Juvenile Diversion is the redirection of youth from the formal processing of the juvenile court.

- Formal court action should be avoided and other community resources utilized to ameliorate situations brought to the attention of the court. [Juv. R. 9(A)] Growing research shows that diversion is the most effective method of disposing of juvenile cases.[1]
- Diversion occurs prior to an initial hearing or formal appearance of a youth before the court.
- Any child may be eligible for diversion.

MINIMUM CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE DIVERSION

- Youth attends an informal meeting with diversion staff;
- A risk or mental health screen is conducted;
- An individualized diversion plan is created with youth and parent/guardian input;
- No standard routine meetings with diversion staff;
- Participation does not typically exceed 90 days; and
- Intervention strategy does not include extensive standard rules/conditions.

DIVERSION INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

- Diversion is not a "program" with a specific beginning or ending, a completion or failure, or just a one-time opportunity.
- Intervention strategies should be community-based services ranging from light-touch contact to high-risk interventions.
- The least-restrictive option is always the one to consider first.

NOTE For more information regarding creating a menu of diversion intervention strategies, see the Juvenile Diversion Toolkit.

- Sample Intervention Strategies
  - School diversion
  - Police warnings
  - Screening referral
  - Community based partner
  - School attendance mediation [R.C. 2710.01 – 2710.10]; [Sup.R 6.00 through 6.06]; [School Attendance Toolkit].

NOTE Hearings relating to a juvenile charged with domestic violence, R.C. 2919.25, shall not be referred to mediation. [Sup.R. 6.02]

WHEN THE MATTER IS REFERRED TO DIVERSION

- Employ diversion intervention strategies that promote positive youth development and allow individualized intervention addressing the underlying cause of the delinquent behavior.
- Design intervention plan using a lens of race, equity, and inclusion.
- When possible, the youth does not have a formal complaint filed against them.
- Youth should not have a formal record after completion.
- The matter should be dismissed before formal court action is taken. [Juv.R. 9(A)]

NOTE For more information, see Models for Change Juvenile Diversion Guidebook - modelsforchange.net/publications/301.

The information contained in this resource is a compilation of statutes, court rules, and court decisions in the State of Ohio, and it is intended as a summary of the law to assist judges, lawyers, and the general public. The information does not represent binding statements of law by the Supreme Court of Ohio.

[1] ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/9909-3/div.html

THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF OHIO