

**JUVENILE PROBATION OFFICER BASIC COURSE**  
**On the Record –**  
**Courtroom Proceedings and Dispositional Recommendations**



**PARTICIPANT GUIDE**

**Juvenile Justice Training Academy**

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**JUVENILE PROBATION OFFICER BASIC COURSE**

**ON THE RECORD – COURTROOM PROCEEDINGS AND DISPOSITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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INTRODUCTION ..... 5

JUDICIAL BLUEPRINT ..... 5

JPO JUDICIAL DUTIES ..... 7

ACTIVITY | YOU'RE UP ..... 8

FINAL THOUGHTS ..... 9

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## INTRODUCTION

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This course will explore provide an overview of the courtroom, the expected etiquette, and duties a juvenile probation officer is expected to perform. Individual roles during courtroom proceedings, appropriate demeanor, and dispositional recommendations will also be considered.

## OBJECTIVES

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1. Discover the courtroom blueprint, including fundamental rules, individuals in court, and appropriate etiquette.
2. Discuss integral responsibilities juvenile probation officers are tasked with regarding court proceedings.
3. Applying knowledge gained from this training, practice making sound recommendations for juveniles appearing in court

## SECTION I: JUDICIAL BLUEPRINT

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### | Who's Who?

- Juvenile | Respondent
    - respondent, person answering to a charge(s) in juvenile court
  - Judge
    - referee during court proceeding; final decision maker
  - Prosecutor
    - attorney for state
  - Defense Attorney
    - attorney for juvenile
  - Court Coordinator
    - maintains records and other court related business
  - Bailiff
    - maintains order in the court; protects participants in courtroom
  - Court Reporter
    - records testimony or verbal statements during court hearing
  - Jury
    - group of individuals tasked with rendering a verdict on court matters
  - Witnesses
    - individuals who provide evidence, by delivering testimony at court hearing
  - Victim
    - person suffering a loss due to juvenile delinquent conduct
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**| Court Hacks**

- Know courtroom rules
    - The “Rule” – Invoked by presiding judge
      - Do not discuss case with anyone, with exception to attorneys
      - Do not read or listen to media reports | other outside influences regarding juvenile case
      - Do not comment on testimony heard in court
      - Must be released by presiding judge
  - Arrive early
  - Know location of juvenile | family
  - Consider confidentiality
  - Be flexible
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**| Distractions**

- Food | drinks
  - Gum | tobacco Products
  - Reading materials
  - Unnecessary communication
  - Movement
  - Inappropriate gestures | interactions
  - Illness
  - Electronic devices
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**| Demeanor – outward behavior or appearance**

- Attire
  - professional | appropriate
  - hair properly manicured
  - follow local policy, especially regarding
    - facial hair
    - jewelry
    - tattoos
- Presence | Body language
  - exude competence
  - speak loudly
  - maintain eye contact
  - keep nervous behavior at bay; such as
    - fidgeting
    - playing with pen

**SECTION II: JPO JUDICIAL DUTIES**

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**| Dispositional recommendations**

Pre-disposition report | PDR

- Offense summary
  - Medical | mental health needs
  - Prior juvenile history
  - Academic performance
  - Peer relationships
  - Criminogenic needs | pro-social skills
  - Family background
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**| The Art of Courtroom Communication**

- Maintain respectful, professional attitude
  - Do NOT be afraid to say no
  - Do NOT take things personally
  - Remain fair | impartial
  - Avoid wavering from professional opinion
  - Be prepared
  - Only answer questions asked
  - Collaborate
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**| Family Guidance**

- Logistical information
- Must obtain legal counsel
- Attire
- Parental written statement
- Docket call
- Hearings
- Appropriate behavior
- Local policy or procedure

**ACTIVITY: YOU'RE UP**

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Instructions: Individually, read your chosen scenario and determine what your recommendation will be, including whether the juvenile should be supervised in the community, the length of the probation term, and conditions of probation, such as anger management classes or community service. You may decide the juvenile may need to be placed in a residential treatment facility or the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, and if so, be prepared to defend your recommendation.

You must base your recommendation solely on the information you have been given and keep in mind; this is the first offense for the juvenile referenced in your scenario. No additional information on the juvenile will be provided.

You will need to summarize your scenario and present your recommendation to the court. In addition, be prepared to answer any additional questions the presiding judge may have.

**| Identifying information**

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**| Recommendation**

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**FINAL THOUGHTS**

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- Following the judicial blueprint allows you to navigate the courtroom process efficiently.
- As an officer of the court, the judge will rely on your professional opinion when ordering juvenile dispositions.
- Dispositional recommendations must consider juvenile needs, family ability, and must be designed with rehabilitation in mind.

**NOTES**

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