

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Adopts Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure**

**HARRISBURG, April 5, 2005** — New rules adopted by Pennsylvania's Supreme Court for the first time will establish uniform statewide procedures in juvenile courts that apply to all phases of delinquency cases that enter the state court system.

The new rules govern a wide range of matters in juvenile delinquency proceedings including: counsel, records, motions, terminology and courtroom practices. Delinquency proceedings involve juveniles who are charged with a crime. The rules were adopted Friday, April 1, 2005 with the majority of the new rules to become effective Oct. 1, 2005. Five rules dealing exclusively with proceedings involving a master become effective April 1, 2006.

"Pennsylvania's Judiciary is committed to providing a swift and effective path to juvenile justice and rehabilitation," Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ralph J. Cappy said. "The delinquency procedural rules adopted by the court provide a solid framework for addressing the growing complexity and demands of dealing with these types of cases."

The new rules are the culmination of the Supreme Court's Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Project that was launched in 1998. The project began partly because of a special legislative session on crime that brought statutory changes to juvenile law, highlighting a need for statewide uniformity through a set of first-ever procedural rules. Among the changes were those that facilitated the transfer of cases involving serious offenses to adult court, and more open proceedings in juvenile court.

The Supreme Court's Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee, a 10-member advisory group of lawyers and jurists from across the state, was responsible for drafting the rules proposals. The recommended set of rules was presented to the Supreme Court after an extensive public input period that included a systematic survey of police, juvenile probation officers, district attorneys and public defenders in judicial districts covering each of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

The committee is drafting a comprehensive set of dependency rules that are expected to be published for public comment later this year. Juvenile Court is a part of Common Pleas Court that last year saw more than 60,000 cases statewide. Cases filed in juvenile court include juveniles who are without proper parental care and control, neglect and abuse, truants, and those charged with misdemeanors and felonies.

*(To view a copy of the order and new rules, visit the Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee page of the Pennsylvania Judiciary Web site at: [www.courts.state.pa.us](http://www.courts.state.pa.us))*