

Montana Judicial Branch Policies and Procedures

Subject: Youth Assessments and Evaluations	Policy No.: 1300
Chapter: 41-5-103, 41-5-1412, 41-5-2004, 41-5-2006 and [section 20], MCA	Number of Pages: 2
Section: Youth	Revision Date: May 31, 2016; July 1, 2018, May 25, 2021; November 14, 2023, May 7, 2025
Effective Date: May 31, 2016	

1.0 Policy

In accordance with 41-5-2006, MCA, it is the policy of the Judicial Branch to assess the consistency and uniformity of placements and services for youth referred to the Youth Court using approved assessment tools and collection of placement and services data.

2.0 Youth Risk Assessment

- 2.1 In accordance with 41-5-2004, MCA, the Office of Court Administrator (OCA) has approved the Montana Juvenile Probation Screener (MJPS) and the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) risk and needs assessment tool and case plan as the validated instruments for measuring youth's risk level and the effectiveness of services provided to youth. The OCA has also adopted the Experiences and Expressions Screener (EES) to assist juvenile probation officers in developing trauma responsive case planning.
- 2.2 To further evidence-based decision making in the case-planning process, it is the policy of OCA and Youth Court Services to administer the MJPS on all referrals in which a Preliminary Inquiry/Intake is completed.
- 2.3 To engage in case planning that addresses trauma and victimization, the Experiences and Expressions Screener (EES) must also be used when a youth scores Moderate or High Risk on the MJPS and is placed on informal or formal probation. The EES must be completed within (45) days of starting supervision.
- 2.4 An initial full Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) assessment and case plan must be completed for a youth:
 - i. placed on informal or formal probation for a period of (6) months or longer, or
 - ii. for a youth placed out-of-home, as defined in 41-5-103(32), MCA, for over 45 days. For youth placement, the RPACT must be completed.

A re-assessment and updated case plan must be completed every (6) months during the period of supervision, including a final assessment at the time of case closure.

3.0 Data Collection and Reporting

If a youth is placed out of the home or is receiving services, the Youth Court must enter all pertinent information into the Juvenile Court Assessment and Tracking System (JCATS). The OCA will provide training on JCATS as needed throughout the state. The OCA will provide recommendations to Youth Court about placements and services that consistently have shown success in reducing recidivism among youth involved in the Youth Court.

4.0 Costs Associated with Evaluations

Evaluations or assessments requested by a Youth Court must be paid from funds provided for in 41-5-130, MCA or with funds in the youth court intervention and prevention account provided for in 41-5-2011, MCA. Psychosexual evaluation costs are capped at \$1,500 plus necessary travel expenses at the state rate.

5.0 Closing

Questions about this policy should be directed to Office of the Court Administrator at the following address:

Montana Supreme Court
Office of the Court Administrator
Room 315, Justice Building
215 North Sanders
P.O. Box 203002
Helena, Montana 59620-3002
Phone: (406) 444-2621