

YOUTH STUDY CENTER

PARENT HANDBOOK



PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As the parent or guardian of a child being detained at the Youth Study Center (YSC), you may have questions about the facility and your child's placement. This handbook is designed to answer those questions as well as to give you a basic understanding of YSC services, procedures, and policies. The staff at the YSC is dedicated to helping youth and their families and is available to answer any additional questions that you may have. The last page of this handbook contains a listing of important phone numbers and contact information.

Please feel free to call us. We are here to help.

City of Philadelphia
Department of Human Services



We Make A Difference
In The Lives Of Philadelphia's
Children And Families

What is the Youth Study Center?

The Youth Study Center is the City of Philadelphia's highest level of secure detention for youth between the ages of 13 and 18. The young people sent here have either been arrested by the Philadelphia Police Department and charged with an offense or have been ordered here by a Family Court judge. There are two reasons that a judge orders youth be detained at the YSC: the judge has determined that the youth will be a risk to the community or he/she feels that the youth may not appear at their scheduled court date.

How long will my child stay at the Youth Study Center?

Each child's case is different and the length of your child's stay may vary from a few hours to several days depending upon certain factors. A judge may want a child to remain at the YSC until his/her probation officer identifies a proper treatment center. Other times, the judge may decide that your child poses no risk of failing to appear at the next scheduled court date and that he/she may go home with you. Occasionally, a child will be released and sent home with an Electronic Monitor, Voice Tracking, or be placed on In-Home Detention. Some children will remain at the YSC until their scheduled court date. In each case, the judge will make the final decision.

Whom can I talk to about my child's case?

Upon arrival at the Youth Study Center, several people become involved in your child's case. A social worker will be assigned to your child and meet with him/her on a weekly basis. Social workers provide your child with support and encouragement and are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. They can answer questions about your child's adjustment to life in the YSC, physical and mental health concerns, and how your child is interacting with others within the facility. The social worker can also arrange "special visits" and "family conferences" if the need arises.

Your child will also be assigned a probation officer. The probation officer plays a major role in your child's case and will make recommendations to the judge about possible next steps. The best time to contact your child's probation officer is before 1:00 p.m. as they spend most afternoons conducting home visits.

A public defender or a private attorney will also be involved with your child's case. They will defend your child in court and speak to the judge on your son or daughter's behalf. It is highly recommended that you speak with this person and ensure that they have all of the facts about your child's case.

What if my child has a Court Order for a Community Based Detention Shelter (CBDS) or other youth placement?

Youth who have been ordered into placement at a CBDS or residential placement will be moved as soon as a slot is available at one of these placements and necessary medical/mental health clearances are obtained.

What types of activities will my child be involved in during the day?

All residents of the Youth Study Center attend school and participate in recreational activities and workshops. The School District of Philadelphia conducts classes on the premises in the areas of English, Social Studies, History, Mathematics, and Science. Children will receive full academic credit upon return to their community school. In addition to the core subjects, children have the opportunity to participate in after-school activities such as computer classes, sewing and clay molding workshops, as well as group discussion sessions dealing with drug and alcohol abuse, violence, self-esteem, and responsibility. Physical education classes are also conducted and, during seasonal weather, the children are allowed to play outdoors.

Who can visit with my child and when?

During the first 30 days of a child's stay at the Youth Study Center, only parents or grandparents are allowed to visit. Visits can take place Monday through Friday from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Only two (2) visitors are allowed each day per resident, so the family may want to decide which two people will visit. Visitors must bring a form of photo identification in order to be admitted. If a youth stays at the YSC for more than 30 days, the social worker may approve a "special visit". "Special visits" take place on Wednesday afternoons from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Special visitors are often adult relatives of the youth. Sometimes it is necessary to meet with several members of a youth's family at the same time to discuss the progress of his or her case or to discuss some problems that the youth may be experiencing. This is called a "family conference" and is facilitated by the social worker. The Youth Study Center does not allow visits from boyfriends or girlfriends.

What kinds of things can I bring to my child during visits?

Please do not bring any items to your child during visits without prior authorization. The Youth Study Center provides soap, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste and other personal care items to all residents. If a youth experiences a problem with the brand of products that we use, our doctor may authorize parents to bring alternative products. Clothing is also provided by the YSC and children are not permitted to wear any outside or “street” clothing. Again, please call before bringing any items to your child and do not bring food of any kind to the Youth Study Center. Drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, and any other illicit substances are also forbidden.

What about phone calls and mail?

Residents may place a call to their parent/guardians shortly after they arrive at the Youth Study Center. After admission, they are allowed to make one call every other day provided they are “on good behavior.” “Good behavior” implies that your child has followed all YSC rules and has treated the staff and fellow residents in a respectful manner. Phone calls and other privileges may be revoked for misbehavior.

All residents can send and receive mail. Though staff will not open their mail, it will be inspected to ensure that it does not contain inappropriate items. Inappropriate items include: drugs, cigarettes, sexually explicit photographs or literature, weapons, or anything that could be used to harm your child or others. Mail should include your child’s name and be sent to the following address:

**The Youth Study Center
2020 Pennsylvania Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19130**

***What if my child takes medication?
Should I bring it to the Youth Study Center?***

If your child takes medication, please inform our medical staff as soon as he or she arrives. The medical staff can be contacted at (215) 686-4830. They will record the names and dosage information for all of your child's medications and ask for the names of your child's physician and pharmacist. They will contact the physician and/or pharmacist to ensure that your child requires the medication and will get a new prescription filled.

You do NOT need to bring your child's medications to us.

What if my child has a follow-up clinical appointment that they need to attend?

Please inform the Youth Study Center medical staff of any health-related appointments that your child may have scheduled. They will ensure that your child will attend these appointments or, in some cases, they may decide to have your child seen for the condition at a different hospital or clinic.

What if my child has special needs?

If your child has any special needs, please inform our Director of Programming immediately at (215) 686-4845.

What other kinds of services will my child receive while he or she is at the Youth Study Center?

All residents of the Youth Study Center undergo a medical assessment to ensure that they are healthy. If any ailments are discovered, the youth is treated by our on-site physician or referred to an appropriate specialist. Dental, vision, and hearing screenings are also provided. Youth that have mental health problems such as depression or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) will attend meetings with YSC mental health professionals (including a child psychiatrist and psychologist), where counseling will be provided and recommendations for medication can be made.

What is it going to cost me while my child stays at the Youth Study Center? What if I am unable to pay for all of the services my child may need?

The average cost of housing and caring for a child at the Youth Study Center is over \$300 per day. Most families cannot afford to pay that much, but there is assistance. Upon your child's admission to the YSC, you will be asked to sign an application enabling the Youth Study Center to receive financial assistance for your child through the State Department of Public Welfare. This application, called a TANF (Transitional Assistance to Needy Families) form, assures that if you are unable to pay, all of your child's YSC billing needs are covered by the State's insurance program. Signing the TANF form is an important step in making sure that your child receives the services that he or she is entitled to and that you are not billed.

What if I have complaints about the way that my child is treated at the Youth Study Center?

If you feel that your child has been treated unfairly or that their civil rights may have been violated, please inform us immediately. We will listen to your concerns and attempt to resolve the problem as quickly as possible. You may contact the hotline at 1-800-932-1313 or any of the administrative staff members listed in this handbook. You may also choose to contact the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations at (215) 686-4670. They are located at 34 S. 11th Street – 6th Floor Philadelphia, PA 19107.

As a parent/guardian, what is my role in this process?

You are the most important person(s) in your child's life. We encourage you to visit often, write letters, and to be available to your child for phone calls. Speak often with your child's social worker, probation officer, lawyer, or public defender. Inform us of any ideas that you may have about possible ways to help your child. We share your concern for your child and, like you, we want this to be the last time your child enters the juvenile justice system. Your encouragement and support will help to make a difference.

The Youth Study Center conducts a Parent Support Group that meets every Tuesday evening at 6:15 p.m. Parents, guardians, grandparents and important caretakers are all invited. The group gives parents a chance to meet with YSC staff, probation officers, and Family Court Judges. If you would like to participate in the Parent Support Group, please contact David Mainor, YSC Social Worker II at (215) 686-8817.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Anne Marie Ambrose
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Juvenile Justice Services
(215) 683-6220

Clarence D. Holmes, Sr.
Executive Director, YSC
(215) 686-4800

Thomas Quick
Director of Residential Services
(215) 686-4833

Marq Temple
Acting Director of Residential Services
(215) 686-4833

Jascinth Scott-Findley
Acting Director of Professional Services
(215) 686-4837

Center Control, YSC
(215) 686-4845

Social Services Department
(215) 686-4846

Philadelphia Defender Association
Juvenile Unit
(215) 557-4929

Philadelphia Department of Human Services
Division of Juvenile Justice Services
One Parkway Building
1515 Arch Street, 8th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 683-4DHS



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2020 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19130

