



# Youth Criminal Justice Act

Many changes are being made to Canada's youth justice system, including the new *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, which is summarized below.

## Objectives of the Act

- **Protection of society** is the most important objective of the youth justice system.
- **Young people** should be **treated separately from adults** under criminal law and in a separate youth justice system.
- **Parents and victims** have a constructive role to play in the youth justice system.

## Sentencing

- The youth justice court has the power to impose **adult sentences**, when appropriate.
- The sentence a youth receives should be related to the **seriousness of the offence**.
- The Act allows an **adult sentence for any youth 14 years old** or older who is convicted of an offence punishable by more than two years in jail.
- The Act creates an intensive custody and supervision sentence for the most high-risk youth who are **repeat violent offenders** or who have committed **violent offences**.
- The Act encourages **community-based sentences**, such as compensation or restitution to the victim, community service or probation.
- The Act permits **victim statements** to be introduced in youth court.



## Publication and Records

- **Names of youths**, convicted of a crime who receive an adult sentence, and 14- to 17-year-olds given a youth sentence for repeat violent offences or violent offences **can be printed in newspapers and on television.**
- Names of youths can be printed in newspapers and on television if they are **at large and considered, by a judge, to be dangerous.**
- The records of youth who receive adult sentences are treated the **same as the records of adult offenders.**



## Custody and Reintegration into the Community

- **Youth are held separately from adults** to reduce the risk that they will be exposed to adult criminals.
- **Provinces have more flexibility** in deciding **where a young person should be placed** as well as more flexibility in moving youth who reach adult age, while still in custody, into adult facilities.
- The Act requires the judge to impose **a period of supervision in the community following custody** that is equal to half the period of custody imposed.
- The Act requires a **youth worker** to work with a young person who is in custody.

## Measures Outside the Formal Court Process

Police are encouraged to use measures, other than the court process, such as:

- **verbal warnings and cautions**
- informal police programs, such as a **family group conference**
- formal programs requiring **community service or repairing the harm done** to the victim through, for example, compensation or restitution to the victim.

