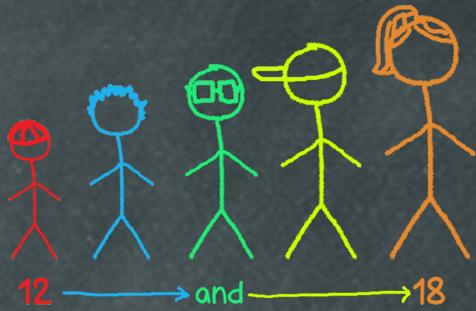


Youth Criminal Justice Act



The *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA) is legislation for young people between the ages of 12 and 18.

It was created to ensure the consequences for young people breaking the law are balanced.



Young people should be held accountable for their actions; however, they are still children who make mistakes. They should be given an opportunity to mature, learn from their mistakes, accept the consequences of their actions, and make amends.



To learn more about the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* visit CPLEA's website:

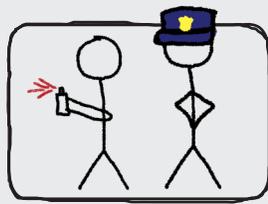
www.law-faqs.org



The Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta acknowledges the Department of Justice Canada for funding this project

Youth Criminal Justice Act

in action



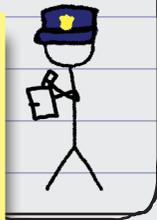
A police officer has a good reason to believe a young person has broken the law. They can choose whether or not to lay charges.

No Charges

Give youth a warning or caution.

Refer youth to a program for help.

Police keep records of these warnings to ensure youth who continue to break the law face the consequences of getting in trouble again.



Charges Laid

Charge youth and release them.

Charge youth and detain them. If the youth is not released, it may be because they are considered a danger to the public or unlikely to show up in court.

The youth will be sent home with a form explaining when to go to court.

Crown Prosecutor

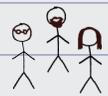
Once charges have been laid, the case will go to a Crown Prosecutor, who is a lawyer that works for the government. Usually, the youth will have a lawyer too. From here, the youth could either go to court or to a program.



Serious offences, including violent crimes, auto theft, theft over \$5000, and crimes that could endanger the public, are more likely to go to court.

Programs

Programs require youth to complete actions designed by groups that work with youth. For example:



Youth Justice Committee



Sharing Circle



Social Worker

Some of the actions the youth could complete include:

- * addiction counselling
- * community service
- * apologizing
- * helping the victim of their crime

If a young person does not complete a program they might have to go to court. A young person can choose to go to court instead of participating in a program.

Court



A judge will listen to the case and decide if the youth is guilty of the crime they have been charged with. For serious violent offences the judge must consider an adult sentence if the Crown Prosecutor requests it.

Not Guilty

The youth is free to go and the case is over. Any records will be destroyed or sealed after a specific period of time as said in the Act.

Guilty

The young person will be given a sentence that reflects their level of maturity and the seriousness of the crime. This could include:

- * community service
- * prison (this cannot be in an adult prison)
- * criminal record
- * payment for damaged property
- * completion of a program

To learn more visit:
www.law-faqs.org

* This is a simplified explanation to describe the intention fo the YCJA. Do not rely on it for legal advice.

