

---

ROLE OF JUVENILE DEFENSE COUNSEL  
IN DELINQUENCY COURT

---



NATIONAL JUVENILE DEFENDER CENTER

SPRING 2009





---

ROLE OF JUVENILE DEFENSE COUNSEL  
IN DELINQUENCY COURT

---

WRITTEN BY

*Robin Walker Sterling*

IN COLLABORATION WITH

*Cathryn Crawford, Stephanie Harrison, and Kristin Henning*

NATIONAL JUVENILE DEFENDER CENTER

SPRING 2009

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend special thanks to the directors of the nine Regional Juvenile Defender Centers for their trenchant suggestions, edits, and comments on the *Role of Juvenile Defense Counsel*. We would also like to thank the juvenile defenders who attended the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Juvenile Defender Leadership Summit in New Orleans, Louisiana for their suggestions as well. The editing and production of the *Role of the Juvenile Defense Counsel* has been a truly collaborative project, and we hope that it will help juvenile defense attorneys across the country as they work to zealously protect their young clients facing charges in juvenile delinquency court.

# ROLE OF JUVENILE DEFENSE COUNSEL IN DELINQUENCY COURT

## PREAMBLE AND SCOPE

---

### A. The Origin of the Role of the Juvenile Defender

In a series of cases starting in 1966, the United States Supreme Court extended bedrock elements of due process to youth charged in delinquency proceedings. Arguably the most important of these cases, *In re Gault*<sup>1</sup> held that juveniles facing delinquency proceedings have the right to counsel under the Due Process Clause of the United States Constitution, applied to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment. The Court added juvenile defense counsel to rectify the dilemma ensnaring juveniles across the country, in which juveniles received “the worst of both worlds . . . neither the protections accorded to adults nor the solicitous care and regenerative treatment postulated for children.”<sup>2</sup> The Court clearly observed that juvenile defense counsel’s role in delinquency proceedings is unique and critical: “[t]he probation officer cannot act as counsel for the child. His role . . . is as arresting officer and witness against the child. Nor can the judge represent the child.”<sup>3</sup> The Court concluded that no matter how many court personnel were charged with looking after the accused child’s interests, any child facing “the awesome prospect of incarceration” needed “the guiding hand of counsel at every step in

the proceedings against him” for the same reasons that adults facing criminal charges need counsel.<sup>4</sup>

The introduction of advocates to the juvenile court system was meant to change delinquency proceedings in several key ways. First, it was meant to infuse the informal juvenile court process with more of the jealously-guarded constitutional protections of adult criminal court and their attendant adversarial tenor. Perhaps more importantly, with attorneys explicitly assigned to advocate on their behalf, juveniles accused of delinquent acts were to become participants, rather than spectators, in their court proceedings. The Court observed specifically that juvenile respondents needed defenders to enable them “to cope with problems of law, to make skilled inquiry into the facts, to insist upon regularity of the proceedings, and to ascertain whether [the client] has a defense and to prepare and submit it.”<sup>5</sup>

With its decisions in *Gault* and other cases,<sup>6</sup> the Court moved the treatment of youth in juvenile justice systems into the national spotlight. In 1974, with a goal of protecting the rights of children, Congress enacted the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A).<sup>7</sup> The JJDP A created the National Advisory Committee for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, which was charged with developing national juvenile justice standards and guidelines. The National Advisory Committee standards, published in 1980, require that children be represented by counsel in delinquency matters from the earliest stage of the process.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, several non-governmental organizations also recognized the necessity of protections for youth in delinquency courts. Beginning in 1971, and continuing over a ten-year period, the Institute of Judicial Administration (IJA) and the American Bar Association (ABA) researched, developed and produced 23 volumes of comprehensive juvenile justice standards, annotated with explicit policies and guidelines.<sup>9</sup> The IJA/ABA Joint Commission on Juvenile Standards relied

upon the work of approximately 300 dedicated professionals across the country with expertise in the many disciplines relevant to juvenile justice practice, including the judiciary, social work, corrections, law enforcement, and education. The Commission circulated draft standards to individuals and organizations throughout the country for comments. The final standards, which were adopted by the ABA in 1982, were crafted to establish a model juvenile justice system, one that would not fluctuate in response to transitory headlines or controversies.

By the early 1980s, there was professional consensus that defense attorneys owe their juvenile clients the same duty of loyalty as adult clients.<sup>10</sup> That coextensive duty of loyalty requires defenders to represent the legitimate “expressed interests” of their juvenile clients, and not the “best interests” as determined by the attorney.<sup>11</sup>

## B. Present State of Juvenile Defense: A Call for Justice

Recognizing the need for more information about the functioning of delinquency courts across the country, as part of the reauthorization of the JJDP in 1992, Congress asked the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to address this issue. One year later, in 1993, OJJDP responded to Congress’ request by funding the Due Process Advocacy Project, led by the ABA Juvenile Justice Center, together with the Youth Law Center and the Juvenile Law Center. The purpose of the project was to build the capacity and effectiveness of the juvenile defense bar to ensure that children have meaningful access to qualified counsel in delinquency proceedings. One result of this collaboration was the 1995 release of *A Call for Justice: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings*, a national review of the legal representation of children in delinquency proceedings.<sup>12</sup> The first systemic national assessment of its kind, the report laid the foundation for a closer examination of access to counsel, the training and resource

needs of juvenile defenders, and the quality of legal representation provided by each state's juvenile indigent defense system. The report highlighted the gaps in the quality of legal representation for indigent children across the country.

The findings of *A Call for Justice* prompted an outpouring of concern from judges and lawyers across the country, and pointed to the need for state-specific assessments to guide and inform legislative reforms. In response, a methodology was developed to conduct comprehensive assessments of access to counsel and quality of representation in individual states. Since 1995, first the ABA Juvenile Justice Center, and then the National Juvenile Defender Center, have conducted state-specific juvenile defense assessments in 16 states: Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. Re-assessments have been conducted in Kentucky and Louisiana. County-based assessments were conducted in Cook County, Illinois, Marion County, Indiana and Caddo Parish, Louisiana. The National Juvenile Defender Center is continuously working with leaders in states who are interested in conducting juvenile indigent defense assessments.

Although each state has its own idiosyncrasies, hundreds of interviews in assessment after assessment reaffirm the findings first uncovered in *A Call for Justice*. Since the *Gault* decision, the role of the juvenile defender has evolved to require a complex and challenging skill set. Juvenile defense attorneys must have all the legal knowledge and courtroom skills of a criminal defense attorney representing adult defendants. In addition, juvenile defenders must be aware of the strengths and needs of their juvenile clients and of their clients' families, communities, and other social structures. Juvenile defenders must: understand child and adolescent development to be able to communicate effectively with their clients, and to evaluate the client's level of maturity and competency and its relevancy to the delinquency case; have knowledge of and



contacts at community-based programs to compose an individualized disposition plan; be able to enlist the client’s parent or guardian as an ally without compromising the attorney-client relationship; know the intricacies of mental health and special education law, as well as the network of schools that may or may not be appropriate placements for the client; and communicate the long- and short-term collateral consequences of a juvenile adjudication, including the possible impact on public housing, school and job applications, eligibility for financial aid, and participation in the armed forces.

There are many juvenile defense attorneys who, in the face of daunting systemic and other obstacles, offer their clients zealous, holistic, client-centered advocacy. Unfortunately, as *A Call for Justice* first revealed, these attorneys are the exception and not the norm: in jurisdiction after jurisdiction, systemic and other barriers prevent juvenile defenders from realizing the constitutionally-mandated vision of their role. For example, on average, juvenile defenders’ caseloads are staggeringly high, and these crushing caseloads have redounding repercussions: plea agreements function as a case management tool and are entered into without previous, independent investigation; pre-trial advocacy to test the strengths and weaknesses of the government’s case is often set aside; and already scarce resources, stretched thin to provide basic services, like office space, computers, desks, and files, are not available for investigators, social workers, and expert witnesses. Also, across the country, juvenile court suffers from a “kiddie court” mentality where stakeholders do not believe that juvenile court is important. Finally, in some jurisdictions, because they view juvenile court first and foremost as an opportunity to “help a child,” judges and other system participants undermine attorneys’ efforts to challenge the government’s evidence and provide zealous, client-centered representation, considering such advocacy an impediment to the smooth function of the court. As a result, many juvenile courts still operate in a pre-*Gault* mode in which the defense attorney is irrelevant, real

lawyering cannot occur, and the fair administration of justice is impeded.

### C. Goals of These Principles

The Principles that follow are developed to describe the unique and critical role juvenile defense attorneys play in juvenile proceedings. Hundreds of interviews with juvenile justice system stakeholders reveal that the juvenile defense attorney's role is perceived differently by different courtroom actors. While there are of course exceptions, across the country, prosecutors and probation officers often view zealous juvenile defense attorneys as obstructionists who overlook the compelling needs of their clients in service to the single and monolithic goal of "getting the client off, and communicate, in direct and indirect ways, that the defender should be less adversarial. Similarly, judges rely on juvenile defense attorneys to advocate on the child's behalf, but only as a necessary cog in the machinery of the appearance of fairness and of judicial economy, and not as a zealous, client-centered advocate. Juvenile defenders themselves are unsure of their role. Most understand that, in theory, they are bound to zealously represent their clients' expressed interests. Nonetheless, in practice, many yield to the unified pressure from other stakeholders and from the seemingly irresistible momentum of the proceedings, and advocate for their clients' best interests. The reasons for this capitulation vary. Some set aside their ethical obligation because of a genuinely misguided understanding of their role; others sacrifice zealous advocacy because they have to triage staggering caseloads supported by scant resources; still others bow to systemic barriers that interfere with their advocacy. The defenders' role seems all the more ambiguous in specialty boutique courts, like drug court and mental health court.

In the vision of the *Gault* Court, the juvenile defense attorney is a critical check on the power of the state as it imperils the client's liberty interests. Defenders are not obstructionists; they

protect the child’s constitutional rights. They do this through their practical, everyday duties – from interviewing the child outside of the presence of the child’s parents, to objecting to inadmissible but informative evidence at adjudicatory hearings, to advocating for the least restrictive alternative at disposition, to pressing, at every stage, for the client’s expressed interests. Each of these day-to-day duties has its grounding in defense counsel’s mandatory ethical obligations. These Principles serve to inform indigent defense providers and the leadership of indigent defense organizations, judges, prosecutors, probation officers, and other juvenile justice stakeholders the specifics of the role of defense counsel in the delivery of zealous, comprehensive and quality legal representation to which children charged with crimes are constitutionally entitled.

## THE ROLE OF JUVENILE DEFENSE COUNSEL

---

### 1. Duty to Represent the Client’s Expressed Interests

*ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct (Model Rules): Preamble; 1.14(a) Client with Diminished Capacity; 1.2(a) Scope of Representation and Allocation of Authority between Client and Lawyer*

At each stage of the case, juvenile defense counsel acts as the client’s voice in the proceedings, advocating for the client’s expressed interests, not the client’s “best interest” as determined by counsel, the client’s parents or guardian, the probation officer, the prosecutor, or the judge. With respect to the duty of loyalty owed to the client, the juvenile delinquency attorney-client relationship mirrors the adult criminal attorney-client relationship. In the juvenile defender’s day-to-day activities, the establishment of the attorney-client relationship is animated by allocating the case decision-making, and practicing the special training required to represent clients with diminished capacity.

**A. Establishment of the Attorney-Client Relationship:**

Juvenile defense counsel do not assume they know what is best for the client, but instead employ a client-centered model of advocacy that actively seeks the client's input, conveys genuine respect for the client's perspective, and works to understand the client in his/her own socioeconomic, familial, and ethnic context.

1. At every stage,<sup>13</sup> juvenile defense counsel works to provide the client with complete information concerning all aspects of the case, including honest predictions concerning both the short-term (e.g., whether the client will be detained pending trial or whether the client will win the probable cause hearing) and long-term (e.g., whether the child will be acquitted or whether, if found involved, the child will be committed and/or face additional collateral consequences) goals of the case. Juvenile defense counsel's abiding purpose is to empower the client to make informed decisions. Counsel's advice to the client about the likely advantages and disadvantages of different case scenarios is legally comprehensive, candid, and objectively relayed using age-appropriate language.
2. Operating under a client-centered model of advocacy allows juvenile defense counsel to enhance immeasurably the fundamental fairness of the system. Because no other courtroom actor serves the juvenile's expressed interests, without juvenile defense counsel, the juvenile would be subjected to a pre-*Gault* proceeding in which protecting the juvenile's due process rights are relegated to a mere technicality.

**B. Allocation of Decision-Making:** Unlike the other courtroom actors, who have no obligation to consider a juvenile's expressed interests in their recommendations and orders, juvenile defense counsel allows clients, to the greatest extent possible, to be the primary decision-makers in their cases.

1. Juvenile defense counsel enables the client, with frank information and advice, to direct the course of the proceedings in at least the following areas:
  - a. whether to cooperate in a consent judgment, diversion, or other early disposition plans;
  - b. whether to accept a plea offer;
  - c. if the client can choose, whether to be tried as a juvenile or an adult;
  - d. if the client can choose, whether to have a jury trial or a bench trial;
  - e. whether to testify in his own defense; and
  - f. whether to make or agree to a specific dispositional recommendation.
2. Other decisions concerning case strategy and tactics to pursue the client's goals, like the determination of the theory of the case, what witnesses to call, or what motions to file, are left to juvenile defense counsel, with the critical limitations that counsel's decisions 1) shall not conflict with the client's expressed interests concerning the areas listed in c, and 2) shall not conflict with the client's expressed interests in any other case-related area.

C. **Diminished Capacity:** Minority does not automatically constitute diminished capacity such that a juvenile defense attorney can decline to represent the client's expressed interests. Nor does a juvenile's making what juvenile defense counsel considers to be a rash or ill-considered decision constitute grounds for finding that the client suffers from diminished capacity. In fact, because of the unique vulnerabilities of youth, it is all the more important that juvenile defense attorneys firmly adhere to their ethical obligations to articulate and advocate for the child's expressed interest, and to safeguard the child's due process rights. In other words, in direct contrast to the pervasive informality that characterizes juvenile court practice in so many jurisdictions, minority sharpens defense counsel's ethical responsibilities, instead of relaxing them.

1. In light of current brain development research, it is clear that minority critically affects the scope of the juvenile attorney- juvenile client relationship. Current brain development research posits that youth are categorically less culpable than the average adult offender. This research has gained wide acceptance, as indicated most recently by the United States Supreme Court's opinion in *Roper v. Simmons*, 543 U.S. 551(2005), which struck down the juvenile death penalty as unconstitutional. The *Roper* Court concluded that youths are less culpable than the average adult offender because they: (1) lack maturity and responsibility, (2) are more vulnerable and susceptible to outside influences, particularly negative peer influences, and (3) are not as well formed in character and personality as, and have a much greater potential for rehabilitation than, adults. *Id.* at 569-570. This research requires juvenile defense counsel to be adept at using age-appropriate

language, motivational interviewing, visual aids, and other techniques effective in communicating with, and more specifically, effective in translating legal concepts to, children.

2. It is crucial to recognize that this research does not provide an argument for counsel to disregard a child’s expressed interests merely because of the child’s minority. To the contrary, the unique vulnerabilities of youth, make it all the more important for the child’s lawyers to help the child identify and articulate his or her views to key players in the juvenile justice system. Any juvenile client capable of considered judgment is entitled to a normal attorney-client relationship. And, even youth of diminished capacity and other vulnerabilities have views, concerns and opinions that are entitled to weight in legal proceedings.

Additional sources:

- *IJA/ABA Juvenile Justice Standards, Standards Relating to Counsel for Private Parties (Juvenile Justice Standards): 3.1 The Nature of the Lawyer-Client Relationship; 5.2 Control and Direction of the Case; 9.3(a) Counseling Prior to Disposition*
- *ABA Standards for Criminal Justice, Standards Relating to the Defense Function (Criminal Justice Standards): 4-3.1 Establishment of Relationship*

## 2. Duty of Confidentiality and Privilege

*Model Rules: 1.6 Confidentiality of Information*

Juvenile defense counsel is bound by attorney-client confidentiality and privilege. The duty of confidentiality that juvenile defense counsels owe their juvenile clients is coextensive with

the duty of confidentiality that criminal defense counsels owe their adult clients. This duty includes:

- A. **No Exception for Parents or Guardians:** There is no exception to attorney-client confidentiality in juvenile cases for parents or guardians. Practically, this fact means that juvenile defense counsel has an affirmative obligation to safeguard a client's information or secrets from parents or guardians; that interviews with the client must take place outside of the presence of the parents or guardians; and that parents or guardians do not have any right to inspect juvenile defense counsel's file, notes, discovery, or any other case-related documents without the client's expressed consent. While it may often be a helpful or even necessary strategy to enlist the parents or guardians as allies in the case, juvenile defense counsel's primary obligation is to keep the client's secrets. Information relating to the representation of the client includes all information relating to the representation, whatever its source.
  
- B. **No Exception for Client's Best Interests:** There is no exception to attorney-client confidentiality in juvenile cases allowing disclosure of information in service to what counsel, parents or guardians, or any other stakeholders deem to be the client's best interests. Even if revealing the information might allow the client to receive sorely-needed services, defense counsel is bound to protect the client's confidences, unless the client gives the attorney express permission to reveal the information to get the particular services, or disclosure is impliedly authorized to carry out the client's case objectives.
  
- C. **Private Meeting Space:** To observe the attorney's ethical duty to safeguard the client's confidentiality,



attorney-client interviews must take place in a private environment. This limitation requires that, at the courthouse, juvenile defense counsel should arrange for access to private interview rooms, instead of discussing case specifics with the client in the hallways; in detention facilities, juvenile defense counsel should have a means to talk with the client out of the earshot of other inmates and guards; and in the courtroom, juvenile defense counsel should ask for a private space in which to consult with the client, and speak with the client out of range of any microphones or recording devices.

Additional sources:

- *Juvenile Justice Standards: 3.3 Confidentiality*

### 3. Duties of Competence and Diligence

*Model Rules: 1.1 Competence, 1.3 Diligence*

A juvenile defense attorney provides competent, prompt, and diligent representation based in legal knowledge, skill, thorough preparation, and ongoing training.<sup>14</sup> With respect to the juvenile defender's day-to-day activities, the Duties of Competence and Diligence are expansive, encompassing the obligations to investigate, to zealously protect the child's due process rights from arrest through the close of the case, to engage in dispositional advocacy, and to access ancillary services.

**A. Comprehensive Skill Set:** Juvenile defense counsel possesses a comprehensive skill set that meets the client's legal, educational, and social needs.

1. Competent representation in juvenile delinquency matters requires legal training that encompasses rules of evidence, constitutional law, juvenile law and procedure, and criminal

law and procedure, as well as trial skills, such as examining witnesses, admitting documents into evidence, and making legal arguments before the court, and appellate procedure.

2. Competent juvenile defense counsel is also well-versed in the areas of child and adolescent development. Child and adolescent development research intersects with counsel's representation in many ways. For example, counsel might rely on recent development research in detention and disposition arguments. Counsel also might use the research to help counsel convey complex legal concepts in age-appropriate language.
3. Competent juvenile defense counsel has a working knowledge of and maintains contacts with experts in ancillary areas of law that often intersect juvenile delinquency matters, including but not limited to the collateral consequences of adjudication and conviction, expungement, special education, abuse and neglect, mental health, cultural competency, child welfare and entitlements, and immigration
4. Competent defense counsel engages in continuing study and education of juvenile-specific subject areas and complies with all relevant continuing legal education requirements.

**B. Investigation:** Juvenile defense attorneys promptly investigate cases to find witnesses, examine forensic evidence, locate and inspect tangible objects and other evidence that might tend to exculpate the client, that might lead to the exclusion of inculpatory evidence at adjudication or disposition, or that might buttress the client's potential defenses. This duty exists even when

the lawyer believes the client is guilty, and when the client has confessed in interrogation, in interviews with counsel, or to anyone else.

1. Juvenile defense attorneys promptly take the necessary steps to obtain discovery, including filing discovery requests, motions pursuant to *Brady v. Maryland*, and motions to compel if the prosecutor does not comply with counsel’s request.
2. Based on leads from the client and from discovery received from the prosecutor, juvenile defense attorneys conduct independent investigation of, *inter alia*, the allegations against the client, of police conduct, of witnesses’ backgrounds, and of any and all possible defenses and mitigating factors for disposition.
3. Juvenile defense attorneys do not allow clients to plead guilty without first reviewing the government’s file, including police reports, results of forensic examinations and tests, photographs, and other evidence, discussing and pursuing possible exculpatory investigation leads, and providing a fair and informed assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the government’s case.

**C. Protecting Pretrial Due Process Rights:** Juvenile defense attorneys have a duty to protect the client’s pretrial due process rights by obtaining discovery, filing motions, and making arguments to protect the client’s rights while serving the client’s expressed interests.<sup>15</sup>

1. To ensure that the court system is not being used for societal functions it was not meant to assume – for example, as the disciplinary arm of the school system, or as a reflection of the

racial, ethnic and class biases that often mark police arrest rates – juvenile defense attorneys file pretrial motions that seek pretrial release, that advocate for individualized plans that offer the least restrictive set of release conditions necessary to ensure the client’s return to court and community safety, and that guard against infringement of the client’s federal or state constitutional rights before and during the arrest, including motions to suppress tangible evidence, identifications, and statements.

2. Juvenile defense attorneys also file pretrial motions that clarify points of law, block the admission into evidence of inadmissible or prejudicial information, and otherwise ensure that the client will receive a fair trial.

**D. Protecting Due Process Rights at Adjudicatory Hearings:** Juvenile defense counsel has a duty to protect the client’s due process rights and to pursue vigorously the client’s expressed interests at adjudication.

1. Juvenile defense counsel ensures that, as *In re Gault* and its progeny clearly intended, juvenile adjudicatory hearings are adversarial proceedings in which the state bears the burden to prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt with credible, admissible evidence.
2. In accord with this constitutional imperative, juvenile defense counsel ensures fairness in the courtroom by litigating the case vigorously consistent with the presumption of innocence, regardless of counsel’s opinion concerning either guilt or innocence or the client’s need for social, educational, and other services.

3. Juvenile defense counsel litigate adjudicatory hearings aware of the elements of each charged allegation, the lesser-includes for each charge, all the client's possible defenses, and relevant case law.
4. Juvenile defense counsel fulfill their role under *Gault* by adhering to and enforcing application of the rules of evidence, lodging objections, examining witnesses, filing written and oral motions, and challenging the credibility and admissibility of the state's evidence. This duty exists regardless of counsel's opinion of the client's guilt.
5. Juvenile defense counsel explains the right to testify, helps the client identify and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of testifying, and helps the client prepare if he decides to testify.

**E. Preparing for and Engaging in Dispositional Advocacy:** As part of the duty of competence and diligence, juvenile defense counsel has an affirmative duty to prepare for and engage in dispositional advocacy. Accordingly, at disposition, juvenile defense counsel offers the court strengths-based disposition alternatives that look beyond the options considered by the probation officer to address the child's expressed interests while being responsive to the court's concerns.

1. Dispositional investigation and advocacy begin at the initiation of the attorney-client relationship. Regardless of counsel's prognosis of the case outcome, counsel begins disposition planning and investigation at the earliest opportunity to maximize the chance that the appropriate investigation, evaluations and interviews are completed, and the necessary docu-

ments are located and submitted, with the end result that, should the client be found guilty, the client receives the most appropriate, least restrictive disposition with as little delay as possible.

2. Juvenile defense counsel investigates disposition alternatives beyond those available to and considered by probation officers and juvenile court counselors, drawing on community-based resources, according to the client's wishes.
3. Counsel thoroughly engages the child in disposition planning by helping the child identify and understand and weigh the available options. Counsel informs the client about the nature of the presentence investigation process and the importance of statements the client and the client's family might make to probation officers and youth court counselors. Counsel also advises the client about the right of allocution at disposition, and helps the client prepare if the client chooses to allocute.
4. As part of disposition preparation, juvenile defense counsel consults with mitigation specialists, social workers, and mental health, special education, and other experts to develop a plan consistent with the client's expressed interests.
5. At the disposition hearing, juvenile defense counsel prepares and presents the court with a creative, comprehensive, strengths-based, individualized disposition alternative consistent with the client's expressed interests.
6. As at the adjudicatory hearing, at the disposition hearing, juvenile defense counsel protects the client's due process rights by challenging

the state's evidence, including any hearsay and other inadmissible evidence that may be included in the presentence report, by cross-examining the state's witnesses, including the probation officer, and by proffering witnesses in support of the client's own disposition plan, according to the client's expressed interests.

**F. Conducting Post-Disposition Representation:**

Juvenile defense counsel has a duty to research and understand the legal rights to which the client is entitled and the legal options the client can access at the post-disposition stage of the case and, after consultation with the client, to pursue available options.

1. Juvenile defense counsel files timely notices of appeals, writs of *habeas corpus*, and other motions that challenge orders or outcomes that counsel believes are illegal or otherwise offend principles of fundamental fairness.
2. At periodic intervals after disposition, juvenile defense counsel checks in with the client, with an eye towards averting any potential problems with the client's successful completion of disposition conditions, to maximize the client's chance at closing the case as quickly as possible.
3. In jurisdictions that hold regular post-disposition review hearings, juvenile defense counsel participates in these proceedings. In jurisdictions that do not hold regular post-disposition review hearings, juvenile defense counsel encourages periodic post-disposition reviews by filing motions to review that request hearings or other forms of relief, unless counsel's contract prohibits filing such a motion.

4. In preparation for probation and parole revocation hearings, juvenile defense counsel locates witnesses, investigates allegations, challenges the government's evidence, prepares a defense and offers relevant mitigating factors for the court's consideration.
  5. Defense counsel also keeps a record of any difficulties with, or failings by probation officers, programs or other entities charged with providing service to the client in order to militate against violations of probations. If the client is detained, juvenile defense counsel helps the client to maintain contact with the client's family and/or other positive community-ties, in accordance with the client's wishes.
  6. Because juvenile defense counsel's obligation is to the client, counsel can challenge conditions of confinement, either individually or as part of a larger strategy with other juvenile defense counsel.
  7. Juvenile defense counsel helps the client expunge juvenile adjudications from the client's record, so that the client is better able to live as a productive, law-abiding citizen without the stigma of adjudication.
- G. Accessing Ancillary Services:** Juvenile defense counsel provides to the client, either directly or indirectly through referrals, assistance in ancillary areas of law that intersect juvenile indigent defense, with the goal of affording the client holistic representation. Juvenile defense counsel does whatever counsel can reasonably undertake to facilitate the relationship with the client and the provider, and ensure the attainment of the client's ultimate goal.



1. Juvenile defense counsel is familiar with special education law and works to ensure that the client is in an appropriate educational setting.
2. Juvenile defense counsel ensures that the client's rights are protected at school discipline or expulsion hearings.
3. Juvenile defense counsel is available to assist the client with intersecting, ancillary proceedings that may impact the client's case, including housing and immigration matters, as well as procedures for obtaining Medicaid or other public benefits.
4. Juvenile defense counsel who are prohibited from or face limitations in providing these services directly develop a network of providers to whom these cases can be referred so that ancillary representation is holistic and responsive to the client's legal needs.

#### Additional sources:

- *Juvenile Justice Standards: 4.3 Investigation and Preparation; 4.1 Prompt Action to Protect the Client; 7.2 Formality, In General; 7.3 Discovery and Motion Practice; 7.8 Examination of Witnesses; 7.9(a) Testimony by the Respondent; 9.1 Disposition, In General; 9.2 Disposition Investigation and Preparation; 9.3 Counseling Prior to Disposition; 9.4 Disposition Hearing; 9.5 Counseling after Disposition; 10.1 Relations with the Client after Disposition; 10.2 Postdispositional Hearings before the Juvenile Court; 10.3 Counsel on Appeal; 10.4 Conduct of the Appeal; 10.6 Probation Revocation; Parole Revocation; 10.7 Challenges to the Effectiveness of Counsel*
- *Criminal Justice Standards: 4-4.1 Duty to Investigate; 4-3.6 Prompt Action to Protect the Accused; 4-1.2(a) The Function of Defense Counsel, Commentary; 4-7.4 Opening Statement; 4-7.5 Presentation of Evidence; 4-7.6 Examination of Witnesses; 4-7.7 Argument to the Jury; 4-8.1 Sentencing; 4-7.9 Posttrial Motions; 4-8.2 Appeal, 4-8.3 Counsel on Appeal*

#### 4. Duty to Advise and Counsel

*Model Rules: 2.1 Advisor*

To better enable the client to make a fully informed decision about the direction of the case, juvenile defense attorneys offer clients honest and comprehensive advice that considers the client's educational, familial, social, developmental, and other realities, in addition to the client's legal situation.

- A. Pursuing Diversion Options:** Consistent with the client's expressed interests, juvenile defense counsel negotiates, at every possible opportunity, for diversion and other means of case dismissal, regardless of counsel's own opinion of guilt or innocence or the client's need for services. Counsel advises the client on the advantages and disadvantages of each of these alternatives to adjudication, including the consequences of non-compliance with conditions of diversion.
  
- B. Ensuring Ethical Plea Agreements:** Juvenile defense counsel negotiates reasonable plea offers and ensures that clients make well-considered decisions concerning whether to plead or go to trial.
  - 1. In negotiations with prosecutors, juvenile defense counsel represents and advocates for the client's expressed interests.
  - 2. Juvenile defense counsel promptly relays plea offers, taking time to review the offer with the client in detail and using age-appropriate language, advises the client on the full panoply of rights relinquished by pleading, as well as the range of disposition options.
  - 3. Juvenile defense counsel seeks to ensure the client has sufficient time to understand and weigh the offer.

4. Juvenile defense counsel’s advice as to whether to accept the plea offer includes discussion of the long-term collateral consequences of a juvenile adjudication or transfer to and conviction in adult criminal court (e.g., in some jurisdictions, deportation if the client is undocumented, ineligibility for public housing, federal student loans, and military service). This discussion should also include: the possible dispositions and their impact on the client’s life; if the client is likely to get probation; and the consequences of a probation violation.

Additional sources:

- *Juvenile Justice Standards: 6.3 Early Disposition; 7.1 Adjudication without Trial*
- *Criminal Justice Standards: 4-6.1 Duty to Explore Disposition Without Trial; 4-6.2 Plea Discussions; 4-5.2 Control and Direction of the Case*

## 5. Duty of Communication

*Model Rules: 1.4 Communications*

At every stage of the case, a juvenile defense attorney keeps the client informed of the case’s legal progression in frequent discussions using age-appropriate language, so that the client is a fully informed and proactive participant at all stages of the proceedings.

- A. **Communication in Court:** For in-court proceedings, juvenile defense counsel previews for the client each hearing before it happens, and reviews each hearing after it happens, providing an opinion as to how the specific hearing has affected the course of the overall case, and allowing the client ample opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns.

- B. Communication outside of Court:** Juvenile defense counsel keeps the client similarly informed about the case’s progression outside of the courtroom by: soliciting and following up on the client’s investigatory leads, sharing copies of and discussing motions filed, monitoring the client’s compliance with release conditions, or, if the client is detained, making sure that the client is receiving adequate services, and being available to assuage the client’s concerns as the case proceeds.
- C. Communication and Confidentiality:** Counsel creates a safe, comfortable, and, to the extent possible, private environment, and allocates adequate time for counseling; engages the youth with age-appropriate language; earns the child’s trust over time; and offers balanced and objective advice when appropriate.
- D. Communication with Detained Clients:** If the client is detained pending trial, juvenile defense counsel visits the client at the detention facility, and informs the client’s family how and when they can visit the client. If the detention facility is too remote, counsel keeps in regular phone contact with the client.

Additional sources:

- *Juvenile Justice Standards: 3.5 Duty to Keep Client Informed; 4.2 Interviewing the Client; 5.1 Advising the Client Concerning the Case*
- *Criminal Justice Standards: 4-3.1 Establishment of Relationship; 4-3.8 Duty to Keep Client Informed; 4-5.1 Advising the Accused*

## ENDNOTES

- 1 387 U.S. 1 (1967).
- 2 *Gault*, 387 U.S. at 19 n. 23 (internal quotations and citation omitted).
- 3 *Gault*, 387 U.S. at 36.
- 4 *In re Gault*, 387 U.S. 1, 36 (1967).
- 5 *In re Gault*, 387 U.S. 1, 36 (1967).
- 6 See *Kent v. U.S.*, 383 U.S. 541 (1966) (holding that due process requirements apply to transfer proceedings); *In re Gault*, 387 U.S. 1 (1967) (holding that juveniles have right to notice of charges, right to counsel, privilege against self incrimination, and right to confrontation and cross-examination); *In re Winship*, 397 U.S. 358 (1970) (holding that fundamental fairness requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt in delinquency adjudications); *Breed v. Jones*, 421 U.S. 519 (1975) (rejecting the rigid categorization of juvenile proceedings as civil, and extending the protection offered by the Double Jeopardy Clause, which had traditionally been applied to criminal proceedings, to juvenile proceedings).
- 7 Pub. L. 93-415 (1974).

- 8 National Advisory Committee for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Standards for the Administration of Juvenile Justice* §3.132 Representation by Counsel - For the Juvenile (1980).
- 9 For a description of the project, see *IJA/ABA Juvenile Justice Standards Annotated: A Balanced Approach* xvi-xviii (Robert E. Shepherd, ed., 1996).
- 10 Kristin Henning, *Loyalty, Paternalism, and Rights: Client Counseling Theory and the Role of Child's Counsel in Delinquency Cases*, 81 Notre Dame L. Rev. 245, 255-56 (2005).
- 11 *Id.*
- 12 ABA Juvenile Justice Center, Juvenile Law Center & Youth Law Center, *A Call for Justice: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (1995), available at <http://www.njdc.info/pdf/cfjfull/pdf>.
- 13 For purposes of this document, "stage" is broadly defined to include each step at which the state's power intersects the child's life, including, but not limited to, arrest, interrogation at the police station, at school, or at home, initial detention hearings, the probable cause hearing, and post-disposition hearings.
- 14 Under Model Rule 1.16(a)(1), *Declining or Terminating Representation*, if a lawyer cannot provide competent, prompt and diligent representation, and continued representation will result in violation of the rules of professional conduct, a lawyer can decline new cases or terminate representation. This rule gives important support to juvenile defense attorneys whose unmanageable caseloads prohibit the individualized, zealous advocacy to which juveniles are constitutionally entitled.

15 It should be noted that juvenile defense counsel is not the only stakeholder ethically charged with safeguarding the client's pretrial due process rights. Model Rule 3.8, *Special Responsibilities of a Prosecutor*, requires prosecutors to: refrain from prosecuting a charge that the prosecutor knows is not supported by probable cause; make reasonable efforts to assure that the accused has been advised of the right to, and the procedure for obtaining, counsel and has been given reasonable opportunity to obtain counsel; not seek to obtain from an unrepresented defendant a waiver of important pretrial rights, such as the right to a preliminary hearing; and make timely disclosure to the defense of all mitigating or exculpatory evidence.

## Endnotes



# APPENDIX A

## ABA MODEL RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

### PREAMBLE AND SCOPE

---

#### **Preamble: A Lawyer's Responsibilities**

1. A lawyer, as a member of the legal profession, is a representative of clients, an officer of the legal system and a public citizen having special responsibility for the quality of justice.
2. As a representative of clients, a lawyer performs various functions. As advisor, a lawyer provides a client with an informed understanding of the client's legal rights and obligations and explains their practical implications. As advocate, a lawyer zealously asserts the client's position under the rules of the adversary system. As negotiator, a lawyer seeks a result advantageous to the client but consistent with requirements of honest dealings with others. As an evaluator, a lawyer acts by examining a client's legal affairs and reporting about them to the client or to others.
3. In addition to these representational functions, a lawyer may serve as a third-party neutral, a nonrepresentational role helping the parties to resolve a dispute or other matter. Some of these Rules apply directly to lawyers who are or have served as third-party neutrals. See, e.g., Rules 1.12

and 2.4. In addition, there are Rules that apply to lawyers who are not active in the practice of law or to practicing lawyers even when they are acting in a nonprofessional capacity. For example, a lawyer who commits fraud in the conduct of a business is subject to discipline for engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation. See Rule 8.4.

4. In all professional functions a lawyer should be competent, prompt and diligent. A lawyer should maintain communication with a client concerning the representation. A lawyer should keep in confidence information relating to representation of a client except so far as disclosure is required or permitted by the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law.
5. A lawyer's conduct should conform to the requirements of the law, both in professional service to clients and in the lawyer's business and personal affairs. A lawyer should use the law's procedures only for legitimate purposes and not to harass or intimidate others. A lawyer should demonstrate respect for the legal system and for those who serve it, including judges, other lawyers and public officials. While it is a lawyer's duty, when necessary, to challenge the rectitude of official action, it is also a lawyer's duty to uphold legal process.
6. As a public citizen, a lawyer should seek improvement of the law, access to the legal system, the administration of justice and the quality of service rendered by the legal profession. As a member of a learned profession, a lawyer should cultivate knowledge of the law beyond its use for clients, employ that knowledge in reform of the law and work to strengthen legal education. In addition, a lawyer should further the public's understanding of and confidence in the rule of law and the justice system because legal institutions in a constitutional democracy depend on popular participation and support to maintain their au-

thority. A lawyer should be mindful of deficiencies in the administration of justice and of the fact that the poor, and sometimes persons who are not poor, cannot afford adequate legal assistance. Therefore, all lawyers should devote professional time and resources and use civic influence to ensure equal access to our system of justice for all those who because of economic or social barriers cannot afford or secure adequate legal counsel. A lawyer should aid the legal profession in pursuing these objectives and should help the bar regulate itself in the public interest.

7. Many of a lawyer's professional responsibilities are prescribed in the Rules of Professional Conduct, as well as substantive and procedural law. However, a lawyer is also guided by personal conscience and the approbation of professional peers. A lawyer should strive to attain the highest level of skill, to improve the law and the legal profession and to exemplify the legal profession's ideals of public service.
8. A lawyer's responsibilities as a representative of clients, an officer of the legal system and a public citizen are usually harmonious. Thus, when an opposing party is well represented, a lawyer can be a zealous advocate on behalf of a client and at the same time assume that justice is being done. So also, a lawyer can be sure that preserving client confidences ordinarily serves the public interest because people are more likely to seek legal advice, and thereby heed their legal obligations, when they know their communications will be private.
9. In the nature of law practice, however, conflicting responsibilities are encountered. Virtually all difficult ethical problems arise from conflict between a lawyer's responsibilities to clients, to the legal system and to the lawyer's own interest in remaining an ethical person while earning a satisfactory living. The Rules of Professional Conduct often prescribe terms for resolving such conflicts. Within

the framework of these Rules, however, many difficult issues of professional discretion can arise. Such issues must be resolved through the exercise of sensitive professional and moral judgment guided by the basic principles underlying the Rules. These principles include the lawyer's obligation zealously to protect and pursue a client's legitimate interests, within the bounds of the law, while maintaining a professional, courteous and civil attitude toward all persons involved in the legal system.

10. The legal profession is largely self-governing. Although other professions also have been granted powers of self-government, the legal profession is unique in this respect because of the close relationship between the profession and the processes of government and law enforcement. This connection is manifested in the fact that ultimate authority over the legal profession is vested largely in the courts.
11. To the extent that lawyers meet the obligations of their professional calling, the occasion for government regulation is obviated. Self-regulation also helps maintain the legal profession's independence from government domination. An independent legal profession is an important force in preserving government under law, for abuse of legal authority is more readily challenged by a profession whose members are not dependent on government for the right to practice.
12. The legal profession's relative autonomy carries with it special responsibilities of self-government. The profession has a responsibility to assure that its regulations are conceived in the public interest and not in furtherance of parochial or self-interested concerns of the bar. Every lawyer is responsible for observance of the Rules of Professional Conduct. A lawyer should also aid in securing their observance by other lawyers. Neglect of these responsibilities

compromises the independence of the profession and the public interest which it serves.

13. Lawyers play a vital role in the preservation of society. The fulfillment of this role requires an understanding by lawyers of their relationship to our legal system. The Rules of Professional Conduct, when properly applied, serve to define that relationship.

## Scope

14. The Rules of Professional Conduct are rules of reason. They should be interpreted with reference to the purposes of legal representation and of the law itself. Some of the Rules are imperatives, cast in the terms “shall” or “shall not.” These define proper conduct for purposes of professional discipline. Others, generally cast in the term “may,” are permissive and define areas under the Rules in which the lawyer has discretion to exercise professional judgment. No disciplinary action should be taken when the lawyer chooses not to act or acts within the bounds of such discretion. Other Rules define the nature of relationships between the lawyer and others. The Rules are thus partly obligatory and disciplinary and partly constitutive and descriptive in that they define a lawyer’s professional role. Many of the Comments use the term “should.” Comments do not add obligations to the Rules but provide guidance for practicing in compliance with the Rules.
15. The Rules presuppose a larger legal context shaping the lawyer’s role. That context includes court rules and statutes relating to matters of licensure, laws defining specific obligations of lawyers and substantive and procedural law in general. The Comments are sometimes used to alert lawyers to their responsibilities under such other law.

16. Compliance with the Rules, as with all law in an open society, depends primarily upon understanding and voluntary compliance, secondarily upon reinforcement by peer and public opinion and finally, when necessary, upon enforcement through disciplinary proceedings. The Rules do not, however, exhaust the moral and ethical considerations that should inform a lawyer, for no worthwhile human activity can be completely defined by legal rules. The Rules simply provide a framework for the ethical practice of law.
17. Furthermore, for purposes of determining the lawyer's authority and responsibility, principles of substantive law external to these Rules determine whether a client-lawyer relationship exists. Most of the duties flowing from the client-lawyer relationship attach only after the client has requested the lawyer to render legal services and the lawyer has agreed to do so. But there are some duties, such as that of confidentiality under Rule 1.6, that attach when the lawyer agrees to consider whether a client-lawyer relationship shall be established. See Rule 1.18. Whether a client-lawyer relationship exists for any specific purpose can depend on the circumstances and may be a question of fact.
18. Under various legal provisions, including constitutional, statutory and common law, the responsibilities of government lawyers may include authority concerning legal matters that ordinarily reposes in the client in private client-lawyer relationships. For example, a lawyer for a government agency may have authority on behalf of the government to decide upon settlement or whether to appeal from an adverse judgment. Such authority in various respects is generally vested in the attorney general and the state's attorney in state government, and their federal counterparts, and the same may be true of other government law officers. Also, lawyers under the supervision of these officers may be authorized to represent several

government agencies in intragovernmental legal controversies in circumstances where a private lawyer could not represent multiple private clients. These Rules do not abrogate any such authority.

19. Failure to comply with an obligation or prohibition imposed by a Rule is a basis for invoking the disciplinary process. The Rules presuppose that disciplinary assessment of a lawyer's conduct will be made on the basis of the facts and circumstances as they existed at the time of the conduct in question and in recognition of the fact that a lawyer often has to act upon uncertain or incomplete evidence of the situation. Moreover, the Rules presuppose that whether or not discipline should be imposed for a violation, and the severity of a sanction, depend on all the circumstances, such as the willfulness and seriousness of the violation, extenuating factors and whether there have been previous violations.
20. Violation of a Rule should not itself give rise to a cause of action against a lawyer nor should it create any presumption in such a case that a legal duty has been breached. In addition, violation of a Rule does not necessarily warrant any other nondisciplinary remedy, such as disqualification of a lawyer in pending litigation. The Rules are designed to provide guidance to lawyers and to provide a structure for regulating conduct through disciplinary agencies. They are not designed to be a basis for civil liability. Furthermore, the purpose of the Rules can be subverted when they are invoked by opposing parties as procedural weapons. The fact that a Rule is a just basis for a lawyer's self-assessment, or for sanctioning a lawyer under the administration of a disciplinary authority, does not imply that an antagonist in a collateral proceeding or transaction has standing to seek enforcement of the Rule. Nevertheless, since the Rules do establish standards of conduct by lawyers, a lawyer's violation of a Rule may be evidence of breach of the applicable standard of conduct.

21. The Comment accompanying each Rule explains and illustrates the meaning and purpose of the Rule. The Preamble and this note on Scope provide general orientation. The Comments are intended as guides to interpretation, but the text of each Rule is authoritative.

## ABA MODEL RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

---

### *Client-Lawyer Relationship*

#### **Rule 1.1 Competence**

A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

### *Client-Lawyer Relationship*

#### **Rule 1.1 Competence – Comment**

##### **Legal Knowledge and Skill**

1. In determining whether a lawyer employs the requisite knowledge and skill in a particular matter, relevant factors include the relative complexity and specialized nature of the matter, the lawyer’s general experience, the lawyer’s training and experience in the field in question, the preparation and study the lawyer is able to give the matter and whether it is feasible to refer the matter to, or associate or consult with, a lawyer of established competence in the field in question. In many instances, the required proficiency is that of a general practitioner. Expertise in a particular field of law may be required in some circumstances.



2. A lawyer need not necessarily have special training or prior experience to handle legal problems of a type with which the lawyer is unfamiliar. A newly admitted lawyer can be as competent as a practitioner with long experience. Some important legal skills, such as the analysis of precedent, the evaluation of evidence and legal drafting, are required in all legal problems. Perhaps the most fundamental legal skill consists of determining what kind of legal problems a situation may involve, a skill that necessarily transcends any particular specialized knowledge. A lawyer can provide adequate representation in a wholly novel field through necessary study. Competent representation can also be provided through the association of a lawyer of established competence in the field in question.
3. In an emergency a lawyer may give advice or assistance in a matter in which the lawyer does not have the skill ordinarily required where referral to or consultation or association with another lawyer would be impractical. Even in an emergency, however, assistance should be limited to that reasonably necessary in the circumstances, for ill-considered action under emergency conditions can jeopardize the client's interest.
4. A lawyer may accept representation where the requisite level of competence can be achieved by reasonable preparation. This applies as well to a lawyer who is appointed as counsel for an unrepresented person. See also Rule 6.2.

### **Thoroughness and Preparation**

5. Competent handling of a particular matter includes inquiry into and analysis of the factual and legal elements of the problem, and use of methods and procedures meeting the standards of competent practitioners. It also includes adequate preparation. The required attention and preparation are determined in part by what is at stake; major litigation

and complex transactions ordinarily require more extensive treatment than matters of lesser complexity and consequence. An agreement between the lawyer and the client regarding the scope of the representation may limit the matters for which the lawyer is responsible. See Rule 1.2(c).

### **Maintaining Competence**

6. To maintain the requisite knowledge and skill, a lawyer should keep abreast of changes in the law and its practice, engage in continuing study and education and comply with all continuing legal education requirements to which the lawyer is subject.

### ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

#### **Rule 1.2 Scope Of Representation And Allocation Of Authority Between Client And Lawyer**

- (a) Subject to paragraphs (c) and (d), a lawyer shall abide by a client's decisions concerning the objectives of representation and, as required by Rule 1.4, shall consult with the client as to the means by which they are to be pursued. A lawyer may take such action on behalf of the client as is impliedly authorized to carry out the representation. A lawyer shall abide by a client's decision whether to settle a matter. In a criminal case, the lawyer shall abide by the client's decision, after consultation with the lawyer, as to a plea to be entered, whether to waive jury trial and whether the client will testify.

## ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

### **Rule 1.2 Scope Of Representation And Allocation Of Authority Between Client And Lawyer – Comment**

#### **Allocation of Authority between Client and Lawyer**

1. Paragraph (a) confers upon the client the ultimate authority to determine the purposes to be served by legal representation, within the limits imposed by law and the lawyer’s professional obligations. The decisions specified in paragraph (a), such as whether to settle a civil matter, must also be made by the client. See Rule 1.4(a)(1) for the lawyer’s duty to communicate with the client about such decisions. With respect to the means by which the client’s objectives are to be pursued, the lawyer shall consult with the client as required by Rule 1.4(a)(2) and may take such action as is impliedly authorized to carry out the representation.
2. On occasion, however, a lawyer and a client may disagree about the means to be used to accomplish the client’s objectives. Clients normally defer to the special knowledge and skill of their lawyer with respect to the means to be used to accomplish their objectives, particularly with respect to technical, legal and tactical matters. Conversely, lawyers usually defer to the client regarding such questions as the expense to be incurred and concern for third persons who might be adversely affected. Because of the varied nature of the matters about which a lawyer and client might disagree and because the actions in question may implicate the interests of a tribunal or other persons, this Rule does not prescribe how such disagreements are to be resolved. Other law, however, may be applicable and should be consulted by the lawyer. The lawyer should also consult with the client and seek a mutually acceptable resolution of the disagreement. If such efforts are unavailing and the lawyer has a fundamental disagreement with the client, the lawyer may withdraw from the representation. See Rule

1.16(b)(4). Conversely, the client may resolve the disagreement by discharging the lawyer. See Rule 1.16(a)(3).

3. At the outset of a representation, the client may authorize the lawyer to take specific action on the client's behalf without further consultation. Absent a material change in circumstances and subject to Rule 1.4, a lawyer may rely on such an advance authorization. The client may, however, revoke such authority at any time.
4. In a case in which the client appears to be suffering diminished capacity, the lawyer's duty to abide by the client's decisions is to be guided by reference to Rule 1.14.

### **Independence from Client's Views or Activities**

5. Legal representation should not be denied to people who are unable to afford legal services, or whose cause is controversial or the subject of popular disapproval. By the same token, representing a client does not constitute approval of the client's views or activities.

### **Agreements Limiting Scope of Representation**

6. The scope of services to be provided by a lawyer may be limited by agreement with the client or by the terms under which the lawyer's services are made available to the client. When a lawyer has been retained by an insurer to represent an insured, for example, the representation may be limited to matters related to the insurance coverage. A limited representation may be appropriate because the client has limited objectives for the representation. In addition, the terms upon which representation is undertaken may exclude specific means that might otherwise be used to accomplish the client's objectives. Such limitations may exclude actions that the client thinks are too costly or that the lawyer regards as repugnant or imprudent.

7. Although this Rule affords the lawyer and client substantial latitude to limit the representation, the limitation must be reasonable under the circumstances. If, for example, a client's objective is limited to securing general information about the law the client needs in order to handle a common and typically uncomplicated legal problem, the lawyer and client may agree that the lawyer's services will be limited to a brief telephone consultation. Such a limitation, however, would not be reasonable if the time allotted was not sufficient to yield advice upon which the client could rely. Although an agreement for a limited representation does not exempt a lawyer from the duty to provide competent representation, the limitation is a factor to be considered when determining the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation. See Rule 1.1.
8. All agreements concerning a lawyer's representation of a client must accord with the Rules of Professional Conduct and other law. See, e.g., Rules 1.1, 1.8 and 5.6.

### **Criminal, Fraudulent and Prohibited Transactions**

9. Paragraph (d) prohibits a lawyer from knowingly counseling or assisting a client to commit a crime or fraud. This prohibition, however, does not preclude the lawyer from giving an honest opinion about the actual consequences that appear likely to result from a client's conduct. Nor does the fact that a client uses advice in a course of action that is criminal or fraudulent of itself make a lawyer a party to the course of action. There is a critical distinction between presenting an analysis of legal aspects of questionable conduct and recommending the means by which a crime or fraud might be committed with impunity.
10. When the client's course of action has already begun and is continuing, the lawyer's responsibility is especially del-

icate. The lawyer is required to avoid assisting the client, for example, by drafting or delivering documents that the lawyer knows are fraudulent or by suggesting how the wrongdoing might be concealed. A lawyer may not continue assisting a client in conduct that the lawyer originally supposed was legally proper but then discovers is criminal or fraudulent. The lawyer must, therefore, withdraw from the representation of the client in the matter. See Rule 1.16(a). In some cases, withdrawal alone might be insufficient. It may be necessary for the lawyer to give notice of the fact of withdrawal and to disaffirm any opinion, document, affirmation or the like. See Rule 4.1.

11. Where the client is a fiduciary, the lawyer may be charged with special obligations in dealings with a beneficiary.
12. Paragraph (d) applies whether or not the defrauded party is a party to the transaction. Hence, a lawyer must not participate in a transaction to effectuate criminal or fraudulent avoidance of tax liability. Paragraph (d) does not preclude undertaking a criminal defense incident to a general retainer for legal services to a lawful enterprise. The last clause of paragraph (d) recognizes that determining the validity or interpretation of a statute or regulation may require a course of action involving disobedience of the statute or regulation or of the interpretation placed upon it by governmental authorities.
13. If a lawyer comes to know or reasonably should know that a client expects assistance not permitted by the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law or if the lawyer intends to act contrary to the client's instructions, the lawyer must consult with the client regarding the limitations on the lawyer's conduct. See Rule 1.4(a)(5).

## ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

### **Rule 1.3 Diligence**

A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

## ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

### **Rule 1.3 Diligence – Comment**

1. A lawyer should pursue a matter on behalf of a client despite opposition, obstruction or personal inconvenience to the lawyer, and take whatever lawful and ethical measures are required to vindicate a client's cause or endeavor. A lawyer must also act with commitment and dedication to the interests of the client and with zeal in advocacy upon the client's behalf. A lawyer is not bound, however, to press for every advantage that might be realized for a client. For example, a lawyer may have authority to exercise professional discretion in determining the means by which a matter should be pursued. See Rule 1.2. The lawyer's duty to act with reasonable diligence does not require the use of offensive tactics or preclude the treating of all persons involved in the legal process with courtesy and respect.
2. A lawyer's work load must be controlled so that each matter can be handled competently.
3. Perhaps no professional shortcoming is more widely resented than procrastination. A client's interests often can be adversely affected by the passage of time or the change of conditions; in extreme instances, as when a lawyer overlooks a statute of limitations, the client's legal position may be destroyed. Even when the client's interests are not affected in substance, however, unreasonable delay can cause a client needless anxiety and undermine confidence in the lawyer's trustworthiness. A lawyer's duty to act with reasonable promptness, however, does

not preclude the lawyer from agreeing to a reasonable request for a postponement that will not prejudice the lawyer's client.

4. Unless the relationship is terminated as provided in Rule 1.16, a lawyer should carry through to conclusion all matters undertaken for a client. If a lawyer's employment is limited to a specific matter, the relationship terminates when the matter has been resolved. If a lawyer has served a client over a substantial period in a variety of matters, the client sometimes may assume that the lawyer will continue to serve on a continuing basis unless the lawyer gives notice of withdrawal. Doubt about whether a client-lawyer relationship still exists should be clarified by the lawyer, preferably in writing, so that the client will not mistakenly suppose the lawyer is looking after the client's affairs when the lawyer has ceased to do so. For example, if a lawyer has handled a judicial or administrative proceeding that produced a result adverse to the client and the lawyer and the client have not agreed that the lawyer will handle the matter on appeal, the lawyer must consult with the client about the possibility of appeal before relinquishing responsibility for the matter. See Rule 1.4(a)(2). Whether the lawyer is obligated to prosecute the appeal for the client depends on the scope of the representation the lawyer has agreed to provide to the client. See Rule 1.2.
5. To prevent neglect of client matters in the event of a sole practitioner's death or disability, the duty of diligence may require that each sole practitioner prepare a plan, in conformity with applicable rules, that designates another competent lawyer to review client files, notify each client of the lawyer's death or disability, and determine whether there is a need for immediate protective action. Cf. Rule 28 of the American Bar Association Model Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement (providing for court appointment of a lawyer to inventory files and take other protective action in absence of a plan providing for another



lawyer to protect the interests of the clients of a deceased or disabled lawyer).

## ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

### **Rule 1.4 Communication**

- (a) A lawyer shall:
  - (1) promptly inform the client of any decision or circumstance with respect to which the client's informed consent, as defined in Rule 1.0(e), is required by these Rules;
  - (2) reasonably consult with the client about the means by which the client's objectives are to be accomplished;
  - (3) keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter;
  - (4) promptly comply with reasonable requests for information; and
  - (5) consult with the client about any relevant limitation on the lawyer's conduct when the lawyer knows that the client expects assistance not permitted by the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law.
  
- (b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

## ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

### **Rule 1.4 Communication - Comment**

- 1. Reasonable communication between the lawyer and the client is necessary for the client effectively to participate in the representation.

## Communicating with Client

2. If these Rules require that a particular decision about the representation be made by the client, paragraph (a)(1) requires that the lawyer promptly consult with and secure the client's consent prior to taking action unless prior discussions with the client have resolved what action the client wants the lawyer to take. For example, a lawyer who receives from opposing counsel an offer of settlement in a civil controversy or a proffered plea bargain in a criminal case must promptly inform the client of its substance unless the client has previously indicated that the proposal will be acceptable or unacceptable or has authorized the lawyer to accept or to reject the offer. See Rule 1.2(a).
3. Paragraph (a)(2) requires the lawyer to reasonably consult with the client about the means to be used to accomplish the client's objectives. In some situations — depending on both the importance of the action under consideration and the feasibility of consulting with the client — this duty will require consultation prior to taking action. In other circumstances, such as during a trial when an immediate decision must be made, the exigency of the situation may require the lawyer to act without prior consultation. In such cases the lawyer must nonetheless act reasonably to inform the client of actions the lawyer has taken on the client's behalf. Additionally, paragraph (a)(3) requires that the lawyer keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter, such as significant developments affecting the timing or the substance of the representation.
4. A lawyer's regular communication with clients will minimize the occasions on which a client will need to request information concerning the representation. When a client makes a reasonable request for information, however, paragraph (a)(4) requires prompt compliance with the request, or if a prompt response is not feasible, that the lawyer, or a member of the lawyer's staff, acknowl-

edge receipt of the request and advise the client when a response may be expected. Client telephone calls should be promptly returned or acknowledged.

## Explaining Matters

5. The client should have sufficient information to participate intelligently in decisions concerning the objectives of the representation and the means by which they are to be pursued, to the extent the client is willing and able to do so. Adequacy of communication depends in part on the kind of advice or assistance that is involved. For example, when there is time to explain a proposal made in a negotiation, the lawyer should review all important provisions with the client before proceeding to an agreement. In litigation a lawyer should explain the general strategy and prospects of success and ordinarily should consult the client on tactics that are likely to result in significant expense or to injure or coerce others. On the other hand, a lawyer ordinarily will not be expected to describe trial or negotiation strategy in detail. The guiding principle is that the lawyer should fulfill reasonable client expectations for information consistent with the duty to act in the client's best interests, and the client's overall requirements as to the character of representation. In certain circumstances, such as when a lawyer asks a client to consent to a representation affected by a conflict of interest, the client must give informed consent, as defined in Rule 1.0(e).
6. Ordinarily, the information to be provided is that appropriate for a client who is a comprehending and responsible adult. However, fully informing the client according to this standard may be impracticable, for example, where the client is a child or suffers from diminished capacity. See Rule 1.14. When the client is an organization or group, it is often impossible or inappropriate to inform every one of its members about its legal affairs; ordinarily, the law-

yer should address communications to the appropriate officials of the organization. See Rule 1.13. Where many routine matters are involved, a system of limited or occasional reporting may be arranged with the client.

### **Withholding Information**

7. In some circumstances, a lawyer may be justified in delaying transmission of information when the client would be likely to react imprudently to an immediate communication. Thus, a lawyer might withhold a psychiatric diagnosis of a client when the examining psychiatrist indicates that disclosure would harm the client. A lawyer may not withhold information to serve the lawyer's own interest or convenience or the interests or convenience of another person. Rules or court orders governing litigation may provide that information supplied to a lawyer may not be disclosed to the client. Rule 3.4(c) directs compliance with such rules or orders.

## ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

### **Rule 1.6 Confidentiality of Information**

- (a) A lawyer shall not reveal information relating to the representation of a client unless the client gives informed consent, the disclosure is impliedly authorized in order to carry out the representation or the disclosure is permitted by paragraph (b).
- (b) A lawyer may reveal information relating to the representation of a client to the extent the lawyer reasonably believes necessary:
  - (1) to prevent reasonably certain death or substantial bodily harm;
  - (2) to prevent the client from committing a crime or fraud that is reasonably certain to result in substantial injury

- to the financial interests or property of another and in furtherance of which the client has used or is using the lawyer's services;
- (3) to prevent, mitigate or rectify substantial injury to the financial interests or property of another that is reasonably certain to result or has resulted from the client's commission of a crime or fraud in furtherance of which the client has used the lawyer's services;
  - (4) to secure legal advice about the lawyer's compliance with these Rules;
  - (5) to establish a claim or defense on behalf of the lawyer in a controversy between the lawyer and the client, to establish a defense to a criminal charge or civil claim against the lawyer based upon conduct in which the client was involved, or to respond to allegations in any proceeding concerning the lawyer's representation of the client; or
  - (6) to comply with other law or a court order.

### ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

#### **Rule 1.6 Confidentiality of Information – Comment**

- (a) A lawyer shall not reveal information relating to the representation of a client unless the client gives informed consent, the disclosure is impliedly authorized in order to carry out the representation or the disclosure is permitted by paragraph (b).
- (b) A lawyer may reveal information relating to the representation of a client to the extent the lawyer reasonably believes necessary:
  - (1) to prevent reasonably certain death or substantial bodily harm;
  - (2) to prevent the client from committing a crime or fraud that is reasonably certain to result in substantial injury to the financial interests or property of another and in furtherance of which the client has used or is using the lawyer's services;

- (3) to prevent, mitigate or rectify substantial injury to the financial interests or property of another that is reasonably certain to result or has resulted from the client's commission of a crime or fraud in furtherance of which the client has used the lawyer's services;
- (4) to secure legal advice about the lawyer's compliance with these Rules;
- (5) to establish a claim or defense on behalf of the lawyer in a controversy between the lawyer and the client, to establish a defense to a criminal charge or civil claim against the lawyer based upon conduct in which the client was involved, or to respond to allegations in any proceeding concerning the lawyer's representation of the client; or
- (6) to comply with other law or a court order.

### ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

#### **Rule 1.14 Client with Diminished Capacity**

- (a) When a client's capacity to make adequately considered decisions in connection with a representation is diminished, whether because of minority, mental impairment or for some other reason, the lawyer shall, as far as reasonably possible, maintain a normal client-lawyer relationship with the client.

### ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

#### **Rule 1.14 Client with Diminished Capacity – Comment**

1. The normal client-lawyer relationship is based on the assumption that the client, when properly advised and assisted, is capable of making decisions about important matters. When the client is a minor or suffers from a diminished mental capacity, however, maintaining the ordinary client-lawyer relationship may not be possible in all respects. In particular, a severely incapacitated person

may have no power to make legally binding decisions. Nevertheless, a client with diminished capacity often has the ability to understand, deliberate upon, and reach conclusions about matters affecting the client's own well-being. For example, children as young as five or six years of age, and certainly those of ten or twelve, are regarded as having opinions that are entitled to weight in legal proceedings concerning their custody. So also, it is recognized that some persons of advanced age can be quite capable of handling routine financial matters while needing special legal protection concerning major transactions.

2. The fact that a client suffers a disability does not diminish the lawyer's obligation to treat the client with attention and respect. Even if the person has a legal representative, the lawyer should as far as possible accord the represented person the status of client, particularly in maintaining communication.
3. The client may wish to have family members or other persons participate in discussions with the lawyer. When necessary to assist in the representation, the presence of such persons generally does not affect the applicability of the attorney-client evidentiary privilege. Nevertheless, the lawyer must keep the client's interests foremost and, except for protective action authorized under paragraph (b), must look to the client, and not family members, to make decisions on the client's behalf.
4. If a legal representative has already been appointed for the client, the lawyer should ordinarily look to the representative for decisions on behalf of the client. In matters involving a minor, whether the lawyer should look to the parents as natural guardians may depend on the type of proceeding or matter in which the lawyer is representing the minor. If the lawyer represents the guardian as distinct from the ward, and is aware that the guardian is acting adversely to the ward's interest, the lawyer may have an

obligation to prevent or rectify the guardian’s misconduct. See Rule 1.2(d).

### **Taking Protective Action**

5. If a lawyer reasonably believes that a client is at risk of substantial physical, financial or other harm unless action is taken, and that a normal client-lawyer relationship cannot be maintained as provided in paragraph (a) because the client lacks sufficient capacity to communicate or to make adequately considered decisions in connection with the representation, then paragraph (b) permits the lawyer to take protective measures deemed necessary. Such measures could include: consulting with family members, using a reconsideration period to permit clarification or improvement of circumstances, using voluntary surrogate decisionmaking tools such as durable powers of attorney or consulting with support groups, professional services, adult-protective agencies or other individuals or entities that have the ability to protect the client. In taking any protective action, the lawyer should be guided by such factors as the wishes and values of the client to the extent known, the client’s best interests and the goals of intruding into the client’s decisionmaking autonomy to the least extent feasible, maximizing client capacities and respecting the client’s family and social connections.
6. In determining the extent of the client’s diminished capacity, the lawyer should consider and balance such factors as: the client’s ability to articulate reasoning leading to a decision, variability of state of mind and ability to appreciate consequences of a decision; the substantive fairness of a decision; and the consistency of a decision with the known long-term commitments and values of the client. In appropriate circumstances, the lawyer may seek guidance from an appropriate diagnostician.



7. If a legal representative has not been appointed, the lawyer should consider whether appointment of a guardian ad litem, conservator or guardian is necessary to protect the client's interests. Thus, if a client with diminished capacity has substantial property that should be sold for the client's benefit, effective completion of the transaction may require appointment of a legal representative. In addition, rules of procedure in litigation sometimes provide that minors or persons with diminished capacity must be represented by a guardian or next friend if they do not have a general guardian. In many circumstances, however, appointment of a legal representative may be more expensive or traumatic for the client than circumstances in fact require. Evaluation of such circumstances is a matter entrusted to the professional judgment of the lawyer. In considering alternatives, however, the lawyer should be aware of any law that requires the lawyer to advocate the least restrictive action on behalf of the client.

### **Disclosure of the Client's Condition**

8. Disclosure of the client's diminished capacity could adversely affect the client's interests. For example, raising the question of diminished capacity could, in some circumstances, lead to proceedings for involuntary commitment. Information relating to the representation is protected by Rule 1.6. Therefore, unless authorized to do so, the lawyer may not disclose such information. When taking protective action pursuant to paragraph (b), the lawyer is impliedly authorized to make the necessary disclosures, even when the client directs the lawyer to the contrary. Nevertheless, given the risks of disclosure, paragraph (c) limits what the lawyer may disclose in consulting with other individuals or entities or seeking the appointment of a legal representative. At the very least, the lawyer should determine whether it is likely that the person or entity consulted with will act adversely to the client's interests before discussing

matters related to the client. The lawyer's position in such cases is an unavoidably difficult one.

### **Emergency Legal Assistance**

9. In an emergency where the health, safety or a financial interest of a person with seriously diminished capacity is threatened with imminent and irreparable harm, a lawyer may take legal action on behalf of such a person even though the person is unable to establish a client-lawyer relationship or to make or express considered judgments about the matter, when the person or another acting in good faith on that person's behalf has consulted with the lawyer. Even in such an emergency, however, the lawyer should not act unless the lawyer reasonably believes that the person has no other lawyer, agent or other representative available. The lawyer should take legal action on behalf of the person only to the extent reasonably necessary to maintain the status quo or otherwise avoid imminent and irreparable harm. A lawyer who undertakes to represent a person in such an exigent situation has the same duties under these Rules as the lawyer would with respect to a client.
  
10. A lawyer who acts on behalf of a person with seriously diminished capacity in an emergency should keep the confidences of the person as if dealing with a client, disclosing them only to the extent necessary to accomplish the intended protective action. The lawyer should disclose to any tribunal involved and to any other counsel involved the nature of his or her relationship with the person. The lawyer should take steps to regularize the relationship or implement other protective solutions as soon as possible. Normally, a lawyer would not seek compensation for such emergency actions taken.

## ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

### **Rule 2.1 Advisor**

In representing a client, a lawyer shall exercise independent professional judgment and render candid advice. In rendering advice, a lawyer may refer not only to law but to other considerations such as moral, economic, social and political factors, that may be relevant to the client's situation.

## ***Client-Lawyer Relationship***

### **Rule 2.1 Advisor – Comment**

#### **Scope of Advice**

1. A client is entitled to straightforward advice expressing the lawyer's honest assessment. Legal advice often involves unpleasant facts and alternatives that a client may be disinclined to confront. In presenting advice, a lawyer endeavors to sustain the client's morale and may put advice in as acceptable a form as honesty permits. However, a lawyer should not be deterred from giving candid advice by the prospect that the advice will be unpalatable to the client.
2. Advice couched in narrow legal terms may be of little value to a client, especially where practical considerations, such as cost or effects on other people, are predominant. Purely technical legal advice, therefore, can sometimes be inadequate. It is proper for a lawyer to refer to relevant moral and ethical considerations in giving advice. Although a lawyer is not a moral advisor as such, moral and ethical considerations impinge upon most legal questions and may decisively influence how the law will be applied.
3. A client may expressly or impliedly ask the lawyer for purely technical advice. When such a request is made by a client experienced in legal matters, the lawyer may accept

it at face value. When such a request is made by a client inexperienced in legal matters, however, the lawyer's responsibility as advisor may include indicating that more may be involved than strictly legal considerations.

4. Matters that go beyond strictly legal questions may also be in the domain of another profession. Family matters can involve problems within the professional competence of psychiatry, clinical psychology or social work; business matters can involve problems within the competence of the accounting profession or of financial specialists. Where consultation with a professional in another field is itself something a competent lawyer would recommend, the lawyer should make such a recommendation. At the same time, a lawyer's advice at its best often consists of recommending a course of action in the face of conflicting recommendations of experts.

### Offering Advice

5. In general, a lawyer is not expected to give advice until asked by the client. However, when a lawyer knows that a client proposes a course of action that is likely to result in substantial adverse legal consequences to the client, the lawyer's duty to the client under Rule 1.4 may require that the lawyer offer advice if the client's course of action is related to the representation. Similarly, when a matter is likely to involve litigation, it may be necessary under Rule 1.4 to inform the client of forms of dispute resolution that might constitute reasonable alternatives to litigation. A lawyer ordinarily has no duty to initiate investigation of a client's affairs or to give advice that the client has indicated is unwanted, but a lawyer may initiate advice to a client when doing so appears to be in the client's interest.

# APPENDIX B

## TEN CORE PRINCIPLES FOR PROVIDING QUALITY PUBLIC DEFENSE DELIVERY SYSTEMS

### PREAMBLE

---

#### A. Goals of These Principles

The *Ten Core Principles for Providing Quality Delinquency Representation through Public Defense Delivery Systems*<sup>1</sup> provide criteria by which a public defense delivery system<sup>2</sup> may fully implement the holding of *In re Gault*.<sup>3</sup> These Principles offer guidance to public defense leaders and policymakers regarding the role of public defenders, contract attorneys, or assigned counsel in delivering zealous, comprehensive and quality legal representation on behalf of children facing both delinquency and criminal proceedings.<sup>4</sup> In applying these Principles, advocates should always be guided by defense counsel's primary responsibility to zealously defend clients against the charges leveled against them and to protect their due process rights.

Delinquency cases are complex and their consequences have significant implications for children and their families. Therefore, every child client must have access to qualified, well-resourced defense counsel. These resources should include the time and skill to adequately communicate with a client so that lawyer and client can build a trust-based attorney-client relationship and so that the lawyer is prepared to competently represent the client's interests. These Principles elucidate

the parameters of this critical relationship already well established in legal ethics rules and opinions.

In 1995, the American Bar Association’s Juvenile Justice Center published *A Call for Justice: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings*, a national study that revealed major failings in juvenile defense across the nation. Since that time, numerous state-based assessments have documented in detail the manner in which these failings result in lifelong, harmful consequences for our nation’s children.<sup>5</sup> These Principles provide public defense leaders and policymakers a guide to rectifying systemic deficits and to providing children charged with criminal behavior the high quality counsel to which they are entitled.

## **B. The Representation of Children and Adolescents is a Specialty.**

Public defense delivery systems must recognize that children and adolescents are different from adults. Advances in brain research cited favorably by the Supreme Court in *Roper v. Simmons*<sup>6</sup> confirm that children and young adults do not possess the same cognitive, emotional, decision-making or behavioral capacities as adults. Public defense delivery systems must provide training regarding the stages of child and adolescent development.

Public defense delivery systems must emphasize that juvenile defense counsel has an obligation to maximize each client’s participation in his or her own case in order to ensure that the client understands the court process and to facilitate informed decision making by the client. Defense attorneys owe their juvenile clients the same duty of loyalty that adult criminal clients enjoy. This coextensive duty of loyalty requires the juvenile defense attorney to advocate for the child client’s expressed interests with the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.<sup>7</sup>

### **C. Public Defense Delivery Systems Must Pay Particular Attention to the Most Vulnerable and Over-Represented Groups of Children in the Delinquency System.**

Because research has demonstrated that involvement in the juvenile court system increases the likelihood that a child will subsequently be convicted and incarcerated as an adult, public defense delivery systems should pay special attention to providing high quality representation for the most vulnerable and over-represented groups of children in the delinquency system.

Nationally, children of color are severely over-represented at every stage of the juvenile justice process. Defenders must zealously advocate for the elimination of the disproportionate representation of minority youth in juvenile courts and detention facilities.

Children with mental health and developmental disabilities are also overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. Defenders must address these needs and secure appropriate assistance for these clients as an essential component of quality legal representation.

Drug- and alcohol-dependent juveniles and those dually diagnosed with addiction and mental health disorders are more likely to become involved with the juvenile justice system. Defenders must advocate for appropriate treatment services for these clients.

Research shows that the population of girls in the delinquency system is increasing, and that girls' issues are distinct from boys'. Gender-based interventions and the programmatic needs of girls in the juvenile delinquency system, who have frequently suffered from abuse and neglect, must be assessed and appropriate gender-based services developed and funded.<sup>8</sup>

The special issues presented by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth require increased awareness and training to ensure that advocacy on their behalf addresses their needs.

## TEN PRINCIPLES

---

1

The Public Defense Delivery System Upholds Juveniles' Constitutional Rights Throughout the Delinquency Process and Recognizes The Need For Competent and Diligent Representation.

- A. Competent and diligent representation is the bedrock of a juvenile defense attorney's responsibilities.<sup>9</sup>
- B. The public defense delivery system ensures that children do not waive appointment of counsel and that defense counsel are assigned at the earliest possible stage of the delinquency proceedings.<sup>10</sup>
- C. The public defense delivery system recognizes that the delinquency process is adversarial and provides children with continuous legal representation throughout the proceedings including, but not limited to, detention, pre-trial motions or hearings, adjudication, disposition, post-disposition, probation, appeal, expungement and sealing of records.
- D. The public defense delivery system includes the active participation of the private bar or conflict office whenever a conflict of interest arises for the primary defender service provider or when the caseload justifies the need for outside counsel.<sup>11</sup>

2

The Public Defense Delivery System Recognizes that Legal Representation of Children is a Specialized Area of the Law.

- A. The public defense delivery system recognizes that representing children in delinquency proceedings is a complex specialty in the law that is different from, but equally



as important as, the representation of adults in criminal proceedings. The public defense delivery system further acknowledges the specialized nature of representing juveniles prosecuted as adults following transfer/waiver proceedings.<sup>12</sup>

- B. The public defense delivery system leadership promotes respect for juvenile defense team members and values the provision of quality, zealous and comprehensive delinquency representation services.
- C. The public defense delivery system encourages experienced attorneys to provide delinquency representation and strongly discourages use of delinquency representation as a training assignment for new attorneys or future adult court advocates.

### 3

#### The Public Defense Delivery System Supports Quality Juvenile Delinquency Representation Through Personnel and Resource Parity.<sup>13</sup>

- A. The public defense delivery system encourages juvenile specialization without limiting access to promotions, financial advancement, or personnel benefits for attorneys and support staff.
- B. The public defense delivery system provides a professional work environment and adequate operational resources such as office space, furnishings, technology, confidential client interview areas<sup>14</sup> and current legal research tools. The system includes juvenile representation resources in budgetary planning to ensure parity in the allocation of equipment and resources.

## 4

### The Public Defense Delivery System Uses Expert and Ancillary Services to Provide Quality Juvenile Defense Services.

- A. The public defense delivery system supports requests for expert services throughout the delinquency process whenever individual juvenile case representation requires these services for quality representation. These services include, but are not limited to, evaluation by and testimony of mental health professionals, education specialists, forensic evidence examiners, DNA experts, ballistics analysts and accident reconstruction experts.
- B. The public defense delivery system ensures the provision of all litigation support services necessary for the delivery of quality services, including, but not limited to, interpreters, court reporters, social workers, investigators, paralegals and other support staff.

## 5

### The Public Defense Delivery System Supervises Attorneys and Staff and Monitors Work and Caseloads.

- A. The leadership of the public defense delivery system monitors defense counsel's workload to promote quality representation. The workload of public defense attorneys, including appointed and other work, should never be so large that it interferes with competent and diligent representation or limits client contact.<sup>15</sup> Factors that impact the number of cases an attorney can appropriately handle include case complexity and available support services.
- B. The leadership of the public defense delivery system adjusts attorney case assignments and resources to guarantee the continued delivery of quality juvenile defense services.

## 6

The Public Defense Delivery System Supervises and Systematically Reviews Juvenile Staff According to National, State and/or Local Performance Guidelines or Standards.

- A. The public defense delivery system provides supervision and management direction for attorneys and team members who provide defense services to children.<sup>16</sup>
- B. The leadership of the public defense delivery system clearly defines the organization's vision and adopts guidelines consistent with national, state and/or local performance standards.<sup>17</sup>
- C. The public defense delivery system provides systematic reviews for all attorneys and staff representing juveniles, whether they are contract defenders, assigned counsel or employees of defender offices.

## 7

The Public Defense Delivery System Provides and Requires Comprehensive, Ongoing Training and Education for All Attorneys and Support Staff Involved in the Representation of Children.

- A. The public defense delivery system recognizes juvenile delinquency defense as a specialty that requires continuous training<sup>18</sup> in unique areas of the law. The public defense delivery system provides and mandates training<sup>19</sup> on topics including detention advocacy, litigation and trial skills, dispositional planning, post-dispositional practice, educational rights, appellate advocacy and procedure and administrative hearing representation.
- B. Juvenile team members have a comprehensive understanding of the jurisdiction's juvenile law and procedure, and the collateral consequences of adjudication and conviction.

- C. Team members receive training to recognize issues that arise in juvenile cases and that may require assistance from specialists in other disciplines. Such disciplines include, but are not limited to:
1. Administrative appeals
  2. Child welfare and entitlements
  3. Special Education
  4. Dependency court/abuse and neglect court process
  5. Immigration
  6. Mental health, physical health and treatment
  7. Drug addiction and substance abuse
- D. Training for team members emphasizes understanding of the needs of juveniles in general and of specific populations of juveniles in particular, including in the following areas:
1. Child and adolescent development
  2. Racial, ethnic and cultural understanding
  3. Communicating and building attorney-client relationships with children and adolescents
  4. Ethical issues and considerations of juvenile representation
  5. Competency and capacity
  6. Role of parents/guardians
  7. Sexual orientation and gender identity awareness
  8. Transfer to adult court and waiver hearings
  9. Zero tolerance, school suspension and expulsion policies
- E. Team members are trained to understand and use special programs and resources that are available in the juvenile system and in the community, such as
1. Treatment and problem solving courts<sup>20</sup>
  2. Diversionary programs
  3. Community-based treatment resources and programs
  4. Gender-specific programming

## 8

### The Public Defense Delivery System Has an Obligation to Present Independent Treatment and Disposition Alternatives to the Court.

- A. The public defense delivery system ensures that attorneys consult with clients and, independent from court or probation staff, actively seek out and advocate for treatment and placement alternatives that serve the unique needs and dispositional requests of each child, consistent with the client's expressed interests.
- B. The leadership and staff of the public defense delivery system works in partnership with other juvenile justice agencies and community leaders to minimize custodial detention and the incarceration of children and to support the creation of a continuum of community-based, culturally sensitive and gender-specific treatment alternatives.
- C. The public defense delivery system provides independent post-disposition monitoring of each child's treatment, placement or program to ensure that rehabilitative needs are met. If clients' expressed needs are not effectively addressed, attorneys are responsible for intervention and advocacy before the appropriate authority.

## 9

### The Public Defense Delivery System Advocates for the Educational Needs of Clients.

- A. The public defense delivery system recognizes that access to education and to an appropriate educational curriculum is of paramount importance to juveniles facing delinquency adjudication and disposition.
- B. The public defense delivery system advocates, either through direct representation or through collaborations with community-based partners, for the appropriate provision of the individualized educational needs of clients.

- A. The public defense delivery system demonstrates strong support for the right to counsel and due process in delinquency courts to promote a juvenile justice system that is fair, non-discriminatory and rehabilitative.
- B. The public defense delivery system recognizes that disproportionate representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system is contrary to notions of fairness and equality. The public defense delivery system works to draw attention to, and zealously advocates for the elimination of, disproportionate minority contact.

## NOTES

---

- <sup>1</sup> The original *Principles* were developed over an eighteen-month period through a collaborative venture between the National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC) and the American Council of Chief Defenders, a section of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA). NLADA officially adopted the original *Principles* on December 4, 2004. NJDC and NLADA collaborated on additional revisions to release this updated version, which NLDA officially adopted on June 4, 2008.
- <sup>2</sup> For the purposes of these *Principles*, the term “public defense delivery system” denotes legal delivery systems that provide defense services to indigent juveniles facing delinquency proceedings. This term is meant to encompass public defender offices, contract, appointed, and conflict counsel, law school clinics, and non-profit legal providers.
- <sup>3</sup> 387 U.S. 1 (1967). According to the *IJA/ABA Juvenile Justice Standard Relating to Counsel for Private Parties* 3.1 (1996), “the lawyer’s principal duty is the representation of the client’s legiti-

mate interests” as distinct and different from the best interest standard applied in neglect and abuse cases. The Commentary goes on to state that “counsel’s principal responsibility lies in full and conscientious representation” and that “no lesser obligation exists when youthful clients or juvenile court proceedings are involved.”

- <sup>4</sup> For purposes of these *Principles*, the term “delinquency proceeding” denotes all proceedings in juvenile court as well as any proceeding lodged against an alleged status offender, such as for truancy, running away, incorrigibility, etc.
- <sup>5</sup> Common findings among these assessments include, among other barriers to adequate representation, a lack of access to competent counsel, inadequate time and resources for defenders to prepare for hearings or trials, a juvenile court culture that encourages pleas to move cases quickly, a lack of pretrial and dispositional advocacy and an over-reliance on probation. For more information, see *Selling Justice Short: Juvenile Indigent Defense in Texas* (2000); *The Children Left Behind: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings in Louisiana* (2001); *Georgia: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (2001); *Virginia: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (2002); *An Assessment of Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings in Ohio* (2003); *Maine: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (2003); *Maryland: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (2003); *Montana: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (2003); *North Carolina: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (2003); *Pennsylvania: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (2003); *Washington: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Juvenile Offender Matters* (2003); *Indiana: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (2006); *Florida: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of*

*Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (2006); *Mississippi: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Youth Court Proceedings* (2007); *Illinois: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Delinquency Proceedings* (2007). All NJDC Assessments are available at <http://www.njdc.info/assessments.php>.

- <sup>6</sup> 543 U.S. 551 (2005).
- <sup>7</sup> *American Bar Association Model Rules of Professional Conduct*, Rule 1.1 Competence.
- <sup>8</sup> *Justice by Gender*: jointly issued by the ABA and the NBA 2001.
- <sup>9</sup> See generally, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, *Juvenile Delinquency Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Juvenile Delinquency Cases* (2005) [hereinafter *Guidelines*]. *American Bar Association Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System* (2002), Principle 3.
- <sup>10</sup> *American Bar Association Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System* (2002), Principle 3.
- <sup>11</sup> A conflict of interest includes both codefendants and intra-family conflicts, among other potential conflicts that may arise. See also *American Bar Association Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System* (2002), Principle 2.
- <sup>12</sup> For purposes of this Principle, the term “transfer/waiver proceedings” refers to any proceedings related to prosecuting youth in adult court, including those known in some jurisdictions as certification, bind-over, decline, remand, direct file, or youthful offenders.
- <sup>13</sup> *American Bar Association Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System* (2002), Principle 8.
- <sup>14</sup> *American Bar Association Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System* (2002), Principle 4.



<sup>15</sup> See generally, American Council of Chief Defenders Statement on Caseloads and Workloads, issued August 24, 2007; see also National Study Commission on Defense Services, *Guidelines for Legal Defense Systems in the United States* (1976), 5.1, 5.3; American Bar Association, *Standards for Criminal Justice, Providing Defense Services* (3rd ed., 1992), 5-5.3; American Bar Association, *Standards for Criminal Justice: Prosecution Function and Defense Function* (3rd ed., 1993), 4-1.3(e); National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, *Report of the Task Force on Courts*, Chapter 13, “The Defense” (1973), 13.12; National Legal Aid and Defender Association and American Bar Association, *Guidelines for Negotiating and Awarding Contracts for Criminal Defense Services* (NLADA, 1984; ABA, 1985), III-6, III-12; National Legal Aid and Defender Association, *Standards for the Administration of Assigned Counsel Systems* (1989), 4.1.4.1.2; ABA Model Code of Professional Responsibility DR 6-101; *American Bar Association Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System* (2002), Principle 5.

<sup>16</sup> *American Bar Association Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System* (2002), Principles 6 and 10.

<sup>17</sup> For example, Institute of Judicial Administration-American Bar Association, *Juvenile Justice Standards* (1979); National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, *Report of the Task Force on Courts*, Chapter 13, “The Defense” (1973); National Study Commission on Defense Services, *Guidelines for Legal Defense Systems in the United States* (1976); American Bar Association, *Standards for Criminal Justice, Providing Defense Services* (3rd ed., 1992); American Bar Association, *Standards for Criminal Justice: Prosecution Function and Defense Function* (3rd ed., 1993); *Standards and Evaluation Design for Appellate Defender Offices* (NLADA, 1980); *Performance Guidelines for Criminal Defense Representation* (NLADA, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> National Legal Aid and Defender Association, *Training and Development Standards* (1997), Standard 7.2, footnote 2. *American Bar Association Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System* (2002), Principle 9; National Legal Aid and Defender Association, *Training and Development Standards* (1997), Standards 1 to 9.

<sup>19</sup> *American Bar Association Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System* (2002), Principle 9; National Legal Aid and Defender Association, *Training and Development Standards* (1997), Standards 1 to 9.

<sup>20</sup> American Council of Chief Defenders, *Ten Tenets of Fair and Effective Problem Solving Courts* (2002).





NATIONAL JUVENILE DEFENDER CENTER

1350 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 304

Washington, DC 20036

202.452.0010 (phone)

202.452.1205 (fax)

[www.njdc.info](http://www.njdc.info)