



About Us | We are committed to zealous and holistic advocacy, fighting for your child inside and outside of the courtroom. Our goal is to help your child at every stage of the case. Your child will remain a client, even after the case is over. We urge you to stay in touch with us.

Office of the Public Defender

Toll Free: 1 877 430 5187

Youthful Defendant Unit

201 East Baltimore Street, Suite 800
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Phone: 410 223 3748
Fax: 410 223 3752

Email: ydu@opd.state.md.us

Stay in Touch!

If you have any questions, call your child's attorney.

Attorney's Name:

Attorney's Telephone:

Who Represents My Child?

—IT TAKES A TEAM—

Defending a child charged as an adult takes a team. Lead by an experienced criminal defense attorney with special training in representing children in adult court, your child's team may include social workers, investigators, interns and law students, and expert witnesses like doctors and psychologists. We work as a team to get the best possible result for our clients.

The Assistant Public Defender who represents your child is an experienced criminal defense attorney and is a lawyer licensed to practice law in Maryland.

Our Mission

The Office of the Public Defender provides superior legal representation to indigent defendants in the State of Maryland.

Supported in part by a grant from the Open Society Institute – Baltimore

A Guide for Parents & Families of Children Charged as Adults in Baltimore City

Prepared by the Baltimore City Youthful Defendant Unit of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below are answers to some commonly asked questions. Please remember to contact your child's attorney for more detailed information.

Why is my child charged as an adult?

In Maryland, children 16 and older are automatically charged as adults if arrested for a serious crime like armed robbery or handgun possession. Children 14 years of age and older are charged in adult court for very serious crimes like attempted murder.

Why is my child held at the Baltimore City Detention Center (BCDC)?

Children charged as adults in Baltimore City are held at the BCDC. Your child's attorney can often ask the Court to move your child from the adult jail to a juvenile detention center while your child waits for a transfer hearing. This is called a motion to move physical custody.

Will my child be able to attend school at the jail?

The Eager Street Academy is part of the Baltimore City Public School System and serves men and women under the age of 18 who are held at BCDC.

Contact the Eager Street Academy to discuss your child's educational needs, including special education or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The Eager Street Academy can be reached by calling 410 209 4091.

How do I visit, call, or write to my child?

Because visiting hours can change, please call BCDC at 410 209 4001 for current information. All phone calls from BCDC and others jails and prisons are recorded. If your child speaks about his or her case on the phone, the recording can be used against him/her in court. It is very important that your child does not talk with you about the charges or anything to do with the case on the phone.

Mail can also be monitored by jail officials and police. It is important not to discuss your child's case when you write to them or when they write to you.

Anything your child says to his attorney or other member of the defense team is confidential. Nothing your child says to his or her attorney can ever be used against them in court.

What are my rights as a parent?

A person of any age who is charged with a crime has the legal right to make decisions about their case. This includes deciding to plead guilty or not guilty or to have a trial in front of a judge or jury. As a parent or guardian, you have a right to be involved in your child's education, even if your child is in jail.

What is a "panel attorney"?

When the Office of the Public Defender has a conflict such as representing your child's codefendant, the office will hire an attorney in private practice to represent your child.

What can I do to help my child's attorney?

Contacting your child's attorney is the first step. Call your child's attorney as soon as you can. The attorney may ask about your child's family, schooling, and any prior involvement in the juvenile justice system.

What is a transfer hearing?

A transfer of jurisdiction hearing, also called a "reverse waiver" is a special court proceeding held before your child's trial date. Your child's attorney will argue that the case should be transferred to the juvenile court system.

What is an arraignment?

At an arraignment, your child and his/her attorney will appear before the Circuit Court for the first time. The court will make sure your child has a lawyer and understands the charges. The court will also schedule a trial date if your child pleads not guilty.

My child is on bail. How do I make sure he or she gets an attorney from the public defender's office?

Your child may apply for a public defender at any OPD office throughout the state.

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