



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Rick Scott, Governor

Christina K. Daly, Secretary

JJSIP Disposition Matrix

Frequently Asked Questions and Responses

1. **Are we pursuing an optimal placement utilizing an optimal recommendation on each case or are we satisfied with an appropriate recommendation for an appropriate placement?**

Response: The intent is that we are to pursue an optimal recommendation. If we were to be satisfied with appropriate recommendations and staff deferred to the most restrictive option in the appropriate cell we could potentially drastically increase the number of commitments, for example. The least restrictive option in the appropriate cell of the matrix that has not been tried before with the youth, or has been tried successfully (the optimal recommendation) should be the expectation but not the rule. Deviations from optimal will and should occur, but they should be rare exceptions rather than common practice.

2. **Do the disposition matrix rules require us to pursue the optimal placement on each case and do you have to request a variance when making a recommendation for an appropriate placement as opposed to making a recommendation for an optimal placement?**

Response: Choosing the optimal placement should be the norm. However, each case has unique and individualized circumstances. Currently, each Circuit is developing a protocol to follow for all recommendations outside of optimal placement. Once the protocols are developed, they will be disseminated. Deviations from optimal to appropriate may be staffed at more local levels (ex. by supervisors) while deviations to above or below guidelines may require Assistant Chief/Chief review (for example).

3. **Should Contempt ever be a recommendation?**

Response: The Department would never recommend contempt. That is a judicial decision.

4. **Youth scores MODERATE-HIGH risk to re-offend on the PACT...meets the criteria for Re-Directions...scores only 3A on the disposition matrix...can we use Re-Directions for him even though that is a 3C service?**

Response: While the youth may meet eligibility criteria for Redirections, 3C may not be the optimal level placement according to the matrix. If the youth had not had the experience to try a

2737 Centerview Drive • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3100 • (850) 488-1850
<http://www.djj.state.fl.us>

less restrictive option before (never been on regular probation or there are JPOs running evidence-based groups like T4C or LST and the youth has not been part of those), the matrix calls for trying those options before Redirections (or Day treatment). Even though the youth is eligible for Redirections, our intent is to attempt the least restrictive options prior to defaulting to Redirections.

5. In what circumstances can a JPO recommend a no-file on a case (Examples: Competency Issues such as age of the offender, autism, low IQ... or victim request no prosecution)?

Response: The Department cannot recommend a no-file (only the State Attorney can). The Department can present information (such as the victim requests no prosecution, etc.). In this circumstance we would recommend non-judicial handling (Level 2).

6. Where does a Judicial Warning fit into the matrix?

Response: Judicial warning fits into the matrix like a Diversion (Level 2).

7. Does the Level 2 restrictive setting non-DJJ Probation come with adjudication? W/H or Adjudication?

Response: It comes with either a “no adjudication” or an “adjudication withheld”. Non-DJJ probation or court supervised probation is not available in all areas, but is an option in at least one pilot site for the JJSIP project.

8. How does a Circuit determine/list the appropriate services under 3A, 3B, and 3C to distinguish effectively between them?

Response: 3A is regular probation where the youth has a JPO. 3A may also include referrals for appropriate services based on need, such as mental health or substance abuse treatment in the community. 3B is where additional evidence-based or delinquency intervention services are added. This is primarily where JPOs facilitate delinquency intervention groups (such as T4C and LST) based on the youths assessed risk factors and for high risk youth requiring an evidence-based intervention. 3C is day treatment as well as any of the Redirection services (MST, FFT, BSFT, PLL, etc.). Additional Redirection services are being procured so more services will be added, but 3C refers specifically to Day Treatment and Redirections.

9. Where does inpatient substance abuse treatment fit into the matrix?

Response: Inpatient substance abuse treatment can fit anywhere on the matrix from Level 1 to Level 3C (all options where the youth remains in the community). Inpatient substance abuse treatment is not a disposition or a DJJ placement. If it is a need of any youth in the community, it should be a referral made.

- 10. If a youth on Conditional Release supervision gets a new law offense (even a very minor one) and staff are scoring the youth on the matrix for a commitment staffing/Transfer Hearing, the youth automatically scores for commitment?**

Response: This will be based on the situation and is perhaps the best example of professional judgment on the matrix. It is true that according to the matrix guidelines any youth on conditional release has been to residential placement, so residential placement becomes the least restrictive option previously tried. However, we MAY request below guidelines in this instance and it should NOT be an automatic default to commitment staffing. The same process exists for requesting below the guidelines as above and should be used as always, based on the individual case and needs of that specific youth.

- 11. If a youth is arrested because the LEO did not refer the youth to civil citation, but the youth scores for civil citation, what should the JPO put into the State Attorney Recommendation?**

Response: In this instance the Department would recommend Level 2 Diversion.

- 12. If a youth scores for a 3C service, and all the Circuit has is Redirections FFT, what kind of services would also qualify as a 3C service if the youth has already completed FFT Redirections?**

Response: Only Redirections and Day Treatment services are covered by 3C. The Department is in the process of procuring additional Redirections services throughout the state which will include additional modalities from MST, FFT, and BSFT (but will still be classified under Redirections).

- 13. IF a youth doesn't score for Re-Directions (ex. FFT) per the policy (ex. a youth who scores MODERATE risk to re-offend and has a violent offense) and has already had a level 2, 3A, and 3B service...**

Response: Day Treatment services would be the only other option, with the exception of if the area had an additional Redirection service the youth was qualified for. In the event there are no other options but the JPO and supervisor still felt the youth was not appropriate for residential placement, continuation on 3B and deviation from the matrix guidelines may be appropriate.

- 14. What definitions are given to Serious and Violent Offenses as listed on the Disposition Matrix?**

Response: Serious is defined as any non-violent felony. Violent is defined as a felony offense of interpersonal violence, or the threat of interpersonal violence in some instances. The list of violent offenses in JJIS used in scoring the DRAI is what should be used.