

Now What?

My Child is Suspected of Breaking a Law

When a **juvenile** does something that would be a crime if he was over 18, it is called an **offense or delinquent act**. There are also some offenses for juveniles that are not illegal for adults, such as drinking alcohol.

Juvenile or Youth =
your child younger
than 18 years old

The Offense

Your child's formal involvement with the juvenile justice system begins with an offense. Someone suspects your child of committing a crime or actually sees him breaking a law. That someone could be a victim, a school official or even you.

Offense or Delinquent Act =
crime or law violation

Usually, a law enforcement officer (LEO) is called about your child's behavior. The LEO then either releases him, issues a Civil Citation (an alternative to arrest), files a complaint with the court and releases him until the court date or contacts the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). When the charges are more serious, DJJ handles the rest of the process.

Taken into Custody

If DJJ is called or the LEO brings your child to a DJJ facility, he will then be evaluated to see what will happen next. When your child is **taken into custody** by law enforcement, this is similar to an adult arrest.

Taken into Custody =
arrested

Your child will then be assessed and processed (booked).

Assessment

If your child is brought to a DJJ facility and does not have any immediate medical or mental health needs, he will be accepted into DJJ's custody. He will be photographed, fingerprinted, and interviewed. Information about him and his charges will be put into a computer system. He then has an arrest record. DJJ will continue to process and assist your child.



Now What?

Can Your Child Go Home?

Whether your child will be allowed to go home or must be kept in a locked detention facility depends upon:

1. His charges;
2. Whether he is a risk to harm anyone or anything; and
3. Whether he is likely to show up for court the next court day.



By St. Pete Prodigy Artist Onisia

Depending on these things, your child may be:

1. Released to you.
Your child must stay out of trouble and attend an arraignment hearing within the next couple of weeks where the judge will ask him if he is guilty or not guilty of breaking the law. He does NOT have to go to a detention hearing the next day.
2. Released to you on non-secure detention.*
Your child may stay at home but must go to the detention hearing the next day. Your child may have limits on what your child can and cannot do and where your child may and may not go until the judge decides his consequences.
3. Placed in detention.*
Your child will stay in a locked DJJ facility. DJJ will take him to the detention hearing the next day.

***If your child must stay in secure detention at DJJ or is on non-secure detention, he must go to court to a detention hearing the next day.**

Detention Hearing

If your child is placed in detention or is on home detention, he must attend the detention hearing. At the detention hearing a judge will decide if it is likely your child broke a law. The judge also will decide if he agrees with the temporary placement of your child in a detention facility or at home with or without restrictions.

Your child will not be asked if he is guilty of the charges at this hearing.

It is important that you attend the detention hearing to support your child.

Afterward, your child may be:

1. Released with all charges dropped.
2. Released to you on non-secure detention.
3. Placed in secure detention.

For additional information, contact:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

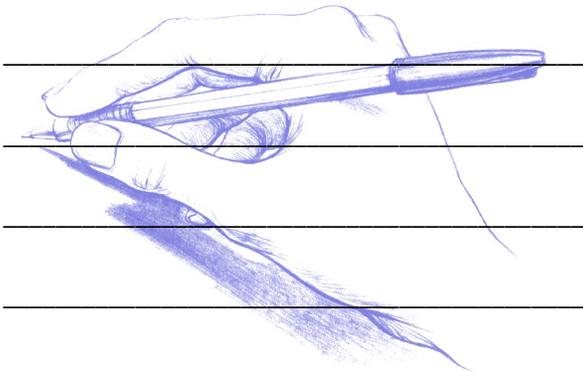
Court Date: _____ Time: _____

Address: _____

Room: _____

Parking: _____

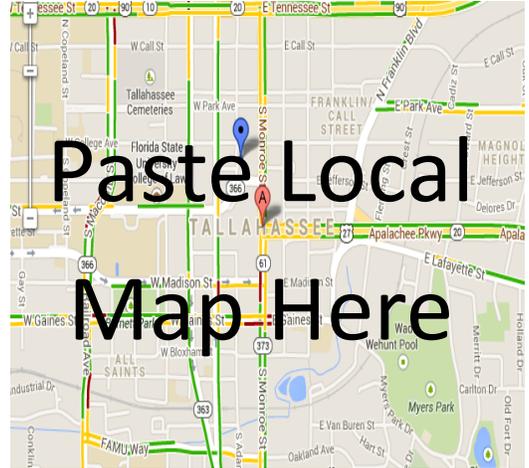
Special Instructions: _____



Courthouse Information

Address: _____

Number: _____



Make sure you get these brochures:

- Definitions and Similar Meanings
- Our Promises to Families
- Be Involved!
- Court Talk

Ask any questions you have about what these say BEFORE you leave or BEFORE you attend court with your child tomorrow.