

Renz Addiction Counseling Center

Juvenile Drug Court

Renz Addiction Counseling Center is actively involved with the Juvenile Drug Court Program through Kane County. Juvenile Drug Court is a separate program within the Juvenile Justice System; however, every member is still assigned a juvenile probation officer. The goal of the program is to incorporate substance abuse treatment with judicial monitoring for non-violent, substance abusing youth who live in Kane County.

In order to meet all the needs of the individuals, decisions about each youth are made by a team of professionals. Currently, Renz Center is active in the drug court team and has one staff member participate in the team meeting each week. All team members also participate in all participants' progress hearings. The team consists of the Presiding Judge, States Attorney, Public Defender, Treatment Providers, an Educational Representative, Mental Health Provider, Mental Health Juvenile Justice Liaison/Community Representative and a Juvenile Court Services Representative. Agencies currently participating in the program include the Kane County Diagnostic Center, Breaking Free, Renz Addiction Counseling Center and Family Services Association of Greater Elgin Area.

The Juvenile Drug Court Program does not accept all juvenile offenders struggling with substance abuse. Applicants must meet the following criteria in order to be approved by the drug court team:

- Between the ages of 14-17.
- Non-violent offenders.
- Have been screened as having a substance abuse disorder.
- Have already been involved in the juvenile justice system.
- No current involvement of gangs or a history of gang involvement.
- Are willing to participate and have a supportive family member or guardian who is willing to participate and provide support in the program.

The length of the program is a minimum of 6 ½ months to about 24 months, although some participants may be in the program longer. Random drug testing is provided throughout the entire program, with the frequency of drug tests determined by the amount of time in the program.

Each participant works their way through the program through a phase system. There are 4 phases they must successfully complete in order to participate in a graduation. Each phase has a series of requirements and a minimum length of time. On phase 1, juveniles are placed on house arrest and all other phases have strict and specific curfews.

While in Juvenile Drug Court, all participants attend substance abuse treatment. They are assigned to treatment providers based on the necessary level of care and/or geographical location. If it is determined by the team that a juvenile is in need of mental health services, necessary steps will be taken to meet those needs as well. If mental health services are recommended by the drug court team, the juvenile and their supportive family member are

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required to follow through with those recommendations. Progress in school is also monitored by the educational representative.

The overall goal of the Kane County Juvenile Drug Court Program is to provide the offenders with an opportunity to decrease their risk factors with the hope of decreasing the chances of repeat offenses. By monitoring substance abuse, mental health and educational needs they have a better chance of obtaining abstinence, making progress and not re-entering the criminal justice system.