QUICK START AND SET UP

Our motivation is to provide youth a second chance and by planting seeds on how to make better choices, bring awareness and provide hope by helping them realize their potential even when they make mistakes.

Young people have less life experience to draw upon, which can lead to poor judgment. They may struggle to predict outcomes accurately, understand risks, or recognize how current actions could affect their future. Adolescents experience emotions more intensely than adults do. Heightened emotional states, like anger, excitement, or sadness, can cloud judgment and lead to impulsive decisions.

The human brain continues to develop well into a person's mid-20s. The prefrontal cortex, responsible for planning, impulse control, and decision-making, is one of the last areas to mature. This means that young people are more likely to act on impulse <u>without fully</u> <u>considering long-term consequences</u> because the emotional and reward-driven parts of the brain are more active and influential than the still-maturing control centers.

Adolescents are in a phase of establishing their identity, and this often involves pushing boundaries and testing limits. They may take risks or make choices that assert their independence, even if those choices carry consequences.

Research shows that programs focusing on social-emotional learning (SEL), which includes impulse control, character building, integrity, substance use awareness, and decision-making, can lead to improved behavior, academic performance, and mental health outcomes for young people. Our programs, teach emotional regulation, decision-making, and interpersonal skills, and are linked to reductions in aggressive behavior, substance abuse, and dropout rates, as well as increased resilience and positive social behavior.

Our educational classes provide young people with valuable life skills that support their emotional growth, help them navigate challenges, and encourage positive behaviors that can benefit them well into adulthood.

Self-Improvement and Support Services: We provide the educational strategies and the mentoring services outlined in HB3186.

Quick Start and Set Up

Here's a 'simple and basic plan' that will meet the requirements, and included are the documents you need for your Youth Diversion Plan.

Start by:

- 1. Printing pages 1-16
- 2. Make a few decisions
- 3. Maintain on file for public inspection

That's it!! Your plan can be ready in five minutes or less! This simple basic plan will meet the requirements and will work for most courts in Texas.

Please remember, you can also come back later and make updates and changes to your plan.

In a nutshell:

Here's what we have included to help you meet the requirement:

- 1) Identify who will be your Youth Diversion Coordinator (you will decide)
- 2) Have a Youth Diversion Plan and have it available for public inspection (included)
- 3) Have a Diversion Eligibility Checklist (included)
- 4) Have Child Questionnaire in place (included)
- 5) Know what your Diversion Educational Strategies and other strategies will be (included)
- 6) Have a list of Educational, Mentoring and other Service Providers (included)
- 7) Have a Diversion Agreement in place (included)
- 8) Have signed service provider MOUs, Available Upon Request for Court Solutions,
- 9) Have your Court Documents for successful completion and non-compliance (samples available upon request)

Things to remember:

Focus on an educational strategy and/or mentoring strategy for first time offenders.

You can always update/change/tweak your youth diversion plan.

Start off with a simple plan and then add more as needed.

Most courts will only need this simple quick start plan.

YOUTH DIVERSION COORDINATOR

Who will serve as the youth diversion coordinator in your local municipal or justice court?

Article 45.307 allows a court to appoint a youth diversion coordinator responsible for:

- 1. Checking if a child qualifies for diversion,
- 2. Applying an approved diversion strategy under Subchapter E,
- 3. Creating and managing diversion agreements,
- 4. Monitoring the progress of diversions,
- 5. Keeping records on the success or failure of diversions, and
- 6. Coordinating referrals to the court.

This role can be filled by various individuals or entities, including:

- 1. A court administrator, court clerk, or someone performing similar duties,
- 2. A person or organization providing juvenile case management under Article 45.056,
- 3. A court services office,
- 4. A community supervision department, such as a juvenile probation department,
- 5. A county or municipal employee, including a peace officer,
- 6. A community volunteer,
- 7. A higher education institution (public, private, or independent), or
- 8. A qualified nonprofit organization, as determined by the court.

This flexibility allows courts to select the most suitable coordinator to help manage youth diversion effectively.

STEP-BY-STEP How to Set Up <u>Your</u> Plan (The youth diversion plan on page 5 meets the requirement.)

Current laws don't list specific ways to help youth avoid getting deeper into the justice system. However, Article 45.305 gives examples of "diversion strategies" that courts can use.

IMPORTANT: This one-page youth diversion plan is a great starting point. You can tweak, add, remove, to make it your own later. Your plan will need to have: A written description of the types of strategies you will implement and use for youth diversion. (Your plan does not limit you on the types of diversion strategies that may be imposed (art. 45.308) Each court shall adopt a youth diversion plan)

Here are some of the diversion strategies a court can use:

1. **Programs for Self-Improvement**: Courts can ask a child to participate in programs like teen court, school-based activities, or classes focused on <u>building positive skills</u>. These may cover topics like <u>self-esteem</u>, <u>leadership</u>, <u>avoiding violence</u>, <u>managing anger</u>, <u>life skills</u>, <u>wellness</u>, <u>or conflict resolution</u>. They can also include <u>awareness programs for alcohol</u>, <u>tobacco</u>, <u>and drugs</u>.

- 2. Support Services: Children can be referred to support services for extra help. This might include working with youth counselors, case managers, tutors, or <u>mentors</u>. They may also receive mental health screenings, academic help, job training, or even counseling in school.
- 3. **Other Court-Ordered Actions**: Courts might require children to go through mediation to resolve conflicts, take part in drug or alcohol testing, or follow treatment prescribed by medical or mental health professionals.
- 4. **Restitution and Community Service**: Courts can order the child to pay up to \$100 in restitution if property is involved, complete up to 20 hours of community service, or do other activities the court finds suitable.

These options help courts guide children towards positive actions without giving them a criminal record.

Here's a simplified, step-by-step summary of the youth diversion process:

First, check if the child qualifies for diversion. Then, create a diversion agreement that outlines the child and parent's responsibilities for successfully completing the program. Both the child and parent need to sign this agreement. You can choose whether or not to collect a \$50 administrative fee. Upon successful completion of the diversion program, the court will dismiss the case without further action.

Steps to follow:

- 1) **Determine Eligibility:** Use the Diversion Eligibility Checklist to assess if the child qualifies.
- 2) If Eligible: Have the child fill out the Basic Questionnaire.
- 3) Choose the Best Diversion Strategy for the child's situation.
- 4) Sign the Agreement: Ensure both the child and parent sign the youth diversion agreement.
- 5) Collect the \$50 Admin Fee (optional).
- 6) **Provide Tools and Referrals:** Give the child and parent the resources needed to complete the diversion program.
- 7) **Successful Completion:** Once the child fulfills the program terms, the court will dismiss the case without further action. Close the case and report as successfully completed.

The Youth Diversion Plan we have included on page 5 is all you need to meet the requirement and deadline. You must also make the plan available for public inspections. Either by posting it on premise and/or on the court's website.

(Court Name) Youth Diversion Plan

Youth Diversion Coordinator: _

(Name of Youth Diversion Coordinator) If child is eligible for diversion, coordinator will collect \$50 fee on a case-by-case basis

- 1. Youth and Parent/Guardian contacts the court to schedule the in-take process.
- 2. In-Take Process and eligibility determination checklist: During the in-take process, youth and parent/guardian will meet with coordinator to determine eligibility for diversion. Coordinator determines diversion eligibility using the checklist.
- 3. Questionnaires for Early Identification: Once diversion eligibility has been established, youth will complete a basic questionnaire to determine where the child may be struggling and to identify remorse and the willingness to accept responsibility/accountability for their actions. An advanced questionnaire will be administered based on the findings of the basic questionnaire. The advanced questionnaire is used to help identify Mental Health issues or Drug Abuse issues. An optional Parent/Guardian questionnaire is available with an observations tool.
- 4. **Determining Strategy:** Coordinator will determine the best diversion strategy based on information gathered from questionnaire and the offense, and what is the best approach for the child. The diversion strategy will be added to the agreement.
- 5. **Diversion Agreement:** Diversion coordinator will document the written diversion strategy and go over the details with both the youth and the guardian. Once youth and guardian understand the plan and what is required of them to be successful, they will sign the agreement.
- 6. **Resources, Referrals and Service Provider Forms:** Coordinator will provide, to the child and parent, the necessary tools and resources including the list of service providers who can assist in helping them successfully complete the items on the written TX Youth Diversion Agreement.
- 7. **SUCCESSFUL Completion of Diversion**: Youth will show proof the diversion items were completed on the diversion agreement and if successful, court will file Dismissal of Charge Pursuant to Diversion Agreement.
- 8. **UNSUCCESSFUL Diversion:** If youth was unsuccessful on their agreed upon diversion plan, the court will file 'Referral to Court for Hearing', Non-Compliance with Diversion Agreement.
- 9. MOUs Signed by Service Providers available upon request.

DIVERSION ELIGIBILITY AND IN-TAKE PROCESS

Under current law, there is no requirement for diversion, nor are there uniform criteria for deciding if a child qualifies. According to Article 45.304, a child must be diverted from formal criminal prosecution as laid out in Subchapter E, except in certain cases:

- 1. A child may only enter into a diversion agreement once every 365 days.
- 2. A child is ineligible for diversion if they previously had an unsuccessful diversion under Subchapter E.
- 3. Diversion is not allowed if the prosecutor objects.
- 4. A child cannot be diverted from criminal prosecution without written consent from both the child and the child's parent.

These guidelines help ensure that diversion is applied thoughtfully, with specific limits and permissions in place.

IN-TAKE PROCESS:

Instead of overhauling the existing processes used in municipal and justice courts, H.B. 3186 aims to enhance youth diversion in these courts by adding a new subchapter (Subchapter E) to Chapter 45 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Legislative records indicate that Subchapter E was created with the following goals:

- 1. **Reduce Recidivism**: Address and prevent repeat offenses and problematic behaviors through early intervention without having to pursue criminal charges against youth in municipal and justice courts.
- 2. Identify and Support At-Risk Youth: Recognize youth who may have mental health issues, substance use challenges, or developmental disabilities, and, when appropriate, refer them to early intervention services as outlined in Subchapter D, Chapter 264 of the Family Code.
- 3. Focus on Accountability and Community Safety: Permit diversion for youth charged with certain minor offenses, promoting personal responsibility for both the youth and their parents, while also enhancing the safety of the community.
- 4. Encourage Collaboration: Strengthen partnerships between government entities, schools, and nonprofit organizations to develop effective local and regional diversion strategies for both rural and urban communities.

This approach is designed to give courts effective tools, just like the ones in this toolbox, to address youth issues constructively, encouraging accountability while providing needed support.

In-Take Process has not changed. During the in-take process, the youth and parent/guardian will meet with the Youth Court Coordinator to:

- 1. Determine Eligibility: Use the Diversion Eligibility Checklist to assess if the child qualifies.
- 2. If Eligible: Have the child fill out the Basic Questionnaire.
- 3. Choose the Best Diversion Strategy for the child's situation.
- 4. Sign the Agreement: Ensure both the child and parent sign the youth diversion agreement.
- 5. Collect the \$50 Admin Fee (optional).
- 6. Provide Tools and Referrals: Give the child and parent the resources they need to complete the diversion program.
- 7. File documents with the court: Upon successful completion or non-compliance

Diversion Eligibility Checklist

Youth Diversion Coordinator: _____

NAME OF CHILD: _____

Date

<mark>STEP TWO:</mark>

IN-TAKE PROCESS

Child completes Basic Questionnaire to identify remorse and responsibility for the charges. Based on the responses, an Advanced Questionnaire maybe administered to identify mental health or drug abuse issues. An optional parent/guardian questionnaire is available. Based on your findings, determined the best diversion strategy for the child. Child and Parent sign **TX YOUTH DIVERSION PLAN AGREEMENT** ASSESS (OPTIONAL) \$50 ADMIN FEE Provided Child and Parent the tools and referrals needed to successfully complete diversion.

Does Child & Parent understand what they must do to have the charge diverted?

STEP THREE:

DETERMINATION: Diversion Successful or Diversion Unsuccessful

If diversion **WAS successful**, file Dismissal of Charge Pursuant to Diversion Agreement to close the case.

If diversion **WAS NOT successful**, file Referral to Court for Hearing and Order on Referral Hearing for Non-Compliance

When Child is NOT Eligible for Diversion

If applicant is NOT Eligible for Diversion or chooses diversion by judge:

You can:

Refer to an educational course (see referral forms) Refer to a 'Live' peer group session (see referral form) Other: _____

If applicant is NOT eligible because the charge is NOT a Class C Misdemeanor, or chooses diversion by judge you can: Refer to one of these websites and order a course the best aligns with their charge.

Referral Forms and Brochures available Upon Request

www.CourtSolutionsOnline.com (large assortment of classes)

www.JuvClass.com (15 courses designed for juveniles – 4 Hour formats)

www.Juvimpact.com (3 Diversion Life Skills Classes – 4, 8, and 12-Hour formats)

www.PeerGroupOnline.com ('LIVE' Peer Groups with Mentors – 1-Hour Format)

www.Schoolimpact.org (Companion classes for students to assist School Resource Officers)

WWW.TXDriveSmart.com TRAFFIC VIOLATION: If applicant is NOT eligible because the charge was a traffic violation: Refer to a 6 Hour Texas State Approved Defensive Driving Course (see referral form) **Note:** Although H.B. 3186 excludes traffic offenses from the scope of statutory diversion under Subchapter E, this exclusion does not apply to amendments made in Article 45.041(b-3). Therefore, even children convicted of traffic offenses must be allowed to choose how they will fulfill the judgment. A Texas Approved Defensive Driving course can be used to fulfilled the traffic violation.

www.ParentingTexas.com Companion classes for parents at low or no cost. Classes include, What You Need to Know About Going to Court, Discipline Education for Parents, Drug & Alcohol Guide for Parents, Truancy Prevention Guide for Parents, Child Sexual Abuse and Awareness and Domestic Violence Awareness

Contact us for more information: info@CourtSolutionsOnline.com Or, send a text message: 830-372-4555

QUESTIONNAIRES

How to Administer the Questionnaire(s) Child and Parent (Basic and Advanced for Early Identification)

The Basic and Advanced Early Identification Questionnaires are to be completed by the youth with a clip board and pen, or the Youth Diversion Coordinator can ask the questions face-to-face and document the answers.

PURPOSE: The purpose for questionnaires is to help identify if the child accepts responsibility and accountability for their actions. The advanced questionnaire will help identify a child who may be struggling with mental health and/or substance abuse issues, or something else. Parent questionnaires will provide you with additional information to help you determine what is the best diversion strategy for the child and if an immediate referral to a professional is needed.

When should you administer the advanced questionnaire? After the applicant completes the basic questionnaire and **doesn't** show remorse, a willingness to accept responsibility or accept accountability for their actions, then the Advanced Early Identification Questionnaire is recommended.

IMPORTANT: Any indication of serious mental health concerns or substance abuse should result in an **immediate referral to a professional for an assessment, clinical evaluation and/or treatment.**

If the child does not present a need for an immediate intervention or needs to be referred to a professional for assessment or clinical evaluation and/or treatment, then an educational course that closely matches their Class 'C' offense along with attending a 'Live' Peer Group Mentoring session may be recommended as your diversion strategy.

(List of Educational Recommendations is available on Page 38)

QUESTIONNAIRES BASIC AND ADVANCED

Basic Questionnaire is designed to look for accountability and remorse for their actions. Advance questionnaire aims to identify and respond to at-risk youth and those with substance issues and/or mental illness.

BASIC QUESTIONNAIRE - Child

Basic Questionnaire (BQ) has 12 questions designed to gather basic details about the youth's involvement in the offense and their accountability for their actions. This questionnaire will also show if the child shows remorse and accepts responsibility for their actions. It will also help identify if the child need may need to complete the 25 question Advanced Early Identification Questionnaire.

ADVANCED QUESTIONNAIRE - Child

Advanced Early Identification Questionnaire (AEIQ) is more detailed with 25 questions and aims to gather more feedback and information to help identify at-risk youth who may be living with substance use and abuse issues and/or mental illness.

BASIC QUESTIONNAIRE - Parent ADVANCED QUESTIONNAIRE - Parent

BASIC QUESTIONNAIRE - Child

Basic Information:	Date:	Time:
Your Name:		
Your address (where you live):		
Your Date of Birth:		
Name of your School/Grade Level:	School Name	Your Grade Level
Name of Your Parent or Guardian:		
Your Phone #:		
1. Give details about why you are here today:		
2. Were other people involved in your situation? Fri If 'yes' please provide details:	iends? Family? Yes	No
3. Was anyone in your family disappointed by your If 'yes', who was disappointed and how did you know		No hat did they say or do?
4. Emotionally, describe how much this incident has sadness, sleep loss, etc.)	s cost you? (worry, fear, anxiety	y, embarrassment, regret,

5. Describe how this incident has changed your life. You can put down something positive or negative.

6. If you could do it all over again, wha	t would you have done differently?
---	------------------------------------

7. List two positive changes you want to make in your life:

8. What are the reasons you want to make these positive changes?

9. What are the steps you plan on taking to make these changes?

10. List 2 things or people that will get in the way of your changes?

11. What do you plan to do if your plan isn't working?

12. On a scale of	f 1 to 10, how ba	d do you feel a	bout your situa	tion?	
	1-2	3-5	6-8	9-10	
	I don't feel bad	I feel a little bad	I feel bad	I feel really bad	
		@ 2024 /			11

© 2024 Court Solutions, LLC

Diversion Strategies and Referrals

To be completed by the Youth Diversion Coordinator.

Purpose: This Diversion Strategy and Referral Tool serves as the final step in determining your diversion strategy. Does the child only need an educational program, a peer session, tutoring, or something else? Or, do they require further follow-up, immediate intervention or a referral to a professional for an assessment, clinical evaluation, or treatment?

IMPORTANT: Any indication from the parent or the child, of a serious mental health concern or substance abuse issue, should result in an <u>immediate referral to a service</u> <u>provider who offers professional assessments, clinical</u> <u>evaluations and/or treatment. Have a list of professionals</u> <u>with signed MOUs on file.</u>

Contact us for more information: info@CourtSolutionsOnline.com Or, send a text message: 830-372-4555

DIVERSION STRATEGY AND REFERRAL TOOL

Child: Diversion and Educational Strategies					
Does applicant (child) need an educational program that closely matches their Class 'C' offense? Yes No					
If 'yes' (explain the educational strategy and service provider you will be referring to)					
Details of the educational program you are requiring the child to participate in:					
Educational class:					
List 'Other' diversion strategies:					
Details:					
Child: Mentoring Strategy					
Does applicant (child) need a Mentor Session? Yes No If 'yes' (explain the educational program and service provider you will be referring to)					
Details on how many sessions:					
'Other' mentoring diversion strategies:					
Give details:					
Parent: Educational Program					
Does the parent need an educational program designed for parental awareness? Yes No If 'yes' (explain the educational program and service provider you will be referring to)					
Details:					
'Other' Diversion Strategy					
Does applicant (child) need a different strategy? Yes No If 'yes' (explain) Details:					
'Other' diversion strategies:					
Details:					

Referral List

Referral list for your Educational Strategies, Mentoring Services, Defensive Driving, and Companion classes for Parents

Referral Forms and Brochures available Upon Request info@CourtSolutionsOnline.comOr, send a text message: 830-372-4555

www.CourtSolutionsOnline.com (large assortment of classes)

www.JuvClass.com (15 courses designed for juveniles – 4 Hour formats)

www.Juvimpact.com (3 Diversion Life Skills Classes – 4, 8, and 12-Hour formats)

www.PeerGroupOnline.com ('LIVE' Peer Groups with Mentors – 1-Hour Format)

www.Schoolimpact.org (Companion classes for students to assist School Resource Officers)

WWW.TXDriveSmart.com TRAFFIC VIOLATION: If applicant is NOT eligible because the charge was a traffic violation: Refer to a 6 Hour Texas State Approved Defensive Driving Course (see referral form) **Note:** Although H.B. 3186 excludes traffic offenses from the scope of statutory diversion under Subchapter E, this exclusion does not apply to amendments made in Article 45.041(b-3). Therefore, even children convicted of traffic offenses must be allowed to choose how they will fulfill the judgment. A Texas Approved Defensive Driving course can be used to fulfilled the traffic violation.

WWW.ParentingTexas.com Companion classes for parents at low or no cost. Classes include, What You Need to Know About Going to Court, Discipline Education for Parents, Drug & Alcohol Guide for Parents, Truancy Prevention Guide for Parents, Child Sexual Abuse and Awareness and Domestic Violence Awareness

Diversion Agreement

Name of Court	
This document constitutes a Diversion Agreement between the	Court of
and	(Child)
and (Parent). This Diversion (Intermediate Diversion under Article 45.309 of the Code of Criminal Proce Article 45.310 of the Code of Criminal Procedure).	n Agreement is entered into as an
The objectives of this agreement are entered into with consideration of the interests of the child, and the long-term safety of the community.	e circumstances of the child, the best
This agreement shall be effective on the day of, 20 of days (not to exceed 180 days). During the period of this agree the Court of the best address to receive notices, and of changes to that contact, (Juvenile Case Manager) Court, at the end of the diversion period to discuss the status of completio	ement, Child and Parent shall inform address. Child and Parent agree to (Youth Diversion Coordinator) of the
During the period of this agreement, Child shall complete: (Specify Child's resp. Youth Diversion Life Skills Class: www.JuvImpact.com 4 Hour Class 8 Hour Class 12 Hour Class	ponsibilities and check applicable Diversion Strategies)
Educational Program: www.JuvClass.com	
Alcohol Education for Minors Anger Management Consequences of Crime Decision Making & Good Judgment	Minor in Possession (MIP)
Peer Group Mentoring Session: www.PeerGroupOnline.com	
One SessionTwo Sessions Other: Teen Court:	
Drug Testing: Course of treatment prescribed by a physician:	

DIVERSION AGREEMENT (Arts. 45.308, C.C.P.) (Page 2 of 2)

Restitution (Diversion by Judge Only; Requires separate Order): _____

Community Service (Diversion by Judge Only; Requires separate Order): _____

Other: _____ (Diversion by Judge Only; Requires separate Order)

During the period of this agreement, **Parent shall:** (Specify Parent's responsibilities)

Parent Educational Program: www.ParentingTexas.com

____ What You Need to Know About Going to Court _____ Discipline Education for Parents

_____ Drug & Alcohol Guide for Parents

_____ Truancy Prevention Guide for Parents

____ Child Sexual Abuse and Awareness

_____ Domestic Violence Awareness

During the period of this agreement, Parent (shall) (shall not) pay to the clerk of the Court a \$50 administrative fee to defray the costs of this diversion.

During the period of this agreement, Court shall refrain from processing criminal cases based upon allegations of conduct which occurred on or about the _____ day of _____, 20____ (Case).

The following charge or offense is being diverted: _____

Upon successful completion of this Diversion Agreement, the Court shall not accept charges related to the Case. Child acknowledges that, upon successful completion of this diversion agreement, Child will be ineligible for diversion for a period of 365 days.

If Child and Parent do not successfully complete the terms of this diversion agreement, the child shall be referred to the court for a hearing, for the purpose of a conference between the judge of the Court, Child, and Parent. Child and Parent may, after notifying the Court, bring any other person who may be of assistance to Child or the Court in determining what is in the best interests of Child and the long-term safety of the community.

Diversion is not an admission of guilt and a guilty plea is not required to participate in diversion.

Child hereby knowingly and voluntarily consents to diversion from criminal prosecution, as provided in this agreement, acknowledges and accepts the terms of this agreement, and verifies that Child received notice of the child's rights, including the right to refuse diversion.

Child's Signature

Date

Parent hereby knowingly and voluntarily consents to diversion from criminal prosecution, as provided in this agreement, acknowledges and accepts the terms of this agreement, and verifies that Parent received notice of the child's rights, including the right to refuse diversion.

Parent's Signature

Date