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Planning the Second National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART II)

FINAL REPORT

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The study had the advantage of a diverse and knowledgeable advisory group. Advisors were: Bernie Auchter, Charles Cowan, Patty Dietz, Joan Fisher, Joan Gaffney, Gerald Hotaling, Terry Lewis, Michael Rand, Owen Thornberry, and Roy Weise. We appreciate their sound technical and practical advice.

There was a 2-day Planning Symposium held as part of the study in June 1993. This activity was particularly important to the development of recommendations we make in this report for the design of NISMART II. Attendees at the NISMART II Planning Symposium were: Ernie Allen, Barbara Allen-Hagen, Bernie Auchter, Pam Cammarata, Gail Collins, James Collins, Charles Cowan, Patty Dietz, Charles Fairchild, David Finkelhor, Joan Fisher, Eileen Garry, Joan Gaffney, Linda Girdner, James Griffin, Bob Heck, Gerald Hotaling, James Howell, Dave Hubble, Della Hughes, Ronaldo Iachan, Ron Laney, Terry Lewis, James Lynch, Elizabeth Martin, Kaye Marz, Mary Ellen McCalla, Karen Bower Mead, Pam Messerschmidt, Michael Messner, Joseph Moone, Eric Peterson, Peggy Plass, John Rabun, Michael Rand, Chris Ringwalt, Janet Rosenbaum, Andrea Sedlak, Howard Snyder, Owen Thornberry, Therese Van Houten, and Emmett Rathland. It is not possible to identify specific contributions made by individuals. Many of the recommendations made in the report emerged as a result of lively discussion.

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Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 1992, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) awarded a grant to the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) to conduct work titled "Planning the Second National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART II)." The grant was to support methodological and other activities in preparation for the second national study of the incidence of various kinds of missing children. The first NISMART data were collected in 1988. Results of that study were published in 1990.

The major purposes of the current planning grant were to examine conceptual, methodological, policy, cost, and other factors in connection with the second national incidence study of missing children, which will be conducted in 1994, and to make recommendations for the design of that study.

Major planning grant goals were to

- assess NISMART I,
- identify NISMART II information needs and sources of information,
- consider alternative methods for NISMART II, and
- prepare a plan for NISMART II.

A number of activities were undertaken to accomplish the planning grant goals. To assess NISMART I and to identify NISMART II information needs, an Advisory Group was recruited and convened. The Advisory Group met in February 1993 and again as part of a 2-day Planning Symposium in June 1993. The results of these two meetings are discussed throughout this report. A survey of key informants was also conducted. This survey involved asking a carefully selected group of knowledgeable individuals to comment and make recommendations for NISMART II. The respondents were individuals with special knowledge about the missing children problem and/or methodological expertise in connection with the effort to estimate the incidence of missing children. In addition, a Planning Symposium was held, to which we invited individuals from government agencies and research organizations concerned with the missing child issue. The results of the Symposium helped inform the rest of the project during which we considered alternative methods and prepared a plan for NISMART II.

The first NISMART broke a lot of new ground both conceptually and methodologically. The careful development of missing child definitions and the

specification within missing child case types of features to distinguish serious and nonserious cases were major contributions to rational discussions of the issue and provided a sound basis for estimating incidence. Given the wide variation in the incidence of missing child case types–from the rare category of nonfamily abductions to the frequently observed category of runaways–development of a methodology for accurately estimating incidence was a challenge. The conceptual and methodological challenges resulted in a very complex study design, and one that was costly to implement. It was therefore decided to consider alternative approaches during the planning grant. Ongoing data series were examined to decide whether they could be utilized during NISMART II.

Because the Household Survey and Police Records Study (PRS) were the two most important and costly components of NISMART I, they received considerable attention during the planning grant. Whether and how to conduct a Household Survey was discussed at length. The question regarding whether to include a Household Survey in NISMART II was answered in the affirmative early on, but major questions remained to be answered, such as: Should there be an independent NISMART II Household Survey, or can the need for estimates of missing children from households be met through a supplement to an existing household survey series, such as the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)? Moreover, should the same incidence questions that were posed in NISMART I be replicated in NISMART II, or should new and revised questions be included in the interest of developing more accurate incidence estimates? As is discussed later, inclusion of a stand-alone Household Survey for NISMART II is recommended here, and changes in the questions to be asked are also suggested.

Two key aspects of discussions about a Household Survey for NISMART II were selection of respondents and development of screening questions. NISMART I used parents and caretakers as respondents to report whether an eligible missing child incident occurred, and if so, to describe its features. There was considerable debate about parent/caretaker versus child respondents with a clear consensus that use of child/youth respondents was preferred. This preference was largely based on evidence from other surveys that direct reporting is more likely to identify eligible incidents and that details of the incidents are more likely to be known by the subjects of these incidents than by a proxy respondent.

It was also decided during the planning grant to develop new Household Survey screening questions. There were two main reasons that new screening questions were developed: to improve identification of eligible incidents, and to accommodate recommended changes in the definition of missing child case types.

NISMART I's PRS collected information from law enforcement agency records to estimate the incidence of nonfamily abductions. Because this NISMART I component also broke new ground methodologically, it was examined carefully during the planning grant. The issue of whether data from police agency records are adequate to support estimation of incidence was particularly salient.

Other NISMART II issues are also discussed in this report. For example, NISMART I developed incidence estimates for runaways, thrownaways, family abductions, nonfamily abductions, and lost or otherwise missing children, but not an overall missing child estimate. A major rationale for this NISMART I thinking was that each case type is unique and that summing incidents across case types would obscure the dissimilarities. But the 1984 Missing Children's Assistance Act passed by the U.S. Congress requires the OJJDP to conduct periodic studies of the incidence of missing children. This mandate can be interpreted to require that a single estimate be produced, and this issue was discussed at length during the planning grant.

A full consideration of all of the scientific and policy issues in connection with the planning of NISMART II over the 16-month project has not been possible. But most of the major issues have been addressed, and recommendations have been developed for the design and conduct of NISMART II.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NISMART II

NISMART I had six major components. The Household Survey collected incidence and other information about each of the five missing child case types. The PRS focused on nonfamily abductions. The Returned Runaway Study interviewed children who had returned home after an incident to determine how well children's accounts about their incidents matched the reports of their caretakers. The Juvenile Facilities Study collected information about children who ran away from these places. The FBI's Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) reanalysis developed a range estimate of how many children were murdered in conjunction with possible abductions by strangers. The Community Professionals Study (NIS-2) analyzed data from a national sample of child welfare agencies to develop an estimate of thrownaway (specifically abandoned) children. Each of the NISMART I components was itself complex. Taken as a whole, the study was extremely complex and costly.

The major planning grant task was to consider a number of factors in decisionmaking about the design of NISMART II, including

- legislative requirements to estimate the incidence of missing children,

- strengths and weaknesses of NISMART I and alternative methodologies for NISMART II,
- comparability of NISMART I and NISMART II, and
- cost of conducting NISMART II.

One of the features of the missing child phenomenon that has major effects on the study's design is the very low incidence of nonfamily abductions. Two NISMART I components were implemented specifically to deal with the low nonfamily abduction incidence–the PRS and reanalyses of the SHR data. And despite the large sample of households in the NISMART I Household Survey (30,000), the number of nonfamily abductions reported were insufficient to support a national estimate of that phenomenon from household reports.

NISMART I was a largely successful study. But NISMART I was also a learning experience, so we will recommend major departures from the NISMART I approach for NISMART II. To summarize our recommendations briefly, we think NISMART II should include

- an RDD telephone survey of about 78,000 households (which will yield more than 23,000 households with children younger than 18 years of age and about 40,000 child interviews [self or by proxy]) using youth aged 12 to 17 as primary respondents (and proxy respondents [parents or caretakers] for children younger than age 12),
- a survey of juvenile facilities in a stratified random sample of counties, and a modified PRS in the same (or a subset of the same) counties (these two components could be conducted independently of NISMART II);
- use of data from the Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-3) to estimate the number of abandoned (thrownaway) children (CPS).

We do not recommend repeating a Returned Runaway Study, nor do we think it necessary to reanalyze the FBI's SHR data to estimate the number of children murdered in the course of a nonfamily abduction based on a methodological rationale only. Given the high public policy importance of such cases, however, it may be useful to repeat this latter NISMART II component.

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

One of the options considered during the planning grant was to utilize the ongoing National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which uses a national sample of

households, as a vehicle for a supplement to collect information about the incidence of missing children. Discussions were held between OJJDP, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the U.S. Bureau of Census (which collects NCVS data), and RTI. A number of options were considered, such as the type of missing incidents that would be focused on, the length of the data collection time period, and the selection of respondents.

A major limitation of using the NCVS as a survey supplement vehicle is the length of the supplement that can be accommodated. Given that the NCVS is a lengthy interview for those who report victimizations, and that households are interviewed seven times in a 3-year period, response rate attrition resulting from response burden is a potential problem. To minimize the length of a supplement, it was decided that a possible NCVS supplement would attempt to gather information only on nonfamily abductions. Information would not be collected for family abductions, runaways, thrownaways, and lost or injured or otherwise missing children.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census developed a cost estimate for an NCVS supplement on abduction that would be implemented in all NCVS households for 6 months. However, because it would also be necessary to implement a Household Survey for NISMART II to estimate the incidence of family abductions, runaways, thrownaways, and lost or injured or otherwise missing children, it was decided that the use of an NCVS supplement would involve considerable duplication of effort. We, therefore, recommend a stand-alone NISMART II Household Survey.

A NISMART II Household Survey is recommended to have the major purpose of collecting data to support incidence estimates for nonfamily and family abductions, runaways, thrownaways, and lost or injured or otherwise missing children. Unlike the NISMART I Household Survey, which collected data to examine the etiologies and consequences of missing events, the NISMART II Household Survey will have a narrower scope and will focus on the classification of incidents and estimation of incidence. (An appendix to this report includes NISMART I questions with an indication of which questions are required for an incidence-only study and which are not.)

The NISMART II recommendations for the Household Survey envision major changes in that methodology:

- an increase in sample size to 23,000 households and 40,000 interviews,
- more careful rostering of households,

- more extensive screening questions (as discussed in Chapter 5.0),
- an incident report form integrated for all case types, and
- interviews with 12- to 17-year-old youth instead of with their primary caretakers.

The Household Survey recommendations, coupled with the recommendations to scale down the PRS and to eliminate the Returned Runaway Study and possibly the SHR analysis, indicate a heavy investment in the Household Survey component of NISMART II–both financially and methodologically. Data collection costs for a 40,000-interview Household Survey may exceed $800,000.

JUVENILE FACILITIES STUDY

Substantial numbers of children run away from nonhousehold settings, such as group homes and boarding schools. In its JFS, NISMART I found an additional 4,000 runaways who had not also run away from home.

NISMART I did not develop a sampling frame for juvenile institutions. Instead, household residents were asked whether there were children who ordinarily lived in the household but for some reason "lived in some type of facility such as a boarding school, hospital, or juvenile facility for at least 2 consecutive weeks during the last 12 months." If the answer was "yes," the interviewers obtained the name, address, and phone number of the facility. Facilities were then contacted and their cooperation was sought. Interviews were conducted to collect information about runaways from the institutions.

For NISMART II, we recommend that a stratified sample of counties be selected, and lists of juvenile facilities in those counties be developed, sampled, and surveyed to develop a national estimate of runaways from institutions that house juveniles.

POLICE RECORDS STUDY

NISMART I used data from the PRS to estimate the incidence of nonfamily abductions. A significant amount of information required for the nonfamily abduction definition was not available in the police records. This left a high proportion of the police records unclassifiable. The study was able to produce an incidence estimate, but a relatively small number of nonfamily abduction cases were identified at a high cost. Moreover, it is likely that the extent and nature of the missing data aggravated both of these problems.

The missing data problem varied depending both on case file (abduction, homicide, or sex offense) and the NFA definition in question. Differences by case file appear to be most important in considering whether and how a PRS might be incorporated in NISMART II. Differing rates at which the case files "produced" NFAs is also a consideration.

Overall, the abduction files were probably the most useful source, but the PRS data may be the best source for abductions involving homicide. NISMART I indicated that these are very rare and, therefore, unlikely to fall into the Household Survey sample in sufficient numbers to support an estimate. The police data on sex offenses were a relatively poor source of abductions, primarily because of missing data. The Household Survey may be a substantially better source for identifying abduction cases involving sex offenses, which appear to be reasonably frequent incidents.

We recommend including a modified PRS either as part of NISMART II or as a separate study, and running concurrently with the JFS (so as to use its sample of counties). Modifications that could help reduce costs include:

- reducing the number of police agencies in the sample to reduce recruiting and field costs,
- increasing the number of records sampled from individual agencies to achieve the expected number of cases, and
- concentrating data collection on cases from abduction files and homicide files.

COMMUNITY PROFESSIONALS STUDY

NISMART I derived an estimate of thrownaway children from an analysis of data collected during the NIS-2 conducted in 1986. NIS-2 data were collected from professionals in child welfare agencies in a national sample of counties. A NIS-3 is planned for 1994; NIS-3 data will thus be available in 1995 and can provide thrownaway incidence information in a manner timely for NISMART II. We recommend NIS-3 data be analyzed during NISMART II to provide a thrownaway incidence estimate to augment the data collected by the Household Survey on thrownaways. We recommend inclusion of NIS-3 analysis in NISMART II for comparability purposes and also because the Household Survey policy focal thrownaway category reports were infrequent, and thus not able to support detailed analyses.

NETWORK STUDY

NISMART I attempted to carry out a Network Study wherein respondents were asked to identify brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews who were not household residents and who had been abducted in the previous 12 months. This initiative was discontinued because few cases were identified and because some respondents were reluctant to provide the names and phone numbers of extended family members who experienced an incident and who could be interviewed.

Although some NISMART II planning grant advisors recommended the inclusion of a network component in the NISMART II Household Survey, we do not. There is little reason to think a new initiative would be more successful than the earlier one. Moreover, we anticipate the changes we recommend to the Household Survey will identify a sufficient number of nonfamily incidents and obviate the need for a Network Study.

RETURNED RUNAWAY STUDY

NISMART I interviewed a sample of returned runaways and thrownaways, as well as a random sample of children whose caretakers reported no incident. The purpose of the Returned Runaway Study was to assess possible problems of the Household Survey because parents and caretakers were asked to report the experiences of their children. The goal was to determine whether parent/caretaker and child reports differed.

Results of the Returned Runaway Study indicated a high level of agreement between parents and children regarding whether an incident had occurred. There was less agreement about the details of incidents, so some incidents were not counted based on the parent or caretaker reports, which in turn would have been counted based on the child's account and vice versa. The incidence estimate would have been approximately 11% higher if it were based on child accounts.

We do not recommend replication of the Returned Runaway Study in NISMART II for several reasons. First, we are recommending that children aged 12 to 17 be the primary household respondents for the Household Survey, so a comparison of parent and child responses would be less useful. Second, the NISMART I Returned Runaway Study's findings showed a high consensus between parents and children. Finally, the Returned Runaway Study had methodological limitations, most notably a 40% response rate for the sample of children who had an incident reported by parents. Moreover, runaways who had not returned home would be unavailable for an interview (just as they had been unavailable for the NISMART I Returned Runaway Study).

SUPPLEMENTAL HOMICIDE REPORTS ANALYSIS

NISMART I used the SHR reports for the 12-year period from 1976 to 1987 to develop an upper-bound estimate of the number of children killed in the course of a stranger abduction every year. We do not recommend repeating a similar analysis for NISMART II for the following reasons:

- The SHR data do not specifically record whether a homicide involved an abduction (this information is inferred from homicide circumstances data, which are often missing).
- Because children killed in the course of an abduction is a very low prevalence phenomenon, a new annual estimate of the number of children killed in this way is not likely to differ much from the NISMART I estimate, it does not seem worth the resources that would be required to conduct such a study.
- If a PRS is conducted in NISMART II, homicide files could be examined.

The SHR data are also problematic due to a large amount of missing data. Although we think that it is difficult to justify redoing the SHR analysis for NISMART II for methodological reasons and because the resulting estimate would not be very informative, this case type is highly important. This may be a good enough reason to conduct the SHR analysis again.

SINGLE ESTIMATE OF MISSING CHILDREN

The NISMART I incidence estimates for abducted, runaway, thrownaway, and lost or injured or otherwise missing children were not aggregated to produce a single estimate of missing children. The different case types were not summed because they represent very different phenomena, because many of the children were not really missing, and because the various NISMART I methodologies produced estimates that it was not appropriate to aggregate. However, the legislation requiring a missing children incidence estimate encourages attempts to develop a single estimate that is methodologically sound and meaningful for interpretive and policymaking purposes.

The development of a sound single estimate of the incidence of missing children was an issue discussed from the outset of the planning grant project. The principle that has emerged to undergird development of a single estimate is use of **generic incidence features** instead of case types to allow summation. For example, if a child's caretaker did not know where he or she was for some portion of a runaway incident, that child can be considered to have been missing. Likewise, if a custodial parent was ignorant of a child's whereabouts during a family abduction incident, the child can be considered

missing. Focusing on the **missing** feature of these two examples then would allow their inc. ion in a single estimate. Similarly, it was suggested at the Planning Symposium that a missing child definition might be further conditioned on the criterion that the parent or caretaker contacted an agency for the purpose of locating the child.

Identifying generic incident features of all case types might be useful for identifying and counting cases that are important social phenomena and that require the attention of social and behavioral scientists and policymakers. Fresh opportunities for theorizing might result; a sound basis for the development of public policy and estimation of resource needs is likely.

BROAD SCOPE/POLICY FOCAL DISTINCTION

NISMART I distinguished some incidents using a "broad scope" and "policy focal" distinction. The reason for making these distinctions was to differentiate nonserious and serious incidents, such as incidents involving greater risk to a child. For example, if a child did not have a safe and secure place to stay during a runaway incident, the incident was classified as policy focal. There was some sentiment from planning grant advisors that the broad scope/policy focal distinction was not appropriate or useful.

We have not made a specific recommendation about continuation of the broad scope/policy focal distinctions. We do think it important that missing incidents be distinguished in terms of degree of risk (seriousness or potential seriousness), and in other ways, such as the need for public intervention or use of public resources. So in this sense we recommend continuing to classify missing child incidents in relevant and useful ways. It would also be helpful to compare NISMART I and NISMART II on the broad scope/policy focal dimension. The major implication this has for NISMART II is that information be gathered during each of the study components to allow classification of events. If the recommendation is followed to narrow the scope of information gathered during NISMART II to that necessary to measure an incident (see Section 7.4), careful attention should be given in the development of study instruments so that information required for broad scope/policy focal incident classification is collected.

SECONDARY DATA SOURCES IN SUPPORT OF NISMART II

During the course of the planning grant, a number of secondary data sources were examined to assess their value for NISMART II. Most notably the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) National Crime Information Center (NCIC) data, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) case tracking system, and the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) of the FBI were considered for their possible value to NISMART II. None of these data systems can make a primary contribution to NISMART II in the sense that they can replace a NISMART component or

support one or more incidence estimates. These (and possibly other) data, however, may prove useful to NISMART II in other ways. For example, the NCIC or NCMEC data may be useful for sample design or instrument development work. NIBRS data may allow development of missing child case profiles, and other supportive uses may be possible with secondary data. But no secondary data source was found that could make a primary contribution to NISMART II.

FINAL WORD

NISMART I was an important study that provided extensive information about missing children. NISMART I was also an important methodological learning experience. By careful analyses of NISMART I, other methodological studies, and the expert opinion of a substantial number of advisors, the NISMART II planning grant team has concluded that the next study of missing children should focus more sharply than NISMART I on the incidence of missing children. The planning grant team has also suggested major changes to the methodologies of the Household Survey, the JFS, and the PRS that would improve the value of these study components. OJJDP is now in a position to support a NISMART II study that will be improved technically and as a policymaking resource. We also hope this report will help to generate a NISMART II that is conducted in a cost-effective way.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In August 1992, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) awarded a grant to the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) to conduct work titled "Planning the Second National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART II)." The grant was to support methodological and other activities in preparation for the second national study of the incidence of various kinds of missing children. The first NISMART data were collected in 1988. Results of that study were published in 1990 (Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Sedlak, 1990). A description and assessment of that study are the subjects of the next chapter of this report.

1.1 OVERVIEW OF PLANNING GRANT

The major purposes of the current planning grant were to examine conceptual, methodological, policy, cost, and other factors in connection with the second national incidence study of missing children, which will be conducted in 1994, and to make recommendations for the design of that study.

Major planning grant goals were to

- assess NISMART I,
- identify NISMART II information needs and sources of information,
- consider alternative methods for NISMART II, and
- prepare a plan for NISMART II.

A number of activities were undertaken to accomplish the planning grant goals.

An Advisory Group was recruited and convened. Advisory Group members were

- Bernard Auchter
  National Institute of Justice
- Charles Cowan
  Resolution Trust Corporation
- Joan Fisher
  Solicitor General's Office, Canada
- Joan Gaffney
  National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect

- Gerald Hotaling
  Family Research Laboratory
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- Terry Lewis
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- Michael Rand
  Bureau of Justice Statistics

- Owen Thornberry
  National Center for Health Statistics

- Theresa van Houten
  Catholic University

- Roy Weise
  National Crime Information Center
  Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Advisory Group met in February 1993 and again as part of a 2-day Planning Symposium in June 1993. The results of these two meetings are discussed throughout this report, but especially in Chapter 4.0 where the results of the Planning Symposium are summarized.

A variety of activities were undertaken during the planning grant to identify information needs for NISMART II and to examine how best to satisfy those needs. One set of activities was a survey of key informants; this survey involved asking a carefully selected group of knowledgeable individuals to comment and make recommendations for NISMART II. The respondents were individuals with special knowledge about the missing children problem and/or methodological expertise in connection with the effort to estimate the incidence of missing children. The results of the Key Informants Survey are given in Chapter 3.0 of this report.

The first NISMART broke a lot of new ground both conceptually and methodologically. The careful development of missing child definitions and the specification within missing child case types of features to distinguish serious and nonserious cases were major contributions to rational discussions of the issue and provided a sound basis for estimating incidence. Given the wide variation in the incidence of missing child case types–from the rare category of nonfamily abductions to the frequently observed category of runaways–development of a methodology for accurately estimating incidence was a challenge. The conceptual and methodological challenges resulted in a very complex study design, and one that was costly to implement. It was therefore decided to consider alternative approaches during the planning grant. Ongoing data series were examined to decide whether they could be

utilized during NISMART II. The results of these deliberations are discussed mainly in Chapter 4.0, where the Planning Symposium is summarized, and in the final chapter of the report.

Because the Household Survey and Police Records Study (PRS) were the two most important and costly components of NISMART I, they received considerable attention during the planning grant. Whether and how to conduct a household survey was discussed at length. The question regarding whether to include a household survey in NISMART II was answered in the affirmative early on, but major questions remained to be answered, such as: Should there be an independent NISMART II household survey, or can the need for estimates of missing children from households be met through a supplement to an existing household survey series, such as the National Crime Victimization Survey? Moreover, should the same incidence questions that were posed in NISMART I be replicated in NISMART II, or should new and revised questions be included in the interest of developing more accurate incidence estimates? As is discussed later, inclusion of a stand-alone household survey for NISMART II is recommended here, and changes in the questions to be asked are also suggested.

Two key aspects of discussions about a household survey for NISMART II were selection of respondents and development of screening questions. NISMART I used parents and caretakers as respondents to report whether an eligible missing child incident occurred, and if so, to describe its features. There was considerable debate about parent/caretaker versus child respondents with a clear consensus that use of child/youth respondents was preferred. This preference was largely based on evidence from other surveys that direct reporting is more likely to identify eligible incidents and that details of the incidents are more likely to be known by the subjects of these incidents than by a proxy respondent.

It was also decided during the planning grant to develop new Household Survey screening questions. There were two main reasons that new screening questions were developed: to improve identification of eligible incidents, and to accommodate recommended changes in the definition of missing child case types. Discussions of respondent selection and screening questions are included in Chapters 5.0 and 7.0 of this report.

NISMART I's PRS collected information from law enforcement agency records to estimate the incidence of nonfamily abductions. Because this NISMART I component also broke new ground methodologically, it was examined carefully during the planning grant. The issue of whether data from police agency records are adequate to support estimation of incidence was particularly salient. The PRS is the subject of Chapter 6.0.

Other NISMART II issues are also discussed in this report. For example, NISMART I developed incidence estimates for runaways, thrownaways, family abductions, nonfamily abductions, and lost or otherwise missing children, but not an overall missing child estimate. A major rationale for this NISMART I thinking was that each case type is unique and that summing incidents across case types would obscure the dissimilarities. But the 1984 Missing Children's Assistance Act passed by the U.S. Congress requires the OJJDP to conduct periodic studies of the incidence of missing children. This mandate can be interpreted to require that a single estimate be produced, and this issue was discussed at length during the planning grant. A strategy for developing a single missing estimate is discussed in Chapters 4.0 and 7.0 of this report.

Several appendices are included to supplement the information in, and provide background information for, this report. Appendix A contains the NISMART I assessment report in toto (an abbreviated version of which is in Chapter 2.0). Appendix B is a listing of respondents, by organization, to the Key Informants Survey, and Appendix C provides the protocol for that survey. Appendix D includes OJJDP-supplied terms and definitions used during the conduct of NISMART I. Appendix E is a literature review that focuses on children's ability to give valid reports of past events. Appendix F includes NISMART I Household Survey questions.

The planning for NISMART II has been a complex undertaking. The missing child phenomenon itself is complex--referring to runaway, thrownaway, abducted, and lost children. Consideration of the NISMART II work has had to integrate a variety of issues, such as

- how much weight to give to making NISMART I and NISMART II comparable and how much to making changes that may improve the estimates or other aspects of the study,
- the need for descriptive and etiological information about missing case types, and
- budgetary constraints.

There are also varied interests in connection with the missing children phenomenon. Policymakers must make legislative, programmatic, and fiscal decisions; interest groups, such as runaway shelter service providers and law enforcement agencies, are required to respond to calls for service; and researchers hope to develop a fuller understanding of the etiology of the various missing children types and to analyze their consequences for families and individuals.

1.2 LIMITATIONS OF PLANNING GRANT

A full consideration of all of the scientific and policy issues in connection with the planning of NISMART II over the 16-month project has not been possible. But most of the major issues have been addressed, and recommendations have been developed for major decision points. In the chapters that follow, the reader will note that a substantial number of NISMART methodological issues are raised. These issues range from whether NISMART I case-type definitions should be replicated in NISMART II or revised, to whether major NISMART I components should be repeated in NISMART II. Multiple issues were raised in connection with the Household Survey, the PRS, and the Juvenile Facilities Study. Recommendations for methodological work to help resolve some of the questions were made by the Advisory Group, Planning Symposium attendees, and others such as the NISMART I principals and those who reviewed the NISMART I reports.

Recommendations regarding many of the NISMART II issues and choices can be found in the report–particularly in the final chapter of the report. But time and resources to address many of the methodological issues raised were not available to the planning grant. It was not possible, for example, to develop and pretest an integrated incident report instrument for all five missing child case types as was recommended at the Planning Symposium.

Two implications result from planning grant limitations:

- important methodological choices remain to be made and reflected in the solicitation to be released for NISMART II, or decided as part of the NISMART II project, and
- some methodological testing will be necessary as part of NISMART II.

In the final chapter of the report, we identify the recommendations developed during the planning grant and identify the further decisionmaking required from OJJDP or the NISMART II contractor.

2.0 ASSESSMENT OF NISMART I

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The passage of both the Missing Children Act of 1982 and the Missing Children's Assistance Act of 1984 was brought about by a coalition of people interested in various types of missing children, including runaways, children abducted by family members, and children abducted (and murdered) by strangers. The latter act mandated periodic national incidence estimates of missing children, defined as

> any individual less than 18 years of age whose whereabouts are unknown to such individual's legal custodian if --
>
> (A) the circumstances surrounding such individual's disappearance indicate that such individual may possibly have been removed by another from the control of such individual's legal custodian without such custodian's consent; or
>
> (B) the circumstances of the case strongly indicate that such individual is likely to be abused or sexually exploited.

Periodic national incidence studies were mandated to

> determine for a given year the actual number of children reported missing each year, the number of children who are victims of abduction by strangers, the number of children who are the victims of parental kidnappings, and the number of children who are recovered each year.

NISMART I was designed to fulfill this mandate. Because the concept of missing children is so complex, NISMART I used six different methodologies to estimate the incidence of the following types of problems that were believed to contain the population of missing children:

- children abducted by nonfamily members,
- runaways,
- children abducted by family members,
- thrownaways, and
- lost, injured, and otherwise missing children.

The estimates produced by NISMART I are summarized in Table 1. These estimates have generated some controversy because some individuals and groups concerned with the various case types of missing children feel that the estimates are too low. In addition, there is some question about the extent to which NISMART I addresses

TABLE 1

NISMART I ESTIMATES

Estimates	Estimated Number of Children in 1988
Nonfamily Abductions	
Legal Definition Abductions	3,200 - 4,600
Stereotypical Kidnappings	200 - 300
Runaways	
Broad Scope	450,700
Policy Focal	133,500
Family Abductions	
Broad Scope	354,100
Policy Focal	163,200
Thrownaways	
Broad Scope	127,100
Policy Focal	59,200
Lost, Injured, or Otherwise Missing	
Broad Scope	438,200
Policy Focal	139,100

Source: Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., & Sedlak, A. (1990). Missing, abducted, runaway, and thrownaway children in America. First report: Numbers and characteristics national incidence studies. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.

the mandate of the act. For example, NISMART I estimates were not aggregated because each type has unique features and the data collection methodology does not allow computation of a true incidence estimate; thus, no single estimate of "missing children" is available.

For these reasons, one of the tasks for the planning grant was to reexamine the definitions and methodologies of NISMART I before deciding on the composition of NISMART II. We reviewed and assessed all the elements of NISMART I, identified strengths and weaknesses, and made suggestions for modifications to consider. The full version of our assessment is located in Appendix A. In this chapter, we highlight some of our findings.

2.2 NISMART I SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

Table 2 shows what methods were used to measure each missing child category. NISMART I used a combination of survey data, records, and secondary sources to generate estimates. Table 3 describes each of the methods and summarizes their objectives.

In the full version of the assessment, all of the missing child categories are assessed based on their

- definitions;
- methods, coverage, and sampling;
- instrumentation; and
- implementation and estimation.

We found that the definitions were adequate for the most part and appropriately operationalized. Some important definitional distinctions were made in NISMART I, such as the distinction between runaways and thrownaways and the addition of runaways from nonhousehold settings. There was difficulty in determining whether missing children are defined as only children who were missing from their parents' point of view or as children who were also displaced from society's point of view (e.g., runaways whose parents know where they are). NISMART I collected information about both types.

There were limitations resulting from the methods used in NISMART I. Although all of the studies were well-planned and well-conducted, there were limitations to all of them. For example, the Household Survey was not able to generate an estimate for nonfamily abductions. We also felt that the Household Survey's reliance on caregiver

TABLE 2

NISMART I DEFINITIONAL CATEGORIES AND METHODOLOGIES

Methods	Missing Child Types				
	Family Abductions	Nonfamily Abductions	Runaways	Thrown-aways	Otherwise Missing
Household Survey	X	X	X	X	X
Police Records Study		X			
Returned Runaway Study			X		
Juvenile Facilities Study			X		
FBI Data Reanalysis		X			
Community Profession-als Study (NIS-2)				X	

TABLE 3

NISMART I STUDIES: DESCRIPTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

Study	Description and Objective
Household Survey	A telephone survey of 34,822 randomly selected households, yielding interviews with 10,554 caretakers of 20,505 children, to find out how many of the missing children in these households had been abducted, run away, thrown away, lost, or otherwise missing.
Police Records Study	A study of police records in 83 law enforcement agencies in a national random sample of 21 counties to find out how many nonfamily abduction episodes were reported to these agencies.
Returned Runaway Study	An interview study with children who had run away and returned home to find out whether children's accounts of events concerning possible runaway episodes matched the accounts given by their parents.
FBI Data Reanalysis	Reanalysis of FBI data to determine how many children were murdered in conjunction with possible abductions by strangers.
Juvenile Facilities Study	A survey of facilities where children resided to find out how many had run away from these facilities.
Community Professionals Study	Reanalysis of data from a study of 735 agencies that have contact with children in a national random sample of 29 counties to determine how many children known to these agencies have been abandoned or thrown away.

respondents may have introduced some bias into the family abduction and runaway data. Limitations of the PRS are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.0. Other problems included the low response rate in the Returned Runaway Study, lack of precision from the FBI Data Reanalysis, and the reliance on nonfamily respondents in the Juvenile Facilities Study and the Community Professionals Study.

We found that the instrumentation was well-designed, and the screening approach was appropriate. For example, there were questions that avoided using the term "runaway" or "abduction" in order to screen in cases that a parent may not define in those terms. As discussed later, we also found that a redesigned instrument might yield better estimates.

As noted above, we found the methods limited in some ways, and these limitations had an impact on the estimates generated. In some cases, the estimates' low precision will have an impact on NISMART II's ability to detect changes over time. Improved sampling and methods in NISMART II might yield more precise estimates.

Appendix A includes a more thorough review and assessment of NISMART I. We do, however, have some summary comments and suggestions for NISMART II.

2.3 CONSIDERATIONS FOR NISMART II

One of the most important accomplishments of NISMART I was that it divided the complex and confusing phenomenon of "missing children" into distinct and identifiable incidents. By clearly defining each type of missing child, NISMART I was able to make important clarifications among incidents, such as the difference between runaway and thrownaway children. Also, NISMART I elaborated on the common conceptions of missing child incidents, such as nonfamily abductions. NISMART I distinguished more serious cases in which children are taken by strangers and held for ransom from similar incidents that may include a nonstranger perpetrator and may not last for a long period of time.

Another strength of NISMART I was its use of multiple methods to measure the incidence of missing children. A well-designed household survey was used and complemented by more narrowly focused surveys, studies of police records, and analyses of existing data.

The NISMART II planners had the opportunity to learn from the experiences of NISMART I and to suggest improvements. In this section, we raise some issues relevant for NISMART II planning. Our suggestions focus on some narrowing of the missing child

definitions and highlight the potential for using existing data sources that would eliminate the need for some of the NISMART I methods.

2.3.1 Definitions

The NISMART I researchers chose not to report an aggregate number of "missing and displaced" children. This has been criticized by some who feel that there should be an aggregated national estimate. Some also argue that, because the numbers will be aggregated by others (such as the news media), those with the best understanding of the methods should provide the number.

One reason for not having an aggregated estimate is that the idea of "missing children" is extremely complex. Finkelhor, Hotaling, and Sedlak (1989) noted that there are two dimensions to the idea of a missing child: (a) the child is missing (i.e., the child's parent or legal guardian does not know the child's whereabouts); and (b) the child is displaced (i.e., the child is not where expected). A problem arises when some cases involve one dimension but not the other (e.g., a runaway whose parents actually know where that child is). NISMART I used the term "non-normative leavings and displacements" to define most comprehensively the cases of interest: "situations where children are missing, removed from or leave parental custody in a way that they are not supposed to."

Under the rubric of "missing or displaced" children, the NISMART I researchers explicated the five different types or cases described above. These types of incidents are relatively disparate. In two cases, the "perpetrator" is actually the child (runaways and lost or otherwise missing). In the other three cases, the perpetrator is a family member, acquaintance, or stranger. That which makes the case policy focal varies by definition as well. For lost or otherwise missing, the police must be contacted; for runaways, the child must be without a safe place to stay; for thrownaways, the parent must not have provided the child with an alternative place to stay. In addition, each of these cases may have different combinations of missing or displaced elements.

To deal with complexities, some have suggested it would be better to narrow the conception of missing child. The first step may be to ask why we want to have such an estimate at all. One answer is that, as a society, we are concerned about when adequate care for a child is lacking, or when society has to step in to fulfill the role the family usually takes in a child's life. From this perspective, one may want to focus on children who are at high risk for "system entry." Such a concept would, for example, exclude children who run away to a friend's house for a few nights. This is a symptom of some trouble in the family, but law enforcement and social services do not necessarily have to step in to help.

On the other hand, a child who runs to a shelter is in need of society's assistance and resources. We want to know about those children for whom adequate care is "missing" because of the implications that missing care has for society. This concept would limit most of the missing child categories to the policy focal definitions. It would, therefore, include all nonfamily abductions; runaways or thrownaways without a secure or familiar place to stay; children simply abandoned by their families; more serious family abductions in which a family member concealed a child, transported the child out of State, or tried to prevent contact from the legal custodian; and lost, injured or otherwise missing children whose parents contacted the police in order to locate them. This concept would allow less serious cases to be screened out so that NISMART II could focus on counting and analyzing those cases that have implications for social action.

Such a conception of missing care would include other situations as well. Figure 1 (adapted from the NISMART I Final Report) conceptualizes the threats to children's health and safety and offers a context in which to think about this problem as a whole. The figure shows that, even if NISMART II were designed to estimate only the policy focal incidents from NISMART I, it would still not cover all children in need of care. However, if we concentrate only on the subset of these youth who are "missing and displaced," we include the NISMART I incidents plus homeless youth and possibly youth who are abused physically or sexually by a nonfamily member. NISMART II considered options for including such children in the estimation.

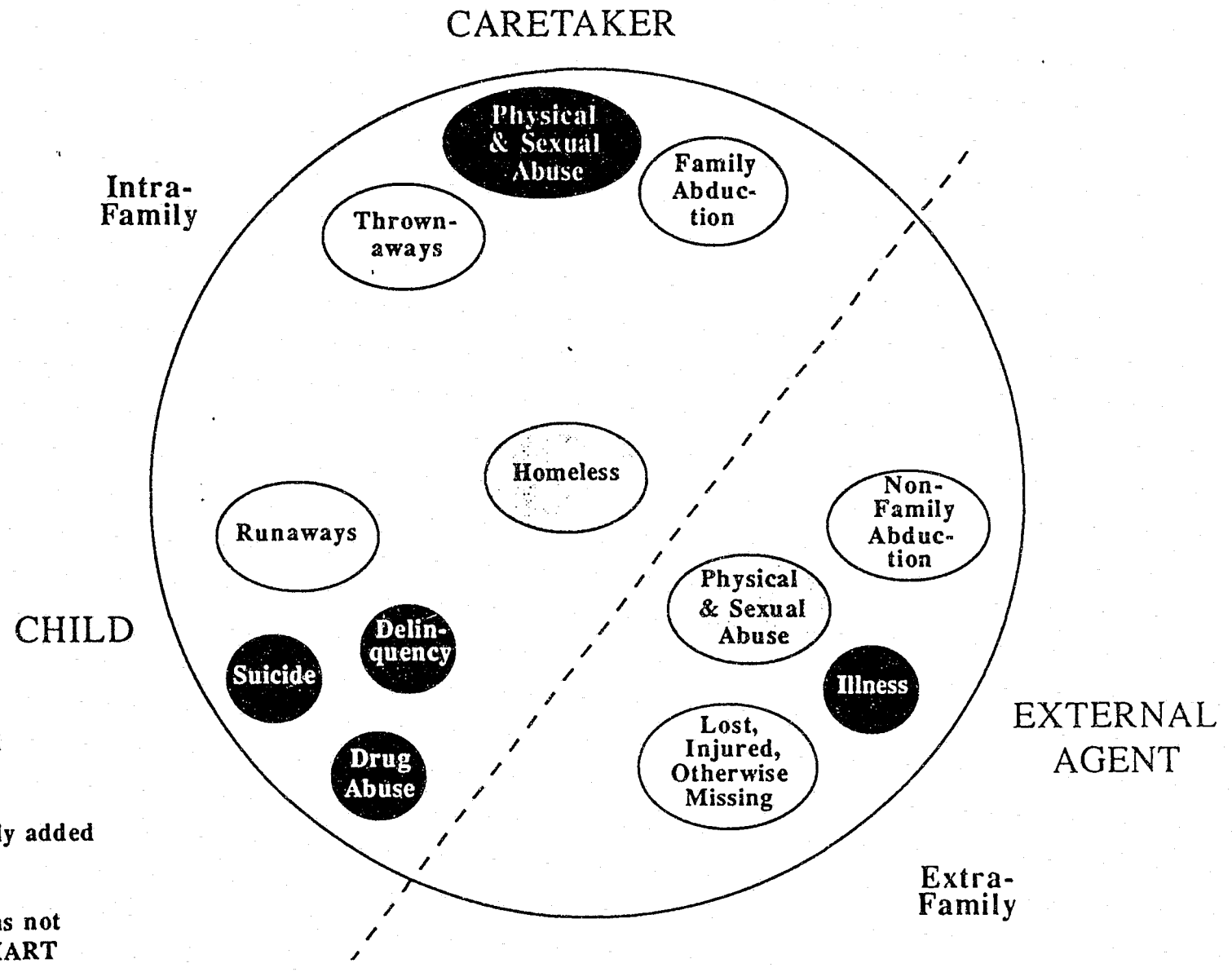
2.3.2 Methods

In addition to rethinking the NISMART definitions, there is a need to examine and possibly modify the methods used to obtain the estimates. One methodological limitation to NISMART I was the fact that there were important incidents that were not accessible through any of the methodologies. For example, children who were abducted and victimized sexually may not have reported the incident to their parents (who thus would not have reported the incident to NISMART I interviewers). Also, some important subpopulations were missed; for example, the exclusion of homeless or currently runaway youth may have limited the estimates of runaways or thrownaways. For these reasons, we considered methodological modifications, including

- expanding the number of "pools" from which to search for these missing children; and
- using methods that interview the children themselves.

Table 4 suggests some additional "pools," namely the addition of homeless and currently runaway youth and youth physically or sexually abused or exploited by nonfamily

FIGURE 1. THREATS TO CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY



Source: Adapted from Finklehor, D., Hotaling, G., & Sedlak, A. (1990).

TABLE 4
POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS FOR NISMART II

Methods	Case Types						
	Family Abductions	Nonfamily Abductions	Runaways	Thrown-aways	Otherwise Missing	Homeless	Physically or Sexually Victimized by Nonfamily Member
NISMART II Household Survey	I, C	I(?), C	I, C	I, C	I, C		I, C
Current ACYF Runaway & Homeless Youth Study, including Youth Risk Behavior Supplement questions	ND	ND	I, C, SA, ND	I, C, (shelters) SA		I, (HH Pop.), C, SA	
NIS-3 Community Professionals Survey (Winter '95)				I*, C, SA			
Police Records Study		I, C					C
Returned Runaway Study			I (?), C	I(?), C			
Juvenile Facilities Study			I, C				
Supplementary Homicide Reports		I (RANGE)					
Other surveys (e.g., Monitoring the Future, National Educational Survey)	SS	SS					
National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)		SS					SS
National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)	SA	SA					SA
National Crime Information Center (NCIC), National Center for Missing and Exploited Children	ND, SA	ND, SA					
Morbidity and Mortality Reports		C					

I = incidence estimation
C = correlates
ND = NISMART II design
SS = survey supplement
SA = secondary analysis

* The National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect-III (NIS-III) will provide an estimate of "abandoned" children.

members. Adding youth from these pools may better estimate the incidence of missing children as defined above. For example, we could gain some important data from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Study, sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and conducted by RTI. This study included interviews with 500 youth residing in a nationally representative sample of approximately 25 shelters and with 500 youth on the streets in 7 sites throughout the country. The youth were asked about several topics:

- their history of homelessness (where they stayed and for how long), and their opinions of youth shelters;
- whether they had spent time in facilities, such as foster homes, group homes, psychiatric or mental hospitals, juvenile detention, youth homes, or jail, and whether they had ever run away from any of these places;
- reasons for running away from home, including physical or sexual abuse, and a distinction between running away and being thrown away;
- where they stayed when they had run away and problems they encountered, including whether they were physically or sexually victimized; and
- questions about health, suicide attempts, depression, and criminal activity.

Advantages to using these data include the fact that youth who are currently out of the home can personally relay information about their experiences. They can express their opinions about whether they ran away or were thrown away, which could be compared to responses from parents in the Household Survey. We can also estimate the number of such youth who were physically or sexually victimized and the number of youth who ran away from juvenile facilities. Consideration might be given to using this study as a replacement for the Returned Runaway Survey. These data would also enable us to estimate the number of homeless youth, which might be added to the "missing and displaced" children categories.

Another possible data source is the Youth Risk Behavior Supplement (YRBS) of the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). The YRBS, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), was administered to 12,000 youth aged 12 to 21 in a randomly selected household population and to an equivalent number of youth aged 14 to 17 (in grades 9 to 12) in a national sample of schools. Nine questions on the YRBS ask youth about runaway and homeless experiences, including whether they had stayed in shelters, public places, abandoned buildings, or with a stranger. The questions also ask whether the youth had ever stayed away from home overnight without

permission, and how many nights were spent away from home without permission. These data provide an estimate of runaways and homeless youth in the household population. Although the questions do not gather much detail about the incidents, the youth again are the respondents.

Other data sources may also provide additional data. For example, the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-III, to be conducted in 1994) will provide data on physically or sexually abused children. One disadvantage to these data is the fact that social service agencies, rather than child care providers, are surveyed. But the data from this study may be more extensively utilized than in NISMART I, which used NIS-II data only to estimate thrownaway children. For example, data for children physically or sexually abused by nonfamily members in a caretaker role (such as child care providers or juvenile institution personnel) may be relevant to NISMART II.

Even if the decision is made not to add physically and sexually victimized children definitionally, this population could still be a useful pool from which to search for other missing child incidents. Such cases are not often classified as missing children, even though they may technically be missing under NISMART definitions. For example, a 14-year-old girl who is pulled behind a bush and raped is technically abducted, even though this may be considered or reported as a sex crime only. Also, sex crime files or incidents may help locate more runaways or thrownaways. Additional screener questions could be added to the Household Survey to locate children in this category. Also, if the PRS is replicated in NISMART II, sex offense files could be examined in all sites.

In considering the PRS, NISMART II planners were aware of the findings from another OJJDP-funded study that is examining the feasibility of using the FBI's new NIBRS (National Incident-Based Reporting System) to estimate nonfamily abductions. Preliminary results from this study indicate that NIBRS is <u>not</u> a valid alternative for NISMART II, but it may be for later replications of NISMART. Work comparing NIBRS data elements to NISMART definitions of nonfamily abductions indicates a need to change the NISMART definitions in order to fit with NIBRS data. Specifically, definitions would have to be collapsed so that there would be one broad definition (similar to the first legal definition at the start of this chapter), and subcategories based on age of the child, whether physical or sexual assault was involved, the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, and whether the child was killed. Such changes were considered by NISMART II planners and are discussed later.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Definitional and methodological changes being considered for NISMART II include

- limiting the definitions (i.e., limiting the estimates to those incidents in which "the system" becomes involved), and
- expanding the definitions (i.e., including homeless youth and youth physically or sexually abused by nonfamily members).

We have also suggested rethinking the methods to

- expand the missing pools,
- include children as respondents, and
- use existing data sources to replace or augment NISMART components.

If implemented, these modifications will limit the comparability between NISMART I and NISMART II. The level of priority given to such comparability must be considered before definite decisions about changes are made. However, we think that the improvements that would ensue, both conceptually and methodologically, outweigh the comparability limitations that would result.

3.0 KEY INFORMANTS SURVEY

Despite the planning and effort that went into NISMART I, some criticism of the definitions and methods was aimed at the study by practitioners, researchers, child advocates, and others concerned with missing children. In response, the NISMART II planning project designed a Key Informants Survey, which solicited comments from a variety of individuals and constituencies regarding NISMART I and requested recommendations for NISMART II. The goal was to raise the likelihood that NISMART II meets the information needs of these individuals and organizations. The pool of key informants included the NISMART I principal investigators and individuals or organizations suggested by the NISMART II planning project's Advisory Group and the OJJDP. The respondents included individuals from law enforcement agencies, advocacy groups for runaways and missing/exploited children, researchers who study the NISMART I case types, and practitioners, such as family court judges, runaway shelter groups, and organizations that help to locate missing children. A full list of the organizations is located in Appendix B.

Potential respondents were contacted by phone and given a brief summary of NISMART I and the goals of the survey. If the respondents agreed to participate, a copy of the response protocol was sent to them (usually by fax), and they were recontacted after a few days for their answers to the questions and any additional comments or suggestions. The interview consisted of seven open-ended questions that allowed respondents to discuss their specific information needs. These questions requested some information about the respondents' work or organization and the type of missing children of concern to them. Questions also gathered opinions on differentiating more and less serious cases and on the magnitude of the missing children problem. Comments on information needs, whether such information was available, and whether the respondents had heard of or used NISMART I data were also collected. A copy of the survey instrument is located in Appendix C.

3.1 RESPONSE TO THE SURVEY

For the most part, the key informants we contacted were willing to participate and were interested in NISMART. A number of our interviews, however, were unsuccessful because the respondents' organizations did not have a direct concern with missing children. This was true for two education-related organizations, one medical organization, and one national-level law enforcement organization. These respondents were unable to comment on NISMART I and did not feel that NISMART II could provide data that would be directly relevant to their work. For similar reasons, we were unable to interview anyone in Congress. The congressional committee that originally studied the

missing children problem no longer exists, and no new committee has been created to deal with this issue.

Other nonresponses were due to a variety of reasons, including lack of interest. On the whole, however, the respondents were cooperative and willing to help. Their responses are summarized below.

3.2 GENERAL FINDINGS

The respondents represented a wide range of perspectives on the missing children problem. They engage in different activities related to missing children, and they have primary concern for different categories of the NISMART I episodes. Surveying such a variety of individuals was necessary given the wide scope of interest in missing children, but this also prevented the emergence of a clear consensus on NISMART I and the design of NISMART II.

Part of the reason for the lack of consensus was that many respondents had little detailed knowledge of NISMART I. They often could not speak to the specific issues of interest in NISMART II planning. Part of the problem is that many groups did not make use of the NISMART I data, in part because the data were not disseminated or presented to them in a format that was helpful to their particular needs.

For those who were able to respond, the discussions usually focused on a particular type of missing child incident, depending on the purpose of the organization. Specific recommendations about missing child definitions and methods are presented in the next section.

3.3 MAJOR FINDINGS

Some of the key informants provided comments on the

- definitions of family abductions and runaways,
- dissemination of NISMART I, and
- NISMART I methods.

A summary of these comments and recommendations follows.

3.3.1 Family Abductions

Because family abductions are apparently a growing problem, a number of respondents felt that increased emphasis could be given to the estimation of such cases.

They felt that the NISMART definition could be improved, but admitted that these cases are difficult to define and count because of differences between State statutes and because law enforcement does not always take these situations seriously. Some of our respondents maintained that all cases of family abductions can have traumatic implications for the children involved. A few of those most concerned with family abductions suggested that these cases can be as serious and dangerous to the child as a stranger abduction.

Although most thought the NISMART definition should be reexamined, there were few specific suggestions for an adjusted or alternative definition. Respondents did feel that collecting more detail about this type of case would be useful (e.g., costs to the parents and the government). The respondents thought that adding emphasis to this type of incident would help educate people about current policies; they also hoped that policymakers would be influenced to take this problem more seriously and create better policy for responding to this social problem.

3.3.2 Runaways

Several respondents were concerned primarily with runaways. Their comments and suggestions focused mainly on the definitions of who is a runaway. Although they agreed that it is difficult to create national-level definitions that are meaningful for a wide variety of organizations, they did make some specific suggestions for NISMART II. For example, the respondents did not like the way the broad scope and policy focal definitions were distinguished from each other. They felt that the "familiar and secure place to stay" criterion used in NISMART I was too subjective and should be replaced with one or a combination of variables, such as length of time away, where the runaway stayed while away, age of runaway, and chronicity of past runaway episodes.

Some respondents felt that the 2-night time away requirement for runaways 15 and older was inappropriate. They understood that the intent of the distinction was to exclude discipline problems (e.g., curfew violations) from runaway estimates, but they felt that 2 nights away was too long for any child, even those 15 and older.

Because the goal of many organizations that help runaways is to intervene and prevent serious runaway incidents, some expressed a need to know about children who leave for shorter periods of time than those counted in NISMART I. Again, they felt that all children gone for 1 night should be included in the count (not just those 14 and younger). Also, there was some interest in children who are gone for a few hours because this may be a symptom of other problems.

Respondents were also interested in seeing NISMART II planners reexamine the runaway/thrownaway distinction. Such cases may actually be part of a continuum of family problems, with thrownaways or abandoned children being on one extreme. The current runaway/thrownaway distinction may be an inappropriate one that tries to ascribe blame to either the youth (runaway) or the caregiver (thrownaway), when "blame" for most incidents cannot be ascribed to one party only.

The respondents also indicated that estimates of both incidence *and* prevalence of runaways would be useful.

3.3.3 Dissemination of NISMART I Information

Based on comments from the respondents, we concluded that many individuals and organizations that should have benefited from the NISMART I information were not familiar with this ground-breaking study. Furthermore, some of those who were familiar with NISMART expressed skepticism about the methodology and numbers.

We also found that several respondents were unhappy with the NISMART I final report format, which presented all of the NISMART results in one document. This meant that all potential users of the results had to work to find the information that was valuable to them. Some respondents felt that the NISMART II results should be delivered in different formats designed for specific targeted groups. Respondents also recommended that a summary fact sheet with reproducible graphs and charts be readily available to help groups spread the word about NISMART further. These efforts may make the research more accessible to policymakers, law enforcement, and the public.

Finally, we found that the respondents were pleased that we solicited their opinions and suggestions for improving the utility of NISMART II. Some dissatisfaction with the NISMART II methods and definitions has been prevented by targeting certain audiences during the planning process for involvement as consultants. As a result of taking part in the development process, these consultants may be more supportive of the NISMART II results.

3.3.4 Methodological Issues

Because of the complexity of the NISMART I methods, only the NISMART I principal investigators were interviewed about each of the methodological components. Some of their comments are included in the following paragraphs.

3.3.4.1 Household Survey. The NISMART I researchers felt that this survey should be retained in NISMART II with two possible modifications. First, the screener

question that attempted to identify children who had been thrownaway and ended up in the respondent's household could be eliminated. This question did not identify a sufficient number of children to warrant the effort. Second, the Network Study (a component that was abandoned during NISMART I) might be redesigned so that respondents can identify nonfamily abductions experienced by additional family members (in NISMART I, nonfamily abductions experienced only by respondents' brothers and sisters were identified).

3.3.4.2 Juvenile Facilities Study. This component should be retained in NISMART II, but a better sampling frame would be optimal. One possibility would be to identify facilities within sampled counties. Also, more thought should be given as to how to prevent duplicate counting of runaways from both household and facility settings.

3.3.4.3 Returned Runaway Study. The OJJDP could consider dropping this study from NISMART II. Although it might yield interesting results, such information may not be worth the effort of the study. The response rates from children were low, and the estimates from children versus parents are not different enough to warrant the effort. Also, other research has examined what happens to youth while they are away from home. Although NISMART can identify whether a child told his/her parents about what happened, this is not important enough to justify the study. The number of additional incidents that could potentially be identified (such as runaways who were also abducted while on the run) is probably very minimal.

3.3.4.4 FBI Data Reanalysis. The respondents had mixed feelings about this study. The data validate the (small) estimate generated by the PRS, but the data set is difficult to work with and may not be worth analyzing again. Also, few people believe any longer that there are large numbers of nonfamily abductions and homicides.

3.3.4.5 Police Records Study. The respondents also had mixed feelings about this study. On the one hand, it was an important component of NISMART, but on the other hand, the missing data problem was formidable and had serious implications for estimation. Basically, at this point there is no way of knowing to what degree the estimate from the PRS is an underestimate due to missing data in the police records. A special study examining the degree of underestimation might be possible. For example, such a study could involve intensive interviews with officers and detectives in one to two police departments about what they report and why. This study might show, for example, that in most cases where there is no record of the distance the victim was moved, there was no abduction. If the study is retained in NISMART II, the sex offense files should be examined in all sampled police departments, rather than in just four counties.

3.3.4.6 Community Professionals Study. The respondents felt that this component should be retained in NISMART II. The timing would be right, since NIS-III will be conducted at approximately the same time as NISMART II. Also, NIS-III captures a type of thrownaway who is not captured in NISMART, and the overlap between the studies is minimal.

The NISMART I principal investigators also felt that it would be useful to develop the idea of "missingness." The concept is very confusing and is often used as an alarmist or political term. A clear definition of "missing" and an explanation of why it is important would help guide the overall study. This would also help specify the goals of the study and assist in the decisionmaking.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In all, the Key Informants Survey showed that NISMART I was relatively well received, but NISMART II could be made more beneficial to practitioners, child advocates, and policymakers. The respondents commented on both the definitions and the methods used in NISMART I and suggested modifications and improvements. Although some of the respondents were not well-informed enough to make specific suggestions, we found that interest in the results is high and there is a great deal of support for the project as a whole. The comments and suggestions reported here helped the NISMART II planning process and can make the next study more responsive to the needs of those concerned with missing children.

4.0 PLANNING SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

A NISMART II Planning Symposium was held on June 3 and 4, 1993, at the Phoenix Park Hotel, Washington, DC. The purpose of the Planning Symposium was to assist the OJJDP to make decisions about the design and scope of the upcoming NISMART II.

The first NISMART was conducted in response to the need for estimates of the incidence of a variety of types of missing children. Congressional actions requiring such information were propelled by well-publicized child abduction cases in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Missing children legislation was enacted in 1982 and 1984. In 1986 and 1987, a series of feasibility studies for OJJDP made it clear that, while the term "missing child" held strong connotations of stranger abductions to most people, there were a variety of other situations in which the whereabouts of children were a concern to parents and caretakers. Thus, NISMART I developed six different methodologies to study a variety of incidents concerning children.

The symposium provided an opportunity for researchers and practitioners to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of NISMART I and attempt to agree on alternative implementation strategies for NISMART II. This summary of the Planning Symposium discussions and recommendations follows the organization of the agenda used at the meeting.

4.2 NISMART I BACKGROUND

NISMART I studies estimated the national incidence of five defined categories involving children: runaways, thrownaways, family abductions, nonfamily abductions, and lost or injured or otherwise missing child cases. Each of these types was broken down into "broad scope" and "policy focal" cases (with the exception of the nonfamily abduction category) in an attempt to separate the less serious cases from those in which a child was likely to be in serious and immediate danger. Nonfamily abductions were separated into "stereotypical" and "legal" abductions. All nonfamily abductions were considered "policy focal" and very serious.

The first NISMART included six components:

- The Household Survey included 35,000 randomly selected households from which 10,000 parents or caretakers of

20,000 children were found. This methodology was used to find all five types of incidents.

- The Police Records Study (PRS) replaced the Household Survey findings on nonfamily abductions (because too few cases were identified in the Household Survey to provide valid estimates).
- The FBI Data Reanalysis examined past Supplemental Homicide Reports submitted by police to the FBI to estimate the number of children who were murdered in the course of an abduction by strangers or nonfamily members.
- The Returned Runaway Study compared children's accounts of runaway incidents with caretaker accounts.
- The Juvenile Facilities Study determined how many children ran away from residential facilities outside their homes.
- The Community Professionals Study (reanalysis of the National Incidence Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect [NIS] data) determined how many children known to social agencies had been abandoned or thrownaway.

4.3 ISSUE OF A SINGLE ESTIMATE

The first NISMART findings presented incidence estimates for each type of case, but did not give an overall estimate for "missing children." There were specific reasons for not producing a combined total number. One reason was that not all of the children counted in NISMART were "missing." In many cases of runaways, family abductions, and thrownaways, the caretakers knew where the child was but did not care or did not take actions to return them to the home, or unsuccessfully attempted to get them back. Or the parents may have known where the child was and sought assistance from the police or other agencies to obtain the child's return. In these cases, the children may have been displaced, but their whereabouts were known.

Some practitioners and media groups in an effort to produce a total number of missing children have chosen to add the various NISMART categories together. This exercise is questionable because it adds together phenomena that are very different from each other, such as runaways and nonfamily abductions. Also, numbers cannot be totaled when several different data collection methodologies are used. This would result in duplicate counting because the same cases would be identified multiple times.

Based on the mandate of the Missing Children's Assistance Act of 1984, there may be a requirement for a single estimate of the number of missing children. Dr. Howell from OJJDP distributed some background information at the Planning Symposium to help

participants consider this issue (see Appendix D). It was pointed out that in NISMART I there was no single estimate for missing children because many of the children in the categories were not truly "missing" and because there are important differences between types of cases. One suggestion that received some support at the symposium was that, regardless of what the separate categories are, a count of "missing" could be a subset of each category studied. There could be standard criteria across categories that would make a case a countable "missing case." One possibility is that missing cases might be those cases in which a child had been reported to the police as missing for the purpose of determining the child's location. However, questions were raised regarding the types of cases that would be ignored by limiting the reporting element to only reports to police. Family abductions could be grossly underestimated unless reports to attorneys, social services, and others were included. Other than some agreement about the importance of a single estimate, no consensus was reached about how or what that number would include.

4.4 NISMART II SAMPLE DESIGN

Dr. Iachan (RTI) presented a potential Household Survey sampling plan for NISMART II that could also form the sampling plan for the PRS and the Juvenile Facilities Study. In NISMART I, the Household Survey used a random-digit dialing (RDD) procedure to select households, while the PRS used a stratified sample of counties and the Juvenile Facilities Study identified facilities by questioning Household Survey respondents. It was suggested that the NISMART II Household Survey sampling plan identify high-incidence primary sampling units (PSUs), in which households, police departments, and juvenile facilities could be sampled for the study. The advantages to this plan include

- the cost-effectiveness of using one sampling plan for three different substudies,
- the better coverage and representativeness of juvenile facilities that would result from identifying all facilities in selected PSUs rather than relying on respondent willingness and recall to identify facilities (this would also make it easier to construct a sampling frame of facilities, which was often difficult in NISMART I because of the limited amount of information that many respondents could provide about facilities), and
- avoiding face-to-face interviewing, which may not be cost-feasible with some children.

The disadvantage of this approach for the Household Survey is the increased sampling error that would result from using a cluster-sampling approach rather than the

RDD approach used in NISMART I. It was suggested that one or several variables that are correlated with the NISMART cases could be used to stratify PSUs in order to produce more cases of interest; thus, the increased sampling error would be outweighed by the increased number of identified cases. The FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) data might be examined to identify variables correlated with the NISMART cases. Several participants were skeptical about the possibility of finding variables correlated with cases of different types (e.g., runaways and abductions).

The conclusions of this session included the following:

- NCIC or other data should be examined to determine whether it is possible to identify variables useful in creating a stratified sampling plan for all three studies. If not, the RDD sampling plan for the Household Survey should probably be retained in NISMART II in order to minimize sampling error.

- A decision needs to be made about the PRS. Some participants favored eliminating the PRS from NISMART II because of the high cost of identifying each nonfamily abduction case. If the PRS is eliminated, the rationale for a common sampling plan is not as strong.

- A decision also needs to be made about the Juvenile Facilities Study. Some participants expressed concern that a stratified PSU approach may miss some important criminal justice juvenile facilities which are often in rural areas. Other potential problems with the Juvenile Facilities Study are the wide dispersion of juvenile facilities in many areas and the reluctance of some facility operators to cooperate with survey research. Some suggested that studies conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), such as the Children in Custody Survey and the Survey of Youth in Custody, may provide an alternative that would obviate the need for a separate Juvenile Facilities Study in NISMART II; however, these studies include only criminal-justice-related juvenile facilities.

4.5 SCREENING TO IDENTIFY NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS IN HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

This session began by discussing NISMART I's five screener questions used to identify nonfamily abductions and attempts. The five NISMART I screener questions were as follows:

- Was there any time when anyone tried to take (this child/any of these children) away against your wishes?

- Has anyone ever kidnapped or tried to kidnap (this child/any of these children)?
- Was there any time when an adult or other child tried to sexually molest, attack, beat-up or rob (this child/any of these children?
- In the last year did (this child/any of these children) leave home without permission and stay away for at least a few hours?
- Was there any time when you were concerned because you couldn't find (this child/any of these children) or (he/she/they) didn't come home?

An explanation of how nonfamily abduction cases were uncovered in the Household Survey was presented. In addition to the screener questions, detailed questions were asked in the interviews with runaways and thrownaways to identify cases missed by the screening questions. Furthermore, a Network Study was attempted in which the 30,000 households contacted in the Household Survey were asked whether brothers, sister, nephews, or nieces of the caretakers had been subjects of an abduction or similar incident. This strategy did not yield many cases, and many respondents were reluctant to give names and phone numbers of other relatives. In the end, this last effort was dropped. However, it was suggested that NISMART II may want to revisit this idea. The combined strategies (excluding the network component) yielded only 17 countable cases of nonfamily abductions and 36 countable cases of attempted abduction. These numbers were too small to be the basis of national estimates.

The numbers of nonfamily abductions estimated in the NISMART I's PRS were about 200 stereotypical kidnappings for the year studied. A media search of national newspapers for abduction stories resulted in 195 stereotypical kidnappings. After a discussion about these numbers and the five screener questions, the group concluded that it was very likely that the numbers for nonfamily abductions, for reasons such as unreported short-term legal abductions that parents were unaware of, may be an underestimate of this type of incident. Therefore, the discussion turned to the various ways to overcome the underreporting problem.

The first topic was the definition of a "nonfamily abduction." One idea raised was whether a former paramour should continue to be included in the NISMART definition as a family member. One argument was that, while cases in which a child is abducted by a former paramour may have similarities to cases in which a child is abducted by a parent in a family of divorce, this may in fact be including cases with more typical nonfamily abduction elements. For example, a former paramour may abduct and detain a child for purposes of sexual assault. The sexual attack in this case would not be incest unless

the former paramour is the abducted child's biological parent, so why count the abduction as a family abduction? Therefore, it was decided that this aspect of the definition needs to be revisited. However, this alone would not address the underestimate of nonfamily abductions. It was also pointed out, however, that the evidence indicating stereotypical kidnappings are rare is probably sound and that the short-term incidents typically connected with sexual assaults are a different phenomenon.

The second topic was the screening process. The screener questions are all rather abstract and without specific examples of the type of incident the questions are referencing. It was recommended that the cuing of the screening process be enhanced to improve respondent recall. It was suggested that more direct cues about places or situations might yield more information. The subject of interviewing children was also raised in this discussion. If children are interviewed, screeners will have to be developed that use different terminology focused on associations children might make with various words (see Chapter 5.0 of this report). Interviewing children was a popular suggestion for trying to find incidents of nonfamily abductions in the Household Survey. Additionally, it was noted that, by interviewing children and including questions about attempted and successful abductions, information about preventing abductions may be gleaned from the survey.

The last major topics of discussion were the possibility of conducting another Network Study and a study of young adults about incidents that had occurred to them prior to their 18th birthday. The first NISMART did some work on a Network Study, asking the parent whether anyone else in their family not living in the house ever had a nonfamily abduction experience. This process did not identify many incidents, and the interviewers had difficulty getting the cooperation of the initial respondent to give the referred person's name, address, and phone number. It was suggested that this method, which was used in a Harris survey for nonfamily abductions, should be reconsidered. Dr. Gerald Hotaling has also conducted a study of college students that asked whether, prior to their 18th birthday, they had been abducted. He was surprised that positive responses to these questions were as high as they were. Positive responses often had to do with date rape or rape abductions not on dates. He suggested that we consider as a supplementary source of data a survey of young adults that inquires about incidents of nonfamily abductions that occurred before they turned 18. Several participants suggested that NISMART II spend more time on attempts at nonfamily abductions. For example, NISMART II might ask how children avoid bad situations. Parents may not know about these attempts.

4.6 SUPPLEMENTARY/SECONDARY SOURCES

The Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF) Runaway and Homeless Youth Study was discussed by Dr. Christopher L. Ringwalt of RTI. This survey gathered information about a population of runaway and homeless children staying in shelters and living on the streets. It also incorporates supplementary questions to the Youth Risk Behavior Supplement (YRBS), which obtains data from children currently in households about previous runaway and homeless experiences. One way in which this study could be helpful to NISMART II is to analyze the information gathered by questions that assess the experience of youth who find their family or home structure dissolving or disappearing around them. This group of questions offers the opportunity to compare similarities and differences between the homeless, thrownaway, and runaway experiences. The ACYF study findings will be available in 1994.

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) was described by Michael Rand of BJS. This survey has the potential to assist in the design and implementation of NISMART II. The NCVS is an ongoing survey in which households are selected by address as opposed to by telephone number. Interviews are conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 6-month intervals at each household for a period of 3 years. Two of the interviews are done in person and the others by telephone if possible.

The potential uses of the NCVS for NISMART purposes include a model for a more productive and efficient screening strategy, a uniform data collection instrument, as well as a model for interviewing children 12 years and older. Another suggestion that was made was to supplement the NCVS by adding questions to gather information about abductions. A recent 12-minute supplement to the NCVS administered to 17,000 respondents cost $600,000. In Chapter 7.0 of this report, we discuss the NCVS supplement topic in greater detail.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) data were presented by John Rabun of NCMEC. These data are based on phone calls to the NCMEC hotline. The center's staff gather data to assist in the casework and technical assistance with which the NCMEC is charged, but they do not conduct research per se on that data. They use this information to help find missing children. They do not have any cases of thrownaways, but do have a data set of more than 8,000 intake cases. From January 1990 to the present, they have identified 390 lost or otherwise missing children, 305 nonfamily abductions, 3,085 family abductions, and 4,300 endangered runaways. These data may have NISMART-relevant information regarding details of stereotypical nonfamily abductions and important information about family abductions.

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) was described by Karen Bower Mead of RTI. NCIC is a computerized index for the exchange of information among law enforcement groups. Two major points about NCIC are (a) that the involuntary category of NCIC cases might be helpful and might be traced back for further information by the identifying number to the agency with the original agency and file; and (b) that part of NCIC 2000 includes the separation of involuntary cases into family and nonfamily incidents, which offers further potential for identifying nonfamily abductions. NCIC's involuntary category consists of a subset of individuals entered on the Missing Person File. "Involuntary" refers to a person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance may not have been voluntary (i.e., abduction or kidnapping). An additional comment was made that for the time being, there may be a bigger payoff with the NCIC by searching the free text for classifications of nonfamily abductions as opposed to tracing them back to the originating agency.

4.7 DEFINITIONS OF "RUNAWAY" AND "THROWNAWAY" FOR NISMART II

As a result of her analysis of the NISMART I definitions of "runaway" and "thrownaway" and her study of NISMART I data, Patty Dietz (a consultant to the National Network of Runaway and Youth Services) presented suggestions for modifying these definitions, including the following:

- Eliminate overlap between the definitions for "runaway" and "thrownaway." Currently, a child who has run away from home and whose caregiver refuses to allow the child back in the home was counted twice by NISMART I—as a runaway and a thrownaway. Also, a child counted in the runaway gesture category will be counted in the lost and otherwise missing category. It was suggested that these definitional overlaps be eliminated. One possibility is to count as runaways children whose parents actually wanted them to return; thrownaways would consist of those children whose parents showed no interest in their return or made no attempt to find the child.

- Make the time period for counting runaways consistent across definitions. Currently, a 15- to 17-year-old child who leaves home with permission but does not come home when required must be away for 2 nights to be counted as a runaway; a child under age 15 must be gone only 1 night. Ms. Dietz felt that this age distinction was arbitrary and should be eliminated. Because the intent of this age distinction in NISMART I was to eliminate "curfew violations," which may be more prevalent among older teens, she suggested that simply interviewing youth would be a better method of identifying their reasons for staying away from home.

- Revise the policy focal definitions. Currently, the policy focal definitions add one criterion to the broad scope definitions: that the child was not in a "familiar and secure" place. This criterion is not clearly defined and is subject to individual interpretations. It was suggested that "familiar and secure" be replaced with a combination of dimensions, such as age, length of time away, or number of lifetime runaway incidents. Another suggestion was to ask the caregiver whether he or she knew where the child was during the episode; if the caregiver did not know or did not verify where the child was, then the case could be counted as policy focal.

- Clarify the intent of estimating runaway incidents. Many of the definitional decisions to be made should be based on a clearly stated goal for the estimates. This goal has not yet been clearly identified.

- Clarify the intent of estimating runaways and thrownaways separately. The relevant distinguishing attributes of runaways versus thrownaways need to be identified in order to make the distinction meaningful. There is a lack of consensus in the literature on the definition of "thrownaway."

Participants also supported the idea of including transient youth or youth whose families fail to supervise closely and who spend the majority of their time away from home as NISMART-relevant cases. This may be acceptable in some U.S. subcultures more than in others, and such children may not be reported by caregivers in the current NISMART design. Participants in the session felt that these children should be included in NISMART II.

It was also mentioned that "runaway" and "thrownaway" are viewed as artificial categories in the field–that a more global term with subcategories that define attributes of the population of interest should be used. It was also suggested that final case-type classification decisions should not be made until all case characteristics are considered.

4.8 VALIDITY ISSUES

The accuracy of respondents' reporting is an issue for NISMART II. Reporting accuracy is relevant in at least three ways: the identification of relevant events, then correct classification, and finally an accurate depiction of event characteristics. The focus of this discussion centered on the possibility of seeding the NISMART II sample and other alternatives for examining validity. Seeding the sample would involve identifying a number of known incident cases before sampling and including these cases with certainty in the sample. The consensus of the participants was that such a strategy would not be worthwhile because it would be too costly and not very reliable. Individuals experienced with the NCVS noted that one major problem would be false nonmatches

(i.e., the failure of an individual to identify a known case). Participants did feel that seeding a *pretest* sample would be useful. For example, identifying cases of interest would be helpful for pretesting a new survey instrument.

The participants felt that a more important validity measure is conducting interviews with children. NISMART I found a relatively high level of consistency in the reporting of runaway incidents by parents and children. Parent and child perceptions of the details of incidents often differed, but there was usually a consensus regarding the occurrence and type of incident. This might also be expanded in NISMART II to include interviews with children about other types of incidents. These interviews could provide an idea of the validity of caretaker reporting for all types of incidents. One problem in asking parents and children about the same types of episodes is the difficulty in knowing whether they are actually talking about the same event.

The participants also felt that secondary data sources might also help establish the level of validity of the NISMART estimates. Sources such as NCMEC and NCIC might be examined to determine whether they develop estimates of NISMART incidents that are similar to those from NISMART.

It should be noted that all three methods for examining the accuracy of reporting (seeding the sample, comparing caretaker and child responses, comparing NISMART occurrences with alternative sources of missing events) are limited due to the absence of a known validity standard. The three approaches look at the consistency of different sources of information and assume higher validity when consistency is high. All of the missing event information sources contain errors.

4.9 MODIFICATIONS TO DEFINITIONS OF "FAMILY ABDUCTION" AND "OTHERWISE MISSING"

According to NISMART I, "family abductions" include events in which (a) a child was taken in violation of a custody order and was gone overnight, or (b) when a family member failed to return a child at the legal end of a visit and the child was kept at least overnight. Sometimes, these events are characterized as "takings" and "keepings." The latter category is often further distinguished by the custodial status of the perpetrator. Custodial keepings usually involve a custodial parent's refusal to allow a visit to a noncustodial parent in violation of a custody order.

Three major questions were addressed by Dr. Peggy S. Plass of the University of Virginia regarding the modification of NISMART's definition of family abductions: Are there significant enough differences between takings and keepings to distinguish them? How should they be distinguished? How should they then be counted? After Dr. Plass

presented a comparison of takings and keepings found in the first NISMART project, it was clear that there are observable differences between these types of incidents. For example, takings more often involved police contact, threats, and efforts to conceal and harm the child; parents, moreover, often perceived takings as kidnappings. Of all the family abduction incidents, takings were more likely to fall into the more serious policy focal category. However, that does not necessarily mean that keepings are benign situations. Although the takings may appear more serious, some of the keepings had longer durations, and some involved harm to the child.

The discussion briefly considered the elements of time gone from a parent, distance taken, and harm to the child. Although these factors may contribute to the seriousness of a case, they do not represent elements that can by themselves be risk factors used to determine whether a case in which a parent keeps a child is as serious as one counted as a taking. It was decided that although there is a need to find out about the less serious keepings, only the more serious ones should be counted as family abductions. Some other suggestions included using the policy focal elements for keeping incidents and counting them if they were met, and adding other possible criteria specific for keeping events, such as concealing, keeping longer than a week, and preventing contact.

The question was also raised as to whether the inclusion of cases should be differentiated depending on which parent is doing the keeping. Also, an element that might influence the level of seriousness for a keeping incidence is the whereabouts of the child. Events in which a child's whereabouts are unknown to the parent who is not keeping the child might be considered more serious. The group also suggested the possibility that for either the custodial or noncustodial parent, a possible definition of a countable keeping would include having the child in violation of a custody order in any place other than the custodial or noncustodial parent's residence.

It was also observed that some noncustodial parents who have experienced "keeping" events may be screened out of NISMART because the child did not live with them for 2 weeks during the year. Thus, parents without custody whose child did not stay with him or her for a least 2 weeks during the year could experience serious events that would not be captured using the NISMART I methodology.

4.10 POLICE RECORDS STUDY METHODOLOGY

The PRS used law enforcement agency records to identify incidents of nonfamily abduction. As a result of a review of NISMART I's PRS methodology and data, Dr. Mary Ellen McCalla of RTI discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the NISMART I's PRS

and presented some ideas on how to improve the PRS for NISMART II. The strengths included

- scientifically defensible, credible estimates of nonfamily abductions;
- a high level of cooperation and support from law enforcement agencies;
- a national-level estimate of such incidents; and
- comparability of NISMART I and II data.

Some of the weaknesses were that

- the study was unable to identify cases that were not reported to the police;
- a large amount of data on a few crucial definitional elements were missing from the police records;
- the project was costly and labor-intensive;
- little information on risk factors, correlates, or the effects on children was provided; and
- there was little comparability with the rest of NISMART data (NISMART unit of analysis: child; PRS unit of analysis: incident).

Dr. McCalla suggested some modifications to the PRS for NISMART II:

- Examine the sex offense files in all sampled counties rather than in just four (as was done in NISMART I).
- Examine other types of files in addition to homicide, kidnapping/abduction, missing persons, and sex offenses (e.g., assaults).
- Modify the rules for classifying incidents as abductions.

Still unresolved after the session was the question of whether the strengths of the PRS outweigh the weaknesses, even after making the suggested modifications. Many participants felt that, although the PRS may not be as methodologically strong as other components of NISMART, the PRS should be retained in NISMART II because there are few alternatives for identifying incidents of nonfamily abductions. Some also pointed out the importance of law enforcement support for NISMART. Because the PRS uses police records, the law enforcement community has adopted the NISMART estimates more readily than estimates from other studies.

Participants also made suggestions for eliminating parts of the PRS. This would reduce the expense of the study, but parts would be kept in order to maintain the support of law enforcement. For example, some suggested that PRS of only homicide cases could be conducted; the assumption was that other nonfamily abductions might be identified with an improved Household Survey, particularly if interviews with children are included. Some also suggested using other data, such as Missing Children Comprehensive Action Program (MCAP) data, NCIC, NCMEC, the Supplemental Homicide Reports, or a newspaper search. Such sources may provide data on stereotypical abductions that could be combined with data from the Household Survey.

No clear consensus was reached in this session because of unresolved questions:

- Can a Household Survey instrument be developed that will improve the identification of nonfamily abductions in the Household Survey sufficiently for incidence estimation?
- Could the definition of nonfamily abductions be modified to reduce the missing data problem in police records?
- Will NISMART II include more interviews with children who could identify short-term nonfamily abductions that their parents do not know about?

Until these questions are answered, no decision can be made about the PRS. RTI staff will attempt to answer some of these questions during the remainder of the planning grant period.

4.11 PANEL TO DISCUSS STRATEGY FOR DISSEMINATION OF NISMART II FINDINGS

This session was begun by the presentation of conclusions drawn from the Key Informants Survey's comments about dissemination issues. (Chapter 3.0 of this report discusses this survey.) These conclusions were that, although NISMART was a groundbreaking initiative and was influential enough for NCMEC to adopt the NISMART categories of children, many groups who are potential beneficiaries of NISMART had never heard of the project. Suggestions included targeting audiences of interest or relevance as part of the NISMART II planning process. Additionally, those target audiences should be given input opportunities to make suggestions about the kind of information that would be useful to them. It was also suggested that NISMART II products be developed for particular audiences, such as law enforcement, service providers, and researchers.

The balance of the discussion about the dissemination strategy of NISMART II concentrated on the importance of maintaining the dialogue between potential users and

researchers, announcements and conferences on the findings and user instruction for analyzing the data, user-friendly documentation, and finding appropriate multiple sources through which to release the information about the findings. To be effective, more people need to be aware of and understand the findings of NISMART. Most people do not want to read more than one page or a brief article such as they might find in USA Today. NISMART I provided more data than people would want to absorb. It should also be noted, however, that the scientific and policy issues are complex and cannot be reduced to brief articles or short discussions in broadcast media.

The NISMART II numbers will likely create disagreement among some groups. However, it was agreed that a Key Informant Survey and focus groups will be helpful in determining what information should be gathered to maximize utility. It was suggested that this group input process might temper the disagreement regarding methodology, and subsequently there may be a greater chance for a consensus about the results. Additionally, some investigation needs to be done on how to address the needs of law enforcement with NISMART information. It was suggested that a list of policy issues be developed that were not addressed in the first NISMART and should be in NISMART II. It was suggested that these policy issues be determined prior to beginning NISMART II and the list be formed based on the input of focus groups.

It was also suggested that OJJDP follow up on how NISMART data are being used after dissemination.

4.12 CONCLUSION

During a final discussion at the symposium, a number of suggestions were made for methodological work that might be conducted during the final months of the planning grant:

- review previous studies that included child interviews to help decide whether to use child respondents in NISMART II;
- review the cognitive psychology literature on interviewing children for purpose of phrasing questions, designing screening questions, understanding language uses, and so on;
- design a new screener for the Household Survey (see Fairchild, 1993);
- develop new procedures for rostering household residents;
- examine the potential of the NCIC to support NISMART II;

- examine the literature on the legal definitions of family abductions;
- design a new unified incident report form for the Household Survey;
- refine definitions for all NISMART case types;
- specify the populations of interest for NISMART II,
- consider the possibility of a supplement to the NCVS for NISMART II;
- incorporate input from the OJJDP-funded "Testing Incident-Based Reporting Systems for Studying Child Abductions" work; and
- consider whether to conduct a PRS in NISMART II.

Some of this work was undertaken during the July to December 1993 time period. The results are reported in Chapters 5.0 through 7.0 of this report.

5.0 HOUSEHOLD SURVEY QUESTIONS

5.1 APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT OF NEW QUESTIONS

Discussions among staff at OJJDP, BJS, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and RTI indicated that several possible changes for NISMART II survey methods were under consideration. One potential change with clear implications for the content of Household Survey questions was the use of youth, aged 12 to 17, as the primary respondents in the survey. Based on the high likelihood that such an approach would be adopted, RTI staff began drafting a set of questions for the purposes of identifying missing, abducted, runaway and thrownaway children.

The questions were intended to be asked of children rather than adult respondents. As a result, extant questions from NISMART I would not be useful. It was necessary to write new questions that would ask the youth about his or her own experiences, rather than asking parents or guardians about their children's experiences. In cases where youthful respondents are unavailable, use of parents or guardians as proxy respondents (as was done in NISMART I) would be considered. Questions from NISMART I could be used for this purpose.

RTI staff reviewed the literature on children's ability to give valid reports of past events (Kennedy, 1993; see Appendix E). This review examined cognitive and developmental psychology literature on memory and children's ability to report autobiographical events. Although the literature does not paint a complete picture, it indicates that children aged 10 and older should be able to remember episodes like those covered by the NISMART surveys, they should be able to provide valid reports of them, and they are not necessarily motivated to conceal the truth. The literature suggests that wording of questions may be important in encouraging adolescent respondents to adopt optimal memory search strategies in answering questions.

The questions presented here should be considered draft questions. The questions were designed to capture the definitions of the different missing, abducted, runaway, and thrownaway incidents. They were not designed to necessarily be "user friendly" for children who are asked to answer them. Before these questions can be used in a survey setting, they will need developmental pretesting to ensure that they can elicit reliable and valid answers from appropriate respondents.

Telephone surveys are usually conducted using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) methodology. CATI methods allow complex branching in questioning, so that incidents identified in the initial stages of questioning can be followed up with

questions designed to clarify ambiguous answers. Computer programs can also direct an interviewer to ask whatever further questions are needed for episode classification and description. Viewed in this light, the questions presented here can be seen as the starting point for a series of questions that would collect all necessary information for such identification.

In designing these screening questions, we assumed that they would be asked of youth respondents after a household screening respondent has provided information about the household's composition. Specifically, we assumed that during the process of household rostering, the following information will be collected: (a) who the child lives with (both, one, or neither parent), (b) who the child's legal guardians are (if not the parents), and (c) whether separated parents have legal or informal custody arrangements for their children.

5.2 NEW SCREENING QUESTIONS DESIGNED FOR USE IN NISMART II

Figure 2 systematically compares the definitions of different types of incidents with draft screening questions designed to measure them. It also identifies definitional features for which additional questions must be written. Unless otherwise noted, all definitions reflect those definitions identified in Chapter 2.0 and Appendix A. We have also tried to be responsive to concerns about screening questions expressed by Dietz (1993), Plass (1993), and others at the June 1993 symposium (see Chapter 4.0).

Questions are intended to serve as screening questions to select respondents for later, in-depth questioning about any episodes found in screening. This was the design used in the NISMART I Household Survey. We made a point of designing the questions to be as inclusive as possible, so that cases that may or may not turn out to fit definitions of one or more of categories of missing children would be screened into the survey. These questions were <u>not</u> designed to make definitive categorizations. The questions provided here are designed to collect complete incidence information for the definitions indicated in Figure 2.

5.3 UNRESOLVED ISSUES AND DECISIONS

The draft questions presented here have been designed by making certain assumptions about the forthcoming NISMART II, but some decisions have not yet been made. To the extent that these assumptions turn out to be incorrect, then modifications of these questions may be necessary. Key assumptions are as follows:

- We assume that the current categories of missing children will remain essentially unchanged. However, several criticisms of these

definitions emerged at the Planning Symposium (see Chapter 4.0) and several alternative definitions were suggested. We have drafted questions in response to some of these concerns, but decisions remain as to which definitions will be adopted for the various incident types. For instance, if the distinction between broad scope and policy focal events is dropped, the definitions of events would change and questions measuring them would also change.

- We assume that OJJDP has made the decision that the purpose of NISMART II will be to measure the incidence of various categories of missing child episodes. Thus, questions about the details of an incident will be asked only to the extent that they are necessary to definitively identify the type of episode that took place.

- We assume that OJJDP has decided to use youth, aged 12 to 17, as the respondents in NISMART II, not their parents. If the decision is made to use adult respondents, or if adult proxies for unavailable youth are to be interviewed, then questions from NISMART I can be used. Appendix F indicates which NISMART I questions could be included in an incidence survey where adults are respondents.

- The present set of questions has not been designed to resolve the problem of episodes that might fall under more than one type of incident, such as a runaway who is abducted during the episode. Decisions about resolution of such episodes must be made and incorporated into the architecture of the survey, with decision rules programmed into the CATI software. This may result in the need for additional questions to clarify such episodes.

- We also recommend additional testing of these draft questions. We designed the questions to cover the definitions of various categories of missing children. However, we do not know whether a nationally probability sample of respondents will interpret these questions in a way that produces reliable and valid answers. To establish this with confidence requires both pilot testing using a variety of cognitive methods (see Forsyth & Lessler, 1991) and pretesting using larger probability samples. In addition, testing is also necessary to see that the questions are appropriate for the mode of interviewing that is adopted for NISMART II. Question wording may differ somewhat if questions are asked in a face-to-face household survey rather than in a CATI telephone survey.

- We assume that the methodology to be adopted in NISMART II will be a stand-alone household survey, rather than an add-on to the NCVS. The set of questions we have designed is probably too extensive, therefore, for use in an already lengthy survey.

FIGURE 2. DEFINITIONS OF INCIDENTS AND IDENTIFYING QUESTIONS		
CONCEPT	**DEFINITION**	**QUESTION**
A. Broad scope runaway	Child who has have left home or stayed away from home without permission, at least overnight.	A1. In the past year, did you spend a night away from home when your parent/guardians didn't know where your were? A1.1 Have you done this more than once? A2. In the past year, did you spend a night away from home when your parent/guardians did not give you permission to be away from home? A2.1 Have you done this more than once?
	Child who has made a statement or left a note indicating intent to run away and stayed away at least overnight.	A3. In the past year, did you tell your parent/guardians you were going to run away from home/ leave home without permission? A3.1 When this happened, did you actually run away/leave? A3.2 Have you done this more than once?
	Child who was away and chose not to come home when expected, and child stayed away overnight.	A4. In the past year, did you ever fail to come home when your parents thought you would come home? A4.1 When this happened, did you stay away from home overnight?
B. Policy focal runaway	Child who meets broad scope runaway definition, and who has no familiar and secure place to stay.	B1. The last night you spent away from your family, <u>where</u> did you spend the night? B2. The last night you spent away from your family, <u>who</u> did you stay with?
Alternative policy focal runaway (Dietz, 1993)	Broad scope runaway where child has run away or been a thrownaway more than once.	A1.2, A2.2, A3.3., A4.2 Have you done this more than once?
C. Runaway gesture	Child who makes statement or leaves note indicating intent to run away but does not stay away overnight.	C1. In the past year, did you tell your parent/guardians you were going to run away from home/ leave home without permission?

FIGURE 2 (Continued)		
CONCEPT	**DEFINITION**	**QUESTION**
D. Nonfamily abduction	When a child was taken by the use of force or threat or detained by the use of force or threat for a substantial period in isolation by a nonfamily member without either lawful authority or the permission of a parent/ guardian.	D1. In the past year, has someone taken you away or moved you from where you belong? D1.1 When this happened, were you forced to go or was force threatened against you? D1.2 When this happened, were you taken or moved against your will? D1.3 When this happened, were you taken or moved by someone who was not a member of your family? D1.4 When this happened, were you taken or moved without your parents/guardians' permission? D1.5 When this happened, were you taken or moved by someone who was not a member of your family or someone with legal authority, like a police officer or sheriff? D2. In the past year, has someone detained or kept where you didn't want to be? D2.1 When this happened, were you forced to stay or was force threatened against you? D2.2 When this happened, were you detained or kept against your will? D2.3 When this happened, were you detained or kept by someone who was not a member of your family? D2.4 When this happened, were you detained or kept without your parents/guardians' permission? D2.5 When this happened, were you taken or moved by someone who was not a member of your family or someone with legal authority, like a police officer or sheriff?

FIGURE 2 (Continued)

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	QUESTION
Nonfamily abduction (continued)	When a child who is 14 or younger or who is under 18 and mentally incompetent is taken by or voluntarily went with or was detained by a nonfamily member without either lawful authority or the permission of a parent/guardian and the perpetrator (1) concealed the child's whereabouts or (2) requested ransom, goods, or services in exchange for the child's return, or (3) expresses an intention to keep the child permanently.	**To each set of questions (D1. & D2.) add the following:** .6 When this happened, did the person who took you hide you or prevent you from having contact with your parent/ guardians? .7 When this happened, did the person who took you ask for ransom or something in exchange before giving you back? .8 When this happened, did the person who took you say he or she planned to keep you permanently?
	Child was taken by or voluntarily went with a nonfamily member who, at the time that the person took or went away with the child, had the apparent purpose of physically or sexually assaulting the child.	D3. In the past year, have you ever been taken or detained, by someone who tried to attack, beat up, rob, or sexually assault you? D4. In the past year, have you ever voluntarily gone with someone who later tried to attack, beat up, rob, or sexually assault you?
E. Broad scope family abduction	When a family member took a child in violation of a custody agreement or decree.	E1. In the past year, did any member of your family, or someone helping a family member, keep you from going home when your parent/ guardians didn't want you to stay away? E2. In the past year, did someone in your family, or someone helping a family member, take you away from home in violation of a custody order, agreement, or other living arrangement for you?
F. Broad scope family abduction (continued)	When a family member fails to return or give over a child and the child was away at least overnight in violation of a custody agreement or decree.	F1. In the past year, did any member of your family at home prevent you from your staying overnight with a family member outside your home when you were supposed to stay there? F2. In the past year, did someone in your family, or someone helping a family member, keep you when it was not their time to have you according to a custody order, agreement, or other living arrangement? F2.1 When this happened, did you stay away from home overnight?

FIGURE 2 (Continued)

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	QUESTION
G. Policy focal family abduction	An attempt was made to conceal the taking or whereabouts of the child or to prevent contact with the child.	G1. In the past year, did any member of your family hide you or prevent you from having contact with your parent/ guardians?
	The child was transported out of the State in the course of the event.	G1.2 When this happened, did you leave the State you were living in?
	The perpetrator made statements or took actions that indicated an intent to prevent contact with the child indefinitely OR to use the episode to permanently affect custodial privileges.	G1.3 When this happened, did the family member who had you keep you from contacting your family or say they would? G1.4 When this happened, did the family member who had you try to keep you permanently?
	The child's absence was ended or averted only because of the substantial efforts of the person from whom the child was taken or kept.	G1.5 When this happened, did you return home to the rightful parent only because she or he tried hard to get you back?
	(For child 15 or older) some kind of force or threat is used against the child.	G1.6 When this happened, did the family member who took/kept you use force against you or threaten to use force?
H. Denial of visitation family abduction (Plass, 1993)	An event that involved one parent (or other family member) with major custody of the child and one parent with visitation rights in which the custodial parent (as the abduction perpetrator) refused to allow legitimate visitation with the child, keeping the child in his/her regular place of residence.	H1. In the past year, did one of your parents refuse to let you make a planned visit to another parent who had visitation rights? H1.1 When this happened, did you stay at home with the parent who wouldn't let you visit?
I. Broad scope thrownaway	The child's parent or other adult in household asks the child to leave home, fails to arrange adequate alternative care, and the child is out of the household for at least one night.	I1. In the past year, did any adult in your home tell you to leave home or make you leave home? I1.1 When this happened, did you ask to come back home? I1.2 When this happened, did your parent/guardians arrange another place for you to stay? I1.3 When this happened, did you stay away from home overnight? I1.4 Has this happened to you more than once?

FIGURE 2 (Continued)		
CONCEPT	**DEFINITION**	**QUESTION**
Broad Scope Thrownaway (continued)	The child is away and asks to return but parent or some adult in the household refuses to allow the child to return, fails to arrange adequate alternative care, and the child is out of the household for at least 1 night.	I2. In the past year, did any adult in your home decide not to allow you to come back home? I2.1 When this happened, did you ask to come back home? I2.2 When this happened, did your parent/guardians arrange another place for you to stay? I2.3 When this happened, did you stay away from home overnight? I2.4 Has this happened to you more than once?
	The child has run away or left and the parent/guardian makes no effort to recover the child or states that it does not matter whether the child stays away or returns, and the child is out of the household for at least 1 night.	I3. In the past year, did you ever feel that your parent/guardians wanted you to leave home and you did leave home? I3.1 When this happened, did your parent/guardians try to find you? I3.2 When this happened, did your parent/guardians arrange another place for you to stay? I3.3 When this happened, did you stay away from home overnight? I3.4 Has this happened to you more than once?
J. Policy focal thrownaway	Broad scope thrownaway where the child is without a familiar and secure place to stay.	**To each set of questions (I1., I2. & I3.) add the following:** • When this happened, where did you stay overnight?
	The parent abandons the child, deserting the child either permanently or indefinitely without prearranged provision for someone else assuming the child's custody or a permanent on indefinite basis.	J1. In the past year, did any adult in your home abandon you or leave you without a way to get home and without anyone to take care or you?
K. Alternative policy focal thrownaway (Plass, 1993)	Child who meets broad scope thrownaway definition, and who has been a thrownaway more than once.	**To each set of questions (I1., I2., I3., & J1.) add the following:** • Has this happened to you more than once?
L. Broad scope lost, injured, and otherwise missing	The child disappears from home or from parent's supervision and cannot be located.	L1. In the past year, was there a period lasting more than 8 hours when your parent/ guardians tried to find you and couldn't?

FIGURE 2 (Continued)		
CONCEPT	**DEFINITION**	**QUESTION**
M. Policy focal lost, injured, and otherwise missing	Meets broad scope definition and where the police were contacted to assist in locating the child.	L1.1 When this happened, did your parents/guardians call the police to help try to find you?
N. Transient youth (Dietz, 1993)	Youth who are transient, whose families fail to supervise closely, and who spend the majority of their time away from home, but who also check in every few days.	N1. In the past year, was there a time when your parent/ guardians did not know where you were living? N2. In the past year, was there a time when you spent most nights away from home without your parents knowing where you were, even if you checked in with your parents every few days?

6.0 POLICE RECORDS STUDY

NISMART I used the Police Records Study (PRS) data, extracted from police reports of abductions, homicides, and sex offenses, to estimate the incidence of nonfamily abductions (NFAs). This study was included in NISMART I because the researchers anticipated that the Household Survey might not identify enough cases for reliable estimation. The PRS was labor intensive and very expensive. The researchers examined 2,870 police records of homicides, abductions, and sex offenses to identify 824 cases that were "in-scope" (or eligible for further study by NISMART rules) and, within that number, 396 cases that were legal abductions that fit at least one of three definitions developed for the study. The NISMART I researchers noted that the PRS had other limitations, including:

- the study could not identify cases that had not been reported to the police;
- because sex offense records were examined in a small proportion of the study jurisdictions, estimates based on them were of unknown bias and reliability;
- abductions that may have occurred in conjunction with offenses not included in the study sample (such as robbery) were not counted by the PRS; and
- some of the detail required by the definitions was not available from police reports; thus, there were probably some NFAs not counted because of missing data.

The last of these limitations is the central concern of this chapter.

At the Planning Symposium, the value of including a PRS in NISMART II was questioned because of its expense and the large amount of missing data on some data items necessary to determine whether cases could be counted as abductions. Discussion of this question indicated that the actual effect of missing data on the researchers' ability to determine case countability was unclear because countability was determined through a rather complex process in which decisions took account of the total situation described in a case record as well as data available regarding specific details.

The purpose of the analyses presented in this chapter is to try to determine the extent and nature of the missing data problem and to examine its effect on the NFA estimates. We first describe the NISMART I PRS methods to introduce terminology and provide the reader with information about how decisions were made from the data available. We next describe our analyses of the missing data for items relevant to

counting cases as fitting each of the three legal NFA definitions used in NISMART I and how missing data affected case countability overall. Finally, we present and discuss recommendations regarding including a PRS as part of NISMART II.

6.1 DESCRIPTION OF POLICE RECORDS STUDY

The PRS was a systematic examination of police records to identify cases fitting the study's NFA definitions and, based on these, estimate the number of NFAs known to law enforcement agencies. As mentioned above, this methodology was developed because the researchers anticipated that the number of NFAs identified through the Household Survey methodology might be too small to produce reliable estimates. In addition, the researchers thought that NFAs would have a high rate of being reported to law enforcement agencies.

The PRS sample used a multistage, stratified sampling procedure, with stages being geographic areas, police departments, and case records. The sample consisted of 21 counties, 83 police departments, and eligible records for abductions (or kidnappings), homicides, missing persons where it was unknown what happened to the child, and sex offenses (in 4 counties only). All police records for these offenses were examined unless the number of cases in the files was too large for time and resource constraints. In these situations, sampling of cases was done to yield approximately 100 cases per type of crime.

Table 5 shows sampling and screening results from NISMART I. The first column shows the number of eligible cases, or those cases identified by the police departments as fitting the study criteria. The second column shows the number of cases that went through the screening process. As this shows, some of the counties' case files were large enough to require sampling. The third column shows the number of cases that were deemed in-scope after the screening process. In-scope cases were those

- in which a child under the age of 18 years was the victim of a homicide, abduction, or sex offense perpetrated by a non-family member,
- that occurred during the study period, and
- that met the residence criterion (the child victim must have lived in the study county at the time of the incident [except for homicide cases]).

The last column shows the percentage of screened cases that turned out to be in-scope. This shows that the yield rate was less than 50%, highlighting the fact that the study was very time-consuming and labor intensive.

TABLE 5

NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE, SCREENED, AND IN-SCOPE RECORDS BY CASE TYPE FOR NISMART I

Case Type	Eligible	Screened	In-Scope	Yield
Homicide	410	410	183	45%
Abduction/Missing Person				
In PSUs with Sampling	2,011	447	152	34
In PSUs with No Sampling	447	447	176	39
Total	2,458	894	328	37
Sex Offense				
In PSUs with Sampling	4,765	1,269	259	20
In PSUs with No Sampling	297	297	54	18
Total	5,062	1,566	313	20
Total	7,930	2,870	824	29

PSU = Primary sampling unit.

Note: Adapted from Sedlak, A. J., Mohadjer, L., McFarland, J., & Hudock, V. (1990). Police Records Study methodology. Table 4-1, p. 4-4.

Each of the 824 in-scope cases went through a three-phase process to determine whether the case could be counted as any of the three study definitions of legal NFAs:

- NFA Definition 1: Child was taken by the use of force or threat or detained by the use of force or threat for a substantial period in a place of isolation by a nonfamily member without either lawful authority or the permission of a parent/guardian; or
- NFA Definition 2: Child who is 14 or younger or who is under 18 and mentally incompetent was taken by or voluntarily went with or was detained by a nonfamily member without either lawful authority or the permission of a parent/guardian and the perpetrator (1) concealed the child's whereabouts, or (2) requested ransom, goods, or services in exchange for the child's return, or (3) expressed an intention to keep the child permanently; or
- NFA Definition 3: Child was taken by or voluntarily went with a nonfamily member who, at the time that person took or went away with the child, had the apparent purpose of physically or sexually assaulting the child.

The three-phase process included the

- data extraction phase,
- evaluative coding phase, and
- determination of countability phase.

In the data extraction phase, trained extractors (often police department personnel) collected data from the police reports on standard forms. These forms requested narrative information about the case, demographic information about the victim and the perpetrator, specific information about the crime, and information about the outcomes for the perpetrator. Information was collected for all of the elements of the three definitions above (we call these definitional elements). For example, at the core of all three definitions, a child was taken, lured, or detained (we call these the core definitional elements). The data extractors were trained to look for the following types of evidence for the core definitional elements:

- Taken: The record extractors were asked to determine whether the child was moved by the perpetrator at any time during the incident. The movement must have been planned for and desired by the perpetrator (i.e., they were not to include the child running away from the perpetrator or any movement of the child by someone trying to assist the child). The extractors were asked to write down the evidence from the police record that showed that the child was moved.

They were also asked to write down, if available, the distance the child was moved and the locations from and to which the child was moved.

- Lured: The record extractors were asked to determine whether at any time during the incident the perpetrator offered promises or enticements to the child under false pretenses as a means of imposing his/her will on the child. The extractors were also asked to provide the evidence from the record and to indicate what the lure was (e.g., falsehood/lies, money, candy/toys, other).

- Detained: The record extractors were asked to determine whether the child was confined, kept in custody, or prevented from proceeding by the perpetrator for any period of time during the incident. The detainment could have been accomplished through obvious means (e.g., tying child to chair) or subtle means (e.g., implying that he/she would stop the child from leaving). Again, the extractors were asked to provide the evidence from the police record.

As an example, detainment was handled in the following manner on the extraction form:

A. DETAINMENT (Circle the one that best describes whether, at any time during the incident, the victim was confined, kept in custody, or prevented from proceeding by the perpetrator.)

1 = Definitely, there was detainment
2 = Possibly, there was detainment
3 = Definitely, there was not detainment
9 = The record does not provide sufficient evidence to select one of the above.

B. EVIDENCE FROM RECORD USED TO ANSWER ABOVE (Include (1) the form or means of detainment and (2) when it occurred during the course of the incident.)

(Room was available to write in evidence.)

Similar information was requested for taking, luring, and the other definitional elements. Some definitional elements were easier to extract than others (e.g., age of child and child's relationship to the perpetrator were often easier to determine than whether the child was taken, lured, or detained). But the data extractors were instructed to choose "possibly" or "insufficient evidence" if they could not make a definite determination. In part because data extractors were unsure about many of these definitional elements, the cases went through the next phase–the evaluative coding phase.

In the evaluative coding phase, trained coders evaluated the likelihood that each definitional element occurred within each case. Using the detainment example again, the coder was able to examine the detainment question from the extraction form as well as all other extracted information (including the narrative) to determine whether the child was detained. Coders were asked to determine whether it was more or less than 50% likely that the child was detained. The same likelihood determinations were required for all of the definitional elements for all three definitions (i.e., the core definitional elements plus the rest of the definitional elements, which we call the contingency definitional elements). A variable coded as "very probable" had an 80% or greater probability of occurring, according to the evaluative coder. A variable coded as "probable" had a 51% to 79% probability of occurring. Attempted takings and detainings were coded in the same manner. If a variable had had a 49% or less than a 50% probability of occurring, it was coded as "unlikely." If no other code applied (i.e., it was not possible to make an up-or-down decision about whether circumstances of the case fit a definitional element) because there was not enough information, the variable was coded as "insufficient evidence." Variables coded N/A followed a skip pattern (e.g., if taken was coded unlikely, then force/threat and no permission were not coded at all).

Work in this phase was done by individuals at the research organization and brought some consistency to the data extraction done in the field. This phase was more subjective because in many cases judgment calls had to be made due to insufficient evidence. For example, the evaluative coders were asked to determine whether the child was moved, but the movement must have been at least 20 feet or into a vehicle or a building. Unfortunately, data on distance moved were unavailable in 90% of the homicide and abduction/missing persons cases and in 99% of the sex offense files. Time detained (a contingency element required in NFA definition 1 as "substantial period") was not available in 53% of the homicide and abduction/missing persons cases and in 64% of the sex offense files. This meant that the evaluative coders had to make their judgments with incomplete or less specific information. (For example, distance might be described as "halfway across the park)." Evaluators were also asked to code "insufficient evidence" if there was too little information to justify coding a definitional element either as more than 50% likely or less. Thorough training and quality control helped ensure that the judgment calls were made consistently.

The last phase determined whether the case could be counted as an NFA under any of the three definitions. For example, under NFA definition 1, each case was examined to determine whether all definitional elements were more than 50% likely. If so, the case was counted under NFA definition 1. The same procedure was used to determine whether a case may have been counted under NFA definitions 2 and 3. A

case may have counted under one or more of these definitions; any case that was counted under at least one definition went into the final NFA count.

6.2 ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

We used simple frequencies and cross-tabulations to examine and describe the extent of the missing data in the NISMART I PRS and the effect that missing data had on the researchers' ability to classify cases. As noted above, the most important definitional elements for determining that cases fit the study definitions of countable cases were taking, luring, and detaining. The NISMART NFA definitions all include one or more of these elements. The definitions differ in what can be called "contingent circumstances," or the circumstances associated with an act of taking, luring, or detaining. (For example, definitions 1 and 2 differ in that, to satisfy definition 1, the perpetrator had to take or detain the victim by force or threat of force while no force is involved in definition 2.) Our analyses focused on these three "core" elements.

We began by examining in some detail the definitional elements for taking and detaining according to NFA definition 1. Comparison of the extracted version of each variable with the evaluator's coding indicated that the evaluative coders apparently disagreed with the record extractors fairly frequently regarding the likelihood that the taking or detaining had occurred, and about the sufficiency of the evidence for the occurrence. For individual cases, the evaluated versions of these variables were coded differently from the extracted versions up to a third of the time in the data examined (data not presented). The aggregate percentage distributions of the evaluated versions of these variables did not differ substantially from the aggregate distributions of the extracted versions, however. That is, the percentage of cases where the record extractors thought a victim had been detained, for example, tended to be very similar to the percentage where the evaluator thought the victim had been detained. Similarly, the percentage of cases where extractors thought there was insufficient evidence to code a definitional element did not differ substantially from the percentage where evaluators had that opinion. Because the overall distributions of extracted and evaluated versions of these variables were essentially the same (and because we had no information about why individual cases were recoded[1]), we continued our analysis using the evaluated variables only.

We next examined patterns of available and missing data for the evaluated versions of taken and detained within the context of the set of contingent circumstances specified in definition 1 (e.g., whether force or threat was used, whether there was lawful

[1]It would not be surprising if the extracted data contained inconsistencies, for example, given that data extraction was conducted at many sites.

authority or parental permission). This constituted a first look at what we call the "countability" of the two definitional elements, taken and detained, at least one of which must be countable for a case to be countable. Here we used a subroutine of SAS that summarizes and lists cases according to the patterns of response across multiple variables. This way of summarizing the data allowed us to examine countability of the important definitional elements--and of cases--in terms of the presence or absence of all relevant information in a case. These summaries provided a picture of patterns of response where cases were countable despite missing data and of patterns where cases were not countable because of missing data.

Next, we created variables indicating the countability of the core definitional elements, taken and detained, according to the contingencies given in definition 1 and cross-tabulated them to examine the extent to which missing data prevented cases from being countable under that definition.

These analyses were conducted by type of case and for all cases combined. Most of our analyses focused on NFA definition 1, but most tables are replicated for NFA definitions 2 and 3. Finally, we created a variable for each case that indicated overall countability of the case so that we could examine the extent to which NISMART I was able to identify NFAs and the extent to which missing data hampered the effort.

Because we were analyzing characteristics of the data set rather than generalizing to a population, we used unweighted data. The analyses presented below, then, show missing data for

- the "core" definitional elements (i.e., luring, taking, and detaining), and
- "contingent" elements (such as use of force or threat) that must be present in a case for a core element to be countable in terms of a given definition.

Data are presented for the variables in several ways:

- for the evaluated variables (as coded by evaluative coders) standing alone,
- for evaluated core elements together with the contingent definitional elements relevant for a given definition, and
- for countability of core variables.

Finally, data are presented on the countability of cases by case type (homicide, abduction, or sex offense) and definition.

6.3 ANALYSIS OF NONFAMILY ABDUCTION DEFINITION 1

The PRS data file contained variables for each of the elements of NFA definition 1. The following algorithm shows what combinations of the definitional elements were required for a case to be counted as an NFA according to this definition. As the algorithm shows, NFA definition 1 contains two conceptual situations: cases in which the child was taken under particular conditions and cases in which the child was detained under particular conditions.

The child was taken (moved at least 20 feet or into a vehicle or building)
AND
the perpetrator used force or threat to take the child
AND
the perpetrator took the child without lawful authority or parental permission

OR

The child was detained
AND
the perpetrator used force or threat to detain the child
AND
the perpetrator detained the child for a substantial period (1 hour or more)
AND
the perpetrator detained the child in an isolated place
AND
the perpetrator detained the child without lawful authority or parental permission.

Table 6 presents the simple frequencies for the evaluatively coded versions of each of these variables. It shows that in many cases, these variables were not evaluated due to insufficient evidence. For example, 14% of all cases were not evaluated as taken or not taken due to insufficient evidence. A total of 17.4% of the cases were not coded as detained/not detained for the same reason. The variable for substantial period of time was also difficult: 11.3% of the cases were not evaluated due to insufficient evidence. Looking at the different case types shows that coders had less trouble with the abduction cases than with the homicide or sex offense cases. This suggests that the police look for the same type of evidence that the NISMART definition requires as long as they believe that an abduction has taken place. Much of the information required by the definition was apparently simply not written down by the police investigating homicide and sex offense cases.

The algorithm above shows that a case was counted (or not) based on combinations of core and contingent variables. We programmed a variable indicating the countability of the two core elements in definition 1 (taking and detainment) that account for the coding of the core elements and its contingent elements together. The results are presented in Table 7. The cases in the "yes" rows are those that met all of the

TABLE 6

SIMPLE FREQUENCIES OF EVALUATED DEFINITIONAL ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN DEFINITION 1 FOR NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

	Very Probable	Probable	Very Probable Attempt	Probable Attempt	Unlikely	N/A	Insufficient Evidence	Total
A. Percentage of All Files (N=824)								
Taken	30.3%	7.0%	8.5%	0.4%	39.8%	0	14.0%	100%
Force/Threat	39.2	1.7	--	--	3.5	53.8	1.8	100
No Permission	57.2	0.8	--	--	2.4	38.3	1.2	100
Detained	45.0	8.0	0.2	0	29.4	0	17.4	100
Force/Threat	40.3	7.0	--	--	1.3	46.7	4.6	100
Substantial Period	14.6	3.5	--	--	23.7	47.0	11.3	100
Isolated Place	7.9	37.7	--	--	4.6	46.7	3.0	100
No Permission	48.3	0.5	--	--	3.0	46.7	1.5	100
B. Percentage Abduction Files (N=328)								
Taken	51.5%	8.5%	20.4%	0.9%	15.9%	0	2.7%	100%
Force/Threat	67.4	2.4	--	--	7.6	18.6	4.0	100
No Permission	89.6	1.2	--	--	3.7	4.3	1.2	100
Detained	50.0	4.9	0.6	0	32.0	0	12.5	100
Force/Threat	40.2	10.7	--	--	0.9	44.5	3.7	100
Substantial Period	25.0	4.6	--	--	20.1	45.1	5.2	100
Isolated Place	7.6	38.4	--	--	7.3	44.5	2.1	100
No Permission	54.6	0.6	--	--	0.3	44.5	0	100

(continued)

TABLE 6 (continued)

	Very Probable	Probable	Very Probable Attempt	Probable Attempt	Unlikely	N/A	Insufficient Evidence	Total
C. Percentage of Homicide Files (N=183)								
Taken	2.7%	0	0	0	77.0%	0	20.2%	100%
Force/Threat	1.1	0	--	--	1.1	97.3	0.5	100
No Permission	4.4	0	--	--	0	95.1	0.5	100
Detained	7.1	2.2	0	0	68.9	0	21.9	100
Force/Threat	9.3	0	--	--	0	90.7	0	100
Substantial Period	0	1.1	--	--	6.0	90.7	2.2	100
Isolated Place	0	6.0	--	--	2.2	90.7	1.1	100
No Permission	6.6	0	--	--	0.5	90.7	2.2	100
D. Percentage of Sex Offense Files (N=313)								
Taken	24.3%	9.6%	1.0%	0	43.1%	0	22.0%	100%
Force/Threat	31.9	1.9	--	--	0.6	65.2	0.3	100
No Permission	54.0	1.0	--	--	2.6	40.9	1.6	100
Detained	62.0	14.7	0	0	3.5	0	19.8	100
Force/Threat	58.5	7.3	--	--	2.6	23.3	8.3	100
Substantial Period	12.1	3.8	--	--	37.7	23.3	23.0	100
Isolated Place	12.8	55.6	--	--	3.2	23.3	5.1	100
No Permission	66.1	0.6	--	--	7.3	23.3	2.6	100

Note: Data are unweighted.

TABLE 7

COUNTABILITY OF CASES AS TAKEN OR DETAINED UNDER DEFINITION 1 FOR NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

	Abduction Files	Homicide Files	Sex Offense Files	Total Files
(N of Files)	(328)	(183)	(313)	(824)
Countable as "Taken"				
Yes	50.0%	1.1%	32.9%	32.6%
No	43.3	78.1	44.7	51.6
Unknown	6.7	20.8	22.4	15.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Countable as "Detained"				
Yes	23.5%	0.0%	14.4%	14.8%
No	53.4	75.4	44.7	55.0
Unknown	23.1	24.6	40.9	30.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Data are unweighted.

definitional criteria for the core element under consideration (e.g., taken *and* by force or threat *and* without parental permission). The cases in the "no" rows are those in which any of the definitional elements in the set are coded as "unlikely." The cases in the "unknown" rows are the rest of the cases: those in which no element was coded as "no," but at least one of the definitional elements had insufficient evidence. These cases are the problem cases--those that could have been counted as NFAs if there were sufficient evidence. As mentioned above, NFA definition 1 can include a case in which a child was taken or a case in which a child was detained. A total of 32.6% of the cases met all of the "taken" criteria, and 14.8% of the cases met the "detained" criteria. More of the abduction cases than the other cases met these criteria. The problem cases–those with insufficient evidence–were more prevalent in the detained cases than the taken cases, and there was more trouble overall in the sex offense and homicide cases than in the abduction cases.

Some of these problem cases become irrelevant, however, if there is sufficient evidence to count them as a taking but not a detaining (or vice versa). Table 8 presents a cross-tabulation of the two countability variables in Table 7. This table shows that 13.1% of the total cases were not coded as *either* a taking *or* a detaining due to insufficient evidence. A total of 9.8% of the cases were coded as not taken and had insufficient evidence to code as a detaining; similarly, 2.3% of the cases were coded as not detained, and had insufficient evidence to code as a taking. All of these were potential NFAs that could not be counted because they could not be coded definitively on one or both variables.

6.4 ANALYSIS OF NONFAMILY ABDUCTION DEFINITION 2

The following algorithm shows what combinations of the definitional elements were required for a case to be counted as an NFA according to NFA definition 2. As the algorithm shows, there are three conceptual situations: cases in which the child was taken, cases in which the child was lured, and cases in which the child was detained.

The child was 14 years old or younger
OR
the child was under 18 years old and mentally incompetent

AND

the child was taken (moved at least 20 feet or into a vehicle or building)
OR
the child voluntarily accompanied the perpetrator
OR
the child was detained against the parents' will

AND

TABLE 8

COUNTABILITY OF CASES AS "TAKEN," BY COUNTABILITY OF CASES AS "DETAINED" FOR ABDUCTIONS, HOMICIDES, AND SEX OFFENSES UNDER DEFINITION 1 FOR NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

A. Percentage of All Files					
Countable as:	Taken				
Detained	Yes	No	Unknown	Total	(N)
Yes	11.9%	2.6	0.4	14.8	(122)
No	13.5	39.2	2.3	55.0	(453)
Unknown	7.3	9.8	13.1	30.2	(249)
Total	32.6	51.6	15.8	100.0%	--
(N)	(269)	(425)	(130)	--	(824)
B. Percentage Abduction Files					
Countable as:	Taken				
Detained	Yes	No	Unknown	Total	(N)
Yes	20.7%	2.1	0.6	23.5	(77)
No	18.0	34.1	1.2	53.4	(175)
Unknown	11.3	7.0	4.9	23.1	(76)
Total	50.0	43.3	6.7	100.0%	--
(N)	(164)	(142)	(22)	--	(328)
C. Percentage of Homicide Files					
Countable as:	Taken				
Detained	Yes	No	Unknown	Total	(N)
Yes	0.0%	.0.0	0.0	0.0	(0)
No	1.1	72.7	1.6	75.4	(138)
Unknown	0.0	5.5	19.1	24.6	(45)
Total	1.1	78.3	20.8	100.0%	--
(N)	(2)	(143)	(38)	--	(183)

(continued)

TABLE 8 (continued)

D. Percentage of Sex Offense Files					
Countable as:	Taken				
Detained	Yes	No	Unknown	Total	(N)
Yes	9.6%	4.5	0.3	14.4	(45)
No	16.0	24.9	3.8	44.7	(140)
Unknown	7.3	15.3	18.2	40.9	(128)
Total	32.9	44.7	22.4	100.0%	--
(N)	(103)	(140)	(70)	--	(313)

Note: Data are unweighted. Cells show table percents for each panel: Those in panel A show percentages of all evaluated cases, those in panel B show percentages of evaluated abductions, panel C, percentages of evaluated homicides, and panel D, percentages of sex offenses. Shaded cells may be summed within a panel to find the percentage of cases of that type that were not countable because of missing data.

the child was taken/went away with/detained without lawful authority or parental permission

AND

the perpetrator concealed the child's whereabouts
OR
the perpetrator requested ransom, goods, or services
OR
the perpetrator expressed an intention to keep the child permanently.

Table 9 presents the simple frequencies for the evaluatively coded versions of each of these variables. As was the case with the variables for NFA definition 1, insufficient evidence made the accurate coding of these variables impossible in some cases. For example, in 14%, 13.5%, and 17.4% of the cases, respectively, the core elements (taken, lured, or detained) could not be evaluatively coded due to insufficient evidence.

Table 10 presents the countability status of takings, lurings, and detainings while considering the evaluative coding of contingent definitional elements along with the core elements. A total of 18.2% of the cases met all of the criteria of a taking; the percentages for the lurings and detainings were 19.9% and 5.3%, respectively. As in NFA definition 1, the abduction cases met the criteria for taking and detaining more often than the other cases; however, the sex offense cases met the criteria for a luring more often than the other case types. The problem cases--those in the "unknown" rows--were still prevalent among all three cases types and for all three core definitional elements. As for NFA definition 1, missing data clearly prevented the core elements from being countable for homicide and sex offense cases than for abductions.

Table 11 presents a three-way cross-tabulation of the takings, lurings, and detainings. All cases where "Taken" counted as "Yes" were countable (panel A). Where "Taken" counted as "No" (panel B), 15.5% of the cases were not countable because of missing data on one or both of the other core elements, detained or lured. Where "Taken" was "unknown" (panel C), none of the cases was countable. Here it is of some interest to note that 9.5% of the cases were also evaluated as "Unknown" for "Detained" and 84.1% were "Unknown" on both of the other core variables.

6.5 ANALYSIS OF NONFAMILY ABDUCTION DEFINITION 3

The following algorithm shows what combinations of the definitional elements were required for a case to be counted as an NFA according to NFA definition 3. As the algorithm shows, there are two conceptual situations: cases in which the child was taken and cases in which the child was lured.

TABLE 9

SIMPLE FREQUENCIES OF EVALUATED DEFINITIONAL ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN DEFINITION 2 FOR NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

Definitional Elements	Very Probable	Probable	Very Probable Attempt	Probable Attempt	Unlikely	N/A	Insufficient Evidence	Total
14 or Younger	37.0%	0.6%	--	--	23.8%	38.3%	0.2%	100%
Under 18 and Mentally Incompetent	0.4	0.1	--	--	60.9	38.3	0.2	100
Taken	30.3	7.0	8.5%	0.4%	39.8	0.0	14.0	100
Voluntarily Accompanied/Lured	12.5	2.3	6.1	0.8	64.8	0.0	13.5	100
Detained	45.0	8.0	0.2	0.0	29.4	0.0	17.4	100
Without Parents' Permission (Taken/Lured)	57.2	0.8	--	--	2.4	38.3	1.2	100
Without Parents' Permission (Detained)	48.3	0.5	--	--	3.0	46.7	1.5	100
Concealment	32.0	11.7	2.9	5.8	7.2	38.3	2.1	100
Ransom Requested	2.1	0.1	--	--	26.6	71.0	0.2	100
Intent to Keep Child	1.7	1.0	--	--	42.6	49.0	5.7	100

Note: Data are unweighted.

TABLE 10

COUNTABILITY OF CASES AS "TAKEN," "DETAINED," OR "LURED" UNDER DEFINITION 2 FOR NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

	Abduction Files	Homicide Files	Sex Offense Files	Total Files
(N of Files)	(328)	(183)	(313)	(824)
Countable as "Taken"				
Yes	30.5%	1.6%	15.0%	18.2%
No	63.4	79.2	62.3	66.5
Unknown	6.1	19.1	22.7	15.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Countable as "Detained"				
Yes	27.4%	0.0%	23.6%	19.9%
No	63.1	71.6	32.9	53.5
Unknown	9.5	28.4	43.5	26.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Countable as "Lured"				
Yes	3.4%	0.0%	10.5%	5.3%
No	92.1	80.9	67.1	80.1
Unknown	4.6	19.1	22.4	14.6
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0	100.0

Note: Data are unweighted.

TABLE 11

COUNTABILITY OF CASES AS "LURED," BY COUNTABILITY OF CASES AS "DETAINED" AND "TAKEN" UNDER DEFINITION 2 FOR NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

A. Percentage of Files Where "Taken" Counted as "Yes"					
Countable as:	"Lured"				
"Detained"	Yes	No	Unknown	Total	(N)
Yes	1.3%	85.3%	0.0%	86.7%	(130)
No	0	2.7	0.0	2.7	(4)
Unknown	0	8.7	2.0	10.7	(16)
Total	1.3	96.7	2.0	100.0	--
(N)	(2)	(145)	(3)		(150)
B. Percentage of Files Where "Taken" Counted as "No"					
Countable as:	"Lured"				
"Detained"	Yes	No	Unknown	Total	(N)
Yes	6.2%	0.0%	0.0%	6.2	(34)
No	0.9	77.0	0.5	78.5	(430)
Unknown	0.4	13.5	1.5	15.3	(84)
Total	7.5	90.5	2.0	100.0	--
(N)	(41)	(496)	(11)	--	(548)
C. Percentage of Files Where "Taken" Counted as "Unknown"					
Countable as:	"Lured"				
"Detained"	Yes	No	Unknown	Total	(N)
Yes	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	(0)
No	0.0	5.6	0.0	5.6	(7)
Unknown	0.8	9.5	84.1	94.4	(119)
Total	0.8	15.1	84.1	100.0	--
(N)	(1)	(19)	(106)	--	(126)

Note: Data are unweighted. Cells show table percents for each panel: Those in panel A show percentages of all evaluated cases, those in panel B show percentages of evaluated abductions, panel C, percentages of evaluated homicides, and panel D, percentages of sex offenses. Shaded cells may be summed within a panel to find the percentage of cases of that type that were not countable because of missing data.

The child was taken (moved at least 20 feet or into a vehicle or building)
OR
the child voluntarily accompanied the perpetrator

AND

the perpetrator had the apparent purpose of assaulting the child.

Table 12 presents the simple frequencies for the evaluatively coded versions of each of these variables. As with the other definitions, the definitional elements for NFA definition 3 were not always coded due to insufficient evidence. Evaluators had more difficulty coding "Taken" and "Voluntarily Accompanied" in cases from the homicide and sex offense files than in those from the abduction files, but the situation was reversed for the definitional element, "Purpose of assault." Fully half of the abduction cases (52.4%) had insufficient evidence for evaluating this definitional element compared with only 1.6% of homicides and 3.2% of sex offenses.

Table 13 presents the frequencies of countable takings and lurings according to the algorithm above. A total of 18.4% of the cases met both of the "Taken" criteria (which are different criteria from those in the other two definitions), and 10.2% of the cases met the "Lured" criteria. Contrary to the other definitions, more of the sex offense cases than the other cases met these criteria. The problem cases–those in the "Unknown" rows–were more prevalent among the takings than the lurings for all case types. This reflects the results for abductions where only 6.7% of lurings were not countable because of missing data compared with 29.0% of takings.

Table 14 presents a cross-tabulation of the taking and the luring countability variables. A total of 13.4% of the cases were not coded as either a taking or a luring due to insufficient evidence on both variables. An additional 2.3% of the cases were counted as not taken, but had insufficient evidence to count as a luring. Similarly, 10.9% of the cases were counted as not lured, but had insufficient evidence to count as a taking. All of these were potential NFAs but could not be coded definitively.

6.6 OVERALL EFFECT OF MISSING DATA ON CASE COUNTABILITY

Table 15 shows the percentages of the 824 in-scope cases, overall and by definition and type of file, that might have been countable according to one or more of the definitions had it not been for missing data. The definitions were <u>not</u> mutually exclusive; some cases that were not countable under NFA definition 1 were countable under NFA definitions 2 and/or 3 (and vice versa) because of differences among the definitions in contingent definitional elements. For example, cases where there was insufficient data to evaluate the use of threat or force would not be countable under NFA

TABLE 12

SIMPLE FREQUENCIES OF DEFINITIONAL ELEMENTS UNDER DEFINITION 3 FOR NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

	Very Probable	Probable	Very Probable Attempt	Probable Attempt	Unlikely	N/A	Insufficient Evidence	Total
A. Percentage of All Files								
Taken	30.3%	7.0%	8.5%	0.4%	39.8%	0%	14.0%	100%
Voluntarily Accompanied	12.5	2.3	6.1	0.8	64.8	0	13.5	100
Purpose of Assault	26.2	2.8	--	--	10.2	38.3	22.5	100
B. Percentage of Abduction Files								
Taken	51.5%	8.5%	20.4%	0.9%	15.9%	0%	2.7%	100%
Voluntarily Accompanied	9.8	0.9	12.5	1.8	71.3	0	3.7	100
Purpose of Assault	15.9	3.7	--	--	23.8	4.3	52.4	100
C. Percentage of Homicide Files								
Taken	2.7%	0%	0%	0%	77.0%	0%	20.2%	100%
Voluntarily Accompanied	1.6	0.5	0	0	78.7	0	19.1	100
Purpose of Assault	1.6	0	--	--	1.6	95.1	1.6	100
D. Percentage of Sex Offense Files								
Taken	24.3%	9.6%	1.0%	0%	43.1%	0%	22.0%	100%
Voluntarily Accompanied	21.7	4.8	2.9	0.3	49.8	0	20.4	100
Purpose of Assault	51.4	3.5	--	--	1.0	40.9	3.2	100

Note: Data are unweighted.

TABLE 13

COUNTABILITY OF CASES AS "TAKEN" OR "LURED" UNDER DEFINITION 3 FOR NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

	Abduction Files	Homicide Files	Sex Offense Files	Total Files
(N of Files)	(328)	(183)	(313)	(824)
Countable as "Taken"				
Yes	14.6%	0.5%	32.9%	18.4%
No	56.4	78.7	44.4	56.8
Unknown	29.0	20.8	22.7	24.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Countable as "Lured"				
Yes	2.4%	1.1%	23.6%	10.2%
No	90.9	78.7	53.7	74.0
Unknown	6.7	20.2	22.7	15.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Data are unweighted.

TABLE 14

COUNTABILITY OF CASES AS "LURED," BY COUNTABILITY OF CASES AS "TAKEN" UNDER DEFINITION 3 FOR NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

Percentage of All Files					
Countable as:	"Lured"				
Taken	Yes	No	Unknown	Total	(N)
Yes	0.7%	17.6%	0.1%	18.4%	(152)
No	9.0	45.5	2.3	56.8	(468)
Unknown	0.5	10.9	13.4	24.8	(204)
Total	10.2	74.0	15.8	100.0	--
(N)	(84)	(610)	(130)	--	(824)

Note: Data are unweighted. Cells show table percents for each panel: Those in panel A show percentages of all evaluated cases, those in panel B show percentages of evaluated abductions, panel C, percentages of evaluated homicides, and panel D, percentages of sex offenses. Shaded cells may be summed within a panel to find the percentage of cases of that type that were not countable because of missing data.

TABLE 15

PERCENTAGE OF IN-SCOPE CASES THAT DID NOT COUNT AS NFAs DUE TO INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE, BY CASE TYPE AND DEFINITION

	Abduction Files	Homicide Files	Sex Offense Files	Total Files
(N of Files)	(328)	(183)	(313)	(824)
NFA Definition 1	13.1%	26.2%	37.3%	22.9%
NFA Definition 2	6.1	26.8	42.8	24.6
NFA Definition 3	32.3	20.8	24.0	26.6
Any NFA Definition	2.7	20.2	20.1	13.3

Note: Data are unweighted.

definition 1, which was constrained to include only cases that involved taking by threat or force and/or detaining by threat or force. Such cases might have been countable under NFA definition 2, however, where threat or force was not a contingency.

Overall, missing data in the police records made definite coding of case countability impossible for 13.3% of the in-scope cases. Case countability varied both by the type of police file from which the case records had been extracted (i.e., abduction/ missing person, homicide, or sex offense) and by definition. Looking first at the variation by police file, we see that, overall, only 2.7% of the cases from abduction/missing person files could not be counted by any definition. For abduction cases, then, there was enough information in the case record to allow evaluative coders to decide that the case fit or did not fit enough definitional elements to allow countability. Cases from the homicide and sex offense files had considerably higher rates of potentially countable cases that were lost because of missing data: About 20% of the cases in each file could not be counted because of missing data. These results indicate that police generally record information relevant to defining or classifying a case as an abduction when they believe the case includes an abduction, which is not particularly surprising. There was little variation in overall levels of missing data among the three definitions. For each definition, roughly one case in four was not countable because of insufficient information; here the percentages range from 22.9% for NFA definition 1 to 26.6% for NFA definition 3.

When we consider type of file and definition together (i.e., the interior cells of Table 15), we see that abduction cases had less missing data than cases from homicide and sex offense files, with the exception of NFA definition 3; 32.3% of abduction cases could not be counted under definition 3 compared with 20.8% of homicides and 24.0% of sex offenses. These figures reflect the variation in levels of insufficient evidence for the definitional element "purpose of assault" (shown in Table 12 above), which was high for abduction cases and low for homicide and sex offense cases.

The analyses for NFA definitions 1 and 2 indicated that the evaluative coders had some difficulty coding whether a victim was detained (regardless of contingent circumstances, such as whether it was by force or threat, or for a substantial period; e.g., see Table 6). Levels of missing data for this variable were highest for homicide and sex offense cases. Further, consistently high levels of missing data on whether victims were detained for a substantial period of time meant that in some cases where "detained" could be evaluatively coded, it could not be counted under NFA definition 1. These difficulties are reflected in the high percentages of uncountable homicide and sex offense cases under NFA definitions 1 and 2 observed in Table 15. For each of these definitions, approximately 26% of the in-scope homicide cases were not countable

because of insufficient evidence. For the sex offense cases, 37.3% were not countable under NFA definition 1 and 42.8% were not countable under definition 2.

Examination of missing data patterns for NFA definition 1 indicated that in the great majority of cases where missing data prevented cases from being counted, there was insufficient evidence for evaluatively coding many or most definitional elements required for countability rather than for one or two elements. This was true for NFA definitions 2 and 3 as well (data not shown).

The analyses conducted for this chapter shed light on another issue that is relevant to whether (or how) to include a PRS in NISMART II. That issue can be called the "productivity" of the types of police files used. The NISMART I researchers reported the productivity of their screening operation (i.e., the number of in-scope cases found) by type of file, and we included that information in our discussion of their methodology (Section 6.1 above). About 45% of the homicide cases screened were found to be in-scope, as were about 37% of the abduction cases screened. Only 20% of the sex offense cases screened were found to be in-scope.

The current analysis has presented data, largely undiscussed by us, on a second consideration related to productivity. This is the productivity of their record extraction and evaluative coding operations (i.e., the number of cases identified as in-scope and then as abductions under one or more of the NISMART definitions). The latter information is summarized in Table 16, again by file and definition. Overall, 47.1% of the 824 in-scope cases were identified as a legal abduction by a NISMART definition. Abduction files and sex offense files produced the most identified cases (61.3% and 57.5%, respectively). Only 3.8% of the in-scope homicide cases were identified as including NISMART-defined abductions.

A somewhat higher proportion (35.6%) of the 824 in-scope cases were identified under NFA definition 1 than under definitions 2 or 3 (23.3% and 27.9%, respectively). For definitions 1 and 2, the abduction files produced somewhat higher proportions of identified cases than the sex offense files. For NFA definition 3, however, the sex offense files produced a substantially higher percentage of identified cases. These differences can probably be attributed, at least in part, to the differences observed in Tables 6 and 15 regarding the lack of sufficient evidence to allow cases to be counted. Very few homicide cases were identified as abductions by any of the three definitions.

6.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Two of drawbacks to the PRS were that the study identified a relatively small number of NFAs (396), given the number of records screened (2,870) and evaluated

TABLE 16

PERCENTAGE OF IN-SCOPE CASES THAT COUNTED AS NFAs, BY CASE TYPE AND DEFINITION

	Abduction Files	Homicide Files	Sex Offense Files	Total Files
(N of Files)	(328)	(183)	(313)	(824)
NFA Definition 1	52.7%	1.1%	37.7%	35.6%
NFA Definition 2	33.8	1.6	24.9	23.3
NFA Definition 3	17.1	1.6	54.6	27.9
Any NFA Definition	61.3	3.8	57.5	47.1

Note: Data are unweighted.

(824), and the that study was very expensive to conduct. It is likely that the lack of sufficient evidence in police records to evaluatively code the relevant definitional elements aggravated both problems. Differences by case file in rates at which it is possible to identify cases and in the degree to which missing data prevent case identification are both important in considering whether and how a PRS might be incorporated into a NISMART II.

Overall, the abduction files were probably the most useful source of the three files used. An NFA fitting one or more of the three definitions was identified in about 60% of the abduction cases while only about 3% of these cases had insufficient evidence to allow a decision about their countability. In contrast, about 20% of the cases in both the homicide and sex offense files could not be counted because of missing data. The sex offense files produced a relatively high proportion of countable cases (57.5%) while the homicide files produced very few (3.8% of these cases).

The PRS data may well be the best source available for estimating abductions involving homicide. NISMART I results indicated that these crimes are rare and, therefore, unlikely to fall into the Household Survey sample in sufficient numbers to support an estimate. The first PRS identified approximately 180 in-scope cases in homicide files. The fact that police record data do not have information on incidents not reported to the police is probably less problematic here because such cases are generally considered serious crimes and are presumably reported to police at a high rate.

The police data on sex offenses were a relatively poor source of abduction cases, primarily because of missing data problems. The Household Survey may be a better source for identifying these NFAs. Abductions involving sex offenses appear to be reasonably frequent incidents. It is currently unclear how frequently such incidents are reported to police; indeed, it is unclear how many such incidents go unreported to parents. The Household Survey could potentially identify such unreported cases. It could also collect more consistent and complete data than appear in police records.

6.7.1 The Need for a PRS

We recommend repeating the PRS, with modifications intended to reduce the overall cost of the PRS and enhance data quality, in addition to collecting data on abductions in the Household Survey. The next chapter includes a recommendation to expand the Household Survey to 40,000 child respondents, using an expanded screening section. This screening section could include questions intended to screen in events that might constitute NFAs that occurred in the course of a sex offense, cases that were not well identified in NISMART I and may be the most prevalent type of NFA scenario. As noted above, however, the Household Survey is unlikely to identify sufficient cases of

abductions associated with homicides to support an estimate of these serious cases. The police data from abduction/missing person files also appeared to be useful for identifying NFAs under the NISMART definitions. We recommend eliminating sex offense records from the PRS and retaining examination of abduction and homicide records.

There are several advantages to such a design:

- Police data would be available to support estimates of abductions involving homicides.
- Having data from both police and households is potentially useful for analyzing the extent and nature of abductions not reported to the police.
- The design would allow estimates of the effects of the methodological change on study estimates. Major changes in the methodology of longitudinal studies commonly have involved running the new methods simultaneously with the old for some period for this purpose.

Disadvantages include:

- The PRS is an expensive methodology in terms of cost per identified NFA.
- There would be some additional cost for unduplicating estimates produced by the PRS and the Household Survey.

The modified PRS could be done as part of NISMART II if sufficient funding was available. Otherwise, it could be funded as a separate study. It could use a sample of the counties selected for the Juvenile Facilities Study. Running these two studies concurrently is likely to result in cost savings.

6.7.2 Design and Costs of a Modified PRS

This section discusses a possible design for a modified PRS. The modifications suggested that could help reduce costs include:

- reducing the number of police agencies in the sample to reduce recruiting and field costs,
- increasing the number of records sampled from individual agencies to achieve the expected number of cases, and
- concentrating data collection on cases from abduction files and homicide files.

We assume the study will be conducted in 20 counties selected from the Juvenile Facilities Study county sample. We also assume that police capacity for investigating serious crimes, such as homicides and abductions is concentrated in two or three of the larger departments in many counties, allowing for a smaller agency sample. The organization of police investigative work and record-keeping in the sample counties would have to be checked, but the cost estimate below assumes some savings could be achieved. The estimates below assume that the data extraction will be carried out in the local agencies by agency employees or local employees of the research organization involved and that it will be a paper-and-pencil operation with subsequent data entry. Evaluative coding and all quality control will be carried out at the research organization conducting the study.

Only variable costs have been estimated here. Fixed costs, such as project planning, administration, and data analysis and reporting, are not included.

Unit costs for the main variable components include:

- agency recruitment @$660/site,
- extractor training @$1,400/site,
- case screening @$7.50/record, and
- record extraction, evaluative coding and data entry @$71/record.

Modified PRS design costs are:

Sample counties	20
Sample agencies	55
Extracting sites	45
Records screened	
Homicide	400
Abduction	1,100
Records extracted, eval. coded and entered	
Homicide	180
Abduction	420
Estimated cost	$153,150

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we make specific suggestions for the design and conduct of NISMART II. The reader who has read each of the six preceding chapters is aware of the large number of factors that can be considered in decisionmaking about NISMART II. For the recommendations set down here, we have weighed many of these factors and their relations to each other in the process of arriving at a plan.

NISMART I had six major components. The Household Survey collected incidence and other information about each of the five missing child case types. The Police Records Study (PRS) focused on nonfamily abductions. The Returned Runaway Study interviewed children who had returned home after an incident to determine how well children's accounts about the incidents matched the reports of their caretakers. The Juvenile Facilities Study collected information about children who ran away from these places. The FBI's Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR) reanalysis developed a range estimate of how many children were murdered in conjunction with possible abductions by strangers. The Community Professionals Study (NIS-2) analyzed data from a national sample of child welfare agencies to develop an estimate of thrownaway (specifically abandoned) children. Each of the NISMART I components was itself complex. Taken as a whole, the study was extremely complex and costly.

The major planning grant task was to consider a number of factors in decisionmaking about the design of NISMART II, including

- legislative requirements to estimate the incidence of missing children,
- strengths and weaknesses of NISMART I and alternative methodologies for NISMART II,
- comparability of NISMART I and NISMART II, and
- cost of conducting NISMART II.

One of the features of the missing child phenomenon that has major effects on the study's design is the very low incidence of nonfamily abductions. Two NISMART I components were implemented specifically to deal with the low nonfamily abduction incidence–the PRS and reanalyses of the SHR data. And despite the large sample of households in the NISMART I Household Survey (30,000), the number of nonfamily

abductions reported were insufficient to support a national estimate of that phenomenon from household reports.

NISMART I was a groundbreaking and largely successful study. But NISMART I was also a learning experience, so we will suggest changes and options that would be departures from the NISMART I approach. Methodological modifications will make NISMART I and NISMART II comparisons problematic. Major departures of course could make comparisons impossible. The changes we suggest will not be major in this sense. Some of the changes we recommend that OJJDP consider, however, are significant. For example, we recommend that children aged 12 to 17 be respondents in the Household Survey. During planning grant activities, a clear preference for interviewing children emerged from the input of advisors and from work done by planning grant project staff. It was felt that collecting information from the incident participants is preferable to collecting information from proxy respondents (caretakers). In fact, early in the planning grant, consideration was being given to a Household Survey design that would include interviews with children younger than age 12. To help in those discussions, we asked one of our staff psychologists to examine the literature focusing on interviewing children (see Appendix E). But the idea of interviewing children younger than age 12 was dropped early for several reasons–uncertainty about the validity of reporting by young children, cost, and comparability of NISMART I and NISMART II. But while the use of 12- to-17-year-old respondents is not a change of the order that interviewing children younger than 12 would have been, it nonetheless introduces a reporting artifact that reduces the comparability of NISMART I and II. We cannot estimate the magnitude of the reporting artifact, but a small-scale methodological study could be conducted as part of NISMART II to develop such an estimate.

Other changes or options suggested below would also involve methodological variations and affect NISMART I/NISMART II comparisons. For example, we will suggest a change in the way the Juvenile Facilities Study (JFS) is conducted, specifically that a national probability sample of counties be selected, that juvenile facilities in the sampled counties be listed and selected, and that a facility respondent be asked to report runaway incidents from the facility. The NISMART I facilities survey did not sample counties and facilities within counties but instead asked household respondents in the random-digit dialing (RDD) survey to identify facilities at which a resident household child had resided during the reporting period. The facilities were then contacted and queried about children who may have run away from these places.

The suggested alternative JFS methodology, while not directly comparable with the NISMART I estimate, would produce an estimate grounded in a national probability sample of counties–an improvement over the NISMART II estimate. Moreover, an option

being suggested for NISMART II is that a PRS be conducted in the same sample of counties as used for the JFS. This would achieve some cost savings if both the JFS and PRS are funded, either as part of NISMART II or as separate studies. In either case, although the NISMART I/NISMART II comparison would be problematic if the area probability sample of counties is selected, the estimate generated by the recommended new approach would be an improvement. The costs would be higher, however. Costs are provided later in this chapter.

We recommend that NISMART II repeat the secondary analysis of data from soon-to-be-collected data from the third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-3). NISMART I analyzed NIS-2 to develop an estimate of the number of abandoned (thrownaway) children reported by community child welfare workers. This was referred to as the Community Professionals Study (CPS) in NISMART I.

The comparability of NISMART I and NISMART II estimates in the case of the CPS raises an interesting issue. Although comparability will be maximized by our recommendation to repeat analyses of NIS data, changes to the NIS-3 methodology (which cannot be documented precisely now due to the ongoing nature of that study) will almost certainly introduce variability. Thus, even when the same approach is recommended for NISMART II as was used in NISMART I, methodological changes will introduce some lack of comparability. Exact methodological replication is unlikely.

NISMART I/NISMART II comparability raises complex issues. Potential changes to NISMART need to be considered in the light of the relative importance of comparability, methodological improvement, and cost. With some recommended changes, it is possible to develop estimates of the effect of the changes. With other changes, this is not possible or feasible. And, even when the same approach is recommended for NISMART II as was used in NISMART I, comparison is likely to be compromised by almost inevitable changes in methodology. Because methodological improvements are constantly being made, perfect replication is not likely ever to occur.

The recommendations and options we discuss below do not incorporate a calculus that allows a weighting of change and comparability in a way that easily informs decisionmaking. OJJDP is thus left with the task of making decisions on the basis of multiple considerations and trade-offs.

7.2 SUMMARY OF NISMART II RECOMMENDATIONS

We summarize our recommendations briefly here and discuss them in detail below. We think NISMART II should include:

- an RDD telephone survey of about 78,000 households (which will yield more than 23,000 households with children younger than 18 years of age and about 40,000 child interviews [self or by proxy]) using youth aged 12 to 17 as primary respondents (and proxy respondents [parents or caretakers] for children younger than age 12),

- a survey of juvenile facilities in a stratified random sample of counties, and a modified PRS in the same (or a subset of the same) counties (these two components could be conducted independently of NISMART II);

- use of data from the Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-3) to estimate the number of abandoned (thrownaway) children (CPS).

We do not recommend repeating a Returned Runaway Study, nor do we think it necessary to reanalyze the FBI's SHR data to estimate the number of children murdered in the course of a nonfamily abduction based on a methodological rationale only. Given the high public policy importance of such cases, however, it may be useful to repeat this latter NISMART II component.

These recommendations envision major changes to the Household Survey, the JFS, and the PRS in comparison with the NISMART I approach. The recommendation to analyze NIS-3 data involves essentially replicating the approach used in NISMART I for this component. Table 17 summarizes the recommendations. Detailed discussions about the recommendations are given below.

TABLE 17

SUMMARY OF NISMART II RECOMMENDATIONS

NISMART Component	Recommended for NISMART II?
Household Survey	Yes: RDD, 23,000 households, 40,000 interviews, interview children aged 12 to 17
Juvenile Facilities Survey*	Yes: probability of sample of counties, list facilities
Police Records Study*	Modified: use JFS sample of counties
Community Professionals Study	Yes: replicate
Network Study	No
Returned Runaway Study	No
Supplemental Homicide Reports Analysis	Maybe

*Conduct JFS and PRS concurrently, either under the NISMART umbrella or separately.

7.3 A NOTE ABOUT COST ESTIMATES

Below we provide cost estimates for several NISMART components and options. Estimated costs include sampling, data collection, and data-processing costs. Not included are costs associated with initial design decisionmaking, instrument development, data analysis, and reporting. Much of the initial design and instrument development work has been done either during NISMART I or as part of the planning grant, but significant work remains. For example, a fully integrated incident report form covering all missing child case types will be required for the NISMART II Household Survey.

7.4 HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

One of the options considered during the planning grant was to utilize the ongoing National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which uses a national sample of households, as a vehicle for a supplement to collect information about the incidence of missing children. Discussions were held between OJJDP, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the U.S. Bureau of Census (which collects NCVS data), and RTI. A number of options were considered, such as the type of missing incidents that would be focused on, the length of the data collection time period, and the selection of respondents.

A major limitation of using the NCVS as a survey supplement vehicle is the length of the supplement that can be accommodated. Given that the NCVS is a lengthy interview for those who report victimizations, and that households are interviewed seven times in a 3-year period, response rate attrition resulting from response burden is a potential problem. To minimize the length of a supplement, it was decided that a possible NCVS supplement could attempt to gather information only on nonfamily abductions. Information would not be collected for family abductions or for runaways, thrownaways, and lost or injured or otherwise missing children. BJS in consultation with the U.S. Bureau of Census made the judgment that the length of a NISMART II supplement that included all NISMART II case types would exceed what is possible to accommodate with an NCVS supplement. NCVS supplements should approximate 10 minutes or less to administer. Administration of NISMART II screening questions for all case types would substantially exceed this limit.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census developed a cost estimate for an NCVS supplement on nonfamily abductions that would be implemented in all NCVS households for 6 months:

- all persons aged 12 to 18 would be interviewed;

- proxy respondents would report for children younger than age 12;
- the supplement would take an average of 5 minutes to complete and would include 12 screening questions and 60 questions for an incident report;
- an estimated 34,900 screeners would be completed, resulting in 100 abduction incident reports; and
- the cost of the supplement would be approximately $600,000.

It would also be necessary to implement a Household Survey for NISMART II to estimate the incidence of family abductions, runaways, thrownaways, and lost or injured or otherwise missing children, as a complement to an NCVS supplement.

A NISMART II Household Survey would have the major purpose of collecting data to support incidence estimates for family abductions, runaways, thrownaways, and lost or injured or otherwise missing children and perhaps for nonfamily abductions as well. Unlike the NISMART I Household Survey, which collected data to examine the etiologies and consequences of missing events, the NISMART II Household Survey is recommended to have a narrower scope and focus on the classification of incidents and estimation of incidence. Appendix F includes NISMART I questions with an indication of which questions are required for an incidence-only study and which are not.

The NISMART II recommendations for the Household Survey envision major changes in that methodology:

- an increase in sample size to 23,000 households and 40,000 interviews,
- more careful rostering of households,
- more extensive screening questions (as discussed in Chapter 5.0),
- an incident report form integrated for all case types, and
- interviews with 12- to 17-year-old youth instead of with their primary caretakers.

Some options for a NISMART II Household Survey, perhaps in combination with the NCVS supplement, are discussed. Two basic options are compared:

(a) the Household Survey alone with varying sample sizes, and

(b) a mixed approach involving both the Household Survey and the NCVS.

The motivation for adding an NCVS supplement is to improve the estimation (precision) for nonfamily abductions (NFAs). This supplement will not improve the precision for other incidence (type) estimates because response burden constraints dictate that any supplement to the NCVS be limited to NFAs.

Table 18 presents the numbers of incidents of various types expected to be found in the Household Survey for various sample sizes. The sample size is the number of children with complete incident screenings (i.e., the denominator of each rate--regardless of the reporting individual [parent as proxy or child]).

To simplify our terminology, we will on occasion refer to "complete incident screenings" as complete interviews; this number should be distinguished from the number of complete rosterings of sample households. This initial rostering, whose main purpose is to identify households with age-eligible children (i.e., children in the target age range of under 18 years old), may also be considered a screening; to reduce any confusion, however, we will call this short initial screening a rostering.

Table 18 also shows the relative standard error (RSE) expected for the corresponding estimated total incidence (or prevalence). It is worth noting that the RSE, computed for an estimated proportion in the range of the rates presented for each case type (based on NISMART I), will be the same for an estimated total as for an estimated prevalence rate (proportion). The RSE was computed assuming that the sample design will, for most survey estimates, yield sampling variances equivalent to simple random sampling (i.e., that the design effect [DEFF] will be near 1.0). This assumption is realistic for an unclustered RDD telephone sample design or for a modified-RDD sample with little clustering.

The RSE helps detect problem categories for which the estimated incidence will not be precise (i.e., for which 95% confidence intervals may contain zero). These problem estimates will have RSE of 50% or greater. Note that for the larger sample sizes considered in Table 18, none of the estimates discussed in the exhibit nears the precision problem zone.

For sample sizes in the 20,000 to 30,000 range, however, the precision will not be good for NFAs and other rare categories (e.g., policy focal thrownaways) that have very low rates (less than 1 per thousand cases). For n=40,000 interviews, all estimates will have an RSE of less than 12%.

TABLE 18

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS EXPECTED FROM HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS OF DIFFERENT SIZES

	(Rate per 1,000)	Number of Completed Interviews					
		20,000		30,000		40,000	
		RSE	Expected Incidents	RSE	Expected Incidents	RSE	Expected Incidents
Nonfamily Abductions							
Legal	0.85	0.24	17	0.20	25	0.17	34
Attempts	1.8	0.17	36	0.14	54	0.12	72
Family Abductions							
Broad Scope	6.9	0.08	142	0.07	213	0.06	284
Policy Focal	2.9	0.13	59	0.11	88	0.09	118
Runaways							
Broad Scope	6.3	0.09	129	0.07	193	0.06	258
Policy Focal	2.11	0.15	35	0.13	52	0.11	70
Thrownaways							
Broad Scope	4.1	0.11	85	0.09	127	0.08	170
Policy Focal	1.3	0.20	27	0.16	40	0.14	54
Lost or Otherwise Missing							
Broad Scope	3.8	0.11	78	0.09	117	0.08	156
Policy Focal	0.7	0.24	14	0.20	21	0.17	28

RSE = relative standard error.

The remainder of this discussion assumes that the NFA estimate will be based on approximately 40,000 interviews. This sample size may be achieved in one of two ways for the two basic options considered:

(a) a Household Survey with 40,000 interviews, or

(b) a Household Survey with 20,000 interviews augmented by an NCVS sample of 40,000 interviews.

The first option, (a), generates estimates with the precision (RSE) and sample counts (hit range) shown in Table 18 (fifth column, n=40,000) for all incident types. On the other hand, the second option, (b), will have these RSE values and sample counts only for NFAs because the NCVS supplement is necessarily restricted to this incident type. For the other incident types, the data with option (b) will come from the Household Survey of n=20,000 interviews alone. Table 19 shows the effective sample size for the estimation of incidents of each type under the two options.

Not only does option (b) provide worse precision for all incident types other than NFAs, but it may also be more expensive. Data collection and processing costs for the two options are estimated as follows:

(a) Option (a): $840,000

(b) Option (b): $440,000 (HHS) + $600,000 (NCVS)

TABLE 19

EFFECTIVE SAMPLE SIZES FOR TWO OPTIONS

Incident Type	Option (a): HHS	Option (b): Mixed
NFAs	40,000	40,000
Other Types	40,000	20,000

Table 20 presents the sample sizes obtained with either option. The breakdown of the total number of interviews between children interviews and parents (proxies for children younger than 12 years old) was based on the U.S. Bureau of the Census total number of children in the two age ranges: About 63.3% of eligible children (aged 17 and younger) nationwide are younger than 12 years of age.

TABLE 20

SAMPLE SIZES FOR THE TWO DESIGN OPTIONS

	Option (a): RDD Household Survey	Option (b): Household Survey Plus NCVS Supplement		
		Household Survey	NCVS Supplement	Total
Telephone Numbers	104,573	52,286		
Households Screened	78,430	39,215	116,333	155,548
Households with Children	23,529	11,765	34,900	46,665
Child Interviews	40,000	20,000	40,200	60,200
Via Child Respondents	14,684	7,342	13,800	21,142
Via Proxy (Parent) Respondents	25,316	12,658	26,400	39,058

Table 20 also shows that for the telephone Household Survey (option (a)), about 78,000 households need to be screened to find 23,529 households with age-eligible children. (This calculation assumes that about 30% of the households will have eligible children.) This latter total (23,529) was estimated as the number needed to generate 40,000 children about whom data will be collected. This calculation takes into account the existence of households with multiple children (average of about two per household), and a refusal rate of 15%.

The option (b) side of Table 20, dealing with the mixed approach, assumes that the NCVS includes screening of 116,000 households to generate 40,200 child interviews. To the NCVS component of the total, one needs to add 39,215 Household Survey screenings to yield the other 20,000 interviews. With this total number of screenings and the age-eligibility rate of 30% also assumed for option (b), the total number of households with children in the target age range will be 46,665.

Finally for option (b), the numbers of child interviews (via child respondents or adult proxies) were computed for a total of 60,200 interviews.

Having reviewed the options, we recommend that NISMART II include a Household Survey of 40,000 interviews (using the RDD approach). The cost of the mixed model (NCVS supplement, Household Survey) is a more costly option. The mixed option would probably generate a higher number of interviews and incidents, but the marginal value of this increment may not be worth the cost. Two changes recommended

for a NISMART II Household Survey are a lengthier screening process and interviewing of children who are aged 12 to 17. Both of these changes are expected to generate higher numbers of incidents. Moreover, with an increase from the 10,000 household NISMART I sample size to a 23,000 household sample, an increased number of incidents are expected. Finally, as indicated below in the PRS discussion, we are recommending such a study be done either as part of NISMART II or as a separate study. The PRS would focus on NFAs and thus provide a backup NFA estimate if the Household Survey did not succeed in developing an estimate that could be reported.

7.5 JUVENILE FACILITIES STUDY

7.5.1 Introduction

Substantial numbers of children run away from nonhousehold settings, such as group homes and boarding schools. In its JFS, NISMART I found an additional 4,000 runaways who had not also run away from home.

NISMART I did not develop a sampling frame for juvenile institutions. Instead, household residents were asked whether there were children who ordinarily lived in the household but for some reason "lived in some type of facility such as a boarding school, hospital, or juvenile facility for at least 2 consecutive weeks during the last 12 months." If the answer was "yes," the interviewers obtained the name, address, and phone number of the facility. Facilities were then contacted and their cooperation was sought. Interviews were conducted to collect information about runaways from the institutions.

7.5.2 Need for the Juveniles Facilities Survey

The JFS provides the only mechanism for capturing the portion of the target population comprised of runaways from facilities. Failure to include this subpopulation will result in undercoverage. Undercoverage biases will then arise both in incidence estimates and in estimates of characteristics of the target population. These biases will be severe to the extent that the noncovered subpopulation (runaways from facilities) is (a) substantial in (relative) size, and (b) different in characteristics from the other subpopulations.

The subpopulation in question (runaways from facilities) is expected to be a sizable portion of the total runaway population. This fact, revealed in a previous study of runaways using police records (Collins et al., 1990), was obscured in NISMART I by virtue of its household-based design. Because NISMART I sample facilities were exactly those housing children originating from responding households, the overlap was artificially magnified (and unduplicating resulted in few new cases from the JFS). The earlier study

of runaways using police records showed about 20% of runaway cases were from institutions.

Moreover, the subpopulation characteristics are expected to differ dramatically from those in the other (e.g., household) subpopulations. For example, its problems (such as drug use) are likely more serious and frequent.

7.5.3 Design of a Facilities Survey

Below we discuss some design options for a possible JFS. All options assume a three-stage sample design with the selection of a first-stage sample of counties, and a second-stage selection of facilities in the sample counties. The third-stage sample will include all eligible children running away from the facility in the reference period. Some advantages of this sample design over the household-based design used in NISMART I will be discussed together with a justification for the JFS.

All options also assume that data collection will be done using the mail and telephones with no personal (face-to-face) visits to the facilities. Although the mode of data collection is similar to NISMART I (and hence so will the associated costs), the proposed approach will collect more complete data about (a) the number of all runaways from the facility in the previous 12 months, and (b) child-specific information that will enable unduplication.

Even though the data collection costs are comparable with those in NISMART I, the proposed design introduces an additional cost component associated with the construction of a sampling frame of eligible institutions. The frame will be constructed by listing facilities of several types within each sample county, including

- shelters,
- juvenile correctional facilities,
- group homes,
- boarding schools, and
- residential mental health facilities.

Although the JFS is described as a stand-alone study component, two estimation aspects need to be emphasized that connect this study with the other NISMART component(s), particularly the Household Survey. First, the estimate from the JFS (runaways from facilities) will be one part of the overall total incidence estimate of "missing children." To combine estimates from different components, one needs to

unduplicate (i.e., eliminate the potential for double-counting children who have runaway episodes from both households and facilities in the period).

Table 21 summarizes the parameters of the design options considered here. The assumptions are as follows:

- An average of five facilities will be listed per county, half of which will be eligible on average;
- An average of two children will have run away per facility in the last 12 months.

Cost components were estimated using the following unit costs per county (C) and cost per facility (D) in the model described below:

- C = $ 8,000
- D = $ 10

These costs are associated with data collection and processing, and exclude the fixed costs (F) discussed below.

A first-stage sample of counties (or county groupings) will be selected with probabilities proportional to size. The number of sample counties represents a trade-off between cost and precision. The design options examine a first-stage sample size in the 30 to 50 range.

The main cost components associated with the first-stage sample size, n, are those related to the construction of a frame of facilities in the selected counties. A cost model for the study may be written as:

$$\text{Total cost} = F + C*n + D*m*n ,$$

where

F = fixed costs,
C = unit cost per sample county,
D = unit cost per sample facility, and
m = average number of sample facilities per county.

The cost component F includes costs of selecting and designing the sample, designing and testing the survey questionnaire, some training costs, and so on. The cost component C includes the cost of constructing a frame in each county, such as

TABLE 21

SAMPLE DESIGN OPTIONS

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Sample Counties	30	40	50
Frame Facilities	150	200	250
Eligible Facilities	75	100	125
Sample Children	150	200	250
Estimated Cost	$240,750	$321,000	$412,500

contacting a number of sources for the different types of facilities. The cost component D includes the cost of contacting the sample facilities (by mail and telephone).

The sample facilities will be selected from the frame of facilities constructed as described. The frame will initially be as complete and comprehensive as possible in the chosen categories of facilities. Completeness, or near completeness, will be achieved by contacting different sources for each type of facility in each county.

At the time of frame construction, it should be recognized that completeness cannot be perfectly achieved for every type of facility that may include runaway children. For cost-efficiency reasons, it is preferable to exclude categories that will at most generate one or two runaway children in selected facilities (e.g., hospitals, summer camps).

Ineligible facilities will be deleted from the frame by contacting the individual facilities listed in the initial frame. (This first contact will also confirm address and telephone number of contact person for initial mailing.)

Table 21 also presents the average number of (eligible) facilities expected in each county. Selection (subsampling) of eligible facilities may or may not take place depending on the total number of eligible facilities found in the initial contact.

Each sample facility will be requested to provide information about all children running away from the facility in the previous 12 months. No sampling will be necessary at this final third stage.

7.6 POLICE RECORDS STUDY

NISMART I used data from the PRS to estimate the incidence of NFAs. As reported in Chapter 6.0, a significant amount of information required for the NFA definition was not available in the police records. The study was able to produce an incidence estimate, but it identified a relatively small number of NFA cases at a high cost. Moreover, it is likely that the extent and nature of the missing data aggravated both of these problems.

The missing data problem varied depending both on case file (abduction, homicide, or sex offense) and the NFA definition in question. Differences by case file appear to be most important in considering whether and how a PRS might be incorporated in NISMART II. Differing rates at which the case files "produced" NFAs is also a consideration.

Overall, the abduction files were probably the most useful source. An NFA fitting one or more of the three definitions was identified in about 60% of the abduction cases while only about 3% of these cases had insufficient evidence to allow a decision about their countability. About 20% of cases in both the homicide and sex offense files could not be counted because of missing data. The sex offense files produced a relatively high proportion of countable cases (57.5%) while the homicide files produced very few (3.8% of homicide cases).

The PRS data may be the best source for abductions involving homicide. NISMART I indicated that these are very rare and, therefore, unlikely to fall into the Household Survey sample in sufficient numbers to support an estimate. The first PRS identified approximately 180 cases of homicide potentially countable as abductions.

The police data on sex offenses were a relatively poor source of abductions, primarily because of missing data. The Household Survey may be a substantially better source for identifying abduction cases involving sex offenses, which appear to be reasonably frequent incidents. The Household Survey could identify cases not reported to police and collect more consistent data on incidents reported to police than appear in police records.

We recommend including a modified PRS either as part of NISMART II or as a separate study, and running concurrently with the JFS (so as to use its sample of counties).

There are several advantages to such a design:

- Police data would be available to support estimates of abductions involving homicides.
- Having data from both police and households is potentially useful for analyzing the extent and nature of abductions not reported to the police.
- The design would allow estimates of the effects of the methodological change on study estimates. Major changes in the methodology of longitudinal studies commonly have involved running the new methods simultaneously with the old for some period for this purpose.

Disadvantages include:

- The PRS is an expensive methodology in terms of cost per identified NFA.
- There would be some additional cost for unduplicating estimates produced by the PRS and the Household Survey.

The modifications that could help reduce costs include:

- reducing the number of police agencies in the sample to reduce recruiting and field costs,
- increasing the number of records sampled from individual agencies to achieve the expected number of cases, and
- concentrating data collection on cases from abduction files and homicide files.

We assume the study will be conducted in 20 counties selected from the Juvenile Facilities Study county sample. We also assume that police capacity for investigating serious crimes, such as homicides and abductions is concentrated in two or three of the larger departments in many counties, allowing for a smaller agency sample. The organization of police investigative work and record-keeping in the sample counties would have to be checked, but the cost estimate below assumes some savings could be achieved. The estimates below assume that the data extraction will be carried out in the local agencies by agency employees or local employees of the research organization involved and that it will be a paper-and-pencil operation with subsequent data entry. Evaluative coding and all quality control will be carried out at the research organization conducting the study.

Only variable costs have been estimated here. Fixed costs, such as project planning, administration, and data analysis and reporting, are not included.

Unit costs for the main variable components include:

- agency recruitment @$660/site,
- extractor training @$1,400/site,
- case screening @$7.50/record, and
- record extraction, evaluative coding and data entry @$71/record.

Modified PRS design costs are:

Sample counties	20
Sample agencies	55
Extracting sites	45
Records screened	
Homicide	400
Abduction	1,100
Records extracted, eval. coded and entered	
Homicide	180
Abduction	420
Estimated cost	$153,150

7.7 COMMUNITY PROFESSIONALS STUDY

NISMART I derived an estimate of thrownaway children from an analysis of data collected during the NIS-2 conducted in 1986. NIS-2 data were collected from professionals in child welfare agencies in a national sample of counties. A NIS-3 is planned for 1994; NIS-3 data will thus be available in 1995 and can provide thrownaway incidence information in a manner timely for NISMART II, using a methodology similar to that utilized in NISMART I. We recommend NIS-3 data be analyzed during NISMART II to provide a thrownaway incidence estimate to augment the data collected by the Household Survey on thrownaways. We recommend inclusion of NIS-3 analysis in NISMART II for comparability purposes and also because the Household Survey policy focal thrownaway category reports were infrequent, and thus not able to support detailed analyses.

7.8 NETWORK STUDY

NISMART I attempted to carry out a Network Study wherein respondents were asked to identify brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews who were not household residents and who had been abducted in the previous 12 months. This initiative was discontinued because few cases were identified and because some respondents were reluctant to provide the names and phone numbers of extended family members who experienced an incident and who could be interviewed.

Although some NISMART II planning grant advisors recommended the inclusion of a network component in the NISMART II Household Survey, we do not. There is little reason to think a new initiative would be more successful than the earlier one. Moreover, we anticipate the changes we recommend to the Household Survey will identify a sufficient number of nonfamily incidents and obviate the need for a Network Study.

7.9 RETURNED RUNAWAY STUDY

NISMART I interviewed a sample of returned runaways and thrownaways, as well as a random sample of children whose caretakers reported no incident. The purpose of the Returned Runaway Study was to assess possible problems of the Household Survey because parents and caretakers were asked to report the experiences of their children. The goal was to determine whether parent/caretaker and child reports differed.

Results of the Returned Runaway Study indicated a high level of agreement between parents and children regarding whether an incident had occurred. There was less agreement about the details of incidents, so some incidents were not counted based on the parent or caretaker reports, which in turn would have been counted based on the child's account and vice versa. The incidence estimate would have been approximately 11% higher if it were based on child accounts.

We do not recommend replication of the Returned Runaway Study in NISMART II for several reasons. First, we are recommending that children aged 12 to 17 be the primary household respondents for the Household Survey, so a comparison of parent and child responses would be less useful. Second, the NISMART I Returned Runaway Study's findings showed a high consensus between parents and children. Finally, the Returned Runaway Study had methodological limitations, most notably a 40% response rate for the sample of children who had an incident reported by parents. Moreover, runaways who had not returned home would be unavailable for an interview (just as they had been unavailable for the NISMART I Returned Runaway Study).

7.10 SUPPLEMENTAL HOMICIDE REPORTS ANALYSIS

NISMART I used the FBI's SHR reports for the 12-year period from 1976 to 1987 to develop an upper-bound estimate of the number of children killed in the course of a stranger abduction every year. We do not recommend repeating a similar analysis for NISMART II for the following reasons:

- The SHR data do not specifically record whether a homicide involved an abduction (this information is inferred from homicide circumstances data, which are often missing).
- Because children killed in the course of an abduction is a very low prevalence phenomenon, a new annual estimate of the number of children killed in this way is not likely to differ much from the NISMART I estimate, it does not seem worth the resources that would be required to conduct such a study.
- If a PRS is conducted in NISMART II, homicide files could be examined (see Section 7.6).

The SHR data are also problematic due to a large amount of missing data. Although we think that it is difficult to justify redoing the SHR analysis for NISMART II for methodological reasons and because the resulting estimate would not be very informative, this case type is highly important. This may be a good enough reason to conduct the SHR analysis again.

7.11 SINGLE ESTIMATE OF MISSING CHILDREN

The NISMART I incidence estimates for abducted, runaway, thrownaway, and lost or injured or otherwise missing children were not aggregated to produce a single estimate of missing children. The different case types were not summed because they represent very different phenomena, because many of the children were not really missing, and because the various NISMART I methodologies produced estimates that it was not appropriate to aggregate. However, the legislation requiring a missing children incidence estimate encourages attempts to develop a single estimate that is methodologically sound and meaningful for interpretive and policymaking purposes.

The development of a sound single estimate of the incidence of missing children was an issue discussed from the outset of the planning grant project. The principle that has emerged to undergird development of a single estimate is use of **generic incidence features** instead of case types to allow summation. For example, if a child's caretaker did not know where the child was for some portion of a runaway incident, that child can be considered to have been missing. Likewise, if a custodial parent was ignorant of a child's whereabouts during a family abduction incident, the child can be considered

missing. Focusing on the **missing** feature of these two examples then would allow their inclusion in a single estimate. Similarly, it was suggested at the Planning Symposium that a missing child definition might be further conditioned on the criterion that the parent or caretaker contacted an agency for the purpose of locating the child.

Identifying generic incident features of all case types might be useful for identifying and counting cases that are important social phenomena and that require the attention of social and behavioral scientists and policymakers. Fresh opportunities for theorizing might result; a sound basis for the development of public policy and estimation of resource needs is likely.

7.12 BROAD SCOPE/POLICY FOCAL DISTINCTION

NISMART I distinguished some incidents using a "broad scope" and "policy focal" distinction. The reason for making these distinctions was to differentiate nonserious and serious incidents, such as incidents involving greater risk to a child. For example, if a child did not have a safe and secure place to stay during a runaway incident, the incident was classified as policy focal. There was some sentiment from planning grant advisors that the broad scope/policy focal distinction was not appropriate or useful.

We have not made a specific recommendation about continuation of the broad scope/policy focal distinctions. We do think it important that missing incidents be distinguished in terms of degree of risk (seriousness or potential seriousness), and in other ways, such as the need for public intervention or use of public resources. So in this sense we recommend continuing to classify missing child incidents in relevant and useful ways. It would also be helpful to compare NISMART I and NISMART II on the broad scope/policy focal dimension. The major implication this has for NISMART II is that information be gathered during each of the study components to allow classification of events. If the recommendation is followed to narrow the scope of information gathered during NISMART II to that necessary to measure an incident (see Section 7.4), careful attention should be given in the development of study instruments so that information required for broad scope/policy focal incident classification is collected.

7.13 SECONDARY DATA SOURCES IN SUPPORT OF NISMART II

During the course of the planning grant, a number of secondary data sources were examined to assess their value for NISMART II. Most notably the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) National Crime Information Center (NCIC) data, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) case tracking system, and the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) of the FBI were considered for their possible value to NISMART II. None of these data systems can make a primary

contribution to NISMART II in the sense that they can replace a NISMART component or support one or more incidence estimates. These (and possibly other) data, however, may prove useful to NISMART II in other ways. For example, the NCIC or NCMEC data may be useful for sample design or instrument development work. NIBRS data may allow development of missing child case profiles, and other supportive uses may be possible with secondary data. But no secondary data source was found that could make a primary contribution to NISMART II.

7.14 FINAL WORD

NISMART I was an important study that provided extensive information about missing children. NISMART I was also an important methodological learning experience. By careful analyses of NISMART I, other methodological studies, and the expert opinion of a substantial number of advisors, the NISMART II planning grant team has concluded that the next study of missing children should focus more sharply than NISMART I on the incidence of missing children. The planning grant team has also suggested major changes to the methodologies of the Household Survey, the JFS, and the PRS that would improve the value of these study components. OJJDP is now in a position to support a NISMART II study that will be improved technically and as a policymaking resource. We also hope this report will help to generate a NISMART II that is conducted in a cost-effective way.

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APPENDIX A

NISMART I ASSESSMENT

Assessment of the First National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children

FINAL DRAFT

Pamela M. Messerschmidt

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Product of:

Planning the Second National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

The passage of both the Missing Children Act of 1982 and the Missing Children's Assistance Act of 1984 was brought about by a coalition of people interested in various types of missing children, including runaways, children abducted by family members, and children abducted (and murdered) by strangers. The latter Act mandated periodic national incidence estimates of missing children, defined as:

> any individual less than 18 years of age whose whereabouts are unknown to such individual's legal custodian if --
>
> (A) the circumstances surrounding such individual's disappearance indicate that such individual may possibly have been removed by another from the control of such individual's legal custodian without such custodian's consent; or
>
> (B) the circumstances of the case strongly indicate that such individual is likely to be abused or sexually exploited.

Periodic national incidence studies were mandated to

> determine for a given year the actual number of children reported missing each year, the number of children who are victims of abduction by strangers, the number of children who are the victims of parental kidnappings, and the number of children who are recovered each year.

NISMART I (National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children) was designed to fulfill this mandate. Because the concept of missing children is so complex, NISMART I used six different methodologies to estimate the incidence of the following types of problems that were believed to contain the population of missing children:

- Children abducted by non-family members,
- Runaways,
- Children abducted by family members,
- Thrownaways, and
- Lost, injured, and otherwise missing children.

The estimates produced by NISMART I are summarized in Table 1. These estimates have generated some controversy because some individuals and groups concerned with the various types of missing children feel that the estimates are too low. In addition, there is some question about the extent to which NISMART I addresses the mandate of the Act. For example, NISMART I estimates should not be aggregated; thus, no single estimate of "missing children" is available.

For these reasons, planners of NISMART II (scheduled to be conducted in 1994) must reexamine the definitions and methodologies of NISMART I before deciding on the composition of NISMART II. The purpose of this report is to review and assess all the

TABLE 1

NISMART I ESTIMATES

Estimates	Estimated Number of Children in 1988
Non-Family Abductions	
Legal Definition Abductions	3,200 - 4,600
Stereotypical Kidnappings	200 - 300
Runaways	
Broad Scope	450,700
Policy Focal	133,500
Family Abductions	
Broad Scope	354,100
Policy Focal	163,200
Thrownaways	
Broad Scope	127,100
Policy Focal	59,200
Lost, Injured, or Otherwise Missing	
Broad Scope	438,200
Policy Focal	139,100

Source: Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., & Sedlak, A. (1990). Missing, abducted, runaway, and thrownaway children in America. First report: Numbers and characteristics national incidence studies. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

elements of NISMART I. The report will identify the strengths and weaknesses of NISMART I and will raise questions and make suggestions for modifications to consider.

The following section, NISMART I Summary and Assessment, is organized by the five missing child categories. Each category will be assessed on the following dimensions:

- definitions,
- methods, coverage, and sampling,
- instrumentation, and
- implementation and estimation.

Table 2, which summarizes the NISMART I categories and the methods used to measure each, will provide a helpful guide while reading about each type of incident. Table 3, which provides short descriptions and summarizes the objectives of each study method, will also be useful.

Following the summary/assessment, the next section raises important questions to consider in the NISMART II planning process and makes suggestions for modifying definitions and methods.

2.0 NISMART I Summary and Assessment

2.1 Non-Family Abductions

2.1.1 Definitions

For most types of missing child incidents, NISMART I distinguished between broad-scope and policy-focal incidents. Broad-scope incidents encompass the cases most broadly defined as countable incidents; policy-focal incidents are a subset of all broad-scope cases in which the child is at serious risk for additional harm, such as physical injury or criminal victimization. Possible operationalizations of a policy focal case include not having a secure place to stay, being extremely young, being away for a long period of time, or the involvement of a public agency in some aspect of the episode. NISMART I defined two types of non-family abductions (NFAs), both of which were considered policy focal, but distinguished between the legal definition and the stereotypical definition. The stereotypical definition includes the most serious kidnapping cases of which the general public usually thinks (e.g. abducted by stranger, held for ransom). The legal definition includes all cases of non-family abduction, in which, for example, a child may be held for an hour and voluntarily released by the abductor. The definitions are as follows:

Legal Definition:

- Child was taken by the use of force or threat or detained by the use of force or threat for a substantial period in a place of isolation by a non-family member without either lawful authority or the permission of a parent/guardian; or

TABLE 2

NISMART I DEFINITIONAL CATEGORIES AND METHODOLOGIES

Methods	Missing Child Types				
	Family Abductions	Non-Family Abductions	Runaways	Thrown-aways	Otherwise Missing
Household Survey	X	X	X	X	X
Police Records Study		X			
Returned Runaway Study			X		
Juvenile Facilities Study			X		
FBI Data Reanalysis		X			
Community Profession-als Study (NIS-2)				X	

TABLE 3

NISMART I STUDIES - DESCRIPTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

Study	Description and Objective
Household Survey	A telephone survey of 34,822 randomly selected households, yielding interviews with 10,554 caretakers of 20,505 children, to find out how many of the missing children in these households had been abducted, run away, thrown away, lost, or otherwise missing.
Police Records Study	A study of police records in 83 law enforcement agencies in a national random sample of 21 counties to find out how many non-family abduction episodes were reported to these agencies.
FBI Data Reanalysis	Reanalysis of FBI data to determine how many children were murdered in conjunction with possible abductions by strangers.
Returned Runaway Study	An interview study with children who had run away and returned home to find out if children's accounts of events concerning possible runaway episodes matched the accounts given by their parents.
Juvenile Facilities Survey	A survey of facilities where children resided to find out how many had run away from these facilities.
Community Professionals Study	Reanalysis of data from a study of 735 agencies that have contact with children in a national random sample of 29 counties to determine how many children known to these agencies have been abandoned or thrown away.

- Child who is 14 or younger or who is under 18 and mentally incompetent was taken by or voluntarily went with or was detained by a non-family member without either lawful authority or the permission of a parent/guardian and the perpetrator (1) concealed the child's whereabouts, or (2) requested ransom, goods, or services in exchange for the child's return, or (3) expressed an intention to keep the child permanently; or

- Child was taken by or voluntarily went with a non-family member who, at the time that person took or went away with the child, had the apparent purpose of physically or sexually assaulting the child.

Stereotypical Definition:

- An episode that meets the criteria for abduction under the legal definition and has these additional components:

  1) perpetrator of the abduction is a stranger (someone child had not met or known before day of the abduction), and

  2) child is detained overnight, is killed, or is transported 100 miles from the scene of the abduction; or the perpetrator requests ransom, goods, or services in exchange for the child's return; or the perpetrator expressed an intention to keep the child permanently.

The distinction between the legal and stereotypical definitions is particularly useful. Because the public often equates "missing child" with a stereotypical NFA, this distinction enables us to see approximately how many such cases occur in a year and how this number compares to the other types of missing or displaced children.

The definitions seem to make clear distinction and allow for replication. Also, the definitions are appropriately operationalized; criteria such as "20 feet" or "overnight" are present when needed. See Finkelhor, Hotaling, and Sedlak (1989) for a more thorough discussion of the definitions and their operationalizations.

2.1.2 Methods, Coverage, and Sampling

The most comprehensive way to estimate the number of non-family abductions would be to ask children, caregivers, and the police. NISMART I gained information only from caregivers and the police; caregivers were reached through the Household Survey and police records were examined in the Police Records Study and the FBI Data Reanalysis.

Household Survey. The Household Survey was a telephone survey of a national sample of households. A random-digit telephone dialing procedure (the modified Waksberg method) was implemented which first identified Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) based on a list of all possible first eight digits of the ten digits in telephone numbers. 250 PSUs (or clusters of numbers with the same first eight digits) were identified for each of the six waves of the

study for a total of 1,500 PSUs; 40 telephone numbers were selected in each PSU for a total of 60,000 telephone numbers. These numbers were called by trained interviewers to identify the residential households and to determine if there were children living at the household; if so, the interview was conducted to find out if there were any "missing child" incidents in the past year. This procedure identified 34,822 residential households. Of these, 11,617 were households with children. These yielded 10,544 interviews with caretakers (an 89% response rate), dealing with the experiences of 20,505 children. Figure 1 diagrams the structure of the household survey and its substudies.

Because those interviewed were composed only of those who had telephones, totals from the survey sample were weighted on a class-by-class and region-by-region basis in order to correspond to Census information. Such a post-stratification procedure allows for accurate national estimates while compensating for households without telephones.

For this part of NISMART I, the intent of the Household Survey was to identify NFAs from families who had experienced such an incident. Because the incidence of NFAs is relatively small, the Household Survey did not identify enough cases to provide a reliable incidence estimate. In fact, only 15 cases were identified by the Household Survey. The Household Survey was able to identify a sufficient number of NFA attempts, but the other data collection sources provided estimates for completed NFAs.

The Household Survey also included a Network Study, in which respondents were asked to identify brothers, sisters, nieces, or nephews who did not live in the household and who were abducted or kidnapped in the previous twelve months. If such an incident had occurred, information about these children was collected. This part of the Household Survey was not very successful in NISMART I: too few cases were reported to produce a reliable estimate of NFAs, and respondents were reluctant to provide information for researchers to contact other family members.

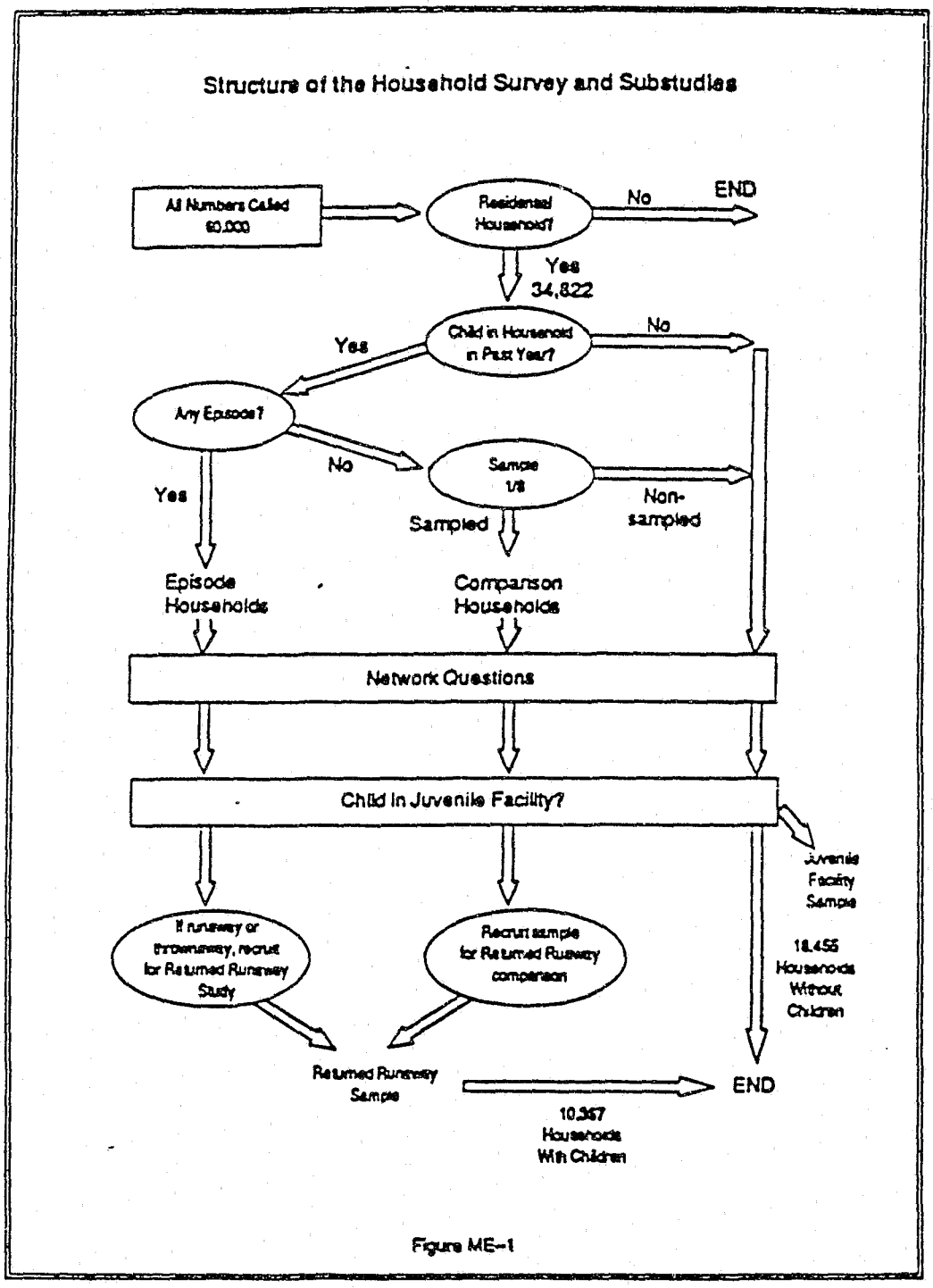
Police Records Study. The Police Records Study (PRS) was an examination of police records to estimate the number of NFAs known to law enforcement agencies. This methodology was developed because the numbers of non-family abductions were too small to estimate accurately through the household survey methodology. In addition, the researchers thought that non-family abductions would have a high rate of being reported to law enforcement agencies.

The PRS sample used a multi-stage, stratified sampling procedure, with stages being geographic areas, police departments, and case records. The sample consisted of 21 counties, 83 police departments, and all eligible records for abductions (or kidnappings), homicides, missing persons where it was unknown what happened to the child, and sex offenses (in 4 counties only).

The 21 counties were subsampled from a group of 29 counties used by Westat, Inc. in another study. These 29 counties were selected by dividing all U.S. counties into the four major geographic regions (as defined by the Office of Business Economics) and categorizing

FIGURE 1

STRUCTURE OF THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY AND SUBSTUDIES



Source: Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., & Sedlak, A. (1990). Missing, abducted, runaway, and thrownaway children in America. First report: Numbers and characteristics national incidence studies. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

the counties within each region by level of urbanization. Size was measured by the number of schoolchildren in each county, and counties with less than 2,800 schoolchildren were excluded temporarily. The rest of the counties were given a weight based on the number of schoolchildren; this allowed the sample to choose counties with probability proportionate to size, i.e. counties with larger populations had a higher probability of being sampled.

Those counties with less than 2,800 schoolchildren (designated rural counties) were treated separately. These counties were sorted first by state and then by urbanization level. Within the urbanization levels, counties were sequenced based on their location from northeast to southwest, thus ordering the counties by their geographic proximity. Then adjacent counties within the same state were joined into larger groupings of more than 2,800 schoolchildren. Of these groups of counties, one was randomly chosen and added to the sample.

The 21 counties for the PRS were randomly chosen from this list of 29. However, the rural PSU was chosen with certainty in order to assure that low population counties would be represented in the sample. This selection resulted in 20 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs).

State, county, and municipal police agencies were chosen from within these 20 PSUs. All state and county police agencies were chosen as long as their functions were "in-scope," i.e. as long as these agencies had primary investigative responsibility for the types of cases targeted by the study. (For example, state highway patrols were not chosen.) This process yielded 16 county agencies and six state agencies. All municipal agencies were chosen if the PSU had fewer than five such agencies. If the PSU had more than five municipal agencies, an average of five were chosen based on the size of the population the agency served. This yielded 61 municipal agencies. There was a 100 percent participation rate.

All police records for the offenses listed above (homicide, abduction/missing persons, and sex offenses [in 4 counties only]) were examined unless the files were too large for time and resource constraints. In these cases, sampling of cases was done in order to yield approximately 100 cases per type of crime. This sampling was necessary for the abduction and missing person files in the Chicago and Los Angeles Police Departments; and for the sex offense files in the New York, Indianapolis, and Los Angeles Police Departments and in the Marion, IN, and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Departments.

The PRS proved to be a relatively effective, though costly, way of estimating NFAs. However, a few problems exist: 1) some of the detail required by the definitions is not available from police reports, meaning that some potential NFAs are not counted because of missing data; 2) the study cannot identify cases which are not reported to the police (e.g., a child who does not report an incident to parents or an incident that is resolved before the police are notified); 3) because sex offense records were examined in only 4 of the 21 counties, estimates based on them are of unknown bias and reliability; and 4) abductions which may have occurred in conjunction with other offenses (such as robbery) were not covered by the PRS.

FBI Data Reanalysis. The FBI Data Reanalysis was conducted in order to estimate the number of children who were murdered in the course of a non-family abduction. Because

such data are not easily accessible, the researchers started with data from the Supplemental Homicide Reports (SHR), submitted monthly to the FBI by police departments across the country. By making adjustments for departments which occasionally fail to submit monthly reports and for other missing data, the UNH researchers created the Comprehensive Homicide File (CHF), which allowed them to estimate upper and lower bounds on the possible number of such crimes.

The CHF includes information such as the age of the victim and the victim-offender relationship. Unfortunately, the CHF does not specify those homicides associated with an abduction or kidnapping; instead, it lists a number of "circumstances" that describe the context or the precipitating event in which the homicide took place. Some examples of these circumstances are robbery, lover's triangle, and juvenile gang killing. The circumstances used for the FBI Data Reanalysis included: rape, other sexual offense, other felony type, all suspected felony type, and undetermined. Twelve years of data were examined, and the final NISMART estimates reflect the average of these twelve years (1976-1987); thus, researchers were able to account for the potentially large fluctuations in stranger abduction homicides which may occur from year to year.

The estimate generated from this study represents only an upper limit to the possible number of homicides in the course of a stranger abduction. The researchers were working with data which were not specifically collected for the purpose at hand; they could exclude only those cases which were unlikely to entail an NFA. In addition, police agencies occasionally fail to submit monthly reports to the FBI. Missing data are common, particularly on the crucial question of offender-victim relationship. However, the number generated from the FBI Data Reanalysis and the estimate generated by the PRS were consistent with each other.

2.1.3 Instrumentation

Household Survey. Three screener questions on the Household Survey were designed to elicit reports of NFAs:

- "Was there any time when anyone tried to take [any of these children] away against your wishes?"
- "Was there any time when anyone tried to sexually molest, rape, attack, or beat up [any of these children]?"
- "Has anyone ever kidnapped or tried to kidnap [any of these children]?"

If a respondent answered yes to any of these questions, further questions were asked to ascertain whether the perpetrator was a non-family member and whether the incident had occurred within the study time frame. If so, then detailed questions were asked about each incident.

An advantage to the phrasing of these questions is that only the last screener question uses the word "kidnap." The others use more subjective wording which helped the interviewers

identify NFAs (attempted or completed) which the caregiver may not have characterized as an abduction or kidnapping.

Police Records Study. Data were collected using three abstract forms: 1) homicide, 2) abduction/missing persons, and 3) sex offense. The forms were used first to collect information relating to the definitions listed above.

Information on the victim and perpetrator, such as race and sex, was collected. In addition, data were collected on whether the child was a runaway at the time of the incident, whether the child was institutionalized at the time of the incident, or whether the child was involved in criminal activity (prostitution, drug dealing, gang activity, burglary/theft) prior to, at the time of, or subsequent to the incident.

Outcome data were also collected: whether and how the child was released, whether the child received injuries, whether the child was taken to a hospital or clinic, and what kind of treatment was received. Also, detailed information on the incident itself was collected: date, time and length of incident, and how the perpetrator took and held the child. The resulting action against the perpetrator was detailed, as well as demographic and previous crime information.

FBI Data Reanalysis. There was no instrument for this study.

2.1.4 Implementation and Estimation

Household Survey. The Household Survey had a response rate of 89%.

Respondents were interviewed by individuals who were familiar with the objectives of the study and with the study definitions and who were trained in appropriate ways to ask questions dealing with the sensitive subject matter of the study. These interviewers were monitored in order to assure that they were administering the questionnaire correctly and to assist them in administering the questionnaire more effectively. The interviewers were monitored for 15% of their time.

Interviewers were able to key in answers only within a valid range, and skip patterns were programmed into the questionnaire in order to assure that the correct interview questions were asked of each respondent (e.g., if a respondent indicated that there was no incident of interest, the computer skipped detailed incident questions). Households with eligible missing child episodes were also administered detailed incident questionnaires.

Respondents were limited to events within a period of 12 months in order to minimize memory problems: an inability to remember correctly if the time period were too long and an inability to locate an event within or without too short a time span were avoided as much as possible. In addition, questions were designed to omit as much subjective wording as possible in order to avoid socially desirable answering. The attributes of the event as opposed to classifications of the event were used to elicit responses ("tried to take this child away against your wishes" instead of "abduct"), and details were collected in follow-up questions.

Great effort went into the data preparation and coding procedures. The coder had to evaluate whether the appropriate incident form had been used for each episode. After this decision, the coder had to determine whether each episode was "in-scope" based on definitional criteria for each type of episode.

As noted above, the Household Survey yielded only 15 cases of NFAs, a number much too small to generate a national estimate.

Police Record Study. After the selection of police agencies (100% response rate) and police records for use in the PRS, the implementation involved a number of steps. Extractors of information from police records were trained and used standard forms. The extractors passed the information on to evaluative coders who compared the extracted data to the NFA definitions and determined whether a case fit into any of the definitions. If there was a level of uncertainty about any of the definitional elements (e.g., whether the child was moved 20 feet), the evaluative coder attempted to determine the likelihood that the requirements of the definitional element were met (e.g., 50% likely, 80% likely, etc.). If each element of a definition was at least 50% likely, the case was counted.

The PRS showed that police records often do not contain the level of information required by strict defintions such as those developed for NISMART. For example, NISMART operationalized movement as 20 feet or more, but this information was not available in 90% of the homicide and abduction/missing person files and in 99% of the sex offense files. Also, the time detained was not available in 53% of the homicide and abduction/missing person files and in 64% of the sex offense files. This highlights the importance of the evaluative coding, designed to evaluate the likelihood that a particular definitional element is present, but it also shows that there was a level of subjectivity involved in including or excluding cases. It is likely that there were cases which would have been counted as NFAs if the information were contained in the police record, but the information is often not available.

This national sample of counties was generalizable to the entire U.S. As noted in Section 2.1.2, however, these represent only cases which are reported to the police; also as noted, the bias and reliability of the estimates from the sex offense records are unknown.

FBI Data Reanalysis. The FBI Data Reanalysis was implemented as planned. (See the description in Section 2.1.2.) As noted, this analysis was able to provide only an upper estimate of NFA/homicides because these are not directly identifiable on the data file.

Comments on NISMART I Estimates. The confidence intervals for the NISMART I estimates of NFAs and of other incidents are relatively wide. As shown in Table 4, the coefficient of variation (C.V.), which is the standard deviation of the estimate expressed as a percentage of the midpoint estimate, is relatively high for both legal and stereotypical abduction estimates from the PRS (32.4% and 45.7%, respectively). This means that even if

TABLE 4

ESTIMATED INCIDENCE OF COUNTABLE CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT MISSING CHILDREN CATEGORIES

Category	Estimate[a]	S.D.[b]	95% Confidence Interval[c] Lower Bound	Upper Bound	C.V. (%)[d]
HOUSEHOLD SURVEY:					
Family Abduction					
- Broad Scope	354,100	36,817	281,900	426,200	10.4
- Policy Focal	163,200	28,767	106,800	219,600	17.6
- Attempts	44,900	13,977	17,500	72,300	31.2
Non-Family Abduction					
- Attempts	114,600	17,734	79,900	149,400	15.5
Runaway					
- Broad Scope	446,700	63,680	321,900	571,500	14.3
- Policy Focal	129,500	33,435	64,000	195,100	25.8
- Gestures	173,700	35,836	103,500	244,000	20.6
Thrownaway					
- Broad Scope	112,600	27,411	58,900	166,300	24.3
- Policy Focal	44,700	20,274	4,900	84,400	45.4
Lost or Otherwise Missing					
- Broad Scope	438,200	66,116	308,600	567,800	15.1
- Policy Focal	139,100	57,972	25,500	252,700	41.7
COMMUNITY PROFESSIONALS STUDY:					
Thrownaway					
- Policy Focal	14,500	6,376	2,000	27,000	44.0
POLICE RECORDS STUDY:					
Non-Family Abduction[e]					
- Legal Abductions	1,400	400	500	2,200	32.4
- Stereotypical Kidnappings	200	107	0	400	45.7
JUVENILE FACILITIES STUDY:					
Runaway					
- Policy Focal	12,800	882	11,100	14,600	7.0

[a]The estimate is the midpoint of the confidence interval. Estimates and confidence intervals are all rounded to the nearest hundred.
[b]"S.D." is the standard deviation of the estimate. It is a measure of the amount of variation there is around our midpoint estimate.
[c]We are 95 percent certain that our midpoint estimate falls within the confidence interval for each category.
[d]The coefficient of variation is the standard deviation expressed as a percentage of the midpoint estimate. The higher the "C.V." is, the wider the confidence interval will be.
[e]These estimates are without the sexual assault file multiplier taken from the four county sample, for which we have no way to calculate a confidence interval.

Source: Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., & Sedlak, A. (1990). Missing, abducted, runaway, and thrownaway children in America. First report: Numbers and characteristics national incidence studies. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

the methodologies of NISMART I are duplicated exactly in NISMART II, detecting actual changes in the estimates from NISMART I to NISMART II will be difficult.

2.2 Runaways

2.2.1 Definitions

As described earlier, many of the NISMART I case types included both broad scope and policy focal definitions. For runaways, NISMART I also added a "runaway gesture" category to encompass minor runaway episodes. Each of these definitions is described below:

Broad Scope Runaways:

- Child left home without permission and stayed away at least overnight;
- Child made statement or left note indicating intent to run away and stayed away at least overnight;
- Child 15 or older was away and chose not to come home when expected, and child stayed away two nights;
- Child 14 or younger was away and chose not to come home when expected, and child stayed away overnight.

Policy Focal Runaways: The Policy Focal Runaways are defined as children involved in episodes where, in addition to meeting broad scope criteria, the child is without a familiar and secure place to stay; thus, the policy focal definition corresponds to the broad scope definition above with this additional criterion. For example, a child who runs away and stays at a friend's house or with a relative, even for several nights, is a Broad Scope Runaway, but not a Policy Focal. By contrast, a child who runs away for the same period and stays for some time on the street or in a car or even in a runaway shelter would be a Policy Focal Runaway.

Runaway Gesture: This includes "mild" cases, which do not fall into either the broad scope or policy focal definitions, but nonetheless may be considered running away by the parents, the police, or the child. NISMART I defined two types of runaway gestures:

- Child made statement or left note indicating intent to run away but did not stay away overnight;
- Child 15 or older was away and chose not to come home when expected, and child stayed away overnight but not two nights.

These cases were not included in the runaway incidence estimate; however, depending on the time away, some of these cases may have been included in the lost, injured, or otherwise missing category (see Section 2.5).

An important addition to the definition of runaways by NISMART is the inclusion of children who left home with parental permission but stayed away longer than the parent had allowed. For example, a teenager who has permission to go to a party on Friday night but stays away from home all weekend without permission was included in the runaway category. This definition also included a different time-away requirement for older children than for younger children.

NISMART also included children who ran away from nonhousehold settings. This is an important addition to the total number of runaways. Additionally, a distinction was made between runaways and thrownaways in NISMART I, something which was not done in previous studies of runaways.

Note that, according to these definitions, runaways are not "missing" in all cases; the whereabouts of many runaways are known to the caregivers, but the child is "displaced" or "not where he or she should be."

2.2.2 Methods, Coverage, and Sampling

An ideal way of measuring runaways would include identifying both those who were currently "on the run" and those who had run away and had returned from both household and nonhousehold settings. Runaways could be identified by their families, by the police, by social service agencies, by relevant people in juvenile institutions, and by the runaways themselves (including those in shelters, on the street, or returned home). Covering all of these sources would be the most productive, as long as one could control for duplicate counting.

NISMART I was able to reach runaways' families, personnel at juvenile institutions, and youth who had run away and had since returned. These populations were surveyed using three methods.

Household Survey. As described in Section 2.1.2, the household survey interviewed a random sample of households. This seems like the best approach to identifying runaways from households as opposed to counts from police records or social service agency records that will not include all cases of runaways (only those that come to their attention) and will probably not include the level of detail required by NISMART to distinguish between types of runaway cases. One drawback is that the interviews were conducted only with caregivers, who may not know all the details of the runaway incident. Another drawback is that runaways from nonhousehold settings are not identifiable. The next two methodologies tried to deal with these two problems.

Returned Runaway Study. The Returned Runaway Study enabled the researchers to compare children's and caregivers' descriptions of runaway incidents. The children interviewed in the Returned Runaway Study were children who were identified as returned runaways in the Household Survey and whose parents gave permission for them to be interviewed by the researchers. A comparison group of children whose parents had reported no episode relevant to the survey were also interviewed. These children were chosen by

asking a random sample of parents with children 12 or older for permission to interview their children. The response rate for returned runaway interviews was somewhat low (85/184, or 46%; 36% of the identified returned runaways did not have permission from the parent and 18% did not respond for other reasons). The response rate for the comparison group was better (142/200, or 71%).

Private telephone interviews were conducted with children who participated in this study. Interviewers were primarily 18-22 years old with telephone interviewing experience and interest in child welfare issues. Attempts were made to be sensitive with the runaways by using younger interviewers and by designing the instrument with simple, direct questions, including several open-ended questions.

About halfway through the data collection process, the researchers realized that many of the incidents which caretakers were characterizing as thrownaway episodes met NISMART's definition of runaway episodes. Thrownaway episodes were similar to runaway episodes except that the parent prompted the child's leaving by having the child thrown out of the home or by refusing to allow the child to return home. (See Section 2.4 for further discussion of thrownaways.) Therefore, the category of youth interviewed for the Returned Runaway Study was widened to include both returned runaways and thrownaways identified on the Household Survey.

The Returned Runaway Study ended up with a fraction of the numbers originally expected. Many of the identified returned runaways did not participate. Also, the runaway/thrownaway confusion may have prevented interviewers from identifying some returned runaways, especially in the first half of the data collection process. These problems need to be examined more fully.

Juvenile Facilities Study. The Juvenile Facilities Study attempted to estimate the number of children who ran away from nonhousehold settings, such as overnight summer camps, group foster homes, detention centers, and mental health and medical hospitals. These numbers were combined with the runaway numbers from the Household Survey to form a comprehensive runaway estimate.

Because there is no comprehensive list of such juvenile facilities, a simple random sample is difficult to generate. NISMART approximated this by asking Household Survey respondents if they or other adults in the household had children who would ordinarily live in the household, but for some reason "lived in some type of facility such as a boarding school, hospital or juvenile facility for at least 2 consecutive weeks during the last 12 months." If the answer was yes, the surveyors obtained the name, address, and phone number for the facility. Information was gathered on overnight summer camps, boarding schools, group foster homes, detention centers, mental health and medical hospitals, residential treatment centers, schools for the disabled, colleges, and the military. (The latter two were excluded because they are generally considered a sign of emancipation.) The facilities were contacted and surveyed about their experiences with runaways. A juvenile facility had a probability of being nominated in proportion to the number of children from telephone households in the facility. There were 400 households which had children residing in such a facility for 2 or more

weeks, but only 318 (a 79.5% response rate) were able or willing to identify the facility. Those households identified 326 juvenile facilities; however, 140 were non-eligible (e.g. college) or out-of-scope (e.g., non-residential), 35 were not able to be located, and 24 did not respond to the survey. The response rate of eligible, located facilities was 84%.

Because juvenile facilities in this study were identified by the household population, facilities which care for orphans, abandoned, or refugee children were underrepresented. Inclusion of such facilities would generate a better estimate of runaways. In addition, the rate of the identified facilities could be improved if better, more thorough information could be obtained from household respondents.

Thus, limitations include the following: the quality of information from the juvenile facilities may not be as reliable as the information obtained from the Household Survey because not all facilities maintain updated, accurate records on runaway incidents; and some statistical problems arise because children may be counted more than once if they ran away from a household and a facility in the same year. Although the latter problem was dealt with to an extent, all of the duplicate counting was probably not eliminated.

2.2.3 Instrumentation

Household Survey. The Household Survey screener questions for runaway incidents were as follows:

- "In the last year did [any of these children] leave home without permission and stay away for at least a few hours?"
- "Did [any of these children] choose not to come home from somewhere when they were supposed to and stay away for at least 2 nights?"
- "Was there a time when you were concerned because you couldn't find [any of these children] or they didn't come home?"

A positive response to any of these questions led to more thorough questioning about each episode by the interviewers.

Note that the term "runaway" is left out of these screening questions. Because some parents may not want to label their children's behavior as "running away," these terms allowed the interviewers to elicit information about events which parents may or may not think of as running away.

The questionnaire also included questions about family dynamics which are important for understanding the risk factors associated with runaway and other types of episodes.

Returned Runaway Study. The Returned Runaway Study collected information about the runaway episodes. Variables included: when and why the child left, for how long, and where; when and why the child came back; whether and with whom the child had a fight or

disagreement before leaving; how long the child planned to be away and what was taken along; and whether anyone knew where the child was and whether anyone else went with the child.

Questions were also asked about what happened during the runaway episode: Did the police pick the child up? Was the child held in a lock-up, jail, or juvenile detention center and for how long? Was the child sexually abused or assaulted during the episode? Did the child contact any hot lines, runaway houses, police, or social services agencies while away? Were these people helpful?

Follow-up questions were asked about whether the child told parents about the episode; what kind of relationship the child had currently with parents; and whether the child would consider running away again.

Juvenile Facilities Survey. The Juvenile Facilities Survey collected information about the number of runaways from each institution. Also, in order to obtain detailed information about the runaways, information was requested about the five most recent runaway children. This included the age, race, and sex of the runaway; whether the child lived in a household or another institution during the year; the child's family structure; whether the child was found or returned and the reason for the episode; whether the child had taken anything along and where the child went; whether the child went alone or with others; whether the child was assaulted or otherwise hurt during the episode; whether the police were contacted; and whether there was more than one episode for this child.

2.2.4 Implementation and Estimation

See Section 2.1.4 for a description of the Household Survey implementation. The survey provided a national estimate for runaways from household settings.

The Returned Runaway Study was implemented as planned, but with a very low response rate. As noted above, halfway through the study period, thrownaways were also included in the returned runaway sample because of confusion between these two types of incidents. The study yielded a disappointing response rate, raising important questions about the adequacy of the coverage.

The Juvenile Facilities Survey was implemented as planned. The researchers attempted to develop a correction to account for potential duplicate counting (e.g., if a child had run away from a household and a juvenile facility in the same year). This effort entailed asking whether a given child who had run away from a facility had also run away from a household or another institution in the study year. However, the fact that this information was secondhand limited the reliability of this correction. Also, the sampling frame was limited because only facilities identified by respondents and located by the researchers were included; therefore, institutions whose child populations do not tend to come from households were underreported. Also, only one fifth of households with eligible children provided information about facilities and only one third of those could be located or interviewed. Thus, the representativeness of the estimates from this study is unknown.

2.3 Family Abductions

2.3.1 Definitions

As with the other missing children incidents, NISMART I broke the family abduction definitions into broad scope and policy focal:

Broad Scope:

- Child was taken by a family member in violation of a custody agreement or decree; or
- Child was not returned or given over by a family member and child was away at least overnight in violation of a custody agreement or decree.

Policy Focal:

- Child age 14 or younger was taken by a family member in violation of a custody agreement and condition (1), (2), or (3) below applies;
- Child age 14 or younger was not returned or given over by a family member and the child was away at least overnight in violation of a custody agreement or decree, and condition (1), (2), or (3) below applies;
- Child age 15 or older was taken by a family member in violation of a custody agreement or decree, condition (1), (2), or (3) below applies, and some kind of force or threat was used against the child; or
- Child age 15 or older was not returned or given over by a family member and the child was away at least overnight in violation of a custody agreement or decree, condition (1), (2), or (3) below applies, and some kind of force or threat was used against the child.

In addition, there was one definition for attempted family abductions:

- Attempt was made to take, or not to return or give over child by a family member in violation of a custody agreement or decree and there is reason to believe that (had the attempt succeeded) the episode would have qualified as policy focal, or condition (4) below applies.

Conditions:

(1) An attempt was made to conceal the taking or whereabouts of the child or to prevent contact with the child;

(2) Child was transported from the state with the intent of making it more difficult to contact or recover the child;

(3) Abducting parent/family member made statements or took actions that indicated an intent to prevent contact with the child on an indefinite basis or to permanently affect custodial privileges; or

(4) The child's absence was ended or averted only because of the substantial efforts of the person from whom the child was taken/kept.

These definitions thoroughly cover different types of family abductions, from a father who takes a child away from his divorced wife to a grandparent who takes a child away from parents perceived as not raising the child well. The definitions also account for cases of older children (15 or older) who may cooperate with an estranged parent in order to leave a custodial parent; force or threat must be used in order for cases involving older children to be counted as policy focal. However, the difficulty and subjectivity of defining when force was used vs. when a child went willingly is apparent. Also, the distinction between children 15 and over and children under 15 may not be appropriate in all cases.

2.3.2 Methods, Coverage, and Sampling

Ideally, family abductions would be estimated by talking to families and examining police records. NISMART I used only the first method through the household survey. (The household survey methodology is explained in Section 2.1.2.)

One advantage to getting information from families is that cases which were never reported to the police can be counted. However, a disadvantage to this approach is the reliance on the answers by only one caregiver. There is no way to corroborate the facts as the caregiver explains them, and the potential for personal bias is apparent.

Another drawback to this approach is that only the caregivers currently in physical custody (whether legal or not) of the child will have the opportunity to talk about the incident. A noncustodial parent without other children in the household would be screened out at the beginning of the interview. Thus, estimates of custodial parents who take the children to prevent visitation rights of a noncustodial parent are potentially undercounted.

On the whole, this approach is perhaps the best available, reaching the highest number of cases. A possible additional methodology would be a study similar to the PRS in order to lend some level of corroboration to the estimates.

2.3.3 Instrumentation

Instrumentation for family abductions included the relevant questions on the Household Survey:

"In the past 12 months, did *any* family member outside of your household, such as an ex-spouse, brother, sister, parent, or in-law, or someone acting for them, do any of the following:

- Did any family member or someone acting for them *take or try to take* [any of these children] in violation of a custody order, agreement or other child living arrangement?

- Did any family member outside of your household *keep or try to keep* [any of these children] from you when you were supposed to have [them] even if for just a day or a weekend?

- Did any family member *conceal* [any of these children] *or try to prevent* you from having contact with [them]?

- Was there any time when anyone *tried to take* [any of these children] away against your wishes?

- Has anyone ever *kidnapped or tried to kidnap* [any of these children]?

If a respondent answered yes to any of these questions, details about the incident(s) were gathered and compared to the Family Abduction definitions. As for other types of incidents, the questions are designed with wording as objective as possible.

2.3.4 Implementation and Estimation

Implementation of the Household Survey is described in Section 2.1.4. The survey provided a good estimate of family abductions. As mentioned above, corroboration for the numbers could be provided if a study similar to the PRS were conducted for family abductions.

2.4 Thrownaways

2.4.1 Definitions

Thrownaways have often overlapped with runaways in previous studies; NISMART I was the first study to distinguish between these two types of incidents. As noted in Finkelhor et al., "We think this (overlap of runaways and thrownaways) has been unfortunate since it stereotypes out-of-home children as disobedient, when the problem may lie with the parent" (p. 29). The definitions of thrownaways are as follows:

Broad Scope:

- Parent or other adult in household asks child to leave home, fails to arrange adequate alternative care, and child is out of the household for at least one night; or

- Child is away and asks to return but parent or some adult in household refuses to allow child to return, fails to arrange adequate alternative care, and child is out of the household for at least one night; or

- Child has run away or left and parent/guardian makes no effort to recover child or states that it does not matter whether the child stays away or returns, and child is out of the household for at least one night.

The Policy Focal definition includes the added element that the child is without a familiar and secure place to stay. In addition, there is one more policy focal definition:

- Parent abandons child, deserting child permanently or indefinitely without prearranged provision for someone else assuming child's custody on a permanent or indefinite basis.

One criterion for these definitions is that the parent did not make any arrangements for alternative care for the child. As Finkelhor et al. explain,

> In the missing or displaced sense, these children (who are sent to a military academy or a school for emotionally disturbed children or to other relatives) are not children who are cast adrift and forced to fend for themselves. We propose the criterion that thrownaway occurs in situations of dismissal from home where adequate substitute care is not provided by actions of the parent (1989, p. 30).

On the whole, the definitional elements are coherent and clear. The definitions are adequately differentiated from runaways except in cases where a child starts out as a runaway but is not let back in the house (thus becoming a thrownaway also). In NISMART I, these children may have been counted in each category.

2.4.2 Methods, Coverage, and Sampling

Ideally, the thrownaway population could be estimated by talking to parents, social service agencies, and children. In NISMART I, parents and social service agencies were reached.

Household Survey. As described in Section 2.1.2, the household survey interviewed a random sample of households; however, only caregivers were interviewed. This poses a problem for this type of missing child case since caregivers are unlikely to admit that the child was thrownaway (they might say the child had runaway). Unfortunately, talking to children may insert the same amount of bias in the opposite direction.

Community Professionals Survey. NISMART attempted to derive an estimate of thrownaway children by conducting secondary data analysis of the NIS-2 data (National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect, conducted in 1986) which surveyed a national sample of community agencies for the purpose of estimating various types of child abuse and neglect. The analysis examined those neglect cases that met NISMART definitions of thrownaway children. This analysis was conducted in order to compensate for potential weaknesses in the Household Survey (e.g., parental unwillingness to admit to or describe such incidents with their own children). In particular, this analysis was aimed at estimating the numbers of abandoned (often young) children.

They felt that the NISMART definition could be improved, but admitted that these cases are difficult to define and count because of differences between State statutes and because law enforcement does not always take these situations seriously. Some of our respondents maintained that all cases of family abductions can have traumatic implications for the children involved. A few of those most concerned with family abductions suggested that these cases can be as serious and dangerous to the child as a stranger abduction.

Although most thought the NISMART definition should be reexamined, there were few specific suggestions for an adjusted or alternative definition. Respondents did feel that collecting more detail about this type of case would be useful (e.g., costs to the parents and the government). The respondents thought that adding emphasis to this type of incident would help educate people about current policies; they also hoped that policymakers would be influenced to take this problem more seriously and create better policy for responding to this social problem.

3.3.2 Runaways

Several respondents were concerned primarily with runaways. Their comments and suggestions focused mainly on the definitions of who is a runaway. Although they agreed that it is difficult to create national-level definitions that are meaningful for a wide variety of organizations, they did make some specific suggestions for NISMART II. For example, the respondents did not like the way the broad scope and policy focal definitions were distinguished from each other. They felt that the "familiar and secure place to stay" criterion used in NISMART I was too subjective and should be replaced with one or a combination of variables, such as length of time away, where the runaway stayed while away, age of runaway, and chronicity of past runaway episodes.

Some respondents felt that the 2-night time away requirement for runaways 15 and older was inappropriate. They understood that the intent of the distinction was to exclude discipline problems (e.g., curfew violations) from runaway estimates, but they felt that 2 nights away was too long for any child, even those 15 and older.

Because the goal of many organizations that help runaways is to intervene and prevent serious runaway incidents, some expressed a need to know about children who leave for shorter periods of time than those counted in NISMART I. Again, they felt that all children gone for 1 night should be included in the count (not just those 14 and younger). Also, there was some interest in children who are gone for a few hours because this may be a symptom of other problems.

Respondents were also interested in seeing NISMART II planners reexamine the runaway/thrownaway distinction. Such cases may actually be part of a continuum of family problems, with thrownaways or abandoned children being on one extreme. The current runaway/thrownaway distinction may be an inappropriate one that tries to ascribe blame to either the youth (runaway) or the caregiver (thrownaway), when "blame" for most incidents cannot be ascribed to one party only.

The respondents also indicated that estimates of both incidence *and* prevalence of runaways would be useful.

3.3.3 Dissemination of NISMART I Information

Based on comments from the respondents, we concluded that many individuals and organizations that should have benefited from the NISMART I information were not familiar with this ground-breaking study. Furthermore, some of those who were familiar with NISMART expressed skepticism about the methodology and numbers.

We also found that several respondents were unhappy with the NISMART I final report format, which presented all of the NISMART results in one document. This meant that all potential users of the results had to work to find the information that was valuable to them. Some respondents felt that the NISMART II results should be delivered in different formats designed for specific targeted groups. Respondents also recommended that a summary fact sheet with reproducible graphs and charts be readily available to help groups spread the word about NISMART further. These efforts may make the research more accessible to policymakers, law enforcement, and the public.

Finally, we found that the respondents were pleased that we solicited their opinions and suggestions for improving the utility of NISMART II. Some dissatisfaction with the NISMART II methods and definitions has been prevented by targeting certain audiences during the planning process for involvement as consultants. As a result of taking part in the development process, these consultants may be more supportive of the NISMART II results.

3.3.4 Methodological Issues

Because of the complexity of the NISMART I methods, only the NISMART I principal investigators were interviewed about each of the methodological components. Some of their comments are included in the following paragraphs.

3.3.4.1 Household Survey. The NISMART I researchers felt that this survey should be retained in NISMART II with two possible modifications. First, the screener

- "Was there any time when you were concerned because you couldn't find [any of these children] or they didn't come home?"

If a positive response was received to any of these questions, further details were obtained. In addition, some episodes were identified after passing the screening questions for other types of episodes but not falling into any of the subsequent definitions (e.g. a runaway who did not stay away overnight).

2.5.4 Implementation and Estimation

Implementation of the Household Survey was described in Section 2.1.4. This survey provided a national estimate of the number of such missing child episodes.

3.0 Considerations for NISMART II

One of the most important accomplishments of NISMART I was that it divided the complex and confusing phenomenon of "missing children" into distinct and identifiable incidents. By clearly defining each type of missing child, NISMART I was able to make important clarifications among incidents, such as the difference between runaway and thrownaway children. Also, NISMART I further developed the common conceptions of missing child incidents such as non-family abductions: NISMART I demonstrated that cases in which children are taken by strangers and held for ransom are more extreme instances of similar incidents which may include a non-stranger perpetrator and may not last for a long period of time.

Another strength of NISMART I was its use of multiple methods to measure the incidence of missing children. A well-designed household survey was used and complemented by more narrowly focused surveys, studies of police records, and analyses of existing data.

The NISMART II planners have the opportunity to learn from the experiences of NISMART I and make improvements where possible. In this section, we raise some issues relevant for NISMART II planning. Suggestions focus on some narrowing of the missing child definitions and highlight the potential for using existing data sources which would eliminate the need for some of the NISMART I methods.

3.1 Definitions

The NISMART I researchers chose not to report an aggregate number of "missing and displaced" children. This has been criticized by others who feel that there should be an aggregated national estimate. Some also argue that, because the numbers will be aggregated by others (such as the media), those with the best understanding of the methods should provide the number.

One reason for not having an aggregated estimate is that the idea of "missing children" is extremely complex. Finkelhor, Hotaling, and Sedlak (1989) note that there are two dimensions to the idea of a missing child: 1) the child is missing (i.e., the child's parent or

legal guardian does not know the child's whereabouts); and 2) the child is displaced (i.e., the child is not where expected). A problem arises when some cases involve one dimension but not the other (e.g., a runaway whose parents actually know where that child is). NISMART I used the term "non-normative leavings and displacements," to most comprehensively define the cases of interest: "situations where children are missing, removed from or leave parental custody in a way that they are not supposed to."

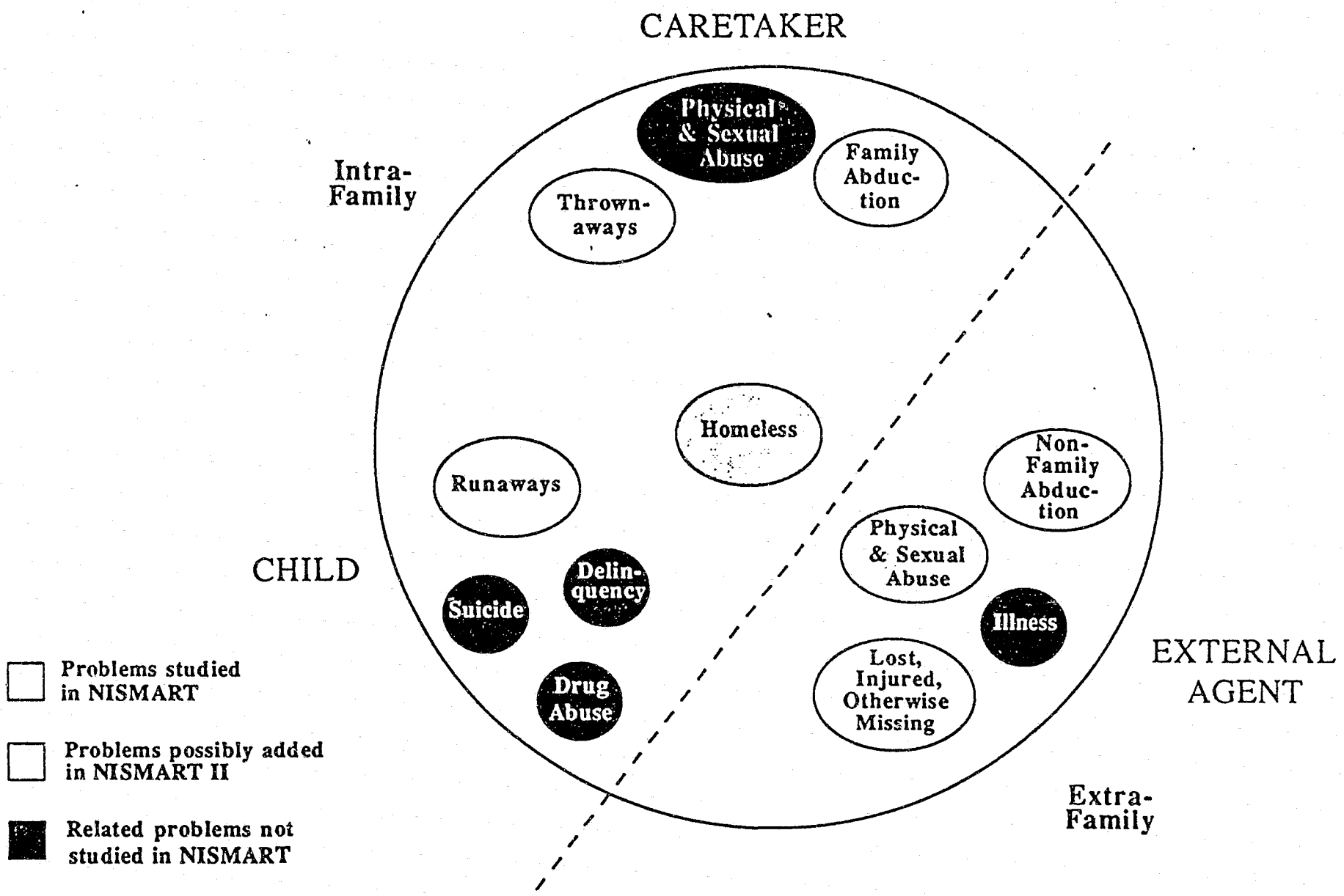
Under the rubric of "missing or displaced" children, the NISMART I researchers explicated the five different types or cases described above. These types of incidents are relatively disparate. In two cases, the perpetrator is actually the child (runaways and lost or otherwise missing). In the other three cases, the perpetrator is a family member, acquaintance, or stranger. That which makes the case policy focal varies by definition as well: for lost or otherwise missing, the police must be contacted; for runaways, the child must be without a safe place to stay; for thrownaways, the parent must not have provided the child with an alternative place to stay. In addition, each of these cases may have different combinations of missing or displaced elements.

One way for NISMART II to deal with this complexity is to narrow the conception of missing child. In order to do this, the first step may be to ask why we want to have such an estimate at all. One answer is that, as a society, we are concerned about when adequate care for a child is lacking, or when society has to step in to fulfill the role the family usually takes in a child's life. In other words, we may want to focus on children who are at high risk for "system entry." Such a concept would, for example, exclude children who run away to a friend's house for a few nights. This is a symptom of some trouble in the family, but law enforcement and social services do not necessarily have to step in to help.

On the other hand, a child who runs to a shelter is in need of society's assistance and resources. We want to know about those children whose adequate care is "missing" because of the implications that missing care has for society. This concept would limit most of the missing child categories to the policy focal definitions. This would include all NFAs; runaways or thrownaways without a secure or familiar place to stay; children simply abandoned by their family; more serious family abductions where the family member concealed the child, transported the child out of state, or tried to prevent contact from the legal custodian; and lost, injured or otherwise missing children whose parents contacted the police in order to locate them. This would allow less serious cases to be screened out so that NISMART II could focus on counting and analyzing those cases which have implications for social action.

Such a conception of missing care would include other situations as well. Figure 2 (adapted from the NISMART I Final Report) provides a conceptualization of threats to children's health and safety and a context in which to think about this problem as a whole. This shows that, even if NISMART II were designed to estimate only the policy focal incidents from NISMART I, it would still not cover all children in need of care. However, if we concentrate only on the subset of these youth who are "missing and displaced," we include the NISMART I incidents plus homeless youth and possibly youth abused physically or sexually by a non-

FIGURE 2. THREATS TO CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY



Source: Adapted from Finkiehor, D., Hotaling, G., & Sedlak, A. (1990). Missing, abducted, runaway thrownaway children in America, First report: Numbers and characteristics national incidence studies. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

family member. NISMART II should consider options for including such children in the estimation.

3.2 Methods

In addition to re-thinking the NISMART definitions, we need to examine and possibly modify the methods used to obtain the estimates. One methodological limitation to NISMART I was the fact that there were important incidents which were not accessible through any of the methodologies. For example, children who were abducted and sexually abused may not have reported the incident to their parents (who thus would not have reported the incident to NISMART I interviewers). Also, some important subpopulations were missed; for example, the exclusion of homeless or currently runaway youth may have limited the estimates of runaways or thrownaways. For these reasons, we suggest thinking about methodological modifications. Modifications to consider may include:

- Expanding the number of "pools" from which to search for these missing children; and
- Using methods which interview the children themselves.

Table 5 suggests some additional "pools," namely the addition of homeless and currently runaway youth and youth physically or sexually abused or exploited by non-family members. Adding youth from these pools may better estimate the incidence of missing children as defined above. For example, we could gain some important data from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Study, sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families and conducted by Research Triangle Institute. This study conducted interviews with 500 youth residing in a nationally representative sample of approximately 25 shelters and with 500 youth on the streets in approximately 7 sites throughout the country. The youth were asked about topics such as:

- their history of homelessness (where they stayed and for how long), and their opinions of youth shelters;
- whether they had spent time in facilities such as foster homes, group homes, psychiatric or mental hospitals, juvenile detention, youth homes, or jail, and whether they had ever run away from any of these places;
- reasons for running away from home, including physical or sexual abuse, and a distinction between running away and being thrown away;
- where they stayed when they had run away and problems they encountered, including whether they were physically or sexually victimized; and
- questions about health, suicide attempts, depression, and criminal activity.

Advantages to these data include the fact that youth who are currently out of the home can personally relay information about their experiences. They can express their opinions about whether they ran away or were thrown away, which could be compared to responses from parents in the Household Survey. We can also estimate the number of such youth who were physically or sexually victimized and the number of youth who ran away from juvenile

TABLE 5
POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS FOR NISMART II

Methods	Case Types						
	Family Abductions	Non-Family Abductions	Runaways	Thrown-aways	Otherwise Missing	Homeless	Physically or Sexually Victimized by Non-Family Member
NISMART II Household Survey	I, C	I(?), C	I, C	I, C	I, C		I, C
Current ACYF Runaway & Homeless =Youth Study, including Youth Risk Behavior Supplement questions	ND	ND	I, C, SA, ND	I, C, (shelters) SA		I, (HH Pop.), C, SA	
NIS-3 Community Professionals Survey (Winter '95)				I*, C, SA			
Police Records Study		I, C					C
Returned Runaway Study			I (?), C	I(?), C			
Juvenile Facilities Study			I, C				
Supplementary Homicide Reports		I (RANGE)					
Other surveys, e.g., Monitor Future, National Educational Survey	SS	SS					
National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)		SS					SS
National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS)	SA	SA					SA
National Crime Information Center (NCIC), National Center for Missing and Exploited Children	ND, SA	ND, SA					
Morbidity and Mortality Reports		C					

I = incidence estimation
C = correlates
ND = NISMART II design
SS = survey supplement
SA = secondary analysis

* NIS-III will provide an estimate of "abandoned" children.

facilities. Consideration might be given to using this study as a replacement for the Returned Runaway Survey. These data would also enable us to estimate the number of homeless youth, which we may want to add to the "missing and displaced" children categories.

Another possible data source is the Youth Risk Behavior Supplement (YRBS) of the National Health Interview Survey. The YRBS, supported by the CDC, was administered to 12,000 youth aged 12 to 21 in a randomly selected household population and to an equivalent number of youth aged 14 to 17 (in grades 9 to 12) in a national sample of schools. Nine questions on the YRBS ask youth about runaway and homeless experiences, including whether they had stayed in shelters, public places, abandoned buildings, or with a stranger. The questions also ask if the youth had ever stayed away from home overnight without permission, and how many nights were spent away from home without permission. These data provide an estimate of runaways and homeless youth in the household population, and although the questions do not gather much detail about the incidents, the youth again are the respondents.

Other data sources may also provide additional data. For example, the Study of National Incidence and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-3, to be conducted in 1994) may provide more data on physically or sexually abused children. One disadvantage to these data is the fact that social service agencies, rather than child care providers, are surveyed. But the data from this study may be more extensively utilized than in NISMART I, which used NIS-2 data only to estimate thrownaway children. For example, data for children physically or sexually abused by non-family members in a caretaker role (such as child care providers or juvenile institution personnel) may be relevant to NISMART II.

Even if the decision is made not to add physically and sexually victimized children definitionally, this population could still be a useful pool from which to search for other missing child incidents. Such cases are not often classified as missing children, even though they may technically be missing under NISMART definitions. For example, a fourteen-year-old girl who is pulled behind a bush and raped is technically abducted, even though this may be considered or reported as a sex crime only. Also, sex crime files or incidents may help locate more runaways or thrownaways. Additional screener questions could be added to the Household Survey to locate children in this category. Also, if the PRS is replicated in NISMART II, sex offense files could be examined in all sites.

In considering the PRS, NISMART II planners also should be aware of the findings from another OJJDP-funded study which is examining the feasibility of using the FBI's new NIBRS system (National Incident Based Reporting System) to estimate NFAs. Preliminary results from this study indicate that NIBRS is not a valid alternative for NISMART II, but it may be for later replications of NISMART. Work comparing NIBRS data elements to NISMART NFA definitions indicates a need to change the NISMART NFA definitions in order to fit with NIBRS data. Specifically, definitions would have to be collapsed so that there would be one broad definition (similar to the first legal definition in Section 2.1.1), and subcategories based on age of the child, whether physical or sexual assault was involved, the

relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, and whether the child was killed. Such changes should be examined and considered by NISMART II planners if the PRS is included in NISMART II.

Most importantly, we think consideration should be given to adding interviews with children, as opposed to only caregivers. We feel that this was a serious limitation of NISMART I. The Household Survey, if expanded, could add interviews with children as well as parents. This would provide better estimates of incidents which may or may not be known by parents and would give us an idea of the number of victimizations which children never report to their parents. This could also potentially provide an interesting comparison between parents' and children's conceptions of runaway vs. thrownaway incidents.

3.3 CONCLUSION

We have made suggestions for both definitional and methodological changes. We have suggested

- a limitation to the definitions (limiting the estimates to those incidents in which "the system" becomes involved), and
- an expansion of the definitions (including homeless youth and youth physically or sexually abused by non-family members).

We have also suggested re-thinking the methods to

- expand the missing pools,
- include children as respondents, and
- use existing data sources to replace or augment NISMART components.

These modifications will limit the comparability between NISMART I and NISMART II. The level of priority given to such comparability must be considered before definite decisions about changes are made. However, we think that the improvements conceptually and methodologically outweigh the comparability limitations which would be produced.

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The following papers are being prepared as part of the Additional Analysis and Dissemination of NISMART I (AAD-NISMART):

Satisfaction with police involvement: What are the [runaway] episode characteristics that lead parents to involve police? What are the characteristics of the episodes in which police were involved and parent were satisfied with their involvement?

Risk of harm for runaway and thrownaway youth.

Family and youth characteristics associated with runaway and thrownaway episodes.

Predicting duration and harm in family abduction episodes.

Police responses and satisfaction with police in family abduction episodes.

Issues in research on nonfamily abduction.

A risk-factor analysis of family abduction episodes.

APPENDIX B

KEY INFORMANTS SURVEY RESPONDENTS

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KEY INFORMANTS SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Organization	Completed Interview?
National Association of Chiefs of Police	Yes
ECHO	Yes
National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect	Yes
National Network of Runaway and Youth Services	Yes
U. of San Francisco, Psychiatry Dept./ Trauma Studies	Yes
U. of New Hampshire, Family Research Lab	Yes
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention	Yes
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Yes
Family and Youth Services Bureau	Yes
National Sheriffs Association	Yes
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children	Yes
Westat, Inc.	Yes
Family Court Judge in Pittsburgh, PA	No
Youth Work Alliance	No
Missing Children Comprehensive Action Program (MCAP)	Yes
Family Court Judge in Memphis & Shelby Counties, TN	Yes
National Education Association	No
Police Executive Research Forum	No
Congressional Committees	No
National Center for Education Statistics	No
American Medical Association	No
Child Find, Inc.	Yes

APPENDIX C

KEY INFORMANT RESPONSE PROTOCOL

APPENDIX C

KEY INFORMANT RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Research Triangle Institute is requesting your participation in the planning activities for the Second National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART II). This project is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. We would like to obtain guidance from various individuals–including researchers, policymakers, and practitioners from governmental and non-governmental organizations–regarding the kind of information that would be most useful for the second NISMART.

You may recall, the first NISMART was a series of studies, which began in 1988 to estimate the incidence of missing children. The first NISMART categorized missing children cases as: non-family abductions, family abductions, runaways, thrownaways, and lost or otherwise missing. We would like your ideas on the type of missing child information most useful to you. This will help us to make decisions about the design of NISMART II, scheduled to take place in 1994.

We will call you to discuss your responses to the questions listed below. If you prefer, you can call *Karen Mead* (919/541-6768) or *Pam Messerschmidt* (919/541-7391) at your convenience or you can send written responses to one of them at Research Triangle Institute, P.O. Box 12194, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709.

Questions

1. Please briefly tell me about the organization you work for and the work you personally do within the organization that is related to missing children.

2. What type(s) of missing children does your work most frequently relate to? (e.g., runaways, abducted children, etc.)

3. Are there any specific criteria you think should be used to determine if a child is indeed missing or to distinguish more serious cases from less serious cases?

4. Based upon your response to question 2 (types of missing children you are most concerned with) please briefly summarize your perception of the magnitude and social implications of this problem? Should more or less emphasis be put on the problem?

5. What information about missing children do you need to fulfill the mission of your organization?

6. Is information you need available? Where do you get your information currently?

7. Were you aware of NISMART prior to this inquiry? Was the first NISMART study useful? If not, what would have made it more useful to you?

APPENDIX D

NISMART I TERMS AND DEFINITIONS DISTRIBUTED BY DR. HOWELL AT THE PLANNING SYMPOSIUM

MISSING CHILD

STATUTORY DEFINITION

Sec. 403 (1) "The term 'missing child' means any individual less than 18 years of age whose whereabouts are unknown to such individual's legal custodian if–

(A) the circumstances surrounding such individual's disappearance indicate that such individual may possibly have been removed by another from the control of such individual's legal custodian without such custodian's consent; or

(B) the circumstances of the case strongly indicate that such individual is likely to be abused or sexually exploited...".

NATIONAL INCIDENCE STUDIES

Sec. 404 (b) (3) "[The Administrator shall] periodically conduct national incidence studies to determine for a given year the actual number of children reported missing each year, the number of children who are victims of abduction by strangers, the number of children who are the victims of parental kidnappings, and the number of children who are recovered each year...".

ALTERNATIVE DEFINITIONS

1) Whereabouts unknown, if
abducted, or
circumstances strongly indicate likely abuse or exploitation

2) Missing
Still missing
Displaced

3) Abducted
Otherwise missing

4) Broad Scope
Policy Focal

SUGGESTED PRINCIPLES AND FACTORS

In determining whether the circumstances surrounding a child's disappearance indicate that the child may possibly have been removed by another from the control of the child's custodian without consent or, if not, whether "the circumstances of the case strongly indicate that the child is likely to be abused or sexually exploited," the following principles apply:

(1) The word "circumstances" encompasses the collective facts and circumstances surrounding the actual disappearance or departure of the child at any point in time, the relevant history of the child, and the known physical, mental, and emotional attributes of the child including, in particular, chronological age.

(2) A "strong indication of a likelihood" exists when the collected facts, circumstances, history, and attributes of the child are sufficient, taken as a whole, to support the conclusion of a trained law enforcement officer, investigator, or other expert that there is a probability that absent law enforcement and/or missing children agency assistance or intervention, the child will be subjected to abuse (physical harm) or sexual exploitation (sexual abuse, prostitution or pornography) during the period of time that the child's whereabouts are unknown to the child's legal custodian;

(3) A "child" is anyone under 18 years of age;

(4) In making a judgment the law enforcement officer, investigator, or other expert should view the "circumstances" of each case as a fluid concept, requiring a balancing of all relevant circumstances known at the time the determination is made, the credibility and factual strength of the evidence collected, and including particularly the age of the child. The classification or nonclassification of an individual as a "missing child" is subject to reevaluation as additional information becomes available or based on the passage of time.

(5) In general, the need for factual or credible evidence of a likelihood of abuse or exploitation or of the actual occurrence of such abuse or exploitation, would increase in proportion to the age of the particular child. Thus, for example, where credible evidence indicates that a 15 year old is engaged in prostitution, the child should be classified as a missing child. However, no flat presumption can be made that a child is likely to be abused or sexually exploited solely by virtue or being a 15 year old runaway. Conversely, it would be appropriate to presume, absent circumstances or credible evidence to the contrary, that a 7-year-old runaway is likely to be abused or sexually exploited.

Examples of the types of information (factors) to be used in reviewing circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance (criterion A) and/or the circumstances of the case (criterion B) in order to properly classify a child are as follows:

FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES EXISTING AT THE TIME OF THE DISAPPEARANCE

When (time of day) and Where (location) disappearance occurred

Witnesses to departure

Physical evidence related to disappearance

Whether a note was left and, if so, its contents

Contemporaneous oral statements and their contents

Whether clothing and other possessions were taken or are missing

Evidence of custodian's consent to give physical custody of the child to another person

Any other facts and circumstances supporting or not supporting a conclusion that the child was or was not removed by another from the control of the custodian without consent or is in circumstances where, although the child was not removed by another, he or she may or may not be abused or sexually exploited.

RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE CHILD (INCLUDING POST-DISAPPEARANCE INFORMATION

Recent threats to run away

Recent intrafamily conflict

History of drug or alcohol use or abuse

History of runaway episodes

History of involvement in child pornography, prostitution, or other incidences of sexual abuse or exploitation

Any other history supporting or not supporting a conclusion that the child was or was not removed by another from the control of the custodian without consent or is currently in circumstances where, although the child was not removed by another, he or she may or may not be abused or sexually exploited

Post - child seen or otherwise known to be in the company of a known sex offender, child abuser, or exploiter (pimp, pornographer)

- evidence of actual abuse or sexual exploitation, e.g., child seen in a drugged or battered state, or evidence of actual involvement in prostitution/pornography

ATTRIBUTES OF THE CHILD

Age

Sex

Physical size

Physical disability

Maturity level

Emotional stability

Mental disability, e.g.: retarded

Any other physical or mental attribute(s) of the child supporting or not supporting a conclusion that the child is in circumstances where he or she may or may not be abused or sexually exploited.

APPENDIX E

CHILDREN'S ABILITY TO GIVE VALID REPORTS OF PAST EVENTS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Are Children Able to Give Valid Reports of Past Events?

James Kennedy
Research Triangle Institute

Introduction

The survey method necessarily presumes that individuals can and will give accurate information about events in their lives. Questionnaires often ask people to report what they have done in the past, or what has happened to them, and how frequently; the respondents' answers are generalized from the sample with the intention of characterizing, not the self-reports of the population, but the behavior and events which actually occur in the population. It is therefore very important for survey methodologists to investigate the parameters of autobiographical memory, in order to obtain the best possible evidence, from a sample, about a population.

Adult cognitive processes are known to be riddled with biases and inaccuracies (cf. Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Further problems result from a discrepancy between the way individuals organize information and the way that survey researchers *wish* it were organized: for instance, people do not often remember the dates of events, and do not appear to keep a running count of the number of times something has happened, though estimates of these quantities constitute important survey data.

Given that adult reports are suspect, children's answers to questionnaire items must be scrutinized closely. Very young children, after all, have no concept of time, of past and future, might not distinguish memory from fantasy, and if we are to believe the Freudians, they may not even be aware of themselves as individuals separate from their surroundings. As they develop, their memory for past events improves, but so does the sophistication of their self-presentation, and they learn not to divulge embarrassing truths about themselves.

The present document reviews literature which bears on the abilities of children to recall information and report it in a survey situation. Generally the paper is organized into sections devoted to the child's ability to understand time frames, the child's ability to recall as well as to make inferences about the past where memory is burdened or vague, and the child's motivations to report distorted versus accurate information.

The Time Frame

Many questionnaire items ask respondents to report the frequency of a behavior over a given length of time, or ask the individual to report events occurring during a specified temporal reference frame. Thus in assessing the ability of a child to produce valid data the researcher must ask if the child is able to understand the time frame, and to determine whether a behavior meets the temporal criterion or not.

Friedman (1978) has classified knowledge of time in terms of three fundamental categories. *Experiential time* is the individual's subjective experience of the order of events and their duration. *Logical time* involves conceptualizing time as a logical dimension which can be reasoned and talked about. For instance, Levin (1982) has demonstrated that 5-year-olds can grasp the logical relations among

beginning, ending, and total time, though interfering cues (e.g., the stopping position of racing cars) can easily overwhelm their fragile understanding of logical time. *Conventional time* comprises the conceptualization of time into days of the week, months of the year, and other socially learned units for dividing the temporal continuum into discrete periods. This view of time, which is the type utilized most often by survey items, is usually not acquired until a child goes to grade school.

Friedman (1989) further described three ways in which conventional time can be known. The earliest form appears to be isolated *associations*, such as the date of a holiday or the time that a parent comes home from work. Then, according to Friedman, the child learns that these associations are embedded in larger temporal systems. Such systems can be represented cognitively as *ordered verbal lists* (e.g., "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday...") proceeding from earlier to later, or as *mental images* which can be scanned from both directions.

Friedman (1986) asked children questions such as "If one goes forward (backward) from Wednesday, will Saturday or Monday come first?" He hypothesized that if children represent the week as an ordered list, they will make fewer errors going forward than backward; if however they represent it as a mental image, they should go as easily in either direction. Second-graders did not answer either type of question very well. Fourth- through eighth-graders, however, did well on the forward task but not the backward one. College students did equally well with either direction. According to Friedman (1982), "adult-like competence is not achieved until early to mid-adolescence" (p. 1397).

These findings have implications for survey research with children. Most conservatively, it appears that children through age 13-15 do not commonly have the cognitive sophistication to conceptualize a segment of time such as "in the past 90 days" as a mental image. If temporal units are stored as ordered lists, then it must be difficult indeed to associate these memorized terms with vivid events. Less cautiously, survey designers should try to state time-frames in terms that children and unsophisticated adults can most easily understand; this suggests that reference frames should be invoked from start to end, perhaps by asking the individual to recall a memorable event at the beginning of the period and then think forward to the present. When individuals wish to use the episode-counting strategy, as well, it may be advantageous for the interviewer to encourage counting from beginning to end of the reference period, rather than backwards from the present, even though thinking backwards has produced slightly better results in adults (cf. Loftus, Smith, Klinger, and Fiedler, 1992).

Strategy Selection: To Remember or Infer?

Hubbard (1992) classified 10 self-described strategies used by R's to answer reference-frame questions:

- Direct enumeration: Respondent reports "counting" the number of instances of the events during the reference period.
- Association: Respondent reports using significant life events to help him/her remember events occurring during the reference period.

- Recall: The Respondent only says that he/she "remembered" or "recalled" or "knew" or "thought about it" or they wrote "memory."
- Multiplication: Respondent used estimates of behavior frequency from a previous reference to mathematically determine the number of events during a given reference period.
- Habit: Respondent reports that behavior was habitual (e.g., "never did it" or "do it every day").
- Broke Down Time: Respondent reports breaking time periods into shorter ones as part of estimation.
- Estimated: Respondent says he/she "estimated."
- Guessed: Respondent says he/she "guessed."
- Other: Answer does not fit any coding category (e.g., respondent says "checked calendar" or "process of elimination."
- None/blank: Respondent either says he/she has no strategy or else leaves question blank.

It is apparent that the strategies listed by Hubbard can be easily sorted into three general categories:

- Memory for each episode, whether the event in question is recalled primarily or through association with a retrieval cue.
- Inference through multiplication with or without heuristic rounding.
- Unknown processes ("guessed"), including heuristics and automatic processes outside the consciousness of the individual; this category includes reports from persons who are unable to articulate their strategies.

Burton & Blair (1991) agree on the division of strategies into recall and inference, which they term "episode enumeration" and "rule-based estimation," and they further stress the importance of availability heuristic and other heuristical inference strategies (cf. Bradburn et al., 1987). Similarly, the model proposed by Lessler et al. (1989) supposes that the response to a behavior frequency question is to "recall a specific visit" or to "recall a fact" (p. 7), which then can lead to either recall or the inferring of an answer.

Supposing that the individual is capable of recalling three months into the past, and can recognize the cutoff boundary, he or she must then adopt a strategy for producing a response. As indicated above, the fundamental choice is between a memory strategy and an inferential one. The choice of a strategy type is apparently (e.g., Russo & Dosher, 1983) influenced by consideration of the tradeoff in effort and accuracy.

Enumeration of instances of an event becomes *effortful* when there are many instances to recall, instances are highly similar to one another, retrieval cues are inadequate, when the definition of the event is ambiguous, or when the time frame is large (Burton & Blair, 1991; Bradburn et al., 1987). Recall *accuracy* is affected, in general, by failure to retrieve relevant episodes and misplacement of episodes in time, which is known as "telescoping" (Burton & Blair, 1991). As Burton & Blair point out, accuracy improvement requires, at the very least, that the information be retained in memory and available for recall. Some traces may be so effortful to recall, due to interference, weak retrieval cues, etc., as to be considered unavailable. Though individual and task variables affect the decision, it appears that inference strategies will be resorted to as the effort of recall becomes great, and the demand for accuracy decreases.

With age, individuals learn new strategies, not only for recalling episodic information, but for inferring the frequencies of past events from the evidence of those episodes which can be recalled with minimal effort. The next part of this paper addresses the responding of individuals who select a recall strategy, while a later section will discuss inference strategies and their implications.

Memory Strategies in Children

While it is true that older children remember better than younger ones, the capacity of a young child's memory may be equal to that of an adult's. For instance, in a study of 4-year-olds, Brown & Scott (1971) found that children could recognize a picture they had seen before, even with as many as 25 shown in the interim, *one hundred per cent* of the time. It has been persuasively argued from this and other findings that memory capacity remains constant through the life-span, and observed improvements derive from more sophisticated use of strategies. On the other hand, some investigators (e.g., Pascual-Leone, 1989) believe that the capacity of working memory more than doubles from infancy to childhood.

For the present purpose, the resolution of this issue is fairly important. If a question were skillfully enough worded so that strategy use were optimized, would a child's memory report be valid? Or would his/her memory still be deficient, relative to what the interviewer would expect from an adult? Memory strategies are contrasted in the present discussion with strategies for inferring information about the past from evidence which may be memorial or explicit. The most frequently studied memory strategies in free recall have been *rehearsal* (cf. Ornstein & Naus, 1978), *organization*, where relations among items facilitate recall (cf. Bjorklund, 1985), and *retrieval*, the process of getting information out of storage (cf. Ackerman, 1985).

Even if memory capacity remains constant through childhood, memory ability improves with age. Folds et al. (1990) point out that "even when a seemingly identical strategy is used by children of different ages, the technique seems to be more effective in facilitating the recall of older as opposed to younger children" (p. 74). Naus et al. (1977) concluded that even when subjects of different ages seemed to be using the same strategy, subtle differences existed in the deployment of those strategies. The problem is articulated by Bjorklund & Muir (1988), who state:

> "...when conditions are right, the 8- or 9-year-old child can display high levels of strategy use and memory performance often comparable to those shown by adults. Such strategies, when they are shown, are not easily

generalized to new situations. By adolescence, context-independent strategies are more common. Children can be presented with a novel problem, identify its characteristics, and apply a well-learned memory strategy to it" (p. 81).

Folds et al. suggest four factors that can result in the increases in effectiveness of identical strategies at different ages. The first of these is *metamnemonic understanding*: the child's understanding of the task and the operation of his/her own memory system. It has been hypothesized that as children acquire a theory of memory and its operation, their ability to execute memory tasks improves.

The question of correlation between metamnemonic understanding and strategy use is unresolved; Folds et al. leave the question open, saying that the failure to confirm the effect in the laboratory may be due to methodological difficulties. Finding an answer to this question, however, appears to be relatively important for the development of questionnaire items: if strategy tutoring were built into a question, would recall be improved in younger individuals? Or would it only improve for those who already possessed advanced metacognitive knowledge?

A second factor which has been linked to the increased effectiveness of memory strategy deployment in children is more problematic for the survey methodologist. *Formal schooling* results in superior recall performance and strategy use. For instance, Morrison (1987) compared a group of "old kindergartners," whose birthdays just missed the cutoff for first grade, with a group of "young first graders," who just made the cutoff. Though subjects were matched for chronological age and gender, at the end of the school year the first graders performed better than the kindergartners on memory tasks.

Many surveys of young people are concerned with issues such as drug use and other criminal activity which may covary with formal education. If the recall of a student is more accurate than that of a child who has spent many of his/her school years in juvenile detention or on the streets, the result will be biased survey data.

Thirdly, there is considerable debate about the effect on memory of a child's developing *knowledge base*. Bjorklund (1985) has argued that children's memory performance could best be viewed as an automatic by-product of an increasingly well-developed knowledge system. On the other hand, Ornstein & Naus (1985) and others have proposed an interactional model, stating that the state of the knowledge base may enable the production of particular strategies. For instance, several studies (i.e., Folds et al., 1989) have demonstrated that knowledge of a taxonomy of items facilitated strategy use of memory for those items.

From the practical side, it can be seen that the extensiveness of the knowledge base correlates, not only with age, but with other factors, as well. These factors might be social, economic, educational, or psychological. As Lessler et al. (1989) state, "Perhaps our clearest conclusion ... concerning items with unfamiliar terms is that respondents answer these questions even when they do not understand the terms" (p. 7). Frequently in interviews the respondent will give a reply such as, "I've never heard of an HMO, so I guess I don't belong to one." The effect of the knowledge base on recall may in fact be a larger problem than is currently believed, for adults as well as children.

A fourth issue in the use of strategies relative to age, according to Folds et al., regards the *efficiency of strategy use*. A younger child must allocate attention to the strategy itself, effectively withdrawing resources from the memory task per se.

From the survey perspective this issue affects the kinds of strategic tutoring which might be built into a question. If the respondent must concentrate on learning the strategy itself, then recall will be diminished.

In sum, the validity of children's responding contains enough finagle-factors to raise serious concern. Research should be conducted to determine the validity of children's recall for various types of autobiographical details, strategy tutoring techniques which might encourage accurate and thorough recall, and question wordings which facilitate accurate reporting of information.

Inference Strategies in Children

As has been seen, behavior frequencies over a time period can be inferred by multiplying frequencies enumerated within a smaller time frame. Under some common conditions, the multiplication method is more accurate than enumeration of episodes. Common situations include those in which the number of episodes is quite high, or events are very similar, e.g., "How many cigarettes did you smoke in the past 6 months?" By the age of 9 or 10, almost all children have learned to multiply, but it is not likely that they will spontaneously turn to that strategy in answering a questionnaire item.

Tulving (e.g., 1993) has theorized the existence of distinct memory systems, two of which he calls *episodic* and *semantic* memory. Episodic memory "enables a person to remember personally experienced events as such," while "semantic memory registers and stores knowledge about the world in the broadest sense and makes it available for retrieval" (Tulving, 1993, p.67). According to Tulving's theory, episodic memory has evolved out of semantic memory and is dependent on it; further, he reports evidence that semantic memory develops earlier than episodic memory.

A similar line of theory describes the formation of schemas and scripts (Schank & Abelson, 1977). A considerable amount of evidence supports the idea that memory-based inferences are affected by schemas. For instance, Loftus & Palmer (1974) showed subjects a film of an accident in which two cars collided; some subjects were asked how fast the cars were going when they "hit" each other, while others were asked how fast they were going when they "smashed" into each other. Estimated speeds were significantly greater for the smashing cars than for those that merely hit. One interpretation is that the conclusion, which is reported as a memory, has been adjusted to become more consistent with the script evoked by the verb.

Several programs of research have concluded that children organize information into scripts before they learn to use the taxonomic categories favored by adults, though as the previous example shows, even adults rely on schematic organization to make inferences about past behavior. Adams & Worden (1986) proposed that children initially store a great deal of atypical information in general scripts, then "weed out" spurious information as they accumulate experience. Reiser et al. (1986) describe retrieval of autobiographical memories as a process of *reunderstanding* the remembered event, even when this requires distorting the

memory. According to them, most retrieval strategies employ causal reasoning to find an experience in memory, asking, for instance, questions such as "Why would I have been doing that?" "What might I have been doing when that occurred?" and so on. They state that, "...in order to retrieve an experience, it is necessary to specify a set of features that discriminate the experience from others in the context. Frequently, the search cue does not contain enough information to make these discriminations, and thus retrieval strategies must be employed to *infer plausible features* of the target experience. These retrieval mechanisms rely primarily on general information represented in the knowledge structure in order to make these inferences..." (p. 103). [italics mine]

In sum, it appears that copious evidence exists regarding reconstruction of events in autobiographical memory, and for the inference of information which is difficult to retrieve. The literature appears to support the belief that younger children are more schematic or semantic in the organization of their knowledge, and that the ability to differentiate single episodes in memory develops in late childhood or adolescence. The academic study of the development of cognition, however, has apparently not addressed the issue, in older children, of the development of strategies for inferring autobiographical past events. Applied cognitive scientists, on the other hand, have concerned themselves largely with the issue of motivation in adolescent questionnaire responding, and have neglected to address questions of cognitive processes in youth. Research should be conducted into questions of tutoring inference strategies within a survey context, the generalization of learned strategy to novel tasks, and capabilities which generally exist within this population to make accurate inferences about the past.

Motivation

The previous section of this document broadly addressed the issue of whether, and at what age, children have the information-processing capabilities to produce good data from recall. Cognitive abilities constitute an outer limit to the survey information which can be obtained from respondents. This section will briefly address *motivational* aspects of children's memory: assuming that they are capable of recalling an episode- will they tell the interviewer?

Whether to increase social desirability or because of some bias in the cognitive apparatus, respondents have a persistent tendency to report events which make them appear to be more responsible for their successes, and less so for their failures (cf. Miller & Ross, 1975). It is challenging to assess the extent to which individuals distort their responses in an interview. One method which has been invented to address this challenge in the *bogus pipeline*.

In the bogus pipeline paradigm, subjects are led to believe that some "scientific," usually physiological, methods can detect deception. The knowledge that the researcher can know their true beliefs may, in some situations, motivate the subject to be more truthful. For instance, Jones, Bell, and Aronson (1972) showed that white subjects reported more negative (and presumably more truthful) attitudes toward blacks when they thought they were being monitored physiologically.

A number of researchers have investigated older children's reports with bogus pipeline techniques, with almost unanimously negative results. For instance, Werch et al. (1987) asked adolescents (mean age=11.74 years) about their experimentation,

frequency, intentions, beliefs, and attitudes related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, under questionnaire only and bogus pipeline conditions. Contrary to predictions, the questionnaire-only condition resulted in the highest reporting of alcohol experimentation, and all other comparisons were nonsignificant. Those authors recommended abandonment of the bogus pipeline method in tobacco, alcohol, and drug use programs, and in epidemiological studies of drug use.

Campanelli et al. (1987) used a bogus pipeline procedure in a study of alcohol use among 7th- to 9th grade children. Analysis of variance found no significant differences, even with a significance level of p=0.20. They concluded that in the context of a school-based study in which confidentiality was assured, adolescents' self-reports of alcohol use and misuse were not significantly affected by a bogus pipeline procedure.

Hansen et al. (19**) reported that when a bogus pipeline method was introduced, a large proportion of subjects refused to participate. Further, differences were not found between bogus-pipeline and questionnaire-only groups, and the value of the bogus pipeline technique was questioned. Martin et al. (1988) also reported that a bogus pipeline method did not affect adolescent reporting of cigarette smoking, nor did Akers et al. (1983) find any effect.

The agreement among these studies suggests that children are probably not motivated to distort evidence. Indeed, Babchuk & Gordon (1958) argued that the child is the "prototype of the spontaneous communicator of the fact rather than the calculated response" (p.197). In their study of interview responding in 182 children ranging from 7 to 14 years of age, they concluded that, though older children were more able to give the requested information, the young children were able to answer all questions. Further, they stated that, "...reliability checks on the information given by the children... revealed no greater discrepancies in the data obtained from children than the discrepancies in the adult schedules" (p.198).

Rachal et al. (1981) conducted a longitudinal analysis of the reliability of reports of alcohol use in adolescents. Children in grades 7-12 were administered a survey which was then readministered four years later. Those authors stated, "These measures appear to be reliable and valid indicators of the behaviors assessed" (p. 325).

Summary and Conclusions

Several patterns emerge in this overview of the literature of children's ability to report autobiographical events. First, children's memory itself is equal if not superior to adults'; however, the young child has not learned to operate his/her memory. Consequently retrieved information may not be dependable (though we would be wise not to overestimate the accuracy of adults' recall.). The age at which a child is reliably able to deploy strategies which are appropriate for the given task varies with a number of factors. Thus it cannot be stated in any absolute terms that a child of a certain age can or cannot answer a particular question accurately.

Secondly, there is an urgent need for research into the development of inference strategies, as opposed to memory strategies, in reporting of autobiographical events. The use of inference in adult survey reporting is well-documented, and potentially produces valid data; further, children have acquired the

necessary techniques for inference by the age of 9 or 10- are they able to use them to answer survey questions? Can they be taught to make accurate inferences in the questionnaire context? Repeated findings have shown that children's semantic memory is more highly developed than episodic memory. Thus it would seem that inference from semantic traces would be the answering strategy of choice for them, but at this point their ability to utilize this form of information is not known.

Finally, an interesting and consistent finding is that children appear to be motivated to give correct answers. Whether one goes so far as to call the child the "prototype of the naive informant," as Babchuk & Gordon (1958) have, it does seem that youthful respondents are relatively guileless in responding to questionnaire items.

The conclusion here must be that children are *potentially* capable of reporting accurately about past events. The variables that affect this ability are not known. Children at a fairly young age are able to learn new recall strategies and apply them to particular problems, though they are not good at generalizing strategies to new situations; thus, a central theme of research should be the development of question-asking approaches which maximize the child's strategy use in the survey situation.

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APPENDIX F

NISMART I HOUSEHOLD SURVEY QUESTIONS NECESSARY FOR INCIDENCE ESTIMATION

The following tables list each question from the NISMART I episode questionnaire and indicate whether the question is necessary for incidence estimation. We kept questions which might be needed if definitional changes are made as suggested by Advisory Board and Planning Symposium participants (e.g., changing the policy focal runaway definition). We also assumed that a unified instrument will be designed that will eliminate the need to ask separate questions about nonfamily abductions in the course of all other case types. Questions asking the respondent to describe the episode (in his/her own words) were retained, assuming that some evaluative coding will be conducted on the Household Survey responses, as was done in NISMART I.

STRANGER/NON-FAMILY ABDUCTION INTERVIEW		
1	No	Could you tell me this person's sex?
2	Yes	Could you tell me his age?
3	No	What is his race or ethnicity? Is he...
4	No	Previous to this episode, was there anything that led you to be suspicious of him?
5	No	Could you tell me what it was that led you to be suspicious of him?
6	Yes	Were there any other persons responsible for this episode?
7	Yes	How many other persons were involved?
8	No	Could you tell me this person's sex?
9	Yes	Could you tell his age?
10	No	What is his race or ethnicity?
11	Yes	How would you describe his relationship to child?
12	Yes	Has child been found or returned from this episode?
13	Yes	Could you tell me briefly in your own words about the episode, including how it took place, why it might have taken place, how long it lasted, and what happened to the child during and after the episode?
14	Yes	Could you tell me briefly in your own words anything you can about the episode including how it started and how long it has lasted and what may have motivated it?
15	No	Do you recall on what day of the week this episode started?
16	No	Do you recall what time of day it was?
17	Yes	To the best of your knowledge was child moved away from his original location during the episode?
18	Yes	Was child moved even a few feet from his original location?
19	Yes	Did the person who took child try to conceal his removal or location?
20	No	How was child moved?
21	Yes	Did the person responsible use any kind of force or threat in moving child from his original location?
22	Yes	Was child lured or persuaded in some way to go with the person?
23	Yes	Where was child taken?
24	Yes	Could you give me an estimate of how far child was moved?
25	Yes	Did the movement of child hide from view what was going on?
26	Yes	To your knowledge, was anything else done to hide what was going on?
27	Yes	How else were the activities concealed?

28	Yes	Was child stopped or held against his will?
29	No	To the best of your knowledge were there any other children with child during this episode?
30	No	How many?
31	Yes	As a result of this episode, was child "missing," in other words did child fail to appear when you expected him or was child not in the place when and where you expected to find him?
32	No	How did you find out about this episode?
33	No	How soon afterward did you find out that child had been taken?
34	Yes	Were the police contacted about this episode?
35	No	Could you tell me why the police weren't contacted?
36	No	How soon after the episode began were the police contacted?
37	No	What did the police tell you?
38	No	What did the police do? Did they:
39	No	To the best of your knowledge did the police...
40	No	How satisfied are you with the way the police handled your case? Are you...
41	Yes	Did you contact any other agencies or people?
42	No	Has the person(s) responsible for this episode been apprehended?
43	Yes	Did the person responsible for taking child have any intention of releasing or returning him?
44	Yes	How long was it from the time child was taken until he was freed or returned?
45	No	To the best of your knowledge, during his episode has child been sexually abused or molested?
46	No	During this episode, has there been any attempt to sexually abuse or molest child?
47	No	What evidence do you have of this attempted abuse?
48	No	Have you reported this abuse/attempted abuse to the police?
49	No	Has child been seen by a doctor as a result of this sexual abuse?
50	No	To the best of your knowledge, during this episode has child been hit, punched, beat up, or hit?
51	No	Could you tell me if child was held there by threat or force after the assault?
52	No	How long was child held there after the assault?
53	No	How long has it been since child was taken?

54	Yes	Was any ransom money, goods or services demanded in this episode?
55	No	Has child suffered any physical harm or injury during this episode?
56	No	Could you describe this harm?
57	No	Did this injury or harm require medical attention?
58	No	Has child been mentally harmed by this episode?
59	No	Would you say this mental harm is..
60	No	Has child received any counseling because of this episode?
61	Yes	Would you consider this episode to be a kidnapping?
62	Yes	What kind of episode would you consider this to be?

RUNAWAY INTERVIEW		
1	Yes	Could you tell me if child has been found or returned from this episode?
2	Yes	Brief description
3	No	Do you recall on what day of the week this episode started?
4	No	Do you recall what time of day it was?
5	Yes	Did child say anything or in some way communicate that he was (leaving/refusing to return) home?
6	No	Could you tell me what child said or communicated?
7	No	How did you know that child was leaving/refusing to return home?
8	No	Was child under a juvenile court order to say in the home?
9	No	Was there anything that led up to this episode?
10	No	Had child had an argument or disagreement or fight with anyone in the week prior to the beginning of this episode?
11	No	Was this person a member of your household?
12	No	Could you tell me who this person was in relation to child?
13	No	Could you tell me what this disagreement concerned?
14	No	Did this disagreement involve threats to child?
15	No	Did these threats involve?
16	No	Did this disagreement involve any hitting, slapping, punching, spanking or hitting with an object?
17	No	Did [person in 12] do this to child?
18	No	Did child do this to person in 12?
19	No	Was there anything (else) that led up to this episode?
20	No	Could you tell me what that was?
21	Yes	Where did child first go when he (left/refused to return) home?
22	Yes	To the best of your knowledge, at any time during this episode has he been at a...
23	Yes	To the best of your knowledge, were there any nights during this episode that child was without any place to sleep?
24	No	To the best of your knowledge, at any time during the episode has child been more than? miles
25	No	At any time during this episode has child left the state?
26	No	During this episode, has child been accompanied by other people?
27	No	How many other people accompanied child?

28	No	Could you tell me who these other people are?
29	Yes	Has child contacted you by telephone at any time during this episode?
30	Yes	During how much of the episode have you known where child was? Was it?
31	Yes	Does this mean you know the actual address or phone number where he is staying?
32	Yes	What information about child's location do you know?
33	Yes	Were the police contacted about this episode for purpose of locating child?
34	No	Could you tell me why the police weren't contacted?
35	No	How soon after child left were the police contacted?
36	No	What did the police tell you?
37	No	What did the police do? Did they...
38	No	To the best of your knowledge, did the police...
39	No	How satisfied are you with the way the police are handling your case? Are you...
40	Yes	Have you done any of these other things to try to get child to come home...
41	Yes	How long was child gone?
42	No	Concerning child's return home, would you say that..
43	No	How would you describe child's relationship with the members of your household since he returned? Is it..
44	No	Could you please describe any changes that have occurred?
45	No	How likely do you believe it is that this situation of child leaving home/refusing to come home will recur? Is it...
46	Yes	How long has child been gone?
47	No	How confident are you that child will return home? Were you...
48	Yes	I have some statements that might describe how you felt at the time of the episode; would you say that the following statements are true or false?
49	No	To the best of your knowledge during this episode has child been picked up by the police and placed in juvenile detention center?
50	No	To the best of your knowledge during this episode has child been picked up by the police and placed in jail?
51	No	To the best of your knowledge, during this episode has child been sexually abused or molested?

52	No	During this episode, has there been any attempt to sexually abuse or molest child?
53	No	What evidence do you have of this abuse/attempted abuse?
54	No	Have you reported this abuse/attempted abuse to the police?
55	No	Has child been seen by a doctor as a result of this sexual abuse?
56	No	To the best of your knowledge during this episode has child been hit, punched, beat up, or hit with an object?
57	No	Which one of the following would you say best describes the person who abused child? Was he...
58	No	To the best of your knowledge was child moved away from his original location during this abuse?
59	No	Was child moved even a few feet from his original location?
60	No	How was child moved?
61	No	Did the person responsible use any kind of force or thereat in moving child from his original location?
62	No	Was child lured or persuaded in some way to go with the person?
63	No	Where was child taken?
64	No	Could you give me an estimated of how far child was moved?
65	No	Did the movement of child hide from view what was going on?
66	No	To your knowledge, was anything else done to hide what was going on?
67	No	How else were the activities concealed?
68	No	Was child stopped or held against his will?
69	No	Could you tell me if child was held there by threat or force after the assault?
70	No	How long was child held there after the assault?
71	No	To the best of your knowledge, has child been harmed in any of the following ways during this episode...
72	No	To the best of your knowledge, has child been harmed in any of the following ways during this episode?
73	No	Could you describe this harm?
74	No	Did this injury or harm require medical attention?
75	No	Has child been mentally harmed by this episode?
76	No	Would you say this mental harm was:
77	No	Has child received any counseling because of this episode?
78	Yes	Would you consider this a case of child running away?

79	Yes	What kind of episode would you consider this to be?
80	Yes	During the past 12 months, has child been involved in any other episodes like this?
81	Yes	Could you tell me roughly how many total days, weeks, or months child was gone in all those other episodes taken together?

THROWNAWAY INTERVIEW		
1	No	Has there been more than one time when this type of situation existed with child?
2	No	How many situations of this type have existed?
3	Yes	When did child first move out/leave?
4	Yes	When was the last time child moved out?
5	Yes	Has child returned from this episode?
6	Yes	How long was he gone?
7	Yes	When were you last in contact with child?
8	Yes	Brief description of episode (why, how, how long, what happened) during/after episode?
9	Yes	Were any of the following statements true about the situation of child moving out/leaving?
10	Yes	Could you tell me if child has returned from this episode?
11	Yes	Brief description of episode (why, how, how long, what happened) during/after episode?
12	Yes	Could you tell me briefly in your own words anything you can about the situation including how it started, how long it has lasted, and what may have motivated it?
13	No	Do you recall on what day of the week this episode started (i.e., child was last at home)?
14	No	Do you recall what time of day it was?
15	No	Where was child when the episode began?
16	No	Was there anything that led up to this episode? (e.g., the breakup of a friendship or relationship, family problems or school problems)
17	No	Had child had an argument, disagreement, or fight with anyone in the week prior to the beginning of this episode?
18	No	Was this person a member of your household?
19	No	Could you tell me who this person was in relation to child?
20	No	Could you tell me what this disagreement concerned? Did it concern..
21	No	Did this disagreement involve threats to child?
22	No	Did these threats involve...
23	No	Did this disagreement involve any hitting, slapping, punching, spanking, or hitting an object?
24	No	Did person in (Q19) do this to child?
25	No	Did child do this to person in Q19?

26	No	Could you tell me what the main reasons were for child leaving?
27	No	Could you tell me what the main reasons were for telling/refusing to allow child to leave/return home?
28	No	Who was it that asked/refused to allow child to leave/return?
29	Yes	When child was asked to leave/stay away, how long was it intended that he stay away?
30	Yes	Where did child first go when left/refused permission to return home?
31	No	Could you describe the primary situation where child was first staying?
32	Yes	Were there adults in the situation where child went to stay/was staying who took responsibility for him?
33	Yes	Was this a situation that you or another adult member of your household helped to arrange?
34	No	How would you describe the quality of supervision in this situation?
35	Yes	To the best of your knowledge, at any time during his time away, has child been at a...
36	Yes	To the best of your knowledge, were there any nights while away that child has been without any place to sleep?
37	No	To the best of your knowledge, at any time during the episode has child been more than.. (miles)
38	No	At any time during his time away, has child left the state?
39	No	While away, has child been accompanied by other people?
40	No	How many other people accompanied child?
41	No	Could you tell me who these people are?
42	Yes	Has child contacted you be telephone at any time while away?
43	Yes	During how much of the time away have you known where child was? Was it...
44	Yes	Does this mean you know the actual address or phone number where he was staying?
45	Yes	What information about child's location do you know?
46	Yes	Were the police contacted about this episode for locating child?
47	No	Could you tell me why the police weren't contacted?
48	No	How soon after the episode began were the police contacted?
49	Yes	Was this contact for the purpose of trying of find or bring child back?
50	No	What did the police tell you?
51	No	What did the police do? Did they...

52	No	To the best of your knowledge did the police...
53	No	How satisfied are you with the way the police are handling your case? Are you...
54	Yes	Have you done any of these other things to try to contact child or to get him to come home? Have you...
55	Yes	Have you done anything else to try to contact child or to get him to come home?
56	No	What else have you done?
57	Yes	How long was child gone?
58	Yes	Could you tell which of these statements is most true concerning child's return home?
59	No	How would you describe child's relationship with the members of your household since he returned? Is it...
60	No	Could you please describe any changes that have occurred?
61	No	How likely do you believe it is, that this situation (asking the child to leave/refusing to allow the child to return/the child leaving with recur? Is it..
62	Yes	How long has child been gone?
63	Yes	I have some statements that might describe how you feel about child's being away; would you say that the following statements are true or false.
64	No	To the best of your knowledge during this episode, has child been picked up by the police and...
65	No	To the best of your knowledge during this episode, has child been picked up by the police at and...
66	No	To the best of your knowledge, during this episode has child been sexually abused or molested?
67	No	During this episode, has there been any attempt to sexually abuse or molest child?
68	No	What evidence do you have of this attempted abuse?
69	No	Have you reported this abuse/attempted abuse to the police?
70	No	Has child been seen by a doctor as a result of this sexual abuse?
71	No	To the best of your knowledge has child been hit, punched, beat up, or hit with an object while he was away?
72	No	Which one of the following would you say best describes the person who abused child? Was he/she...
73	No	Did the person who abused child try to conceal his removal or location?
74	No	To the best of your knowledge was child moved away from his original location during this abuse?

75	No	Was child moved even a few feet from his original location?
76	No	How was child moved?
77	No	Did the person responsible use any kind of force or threat in moving child from his original location?
78	No	Was child lured or persuaded in some way to go with the person?
79	No	Where was child taken?
80	No	Could you give me an estimate of how far child was moved?
81	No	Did the movement of child hide from view what was going on?
82	No	To your knowledge, was anything else done to hide what was going on?
83	No	How else were the activities concealed?
84	No	Was child stopped or held against his will?
85	No	Could you tell me if child was held there by force or threat after the assault?
86	No	How long was child held there after the assault?
87	No	To the best of your knowledge, has child been harmed in any of the following ways while he was away?
88	No	Has child suffered any physical harm or injury during this episode?
89	No	Could you describe this harm?
90	No	Did this injury or harm require medical attention?
91	No	Has child been mentally harmed by this episode?
92	No	Would you say this mental harm is: Very serious...
93	No	Has child received any counseling because of this episode?
94	Yes	Would you consider this a case of child being thrown our of the household?
95	Yes	What kind of episode would you consider this to be?
96	Yes	During the past 12 months has child been involved in any other episodes like this?
97	Yes	Could you tell me roughly how many days, weeks or months child was gone in all these episodes taken together?

GENERAL MISSING INTERVIEW		
1	Yes	Could you tell me if child has been found or returned from this episode?
2	Yes	Brief description of episode (why, how, how long, what happened) during/after episode?
3	No	Do you recall on what day of the week this episode started?
4	No	Do you recall what time of day it was?
5	No	Do you know where child was when the episode began?
6	Yes	Was the child out with your permission?
7	No	Was this an activity that was in your mind dangerous or that you were worried about?
8	No	Did you believe that child was in the company of others - either adults or other children?
9	No	Who did you believe was with children?
10	No	During this episode when did you first realize or believe that child was missing?
11	Yes	How did you come to notice or believe that child was missing?
12	No	How did this other person come to notice or believe that child was missing?
13	Yes	After you noticed or believed that child was missing, whom did you contact? Did you call (READ)
14	No	How soon after you noticed or believed child to be missing did you contact the police?
15	No	What did the police tell you?
16	No	What did the police do? Did they: (READ)
17	No	To the best of your knowledge did the police... report
18	No	How satisfied are you with the way the police are handling your case? Are you (READ)
19	Yes	Did you contact any other agency or professional person (outside the family)?
20	Yes	Whom did you call? Did you call... (CIRCLE)
21	Yes	How long was it before you found out where child was?
22	Yes	How long has child been missing?
23	Yes	Which of these statements best describes the reason child was missing? (READ)
24	No	To the best of your knowledge, during this episode has child been sexually abuse or molested?

25	No	During this episode, has there been any attempt to sexually abuse or molest child?
26	No	What evidence do you have of this abuse/attempted abuse?
27	No	Have you reported this abuse/attempted abuse to the police?
28	No	Has child been seen by a doctor as a result of this sexual abuse?
29	No	To the best of your knowledge, during this episode has child been hit, punched, beat up, or hit with an object?
30	No	Which one of the following would you say best describes the person who abused child? Was he ...
31	No	Did the person who abused child try to conceal his removal or location?
32	No	To the best of your knowledge was child moved away from his original location during this abuse?
33	No	Was child moved even a few feet from his original location?
34	No	How was child moved?
35	No	Did the person responsible use any kind of force or threat in moving child from his original location?
36	No	Was child lured or persuaded in some way to go with person?
37	No	Where was child taken?
38	No	Could you give me an estimate of how far child was moved?
39	No	Did the movement of child hide from view what was going on?
40	No	To your knowledge, was anything else done to hide what was going on?
41	No	How else were the activities concealed?
42	No	Was child stopped or held against his will?
43	No	Could you tell me if child was held there by force or threat after the assault?
44	No	How long was child held there after the assault?
45	Yes	Has child suffered any physical harm or injury during this episode?
46	No	Could you describe this harm?
47	Yes	Did this injury or harm require medical attention?
48	No	Did this episode, had child been in serious danger of being harmed?
49	No	Could you describe this danger?
50	No	Has child been mentally harmed by this episode?
51	No	Would you say this has been... (READ)
52	No	Has child received any counseling as a result of this episode?

THROWAWAY ELSEWHERE INTERVIEW		
1	No	Has there been more than one time when this type of situation existed with this child?
2	No	How many situations of this type have existed?
3	Yes	When did child first move out from his former household?
4	Yes	When was the last time child moved out?
5	Yes	Could you tell me if child returned to his household from this episode?
6	Yes	How long was he gone?
7	Yes	When was child last in contact with their former household?
8	Yes	Brief description of episode (how, why, how long, what happened) during/after episode?
9	No	Do you recall on what day of the week this episode started (i.e., when child was last at his home?
10	No	Do you recall what time of day it was?
11	No	Where was child when this episode began?
12	No	Who was it that asked child to leave?
13	Yes	When child was asked to leave, how long was it intended that he stay away?
14	No	Was there anything that led up to this episode? (e.g., the break up of a friendship or relationship, family problems or school problems)
15	No	Had child had an argument, or disagreement, or fight with anyone in the week prior to the beginning of this episode?
16	No	Was this person a member of the household which the child was forced or told to leave?
17	No	Could you tell me who this person was in relation to child?
18	No	Could you tell me what this disagreement concerned? Did it concern...
19	No	Did this disagreement involve threats to child?
20	No	Did these threats involve...
21	No	Did this disagreement involve any hitting, slapping, punching, spanking, or hitting with an object?
22	No	Did person in Q17 do this to child?
23	No	Did child do this to person in Q17?
24	No	Could you tell me what the main reasons were for child leaving?
25	Yes	Where did child first go when he left the last time they were force or told to leave their home?

26	No	Could you describe the primary situation where child is/was first staying?
26a	Yes	Were there any adults in the first situation where child went to say who took responsibility for him?
27	Yes	Is this a situation that an adult member of the child's household helped to arrange?
28	No	How would you describe the quality of supervision in this situation? Was it:
29	Yes	To the best of your knowledge, at any time during his time away, has child been at a: relative's, friend's or runaway shelter?
30	Yes	To the best of your knowledge, where there any nights while away that child was without any place to sleep?
31	No	To the best of your knowledge, at any time during the episode has child been more than.. (___miles from home)?
32	No	At any time during his time away, has child left the state?
33	Yes	Has child contacted his former household by telephone at any time while away?
34	Yes	During how much of the time away has child's former household known where he is?
35	Yes	Does that mean that the former household knows the actual address or phone number where child is staying?
36	Yes	What information does the former household know about the location of child?
37	Yes	Were the police contacted concerning this episode?
38	No	How soon after the episode began were the police contacted?
39	Yes	Was this contact for the purpose of trying to find or bring child back?
40	No	What did the police tell the person who contacted them?
41	No	What did the police do? Did they:
42	No	To the best of your knowledge did the police...
43	No	How satisfied are you with the way the police are handling this case? are you:
44	Yes	How long has child been gone from his former household?
45	Yes	How long was child gone from his household?
46	Yes	Could you tell which of these statements is most true concerning child's return home?
47	No	How would you describe child's relationship with the members of his household since he returned? Is it:

48	No	Could you please describe any changes that have occurred?
49	No	How likely do you believe it is that this situation, asking the child to leave, will recur? Is it:
50	No	To the best of your knowledge was child sexually abused or molested in the household prior to the episode?
51	No	To the best of your knowledge, during this episode has child been sexually abused or molested?
52	No	During this episode, has there been any attempt to sexually abuse or molest child?
53	No	What evidence do you have of this abuse/attempted abuse?
54	No	Have you reported this abuse/attempted abuse to the police?
55	No	Has child been seen by a doctor as a result of this sexual abuse?
56	No	To the best of your knowledge was child hit, punched, beat up, or hit with an object in the household prior to the episode?
57	No	To the best of your knowledge has child been hit, punched, beat up, or hit with an object while he was away?
58	No	Which one of the following would you say best describes the person who abused child? Was he...
59	No	Did the person who abused child try to conceal his removal or location?
60	No	To the best of your knowledge was child moved away from his original location during this abuse?
61	No	Was child moved even a few feet from his original location?
62	No	How was child moved?
63	No	Did the person responsible use any kind of force or threat in moving child from original location?
64	No	Was child lured or persuaded in some what to go with the person?
65	No	Where was child taken?
66	No	Could you give me an estimate of how far child was moved?
67	No	Did the movement of child hide from view what was going on?
68	No	To you knowledge, was anything else done to hid what was going on?
69	No	How else were the activities concealed?
70	No	Was child stopped or held against his will?
71	No	Could you tell me if child was held there by force or threat after the assault?
72	No	How long was child held there after the assault?

73	No	To the best of your knowledge, has child been harmed in any of the following ways while he was away?
74	No	Has child suffered any physical harm or injury during this episode?
75	No	Could you describe this harm?
76	No	Did this injury or harm require medical attention?
77	No	Has child been mentally harmed by this episode?
78	No	Would you say this mental harm is:
79	No	Has child received any counseling because of this episode?
80	Yes	Would you consider this a case of child being thrown out of the household?
81	Yes	What kind of episode would you consider this to be?
82	Yes	During the past 12 months has child been involved in any other episodes like this?
83	Yes	Could you tell me roughly how many days, weeks or months child was gone in all these episodes taken together?
84	No	Could you tell me the education level of the head of child's household?
85	No	Could you tell me in which state child's household is located?

PARENTAL/FAMILY ABDUCTION INTERVIEW		
1	Yes	Found?
2	Yes	Relationship to perpetrator
3	No	If married or in relationship, when it ended
4	No	Age of child at time of break-up
5	No	When did you last live with this person before this episode
6	No	Age of child at that time
7	No	Sex of perpetrator
8	No	Age of perpetrator
9	No	Race/ethnicity of perpetrator
10	No	Education level of perpetrator
11	No	Employment status of perpetrator
12	No	Has perpetrator ever held a job for pay?
13	No	Occupation - job title and main duties
14	No	City/state in which perpetrator resided at time of episode
15	Yes	Brief description of episode
16	Yes	Brief description of episode
17	No	How long had child been with perpetrator prior to episode?
18	No	Where was child when episode began?
19	No	How child was moved
20	Yes	Was force or threat used?
21	Yes	Was child lured or persuaded?
22	No	On what day of the week did episode start?
23	No	What time of day was it?
24	No	Did perpetrator tell child what was happening?
25	No	How soon afterward did you find out child was taken/had not been returned?
26	No	How did you find out?
27	Yes	Did you have any contact with perpetrator regarding child during episode?
28	No	Have you had any contact with perpetrator regarding child since episode?
29	No	How soon was this after episode?

30	Yes	How long did perpetrator say s/he would be keeping child?
31	Yes	Did perpetrator make you think s/he wanted to prevent you from ever contacting child?
32	No	What threats or statements were made to make you think that?
33	Yes	Did perpetrator try to use episode to permanently affect custodial privileges?
34	No	Did perpetrator make other threats or demands?
35	No	What were these?
36	Yes	Was any attempt made to conceal the removal or the location of the child from you?
37	Yes	Was any attempt made to prevent you from having telephone or letter contact?
38	Yes	Do you know if child was taken to another state or country during episode?
39	No	Which state or country?
40	Yes	Was this done to make contact or recovery more difficult or for another reason?
41	Yes	During how much of the episode did you know where the child was?
42	Yes	Did you know actual address or phone number?
43	Yes	Were the police contacted?
44	No	Why weren't they contacted?
45	No	How soon after start of episode did you contact the police?
46	No	What did the police tell you?
47	No	What did the police do?
48	No	Did the police report the episode to the FBI or another federal agency?
49	No	How satisfied are you with the police's handling of the episode?
50	Yes	Did you contact an attorney?
51	No	How long after start of episode did you contact an attorney?
52	Yes	Did you take other actions to have the child returned?
53	No	What else did you do?
54	Yes	Was this episode in violation of a written custody order or agreement?
55	Yes	Was this episode in violation of a mutual understanding regarding custody and visitation rights?
56	No	What conditions were violated?
57	No	Are there other reasons you believe that the episode was unauthorized?

58	Yes	Did the perpetrator make claims to justify the episode?
59	No	What were these claims?
60	Yes	How long was the episode?
61	No	How long has it been since the episode?
62	No	Was the child sexually abused during the episode?
63	No	Was there any attempt to sexually abuse the child during the episode?
64	No	What evidence do you have?
65	No	Did you report this to the police?
66	No	Was child seen by a doctor as a result of the sexual abuse?
67	No	Was child hit, punched, beat up, or hit with an object during the episode?
68	No	Did child suffer any physical harm during episode?
69	No	Please describe this harm
70	No	Did the injury or harm require medical attention?
71	No	Was the child mentally harmed by the episode?
72	No	Was this mental harm serious, mild, minor?
73	No	Has the child received counseling because of this episode?
74	Yes	Would you consider the episode to be a kidnapping?
75	Yes	What kind of episode would you consider this to be?

FAMILY ABDUCTION PERPETRATOR INTERVIEW		
1	Yes	Did you, someone else in your household, or someone else take the child?
2	No	How were you/other adult related to the person who acted for you/other adult?
3	Yes	Has person child was taken from been given an opportunity to see the child?
4	Yes	How is child related to person from whom s/he is being kept?
5	Yes	What is your relationship to the person from whom the child is kept?
6	No	If married or in relationship, when it ended
7	No	Age of child at time of break-up
8	No	When did you last live with this person before this episode
9	No	Age of child at that time
10	No	Sex of person from whom child is kept
11	No	Age of person from whom the child is kept
12	No	Race/ethnicity of person from whom the child is kept
13	No	Education level of person from whom child is kept
14	No	Employment status of person from whom child is kept
15	No	Has that person ever held a job for pay?
16	No	Occupation - job title and main duties
17	No	City/state in which that person resided at time of episode
18	Yes	Brief description of episode
19	Yes	Brief description of episode
20	No	How long had child been with you prior to episode?
21	No	Where was child when episode began?
22	No	On what day of the week did episode start?
23	No	At what time of day did episode start?
24	Yes	Did you use force or threat against the child?
25	Yes	Did you lure or persuade the child?
26	Yes	What did you tell the child about what was happening?
27	Yes	Did you believe the child would be in danger if given to the other person?
28	No	Could you describe this danger?

29	No	What did you do before the episode to alleviate the situation?
30	No	Did you consult an attorney before the episode?
31	Yes	Did you make any threats or statements that would suggest you wanted to prevent the person from ever contacting the children?
32	No	What were these statements, threats?
33	Yes	Did you try to use the episode to permanently affect custodial privileges?
34	No	Did you make any other threats or demands?
35	No	What were these threats or demands?
36	Yes	Did you make an attempt to conceal the removal or the location of the child from the other person?
37	Yes	Did you make an attempt to prevent telephone or letter contact?
38	Yes	Was the child taken to another state or country during the episode?
39	No	Which state or country?
40	Yes	Was this to make contact with or recovery of the child difficult for another reason?
41	Yes	Was your residence prior to the episode in another state from that of the other person?
42	Yes	Were the police contacted?
43	Yes	Who contacted the police?
44	Yes	Were you contacted by the police concerning this episode?
45	No	How soon after the start of the episode did the police contact you?
46	No	What did the police tell you?
47	No	What did the police do?
48	No	Did the police report the episode to the FBI or another federal agency?
49	No	How satisfied are you with the way the police handled the episode?
50	No	Did you contact an attorney concerning this situation?
51	No	How long after the start of the episode did you contact an attorney?
52	Yes	Was this episode in violation of a written custody order or agreement?
53	Yes	Was this episode in violation of a mutual understanding regarding custody and visitation rights?
54	No	What conditions were violated?
55	Yes	Do you believe that the incident was justified?
56	No	Could you explain?
57	Yes	How long was the episode?

58	No	How was it resolved?
59	No	How long has it been since the episode?
60	No	Has the child suffered mental harm as a result of the episode?
61	No	Has the mental harm been serious, mild, minor?
62	No	Has the child received counseling as a result of the episode?
63	Yes	Would you consider this episode a kidnapping?
64	Yes	What kind of episode would you consider this to be?