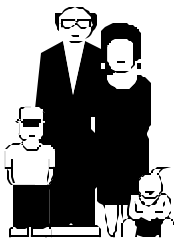


# **OAKLAND COUNTY COURT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**



**October, 2003**

## ***INDEX OF FAMILY SERVICE PROGRAMS***

<b>CLIENT PROBLEM</b>	<b>SERVICES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Adoption</b>	-Casework services.....	1
	-Confidential Intermediary.....	1
<b>Clinical Assessment</b>	-Court Clinic Testing.....	2
<b>Divorce</b>	-Friend of the Court Early Intervention Conference.....	3
	-Family Assessment Tool.....	3
	-Friend of the Court Mediation.....	3
	-Family Counselor Services.....	4
	-Child Support Collection.....	4
	-Referee Functions.....	4
	-Supervised Exchange and Parenting Time.....	5
	-Other Special Services.....	5
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	-Referee/Contract Attorney Review of PPO Requests.....	6
	-Womens' Survival Center Volunteer Collaborative.....	6
	-Referral for Treatment ( HAVEN).....	6
	-Mediation Center.....	6
<b>Guardianships (Minor)</b>	-C.A.S.A. Home Studies and Reviews.....	7
<b>Juveniles</b>		
<i>A)Delinquency:</i>	-Consent Probation.....	8
	-Standard Probation.....	9
	-Intensive Probation.....	10
	-In-Home Detention and Tethering.....	11
	-Victim Restitution.....	11
	-Victim Rights.....	12
	-Jail Tour.....	12
	-Youth Community Service.....	12
	-Youth Employment.....	13
	-R.R.R. (Reading to Reduce Recidivism).....	13
	-S.T.R.I.D.E. (Weekend Consequence).....	14
	-Crossroads for Youth Day Treatment Program.....	14
	-Crossroads for Youth Achievement Center.....	14
	-Crossroads for Youth-Residential.....	15
	-Children's Village.....	15
	-I.R.A.P. (Aftercare).....	16
	-Family Independence Agency.....	16

<b>CLIENT PROBLEM</b>	<b>SERVICES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<i>B)Emotional Problems</i>	-S.T.A.R. (Adolescent Group Therapy).....	17
<i>C)Prevention</i>	-Youth Assistance Casework Counseling.....	18
	-Youth Assistance Education Programs (e.g. Shoplifting Prevention) .....	18
	-Youth Assistance Community Programs:	
	-Mentors Plus .....	18
	-Camp .....	18
	-Skill Building.....	18
	-Teen Recreation .....	18
	-U-Turn Program.....	19
<i>D)Substance Abuse</i>	-Screening .....	19
	-Urine Drug Testing.....	19
	-Referrals for Treatment ( PACE Program).....	20
	-Family –Focused Juvenile Drug Treatment Court.....	20
<i>E)Truancy</i>	-Casework Assessment and Behavioral Contracting .....	21
	-Crisis Referral to Sanctuary.....	21
<b>Parenting</b>	-SMILE (Program for Divorcing Parents).....	22
	-COPE (Mediation Program for Divorcing Parents).....	22
	-FOCUS .....	22
	-A.D.E.P.T. (After-Divorce Effective Parenting Techniques).....	23
	-C.H.O.I.C.E. (Parent Guidance Program).....	23
<b>Probate Estates</b>	-Removing the Mysteries Seminar .....	25

## ADOPTION CASEWORK

*Adoption Casework staff* assist petitioners in adult, relative, and stepparent adoptions by conducting home studies and making recommendations to the court regarding the suitability of those petitioners. They respond in writing to requests for identifying and non-identifying information, which includes a Central Registry Clearance to see what information can be released.

The *Confidential Intermediary* provides searches and reunion service for petitioners who wish to locate birth parents, adult adoptees and adult siblings. The Confidential Intermediary also acts as a liaison to agency representatives who have been appointed by the court to conduct these searches.

Annually, approximately 200 stepparent, relative and adult adoptions are completed, and there are over 50 petitions for Confidential Intermediary searches.

Two other types of adoptions handled by the Court are *agency adoptions* and *direct placement adoptions*. In the case of agency adoptions, the home study, birth family history and other supporting documents are prepared by agency staff and filed with the Court, along with the adoption petition. The agency has responsibility for supervising the placement for six months and final adoption hearings are then scheduled with the Court. In direct placement adoptions, a petition is filed and then the birth parents consent to the adoption. All parties have an attorney. The Court reviews and files necessary documents, and approves adoption fees. Adoption files are highly confidential and are stored in a secure location in the Court.



## COURT PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC EVALUATIONS

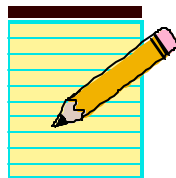
The Court Psychological Clinic is responsible for providing clinical forensic evaluations of children and families to aid the court in making informed dispositional decisions. The staff consists of full and part-time psychologists and contractual consultants who conduct testing and prepare reports for court. Staff are available for case consultation with attorneys, hearing officers, and caseworkers. They also present expert testimony as required.

Any adult involved with the court and children ages 3-17 can be referred. The clinician may request to see individuals living in a home where court-referred children reside, even if these individuals are not directly involved in the matter pending before the court.

Typically, clients are referred when caseworkers and/or hearing officers observe behavior or receive information to suggest that the client may have one or more presenting problems, such as: academic problems, intellectual limitations, prior mental health history, substance abuse involvement, serious family dysfunction, evidence of gang involvement, domestic violence, and assaultive history.

The Clinic provides evaluations and recommendations on delinquency matters, child protection cases, guardianship matters, and divorce cases with minor children. Parents and children may be referred to assist in determining temporary or permanent custody, parenting time, foster or residential placement and community treatment. Clinic experts can also address questions of competency to stand trial and criminal responsibility.

Approximately 1400 evaluations are completed by the Clinic annually.



## **DIVORCE WITH MINORS**

### **1) *EARLY INTERVENTION CONFERENCE***

At the time of filing of a divorce matter, the County Clerk's staff provides plaintiff with an ORDER FOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE, SMILE Program Attendance, and Early Intervention Conference. The Early Intervention Conference is set 56 days after the complaint is filed. Attendance at an EIC is mandatory for attorneys and parties. Reasonable requests for adjournments are granted by the referees. Parties and their counsel meet with the referee to resolve and narrow the issues in the case. The parties' attorneys may choose not to attend the EIC if the case is settled, but the parties must still attend.

Parties are provided information on the FOC, court system, and what to expect during the pendency of their divorce. The EIC also provides a forum for appropriate referrals to other resources and agencies. Parties are advised about the potential problems they and their children may have as a result of the divorce process. They are encouraged to make use of Youth Assistance and other Court and community resources. Finally, referees determine whether the parties have exchanged information pursuant to the Court Order.

### **2) *FAMILY ASSESSMENT TOOL***

This simple paper and pencil test was designed by court staff for use early in the divorce process, to help assess family problems that may negatively affect children. Parents are asked to report problems and to focus on any observations they have about their children's behavior such as problems in school, emotional problems, minor delinquent activity and so on. Individuals who score in the moderate to severe range of problems are offered referral information for community agencies that can assist them. The Family Assessment Tool is disseminated to parents at the Early Intervention Conference and at the SMILE program.

### **3) *FRIEND OF THE COURT MEDIATION***

Domestic relations mediation provides an alternative to resolving custody and parenting time disputes. By actively participating in the decision-making process with the aid of a trained domestic relations expert, the parties are more inclined to live by the agreements they reach and avoid disputes. All discussion during formal mediation is confidential by statute. The Friend of the Court also provides informal mediation, which is a joint meeting with the parties and not bound by confidentiality, to assist parents to voluntarily resolve

custody and parenting time issues.

#### **4) *FAMILY COUNSELOR SERVICES***

In divorce, paternity and separate maintenance actions, the judgement in each individual case sets forth the parenting plan for the minor child(ren). Usually parents agree about custody, and this is best because it helps reduce conflict and allows the family a degree of self-determination. When parents cannot agree on a parenting plan, they may seek assistance from the Friend of the Court family counselor.

In disputed cases, the Court can direct the Friend of the Court to conduct an investigation and make a recommendation about custody and parenting time (visitation). The family counselor interviews the parties and their children and may ask for school and medical records. A home visit also may be arranged as part of the investigation. The findings and recommendations are submitted to the court and parties through their attorneys. These reports are not public record. The family counselors can assist parties to access appropriate community resources for identified needs. They also participate with Friend of the Court referees in resolving custody and parenting time motions brought before the Court.

#### **5) *CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTION***

One of the main functions of the Friend of the Court is enforcing child support obligations spelled out in the "Judgement of Divorce". Both mothers and fathers may be required to pay support. The Supreme Court has established a statewide child support schedule that serves as a guideline for determining the amount of child support. Circumstances of each case will determine how closely the formula is followed. Parties may contact Friend of the Court to seek a modification of the child support order. In all but rare cases, payments are made through the Friend of the Court, so that disputes regarding timeliness of payment can be easily resolved. When a responsible party does not make payment, Friend of the Court is required to initiate withholding of support payments directly from the payor's source of income.

#### **6) *REFeree FUNCTIONS***



Friend of the Court Referees perform a variety of functions in regard to domestic cases. Referees are responsible for conducting the Early Intervention Conference to determine status of the case. Based upon review of financial and family information presented, the Referees make recommendations to the Judge regarding the specifics of the court orders for custody and support. If parties wish to bring matters before the Court for modification, the Referee reviews these motions and recommends appropriate resolutions to the Judge. When individuals responsible for child support fail to make payment, the custodial parent can notify Friend of the Court of the need for review. Friend of the Court screens the complaint and may request an Order to Show Cause from the Judge. Referees then hold a Show Cause hearing to determine

sanctions, up to and including jail for contempt.

#### **6) SUPERVISED EXCHANGE AND PARENTING TIME**

The goal of supervised parenting time programs is to provide safe, neutral environments where family members can interact with each other while being supervised by trained staff. Families must be Court-ordered to be eligible, and must participate in an initial intake assessment before beginning the program.

This service may be recommended by the Family Counselor or FIA caseworker in cases involving domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse/neglect, substance abuse or other problematic behavior.

Programs are offered by *Impact Services* and *HAVEN*, each of which charge a sliding fee to clients. Reports regarding client compliance are provided to the Court upon request. *HAVEN's* program is offered seven days a week at locations in Southfield, Rochester, Pontiac and Novi. The *Impact Services* program is offered in Waterford, Monday – Friday from 10:00 am – 8:00 pm and alternating Saturdays. Parenting times are scheduled on a weekly basis for at least one hour or the time frame ordered by the Court.

Supervised Exchange is for those referrals requiring no contact between parents when one party exercises parenting time rights. Child(ren) are exchanged and returned on *HAVEN* premises. The service can accommodate unsupervised parenting time sessions and/or overnight visits. Monitors only supervise during the exchange and return of the child.

#### **7) OTHER SPECIAL SERVICES**

Occasionally, clients present with special needs, and Family Counselors may refer clients to experts in the community trained in helping families resolve specific problems. For example, at the discretion of the Court, a *Guardian Ad Litem* can be appointed to assist in determining the best interests of the child(ren). Some families benefit from meeting with a *parenting coordinator* on a regular basis, to help settle disputes regarding discipline, household rules etc.

To deal with inappropriate displays of angry, aggressive feelings, family members may be referred to *anger management* programs run by Recovery Consultants or Step Forward. Parents and children may be referred to participate in *therapeutic visits*, so that family members can express themselves about the effects of separation/divorce process and the impact of visits with non-custodial parents.

A program initiated in partnership with FIA is the *Job Placement* program for individuals who are delinquent in child support payments. The program offers referral to training, resume assistance, job search services, help with obtaining work clothes etc. Family Counselors can provide clients with information and referral to this program.

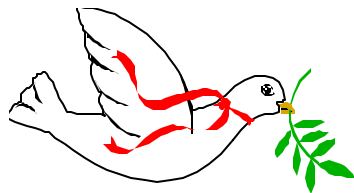
## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

### ***PERSONAL PROTECTION ORDERS***

A Personal Protection Order (PPO) is available to anyone who has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused by a spouse or partner, former spouse or partner, current or former roommate or current or former dating partner. A PPO may also be issued if there is proof of stalking. Juvenile staff referees and contract attorneys screen each PPO petition and make recommendations to the judge regarding issuance.

Volunteers from the Women's Survival Center are on site and available to assist persons seeking a PPO with the necessary legal processing. They help petitioners locate the various offices within the courthouse where documents must be filed. The volunteers are trained in and able to advise parties regarding the dynamics of domestic violence, and can assist petitioners with making contacts to obtain alternative housing, counseling and other needed services for themselves and their children. A shelter for battered women is operated by HAVEN, a local non-profit agency that also offers a variety of education and counseling services.

For non-domestic matters, the Court participates in an alternative dispute resolution program offered by the Oakland County Mediation Center. Upon referral from the Court, trained attorney and non-attorney mediators provide low or no cost services to parties to help them solve community and neighborhood disputes without costly and unnecessary Court intervention.



## **MINOR GUARDIANSHIPS**

A minor needs a guardian when the minor's parents are no longer able to fulfill their parental duties. In a *full* guardianship, a petition may be filed if the parental rights are terminated or suspended by court order or death, or the parents are mentally incompetent, disappeared or confined in a place of detention. A full guardianship may also be obtained if 1) the parents have permitted the minor to reside with another person and have not provided legal authority or 2) the parents have never been married to each other *and* the parent who has custody dies or is missing, *and* the other parent has not been granted legal custody, *and* the person who wants to be guardian is related to the minor within five degrees. A *limited* guardianship, on the other hand, is a *voluntary* arrangement in which the parent(s) consents to the guardianship, often due to a temporary situation. All guardians are responsible for the personal and physical well-being of the minor. They have full authority to make all decisions regarding the minor's care, except that a *limited* guardian may not agree to the marriage or adoption of the minor.

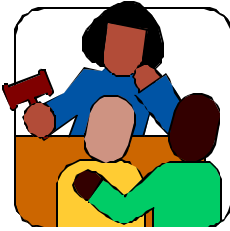
### ***COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA)***

The Probate Court processes guardianship petitions. A prospective guardian must file a petition and complete a questionnaire providing background information. The court checks the proposed guardian's records for any Protective Services or criminal involvement. Working in teams, CASA program volunteers may be assigned to investigate a case by doing a home study. They interview parents, family members, teachers, doctors, and when appropriate, the child. The CASA team then prepares a written report and appears in Court to recommend what is best for the child's future. The CASA teams are trained to do this important job and provide the judge with an unbiased viewpoint.

The National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section, has had a role in the CASA program for the Oakland County Probate Court since 1980. These volunteers provide necessary information to assist the Court in making informed decisions and placing children in the most appropriate and safe environment.

### ***GUARDIANSHIP REVIEW VOLUNTEERS***

The Probate Court is mandated to review all cases where a guardian has been appointed for an adult or minor. For children age six and under, the case is reviewed annually. Oakland County has developed a volunteer program to help provide these services at no cost. The Court requires the volunteers to submit written application materials, attend a three-hour training, and be personally interviewed by Court personnel. Each volunteer is asked to determine whether the guardian is providing a satisfactory level of care to those adults and children who are subject to guardian placements. The volunteers visit the home or placement of the ward and provide a written report to the Court for review.



## **JUVENILES: A) DELINQUENCY**

### ***1) CONSENT PROBATION***

Consent probation represents a minimal service intervention. In addition to a simplified court process, most of the burden for fulfilling and verifying court orders is placed on the client and family. Failure of the youth to comply can lead to a case transfer to the formal docket where supervision and court intervention are increased. Casework staff implement the court order, receive verification of compliance, and report to the court. Personal contact is minimal; usually four contacts during the course of the case.

The consent docket is designed for first-time offenders, where the offense is not so serious as to consider removal from home. Most non-divertable felonies will not be considered. Clients and families who appear to have the strengths to fulfill court orders on their own can be considered. To be eligible for consent probation, the youngster must make a voluntary and knowledgeable guilty plea.

A youth placed on consent probation can expect to receive at least the following services post-disposition:

- 1) One face-to-face interview with caseworker within ten days of disposition, to insure understanding of the court's expectations, establish time lines for completing any orders, and get signature on rules of probation.
- 2) Explanation of Youth Community Service and/or restitution requirements and a list of sites for completing assignment.
- 3) Information and referral list for counseling, if part of the order.
- 4) Telephone contact with caseworker one month after consent probation is initiated, to determine progress.

- 5) One face-to-face interview with caseworker at mid-point of probation term.
- 6) One face-to-face interview just prior to review date.

NOTE: Additional contacts may be provided based on client need.

Almost 400 new cases are handled on consent probation annually.



## 2) ***STANDARD PROBATION***

Standard probation represents more of a full-service diagnostic and monitoring plan for the delinquent client.

A full social history is collected, including information from schools and other agencies. The caseworker assists in developing and implementing the plan and meets regularly with client and family to assure compliance and to help shape behavior. Staff also serves as liaison and coordinator, and sometimes advocate, with schools, therapists, and others who provide services to the youth and/or family. Staff is responsible for regular feedback to the court and presents the case at the scheduled review hearing. A violation of probation may lead to a more restrictive disposition.

Youngsters authorized on the formal court docket are assigned geographically to a probation officer who is responsible for preparing the case for court and submitting a social history report with recommended disposition. An assigned judge or court referee, upon adjudication, enters the probation order, if appropriate.

A youth placed on standard probation can expect to receive at least the following services:

Pre-disposition:

- 1) Family interview to collect social history information for a report to court.
- 2) Opportunity to review the plan and caseworker's recommendations.

Post-disposition:

- 3) One face-to-face interview within ten days after disposition to insure understanding of court orders and get signature on rules of probation.

- 4) Explanation of Youth Community Service and/or restitution requirements and a list of sites for completing assignment, as well as explanation of court costs.
- 5) Information and referral list for counseling, if part of the order.
- 6) Twice monthly face-to-face interviews with caseworker to review progress/confirm compliance with court order

NOTE: Frequency of interviews may increase or decrease if caseworker and caseworker's supervisor determine appropriate.

- 7) Regular checks by caseworker with parents, agency personnel, school authority, to assure progress.
- 8) Written documentation of progress filed with the court.

Approximately 350 new cases are placed on standard probation each year.

### **3) *INTENSIVE PROBATION***

Intensive probation is designed to maintain high risk delinquents in their community in lieu of residential care, while safeguarding the community as much as possible. Caseload size is limited to 15. A team approach, including paid paraprofessional intern monitors, assures frequency and intensity of contacts. Special tools have been designed to give probation staff the repertoire of responses needed to work with this high risk population.

Youngsters placed on intensive probation either have the offense history or the level of dysfunction to a point where they would have been placed out of the home had it not been for this program. Often, consent probation or standard probation failures will be tried on intensive probation.

A youth placed on intensive probation can expect to receive at least the following services:

- 1) One face-to-face interview within five days after disposition to insure understanding of the court's expectations and establish time lines for compliance with order.
- 2) Explanation of Youth Community Service and/or restitution requirements and a list of sites for completing assignment, as well as explanation of court costs, etc.
- 3) Referral of parent to the court clinic parent guidance program (C.H.O.I.C.E.).
- 4) Referral of youth to the court clinic adolescent group or other therapy programs if appropriate.

5) Contacts with caseworker and intern as follows:

- Phase I Caseworker - Two face-to-face interviews per week  
(30 days) Intern - Two face-to-face interviews per week  
- Random checks of whereabouts at night, on weekends, at school
- Phase II Caseworker - Two face-to-face interviews per week  
(60 days) Intern - Two face-to-face interviews per week  
- Random checks of whereabouts at night, on weekends, at school
- Phase III Caseworker - Two face-to-face interviews per week  
(60-90 days) Intern - Two face-to-face interviews per week  
- Random checks of whereabouts at night, on weekends, at school
- Phase IV Caseworker - One face-to-face interview per week  
(30 days) Intern - One face-to-face interview per week

Nearly 200 youth are handled on intensive probation annually.

#### 4) ***ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE***

Tethering technology is used to assure compliance with home detention for those youth adjudicated and placed on probation and, occasionally, as a pre-dispositional in-home alternative to detention.

A "Visitel" unit is attached to the client's telephone, with random calls made throughout the day. The client sends a retrievable picture and voice transmission. "Failed" phone calls lead to casework intervention and possible program failure. A second method involves an ankle bracelet that is attached to the youth's ankle. The device can be programmed to emit a signal whenever the youth travels beyond the confines of a predetermined space perimeter. Youngsters are typically tethered for approximately 15-20 days, at the cost of \$6.00 to \$7.50 per day, plus installation fee.

Over 100 youngsters are monitored through tethering each year with only a 2% failure rate.



#### 5) ***RESTITUTION***

When a youngster's delinquency has resulted in financial harm to a victim, repayment to the victim is ordered as a standard part of disposition in order to hold youngsters accountable for their actions. The amount of loss and the youngster's ability to pay are factors used to determine restitution amounts.

The court obtains victim loss and impact statement information from identified victims. That information is passed along to the assigned probation staff, who must include a restitution recommendation in their court report. Once ordered, restitution information is then forwarded to the County Reimbursement Division.

Arrangements are made for the youngster to make payments to the Reimbursement Division, who will then forward the money to the victim. In excess of \$131,000 is repaid victims in cash restitution by probationers each year.

#### **6) VICTIM RIGHTS**

The Victim Rights office of the Circuit Court/Family Division provides the victim with a victim impact statement. The caseworker's name and phone number is provided to the victim as a resource to the victim to answer any questions about their rights or the court process. The impact statement asks for the victim's feelings about being a victim and how they were impacted physically and emotionally by the crime. The victim also is asked to state their thoughts regarding appropriate disposition of the case such as probation, out of home placement and substance abuse treatment. The victim is asked to provide information regarding their financial loss and if they want to be reimbursed for their loss. The Court caseworker provides a report and recommendation to the Court on the victim's responses.

#### **7) JAIL TOUR**

This program provides a brief reality-based experience to 16-year-olds who have been identified as being at low risk for recidivism. In lieu of the traditional social history gathering and regular probation meetings, the youngster and his parents are scheduled for a tour of the Oakland County Jail. For this group of soon-to-be legal adults, the message conveyed by the jail tour is that further offenses can exact a heavy toll on freedom and dignity. These youth are also ordered to make restitution and to complete some community services.

Tours are scheduled by a Casework Unit supervisor, with the help of various court caseworkers and Sheriff Department staff at the jail. Upon submitting proof of compliance, the youths are "warned and dismissed" without a review hearing.

Approximately 250 youth complete a jail tour annually.

#### **8) YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The court's philosophy is that every delinquent offender owes a debt to his or her community for inconveniences resulting from a youngster's offenses. As part of probation, the youngster repays that debt by contributing community service work. A certain number of hours, usually between 30 and 100, are ordered as part of the disposition. Recruited community agencies agree to provide supervised work

opportunities in which youngsters can serve their hours.

Probation officers will give information about possible worksites to the individual probationer, who is given the responsibility of contacting work sites and arranging for placement. The youngster then receives verification of hours worked from the work site and supplies this to the worker to show compliance with the court order.

Youth Assistance workers may also assign youngsters to perform community service as part of their diversion treatment plan, although this is not court ordered.

Probationers each year complete well over 20,000 hours of service. Another 11,000 hours of service are contributed by youth Assistance caseload youth.

## **9) *YOUTH EMPLOYMENT***

Youth employment is an expectation of all probationers capable of employment. Probation officers provide assistance to youth seeking employment. They are assisted in learning how to fill out employment applications, preparing for job interviews and being a responsible employee. Referrals are made to employment services as appropriate to the youth's eligibility. Youth are encouraged to make regular restitution payments to victims as defined by Court order.



## **10) *R.R.R. -- READING TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM***

The 3 R's project is a partnership between the courts, Sheriff's Department, Community Corrections, Oakland Schools and private agencies such as Eton Academy and Michigan Dyslexia Institute. Research done by our local Community Corrections Department indicates that between 25% and 40% of the individuals who are involved with the court have learning/literacy difficulties. This program is designed to address the individual learning needs of detainees and probationers while they are under the Court's jurisdiction. Participants are Court ordered to participate, and they receive tutoring and remediation from volunteers coordinated through the project. The program has primarily focused on adult offenders to date, and plans are currently under way to expand services to include youth placed in Children's Village and Crossroads for Youth.

**11) S.T.R.I.D.E. (WEEKEND CONSEQUENCE)  
(SHORT TERM RAPID INTERVENTION & DIVERSION EFFORT)**

This program began in October 1999. Funded through the Federal Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant, the project provides two days of intensive intervention for youth who are on probation and have committed a technical violation of their probation rules, such as curfew violation, school truancy, etc. Youngsters participate in work details, didactic programs on retail fraud prevention, anger management, communication skills and other topics, receive job skills orientation, and attend group and family counseling sessions with their parents. Space is available for approximately 8 youth each week.

**12) CROSSROADS FOR YOUTH DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM  
(Formerly Camp Oakland)**

Day Treatment is an intermediate disposition for those youngsters who have difficulty succeeding in the community, but for whom residential care is not necessary. This is a six-day per week program, approximately 14 hours per day, with transportation provided to the youngster. The program includes remedial education, ongoing group therapy, and a strong parent-training component. Currently, there are two campus sites, one in Oxford and one in Walled Lake. Crossroads for Youth staff and the court caseworker work together to provide services to the client families.

Between 80 and 90 youngsters are placed in the Day Treatment Program annually.

**13) CROSSROADS FOR YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT CENTER**

This residential alternative is located at the Walled Lake campus. The youth are clothed in military style uniforms. Their daily activities are highly disciplined, emphasizing physical conditioning and work. Their education, GED prep and vocational classes, are offered by the Walled Lake Schools. Youngsters are assigned to a squad of 12 to 13 youth. These squads start the program together and graduate together. When needed, Crossroads for Youth makes available to youngsters preparation for independent living. Program emphasis is on instilling self-control and shaping behavior, along with group and family therapy. Currently, the typical length of stay in the Achievement Center Program is 4 ½ months, followed by intensive aftercare.

Youth selected are male delinquents, 15 ½ to 17, who have been adjudicated on non-status offenses. Emphasis is on selecting delinquent youth with no significant mental health or substance abuse problems. These are, in many situations, youngsters who would otherwise have been committed to the Family Independence Agency. Over 30 youth participate in this program each year.



#### **14) *CROSSROADS FOR YOUTH - RESIDENTIAL***

Crossroads for Youth is a private facility, located in Oxford, Michigan. Included at the main campus are a range of placement facilities, including Boys' Center, Girls' Center, Work Education, and Achievement Center.

Crossroads for Youth is licensed as a child care facility by the Family Independence Agency. The facility contracts directly with the court to provide day student and boot camp and also maintains a separate contractual relationship through the County Executive for the other residential programs.

Typical length of stay is approximately six months. Over 60 youth are placed in residential programs at Crossroads annually.

#### **15) *OAKLAND COUNTY CHILDREN'S VILLAGE***

A Pontiac-based option for out-of-home placement is with Oakland County Children's Village. The Children's Village is operated under the control of the County Executive and is licensed for detention, shelter care, and treatment by the family Independence Agency. There are three boys' and one girls' treatment units on grounds. Youngsters attend school on campus. The programs vary slightly, utilizing a level system and group therapy to help youngsters internalize control. The average length of stay is approximately six months.

A North is the 18-bed secure treatment program for older, more seriously delinquent boys requiring longer-term residential care (i.e. 9-12 months).

A South, also known as girls' detention, houses any girls on a detention order and girls returning from truancy. It houses 17 girls.

B Building is a four-level treatment program. Youth in B Building tend to be a slightly older population than C Building and younger than D Building. These are youth who may be oppositional, but perceived as able to make changes based on social psychological evaluations. It houses 20 boys.

C Building is a younger population with a less extensive offense history. They tend to be oppositional defiant youth and ADHD. It has a three-phase system, more individualized planning than B and D Buildings.

D Building is for the older youth with extensive offense history. The four-level system is highly structured and consequence-based. Youth in D Building tend to be conduct disorders. D Building houses 20 youth.

G Building is the only treatment facility for girls. It houses a mix of status offenders and non-status offenders. G Building houses 20 girls.

H Building (Shelter Care) houses status offenders and neglect/abuse youth. The capacity is 40. Twelve of these beds (medical wing) could be utilized for delinquents.

J-I Building is for pre-adjudication and mandatory waiver youth. It houses 56 boys. With additional staff assigned, it may house as many as 62 boys.

J-II Building houses post-adjudication youth awaiting placement. Time out for behavior or truancy violation is utilized. It houses 20 boys.

In past years, individual treatment programs have housed up to 25 youth.

Approximately 20 youth are treated at the secure facility annually, and another 140 youth are placed in open treatment programs.

**16) I.R.A.P.  
(INTENSIVE REINTEGRATION AND AFTERCARE PROGRAM)**

Funded through the Federal Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant, this project provides up to six months of intensive aftercare services to youth released from Children's Village residential treatment programs. These youth are at high risk to recidivate, and I.R.A.P. is designed to help reduce this risk by offering frequent contacts, monitoring, family and school supports, group counseling, drug testing and other community services.

**17) FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY COMMITMENT**

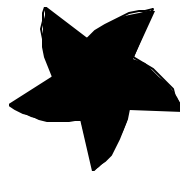
The court may place a youngster with the State of Michigan Family Independence Agency. The court views this as a last resort if all local programming has been tried, the youth continues to commit offenses, and a determination is made that a particular youngster's needs cannot be met locally. The State runs many of its own facilities and contracts with a number of private facilities to provide a wide range of placements.



## **JUVENILES: B) EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

### ***S.T.A.R. (SKILL TRAINING IN ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS) ADOLESCENT GROUP THERAPY***

The Court Psychological Clinic provides group therapy for participants of the Intensive Probation Program. The group sessions run for approximately six months. These groups are non-traditional and structured in their approach. They concentrate on the areas of problem solving techniques, social skill building, and anger restraint training. Sessions are offered weekly at three sites (main courthouse and two satellite offices) at times convenient to clients. Approximately 120 youngsters participate in the program each year.



## **JUVENILES: C) PREVENTION**

### ***YOUTH ASSISTANCE***

Youth Assistance is a community-based program, incorporating volunteers in all phases of program planning and implementation. Its mission is to strengthen youth and families and prevent and reduce delinquency, neglect and abuse, through volunteer involvement.

Administrative offices are located in the Oakland County Courthouse, in Pontiac, Michigan. Each of 26 local programs, corresponding to local school district boundaries, is co-sponsored by the school district, the municipalities therein, and the Oakland County Circuit and Probate Court. Each local sponsor is responsible for supporting the local operations. Local offices are housed in schools, city and township halls, as well as independent office buildings. The courts provide the professional staff, with funding provided by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners. Half of the local offices have a single professional staff person assigned. Higher volume areas have additional staff assigned. There are currently 41 field staff assigned to the 29 field offices.

The program utilizes a two-pronged approach:

- 1) Direct casework services
- 2) Community organization techniques

At each of the 29 local program sites, staff conduct family-based assessments and provide short-term counseling and referral services to youth and families. Referrals to the program are made by police, schools, parents, and the court. Direct, confidential casework services are offered free of charge to any Oakland County youth 17 years of age or younger, and their family, referred to the program. Participation is voluntary, and usually as a result of a status offense such as incorrigibility or truancy or a first time delinquency matter, when formal court action might not be warranted.

To address the community organization focus, Youth Assistance depends on the extensive involvement of volunteers. At the local level, volunteers take a leadership role in conducting their own needs assessment and then mobilizing their community resources to respond. Court staff provide consultation to the volunteer board of directors. Typical programs offered include Family Education, Mentors PLUS, Youth Recognition, Camp/Recreation and Skill Building. These programs are open to any family, including those on the Youth Assistance caseload or involved with the court in some other capacity. The Mentors PLUS Program is designed to provide a one-to-one relationship for youth ages 6-16 who are in need of a positive adult role model and friend. Youth Recognition events honor young people for making a significant contribution to their community.

The U-Turn Program is a collaboration with Oakland County Sheriff's Department. It provides a guided tour of the Oakland County Jail and red-eye encounter with inmates and is designed to serve as a deterrent for pre-delinquent youth.

Between 3500 and 4000 new referrals are made to Youth Assistance for casework each year. Approximately 175 at-risk youth are matched with adult mentors and almost 1300 youngsters benefit from camp scholarships.



## **JUVENILES: D) SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

### **1) *SCREENING***

Substance abuse screening is provided using the Adolescent Chemical Dependency Inventory, (ACDI-II) an easily administered paper and pencil questionnaire. The information gained from the questionnaire assists the court caseworker in making appropriate case plans for our client families. The ACDI is resistant to client faking and defensiveness, making it a valuable tool for a Court setting. It is an important part of our information gathering process, as a high percentage of our families are affected by substance abuse or substance dependency.

The ACDI. is administered to all adjudicated wards of the court.. In addition, the ACDI is made available to clients served by Oakland County Youth Assistance when specific indicators are apparent in the information gathering process. The Court Psychological Clinic administers substance abuse screening . to neglect/abuse client families at the discretion of the clinician assigned.

### **2) *URINE DRUG TESTING***

The Court may order probationers to submit urine samples to identified laboratories within 24 hours when directed to do so by their probation officers. The probationer is provided a referral form to take to the laboratory. Results of the test are returned to the probation officer. The probationer may have his/her probation violated as the result of a positive test for an illegal substance. Intermediate sanctions short of violation of probation are also utilized.

Over 600 youth are tested for drug and alcohol use each year.

### 3) ***INFORMATION AND REFERRAL***

Youth who appear to have problems with substance abuse, based on ACDI scores and other information, are referred to a substance abuse treatment agency for more extensive assessment and treatment. If needed, the youth can be referred for in-patient treatment at Kairos. Clients who are Medicaid eligible or uninsured can be referred to the Oakland County Office of Substance Abuse PACE unit for free evaluation and referral.

### 4) ***Family Focused Juvenile Drug Treatment Court***

Juveniles who present with moderate to severe substance abuse problems may be eligible for enrollment in the Family Focused Juvenile Drug Treatment Court. Primarily funded through a grants, the program provides 12-15 months of close supervision and community-based, intensive substance abuse treatment for non-violent repeat offenders. Youth, as well as their families, are required to participate in counseling, and the juveniles must also attend NA/AA meetings, submit to frequent, random drug testing, perform community service and demonstrate either school or work achievements.

A specially trained group of professionals that includes a judge, a program coordinator, an assistant prosecutor, a defense attorney, a school representative, two probation officers, interns, and treatment providers, work together with the family as a team. Progress in the program is rewarded with incentives, while problem behaviors meet with swift consequences or sanctions. The goals of the program are to reduce juvenile drug crimes, help youth and families achieve sobriety, link participants with appropriate treatment quickly, and strengthen family relationships. When fully operational, the Drug Court will serve approximately 35 – 40 youth annually.

## **JUVENILES: E) TRUANCY**

The Casework Services Unit offers an intervention designed to provide services to the youth and family of the youngster who runs away from home. Our basic objective is to divert as many cases as possible from formal court involvement, detention, and out-of-home placement. Truancy is viewed as symptomatic of a family problem, needing therapy and exploration of family dynamics rather than a judicial approach. Staff work to both refer families to appropriate treatment agencies and to offer specialized casework services in lieu of court intervention. In some "last resort" situations, the unit may recommend authorization of a petition and a full dispositional response to this client group.

Referrals are made by parents, schools, therapists, or police departments. A youth may also request services. Many of the initial contacts are initiated by telephone, but walk-in clients are also seen for services. The majority of youth referred are female and average age is 14.

Typically, almost 40 youth are referred for shelter or counseling each year. Informal casework interventions are provided to approximately 100 youngsters, and 25 cases are authorized for formal court.



## **PARENTING**

### ***1) SMILE (START MAKING IT LIVEABLE FOR EVERYONE)***

S.M.I.L.L.E. is a one-session, two-hour program provided by Friend of the Court staff and professional volunteers for separating/divorced parents with minor children. These free sessions are scheduled twice monthly, during evening hours, and take place at the Oakland county Commissioners Auditorium. Parents receive an order to attend when they petition the court for divorce. Those who cannot attend the live session may be given the opportunity to view the video version of the program, on a case-by-case basis.

The program provides parents with information about the effects of divorce and needs of their children, and offers help in promoting children's healthy adjustment to divorce.



### ***2) COPE (CO-PARENTING EFFECTIVELY)***

The COPE program is a voluntary dispute resolution alternative for parents in divorce and paternity actions who are having difficulty in resolving custody and parenting time issues. The goals of this program are to reduce parental conflict which may be damaging to children, minimize ongoing court involvement, increase cooperation between parents, and promote effective coparenting to serve children's needs. The COPE program uses trained community mental health professionals, called COPE Coordinators, who conduct a one-time, intensive session to assist parents in defining the issues, identifying possible options, and developing a time-sharing plan. Parties may use this voluntary dispute resolution process when referred by order of the judge, and must sign an acknowledgment of confidentiality and agreement to pay for services.

A COPE session generally lasts four hours, and the fee is \$500, paid in advance by the parties directly to the COPE Coordinator.

### ***3) FOCUS ON THE CHILDREN ( PARENTING INTERVENTIONS FOR DIVORCING PARENTS ENGAGED IN HIGH CONFLICT )***

This program is designed to train parents to engage in cooperative parenting through appropriate means, rather than involving the judicial system in additional litigation and continuing conflicts. Trained social workers employed by Jewish Family Services will help parents learn about the devastating impact of such

conflict on their children. The clients will practice communication, negotiation and conflict resolution skills. They are expected to attend for eight weeks, with a total cost of \$125 charged to each individual. Children of the participants engage in a separate one-time session.

Appropriate candidates for this program are *post judgement* families who are experiencing a complete breakdown in communication between the parents, continual litigation, verbal threats of harm or kidnapping, ongoing attempts to form covert alliances with the children and other negative behaviors. Parties must be court-ordered, and must agree to not initiate any litigation for the duration of the program. Families that have experienced domestic violence are not eligible for this program.

#### **4) ADEPT ( AFTER DIVORCE – EFFECTIVE PARENTING TECHNIQUES )**

Unlike the special needs presented by the families who should attend the “Focus on the Children” program, there are many individuals who go through divorce with much less disruption and turmoil. Nevertheless, the process of establishing separate homes while providing continuity in child rearing, can be somewhat bewildering for families already experiencing significant change. Parent education research suggests that lasting changes in behavior and attitudes are less likely to occur in short-term or single session interventions, than in programs that provide more sustained opportunities to practice new skills.

This Court program provides training for parents that builds upon the initial efforts of the SMILE program. Over a series of six weekly sessions, parents revisit the issues of the effects of divorce on children. Through homework assignments and role-playing exercises, parents examine issues of effective discipline in single parent situations, disciplining as the non-custodial parent, avoiding alliances with the children, spotting developing problems with troubled children and other key topics. Professional staff from the Family Division Psychological Clinic facilitate the sessions at no charge to participants. The program is scheduled at times and locations convenient to clients. Referrals occur through the Friend of the Court Family Counselors and other court staff.

#### **5) C.H.O.I.C.E. (PARENT GUIDANCE CLASSES FOR PARENTS OF JUVENILE PROBATIONERS**

Parent guidance classes are provided by Court Clinic psychologists for parents of youth on Intensive Probation. These classes are designed to assist parents in gaining further effectiveness as parents, to improve discipline and control, and to bring parents together to provide mutual support and understanding.

The C.H.O.I.C.E. program is an eight-week series of sessions, which teaches parents how to handle difficult behavioral problems in a more consistent manner, while increasing their youngsters’ self esteem.

Classes are held throughout the year, generally in the evenings to accommodate work schedules. There are programs available at the main Courthouse as well as at Walled Lake and Troy satellite offices. Referrals

to the program are handled by the caseworker assigned to the juvenile probationer.



## **PROBATE ESTATES**

### ***REMOVING THE MYSTERIES SEMINAR***

This is a seminar given in cooperation with the Oakland County Probate Court staff and the Oakland County Citizens Alliance. This seminar is presented at various community centers all across Oakland County at no cost to the attendees.

Experts including probate staff, bank trust officers and private attorneys will educate the attendees on topics including what individuals need to know about the new Probate Code, how to begin probate proceedings, what happens if a person doesn't have a Will, when an individual needs a Will, trust or power of attorney, and what guardianships and conservatorships are and how they are handled at our Court.

This program is offered in the fall and spring and has educated hundreds of citizens on Probate Court and its procedures.

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***FOR MORE INFORMATION:***

<b>Administration – Circuit Court</b>	<b>(248) 858 - 0347</b>
<b>Administration - Family Division</b>	<b>858 – 0951</b>
<b>Adoption Services</b>	<b>858 – 0030</b>
<b>Child Support</b>	<b>858 – 4031</b>
<b>Friend of the Court</b>	<b>858 – 0424</b>
<b>Guardianships for Minors</b>	<b>858 - 0288</b>
<b>Juvenile Drug Court</b>	<b>452-9709</b>
<b>Juvenile Intake</b>	<b>858 – 2873</b>
<b>Juvenile Probation - Main Office</b>	<b>858 – 0237</b>
<b>Troy</b>	<b>655 – 1200</b>
<b>Walled Lake</b>	<b>926 – 3346</b>
<b>Personal Protection Orders</b>	<b>858 – 0117</b>
<b>Probate - Estates</b>	<b>858 – 0260</b>
<b>- Mental Health</b>	<b>858 – 0291</b>
<b>Prevention Programs - Youth Assistance</b>	<b>858 – 0051</b>
<b>Psychological Clinic</b>	<b>858 – 0065</b>
<b>Truancy ( Runaways )</b>	<b>858 – 0112</b>
<b>Victims Rights</b>	<b>858 – 0414</b>

