

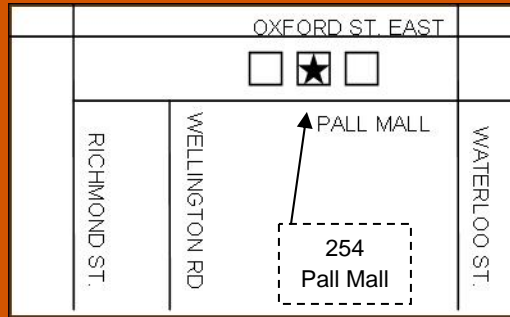
THE COURT DECISION

The judge decides the appropriate sentence for the offence(s). Our report gives the judge information and offers recommendations to help with that decision. The *Youth Justice Court* will hear from your lawyer, from the crown attorney and, possibly, yourselves. The judge's responsibility is to consider all submissions and then make a final decision.



Youth Justice Court is guided by special principles. Youth are held accountable for their behaviour, but the court must also acknowledge the youth's level of maturity, stage of development, level of independence and any mental health issues.

We help by identifying the youth's strengths, special needs, and assistance they may require. We hope our efforts will help to prevent future problems for the youth while encouraging their full potential.



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The Centre promotes emotional health, healing and growth in children, youth and families involved in the legal system, to help them through a difficult time in their lives.

Our approach to helping is to:

- ◆ listen with respect and without judgment
- ◆ understand people as having challenges and opportunities rather than problems
- ◆ acknowledge family preferences and needs to individualize the service
- ◆ recognize the achievements and nurture the potential of children, youth & families
- ◆ work collaboratively with other agencies on behalf of families
- ◆ create workable, solution-focused plans that keep everyone safe
- ◆ maintain the highest standards of professional practice.

Les services sont disponibles en français sur demande

For more information on the Centre,
visit our web site:
www.lfcc.on.ca

Charities Division BN 12991 5153 RR0001

Youth Justice Court Assessments

Helping Youth and Families Discover Their Potential



Over 35 years, we have helped thousands of youth and their families.

We combine experience, a multi-disciplinary approach, and knowledge of the best research to deliver a high-quality assessment service.



Formerly known as The London Family Court Clinic

THE ASSESSMENT

How We Help

Youth are referred to our Centre by a judge in *Youth Justice Court*. The Court is required to hold young people accountable for their actions, but also to take into account their needs. Under Section 34(1) (2) of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, a judge may request a psychological report be prepared by our team before making a decision on sentencing.

This report can help in two ways:

- 1) By giving the Court background about the youth and deeper understanding of the offence(s).
- 2) By suggesting a plan for the youth that might prevent continued conflicts with the law.

Assessments are usually completed in four to six weeks and involve three or four appointments.

Attending all appointments is very important. Missed appointments delay the assessment and may result in our requesting the court date be adjourned.

The First Step

A Centre staff member will telephone you to set-up the first appointment. You will meet with an intake worker who gathers background information. We encourage parental involvement in the assessment.

As well, we ask the youth and his/her parent or guardian to sign “release of information” consent forms. These forms give us permission to contact the school and other involved services. This additional information provides a broader perspective and helps us to identify important resources as well as gaps in service.

Also, psychological testing is completed at this first appointment. It provides a picture of a young person’s strengths as well as their struggles. The test findings are discussed with each youth by the team psychologist.

The Assessment

Soon after intake is done, a case worker from the Centre will telephone you to set up an interview. The family will be interviewed and the youth is generally interviewed individually.

If the youth is in detention and has been referred to the Centre, we consider them a priority.

In a one-on-one meeting, our team psychologist will go over the results of the psychological tests that were completed at intake. If ordered by the judge, or where the clinicians feel it would be helpful, a psychiatric assessment report will also be completed for the court.

Centre clinicians will provide youth and their families with feedback about the assessment results and the recommendations that will be provided to the Court.

Our Report

Our assessment is summarized in a report to the judge, the crown attorney, and the defense counsel.

We suggest a plan to deal with any problems outlined and suggest sentencing options. You will have a chance to discuss the contents of the report with defense counsel before court. The judge may want to know if you agree with the contents of the report and if you support the recommendations. The final sentencing decision falls to the judge.

Our hope is to help youth move forward with their lives. Whenever possible, we support plans and recommendations developed by the youth and their family.



What to Expect

- ◆ **At the first appointment, we describe the process and answer your questions. We explain how we protect your privacy and limitations on confidentiality.**
- ◆ **In all, there will be three or four appointments.**
- ◆ **We will review with you the details of the offences and explore your understanding of the causes.**