



# THE FAMILY CONNECTION

NEWS FROM THE TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

OCTOBER 2016

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## Editor's Corner

It is the desire of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department to continue to have parents play an important role in the lives of their children while under the care and custody of TJJD. To give validity to that statement, in 2007 a group of parents, TJJD staff, TJJD youth, and members of child advocacy groups came together to develop what we call the Parents' Bill of Rights. TJJD continues to support that parents are partners with correctional staff, educators, and treatment providers in their child's rehabilitation. This month I chose to shed light upon the Parents' Bill of Rights and publish them in this newsletter. Parents of children who have been committed to the care, custody, or control of the TJJD have the following rights:

1. As a parent, you have the right to know that you and your child will be treated fairly regardless of race, religion, national origin, language, economic status, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or age and that each child will be treated as an individual.
2. As a parent, you have the right to expect TJJD to provide a safe, secure, and sanitary environment for your child.
3. As a parent, you have the right not to be judged, blamed or labeled because of your child's incarceration.
4. As a parent, you have the right to be a vocal and active advocate on behalf of your child.
5. As a parent, you have the right to be an active participant when decisions are made about your child.
6. As a parent, you have the right to be informed about matters related to your child's welfare.
7. As a parent, you have the right to access your child's records.
8. As a parent, you have the right to meaningful participation in your child's treatment, including medical treatment, behavioral health treatment, and education.
9. As a parent, you have the right to communicate with your child, including visitation, telephone, and mail.
10. As a parent, you have the right to be assured that all TJJD staff are professional, courteous, and respectful.
11. As a parent, you have the right to know that TJJD will take immediate corrective action to protect the rights of parents and youth.
12. As a parent, you have the right to meaningful participation in your child's transition-planning — from intake through community reentry, and eventual discharge.

If you think that your rights as a parent have been violated, you may call the office of the Ombudsman at 855-468-7330.



# Early Release Requests Are Possible



Did you know that if your child is doing well in his treatment program and he is at least a stage 4, he could possibly be released three months early? TJJD has a policy for youth who do not have a court-determined sentence to request a reduced length of stay for up to three months. If your child is making good progress in education, treatment, and behavior expectations, the facility's MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team) could send a request, first, to the superintendent. If the superintendent is in agreement, he could then send the request to Central Office for approval.

As parents, you may help your child qualify for an early release by encouraging him to follow rules, respect staff members and his peers, and actively participate in the treatment program.

Remember that as parents, you may also participate in your child's MDT. You should contact your child's case manager at least a week before the MDT meeting in order for arrangements to be made for your participation. If your child is a stage 4, you may contact your child's case manager to ask if your child is eligible for an early release.

## Questions or Comments?

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## WEBCAM VISITS REUNITE FAMILIES

After 1-½ years of not seeing their child, this family reunites by webcam from their home. It was a well received and appreciated time for this family and their son. The Mart facility is several hundred miles from the Rio Grande Valley and the distance and expense were prohibiting this family from seeing their son. Technology has bridged that gap and they look forward to the next visit.

Kudos!!! to Parole Officer Leal and Family Liaison Mary Garrity for coordinating this webcam visit at the family's home. The determination that was demonstrated to facilitate the visit ignited a well-received response from the family and the youth.



# PROCEDURE FOR PUTTING MONEY INTO YOUR CHILD'S TRUST FUND ACCOUNT

Do not send cash. TJJJ will not be responsible for any cash sent through the mail that is not received.

Funds need to be in the form of a money order, check or cashier's check. If a money order is purchased from anywhere else, other than the United States Post Office, there will be a 2 week hold on it. There will also be a 2 week hold on checks and cashier's checks.

Money Orders, checks and cashier's checks need to be made payable to **Facility's Name - Student Trust**. Include who purchased the money order and their address. On the memo line, include your child's name and TJJJ #.

Envelopes for money orders, checks and cashier's checks need to be addressed to the name of the facility where your child is,

Attention Business Office.

Example:  
McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility  
Attn: Business Office  
116 W. Burleson Road  
Mart, Texas 76664

Your child will receive an Official Student Trust Fund Receipt as notification of the funds they have received.

## BLUE PHONE/C-TEL PROCEDURES:

Follow the same instructions for money orders as stated above, only reference C-Tel/ Blue Phone on the bottom of the money order. Also, C-Tel can be contacted directly by calling 1-800-583-9683 or online at [www.ctel.us](http://www.ctel.us) and putting money directly in the youth's account for a nominal fee.

# AMIKids Win Sports Challenge Award



AMIKids-Rio Grande Valley is a program under contract with TJJJ and each year AMIKids take a group of youth to a sports challenge event. This year the program traveled to North Carolina for a Whitewater Rafting Challenge and our kiddos got 1st place in the event on the last week. Five (5) TJJJ Youth were selected based on their progress in the rehabilitative program at AMIKids; having minimal behavior issues; and their parents/guardian granting consent for them to participate.

## Evins Hosts Family Day



Evins Regional Juvenile Center recently held a Family Day to bring families and their youth together. A total of 51 youth and 115 family members participated in this event and enjoyed

pizza and soft drinks that were sponsored by the Evins Volunteer Council. Family members were able to interact and meet with case managers and dorm supervisors and get an update on the youth's progress. Family members were also provided with a copy of the Parent's Bill of Rights, the most recent Family Connection newsletter and an invitation for the next family day event which is the annual Feast of Sharing on November 19, 2016. Family days at Evins are always fun and special to families and youth as they joyfully interact with one another.

## Take Time to Get a Flu Shot

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a yearly flu shot as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu shot by the end of October, if possible, but may still benefit from a shot through the winter.

At TJJJ, we encourage all youth to take the flu shot that we provide to them at no cost to you. The nurses try to give flu shots to youth by the end of October. All of the nurses, doctors, dentists and other health care staff working in TJJJ medical clinics also receive a flu shot each year. Encourage your child to take the flu shot that we offer and help protect them and others from the flu this season.



# 3rd Annual Spelling Bee

On July 13, 2016, the Education Division of Texas Juvenile Justice Department hosted its 3rd Annual Spelling Bee at Central Office. The winner of the Spelling Bee was K. P. from Ron Jackson, and the second place winner of the Spelling Bee was T. W. from Mart.

Students from across the state competed in on-campus spelling bees and the top three winners from each of TJJD's 7 campuses won their opportunity to compete in the District-Wide Spelling Bee. The Spelling Bee was conducted out of Central Office via the Polycom system. The pronouncer for the Bee was Dr.

Janice Lopez, PBIS Intervention Specialist, and the judges were Kimbla Newson – Manager of Youth Services Contracts, and Parole Services; James Williams – Senior Director of Probation & Community Services; and Lane Cartwright – Education Services, Grants Compliance and Budget Specialist. Cathy Berryhill, District Reading Specialist, coordinated the Bee, along with Efrain Resendez, Scorer, and Jeanye Anderson, who coordinated the T-shirt Art Project.

We also conducted our 3rd annual art contest, with students entering their own original artwork and designs into the competition.

The winning art logo is printed on a t-shirt for the Spelling Bee Champion. The second place art logo is printed on t-shirts and given as a gift to all other Spelling Bee participants who competed in the Bee.

This year, the 1st place art logo was hand drawn by R. R. and E. M. at Lone Star High School South (Evins), and the 2nd place art logo was from the graphic design class drawn by K. H. at Lone Star High School West (Ron Jackson).

Congratulations to our Spelling Bee Champion and our Art Contest Winners!

## Families Voice Their Opinion

In 2008, a survey was initiated to seek the families' opinion on how the Texas Department of Juvenile Justice (TJJD) is doing in rehabilitating your child. The Survey is short and has become available on our TJJD website so that families can give us their rating on various issues such as education, medical care, case management, youth safety, and other areas of interest. The survey has also been provided to family members during visitation weekends and through mailouts. Throughout the years, the survey results have provided information on family views and improvement in services has been perceived by families. This year we collected 457 responses from family members across the state. 386 responses were in English and 71 in Spanish. The table shows the results of this year's survey. Think of the percentages as if they were grades on your child's report card. Thank you to all the families who participated in the survey, and TJJD will continue to work towards improving in all areas of your child's care. Our next newsletter will provide more detailed information on survey results.

Q	Topic 2016	ENGLISH % Agree	SPANISH % Agree
5	My child is making progress in education.	85	83
6	My child receives the necessary medical treatment.	81	89
7	I get timely responses to my questions about my child's medical care.	77	90
8	I am notified in a timely manner when my child is seriously sick or injured.	77	87
9	The case manager has involved me in my child's ICP and the planning for return to the community.	85	88
10	TJJD is helping my child make positive changes.	88	84
11	I am able to reach staff when I have questions.	83	82
12	Families are treated w/respect when they visit TJJD facilities.	97	99
13	Grievances that my child has filed are handled in a timely and fair manner.	88	95
14	My child is safe at current TJJD facility.	89	86
15	My child is given the opportunity to worship in the religion of his/her choice.	97	95
16	The family liaison assists me in communicating my child's needs to other TJJD staff.	83	91

Tell us how we are doing: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FY2017FSCS>