



Michigan Family Impact Seminars

Promising Approaches for Reducing Youth Violence



Briefing Report No. 2001-1

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Briefing Report No. 2001-1

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Executive Summary

Nancy Walker

Every day in Michigan, 55 juveniles ages 10-17 are arrested for an index crime, 9 for a violent index crime; 10 children are placed in out-of-home care for delinquency; and 157 youth drop out of high school. As these facts suggest, Michigan—like other states—has not yet eradicated the problem of youth violence. This Michigan Family Impact Seminar Briefing Report addresses this important problem by describing a framework for understanding it, offering a variety of policy options, and describing a methodology for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of different policy approaches.

The first article, *Youth Violence in Michigan*, provides statistics regarding the problem of youth violence in Michigan, including information on youth under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Corrections. It also outlines the state's current juvenile justice policies and explains how youth placement decisions are made in Michigan.

A Framework for Understanding Youth Violence discusses the scope of the problem nationally and distinguishes myths from realities. It describes patterns and categories of juvenile crime and defines the problem of chronic delinquency. The article then discusses factors that predict youth violence, organized in six categories: Individual, family, school, peer, community and neighborhood, and media. The article also outlines factors for policymakers to consider when evaluating proposed approaches. These include program promise, efficacy, feasibility, safety, cost/benefit, and sustainability. Next, the article describes the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) comprehensive strategy for juvenile offenders, a strategy that features the concept of "balanced and restorative justice." The article concludes with a listing of policy options for each of the six categories of predictors of youth violence.

In *Cost-Effective Violence Prevention Programs: A Guide to Current Knowledge and How to Use It*, Dr. Peter Greenwood outlines criteria for judging program effectiveness and distinguishes the characteristics of strategies that work from those that don't. He then provides the RAND Corporation's method for evaluating policy alternatives, including estimating the direct costs and benefits of those strategies, and provides a case example as illustration. The article concludes that some early-intervention approaches appear to be more cost effective than widely endorsed incarceration alternatives: graduation incentives, parent training approaches, and delinquent supervision programs.

Next, Dr. Patricia Chamberlain describes *Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care for Chronic Juvenile Offenders: A Blueprint for Violence Prevention*. MTFC is a developmentally appropriate, gender-specific, ecologically-sound foster care approach to treatment of serious, chronic delinquents. Dr. Chamberlain describes the program for boys and its recent adaptation for girls, and contrasts the effectiveness of MTFC with traditional community-based group care facilities. MTFC resulted in better short- and long-term impacts on changing antisocial behavior. Teens in MTFC completed their programs more often, had fewer criminal referrals, and reported engaging in fewer violent and serious crimes than teens in traditional group care.

Some Promising Approaches for Reducing Youth Violence briefly describes violence prevention programs designated as "blueprints" by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

Additional Resources provides links to websites and information sources relevant to the problem of youth violence and programs that address the problem.

Youth Violence in Michigan

Stephanie Jacobson, Nancy Walker, and Yvonne Phillips

Every day in Michigan ...

- 55 juveniles, ages 10-17, are arrested for an index crime*
- 9 juveniles, ages 10-17, are arrested for a violent index crime
- 10 children are placed in out-of-home care for delinquency
- 157 youth drop out of high school
- 1 youth, age 15-19, dies from an accident, homicide or suicide

Source: *Kids Count in Michigan: 1999 Data Book* (p. 19)

Michigan has approximately 10 million residents, with juveniles (ages 17 and younger) constituting more than 25% of the population [1]. Arrests of juveniles (ages 16 years and younger) numbered 33,000 in 1999, representing approximately 8% of the 400,000 total arrests for crimes committed in the state that year [2]. In Michigan, youth are arrested for index crimes (including murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson), more than 6,000 times each year [1].

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *2000 Kids Count Data Sheet* [3], Michigan ranks 23rd among U.S. states in rate of teenage deaths by accident, homicide, and suicide. As in other states, the adolescent death rate in Michigan has declined since 1993, but remains at 59 deaths per 100,000 teens each year—which means that more than 400 teens die in Michigan each year due to accident, homicide, or suicide.

Some of the state's seven districts have reported decreases in certain crimes. However, both the 1st District (which includes Lansing) and the rural 7th District reported an increase in murder rate in 1999, and the 2nd District, which includes Detroit, reported an increase in aggravated assaults [2].

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Youth Under the Jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Corrections

Another indicator of the problem of youth violence in Michigan is the number of youth under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). Last July, 519 juveniles (defined as youth below the age of 18) were under the jurisdiction of MDOC.** Using data from MDOC's Alpha Client Index Report, the Michigan Collaborative for Juvenile Justice Reform reported that, of those under the department's jurisdiction:

- 97% were male
- 53% were African American youth, 40% were Caucasians, 5% were multi-racial, and 2% were classified as "other race"
- Average age at commitment was 17.03 (range = 14.02 – 17.99)
- Most came from urban counties: Kent (13%), Wayne (13%), Berrien (9%), Saginaw (6%), Genessee (6%), and Jackson (6%)

*According to the *Kids Count in Michigan 1999 Data Book*: "The Uniform Crime Reports of the Michigan State Police tabulates the number of arrests for eight index crimes: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. The first four are considered *violent* index offenses. The arrest count reflects numbers of arrests [rather than numbers of youth arrested]; repeated arrests of the same individual for different offenses are counted each time. Although in Michigan's criminal justice system seventeen year-olds are not considered 'juveniles,' they are included in national statistics as juveniles. They are included here for comparability to national data. The rate is based on the number of index crime or violent index arrests per 1,000 children ages 10-17" (p. 215).

**Information reprinted with permission from the Michigan Collaborative for Juvenile Justice Reform, which prepared the document, "Youth Under the Jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Corrections," (unpublished), using data from MDOC's Alpha Client Index Report.

- 54% were convicted of property crimes, 38% for crimes against people, 4% for drug/narcotic offenses, and 4% for other felonies
- 48% were incarcerated at the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Baldwin and 39% at other Michigan correctional institutions or “boot camps,” while 8% were on parole through local field offices and 3% were being monitored electronically

Gang Activity

The Michigan Youth Gang Violence Task Force noted in its 1997 report that gangs exist in all 83 counties of the state, although it is difficult to quantify the extent of the problem [4]. Urban areas such as Detroit have notable gang activity [5]. Nationally there is also increasing gang activity in suburbs and rural areas [6-8], and there is no reason to believe the trend is any different in Michigan.

School Violence

Although students are more likely to be victims of serious violent crime away from school than either at school or on the way to school [9], incidents of school violence generally attract a great deal of attention from the public and the media. The death of six-year-old Kayla Rowland in Genesee County last year bears testament to this fact.

Michigan, like many other states, has enacted policies calling for “zero-tolerance” with regard to school violence. These policies emanated from the federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994,* which obliges school districts to implement a policy “requiring referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a firearm or weapon to a school served by such agency.” Under the Act, no funds are made available to any school district unless it has a policy requiring referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a firearm or weapon to a school in that district. Michigan’s statute, however, is more stringent than federal law requires.

The Michigan “zero-tolerance” law** enacted in 1999 requires the expulsion of students for certain acts of weapons possession, as well as for physical or verbal abuse—terms whose definitions are open to interpretation. Michigan’s policies are resulting in greater numbers of expulsions, especially among minority students and students between the ages of 12 and 15 [10]. Although these students can petition for reinstatement after a certain number of days, a recent study shows that only 40% of them do so, and fewer than half of those students actually return to school [10]. Instead, many enter the criminal justice system through what may be referred to as the “expulsion pipeline.” In a follow-up study of students expelled from 35 of its districts during the 1995-1996 school year, for example, the Michigan Department of Education found that only 8.7% of expelled students had been placed in alternative schools, whereas 40.4% had been referred to law enforcement agencies [10].

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Michigan Citizens Are Calling for Prevention

In the last decade, groups in Michigan have been raising their voices to call for prevention and community action to reduce youth violence.

- One indication of citizen interest is provided by Michigan State University’s November 2000 conference, “Violence Prevention: What Works, What Doesn’t, What’s Promising,” which attracted more than

*Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, 20 U.S.C. Section 8921 (1994).

**Michigan Compiled Laws, Annotated, section 380.1311.

300 participants from around the state. (For information from this conference, contact Dr. Lori Post at lapost@msu.edu).

- Interest in focusing on preventive strategies is provided by the action plan developed by the Michigan Collaborative for Juvenile Justice Reform (MCJJR) [11]. The plan emphasizes prevention-based policies as crucial to curtailing later delinquency and violence. Its 10 priorities include prenatal care, parenting education, quality child care, conflict resolution and student assistance programs in schools, and early intervention and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders including the three principal provisions of balanced and restorative justice (BARJ; see pages 16-17 of this Briefing Report for a description of BARJ) [11].
- Three years earlier, in its 1997 report, the Michigan Youth Gang Violence Task Force also recommended a list of prevention strategies including risk detection, health promotion, family support, positive alternative activities, education, employment, and community organization [4].
- Similarly, students, professionals, and concerned citizens attending the 1995 Michigan Council on Family Relations (MCFR) conference, "Attacking Violence: Prevention and Intervention," recommended 12 prevention-focused, community-based, educational action steps aimed at preventing future violence [12].

As these indicators suggest, violence prevention is an issue much on the minds of Michigan citizens.

Michigan's Current Policies

Michigan has a generally decentralized juvenile justice system. Local courts help to organize delinquency services, supervise intake and probation, and contribute to the administration of community-based alternative services, non-secure and secure detention, and aftercare (National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) [13].

The state Committee on Juvenile Justice, organized in 1974, oversees and directs policy for the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Act in Michigan. It funds programs in diverse areas including aftercare/reintegration services, alternatives to jailing, community-based services, delinquency prevention, gender-specific services, juvenile-oriented community policing, minority over-representation, and native American pass-through. Committee members are appointed by the Governor. The committee functions as an independent body, although it is administratively connected to the Family Independence Agency (FIA) [13].

In 1996, the Michigan Legislature passed a juvenile justice reform package in response to widespread public sentiment that juveniles were becoming an increasing threat to citizens. The existing system had been designed to rehabilitate "wayward youth" who were committing offenses considered "less heinous." This legislation clarified the parameters for treating juveniles who commit more serious offenses, including "the more severe and lengthy penalties provided in the adult system" [14, pp. 1-4].

How Does Michigan Determine Youth Placement?

Michigan uses a process called Structured Decision-Making (SDM) to determine placement of juveniles. SDM is a process of risk and needs assessment with research-based criteria. It is designed to encourage development of community-based resources [13]. Using the assessment criteria, a youth's relative needs and risk of re-offense are examined. Then, treatment resources are assigned according to specific criteria established by the Michigan Office of Juvenile Justice [15].

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Which Model Guides Placement Decisions in Michigan?

In 1998 the Family Independence Agency (FIA) formally adopted Balanced and Restorative Justice, or BARJ, as the state's juvenile justice framework [13]. As described on page 17 of this report, a balanced approach is one that simultaneously considers three goals: (1) *accountability* to victim and community, (2) *competency development* of youth offenders, and (3) *community safety* [16].

In 1998 the Family Independence Agency (FIA) formally adopted Balanced and Restorative Justice, or BARJ, as the state's juvenile justice framework.

Michigan's juvenile justice program, as operated by the FIA, currently includes two of the three goals in OJJDP's balanced approach: competency development and community safety. The Michigan Office of Juvenile Justice states:

The Agency's program directs delinquent youth through the continuum of treatment models and services determined to provide safe and proper care that is appropriate to the youths' individual needs while taking into account community safety. The treatment models seek to provide youth and families with the knowledge and skills needed to reduce delinquency behaviors, promote appropriate attitudes and strengthen their capacity for self sufficiency to enable them to function responsibly in their . . . home communities and become contributing members of society safe placement and family reunification goals must always be balanced against the need for community safety and be based upon careful evaluation of the youth's presenting circumstances [9].

What Else Can Michigan Do?

Michigan's adoption of the BARJ approach is a good step toward overcoming the problem of youth violence in the state, but it is only a first step. Much work remains to be done. The programs described in this report provide policy options worthy of consideration.

A Framework for Understanding Youth Violence

Nancy Walker and Stephanie Jacobson

There is no doubt that the United States is a violent place to raise children. Consider these facts:

- Law enforcement agencies in the U.S. arrest nearly 3 million persons under age 18 each year, with juvenile arrests constituting approximately 20% of the total number of arrests and 27% of all serious violent victimizations [17]. The crimes for which youth are detained vary in severity from status offenses (such as truancy) to property offenses (such as shoplifting) to felonies (such as robbery and murder).
- Annual medical costs for violence in the United States were estimated at \$13.5 billion a decade ago [18], and nothing suggests that costs have declined since then.
- The rate of firearm-related homicides for children in the United States is more than twice that of the country with the next highest rate (Finland), and nearly 20 times the rate for the United Kingdom (see Figure 1). In fact, the Centers for Disease Control reported that the teen homicide rate for the United States is five times greater than the rate for 25 other industrialized countries *combined* [17].
- By the time the typical American child enters middle school, he or she will have witnessed more than 8,000 murders and more than 100,000 other acts of violence on network television (as cited in [19]).

The teen homicide rate for the United States is five times greater than the rate for 25 other industrialized countries combined.

Given these alarming facts, it is disturbing to note that many Americans, especially those who frequently watch violent television programs and movies, believe that our nation is even more violent than it actually is. One explanation for this finding is that television programs tend to depict American life as especially violent. For example, whereas only 0.2% of the

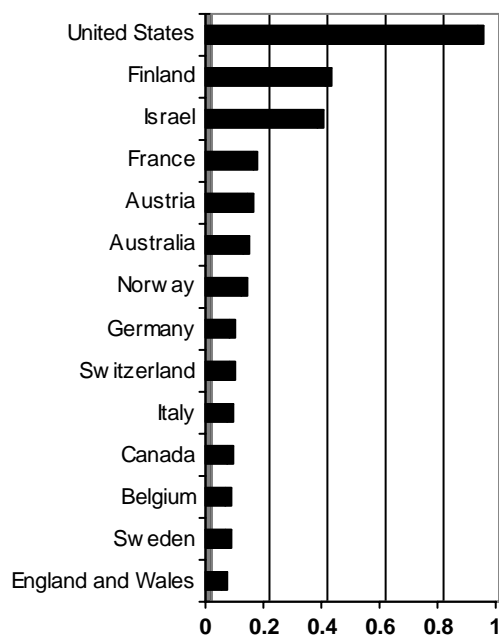


Figure 1
Firearm-Related Deaths
per 100,000 Juveniles
Ages 0-14
Adapted from [17]

crimes reported by the FBI are murders, approximately 50% of the crimes shown in “reality-based” TV programs are murders [19]. Frequent viewers of such programs, therefore, may develop distorted perceptions of how violent the world around them is.

Such misperceptions, in turn, can inappropriately influence policy decisions. It is important, therefore, to distinguish myth from reality when we create policies to address the problem of youth violence.

Youth Violence: Myths and Realities

Myth 1: Kids are committing more crimes today.

Reality: Juvenile crime is declining.

Overall, rates of juvenile crime and violence are declining. Arrest rates for violent juvenile crime have fallen by 19 percent since 1994 [20]. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), all of the increase in homicides by juveniles between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s was firearm related, and the sharp decline in homicides by juveniles between 1994 and 1997 was attributable entirely to a decline in homicides by firearm [21]. Similarly, between 1993 and 1997, the number of serious violent victimizations with at least one juvenile offender dropped 33%, from more than 1.2 million to 830,000 [17].

Myth 2: The epidemic of violent behavior that marked the early 1990s has passed.

Reality: Youth violence remains a serious problem in the United States.

The Office of the U.S. Surgeon General recently concluded that, although several key indicators of violence show significant reductions since the peak of the epidemic in 1993, self-reports by youth reveal that involvement in some violent behaviors remains at 1993 levels [22].

Myth 3: Americans want policymakers to be “tough on kids.”

Reality: Most Americans prefer prevention and rehabilitation to adult incarceration for juveniles.

A national survey of 1200 adults revealed that Americans think it is more important to be “tough on criminals” (76%) than to protect “the rights of the accused” (17%) (cited in [23]). However, Americans also believe that the main purpose of the *juvenile* court system should be to “treat and rehabilitate young offenders” (78%) rather than punish them (12%) (cited in [23]). When no other choices were given, 42% said that juveniles convicted of a violent crime should be sent to adult prison. When more choices were offered, however, people chose “secure placement” (45%) or “residential placement” (27%) over “adult prison placement” (1%) for first time violent offenders (Bostrom, 1999).

Despite these opinions and the downward trend in juvenile crime, more children are being tried as adults and held in juvenile and adult jails and prisons [20]. For example, on one day in 1994 there were 6,700 juveniles being held in local adult jails; on the same day three years later (1997), 9,100 juveniles were being held in adult jails, representing a 35% increase [20].

However, youths transferred to adult criminal court have significantly higher rates of re-offending and a greater likelihood of committing subsequent felonies than youths who remain in the juvenile justice system [22]. Research evidence also suggests that adolescents sentenced in juvenile court have lower recidivism rates than those sentenced in criminal courts [24], and are less likely to be victimized, physically and sexually [22].

Most Americans believe that the purpose of the juvenile court system should be to treat and rehabilitate young offenders rather than punish them.

Youths transferred to adult criminal court have significantly higher rates of re-offending and a greater likelihood of committing subsequent felonies than youths who remain in the juvenile justice system.

Myth 4: The reason we have such a big problem with youth violence is that some kids are just “bad seeds.”

Reality: Violence is learned behavior.

People, especially children, learn how to live and how to behave mostly by imitating what they see around them. Anyone who grows up in a violent environment is more likely to become violent in his or her own life. All forms of violence, including corporal punishment and “entertainment violence,” teach the lesson that violence is an appropriate way of solving problems, thereby leading to increased violence [25]. American children are exposed to more violent imagery in the media, are more likely to see guns in their homes, and are more likely to witness violence in their neighborhoods than children in other countries. As Professor Carl Taylor, author of two books on Detroit gangs, noted: “Violence is just a fact of life in urban America” [26]. It is no surprise, therefore, that American children accept and engage in violence.

Violence is learned behavior.

While it is true that some individuals have biochemical imbalances or brain disorders that prevent them from controlling their violent behaviors, most of the violent incidents committed in this country are not perpetrated by individuals with brain disorders. It is not accurate to say, therefore, that violence in our society is contained within certain individuals, or that eliminating these people will take care of the problem of violence.

Myth 5: Juvenile violence is most likely to occur at school.

Reality: Most American schools are free from serious crime.

Despite the public’s perception that school violence is on the rise, several studies released since July 1998 have shown that most schools are safe and that school crime generally is declining along with other forms of youth violence. Violence in urban schools continues to be a concern, however. Still, the odds of dying a violent death in a U.S. school during 1999 were one in two million [27]. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that between 1993 and 1997:

- Reports of physical fights by students declined 14%
- Reports of students being injured in fights declined 20%
- The number of students who self-reported carrying a weapon in the previous 30 days declined 30% [27]

Myth 6: African American and Hispanic youths are more likely to become involved in violence than other racial or ethnic groups.

Reality: Several factors account for the over-representation of ethnic minorities in the juvenile justice system.

Research reveals that African American, Latino, and Asian American youth are treated very differently by the juvenile justice system than white youths who commit comparable crimes [28; 29]. Minority youth are confined behind locked doors twice as often as white youth [29]. One study in California found that youth of color were 2.5 times more likely than white youth to be tried as adults and 8.3 times more likely to be incarcerated by adult court [28]. The study also found that after transfer to the adult system, confinement was significantly more likely to occur for youth of color than for white youth. Compared with white youth in the study, confinement was:

African American, Latino, and Asian American youth are treated very differently by the juvenile justice system than white youths who commit comparable crimes.

- 18.4 times more likely for African Americans
- 7.3 times more likely for Latinos
- 4.5 times more likely for Asian Americans

Moreover, minorities were disproportionately over-represented at all stages of interaction with the justice system. Compared to white youth, minority youth in this study were:

- 2.8 times more likely to be arrested for a violent crime
- 6.2 times more likely to be waived into adult court
- 7 times more likely to be sent to prison

Why are minority youth so over-represented in the justice system? The answer to that question is complicated. Possible explanations have

The linchpin for lasting violence reduction is strengthening the structure of the community.

included differential police policies and practices (e.g., targeting patrols in certain low-income neighborhoods, policies requiring immediate release to biological parents, group arrest procedures); location of offenses (minority youth using or selling drugs on street corners, white youth using or selling drugs in homes); different behavior by minority youth (e.g., whether minority youth commit more crimes than white youth); differential reactions of victims to offenses committed by white and minority youth (e.g., whether white victims of crimes disproportionately perceive the offenders to be minority youth); and racial bias within the justice system [29]. Research suggests that racial disparities are most pronounced at the beginning stages of involvement with the juvenile justice system, with differences tending to accumulate as youth are processed through the system [29]. Two-thirds of the studies of disproportionate minority confinement reviewed by one team of researchers showed negative “race effects” at one stage or another of the juvenile justice process [29].

Myth 7: There is little that communities can do to overcome the problem of youth violence.

Reality: The linchpin for lasting violence reduction is strengthening the structure of the community.

Research shows that the more time community members spend in public spaces, such as their own front porches or neighborhood sidewalks, the less violent crime there is in the community [30]. Violent street crime drops when ordinary citizens “take back their streets” even in simple, non-confrontational ways. For example, the more connections there are between people in a community (i.e., the tighter the network), the less violence there is. Other successful strategies include improving access to jobs and education and encouraging people to feel that they have a stake in the community [30].

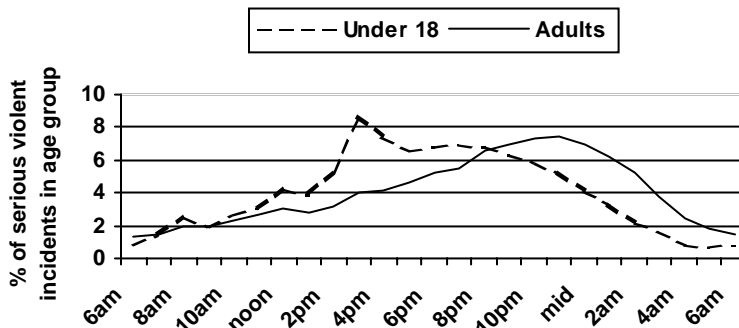
What is the Pattern of Juvenile Crime?

Violent crimes by juveniles peak in the afternoon between 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm.

Juveniles commit crimes at different times and under different conditions than adults do [17]. As Figure 2 shows, violent crimes by juveniles peak in the afternoon between 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm, the hour at the end of the school day, whereas adult serious crimes peak shortly before midnight. Violent crimes perpetrated by juvenile gangs show the same pattern as for non-gang juvenile crimes, with peak violence occurring when school lets out [31]. Interestingly, a comparison of the crime patterns for school and non-school days finds that the 3:00 pm peak occurs only on school days. The time pattern of juvenile violent crimes on non-school days is similar to that for adults.

Juveniles also are distinguished from adults in that they are much more likely to commit serious violent crimes while in the company of others. Table 1 provides the percent of serious violence involving multiple offenders for juveniles and adults according to type of victimization.

Figure 2
Time Patterns of Serious Violent Crime for Juveniles and Adults
Adapted from [17]



What are the Categories of Juvenile Crime?

Offenses are defined and handled differently for youth and adults. Juveniles may be penalized for acts known as *status offenses* for which adults could not even be arrested. Youth who commit crimes other than status offenses may be considered “delinquents.”

Status Offenses

Generally speaking, status offenses are non-criminal offenses for which a child can be arrested, but an adult cannot [32]. In Michigan, status offenses include running away from home, truancy, and being repeatedly disobedient to parent or guardian such that court services are deemed necessary. Michigan law allows that status offenders be detained in secure juvenile facilities only if they have willfully violated a court order and there are no less restrictive facilities available [14].

Status offenses are significant because they signal greater potential trouble in the future. Truancy is the status offense that most powerfully predicts serious future trouble for a child [32]. Therefore, the manner in which a system handles truancy cases could be pivotal to determining future incidence of juvenile crime.

Truancy is the status offense that most powerfully predicts serious future trouble for a child.

Some states are decriminalizing status offenses. For them, these offenses are no longer law violations, so status offenders are considered dependents and referred to child protective services rather than juvenile courts. South Carolina, for example, is implementing community-based intervention and rehabilitation programs to battle truancy and other status offenses, with some indicators of significant success [32].

Delinquency

Delinquency involves an act committed by a juvenile that also would be a crime if committed by an adult. Delinquents may be adjudicated as juveniles within the juvenile justice system, or they may be waived to criminal court for processing as adults.

The Problem of Chronic Delinquency

Most youth “outgrow” delinquent behavior [33]. Although most youth who are detained will not be arrested again, for those who are, each successive arrest will increase the risk of future scrapes with the law. Chronic offenders—those who have been arrested five times—will have better than

	<i>Juvenile</i>	<i>Adult</i>
Serious violence	52%	21%
Rape	23%	4%
Robbery	60%	29%
Aggravated assault	49%	19%

Adapted from [17]

The best predictor of an individual's future deviant or antisocial behavior is the amount and severity of similar behaviors in the past.

a 90% chance of being arrested again. These 6% of boys account for more than 50% of all arrests [34].

Several researchers have charted the progression from early aggressive behavior to violent crime, finding that childhood conduct problems tend to lead to delinquency, which, in turn, leads to adult criminal behavior [35]. The best predictor of an individual's future deviant or antisocial behavior is the amount and severity of similar behaviors in the past [36]. In addition, early onset of violence and delinquency is associated with more serious and chronic violence. For example, Farrington [36] found that approximately 50% of boys adjudicated delinquent for a violent offense between ages 10 and 16 were convicted of a violent crime by age 24, compared with only 8% of juveniles not adjudicated delinquent for a violent crime between ages 10 and 16. Similarly, Lipsey and Derzon [37] found that a juvenile offense at ages 6-11 was one of the strongest predictors of subsequent violence; for the 12-14 age group, the two strongest predictors were the lack of social ties and involvement with antisocial peers.

Many other factors also are associated with higher rates of delinquency including early childbearing, birth complications, parent's criminal record or mental health problems, poor parental supervision, erratic child-rearing behavior, child abuse and neglect, drug use, and academic failure [38]. These factors do not operate in isolation, of course; rather, they interact with one another. For this reason, interventions that have been shown to reduce such factors as drug use or teen pregnancy or to increase educational achievement or parenting skill probably also will reduce juvenile crime. Armed with this knowledge, researchers have developed and evaluated a number of programs that are based on known predictors of youth violence.

Predictors of Youth Violence

Predictors of Youth Violence, a report published in April 2000 by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), summarized the findings of OJJDP's two-year study group of 22 renowned youth violence researchers [38]. The study group identified five categories designated as "malleable predictors of violence"—that is, factors that might be influenced by prevention or intervention strategies. These categories included: (a) individual factors, (b) family factors, (c) school factors, (d) peer-related factors, and (e) community and neighborhood factors. Table 2 lists predictors in each category.

Table 2
Predictors of Youth Violence by Category

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Peer</i>	<i>Community/ Neighborhood</i>
Pregnancy and delivery complications	Parental criminality	Academic failure	Delinquent siblings	Poverty
Lead poisoning	Child maltreatment	Low bonding to school	Delinquent peers	Community disorganization
Poor prenatal care/nutrition	Poor family management practices	Truancy	Gang membership	Availability of drugs and firearms
Low resting heart rate	Low levels of parental involvement	Dropping out	Bullying	Neighborhood adults involved in crime
Depression	Poor family bonding	Frequent school transitions		Exposure to violence
Hyperactivity	Family conflict	Expulsion		Exposure to prejudice
Concentration problems	Parental acceptance of substance use and violence			
Risk taking	Parent-child separation			
Early initiation of violence				
Acceptance of deviant behavior				

In this section, we discuss factors that contribute to youth violence in each of these five categories, as well as a sixth category, media predictors.

Individual Predictors

Individual factors that contribute to youth violence can be ameliorated in several ways. For example, proper prenatal care, childbirth education classes and other programs to educate parents about child development, and early treatment for mental health problems all can reduce the risk of later delinquent behavior [39].

In addition, high quality early childhood programs appear to reduce later violent behavior through multiple pathways. One way is by assisting children to understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behavior at an early age, before negative behavior patterns are established. Developmentally appropriate child care programs also can help children learn prosocial skills and develop the capacity to regulate their emotions, including the development of self-control. Children in these programs also gain cognitive skills and are less likely to experience school failure [39], which is a strong predictor of later violent behavior. High quality early childhood programs also can encourage parents to develop effective disciplinary strategies and to care for their children effectively throughout childhood and adolescence [40].

Proper prenatal care, childbirth education classes and other programs to educate parents about child development, and early treatment for mental health problems all can reduce the risk of later delinquent behavior.

Family Predictors

When asked to select from a list of possible causes of violence, a majority of Americans surveyed indicated that the biggest cause was “parents not teaching children good values” [23]. Indeed, family management practices such as failure to set clear expectations for children’s behavior, an authoritarian or neglectful parenting style, parental disagreement about childrearing, poor monitoring and supervision, and severe and inconsistent discipline consistently predict later delinquency and substance abuse [41-43]. Wells and Rankin [44] found that boys with very strict parents reported the most violence, while boys with very permissive parents reported the second highest level of violence. Also, boys whose parents punished them inconsistently were more likely to commit an offense against other persons than boys whose parents punished them more consistently.

On the other hand, strong parental involvement can function as a protective factor against violence. Farrington [42] reported that sons whose fathers engaged in leisure activities with them were less likely to exhibit violent behavior as teenagers and adults and were less likely to be convicted for a violent offense.

Strong parental involvement can function as a protective factor against violence.

School Predictors

Expelled youth often have limited access to alternative programs and therefore face a high risk of never completing their education [1]. Students expelled from school or at risk of expulsion are unlikely to possess key developmental assets, including constructive use of time, positive peer influence, high expectations, achievement motivation, school engagement, bonding to school, and positive view of personal future [45]. The fewer developmental assets youth possess, the more likely they are to be involved in high risk behaviors such as violence, substance abuse, and other antisocial behaviors.

In contrast, bonding to school serves as a protective factor against crime [46]. Expelled students with large amounts of unstructured time on their hands often feel angry and disconnected from their communities [10], thus increasing the risk that they will experience higher rates of depression and behavior problems [1]. Youth who go unsupervised are twice as likely to abuse substances, and arrests for violent crimes and other misdemeanors peak during daytime hours when youth experience inadequate supervision [1].

The most severe, violent hate crimes were nearly always preceded by years of bullying.

Children who know many adult criminals are more likely to engage in violent behavior by age 18.

80% of movies rated “R” for violence that the Commission reviewed were targeted to children under age 17.

Peer Predictors

Adolescents whose peers disapprove of delinquent behavior are less likely to report having committed delinquent acts [33]. On the other hand, being a gang member contributes more to delinquency than does having delinquent peers [47]. Disrupting early patterns of antisocial behavior and negative peer support, therefore, is a promising strategy for the prevention of violence and serious delinquency [37].

Bullying is another peer-related predictor of youth violence. *Bruised Inside: What Our Children Say About Youth Violence, What Causes It, and What We Need to Do About It* [48] reported that the way peers treat each other is the second major cause of youth violence. According to the report, the links between bullying and violence were clear to the students surveyed. When Maine Attorney General Andrew Ketterer’s Civil Rights Division found that half of all hate crimes reported to that office were committed by juveniles, the Division studied these incidents and found that the most severe, violent hate crimes were nearly always preceded by years of bullying (cited in [48]).

Community and Neighborhood Predictors

Low attachment to the neighborhood, including feelings of isolation, may be associated with later delinquency. Community disorganization (defined as the presence of crime, drug-selling, gangs, and poor housing) is an even better predictor of violence than low attachment to a neighborhood [49]. Children who know many adult criminals are more likely to engage in violent behavior by age 18. Exposure to violence in and out of the home also increases a child’s risk for involvement in violent behavior later in life [50], as does exposure to discrimination.

Media Predictors

Movies, television, and internet use all provide important sources of children’s exposure to violence. Bushman and Huesmann [19] reviewed the evidence relating TV violence to aggressive and violent behavior and drew the following conclusions:

- TV violence has a short-term stimulating effect on aggressive behavior for viewers of all ages.
- TV violence has a long-term socializing effect that makes lifelong aggressive behavior more likely for children who watch a lot of it while growing up.
- These effects occur not just for already aggressive children; they occur for all children who ingest a steady diet of TV violence.

Similar effects have been found for youth who watch violent movies, listen to violent music, or engage in violent or aggressive computer games or internet use [19].

Despite this knowledge, media industries continue to market violent products to children in the United States [51]. In September, 2000 the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) released its report, *Marketing Violent Entertainment to Children: A Review of Self-Regulation and Industry Practices in the Motion Picture, Music Recording and Electronic Game Industries*. Among its findings, the Commission reported that:

- 80% of movies rated “R” for violence that the Commission reviewed were targeted to children under age 17.
- 27% of the music recordings with explicit content labels the Commission reviewed included marketing plans expressly identifying teenagers as part of the target audience.
- 70% of electronic games with a “Mature” rating for violence reviewed by the Commission targeted children under 17. Most of the plans that targeted an under-17 audience set age 12 as the younger end of the spectrum, but a few plans for violent “Mature”-rated games targeted children as young as six [51].

Children who watch media violence imitate the aggressive scripts they see, become more condoning of violence, start to believe the world is a more hostile place, and become emotionally desensitized to violence [19]. The violence they see justifies to them their own violent acts, the energy associated with the violence they see arouses them, and the violence they see cues aggressive ideas for them [19]. Of course, media violence is not *the* cause of aggression and violence, nor is it necessarily the most important cause. However, accumulating evidence has revealed that media violence is *one* factor that contributes significantly to aggression and violence in the United States [19].

Research findings in each of these six predictor categories provide promising directions for preventing the problem of youth violence.

Why Prevention?

Why is Prevention a Good Approach to Reducing Youth Violence?

1. **Prevention is effective.** As this report documents, certain primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention efforts all have track records for success.
2. **Prevention can be cost-effective** in the long run. Greenwood's article (pages 21-27 of this report) provides an approach for analyzing cost-benefit ratios. Chamberlain's article (pages 29-37 of this report) describes a prevention approach that has been estimated to save \$17 in criminal justice costs for every dollar spent on prevention.
3. **Prevention is empowering** to individuals and communities. Prevention models often lend themselves to community-based implementation, which empowers individuals and communities to join hands in reducing violent behavior in their own neighborhoods [18].

Prevention is effective, cost-effective, and empowering.

How is Prevention Defined?

Primary prevention involves efforts to prevent crime and violence from occurring in the first place by delivering services to all individuals, whether they are "at risk" or not. Primary prevention efforts seek to improve the quality of life for all youth, regardless of their presumed propensity for violence. In recent years, approaches emphasizing primary prevention have become increasingly well regarded as methods for preventing youth violence [18]. *Secondary prevention* targets youth who are considered to be "at-risk" for criminal activity based upon risk factors identified by research (as described in the previous section). *Tertiary prevention* focuses on youth who already have committed violent crimes in an effort to prevent them from re-offending.

Common Characteristics of Effective Prevention Programs

Research suggests that programs that are effective in preventing or reducing chronic delinquency have several characteristics in common. They are:

- Theoretically grounded
- Evidence based
- Multi-faceted
- Specifically targeted
- Often costly, but frequently pay for themselves, sometimes many times over

Any program must be adapted to the specific characteristics and resources of the community in which it is to be applied.

Policy Considerations

Any program, no matter how carefully conceived, must be adapted to the specific characteristics and resources of the community in which it is to be applied. What is feasible, cost-effective, and sustainable in one location or with one target population may not be possible for another. For these reasons, policymakers considering adoption of any prevention or intervention model to reduce the problem of youth violence must address these policy concerns:

- **Promise:** Does the program work? What are the benefits we can expect to reap from implementing the program? Will the program “sell” in our community?
- **Efficacy:** Is there research evidence to demonstrate the program’s success with the population we intend to target in our community?
- **Feasibility:** Is the program feasible for our community? Do we have the economic, human, and social resources to implement the program?
- **Safety:** Will our community stay at least as safe as it is now or become even safer if we implement this program?
- **Cost/Benefit:** Can we afford to implement this program? Can we afford *not* to implement this program? Are the benefits likely to be achieved worth more than the economic and human costs of implementing the program?
- **Sustainability:** Does our community have the resources and commitments necessary to keep the program running for as long as needed?

Policy Options

Several approaches successfully address the questions posed above. In this section, we outline some of these strategies. First, we describe OJJDP’s comprehensive strategy for serious, chronic, and violent juvenile offenders. Second, we offer policy options for reducing youth violence, organized according to the six predictor categories described above.

OJJDP’s Comprehensive Strategy for Juvenile Offenders

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has developed a comprehensive strategy for dealing with chronic, serious, and violent juvenile offenders which features the concept of *restorative justice* (described below). In 1993 OJJDP launched the Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Project. Its aim is to provide training and technical assistance regarding the program, as well as written materials informing policy and practice related to restorative justice and the balanced approach [16].

OJJDP’s online *Guide for Implementing the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model Report* contains promising programs for accomplishing each of its goals, as well as case examples from Minnesota, Florida, and Pennsylvania – states which, like Michigan, have moved toward the balanced and restorative justice model of juvenile justice. Information about OJJDP’s BARJ Project can be obtained at <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/implementing/index.html>

The aim of retributive justice is to establish guilt and administer punishment.

Restorative versus Retributive Justice

Traditionally, the justice system has operated according to the *retributive* model of justice, which defines crime as a violation of the law and identifies the state as the victim. The aim of retributive justice is to establish guilt and administer punishment [52].

In contrast, the *restorative* model of justice defines crime not principally as a violation of the law, but as harm to people and communities. It emphasizes the importance of a victim's needs and obligates the offender to repair the harm that has been done to the victim and the community [52].

Table 3 provides features that contrast the retributive and restorative models.

According to OJJDP, a balanced approach is one that balances the following three goals [16]:

- *Accountability* emphasizes the best interests of the *victim(s)* by recognizing that the offender has an obligation both to the victim and to the community.
- *Competency development* emphasizes the best interests of the *youth* by aiming to release offenders from the juvenile justice system who are more capable than they were when they entered.
- *Community safety* protects the best interests of the *community* by recognizing that the juvenile justice system has a responsibility to protect the public from juveniles in the system.

The BARJ model is linked with rehabilitation—and therefore violence prevention—through its second goal, *competency development*. Evidence increasingly shows that the sanctions involved in a restorative justice model, such as community service, have a great rehabilitative value [54]. Research evidence also suggests that states using rehabilitative models of juvenile justice have lower recidivism rates than those using more punitive models [55].

The restorative model of justice emphasizes the importance of a victim's needs and obligates the offender to repair the harm that has been done to the victim and the community.

Research evidence suggests that states using rehabilitative models of juvenile justice have lower recidivism rates than those using more punitive models.

Additional Policy Options for Reducing Youth Violence

A host of other policy options also are available. In this section, we outline a sampling of options for each of the predictor categories for youth violence.

Table 3 Retributive versus Restorative Justice Models	
<i>Retributive Justice Model</i>	<i>Restorative Justice Model</i>
Crime defined by violation of rules	Crime defined by harm to people and relationships
State as victim	People and relationships as victims
State and offender seen as primary parties	Victim and offender seen as primary parties
Debt paid by taking punishment	Debt paid by making right
Focus on offender; victim ignored	Victims' needs central
Offender's ties to community weakened	Offender's integration into community increased
Victim-offender relationships ignored	Victim-offender relationships central
Ignores social, economic, and moral context of behavior	Total context relevant
Assumes win-lose outcomes	Makes possible win-win outcomes

Adapted from [53]

Individual Strategies

- Affordable, available prenatal care
- Childbirth education classes
- Programs to educate expectant parents about the dangers of poor prenatal care, malnutrition, and lead poisoning
- High-quality child care
- Programs that focus on healthy development
- Early treatment for hyperactivity, ADHD, and other disorders

Family Strategies

- Home visits by health and mental health professionals
- Parenting programs that focus on development of good family management practices, including positive discipline techniques and non-aggressive means for resolving conflict
- Parenting activities that encourage family bonding and parental involvement with children
- Programs that reduce domestic violence and substance abuse

School Strategies

- Programs that encourage youth involvement in school activities
- Graduation incentives
- Methods for reducing school transitions
- High-quality, affordable, available alternative education programs
- Programs that reduce the number of student expulsions
- High-quality after-school programs

Peer Strategies

- Programs that identify problems with bullying and reduce its effects
- Activities that reduce interaction with deviant peers

Community and Neighborhood Strategies

- Programs that reduce poverty
- Programs that build community capacity and increase community organization
- Programs that reduce the availability of drugs and firearms
- Programs that reduce exposure to prejudice and violence
- Improving access to jobs and education
- Increasing citizens' involvement in the community

Media Strategies

- Increased regulation of violence on TV, in music, in computer games, and on the internet
- Incentives and/or sanctions that encourage producers to limit violence on television and the internet, as well as in music, videos, and computer games
- Incentives and/or sanctions that discourage advertisers from advertising their products on programs that feature violence
- More active enforcement of the federal Children's Television Act (CTA) of 1990.*
- Incentives to increase educational programming for children and youth

*The Children's Television Act of 1990 was passed by Congress to improve educational broadcast programming for children. The Federal Communications Commission was charged with the task of creating the specific rules necessary to enforce the act, resulting in the Children's TV Rules of 1996, a new set of standards designed to strengthen and implement the Children's Television Act [56].

Concluding Comments

Youth violence is a multi-faceted problem of long-standing duration. As such, it has no simple cure. However, when community members join hands to implement a variety of strategies that have been carefully evaluated and proven effective, progress is possible. This report focuses on examples of programmatically and fiscally sound strategies that hold promise for reducing youth violence.

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Cost-Effective Violence Prevention Programs: A Guide to Current Knowledge and How to Use it

Peter W. Greenwood, Ph.D.

Crime typically is listed near the top of most Americans' concerns, yet most of the money and effort devoted to solving the problem of crime are restricted to a narrow range of solutions—chief among them, incarceration of persons who already have committed crimes. Much less attention has been paid to diverting youth who have not yet committed crimes from doing so. In most jurisdictions, the juvenile system has little to offer delinquent preteens because they are not yet seen as dangerous, despite the fact that these delinquents disproportionately include the future violent criminals of their cohort.

In some ways, this lopsided allocation of resources makes sense. When a criminal is imprisoned, there is little doubt that crimes are being prevented by that person's incarceration. However, for a variety of reasons, programs intended to reduce the flow of children into criminal careers are more difficult to evaluate. For example, youth who are detained for committing a crime cannot be identified with certainty before they wind up in trouble with the law. In addition, participation in even the best of diversion programs cannot ensure against eventual criminal activity, and even the most positive effects can wear off or decay over time. How, then, can we select and evaluate the effectiveness of programs aimed at reducing youth crime and violence? And how can we assess whether the dollars spent on such programs are worth the benefits attained?

This article provides some guideposts for answering these difficult questions. First, it defines criteria for judging program effectiveness. Next, it outlines common characteristics of programs that have proven effective, and identifies some programs that have fallen flat. The article then describes a series of steps that policymakers can take in conducting cost-benefit analyses of violence prevention programs for youth, suggests reasons that program results may vary, and provides strategies for reducing both the risk of poor outcomes and local resistance to adopting proven programs.

Criteria for Judging Program Effectiveness

Four criteria are central to judging the effectiveness of any youth program intended to stem the tide of violence:

1. **Promise:** Does the program sound like a good idea? Will it "sell" well? Will it be popular with clients, taxpayers, program administrators, and policymakers?
2. **Proof of program effectiveness:** Is there sound, experimental evidence of the program's success? Has proof of the program's effectiveness been replicated, especially by those who do not profit from the program's appeal?
3. **Cost effectiveness:** Will the estimated benefits justify the costs? Can we expect "more bang for the buck" with this program than others also intended to produce positive outcomes?
4. **Sustainability:** Is this the right time to implement this program? Are the right resources— financial, human, and social—in place to make the program not only successful, but sustainable?

The juvenile system has little to offer delinquent preteens because they are not yet seen as dangerous, despite the fact that these delinquents disproportionately include the future violent criminals of their cohort.

This article describes a series of steps that policymakers can take in conducting cost-benefit analyses of violence prevention programs for youth.

Strategies That Work—And Those That Don't

The greatest impact was produced by programs that were community-based as opposed to institutional.

Despite their popularity, some programs fail to meet the important criterion of proven effectiveness. For example, a thorough analysis of more than 400 juvenile program evaluations revealed that such popular programs as “shock incarceration” and “scared-straight” techniques, both intended to deter crime, actually produced *negative* effects [57]. Programs that bring delinquents together in community—including “boot camps,” vocational programs, and wilderness challenges—also have been disappointing. Even the widely implemented D.A.R.E. program, intended to dissuade children from drug use, has produced negative effects including *increased* drug use [58]. In response to these criticisms the D.A.R.E. program currently is undergoing revision.

In contrast, Lipsey [57] found that programs that were behavioral, skill-oriented, and multi-modal—even if not “showy”—tended to produce the largest positive effects. (See “Some Promising Approaches for Reducing Youth Violence,” pages 39-42 of this report, for several examples of such programs.) Interestingly, the greatest impact was produced by programs that were community-based as opposed to institutional [57]. Others have found that programs that are based upon developmental theory [59] and resolution of gender-specific issues [60] also show more evidence of positive outcome.

Characteristics of Effective Programs

Good programs are based on a sound rationale and provide ample data to support the claim that they are effective. Successful programs tend to be comprehensive and multi-faceted rather than simplistic, and they are targeted to a specific audience. In other words, such programs are not intended to be a panacea; rather, they are aimed at a specific group of youth with defined characteristics (e.g., age, developmental level, gender, ethnic group, cultural heritage, academic history, etc.). Because the programs are complex, they typically are costly as well. But some programs more than pay for themselves in justice system savings. (The next article on Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care provides an example of this type of program.)

The critical questions, then, become: Which programs have proven most effective? How should program effectiveness be weighed against cost effectiveness? Are there some programs that are not worth implementing?

Table 1
Steps in Conducting a Cost-Benefit Analysis of a Juvenile Intervention Program

1. Assess all beneficial outcomes
2. Project beneficial outcomes over the life of the participant
3. Adjust for scale-up and decay
4. Convert all benefits to monetary values for specific parties
 - a. Government
 - b. Potential victims
 - c. Program participants
5. Recalculate future benefits in terms of their present value (i.e., discount them)

Estimating the Direct Costs and Benefits of Alternative Approaches

Comparing the cost of incarcerating a person for one year with the costs and economic benefits associated with a particular intervention strategy provides an estimate of that program's comparative cost effectiveness. To conduct such an analysis requires addressing the following questions:

- What percentage of the population is to be treated, and how much crime do they commit?
- What is the cost per treatment?
- How effective is each program at preventing crime?
- How will effectiveness change if the program is expanded?
- How long do effects persist after treatment has ceased?

The RAND Corporation developed a model to answer these questions [34]. Table 1 provides the model's steps for conducting a cost-benefit analysis. The model calculates the impact of each intervention program on crime

and criminal justice spending, relying on a mathematical model of criminal populations in prison and on the street, as affected by criminal career initiation, arrest and sentencing, release, and desistance from criminal activity.

A Case Example Comparing Cost-Benefit Analyses for Five Intervention Approaches

Using RAND’s analytical model, Greenwood and colleagues [34] compared the effectiveness of California’s “three-strikes” approach* with the estimated 30-year cost-effectiveness of four other strategies to prevent crime: (1) early intervention home visits plus high-quality child care, (2) parent-training programs, (3) high school graduation incentives, and (4) delinquent supervision. The researchers calculated typical costs for each of these interventions using average costs of programs proven to be effective. Table 2 summarizes program costs for each of the four interventions, estimated using 1995 dollars.

Table 3 compares the estimated cost-effectiveness of the four interventions after 30 years. As the table shows, graduation incentives were by far the most cost-effective strategy, followed by the relatively inexpensive strategy of parent training. Early home visits plus child care, although important interventions, produced the least favorable cost-benefit ratios primarily because they were the most expensive and had large penalties for scale-up and decay effects (see definitions below).

In interpreting these findings, it is important to note that the RAND model rests on a number of assumptions. These assumptions are described next, including examples from the California analysis.

Assumption 1:

Chronic delinquent behavior in adolescence leads fairly directly to the commission of more serious crimes in adulthood.

Graduation incentives were by far the most cost-effective strategy, followed by the relatively inexpensive strategy of parent training.

*California’s “three strikes” law mandates extended sentences for repeat offenders. To conduct the comparative analysis, Greenwood and colleagues used a 1994 estimate provided by the California Offender Information Services Branch showing that the annual cost of incarceration per person in the state was \$21,000.



	<i>Home Visit/ Day Care</i>	<i>Parent Training</i>	<i>Graduation Incentives</i>	<i>Delinquent Supervision</i>
Year 1	\$2,700	\$3,000	\$3,130	\$10,000
Year 2	\$2,700		\$3,130	
Year 3	\$6,000		\$3,130	
Year 4	\$6,000		\$3,130	
Year 5	\$6,000			
Year 6	\$6,000			
Total	\$29,400	\$3,000	\$12,520	\$10,000

Adapted from [75]

Assumption 2:

Programs that begin at earlier ages are expected to have a lower "targeting ratio" because it is difficult to predict at younger ages who will become a high-rate offender.

Targeting ratio is defined as the number of crimes per person in the population targeted by the program (assuming no treatment) versus that per person in the general population. A targeting ratio of 1.0 indicates a participant group that commits crimes at the same rate as persons in the rest of the population. Targeting ratios greater than 1.0 indicate groups with greater criminal activity than the remainder of the population.

California example: Information on pre-intervention criminality was available for only one of the treatments considered in the RAND analysis: Targeting ratio for graduation incentives = 3.0. In other words, persons in the targeted population, if untreated, commit 3 times as many crimes as those in the population as a whole. Using this rate as a benchmark, the researchers selected a targeting ratio of 2.0 for early home visit plus child care and 2.0 for parent-training programs, to reflect the fact that younger children cannot be targeted as effectively through these programs. In contrast, the researchers selected a targeting ratio of 4.5 for supervision of chronic delinquents because those youth already are heavily involved with the juvenile-justice system at the time of treatment.

Assumption 3:

Prevention rates typically are available for small, intensive pilot programs, which are likely to be more effective than large-scale, expanded programs.

To correct for this factor, the RAND model includes a modifying parameter to account for the effect of *scale-up* on program efficacy. The values chosen for this parameter reflect the relative size of each program. Specifically, the larger the percentage of a group treatable by a program, the larger is the penalty due to scale-up.

California example: The researchers selected a scale-up penalty of 40% for early home visit plus child care and 40% for parent-training programs, assuming that a larger percentage of the groups in these treatment conditions were treatable, but 20% for graduation incentives and 15% for delinquent supervision (assuming a smaller percentage of treatable individuals).

The RAND model includes a modifying parameter to account for the effect of scale-up on program efficacy.

Table 3
Estimated Cost-Effectiveness of Four Interventions After 30 Years

	<i>Home Visit/ Day Care</i>	<i>Parent Training</i>	<i>Graduation Incentives</i>	<i>Delinquent Supervision</i>
Cost per participant	\$29,400	\$3,000	\$12,520	\$10,000
Net present value of cost per participant	\$26,238	\$3,000	\$11,816	\$10,000
Serious crimes prevented per participant	0.59	0.71	4.16	0.99
Net present value of serious crimes prevented per participant	0.30	0.47	3.05	0.72
Dollars spent per serious crime prevented	\$89,035	\$6,351	\$3,881	\$13,899
Serious crimes prevented per million dollars spent	11	157	258	72

Adapted from [75]

Assumption 4:

Most program evaluations have follow-up periods that are too brief to assess long-term program benefits.

Some studies, moreover, have shown that positive program effects decay rapidly after program completion [61; 62]. The RAND model thus incorporates another parameter to account for *decay* in effectiveness due to time. Intervention programs designed for administration during adolescence show less decay than early-intervention programs, as the latter are administered several years before criminal activity is likely to begin.

California example: The researchers assumed that graduation incentives and delinquent supervision show no decay in their effectiveness in deterring juvenile crimes because they are administered during adolescence. Therefore, they selected a decay rate of 0% for delinquent supervision and 0% for graduation incentives. On the other hand, they attached larger decay rates (20%) for juvenile crime deterrence to early home visit plus child care and parent-training programs, as these interventions are administered several years before individuals may be expected to begin to commit crimes. The researchers also included another percentage for decay regarding prevention of **adult** crime: 70% for home visit plus child care, 70% for parent-training programs, 10% for graduation incentives, and 5% for delinquent supervision.

Whether policymakers accept these assumptions or adopt assumptions that are either more conservative or liberal, estimation of the long-term effectiveness of a particular scaled-up program can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Effective Prevention Rate} = \text{Pilot Prevention Rate} \times \text{Scale-up Penalty} \times \text{Decay Rate}$$

The resulting percentage (i.e., Effective Prevention Rate) can be applied to the number of serious crimes that an *average* program participant would be expected to commit in a lifetime. This calculation results in estimated program benefits, in terms of the number of serious crimes prevented per program participant.

For example, the RAND researchers estimated the number of serious crimes prevented per million dollars spent to implement California's "three strikes" law and compared that result with each of the four early-intervention strategies described above. They concluded that the California statute, if applied in all eligible cases, would reduce the number of serious felonies committed by adults in any one year by approximately 28% (or 329,000 crimes). They further estimated that such application would cost \$5.5 billion per year in additional criminal justice funding, primarily reflected in the costs of constructing and operating additional prison facilities. The "three strikes" law thus was estimated to cost \$16,000 per serious felony prevented. As Figure 1 shows, two of the four early interventions were considered more cost-effective at reducing serious crime over time than the statute, and a third was roughly equivalent.

Figure 2 illustrates the estimated criminal justice system savings achieved through early intervention, as estimated by the same mathematical model used to estimate the costs and benefits of California's "three strikes" law. The figure presents savings relative to costs that would have been incurred under sentencing laws in existence prior to "three strikes" and relative to the newly enacted law. As the figure shows, a million dollars spent on graduation incentives should result in savings to the criminal justice system of between \$600,000 and \$1.1 million. Thus, over time, the program likely would save enough money to pay most, if not all, of its costs. Criminal justice system savings would pay about one-third of the costs of parent training and about one-fourth the costs of delinquent supervision. Other potential savings (for example to taxpayers and society) are not included in this analysis.

The RAND model incorporates another parameter to account for decay in effectiveness due to time.

Policy Implications

Chronic youth offenders disproportionately include the future violent criminals of their cohort. Policymakers, therefore, must implement proven, cost-effective strategies to positively intervene in the trajectory of the lives of youth who are chronically delinquent. Although there is no panacea for the problem of reducing youth violence, research evidence suggests some promising approaches.

Based on current estimates of program costs and benefits, investments in some interventions for high-risk youth may be several times more cost-effective in reducing serious crime than long mandatory sentences for repeat offenders. This is not to suggest that incarceration is the wrong approach. The crime reductions achievable through incarceration—on the order of 20% or so—are substantial. But, with 80 percent of serious crime remaining, Americans will want to know what else can be done.

The analyses conducted by the RAND researchers indicate that some early-intervention alternatives appear to be more cost-effective than the high-profile, widely endorsed “three strikes” incarceration alternative adopted in the State of California. That approach significantly reduced crime, but also carried an estimated price tag of \$5.5 billion. By comparison, the combined interventions of graduation incentives and parent training were estimated to reduce serious crime by an equivalent amount (22%) at a combined annual cost of less than \$1 billion—approximately one-sixth the cost of the “three strikes” approach. A third approach, delinquent supervision, also compared favorably with the statute in cost effectiveness.

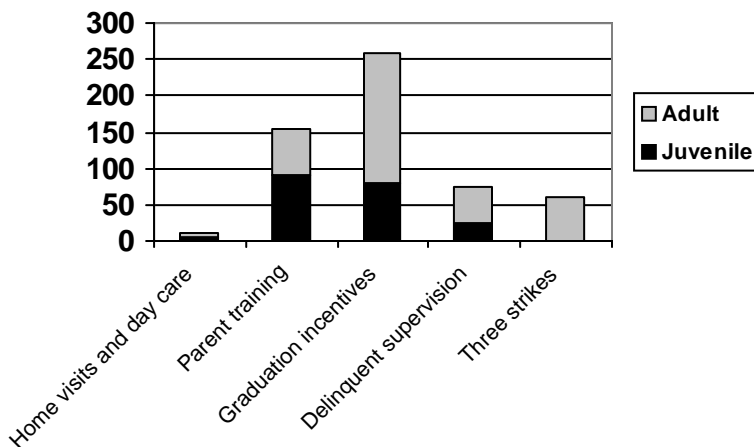
Although the early home visits plus child care approach was found to be an expensive alternative compared to the “three strikes” law, the additional benefits of the early intervention program cannot be ignored. Comprehensive early intervention with at-risk families has been shown to reduce by approximately 50% rates of child abuse, which is one of the risk factors for later delinquency. Early home visits plus child care also produce considerable benefits by way of savings in the medical and social service costs associated with foster care, as well as improvements in student performance [63; 64].

Even the most successful program, however, might have less favorable results when implemented in a new location or with a different population. Modifications to program design, changes in training protocol, local resistance to specific program features, alterations to program management, application to a different target group, and other factors may produce variations in program results. Policymakers and program implementers, therefore, need to identify strategies for reducing the risk of poor outcomes.

The “three strikes” approach adopted in California significantly reduced crime, but also cost \$5.5 billion.

By comparison, a combination of graduation incentives and parent training reduced serious crime by an equivalent amount, at approximately one-sixth of the cost.

Figure 1
Series Crimes Prevented per
Million Dollars Spent
Adapted from [75]



To reduce the risk of poor outcomes, policymakers should take the following steps:

- Adopt programs proven effective through sound research
- Use the program developer’s theoretical assumptions
- Encourage the use of multiple program models with different service providers in order to compare programs in relative effectiveness
- Set up quality assurance programs
- Evaluate outcomes
- Hold providers accountable for results

Concluding Comments

Research clearly suggests that positive impacts are much more certain with proven programs. However, policymakers may encounter significant resistance to adopting programs, even those with a proven track record. Unless funders create incentives for local providers to adopt proven programs, they may be reluctant to do so. Local providers may be complacent about current programming, may believe that “we are different,” or may resist adopting a program that isn’t “home grown.”

In addition, policymakers typically are confronted with a dilemma when attempting to choose among several programs that all appear promising: *How do we decide which alternative is best for us?*

Using the strategies described in this article should assist policymakers in making decisions regarding selection and implementation of programs designed to reduce youth violence that are appropriate for their specific circumstances. Use of the cost-benefit analysis model described in this article can assist policymakers to implement policies that are both programmatically and fiscally sound.

Local providers may be reluctant to adopt proven programs unless funders create incentives for them to do so.

□ Pre-three-strikes baseline ■ Three-strikes baseline

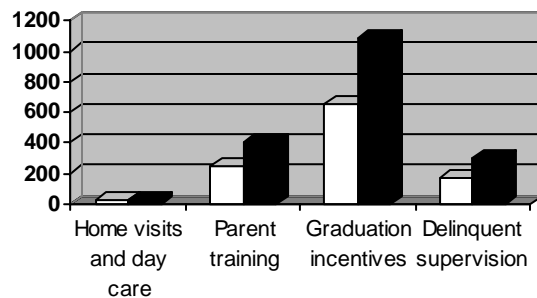


Figure 2
 Estimated Criminal Justice System Savings per Million Dollars of Program Costs
 Adapted from [75]

As Executive Director of the OSLC (Oregon Social Learning Center) Community Programs, Dr. Patricia Chamberlain has been researching the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs for juvenile offenders for nearly two decades. Her work focuses on ecological approaches to treatment that are developmentally appropriate and gender specific. Dr. Chamberlain's Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care Program, described in this article, has been selected as one of 10 National Blueprint Programs for Violence Prevention by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and by the U.S. Department of Education as one of 9 national exemplary violence prevention programs.

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care for Chronic Juvenile Offenders: A Blueprint for Violence Prevention

Patricia Chamberlain, Ph.D.

Traditional community-based group care facilities often fail to achieve the goal of positively socializing teens who have been removed from their homes for chronic delinquency. Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC), pioneered by the Oregon Social Learning Center, provides a positive alternative. Comparing chronically delinquent teens placed in MTFC with those placed in traditional group care, researchers have demonstrated that MTFC results in better short- and long-term impacts on changing antisocial behavior. Teens in MTFC run away less frequently, complete their programs more often, and are less often locked up in detention. In addition, court records reveal that teens in Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care have fewer criminal referrals, and MTFC teens report engaging in fewer violent and serious crimes than teens in traditional group care. This article describes the MTFC program and its application to youth with varying characteristics.

What Do We Know About Delinquent Behavior Among Boys and Girls?

Patterns of Delinquency

Several factors are key predictors of antisocial behavior and delinquency for youth during adolescence: poor parental supervision, lack of consistent discipline, low parental involvement, friendships with delinquent peers, and school failure. Antisocial behavior leads to increasingly serious delinquency and wears down the social forces that have the potential to guide youth to more acceptable behavior. Family members of antisocial youth become distressed, demoralized, defeated, and cynical. As a result, they become increasingly incapable of supervising, mentoring, setting limits for, or negotiating with the offending teen. The youth's homework, school attendance and behavior deteriorate, and the teen increasingly falls under the influence of undesirable peers. Finally, the youth's behavior compromises community safety, at which point the court intervenes to remove the youth from home.

When this result occurs, the challenge is to re-create the powerful, positive socialization forces of functional family life for teens removed from their homes for chronic delinquency. For a variety of reasons, traditional secure or community-based group care facilities typically fail to meet this challenge. These reasons include inadequate attention to the development of positive behavior management skills, insufficient time for youth to interact with adult mentors, emphasis on group rather than individual therapy, and the improper reliance on trying to influence peer interactions.

The challenge is to re-create the powerful, positive socialization forces of functional family life for teens removed from their homes for chronic delinquency. For a variety of reasons, traditional secure or community-based group care facilities typically fail to meet this challenge.

Gender Differences in Delinquency Risk Factors

Unlike their male counterparts, for most seriously delinquent girls, antisocial behavior emerges for the first time during adolescence [65]. However, the pathways to adolescent antisocial behavior are not as well understood for girls as they are for boys. Consequently, we generally know less about factors that predict or protect against the development of severe conduct problems and delinquency for girls.

One project currently in progress, the Oregon Study of Female Delinquency Processes and Outcomes, sheds some light on the differences between girls and boys who are chronically delinquent. The study's comparison of gender revealed that boys and girls were similar on average age at referral (girls, 14.6 years; boys, 14.4 years) and on the percentage who had been adopted (girls, 8%; boys, 9%). However, Chamberlain and Moore [60] reported some striking differences between the genders, as Table 1 shows.

64% of the delinquent girls studied met identified criteria for physical abuse.

The Oregon Study does not have access to data on some measures for boys, but the data available for girls on these measures indicate that they have experienced very traumatic lives. For example, 64% of the delinquent girls studied met identified criteria for physical abuse, compared to only 9% of a college sample of females. In addition, a significant percentage of the delinquent girls also had lifetime histories of other serious traumas such as car accidents, fires, or being physically attacked. The girls further reported that they had experienced an average of 4.28 forms of severe sexual abuse (e.g., various types of intercourse, posing for pornographic photographs) before the age of 12. The average age at which at least one of these sexual experiences occurred for girls in the study was 7.4 years.

The girls referred from juvenile justice appeared to come from families that were extremely chaotic and distressed, even compared to the highly distressed families of juvenile justice-referred boys.

Thus, the girls referred from juvenile justice appeared to come from families that were extremely chaotic and distressed, even compared to the highly distressed families of juvenile justice-referred boys. These data suggest that studies examining precursors to the development of antisocial behavior would be remiss if they failed to look at the possible impact of multiple and sustained traumas and lack of parental guidance and care on girls' developmental trajectories. These findings also suggest the importance of implementing gender-relevant treatment paradigms.

Other research findings highlight the notion of gender as a treatment-relevant variable for chronic youth offenders. For example, while boys and girls report similar rates of conflict with peers, expression of conflict differs by gender [66]. Boys engage in more overt (i.e., physical) aggression, whereas girls tend to employ verbal aggression [67] and forms of indirect or "relational" aggression such as snubbing, ignoring, gossiping, and exclusion [68]. Crick [69] reported that, among elementary school children, 15.6% of boys and 0.4% of girls were classified exclusively as overtly aggressive, whereas 17.4% of girls and 2% of boys were classified

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
Mother convicted of a crime	43%	10%
Father convicted of a crime	70%	22%
Parental transitions (mean)	14	4
Out-of-home placements	3.9	1.3
Attempted suicide	64%	3%

Adapted from [60]

exclusively as relationally aggressive. An additional 9% of boys and 4% of girls displayed both overt and relational aggression.

One conclusion to be drawn is that, for girls, aggression tends to be expressed in close personal relationships rather than in the community at large. Perhaps for this reason, although girls in the Oregon Study were perceived as being less of a threat to the community than boys, foster parents and therapists reported that the girls were, in many ways, more clinically challenging to treat than their male counterparts [60]. Thus, for chronically delinquent girls, treatment must address not only the delinquent behavior itself, but also relational aggression.

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care: An Effective Approach for Chronic Youth Offenders

What is Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care?

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) is an innovative, theory-based program developed by the Oregon Social Learning Center that has been rigorously evaluated for more than 15 years. The Oregon MTFC program was selected by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), as one of 10 model violence prevention programs in America.

Specially trained and supported foster parents are the cornerstone of the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care program. Families are recruited based on their experience with teens, their willingness to act as treatment agents, and assessment of their family environments as nurturing. Selection includes a telephone screening, an application process, and a home visit, followed by 20 hours of pre-service training.

The program emphasizes structured living environments with individualized plans for each teen. Training focuses on parent management skills including setting clear rules, providing reasonable consequences, and monitoring teens' whereabouts. Foster parents are taught to track positive and negative behaviors and to respond appropriately and consistently. Youth are supervised closely, with all free time prearranged. Contact with other delinquent youth is prohibited.

Foster parents receive weekly supervision and daily phone calls during which parents identify problems and discuss potential solutions. Case managers are on call 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Each teen participates in weekly *individual* therapy focused on problem solving and non-aggressive methods of communicating. Each teen's biological family or caregiver participates in weekly family therapy, including supervision, encouragement, discipline, and problem-solving. Frequent home visits occur, beginning with 1- and 2-hour visits, and increasing to overnights.

All teens attend public school, with school staff attending a conference with program staff before enrollment. Teens carry a card to each class for teachers to verify attendance, homework, and attitude. Support is provided to the school if a teen has problems, and program staff are on call to remove teens who are disruptive.

Consequences for breaking rules are tailored for each teen. Consequences include loss of privileges, assignment of work chores, and demotion to a more restrictive level of activity within the program. Teens are encouraged to accept consequences, even for minor rule violations, and to start each new day with a clean slate. Foster parents are trained to offer consequences in a neutral way and to give teens credit for complying with sanctions.

Although girls in the Oregon Study were perceived as being less of a threat to the community than boys, foster parents and therapists reported that the girls were, in many ways, more clinically challenging to treat than their male counterparts.

Specially trained and supported foster parents are the cornerstone of the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care program, which emphasizes structured living environments with individualized plans for each teen.

How Does MTFC Differ from Traditional Group Care?

As Table 2 shows, MTFC differs from traditional group care on a variety of dimensions. When Chamberlain and Reid [59] compared the two approaches as implemented in Oregon, they found that teens in group care typically lived and were educated with 6-15 peers in a communal residence/school run by shift staff. The therapeutic approach most commonly employed was the positive peer culture approach, which assumes that the peer group can best influence and motivate youth to change. Group care teens typically participated in therapeutic group work to establish prosocial expectations, confronted each other about negative behavior, and participated in discipline and decision-making. As in MTFC, family contact was encouraged for teens in group care, although family therapy usually was provided only if families could commute to program sites, which occurred typically once a month or less.

How Effective is MTFC?

Chronically delinquent teens placed in MTFC programs fare better than teens with similar characteristics placed in traditional group care [59; 60]. MTFC results in better short- and long-term impacts on changing antisocial behavior for both boys [59] and girls [60].

Chamberlain and Reid [59] studied 79 boys ages 12 to 17 with histories of serious, chronic delinquency who were randomly assigned to either MTFC or traditional group care. Of the total sample, 85% were white, 6% were black, 3% were Native American, and 6% were Hispanic. All had been required to be placed in out-of-home care. On average, the boys had 14 previous criminal referrals, including more than four felonies. All had been detained in the year before the study, with 76 average days in detention. All had been placed out of their homes at least once before. The majority of the boys had been chronically truant and had run away from previous placements. A significant percentage had two or more risk factors such as parent convicted of a crime, institutionalized sibling, or history of fire setting behavior.

The researchers found that teens in MTFC ran away much less frequently and completed their programs far more often than boys in group care (see Figure 1).

MTFC results in better short- and long-term impacts on changing antisocial behavior for both boys and girls.

Table 2
Differences between MTFC and Traditional Group Care for Chronically Delinquent Youth

	<i>TFC</i>	<i>Group Care</i>
Agents of change	Adults	Peers
Number of teens in care	1-2	6-15
Staffing	Consistent foster parent(s)	Shift staff
Schooling	Public	In-house
Type of therapy	Individual therapy Family therapy	Peer group counseling (family therapy)
Adult time with individual teens	More	Less
Peer influence on house rules and discipline	Smaller	Greater

Adapted from [70] and [59]

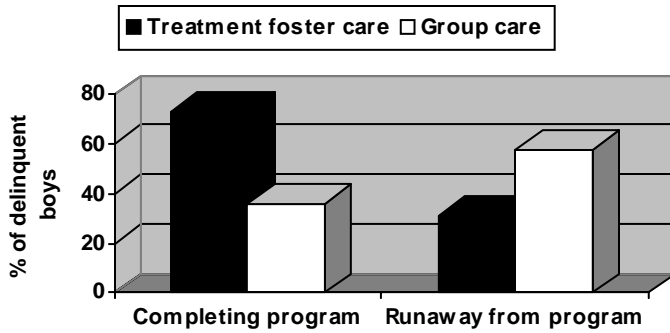


Figure 1
Program Completion and Runaway Rates for Delinquent Youth in MTFC and Traditional Group Care
Adapted from [70]

In addition, court records revealed that boys in Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care had fewer criminal referrals, and MTFC teens reported engaging in fewer violent and serious crimes than boys in group care. During the year following referral, youth in foster care spent, on average, fewer than half as many days in detention as youth in group care, and about one-third less time locked up in state training schools (see Figure 2). Overall, the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care boys spent 60% fewer days in jail during the year following referral. In addition, teens in foster care spent nearly twice as much time living with parents or relatives—a major goal of both types of treatment programs—during the year after their program than boys in group care (see Figure 2).

The Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care boys spent 60% fewer days in jail during the year following referral. One year after out-of-home placement, 41% of teens in MTFC had no criminal referrals, compared with only 7% of teens placed in group care.

The study looked at official juvenile court records of teens in both foster care and group care from one year before enrollment through one year after leaving the out-of-home placement. Clearly, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care was more effective than group care in reducing recorded delinquent behavior. Teens entering foster care had an average of 8.5 criminal referrals per year before treatment, compared with 2.6 referrals per year after completing MTFC. In contrast, teens entering group care had an average of 6.7 criminal referrals per year before treatment, and 5.4 referrals per year after group care (see Figure 3). One year after out-of-home placement, 41% of teens in MTFC had no criminal referrals, compared with only 7% of teens placed in group care (see Figure 4).

Why Does Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care Work?

When a treatment has proven useful, it is important to know not only how effective it is, but also why it works. Sometimes a treatment directly causes the desired outcome. Other times, an intervention influences an

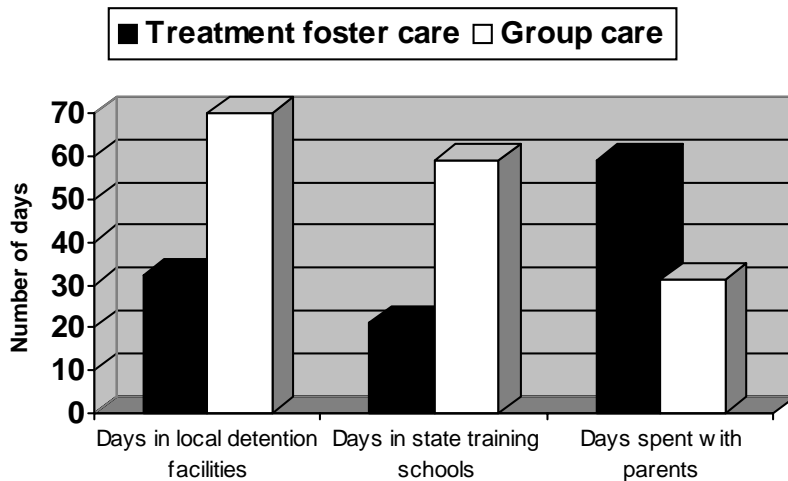
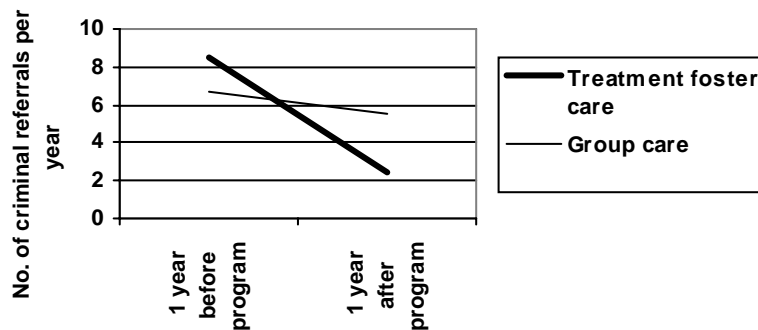


Figure 2
Detention Rates and Time Spent with Parents for Delinquent Youth in MTFC and Traditional Group Care
Adapted from [70]

Figure 3
Changes in Officially Recorded Acts of Delinquency for Delinquent Youth in MTFC and Traditional Group Care
Adapted from [70]



MTFC was effective because it included positive parenting approaches and limitation of youth association with deviant peers.

intermediate set of behaviors, called *mediators*, which, in turn, lead to the desired outcome.

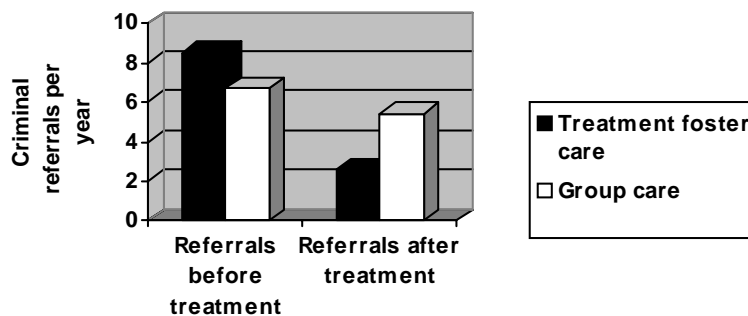
Eddy and Chamberlain [71] studied mediators of MTFC efficacy. They reasoned that such factors as type of discipline, amount of supervision, and nature of adult-youth relationship would serve as mediators between treatment approach and outcomes achieved. The researchers compared youth who were chronic offenders that had been randomly assigned to either MTFC or traditional group care. They found no significant differences between participants in terms of age, pre-treatment criminal referrals, pre-treatment length of stay in detention, current family status, parent criminal convictions, or a variety of other demographic risk factors. Participants and their parent(s) were assessed prior to placement. Three months following placement, the mediating variables (discipline, supervision, and adult-youth relationship) were assessed. At program entry, and at 6, 12, 18, and 24 months following entry, youth were interviewed about their antisocial behavior, and official records of criminal referrals were collected. These measures constituted the outcome variables.

Initially, means for antisocial behavior did not differ for the two groups. At the mid-point and follow-up assessments, however, MTFC was associated with significant positive outcomes—lower antisocial behavior scores, more positive family management scores, and lower deviant peer association scores.

The study found that two factors mediated the relationship between treatment approach and outcomes: (1) parenting style and (2) contact with deviant peers (see Figure 5). Specifically, MTFC was effective because it included positive parenting approaches and limitation of youth association with deviant peers. Even during high-risk boys' prime offending years, the frequency of antisocial behaviors decreased when these mediators were controlled.

Thus, the study produced clear results with important practical implications. It demonstrated that parenting characterized by firm limit setting, consistent consequences for misbehavior, close supervision of youth activities and whereabouts, limitation of contact with deviant peers,

Figure 4
Percentage of Teens with Criminal Referrals Post-Treatment: MTFC versus Traditional Group Care
Adapted from [70]



and positive interactions between youth and caretaker(s) does make a difference.

Adaptations of the Oregon Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care Model

MTFC has shown beneficial effects for a particularly hard-to-reach group: chronically delinquent boys who committed their first official offense as young as six years of age. Thus, placing such hard-to-reach youth in strong, well-trained families has the potential to set them on a more positive life path, even if the intervention occurs later in adolescence.

MTFC shows promise as a therapeutic approach for other difficult groups as well. Both youth with serious mental illnesses and chronically delinquent girls who engage in relational aggression can benefit from adaptations of Oregon's MTFC model.

MTFC shows promise as a therapeutic approach for other difficult groups as well. Both youth with serious mental illnesses and chronically delinquent girls who engage in relational aggression can benefit.

Youth with Serious Mental Illnesses

Chamberlain and Reid [72] studied youth with serious mental illnesses (e.g., conduct disorder, schizophrenia, substance abuse, and borderline personality) who were assigned to either MTFC or alternate care including psychiatric hospitalization, residential treatment, or group care. All 10 youth in the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care program eventually were placed in a family setting, compared with only 40% of those in the control group. MTFC youth also were placed outside the hospital more quickly than those in the control group.

During the first three months of the study, the results regarding youth behavior were striking. Behavioral problems reported for MTFC youth decreased dramatically from 22 to 10 per day, whereas control group problems decreased only slightly, from 24 to 22 per day. Ultimately, the control group decreased to approximately 15 problems per day, while the MTFC youth held steady at about 10 problems per day.

Chronically Delinquent Girls with Relational Aggression

Beginning in the mid-1980s, the MTFC program was expanded to include treatment of girls. Chamberlain and Reid [73] examined 88 consecutive referrals of girls and boys to the program from the juvenile justice system. Prior to intake, significant gender differences were found in several areas. Males averaged 10.8 arrests, while females averaged 8.43. Males also had more felonies and were younger at time of first offense. Females had more prior out-of-home placements, had attempted suicide more often, and had run away more frequently.

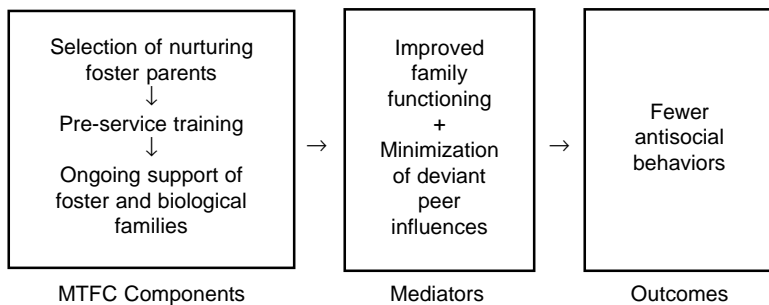


Figure 5 Mediators of MTFC Efficacy

Patterns of problem behaviors engaged in by boys and girls in their MTFC homes differed sharply.

Females in the juvenile justice system have multiple and complex needs in addition to controlling their criminal, antisocial, and often self-destructive behaviors.

One analysis concluded that for every \$1 spent on MTFC, taxpayers save more than \$17 in criminal justice and victim costs by the time the participating youth is 25 years old.

Despite these differences, MTFC treatment was equally effective in reducing arrests for boys and girls. Status offenses, property crimes, and person-to-person crimes also decreased for both genders. Program completion rates showed no difference for boys and girls.

However, patterns of problem behaviors engaged in by boys and girls in their MTFC homes differed sharply. Boys began the program with higher daily rates of problem behaviors, and these decreased over time. Girls, on the other hand, showed the opposite pattern: Their foster parents reported fewer problem behaviors at intake, but these problems increased over time. The study authors concluded that, in not targeting relational/social forms of aggression expression in these girls, they had missed a key set of problem behaviors that compromised the girls' relationships with their MTFC parents and other socializing adults (e.g., therapists, teachers) and peers.

It thus appears that females in the juvenile justice system have multiple and complex needs in addition to controlling their criminal, antisocial, and often self-destructive behaviors. Researchers in Oregon currently are responding to this knowledge by adding to the basic MTFC program components a set of individualized services and supports that address the specific needs of chronically delinquent girls. Treatment is organized around the notion of providing girls with a safe, supportive, and stable family living environment that includes clear, teaching-oriented direction and mentorship by a positive female adult. A therapist also introduces the notion of future planning and assists each girl to identify a plan and to take steps toward its actualization.

Because the Oregon Study still is in progress, results should be considered preliminary. However, the study clearly indicates that, because of the number, different types, and intensity of traumatic events typically experienced by girls who are chronically delinquent, it is counterproductive to ask them to focus on exploring these traumas while also trying to accomplish current developmental tasks (e.g., learning to live in a family, getting along with others, going to school and studying, learning and performing age appropriate social skills). It is not wise to conduct focused trauma therapy before stabilizing these girls and before targeting behaviors and emotional coping styles that help them avoid daily inter- and intra-personal chaos and disruption. Doing so has the potential to actually increase their negative behavioral and emotional trajectories. However, if the relational/social aggressive behaviors associated with conduct disorders in girls are not directly treated after stabilization, the girls will remain at risk for negative long-term interpersonal and developmental outcomes, including adult mental health problems, early pregnancy, and poverty. These negative outcomes also include intergenerational transmission of trauma, aggression, mental health and conduct problems.

Are the Benefits of MTFC Worth the Cost?

Like most intensive, comprehensive treatment programs, MTFC is not inexpensive. Typical costs average \$3,000 per month per youth served. Traditional group care is even more costly, however. MTFC typically costs 30-50% less than traditional group care.

Although the initial expenditure of funds may seem prohibitive for MTFC, evidence of cost savings over time is persuasive. One analysis of MTFC, conducted by the Washington State Public Policy group [74], concluded that for every \$1 spent on MTFC, taxpayers save more than \$17 in criminal justice and victim costs by the time the participating youth is 25 years old.

When the MTFC approach was applied to teens with severe mental illnesses—teens who traditionally would have been placed in psychiatric hospitals—cost savings also were significant. Chamberlain & Reid [72]

found that, hospital programs for such youth were twice as costly per month per child. On average, placement in MTFC saved \$10,280 per child in hospital costs.

Of course, economic experts can and do disagree regarding which variables should be included in and excluded from analyses of cost savings. Even if more conservative assumptions were applied to the MTFC cost analyses, however, it is apparent that this community intervention can result in significant savings over time.

Concluding Comments

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care is more effective in reducing criminal activity among serious juvenile offenders than group care, regardless of offender age and gender, and can be at least as effective for treating young people with serious mental illness, at greatly reduced cost. The MTFC approach rests upon a foundation that includes developmentally appropriate, intensive, and individualized treatment that is family-focused, addressing the antecedents to antisocial behavior—conditions such as poor parental supervision, low parental involvement, friendships with delinquent peers, relational aggression, and school failure.

Several elements are central to the program's success, regardless of target population. The linchpin of MTFC is the foster parent, who is carefully selected, trained and supported to model positive management strategies, relationship skills, and methods for resolving conflict. In addition, caseworkers must provide frequent, intensive, and sustained support. In Oregon, when such supports were combined with a \$70 increase in monthly stipend, foster parent attrition rates were one-third the normal dropout rate. Moreover, when these factors are in place, the MTFC program leads to improvements in parenting practices (of foster parents) and minimizes the influence of deviant peers on chronically delinquent youth. When coupled with positive parenting approaches, isolating teens from contact with other delinquents and promoting activities that will bring them into relationships with less troubled peers results in the youth engaging in fewer antisocial behaviors.

Providing consistent and positive parenting to youth who have reached the extreme end of the antisocial behavior continuum is quite difficult and exhausting, but clearly it is possible under supportive conditions. Training and supporting foster parents as professionals appears to have the potential for providing young people who have criminal records and/or severe behavioral problems with a more normal lifestyle, while at the same time saving substantial amounts of money in the treatment and justice systems, as well as in costs to potential victims and communities.

For teens with severe mental illness, placement in MTFC saved \$10,280 per child in hospital costs.

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care is more effective in reducing criminal activity among serious juvenile offenders than group care, regardless of offender age and gender.

Some Promising Approaches for Reducing Youth Violence*

Pamela Minifee and Nancy Walker

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has evaluated a variety of approaches for reducing youth crime and has designated several programs as “blueprints” for success. This section provides information about several promising programs, including OJJDP’s model programs. These programs are designed to teach youth who are chronic offenders how to make better decisions, build new skills, and develop positive relationships with adults and peers.

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) Oregon Social Learning Center

Program Description

MTFC is an alternative to group or residential treatment, incarceration, and hospitalization for adolescents who have problems with chronic antisocial behavior and delinquency. Individuals are recruited as foster parents, trained, and closely supervised as they provide 1-2 adolescents with MTFC treatment and intensive supervision at home, in school, and in the community. The program encourages clear and consistent limits with follow-through on consequences, positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior, a healthy relationship with a mentoring adult, and separation from delinquent peers.

Population Served

MTFC serves teenagers with histories of chronic and severe criminal behavior who are at risk of incarceration. The program also has been applied successfully to youth with serious emotional disturbance.

Program Outcomes

Compared with delinquent youth in traditional group care, chronic offenders assigned to MTFC:

- Spent 60% fewer days incarcerated at 12-month follow-up
- Had significantly fewer subsequent arrests
- Ran away from their programs, on average, three times less often
- Engaged in significantly less hard drug use during the follow-up period; and
- Were moved more quickly from more restrictive settings (e.g., hospital, detention) to less restrictive community placements if detention was required

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www.oslc.org/tfc/tfconline.html

Multisystemic Therapy (MST) Medical University of South Carolina

Program Description

MST is an intensive family- and community-based treatment that addresses the multiple determinants of serious antisocial behavior in juvenile offenders. The multisystemic approach views individuals as being nested within a complex network of interconnected systems that encompass individual, family, and extrafamilial (peer, school, neighborhood) dimensions. Intervention may be necessary in any one or a combination of these systems.

Population Served

MST targets chronic, violent, or substance-abusing male and female juvenile offenders, ages 12 to 17, at high risk of out-of-home placement. The program also includes services for offenders’ families.

Program Outcomes

MST has resulted in the following outcomes for serious juvenile offenders:

- 25-70% reduction in long-term rate of re-arrest
- 47-64% reduction in out-of-home placements
- Significant improvements in family functioning
- Decreased mental health problems

For more information, please contact:

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*Information on model resources was obtained from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

The Midwestern Prevention Project (MPP)* The University of Southern California

Program Description

MPP is a comprehensive, community-based, multifaceted program for adolescent drug abuse prevention, involving an extended period of programming. MPP is initiated in a school setting, but also extends beyond this setting into the family and community contexts.

Population Served

Because early adolescence is the first risk period for gateway drug use (that is, the use of alcohol, cigarettes, and/or marijuana), MPP is initiated with entire grade levels of middle school (sixth or seventh grade) students. MPP then bridges the transitions from early adolescence through middle adolescence to late adolescence.

Program Outcomes

The following outcomes have been achieved with youth in MPP programs:

- Up to 40% reduction in daily smoking
- Up to 40% reduction in marijuana use, and smaller reductions in alcohol use maintained through grade 12
- Increased parent-child communications about drug use
- Positive effects on daily smoking, heavy marijuana use, and some hard drug use have been shown through early adulthood (age 23)

MPP also has been effective with community leaders, who have facilitated development of prevention programs, activities, and services.

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Big Brothers, Big Sisters of America (BBBSA)

Program Description

BBBSA has been providing adult support and friendship to youth for nearly a century. Through BBBSA's network of nearly 500 agencies across the country,

more than 70,000 youth are supervised in one-to-one relationships with mentoring adults.

Population Served

BBBSA serves youth aged 6 to 18 years who live in single-parent homes.

Program Outcomes

An evaluation of the BBBSA program was conducted to assess children who participated in BBBSA compared to their non-participating peers. After an 18 month period, BBBSA youth were:

- 46% less likely to initiate drug use
- 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use
- Almost one-third less likely to hit someone
- Superior in academic behavior, attitudes, and performance
- More likely to have high quality relationships with their parents or guardians
- More likely to have high quality relationships with their peers

For more information, please contact:

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The Functional Family Therapy Program (FFT) University of Utah

Program Description

FFT is an outcome-driven prevention/intervention program for youth who have demonstrated the entire range of maladaptive, acting out behaviors and related syndromes.

Population Served

FFT serves youth aged 11-18 who are at risk for and/or presenting with delinquency, violence, substance use, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, or disruptive behavior disorder.

Program Outcomes

Evaluations of FFT have demonstrated that the program:

- Effectively treats adolescents with conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, disruptive behavior disorder, alcohol and other drug abuse disorders, as well as those who are delinquent and/or violent
- Reduces the likelihood that these adolescents will require more restrictive, higher cost services
- Prevents further incidence of the presenting problem
- Prevents younger children in the family from requiring similar care
- Prevents adolescents from entering the adult criminal system

*This program will not be widely commercially available until Fall 2001.

- Effectively transfers treatment effects across treatment systems

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The Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP) Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America

Program Description

QOP is a youth development program designed to serve disadvantaged adolescents over a four-year period by providing education, service, and development activities, as well as financial incentives, from ninth grade through high school graduation.

Population Served

QOP serves adolescents from families receiving public assistance.

Program Outcomes

An evaluation which compared QOP participants to a control group demonstrated that:

- 63% of QOP members graduated from high school, compared to 42% of the control group
- 42% of QOP members attended post-secondary schools, compared to 16% of the control group
- 23% of QOP members dropped out of high school, compared to 50% of the control group
- 34% of QOP members received an honor or award in the past year, compared to 12% of the control group
- 24% of QOP members became teen parents, compared to 38% of the control group
- 19% of QOP members were arrested, compared to 23% of the control group

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Life Skills Training (LST) Institute for Prevention Research, Cornell University Medical College

Program Description

LST provides training in a variety of life skills including; personal self-management, social skills, and drug-related resistance skills. Initial intervention occurs in grade 6 or 7, depending on the school structure, with booster sessions in the two subsequent years.

Population Served

LST serves entire grade levels of middle/junior high school students.

Program Outcomes

The results of more than a dozen studies consistently show that the LST training program dramatically reduces tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use. These studies further show that the program works with a diverse range of adolescents, produces results that are long-lasting, and is effective when taught by teachers, peer leaders, or health professionals. Using six-year post-treatment outcomes averaged across all of these studies, LST has been found to:

- Cut tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use 50%-75%
- Cut poly-drug use up to 66%
- Reduce pack-a-day smoking by 25%
- Decrease use of inhalants, narcotics, and hallucinogens

For more information, please contact:

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The Bullying Prevention Program (BPP) University of Bergen (Norway)

Program Description

BPP is a school-based intervention for the reduction and prevention of bully/victim problems.

Population Served

BPP serves students in elementary, middle, and junior high schools. All students within a school participate in most aspects of the program. Additional individual interventions are targeted at students who are identified as bullies or victims of bullying.

Program Outcomes

BPP has been shown to result in:

- Substantial reduction in boys' and girls' reports of bullying and victimization
- Significant reduction in students' reports of general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft and truancy

- Significant improvements in the “social climate” of the class, as reflected in students’ reports of improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, and a more positive attitude toward schoolwork and school

For more information, please contact:

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The PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) Program Pennsylvania State University

Program Description

PATHS is a comprehensive program for promoting emotional and social competencies and reducing aggression and behavior problems in elementary school-aged children while simultaneously enhancing the educational process in the classroom. This innovative curriculum is designed for use by educators and counselors in a multi-year, universal prevention model. Although primarily focused on the school and classroom settings, information and activities also are available to parents.

Population Served

PATHS was developed for use in the classroom setting with all elementary school aged-children. PATHS has been field-tested and researched with children in regular education classroom settings, as well as with a variety of special needs students (deaf, hearing-impaired, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, mildly mentally delayed, and gifted). Ideally it should be initiated at school entry and continue through Grade 5.

Program Outcomes

PATHS has resulted in:

- Improved self-control
- Improved understanding and recognition of emotions
- Increased ability to tolerate frustration
- Use of more effective conflict-resolution strategies
- Improved thinking and planning skills
- Decreased anxiety/depressive symptoms for special needs students
- Decreased symptoms of sadness and depression for special needs students
- Decreased self-reports of conduct problems, including aggression

For more information, please contact:

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Mayor’s Anti-Gang Office and Gang Task Force Houston, TX

Program Description

The program’s goal is to reduce juvenile and gang-related crime and violence through partnerships with law enforcement, criminal justice agencies, schools, and youth service providers.

Population Served

The Mayor’s Anti-Gang Office and Task Force serves criminal street gangs and at-risk juveniles.

Program Outcomes

Following implementation of the Mayor’s program, Houston showed the following one-year improvements in juvenile crime statistics for 1997:

- 11.6% decline in overall violent crime
- 23.1% decline in juveniles accused of murder
- 10% decline in robbery convictions
- 5.7% decline in rape convictions
- 14.2% decline in aggravated assault convictions

For more information, please contact:

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Boston, MA 02118
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Additional Resources

Pamela Minifee

Bureau of Justice Statistics

is a component of the Office of Justice Programs in the U.S. Department of Justice, and is the United States' primary source for criminal justice statistics. BJS collects, analyzes, publishes, and disseminates information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government.

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/

Center for Community Alternatives

provides services to professionals and clients in the criminal and juvenile justice and human service systems, as well as training and technical assistance in those fields.

www.dreamscape.com/ccacny/ccahome.htm

Center for Prevention of School Violence

The Department of Education requires each state to submit an annual report that provides the number of students expelled by the types of firearms and school level.

www.ncsu.edu/cpsv

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice

is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to reduce society's reliance on the use of incarceration as a solution to social problems. The Center has developed model programs in the areas of juvenile justice, alternative sentencing, pretrial release and residential programming which demonstrate the effectiveness of community-based programming for offender populations.

www.cjcj.org/

Early Warning and Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools

tells what to look for and what to do to prevent violence, when to intervene and get help for troubled children and how to respond when violent situations occur. Developed by the Departments of Justice and Education, in cooperation with the National Association of School Psychologists.

www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html

Frontline: Does TV Kill?

investigates the connection between television violence on the screen and real violence in our society.

www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/tvkillguide.html

Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior

empowers schools and social service agencies to address violence and destructive behavior, at the point of school entry and beyond, in order to ensure safety and to facilitate the academic achievement and healthy social development of children and youth.

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~ivdb/>

Join Together Online

is an anti-gun violence organization that presents news information and offers community grants to reduce juvenile crime.

www.jointogether.org/gv/

Justice Policy Institute

formed by the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice as a policy development and research body to promote effective and sensible approaches to America's justice system.

<http://cj.cj.org/jpi/contact.html>

Juvenile Justice Center of the American Bar Association (ABA)

is dedicated to working in partnership with other ABA entities, bar associations, and local and state advocacy groups to monitor and influence juvenile justice policy and practice.

Contact: Patricia Puritz, director, 202-662-1515; email: juvjus@abanet.org

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse

is operated by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, produces fact sheets on juvenile crime and juvenile court statistics, including "Offenders in Juvenile Court" which is updated annually.

<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org>

Juvenile Justice Media Project

is a collaboration of the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice and the American Bar Association's Juvenile Justice Center. It was established to promote balanced coverage and increased public awareness of juvenile justice issues.

www.cjcj.org/mediaproject.html

Kids Count Data Book

is published each year by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in June, includes state profiles of indicators of child well-being, including child death rates, teen violent death rates, and juvenile violent crime arrest rates.

www.aecf.org

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)

The Division of Violence Prevention in the Center of Disease Control's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) has four priority areas for violence prevention, including youth violence. This site is a resource for statistics, programs, and publication.

www.cdc.gov/ncipc

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control State Cooperative Agreements

have been undertaken to evaluate specific interventions that may reduce injuries and deaths related to interpersonal violence among adolescents and young adults. Eleven projects have been funded. Most projects are 3-year projects in their third year of funding.

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/res-opps/ythviolc.htm

National Center for Juvenile Justice

is the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The Center developed and maintains the National Juvenile Court Data Archive. Periodic publications include States Response to Serious and Violent Juvenile Crime Report and bulletins and fact sheets on current areas of interest in juvenile crime.

www.ncjfcj.unr.edu/

National Children's Coalition

addresses the growing crisis of violence among youth: child abuse, suicide rate among teens, violence directed at and even by children, AIDS, runaways, domestic violence, latchkey children, and the lack of adequate activities and opportunities for youth, particularly in cities.

www.child.net/ncc.htm

National Conference of State Legislatures

tracks state legislation related to juvenile justice issues, including at what age different states will charge a child as an adult.

Contact: Jack Tweedie, Children and Families Program Manager, (303) 830-2200; email jack.tweedie@ncsl.org

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

represents over 9,000 judges who exercise jurisdictions over delinquency, abuse and neglect, divorce, custody, support, domestic violence and similar types of cases throughout the country.

<http://ncjfcj.unr.edu>

National Crime Prevention Council

is dedicated to helping America prevent crime and build safer, stronger communities.

www.ncpc.org/

National Criminal Justice Reference Service

is one of the most extensive sources of information on criminal and juvenile justice in the world.

www.ncjrs.org

National Youth Gang Center

expands and maintains the body of critical knowledge about youth gangs and effective responses to them. The Center assists state and local jurisdictions in the collection, analysis, and exchange of information on gang-related demographics, legislation, literature, research, and promising program strategies, and coordinates activities of the OJJDP Youth Gang Consortium (a group of federal agencies, gang

program representatives, and other service providers). It also provides technical assistance to two OJJDP Programs: the Rural Gang Initiative and the Gang-free Schools and Communities Initiative.

www.iir.com/nygc/maininfo.htm

New Peace Movement: North Carolina Television Against Violence

Through a public television awareness campaign, the Center for the Prevention of School Violence has become a vital facilitator of actions taken to get violence out of schools.

www.ncsu.edu/cpsv/

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

provides national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization. OJJDP accomplishes this by supporting States and local communities in their efforts to develop and implement effective and coordinated prevention and intervention programs and improve the juvenile justice system so that it protects the public safety, holds offenders accountable, and provides treatment and rehabilitative services tailored to the needs of families and each individual juvenile.

<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>

Pacific Center for Violence Prevention

addresses the root causes of violence, implements a multifaceted approach to prevention, and focuses on broad, community-based prevention strategies.

www.pcvp.org

U.S. Department of Justice/Justice Information Center

is a federally sponsored information clearinghouse for people around the country and the world involved with research, policy, and practice related to criminal and juvenile justice and drug control.

www.ncjrs.org

Youth Crime Watch

is a youth-led movement to create a crime-free, drug-free environment in our schools and neighborhoods.

www.ycwa.org/

Youth Law Center

is a non-profit, public interest law office that has worked to protect abused and at-risk children, especially those children living apart from their families in child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

www.youthlawcenter.com/

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School of Social Work

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Tony Stamas	Representative, District 98
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About Family Impact Seminars

- Family Impact Seminars are nonpartisan educational forums on family issues for state policymakers.
 - The seminars analyze the consequences to families of an issue, policy or program.
 - The seminars provide objective non-partisan information on current issues. They do not advocate or lobby for particular policies.
 - Briefing reports make scholarly findings available in an accessible format.
 - A Legislative Advisory Committee selects issues for seminars based on emerging legislative need.
 - National scholarly experts bring state-of-the-art research on current family issues to policymakers.
 - Audiotapes make information available to those not able to attend the seminar.
-

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Michigan Family Impact Seminar Briefing Reports

- No. 2000-1 *Child Care and Education*
- No. 2000-2 *Children and Divorce*
- No. 2001-1 *Promising Approaches for Reducing Youth Violence*
- No. 2001-2 *Moving Families out of Poverty* [forthcoming in April]

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