

JUVENILE PLEAS: A DEVELOPMENTALLY INFORMED APPROACH

Plea Bargain Discussion Checklist for Judges

- I used open-ended questions to evaluate adolescent understanding and decision-making skills.
- I verified that the youth understood the allegations and what it means to admit guilt.
- I asked questions to figure out whether the youth understood the choice to not plead guilty.
- I had the youth explain the consequences of pleading and not pleading in their own words.
- I questioned the youth about what information the youth received about pleas.
- I learned about and considered any factors specific to the youth that make it less likely that the plea is *knowing, intelligent, and voluntary*.

Some content adapted from 237 Pa. Code § 407 (2017).
Resource prepared by Alexandra Cohen, Erika Fountain,
Emily Haney-Caron, and Gail Rosenbaum.

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