

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION – YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

- AUTHORITY:** Administrative Directive  
California Code of Regulations, Title 15 – Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities, Section 1371
- RESCINDS:** Procedure Manual Item **3-8-002**, dated **08/18/23**
- FORMS:** None
- PURPOSE:** To set forth an overview of the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) Program.

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The facility administrator shall develop and implement written policies and procedures for programs, recreation, and exercise for all youth.

- A. Juvenile facilities shall provide the opportunity for programs, recreation, and exercise a minimum of three hours a day during the week and five hours a day each Saturday, Sunday, or other non-school days, of which one hour shall be an outdoor activity, weather permitting.
- B. Program, recreation, and exercise schedule shall be posted in the living units. There will be a written annual review of the programs, recreation, and exercise by the responsible agency to ensure content offered is current, consistent, and relevant to the population.
- C. Programs- All youth shall be provided with the opportunity for at least one hour of daily programming to include, but not limited to trauma-focused, cognitive, evidence-based, best practice interventions that are culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate, or pro-social interventions and activities designed to reduce recidivism. These programs should be based on the youth's individual needs as required by Sections 1355 and 1356. Such programs may be provided under the direction of the Chief Probation Officer or the County Office of Education and can be administered by county partners such as mental health agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations or Probation staff. Programs may include but are not limited to:
1. Cognitive Behavior Interventions;
  2. Management of Stress and Trauma;
  3. Anger Management;
  4. Conflict Resolution;
  5. Juvenile Justice System;
  6. Trauma-related interventions;

7. Victim Awareness;
  8. Self-Improvement;
  9. Parenting Skills and support;
  10. Tolerance and Diversity;
  11. Healing Informed Approaches;
  12. Interventions by Credible Messengers;
  13. Gender Specific Programming;
  14. Art, creative writing, or self-expression;
  15. CPR and First Aid training;
  16. Restorative Justice or Civic Engagement;
  17. Career and leadership opportunities; and,
  18. Other topics suitable to the youth population.
- D. Recreation. All youth shall be provided the opportunity for at least one hour of daily access to unscheduled activities such as leisure reading, letter writing, and entertainment. Activities shall be supervised and include orientation and may include coaching of youth.
- E. Exercise. All youth shall be provided with the opportunity for at least one hour of large muscle activity each day.
- F. The administrator/manager may suspend, for a period not to exceed 24 hours, access to recreation and programs. The administrator/manager shall document the reasons why the suspension of recreation and programs occurs.
- G. The Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) is a juvenile treatment facility with a multi-disciplinary focus operated by the Orange County Probation Department. The program protects the community, offers rehabilitative programs, and provides centrally located accommodations for adjudicated youth. The program provides meaningful consequences through a highly structured environment for the purpose of reducing further court commitments. The youth are under constant supervision.
- H. The **department's rated capacity** of 64 youth provides commitment accommodations for males ranging in age from 14 to 24.99 years of age. Youth commitments within YLA can vary, they can include short-term commitments to long-term commitments, spanning several years. Once adjudicated and if the youth meets YLA eligibility requirements, the youth can be transferred to serve **their** commitment within the program.
- I. Upon arrival, youth are assigned to a **Deputy Probation Correctional Officer (DPCO)** who assess their needs and develops **an** individualized case plan with

specific treatment goals and strategies to be achieved while at YLA. The successful transition back to the community is a primary case objective for all youth at YLA. The assigned **DPCO** meets with the youth regularly to **collaborate on identifying treatment and resource** needs and to evaluate the **youth's progress as it relates to** program participation and behavior. A broad range of treatment services are available onsite, including cognitive behavioral programming such as EPICS (Effective Practices in Community Supervision) and Decision Points, academic education, alcohol/drug abuse counseling, work and educational furloughs, parenting effectiveness, and counseling provided by the Health Care Agency (HCA) Clinical Evaluation and Guidance Unit (CEGU). Youth are transitioned to appropriate community-based service providers for follow-up care following their release from YLA. The treatment program helps prepare the youth emotionally, behaviorally, and academically for transition back into the community.

- J. YLA will maintain sufficient staff to provide for the safety and security of its youth and staff, conduct programming, meet state and federal standards and regulations, and perform facility operations.
- K. YLA utilizes phases for the purpose of classification, supervision and behavior modification within program guidelines and criteria. Each phase, described below, is designed to help youth progress in attitude, behavior, and education. Both sanctions and incentives are utilized as youth work toward program completion (i.e., collared shirt, participation in College Occupational Program (COP), field trips, extended privileges, etc.) Positive and negative behavior are addressed by unit staff and supervisors. Advancing or reducing phases is evaluated by officers and supervisors on a case by case basis.
  - 1. YLA 1 P.R.I.D.E. (Progressive Rehabilitation in a Dynamic Environment)
    - a. Phase 1: Orientation Phase: When a new youth enters the unit, they are assessed and placed into Phase I. During this time, **DPCOs** will orient the youth to the unit with the assistance of a Phase 4 youth. During the orientation phase, youth may participate in indoor work crews. Phase 1 youth are not eligible for roommates, unless there is need, such as medical or psychological. Roommate designation will be reviewed by the unit supervisor or administration.
    - b. Phase 2: After four (4) weeks of P.R.I.D.E. programming, a youth can apply to promote to Phase 2. The youth must complete a Phase increase application, which will be provided by their assigned **DPCO**. The youth is required to complete a detailed essay, stating why **they** feel that **they are** deserving of a Phase increase. **They are** also encouraged to approach each staff, teacher, and collaborative partner for their signature in support of the phase increase. Completed applications should be given to the unit **Supervising Probation Correctional Officer (SPCO)** for approval. In this phase, youth are eligible to have extra room privileges and roommates; have an extended bedtime; participate in special programming, participate on the cart crew, and be considered for field trips.
    - c. Phase 3: After six (6) weeks in Phase 2 and completion of unit programming, the youth will be eligible to promote to Phase 3. In

this phase, youth have all Phase 2 privileges, in addition to: on-grounds furloughs; being considered for all field trips; having **late night**; and being allowed extra hygiene and food items from the unit store.

- d. Phase 4: After completion of Phase 3 and unit programming, the youth will be eligible to promote to Phase 4. In this phase, youth have all Phase 3 privileges, in addition to: an extended bedtime; eligibility for off-ground furloughs; use of a DVD player with movie rental; access to an MP3 player; and being allowed extra hygiene and food items from the unit store. The youth can also serve as a mentor during orientation for the other youth.

2. YLA 2 L.E.A.D. (Leadership Education through Active Development)

- a. Phase 1: (14+ days): All youth enter at Phase 1 and must be part of the program for a minimum of 14-days before being eligible to move to Phase 2. Additionally, the youth must complete the Phase 1 packet and actively participate in programming.
- b. Phase 2: (35+ days): Youth must be part of the program for a minimum of 35-days before being eligible to move Phase 3. Additionally, the youth must complete the Phase 2 packet, attend school regularly, maintain good behavior, and actively participate in programming.
- c. Phase 3: (50+ days): Youth must be part of the program for a minimum of 50-days before being eligible to promote to Phase 3. Additionally, the youth must take on a mentor/role model role in the program, attend school regularly, maintain good behavior, actively participate in programming, complete a unit project, and complete a promotion interview with the unit supervisor. Phase 3 youth are eligible to use MP3 players, have a roommate, attend field trips and have on-grounds furloughs.
- d. Phase 4: In addition to all other privileges, Phase 4 youth are eligible to use a DVD player and participate in off-grounds furloughs.

II. PROCEDURE

- A. Youth with the following case dynamics will be individually reviewed by YLA management for commitment to YLA:
  - 1. History of highly assaultive behavior.
  - 2. Serious emotional or mental health needs.
  - 3. Serious physical limitations.
  - 4. Criminal sophistication.
  - 5. Serious sex offenses.

- B. **Counseling is an integral part of every component of the YLA program.** Regularly scheduled individual and small-group counseling **sessions, as well as case conferences are conducted to support problem-solving and address the youth's adjustment needs, particularly in preparation for transfer or release. Services are trauma-informed, provided by staff and collaborative partners, ensuring that support is sensitive to the individual experiences of each youth.** Committed youth are admitted to YLA **following** assessment and medical clearance **from** Juvenile Hall. **Admissions are managed to ensure the facility does not exceed maximum population limit established by administration.**
- C. Upon arrival at YLA, unit staff completes a formal orientation, including a program description and orientation regarding acceptable behaviors in all facets of the program and probable consequences for unacceptable behavior.
- D. Youths' parents or guardians are contacted on the day of arrival to inform them of the youth's transfer. In addition, an orientation letter is sent to the parent/guardian to provide the new mailing address, information about visiting, available services and a description of the YLA program. **Probation brochures are available in general areas in the YLA administration building, MRC, and JH reception.** If needed, youth will receive assistance in requesting contact with parents, attorneys, detention ministries, their probation officer, or other supportive adults or public officials. Youth will be provided access to available resources to meet their needs in custody.
- E. All valuables and personal property collected and listed on a Personal Property Inventory will remain stored at Juvenile Hall safe and property rooms until release. Youth are provided with clothing, linens, and personal hygiene articles throughout their commitments. Youth also have the opportunity to earn personal hygiene articles from the facility commissary.
- F. The daily routine is very structured. Youth are oriented to daily activities, rules and staff expectations several times each day to assure that all youth are aware of behavioral expectations. The daily schedule is divided into time segments to accommodate recreation and treatment programs. Counseling is utilized at any time to redirect inappropriate behaviors and attitudes.
- G. Otto Fischer School Program

Upon arrival (and exit) at YLA, students are tested by school personnel and given reading and math scores to help determine the level of educational services.

1. The scope and level of educational service will vary, by necessity, with the following factors:
  - a. Length of time the student will be in the program.
  - b. Grade, instructional levels, and learning deficiencies of the student.
  - c. Prior school and type of program the student was attending in the community.
  - d. Post-release and/or transition plans of the student.

2. To accommodate differences between students, the school program will focus on a core curriculum, with support services to encompass various levels of instruction, learning deficiencies, state requirements, and comprehensive counseling needs.
3. Programs and classes will be offered in the following areas and will reflect the student's needs as determined through skills assessment, observation, and review of records:
  - a. Comprehensive program towards high school completion/diploma
  - b. Preparation for the high school proficiency test/GED
  - c. Remedial education
  - d. Special education programs for individuals with educational needs (RSP)
  - e. Intermediate school curriculum (grades 6 – 8)
  - f. College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
  - g. Life and job skills
4. Students will attend six class periods (block scheduling) each day. The class periods are approximately 45 minutes long (270 minutes per day).

#### H. College Occupational Program (COP)

Youth in COP are enrolled in classes through Santiago Canyon College. COP consists of a classroom component and operates Monday – Friday. YLA also participates in COP programming that involves work crews which are held on various days of the week to teach the youth job skills such as construction, painting and landscaping.

#### I. YLA Program Information

1. Youth at YLA are housed in one of two programs – The PRIDE (Progressive Rehabilitation in a Diverse Environment) Program in YLA-1, a secure camp setting, houses male youths aged 14 – 24.99 years old who receive lengthy commitments due to the seriousness of their offending behavior. The Leadership Program (Leading through Positive Change) in YLA-2 houses male youth aged 14 – 24.99 years old serving shorter commitments and is designed to house youths who require a higher level of need for transition and reentry services.
2. Evidence Based Practices (EBP) are facilitated at YLA through Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and pro-social programs. Two CBT programs are offered at YLA based on the youth's length of commitment EPICS and Decision Points. The "New Beginnings" parenting program (which includes baby visits) is also offered to all youth at YLA who have children. This is a

pro-social program that helps youth develop positive relationships with their young children.

3. Youth at YLA may be involved in work experience assignments. Work assignments are part of the daily schedule and may include kitchen, unit laundry, building, grounds maintenance, and off-campus work sites. Work assignments are performed under direct staff supervision and scheduled during waking hours.
4. Recreational activities are scheduled to provide energy release, encourage participation in acceptable group activities, and to provide relief from the academic/work schedule. Participation by Volunteers in Probation assists in augmenting this facet of the program, encouraging youth to learn socially acceptable recreational activities.
5. Youth receive visits from parents, guardians, persons standing “in loco parentis,” or other supportive adults as **approved** by the assigned Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) or unit supervisor, **following a facility clearance**. Opportunity for visitation is provided at least two hours per week.
6. Medical services are available 24 hours per day at Juvenile Hall or at an appropriate hospital **at the direction of the Medical Unit**. There is a nurse located at Juvenile Hall 24-hours a day. Parents and field Deputy Probation Officers are notified by medical staff of any serious medical problems. Furloughs may be authorized for emergency medical treatment.
7. Clergy visitation and religious services at the facility are available upon the youth’s request and parental approval. Catholic and Protestant religious services and Bible study groups are conducted during the week.
8. In order to maintain facility program standards, it may be necessary to remove youth who become unamenable, have serious, inappropriate behaviors or commit illegal and/or dangerous acts **to Juvenile Hall**.
9. During case conference planning sessions, specific goals will be outlined, **identified and implemented to guide the youth’s progress both during their time at YLA and following release. Transition and re-entry planning begin at the moment the youth is transferred to YLA, ensuring a continuum of care and support as they prepare to reintegrate into the community.**
10. Parents or legal guardians are **invited to all case conferences** and arrangements are made for the parents to accept youth upon release. Youth who cannot be released to parents, guardians, or field Deputy Probation Officers will return to Juvenile Hall upon completion of their commitment until proper placement or release can be made.
11. The Duty Officer, unit **SPCO**, or Assistant Division Director (ADD), under the Director's supervision, assume the responsibility for informal and formal handling of violations while a youth is in the program. The unit **SPCO** will ensure that a summary of each youth’s behavior, program adjustment and other pertinent information is forwarded to the assigned Deputy Probation

Officer after completion of the program. CEGU assists **Probation** staff in working with youth who suffer emotional or behavioral problems.

12. The ADD and/or Director supervise the compilation of information for program status reports. The ADD and/or Director also compile information for use in long-term research regarding the effectiveness of the treatment programs at YLA.

**REFERENCES:**

Procedures:	3-8-005	Daily Schedule – Youth Leadership Academy
	3-8-012	Visiting/Video Conferencing
	3-9-006	<b>Youth's Personal Property</b>
	3-11-003	Treatment Goals and Strategies – Youth Leadership Academy
	3-12-001	Health Care Procedures for Probation Staff
	3-13-007	Commissary Guidelines
Policies:	B-1	Case Confidentiality-Client's Right to Privacy
	B-3	Case File Management and Security
	B-4	Sensitive Cases
	E-9	Use of Resources for Minors, Parental Consent and Field Trips
	F-5	School Programs in Probation Department Juvenile Institutions
	F-7	Personal Property of Minors in Juvenile Institutions

**R. Soto**

**APPROVED BY:**