

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Provide Support for At-risk Youth

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 15 MRSA §3509 is enacted to read:

§ 3509. At-risk youth program

The Juvenile Court shall implement an at-risk youth program to address punishment and proactive treatment of certain juveniles in accordance with this section.

1. Filing of petitions to enroll in program. A parent, a school official, the Department of Health and Human Services, a guardian ad litem or other legal advocate may file a petition with the Juvenile Court to enroll a juvenile in the at-risk youth program when the juvenile:

A. On a regular basis, leaves the care of the juvenile's parents, guardian or legal custodian without that person's consent;

B. Is habitually truant. For purposes of this paragraph, "habitually truant" has the same meaning as in Title 20-A, section 5051-A; or

C. On a regular basis, exhibits such disruptive behavior at home or at school, or both, that the health, safety or welfare of the juvenile or any other person may be endangered.

2. Program agreement. Upon acceptance into the at-risk youth program, a participating juvenile must enter into a program agreement and may be required to appear before the Juvenile Court.

SUMMARY

This bill creates a program within the Juvenile Court to address punishment and proactive treatment of at-risk youth. Petitions for the program may be filed by a parent, a school official, the Department of Health and Human Services, a guardian ad litem or other legal advocate when a juvenile regularly runs away from home, exhibits extremely disruptive behavior or is habitually truant.