



**CHILDREN IN COURT:
*ENHANCING THEIR EXPERIENCE***

OBJECTIVES

- ✘ List strategies used to enhance the experience of children who appear in Court
- ✘ Discuss the steps needed to implement child-friendly practices
- ✘ Identify the benefits of differentiated case management

ABOUT THE 15TH CIRCUIT

- × Palm Beach County
 - + (1) County, (1) Circuit



- × Juvenile Division
 - + (3) Courthouses conducting Juveniles hearings
 - + Judges hear both Delinquency and Dependency Cases
 - + Magistrate – Judicial Reviews
 - + Court Case Management
 - + Specialty Courts/programs
- × Strong partnerships with stakeholders



“CHILD-FRIENDLY” INITIATIVES

- × Resource libraries and kiosks
- × Clothing Closet
- × *Caring Canines*
- × Waiting Rooms
- × Policies to address “kid” issues
- × Court Education liaisons

HOW WE GOT HERE

- × Early needs – INFORMATION for youth and families who were waiting (kiosks, boards, resource libraries)
- × Clothing Closet
- × Supreme Court opinion for kids coming to Court
 - × Pilot in JR which expanded
- × Once kids began appearing, needed to find ways to reduce the trauma
 - × Therapy dogs
 - × Child friendly rooms
 - × Creation of specific policies for kids
- × Evolved over time – simple ideas that gathered steam

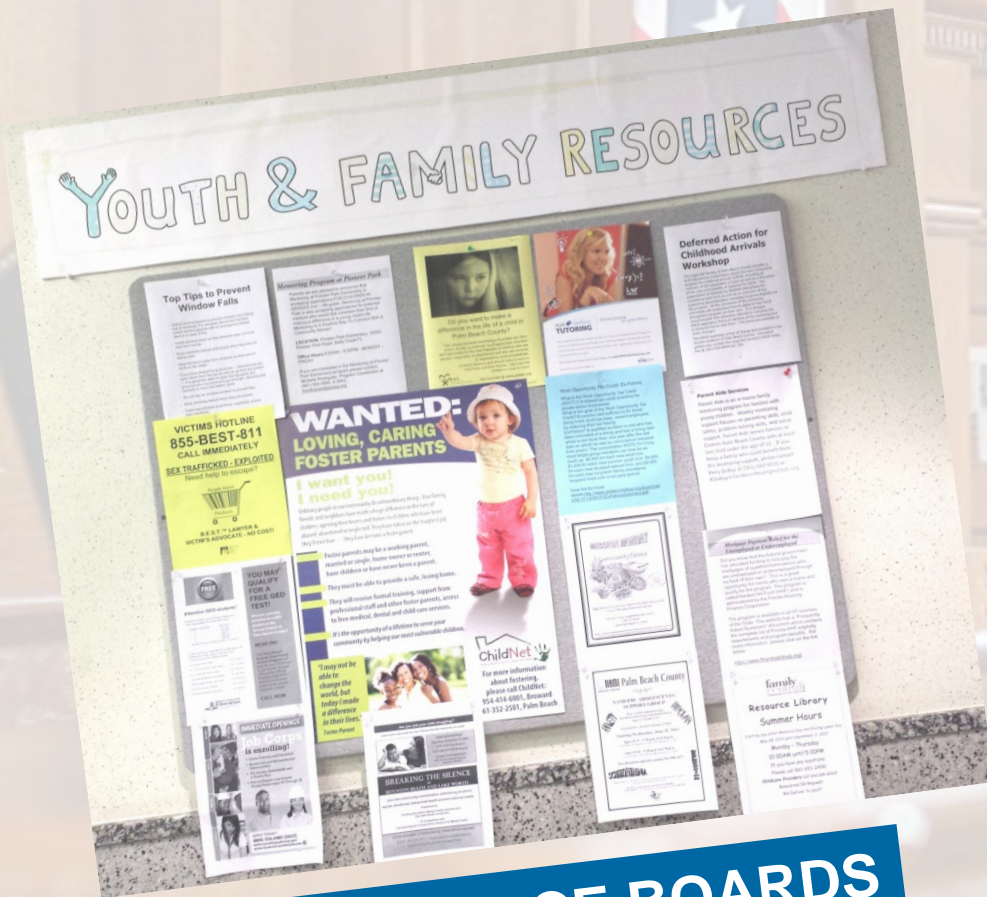
RESOURCE LIBRARIES/KIOSKS - PICS

ONLINE RESOURCE
GUIDE &
COURTHOUSE KIOSK



<http://cadapps.co.palm-beach.fl.us/depresource/>

RESOURCE LIBRARIES/KIOSKS - PICS



RESOURCE BOARDS



BOOK SHELVES

RESOURCE LIBRARIES/KIOSKS

- ✘ Need to share important information and resources with youth and families
 - + MMU, Glades Initiatives
- ✘ Families were waiting – captive audience
- ✘ Evolution:
 - + Bulletin boards – regular maintenance
 - + Online resource guide
 - + Kiosks in courthouse

CLOTHING CLOSET - PICS



CLOTHING CLOSET

- ✘ Lack of \$ to purchase appropriate clothes for:
 - + Work
 - + School
 - + Court
- ✘ Donations from Court staff
 - + Shirts, Pants, Dresses, Suits, Ties, and shoes
- ✘ Began in delinquency, expanded to all

CARING CANINES THERAPY DOG PROGRAM

- ✘ Discussion began with Supreme Court opinion and spear-headed by juvenile Magistrate and Judge
- ✘ One attorney who had a therapy dog; pilot in JR with kids coming to Court
- ✘ Expansion
 - + Implementation objections
 - + Recruitment
 - + Policies, procedures and events



CHILD & FAMILY WAITING ROOMS - PICS

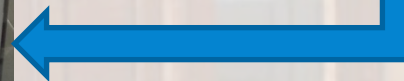


**INFANT AND
TODDLER ROOMS**

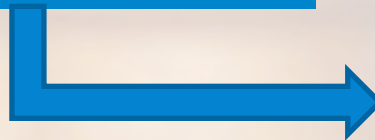
CHILD & FAMILY WAITING ROOMS - PICS



**TEEN ROOM &
STUDY AREA**



**FAMILY &
VISITATION ROOM**



CHILD & FAMILY WAITING ROOMS

- ✘ With so many children coming to Court - hallways and courtrooms were overflowing
- ✘ Children needed a comfortable, safe, space outside of the courtroom to wait
- ✘ Capitalized on opportunity to provide visitation to maximize benefit of children coming to Court
- ✘ Helped lessen concerns of stakeholders and helped improve public perception

COURT EDUCATION LIAISONS

- × A program which houses School District employees in the juvenile courthouses
- × Staff (School District)
 - + (1) Director
 - + (4) Court Education liaisons
- × Implemented in 2008



COURT EDUCATION LIAISONS - CONTINUED

- × Spear-headed by then Chief Judge to increase collaboration between Courts and School
- × Benefits
 - + Provides updated information and interpretation of educational records to the Court
 - + Conference with youth/families onsite
 - + Assist with matters concerning **registration, reenrollment and transition**
 - + Increased partnerships and new initiatives; support specialty courts/programs

COURT EDUCATION LIAISONS - CONTINUED

✘ What the Judges say:

“I have been in juvenile court almost five years. From my experience these liaisons are the most effective tool I have in addressing the educational dysfunctions of the children who come before me. The correlation between educational and social dysfunction is obvious. If I can get a child back on track educationally, I have a far better chance of turning that child's life

“CHILD-FRIENDLY” POLICIES

- × Policies to increase the efficiency and privacy of hearings:
 - + A “check-in” policy with Court Case Manager
 - + Make announcements PRIOR to docket
 - × Resets, Child Friendly Rooms
 - + Cases with children present FIRST
 - + Eliminate “drive by” motions
 - + At each hearing, determine if child’s presence is required at the subsequent hearing

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- ✘ Lessen the trauma related to coming to Court for all involved
- ✘ These practices transform the perception of the Court (-) to help strengthen families
- ✘ Families and children are a captive audience - do not want to waste the opportunity to educate and help

WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU NEED?



HOW TO GET STARTED

- ✘ Research best practices across state/country
- ✘ Identify a champion
- ✘ Utilize all resources
 - + Existing stakeholders/partners
 - + Community agencies (i.e. Junior League, etc.)

WHAT IS DIFFERENTIATED CASE MANAGEMENT?

- × Differentiated case management (DCM) is a technique Courts can use to tailor the case management process—and the allocation of judicial system resources—to the needs of individual cases.



WHY USE DCM IN JUVENILE COURT?

- ✘ Improve child and family outcomes – shift focus from processing cases to achieving lasting change
- ✘ Early and continuous judicial supervision helps resolve cases, ensures the right resources are used, parties are meeting deadlines, rulings happen more timely
- ✘ Looking in-depth now with the goal of preventing further interaction with Court

HOW IS IT UTILIZED IN PALM BEACH COUNTY?

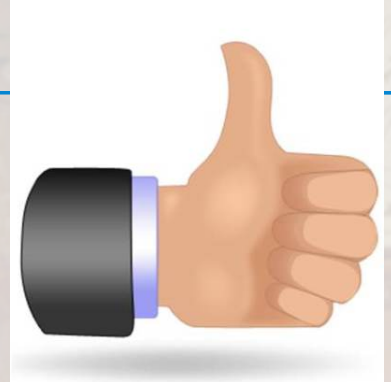
× 15th Circuit practices:

- + *Crossover* hearings and case management
- + *Independent Living Review (ILR)* hearings
- + *Family (Dependency) Drug Court*
- + *Delinquency Drug Court*
- + *Magistrate Judicial Review Hearings*



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- × Specialization allows greater focus on high need families
- × Quality of Judicial Process Enhanced
- × Cooperation Among Agencies- Better Use of System Resources
- × Public Perception of Court
- × Case Disposition Time Reduced



QUESTIONS TO ASK PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION

- ✘ There must be agreement that all cases filed are not alike and some require more attention and management
- ✘ Sufficient caseload present to justify differentiation
- ✘ A key Judge to assume leadership throughout the process
- ✘ Justice system agencies must be willing to collaborate on the design and implementation
- ✘ The Court and other agencies involved must be willing to reorganize existing staff to support the operation of a DCM program

QUESTIONS? NEED ADDITIONAL INFO?

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