

Juvenile Diversion Program

The function of the Sheriff's Juvenile Diversion Program is to balance the best interest of the minor with that of the public. This Program is an alternative to entering the minor into the formal juvenile justice system, which would occur if a formal arrest had been made. Only minors without a record of a prior referral and who are suspected of less-serious offenses qualify for the diversion process.

The School Resource Officer conducting the diversion hearing will examine the case and consult with the parent or guardian before making a determination of what will be required for successful diversion. Fingerprints and a photograph of the minor may be required at this time. **If the minor, or the offense involved does not qualify for diversion, a referral will be made to the Marin County Juvenile Probation Department.**

The Jeannette Prandi Children's Center is a place where children who may have been sexually abused can be interviewed in an environment designed with their comfort in mind. The purpose of the Center is to provide the opportunity for an interview that will be accepted in a court of law and not be traumatizing in any way.

The interview is conducted with only your child and the Interview Specialist in the room. The Deputy District Attorney, Law Enforcement Officer and Child Protective Service Worker observe the interview through a one way mirror. They can communicate when necessary with the Interview Specialist through a listening device in his/her ear. Most parents would like to be present during the interview. However, in the event the case goes to court, parents may be excluded from the courtroom if they have witnessed the interview.

To learn more about the center, visit their website at www.jprandichildrencntr.org

A SPECIAL NOTE TO PARENTS

While interactive internet sites, such as "MySpace", can be tremendously educational for teenagers, there is also a dark side. Some so called "chat-rooms" are places where young people go online and end up making perilous contacts with strangers. Some internet sites are a playground for pedophiles and predators, and many use the internet to disseminate child pornography and entice children into sexual activity. Sexual predators find the internet to be a well-suited medium to trap unwary children because they can maintain their anonymity. Parents must always monitor their children's use of the internet, using the same concern as that with strangers outside. A true child friendly site that both parents and kids can benefit from is www.netsmartz.org. And parents, make sure to stop by www.cyberangels.org for a wealth of Internet safety information and much more.