



Comm Skills Virtual Learning

Legal Communications I & II

Court Processes

April 21, 2020



Lesson: April 21, 2020

Objective/Learning Target: Students will understand the juvenile court process.

Bell Ringer/Let's Get Started

Rewrite the following quote in your own words.

“If justice is priced in the marketplace, individual liberty will be curtailed and respect for law diminished.”

Robert F. Kennedy, 1962

Lesson/Activity

Consider the Kennedy quote. Record answers to the following questions.

- What is Kennedy saying in this quote?
- What did he mean by “if justice is priced in the marketplace”? What was he warning against?
- What real-world examples can you give (from the past or present) that illustrate what happens when “justice is priced in the marketplace”?
- Do you agree with Kennedy? Why or why not?

Lesson/Activity

In recent years, communities across the United States have begun challenging the rise of policies that criminalize poverty and target minority communities. There has also been increased attention to how these policies are affecting the juvenile justice system, where aggressive policing has trapped low-income youth and their families in a cycle of debt, incarceration and increasing poverty.

Lesson/Activity

Read this 2016 *New York Times* article “**Court Costs Entrap Nonwhite, Poor Juvenile Offenders**” with a focus on identifying the similarities and differences between adult and youth courts.

Annotate the text using the **Thinking Notes technique from Teaching Tolerance**.

Practice

Every year, approximately one million youths appear in juvenile courts across the country and face a barrage of court fees, fines, defense costs and restitution payments. According to a 2016 report by the Juvenile Law Center:

The costs for court related services, including probation, a “free appointed attorney,” mental health evaluations, the costs of incarceration, treatment or restitution payments, can push poor children deeper into the system and families deeper into debt. Youth who can’t afford to pay for their freedom often face serious consequences, including incarceration, extended probation, or denial of treatment.

Practice

Investigate juvenile justice legislation, court procedures and sentencing in your town, city and/or municipality. Look at:

- arrest, hearing and sentencing procedures and costs
- the court's interpretation of due process
- demographics of youth arrest and incarceration compared with the residential population (i.e., economics, race, gender, religion, citizenship status)
- diversion programs that shift youth into community-based programs
- the financial burden for youth and their families
- psychological and financial impact on youth and their families (short- and long-term)

Practice

Expand your research beyond the virtual library and the Internet by interviewing people who have experience with the juvenile justice system: judges, prosecutors, public defenders, social workers, court clerks, local journalists, defendants and their families and so on.

Illustrate the juvenile court process and costs in the form of a flow chart.

Additional Resources

[The Cost of Court Involvement](#)

[CANVA](#)

[Juvenile Court Process](#)