

## Who is eligible for the **GEMS** Program?

Girls' Court is looking for participants who:

- Are females, aged 14-17;
- Are on probation , and in need of intensive supervision;
- Have not been adjudicated for a sex crime or a violent offense with a weapon;
- Have a history of trauma, abuse, mental health issues,  
<or>
- Are at risk of victimization;
- Do not require inpatient mental health treatment; and are willing to comply with any prescribed medication or treatment.

In addition, both the family and the juvenile must be motivated to participate in the program and commit to the program requirements.



## Contacts

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**COLLIN COUNTY**  
collincountytx.gov

**GEMS**   
Girls' Empowerment, Mentoring & Support

# Girls' Court



## What is GEMS?

The **GEMS** Program is a Girls' Court program to help empower and support girls in the juvenile justice system, and identify youth at risk of being trafficked. The Girls' Court model acknowledges the differences between male and female juveniles in the justice system. The goals are to help the girls successfully complete probation, and reduce runaways and arrests.

The **GEMS** team guides the participant and her family by coordinating treatment, counseling, community resources, supervision, and accountability.

The **GEMS** team is mainly women, and includes:

- Juvenile Court Judge Cynthia Wheless
- Program Coordinator Sheila Shaw
- Probation Officer Shun Jones
- Clinical Supervisor Michelle Morris, LCSW
- Family-based Worker Angela Phillips
- Treatment Providers
  - Annie May, LPC, Child Advocacy Center
  - Ashley Pepkin, LPC, Child Advocacy Center
  - Suzanne Arnold, Child Advocacy Center
  - Therapists from Child Advocacy Center
  - Amanda Brunson, LPC, Summit Program
- Defense Attorneys
  - Lara Bracamonte
  - Terri Daniel
- Juvenile Prosecutors
  - Kelly Ludy
  - Paul Anfosso
  - Rachel Soeth
  - Sarah Carey
- Educational Liaison Juli Ferraro
- Court Reporter Kathy Bounds



## The **GEMS** Program

**GEMS** is strengths-based; so is focused on the strengths of participants and their families, providing support where needed, to remove barriers. Youth are rewarded for accomplishments, and held accountable for negative behaviors.

### Program Components:

- Supportive Case Management with Home Visits
- Frequent Court Appearances
- Academic Advocacy
- Randomized Drug Testing
- MRT (Moral Reconciliation Therapy) Groups;
- Individual and/or group counseling;
- Family Counseling and/or Parent groups;
- Mentoring and strengthening families;
- Youth groups may address topics, such as:
  - sexual abuse/assault/harassment
  - healthy and unhealthy relationships,
  - skills building; self-esteem building;
  - substance abuse education/counseling,
  - resiliency and self-esteem building,
  - bullying, cyberbullying,
  - human trafficking, and
  - LGBTQIA+ sexuality and identity;
- Referrals are made to community resources, as needed, such as mental health services, family-based services, SMART meetings, IOP, etc.

### Empowering Girls



## How is Girls' Court Different?

**GEMS** differs from traditional court, in that the judge, prosecutor, and defense attorneys work together, as a team, sharing in the decision-making process. **GEMS** team members are all dedicated to helping young women.



## What happens now?

Your Probation Officer may refer you to the program. A thorough assessment, with recommendations, will then be completed by one of our licensed therapists. The **GEMS** team will meet to discuss possible acceptance.

## **GEMS** Phases:

The **GEMS** program is at least 8 months in length, with a total of 4 phases:

**Sapphire** (minimum of 30 days) - Orientation

**Ruby** (minimum of 90 days) - Skills Development

**Pearl/Emerald** (minimum of 60 days) - Transition

**Diamond** (minimum of 60 days) - Maintenance & Independence

