials should conclude without continuances.
10. Juvenile delinquency system staff should engage parents and families at all stages of the juvenile delinquency court process to encourage family members to participate fully in the development and implementation of the youth's intervention plan.
11. The juvenile delinquency court should engage the school and other community support systems as stakeholders in each individual youth's case.
12. Juvenile delinquency court judges should ensure court dispositions are individualized and include graduated responses, both sanctions and incentives.
13. Juvenile delinquency court judges should ensure effective post-disposition review is provided to each delinquent youth as long as the youth is involved in any component of the juvenile justice system.
14. Juvenile delinquency court judges should hold their systems and the systems of other juvenile delinquency court stakeholders accountable.
15. Juvenile delinquency court judges should ensure the court has an information system that can generate the data necessary to evaluate performance, facilitate information sharing with appropriate agencies, and manage operations information.
16. The juvenile delinquency court judge is responsible to ensure that the judiciary, court staff, and all system participants are both individually trained and trained across systems and roles.