

Juvenile Assessment Center
of Lee County
2107 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Fort Myers, FL 33901
(239) 258-3450
www.swfjac.org

August 2014

The JAC Perspective



The Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County ... assisting youth and their families to seek the treatment and programs they need to lead productive, crime free lives.

Free drug testing kits are available at the JAC 24 hours a day.

Law enforcement should call ahead to

**258-3461
or 258-3471**

when bringing an arrested youth to the JAC or to confirm that a youth is eligible for a civil citation.

Locked Cars Help Prevent Theft

While youth crime has been down overall in the past year in Lee County, one crime that the JAC has seen more youth arrested for recently is auto theft. The majority of car thieves are opportunists, especially when it comes to young car thieves. By removing the opportunity, one can help to prevent the crime. According to national data, in about one-half of all car thefts the vehicles stolen had been left



unlocked. You probably know to lock your car and take the keys when you are parking at the mall, but what about when your car is parked at home? More car thefts occur near a car owner's residence (33%) than occur in a parking lot (20%). Also, do you think about where you store your car keys and who could get access

to them? For example, do you hang them up just inside a door where someone could easily spot them and grab and go? Or, do you put your keys in a purse, beach bag, or a jacket pocket and leave them unattended at a public place? Leaving car keys in any easily accessible and unattended location is an opportunity for a would-be car thief. You may think that you are only going to run into a store for a moment, but who knows if you'll get stuck in a check out lane or run into your neighbor that wants to tell you *every detail* about her recent vacation. If you've left your car unlocked, or even worse, also left your keys in the car, that is an opportunity for a would-be thief. A car can be stolen in seconds. Many car thefts can be prevented in seconds.

Back to School - A Good Time to Discuss School Rules

Buy school supplies. Check. Buy school clothes. Check. Review school rules. Say, what? Back to school time is a perfect time for parents to review school rules with their children and discuss expectations for the coming school year. Although many parents and youth believe they know the school rules, every school year the JAC sees some arrested youth and sometimes parents who missed some of the finer points of the school discipline code. For example, being on school grounds without permission, such as when the school is closed, is considered trespassing. Possession of any object that could be used as a weapon is not



allowed at school. This includes the box cutter that was left in the car after a weekend of moving or the pocket knife that was left in a pocket after a weekend of camping. Possession of over-the-counter medications is also not allowed. Some violations of the school code of conduct automatically require a law enforcement response. Every year the JAC sees youth who are arrested at school for behavior which violates both the school code and is an arrestable offense. Besides possession of drugs at school, one of the most prevalent offenses that youth are arrested for at school in Lee County is breach of peace or disorderly
(Continued page 2)

It's 3:00 p.m. - Do You Know Where Your Child Is?

During this time of year the community and many families are making plans for the start of the school year. It is also time to consider what youth will be doing in the hours after school is dismissed for the day. The prime time for youth crime and other youth risk-taking behaviors is between 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on school days. National figures show that juvenile crime peaks on school days at 3:00 p.m. (This is also the timeframe when youth are most likely to be victims of a crime.) While it may be obvious that elementary school aged children need supervision after school, older youth and even teens also need something to do with their time after school. Teens that are supervised or involved in structured activities during after school hours are less likely to engage in risky behaviors than those youth who are unsupervised. Communities can help reduce youth problem behaviors by



supporting access for all youth to attend after school programs, supervised extra-curricular activities, and other structured activities after school lets out. Parents can help reduce youth problem behaviors by encouraging youth to take part in supervised activities available to them after school. If a youth is unable or unwilling to take part in structured, supervised after school activities, it is important for

parents to plan other strategies to monitor their youth's behavior. Parents should be clear with their youth on the rules about where the youth is allowed to be and who he or she is allowed to be with during unsupervised hours after school. If working parents are able, they should consider occasional unannounced visits home during after school hours or otherwise check that their youth is where he said he was going to be. If this is not possible, parents may want to enlist help from other family members, friends, or neighbors to occasionally check up on unsupervised youth. A good resource that provides tips for parents on monitoring and raising healthy teens is "[Navigating the Teen Years: A Parent's Handbook for Raising Healthy Teens](http://www.wellnessproposals.com/mental-health/handouts/drugs-and-addiction/navigating-the-teen-years.pdf)" available at www.wellnessproposals.com/mental-health/handouts/drugs-and-addiction/navigating-the-teen-years.pdf.

Back to School - A Good Time to Discuss School Rules (cont.)

conduct. Youth behaviors which lead up to receiving this type of charge may include physical altercations with other students, verbal disturbances, physically threatening to fight another student, use of profanity, use of profane gestures, refusing to leave a classroom or bus as requested after causing a disruption, refusing to report to a timeout room as requested, and refusing to follow directions of a school administrator or law enforcement officer. If you are a parent of a school-aged child, this year when your child brings home the school district code of conduct and asks you to sign it, take some time to review it with your child. This also might be a good

time to discuss with your child the importance of using appropriate problem solving strategies at school, showing respect for authority, and your expectations

that your child will make good decisions at school. The first day of school for students attending Lee County public schools is August 18th.



The JAC of Lee County is operated by the Lee County Sheriff's Office in partnership with the Lee County Board of County Commissioners and the Department of Juvenile Justice.