

# YOUTH JUSTICE IN CANADA

## UNDERSTANDING HOW THE SYSTEM FUNCTIONS

### WHAT IS YOUTH JUSTICE?

Youth justice refers to the legal system and processes designed specifically for young people, usually those aged 12 to 17, who are accused of breaking the law. Its purpose is to balance accountability, rehabilitation, and the protection of youth rights in Canadian society.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Canadian youth justice aims to help young people learn from their mistakes, take responsibility, and reintegrate into their communities. It recognizes that young people are still developing and deserve special consideration under the law. Understanding the system is the first step toward navigating it effectively.

### YOUR RIGHTS UNDER YOUTH JUSTICE

- ✓ You have the right to know the charges against you
- ✓ You can speak to a lawyer or have legal representation
- ✓ Your privacy is protected — your name and details are not released to the public
- ✓ You have the right to a fair trial and appeal

### WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU ARE CHARGED?

If you are charged with an offence, the process may include police questioning, court appearances, and possible sentencing. The law encourages alternatives to court, such as warnings, participation in community programs, or diversion. Knowing your options is essential.

### HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Learning about the youth justice system empowers you to make informed choices and support friends who may be facing challenges. Respecting the law, participating in community education, and seeking guidance when needed are important steps towards a positive future.

### YOUTH JUSTICE EDUCATION SERVICE

Every year, hundreds of Black and minority youths enter the justice system for behaviours that could have been prevented.

Did you know that justice begins with understanding, and education can achieve different outcomes?

- ▶ In-person, social media, and hybrid education programs about the youth justice system
- ▶ Focus on prevention and intervention strategies
- ▶ Small groups, events, conferences, workshops, libraries, schools, and community hubs
- ▶ Know your legal rights — actionable steps for system navigation
- ▶ Education about root causes: racism, trauma, stigma, systemic oppressions, inequities
- ▶ Connection to community resources that support youth to reach their potential

### CONTENT PILLARS

Prevention Tools

System Navigation

Root Cause Solutions

Value of Education

### SUPPORT & RESOURCES

 Justice for Children and Youth  
1-866-999-5329 | [www.jfcy.org](http://www.jfcy.org)

 Law Society of Ontario Referral Service  
[www.LSO.on.ca](http://www.LSO.on.ca)

 Kids Help Phone  
1-800-668-6868 | [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

 LGBT YouthLine  
1-800-268-9688 | [www.youthline.ca](http://www.youthline.ca)

Connect to discuss, develop approaches,  
and attend learning forums.

Norma Nicholson, MA, BA, RN (Retired)  
[n.nicholson.a805@rogers.com](mailto:n.nicholson.a805@rogers.com) | 905-272-1406

JUSTICE BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING — EDUCATION CHANGES OUTCOMES

Norma Nicholson's Youth Justice Education Service

Prevention • Intervention • Education • Empowerment

[youthjusticeeducationservices.com](http://youthjusticeeducationservices.com)

905-272-1406