

**Title 9 – Youth Code**  
**Chapter 5. Court Procedures**

**Sec. 503. Initial hearing.**

(a) After receiving a petition, the Court shall promptly schedule an initial hearing, to be held immediately, if possible, and in all cases within seventy two (72) hours of the time a youth is placed in protective custody and within ten (10) days if the youth is in non-protective custody. The Court shall make all reasonable attempts to notify, by telephone or other means, the youth and the youth's parent(s) or legal guardian or custodian of the time and place of the initial hearing, and of the right of the youth and the parent(s), legal guardian or custodian to:

(1) Obtain legal counsel at his/her own expense,

(2) Be present at the hearing, and

(3) Testify, present documentary evidence, call witnesses, and ask questions of all witnesses.

The initial hearing shall be conducted informally and shall be closed to the public. If the Court determines that there is probable cause to believe that the youth has been abused, neglected, abandoned or dependent, the Court may temporarily order such disposition as is appropriate under Section 506 of this Title, pending a fact-finding hearing. Otherwise, the case shall be dismissed.

(b) Where there is probable cause to believe that a youth has been sexually abused, severely physically abused, neglected, abandoned or dependent and the Court determines that a criminal investigation has commenced or will commence in the near future, the Court shall not allow the youth to reside or be placed in the residence with the person(s) allegedly responsible for said act. Such placement shall remain in force until the fact-finding hearing, at which time placement shall be determined according to Section 506 without regard to the provisions of this subsection. The Court shall have the discretion to implement this subsection according to the best interest of the youth.