

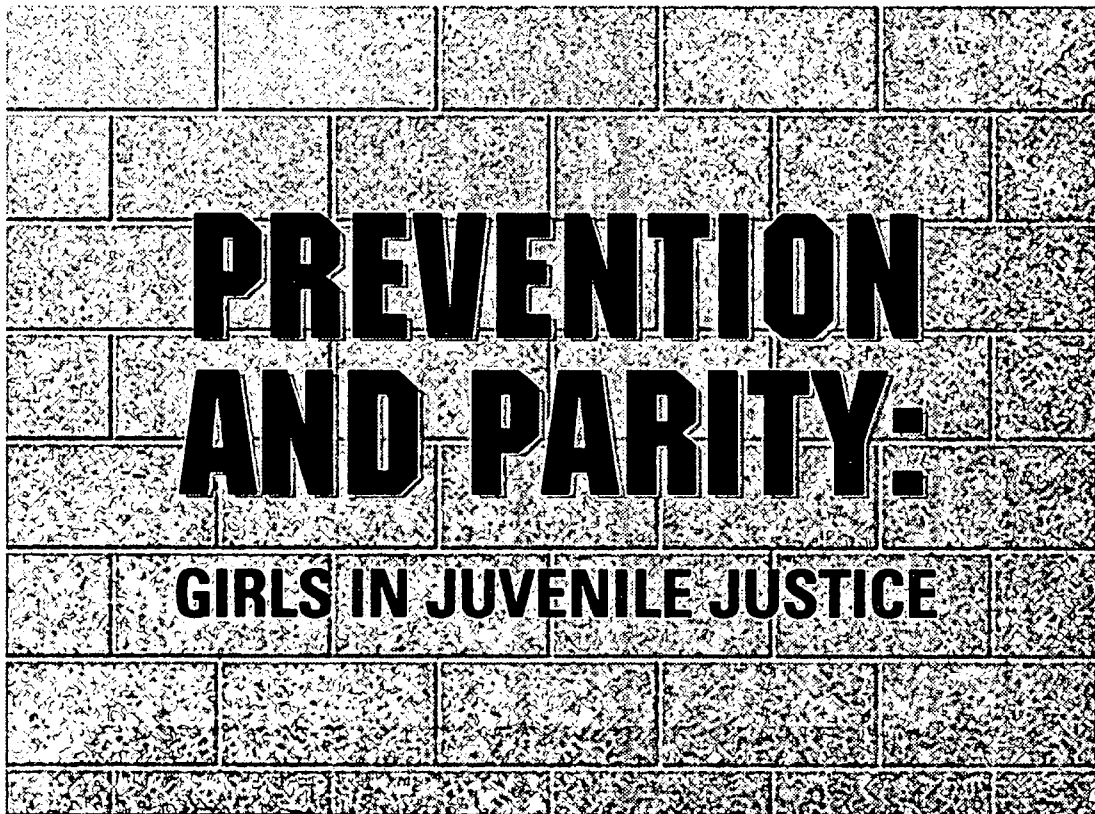
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Girls Incorporated National Resource Center  
441 West Michigan Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
Tel: (317) 634-7546  
Fax: (317) 634-3024  
E-mail: [hn3580@handsnet.org](mailto:hn3580@handsnet.org)

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## **Prevention and Parity: Girls in Juvenile Justice**

The juvenile justice system reflects society's assumptions about gender. Boys are perceived to threaten the community with violent behavior, girls by flouting moral standards. Society is presumed to need protection from boys; girls are presumed to need protection from themselves. The dearth of research about girls adds to confusion both about the nature and extent of girls' involvement in delinquency and their treatment in the juvenile justice system. Most of the literature on delinquency focuses on boys; major studies attempting to understand and predict delinquency include few if any girls in their study samples.

Sensational reports about violent girls have focused media attention on girls as delinquent offenders. In 1994, an estimated 678,500 girls were arrested, constituting 25 percent of all juveniles who are arrested—up from 22 percent in 1984. The large majority of these girls (91%) were adolescents ages 13 to 17. Thus, girls are a significant proportion of the young people who come in contact with the juvenile justice system. Understanding how and why girls encounter the juvenile justice system is crucial to making sound policy.

Still, only four percent of all adolescent girls come in contact with the juvenile justice system each year. The majority of these are charged with offenses such as running away, violating curfews and truancy that would not be offenses if they were committed by adults. Girls also are arrested for theft, getting into fights and violating liquor laws. Yet many girls who run away or steal things do not wind up in the juvenile justice system. In other words, the conduct that triggers a girl's arrest may be neither extreme nor exceptional, especially within the context of adolescence. The great similarities between girls "inside" and "outside" the system lead to two conclusions:

- Virtually all girls could benefit from high-quality prevention programs.
- Good programs for girls who are juvenile offenders are much like all good youth programs, addressing individual needs, developing interests and skills for current and future success and creating relationships with positive peers and caring adults.

This publication addresses key issues that affect the ways in which the juvenile justice system can meet girls' needs. The issues include the nature and extent of young women's involvement in juvenile delinquency and the juvenile justice system, specific factors that place a young woman at risk for involvement, variables affecting how girls are treated by the juvenile justice system and what is known about effective programs for prevention, intervention and treatment.

The analysis and policy recommendations are based upon a synthesis of the available research in this area. The document concludes with ways the system could work effectively, offering both prevention and parity for young women. It provides examples of promising programs specifically addressing the needs of young women in the juvenile justice system and at risk of becoming involved.

## **Extent of Girls' Involvement in Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice**

As noted above, the 678,500 girls arrested in 1994 accounted for one-quarter of all juvenile arrests. Traditionally, the majority of young women who enter the juvenile justice system have been charged with status offenses such as running away, being ungovernable, underage drinking, truancy, and curfew violations. Girls comprise 57 percent of all juvenile arrests for running away. A second group of young women are charged with delinquent offenses such as larceny and theft, liquor law violations, fraud (passing bad checks) and simple assault, for which girls account for between 25 and 35 percent of the juveniles arrested. Notably, young women account for 49 percent of the juveniles charged with prostitution and commercialized vice.

When it comes to violent juvenile offenses, young women traditionally have accounted for less than 10 percent of the arrests. From 1985 to 1994 there has been an increase in the rate and number of arrests of young women for violent offenses, especially for aggravated assault. According to FBI statistics, young women accounted for about one-fifth (18.6%) of the juveniles arrested for aggravated assault in 1994. However, according to the same statistics young women accounted for only eight



or nine percent of the juvenile arrests for robbery, sex offenses other than rape and prostitution and weapons offenses (including possession) and only six percent of arrests for murder and nonnegligent manslaughter.

The majority of girls who encounter the juvenile justice system are processed "informally." That is, only 43 percent of juvenile female offenders are formally processed with a petition being filed in court; the remaining 57 percent are handled in other ways. For example, parents sometimes are permitted to place daughters (more often than sons) charged with delinquent or status offenses in private facilities as an alternative to having them appear in court. The "Children in Custody" census, conducted on February 15, 1993 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, found that female juvenile offenders were disproportionately represented in private facilities. Young women represented 11 percent of the juvenile offenders being detained in public facilities, but they comprised 27 percent of the private facility population.

Thus, the number of arrests, the reasons for arrest and treatment after being charged are different for girls than for boys. Some of these differences are due to gender, race, and stereotypical assumptions about the types of crimes committed by females and the types of sanctions that are appropriate for girls.

## **Risk Factors for Involvement of Girls in Delinquency and Juvenile Justice**

Studies investigating female juvenile offenders and incarcerated adult women have found that there are a number of common risk factors for involvement in the justice system. These risk factors come from several different domains including individual and peer characteristics, school situations, family circumstances, and community issues. While any one of these risk factors in isolation may not lead to delinquency, the interplay among them sharply increases the likelihood of a young woman becoming involved with the juvenile justice system.

A history of being a victim of violence, sexual abuse or physical abuse is one of the most universally shared attributes of incarcerated women. Acoca and Austin's (1996) study of incarcerated females in three states found that 67.5 percent of the study participants had a history of being exposed to violence as a child. Estimates of young women in the juvenile justice system who have been abused range from about 40 to 73 percent, compared to estimates in the national population that 23 to 34 percent of young women have been abused.

When young women associate with peers who engage in delinquent behaviors, there is a much greater likelihood that they will become involved in delinquent activities and will continue to associate with delinquent groups. Associating with peers involved in drug abuse was found to be an even stronger predictor of both of these negative outcomes. Many communities report that girls are increasingly seen to be playing an active part in youth gangs, either in the same groups with young men or in separate ones. According to one estimate, six percent of gang members are females. Studies indicate a range of behaviors reported by girls who say they belong to gangs, from staying out late and singing to participating in organized drug rings and planned assaults.

Difficulty in school, whether with academic subjects, behavioral expectations or conflicting responsibilities, has been found to be a significant risk factor related to involvement in delinquency and violence. While many young women perform well in school prior to their involvement in the juvenile justice system, a significant number experience problems. A study of incarcerated women in three states indicated that 26 percent of them had been placed in a special class, 46 percent had been expelled and 28 percent had repeated a grade. In another study, 27 percent of juvenile female offenders reported dropping out of school because they were pregnant, with 20 percent dropping out because they were parents and needed to take care of their children. Other reasons offered by the young women for dropping out of school included being bored, not getting along with teachers, and finding the work unrewarding.

Evidence suggests that substance use is part of the complex of risk factors that can predict delinquent behavior for both boys and girls. Some studies have shown a relationship between substance use, early sexual activity and delinquent behavior. A significant number of young women involved in the juvenile justice system use or abuse alcohol, tobacco and other substances, most commonly marijuana, LSD, inhalants and stimulants. Drug abuse by girls often goes unnoticed because of the perception of both society and law enforcement that underage drinking and trafficking in drugs are not typical female activities. Significantly more boys are arrested for violation of liquor laws and for drug crimes; however, the girls who are arrested for these offenses tend to be treated more harshly. Thirty-four percent of all arrests for drug crimes end up in hearings in juvenile court, yet 48 percent of young women arrested for drug crimes are brought before the court.



## Factors Affecting How Girls Are Treated by the Juvenile Justice System

Differences in the way girls are treated are apparent at many stages of the juvenile justice system. Gender differences are obvious in the reasons why individuals are referred to the system. Females are primarily referred for status offenses. The sanctions used also demonstrate signs of gender differences, with girls being twice as likely to be detained as boys and being detained on the average three to five times as long. This practice of detaining young women has serious ramifications given the fact that prehearing detention is twice as likely to result in an out-of-home placement. Current federal law permits judges to incarcerate young people who have violated a valid court order. This practice of "bootstrapping" is being applied disproportionately to girls, particularly girls under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court for having committed status offenses. The percentage of girls in custody for violating a valid court order is double the percentage of boys in custody for this reason.

Race and socioeconomic status also affect the treatment of girls in the juvenile justice system. A lack of cultural sensitivity and knowledge among juvenile court personnel can often result in harsher treatment of minority female offenders. African-American young women are often viewed as being aggressive or not showing remorse when they act assertively. By contrast, Latina, Asian-American and Native-American girls who have been taught to show deference to adults may have their subdued conduct perceived as evidence of guilt or rudeness.

The limited placement options available specifically for girls interact with gender, race, and socioeconomic status to directly affect the disposition of girls in the juvenile justice system. Girls are often inappropriately placed in facilities and programs that were designed for boys or that emphasize security over intervention and treatment. Many facilities serving young people are mixed-sex facilities, where the specific needs and strengths of girls are ignored or shortchanged because they are the minority group housed in the facility. These facilities usually do not offer programs for pregnant and parenting teens, sexual abuse treatment, substance abuse treatment or educational programs that consider the strengths and needs of girls. Vocational programs, if they exist at all, often use outdated facilities and push girls toward low-paying, dead end, stereotypically female occupations.

## Effective Programs Offer Prevention and Parity

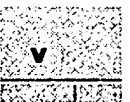
In designing effective programs for female offenders it is essential to address the factors that place young women at risk for delinquent behaviors. Every community needs a continuum of program options to be established ranging from prevention to intervention to aftercare. In most communities the options are woefully inadequate to meet the needs of girls while assuring their safety. Every program needs to be gender-specific, designed to meet the needs of young women as individuals, to take female development into account and to avoid perpetuating limiting stereotypes based on gender, race, class, language, sexual orientation, disability and other personal and cultural factors.

Programs need to focus on providing educational opportunities, employment and vocational training while promoting the health and wellness of the individual. Educational and vocational programming need to present young women with an array of opportunities available to them and to empower them to reach their full potential. Vocational training offered must not confine itself to stereotypical career options. Programs aimed at juvenile offenders need to incorporate female-specific health and wellness issues into their curriculum. In addition to providing adequate physical and mental health care, programs for young women should promote wellness by providing accurate information concerning sexuality education, parenting, eating disorders and HIV/AIDS. Sexual abuse and substance abuse treatment and education are basic needs of many of the young women in the juvenile justice system.

## Conclusion

In order for the juvenile justice system to provide effective prevention, intervention and treatment for girls, the needs of girls must be incorporated into all aspects of the juvenile justice system, from policy-making to services and program implementation. It is neither effective nor acceptable to assume that girls are well served by programs that were designed for boys.

Governmental policies can serve as a catalyst in developing and expanding programs that incorporate prevention and parity. This groundwork has already been laid at the federal level with the 1992 amendments to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act, which directly address the issue of gender bias in the juvenile justice system and provide challenge grant funding to states to develop and adopt policies to prohibit gender bias in the placement and treatment of juvenile offenders. To date, 23 states have accepted this challenge. While this is an excellent beginning, policy makers need to ensure that the needs of young women continue to be a priority at the federal, state and local levels.



Designing effective policies and programs depends upon rigorous research and program evaluation. Much remains to be learned about the factors that increase or decrease girls' chances of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system and the most effective types of prevention, intervention and treatment programs. Replication of small-scale studies of girls in state and local juvenile justice systems would help to distinguish national trends from regional occurrences. More large-scale and longitudinal studies are vital to clarify the prevalence and risk factors associated with female delinquency.

At the same time more research would be helpful, much is known about how to achieve much higher quotients of both prevention and parity in the nation's juvenile justice system. Policy makers, professionals in juvenile justice and youth development, community leaders, parents and young people are urged to discuss and work towards implementing the policies recommended in this document.

## **Policy Recommendations**

### **Focus on prevention and early intervention.**

It is far easier and far less costly in both monetary and human terms to prevent problems before they occur or to intervene as soon as they are discovered than to wait until a girl is in serious trouble. The best interventions are those that strengthen families, helping parents access skills and resources to bring up their children in a safe, nurturing and stimulating home and community.

### **Expand research on young women.**

The dearth of research on girls in and out of the juvenile justice system helps to maintain misguided stereotypes and inadequate programming. Research on juvenile offenders should include significant samples of girls so as to identify and address the impact of gender on girls' life situations, behaviors, strengths and needs.

### **Stop differential treatment of female juvenile offenders.**

The practice of "bootstrapping"—charging young people with a delinquent offense for violation of a court order—should be immediately reviewed with an eye toward abolishing it. Evidence strongly suggests that bootstrapping results in harsh and inequitable treatment of girls charged with status offenses.

### **Promote gender-specific instead of gender-stereotyped interventions.**

Girls are individuals and need to be treated as such. Some girls' interests and talents lie in areas traditionally considered female, other girls' interests and talents do not.

### **Tailor treatment to fit individual needs.**

Recognition of girls' common problems should not obscure awareness of individual differences—such as race, culture and sexual orientation—that may influence individual girls' conduct and responsiveness to particular treatment programs. Young women also need access to a wide variety of programs and placements in order to address their specific needs, such as drug addiction, learning disability or teen motherhood.

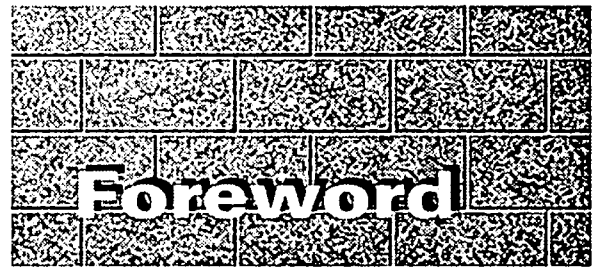
### **Create more alternatives to abusive home situations.**

Girls' contact with the juvenile justice system is often precipitated by their attempts to escape abuse at home. Young women need access to a continuum of placement options in which their safety can be assured while they address the issues that brought them into the system and the resources they will need to leave it.

### **Prepare girls for a positive future.**

While girls' offenses should not be ignored, intervention and treatment should focus on girls' needs. An encounter with the juvenile justice system benefits a girl—and her community—only if she leaves the system better able to live a healthy, productive and law-abiding life than she was before she entered it.





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**Authors**  
Faedra Lazar Weiss, M.A.H.L.  
Heather Johnston Nicholson, Ph.D.  
Maria Magdalena Cretella

**Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

Shay Bilchik, *Administrator*  
Douglas Dodge, *Special Emphasis Division*  
Travis A. Cain, *Program Manager*  
Barbara Allen-Hagen  
Kathy Brown  
Ann Fitzsimons  
Frank Porpotage  
Marsha Renwanz  
Joell Roy

**Advocates for Human Potential**  
(promising programs)

Maria Magdalena Cretella (currently of Education Development Center)  
Doni Blumenstock

**Resources**

Leslie Acoca, *National Council on Crime and Delinquency*  
Jeffrey A. Butts, *National Center for Juvenile Justice*  
Marcia R. Chaiken, Ph.D., *LINC*  
Meda Chesney-Lind, Ph.D., *University of Hawaii at Manoa*  
Marian Daniel, *Female Intervention Team (Baltimore)*  
Joy G. Dryfoos, *independent researcher*  
Shari Jennings, *Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse*  
Judith A. Mayer, *Maryland Department of Juvenile Services*  
Robin Robinson, *Office of Population Affairs*  
Melissa Sickmund, *National Center for Juvenile Justice*  
and many others



## **Reviewers**

James Bell, *Youth Law Center*  
Ilene Bergsmann, *Cook County (Chicago, Illinois) Juvenile Center*  
Meda Chesney-Lind, Ph.D., *University of Hawaii at Manoa*  
Coramae Richey Mann, Ph.D., *Indiana University*

## **Capitoline/MS&L (public relations)**

Jennefer Hirshberg, *Senior Principal and Managing Director of Public Relations*  
Sarah Reis, *Associate*  
Whit Clay, *Associate*  
Joe Gleason, *Senior Principal and Managing Director of Public Affairs*

## **Girls Incorporated National Headquarters**

Isabel Carter Stewart, *National Executive Director*  
Phyllis Eckhaus, *Associate Director of Development, Research, Program and Outreach*  
Amy Sutnick Plotch, *Director of Communications*  
Jennifer Hahn, *Associate Director of Communications*  
Shawn Newton, *Art Director*

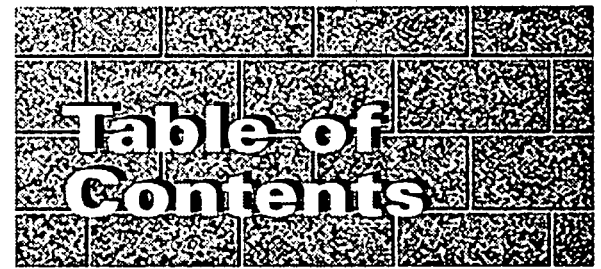
## **Washington Office**

Mildred Kiefer Wurf, *Washington Representative*

## **National Resource Center**

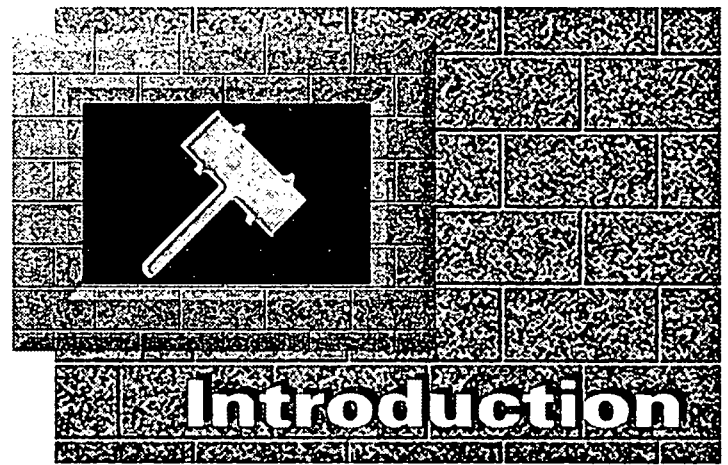
Heather Johnston Nicholson, Ph.D., *Director, National Resource Center*  
*Associate Executive Director for Program, Research and Training;*  
Faedra Lazar Weiss, M.A.H.L., *Research Associate*  
Mary F. Maschino, *Librarian/Media Specialist*  
Angela Lane, *Research Assistant*  
Susan Ellis, *Director of Administration*  
Kelly Hale, *Administrative Secretary*  
Teresa Brown, *Administrative Secretary*  
Leslie Bradley, *Secretary/Receptionist*  
Katrina Cones, *Distribution Clerk*

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The juvenile justice system reflects society's assumptions about gender. Boys are perceived to threaten the community with violent behavior, girls by flouting moral standards. Society is presumed to need protection from boys, whereas girls are presumed to need protection from themselves (cf. Bishop and Frazier, 1992; Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1992). The dearth of research about girls adds to the confusion both about the nature and extent of girls' involvement in delinquency and their treatment in the juvenile justice system. Most of the literature on delinquency focuses on boys; major studies attempting to understand and predict delinquency include few if any girls in their study samples (Adolescent Female Subcommittee, 1994, Calhoun, Jurgens and Chen, 1993; Miller, Trapani, Fejes-Mendoza, Eggleston and Dwiggins, 1995).

Issues of both prevention and parity compel attention to the situation of girls in contact with the juvenile justice system:

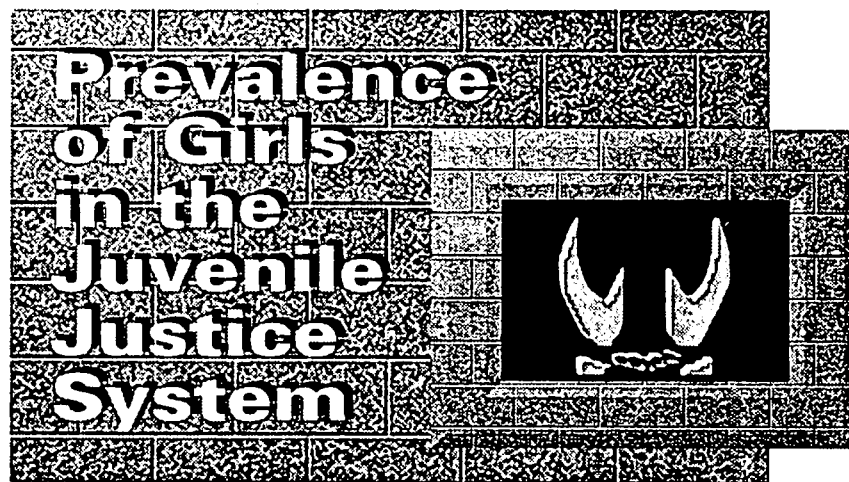
**Prevention** - Evidence strongly suggests that girls who are "inside" the system are much like girls "outside" the system; girls' background and circumstances and the system's limited options and stereotyped expectations have much to do with which girls are apprehended and how they are treated. Prevention is thus a sound strategy: good programs for girls who are juvenile offenders are much like good programs for future judges and astronauts.

**Parity** - Girls currently constitute 25 percent of the juveniles who are arrested (Poe-Yamagata and Butts, 1996). Thus, girls are a significant proportion of young people under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system, warranting careful attention to its effectiveness in meeting their needs.

In synthesizing the research describing girls' involvement in the juvenile justice system, the following themes emerged:

- (a) the prevalence of girls in the juvenile justice system;
- (b) factors putting girls at risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system;
- (c) differential treatment of girls in the juvenile justice system;
- (d) recommendations for program development and implementation; and
- (e) promising programs for girls already involved with or likely to come in contact with the juvenile justice system.





In 1994, an estimated 678,500 girls were arrested, accounting for one-quarter of all juvenile arrests (Snyder, Sickmund and Poe-Yamagata, 1996). The large majority of these girls (91 percent) were adolescents—young women ages 13 to 17 (FBI, 1995).<sup>1</sup>

Table 1 (Offenses for which young people under age 18 were most often arrested, 1994) illustrates the significant gender differences in the arrests of young people for specific offenses. Although both young women and young men are represented in each of the 12 offense categories, gender differences in the arrest rates for specific offenses are evident. The most common offense for which both girls and boys are arrested is larceny-theft. However, girls are disproportionately arrested for being somewhere other than where adults determine they ought to be. Running away from home and curfew or loitering violations rank as the second and sixth most common offenses for girls, but only the eighth and ninth most common for boys. Girls are far less likely than boys to be arrested for vandalism or burglary (FBI, 1995).

These 12 offenses constitute 94 percent of all arrests of young women but only 88 percent of the total arrests of young men. Young women are far less likely than young men to be arrested for murder, arson and all sex offenses other than prostitution. Among young people arrested for “violent offenses” (the FBI definition includes murder, robbery, forcible rape and aggravated assault but not simple assault) in 1994, only 14 percent were girls (FBI, 1995).

Arrest statistics may represent both actual gender differences in rates of offense and differences in the way society responds to male and female juvenile offenders. Boys have been found to commit a disproportionately high number of delinquent offenses, particularly those offenses considered as “street violence.” However, similar rates for boys and for girls are reported for minor offenses (Huizinga, Esbensen, Loeber, Van Kammen and Thornbery, 1993; Snyder and Sickmund, 1995). Figure 1 (Gender breakdown of arrests for selected juvenile offenses, represented as percentage of arrests of young women) graphically illustrates the relative frequency with which girls and boys are arrested for key offenses.

The vast majority of girls who enter the juvenile justice system are status offenders. A status offense is a behavior that is a law violation only when committed by a juvenile. These offenses include running away, being ungovernable, underage drinking, truancy and curfew violations. Thus, offenses with which girls are charged are typically nonviolent. In addition, the conduct that triggers a girl’s arrest may be neither extreme nor exceptional, especially within the context of adolescence.

<sup>1</sup>Girls in contact with the juvenile justice system are overwhelmingly older girls, or “young women.” This is a consequence both of changes in girls’ conduct as they confront adolescence and also of state laws. States typically require that children reach a threshold age (usually age 10) before they are subject to adjudication as juvenile offenders. In this publication the terms “girls” and “young women” (and similarly “boys” and “young men”) are used interchangeably unless specifically noted otherwise. Graphics and text that refer to “young women” reflect all female juvenile offenders up to but not including age 18, unless otherwise indicated.

**TABLE 1****Offenses for which young people under age 18  
were most often arrested, 1994**

Source: Calculated from Snyder, Sickmund and Poe-Yamagata (1996), table, p. 10.

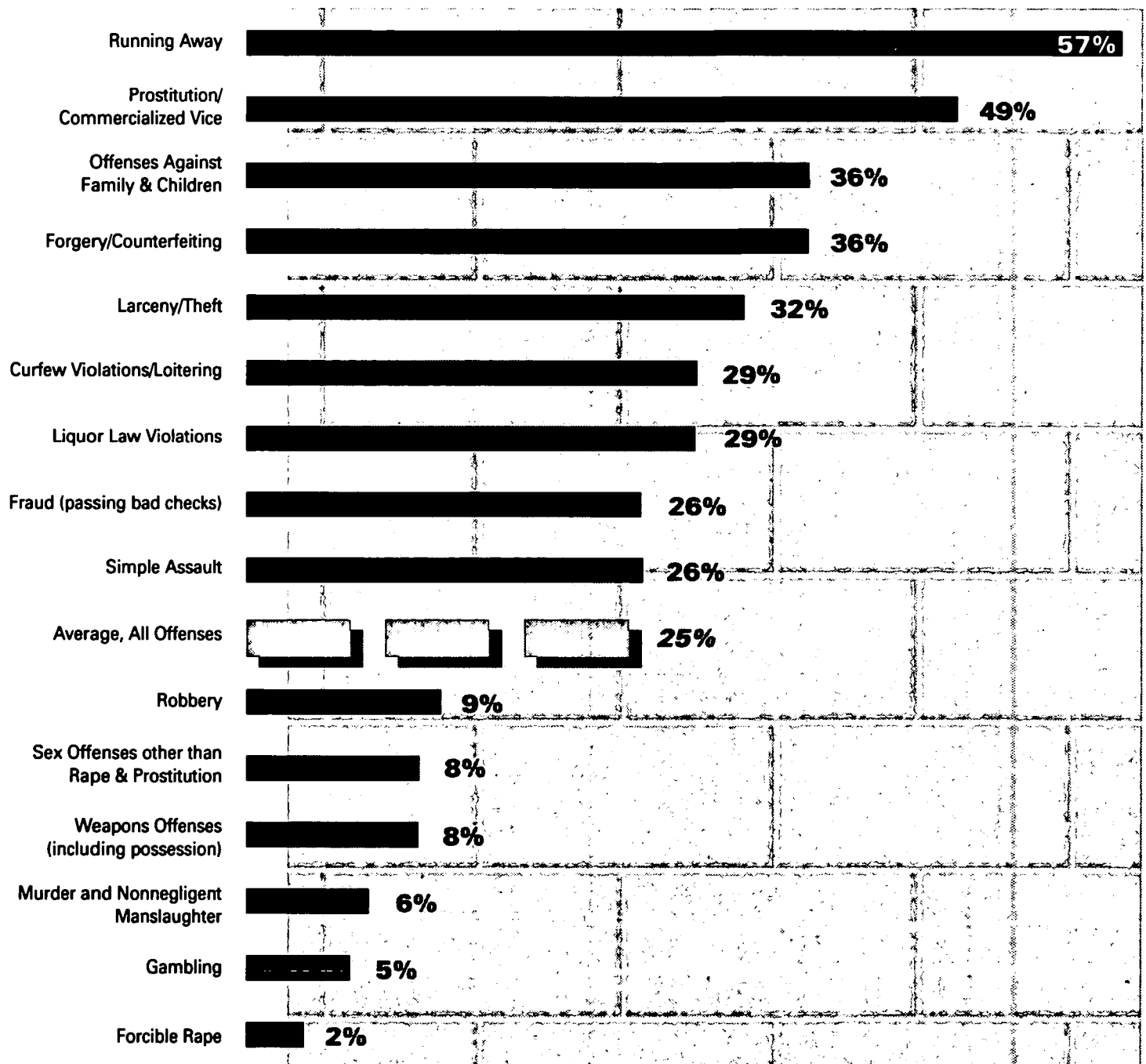
	<b>FEMALES</b>		<b>MALES</b>	
	Rank	Estimated Number (in thousands)	Rank	Estimated Number (in thousands)
<b>Larceny-theft</b>	1	(162)	1	(343)
<b>Runaways</b>	2	(142)	8	(107)
<b>All other offenses (except traffic)*</b>	3	(93)	2	(329)
<b>Simple assaults</b>	4	(55)	3	(157)
<b>Disorderly conduct</b>	5	(39)	6	(131)
<b>Curfew/loitering law violations</b>	6	(37)	9	(91)
<b>Liquor laws</b>	7	(35)	10	(85)
<b>Drug abuse violations</b>	8	(19)	4	(140)
<b>Aggravated assault</b>	9	(16)	12	(69)
<b>Vandalism</b>	10	(15)	5	(137)
<b>Burglary</b>	11	(14)	7	(129)
<b>Motor vehicle theft</b>	12	(12)	11	(76)
<b>TOTAL (in thousands)</b>		<b>639</b>		<b>1,794</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE OF ALL ARRESTS</b>		<b>94%</b>		<b>88%</b>

\*This category includes various minor offenses and status offenses.

**FIGURE 1**

# Gender breakdown of arrests for selected juvenile offenses, represented as percentage of arrests of young women

Source: Snyder, Sickmund and Poe-Yamagata (1996), table, p. 10.



While young women are most often arrested for status offenses, between 1985 and 1994 arrest rates of young women for violent offenses more than doubled. Numerically small increases in small absolute numbers result in large changes in rates, so this statistic must be interpreted with caution. Still, more needs to be learned about what leads young women to resort to violence and how best to deal with young women who have harmed others. In the extreme case of young people who commit homicide (of whom 9% are girls), girls almost exclusively kill people known to them—friends (46%) or family members (41%). By contrast, one-third of the people boys kill are strangers (Snyder and Sickmund, 1995).

## **Girls in Juvenile Detention Facilities**

This report deals primarily with girls who have had contact with the juvenile justice system and the far larger universe of girls who are potentially at risk of contact with the juvenile justice system. A relatively small subset of girls is detained or placed by the juvenile justice system. A recent large-scale study of juvenile court statistics estimates that 16 percent of girls referred for delinquent offenses and seven percent of girls referred for status offenses are detained before their hearings. Six percent of girls referred to the juvenile court for delinquent offenses and 10 percent of girls referred for status offenses are placed out of their homes (Poe-Yamagata and Butts, 1996). This subset, however, figures prominently in the research on female juvenile offenders, including the research on “risk factors” presented below.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP’s) 1993 “Children in Custody” census conducted on February 15, 1993 found that 6,408 girls and 53,846 boys were being held in public juvenile facilities. The census also determined the following:

- Eleven percent of the young people in custody were girls.
- Twelve percent of the girls in custody (versus 27% of the boys) had committed violent crimes.
- Twelve percent of the girls (versus 1% of the boys) were in custody for status offenses.

The figures presented in Table 2a reflect the larger pattern of girls referred to the juvenile justice system. Girls typically come into custody for nonviolent offenses. In many cases these offenses do not constitute a risk to others and are not exceptional within the context of adolescence. Furthermore, these figures significantly understate the proportion of young women held for nondelinquent conduct because many young women referred to the juvenile justice system are placed in private facilities (Table 2b). The vast majority of these placements (87%) result from status offenses, nonoffenses or voluntary commitments. By contrast, over half (51%) of placements of young men in private facilities result from delinquent offenses.

Only a tiny minority of all girls (less than four percent) come into contact with the juvenile justice system each year. This number, however, reflects only those who were arrested. A much larger proportion of girls report engaging in behaviors that could subject them to the jurisdiction of the juvenile courts if they were apprehended. Another factor serving to blur the larger picture is that many of the young women who are caught engaging in delinquent behaviors are processed informally. Only 43 percent of female juvenile offenders who are apprehended are formally processed through the filing of a delinquency petition (Poe-Yamagata and Butts, 1996). This fact is supported by two national surveys in which 12 to 14 percent of girls reported having gotten “into trouble with the police for something they did” over the past year (Bachman, Johnston, and O’Malley, 1993; PRIDE, 1996) versus the official statistics of two to four percent (Butts, Snyder, Finnegan, Aughenbaugh and Poole, 1995). Whether these transgressions result in arrest is partly a matter of social circumstance (notably race and socioeconomic status) and partly a matter of luck.





**TABLE 2**

# Juveniles in custody in public and private juvenile facilities: 1-day counts by reason for custody and gender, 1991

Source: 1991 Census of Public and Private Juvenile Detention, Correctional, and Shelter Facilities on the census day 2/15/91.

**TABLE 2a Public facilities**

	<b>Total (N=57,542)</b>	<b>Males (N=51,214)</b>	<b>Females (N=6,328)</b>
<b>Delinquent Offenses</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>97.3%</b>	<b>80.7%</b>
<i>Violent</i>	19%	20.5%	10.4%
<i>Other personal</i>	12%	12.1%	9.4%
<i>Serious property</i>	24%	24.4%	17.1%
<i>Other property</i>	12%	12.5%	12.9%
<i>Alcohol offenses</i>	1%	10.0%	7.0%
<i>Drug-related offenses</i>	10%	10.4%	5.3%
<i>Public order offenses</i>	4%	4.4%	5.4%
<i>Probation/parole violations</i>	8%	7.2%	13.0%
<i>Other</i>	5%	4.8%	6.5%
<i>Status offenses</i>	3%	1.8%	12.9%
<i>Nonoffenders</i>	1%	0.7%	4.0%
<i>Voluntary commitments</i>	1%	0.2%	2.1%

**TABLE 2b Private facilities**

	<b>Total (N=36,190)</b>	<b>Males (N=25,801)</b>	<b>Females (N=10,389)</b>
<b>Delinquent Offenses</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>50.7%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>
<i>Violent</i>	4%	5.3%	0.5%
<i>Other personal</i>	6%	7.5%	1.6%
<i>Serious property</i>	9%	11.7%	2.0%
<i>Other property</i>	10%	11.8%	4.5%
<i>Alcohol offenses</i>	1%	0.6%	0.4%
<i>Drug-related offenses</i>	5%	7.0%	1.3%
<i>Public order offenses</i>	1%	1.2%	0.7%
<i>Probation/parole violations</i>	1%	1.7%	0.4%
<i>Other</i>	3%	3.9%	1.5%
<i>Status offenses</i>	15%	11.5%	22.1%
<i>Nonoffenders</i>	27%	23.0%	38.3%
<i>Voluntary commitments</i>	18%	14.8%	26.5%

FIGURE 2

# Girls' self-reports of behavior that could bring them into contact with the juvenile justice system

## Percentage of girls who report having done the following during the past 12 months:

FIGURE 2a

### Girls' self-reports of delinquent behavior

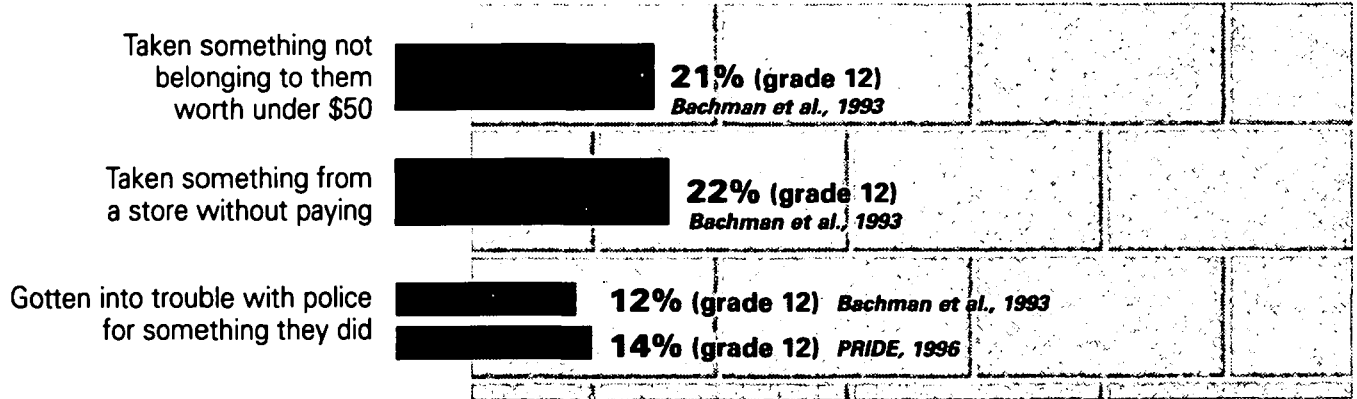
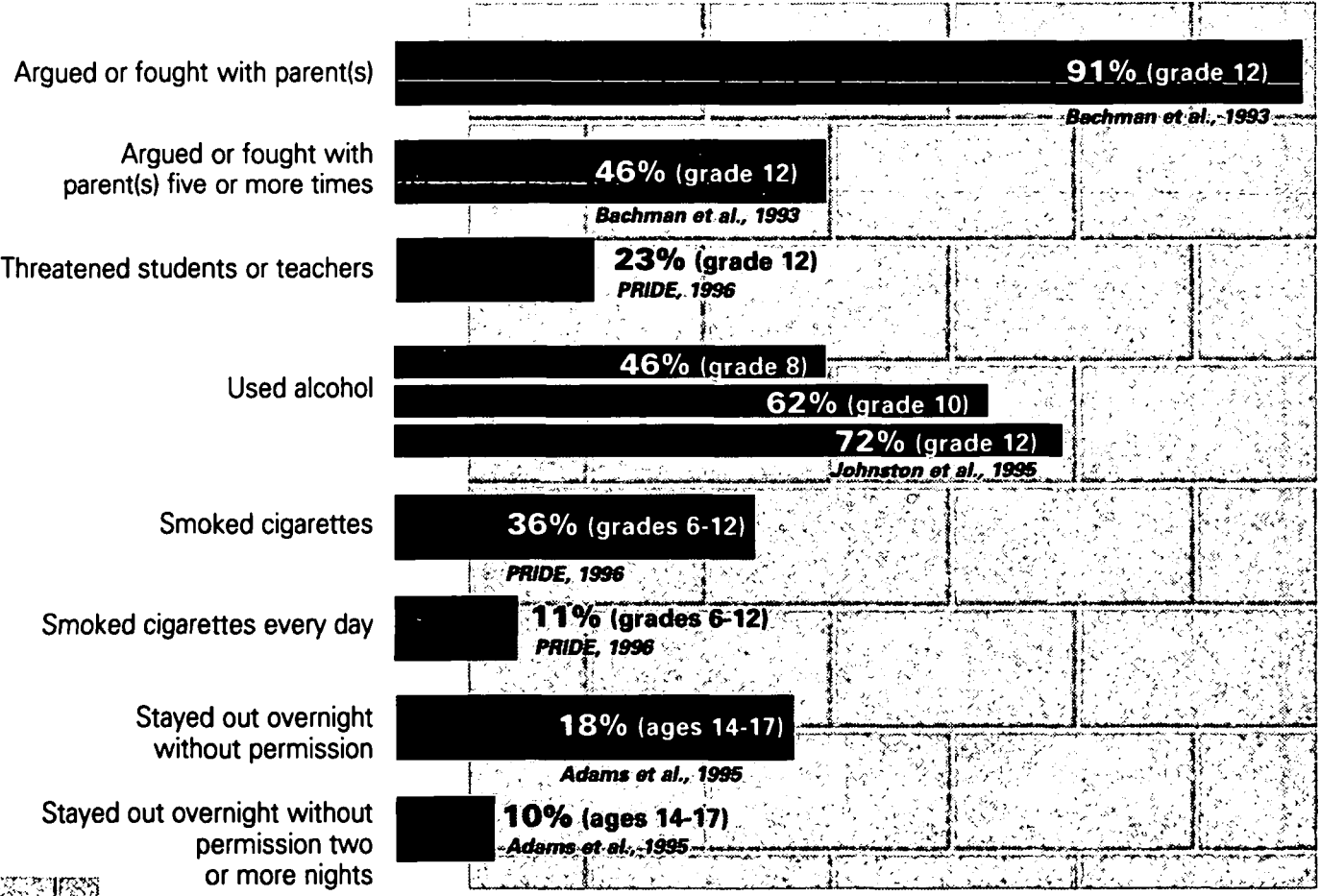


FIGURE 2b

### Girls' self-reports of potential status offenses



During her 18 years as a juvenile, virtually every girl commits at least one act that could, in theory, bring her into contact with the juvenile justice system (Calhoun et al., 1993; Huizinga, Esbensen et al., 1993). Teenage girls routinely act in ways that might suggest that they are “incorrigible” or “in need of supervision.” For example, more than nine out of ten 12th-grade girls (91 percent) responding to a national survey reported arguing or fighting with their parents at least once during the past year, and nearly half (46 percent) said they had done so five times or more (Bachman et al., 1993). In another national survey, nearly one-third (32 percent) of ninth-grade girls reported having had sexual intercourse; in the same survey, nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of 12th-grade girls reported having had at least four sexual partners (Kann et al., 1995).

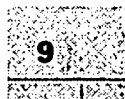
Figure 2 (Girls’ self-reports of behavior that could bring them into contact with the juvenile justice system) demonstrates that the proportion of young women who engage in delinquent behaviors appears to be dramatically higher than the proportion actually charged with such offenses. As shown in Figure 2a (Girls’ self-reports of delinquent behavior), girls participating in nationally representative studies report a range of delinquent behaviors—for example, one out of five girls (21 percent) reports having shoplifted during the past year (Bachman et al., 1993). Figure 2b (Girls’ self-reports of potential status offenses) indicates that 18 percent of young women between the ages of 14 and 17 report having stayed out overnight during the past year without permission, which is the kind of behavior that could constitute grounds for being charged with violating curfew or running away.

A large number of girls who enter the juvenile justice system also report numerous and varied offenses unrelated to those with which they were charged. In a study of serious offenders, Horowitz and Pottieger (1991) found that none of the participants had been arrested for a major felony, even though 63 young women reported committing a total of 1,793 major felonies. The researchers suggest that some differences in arrest rate by gender and race are related to the visibility of particular crimes and stereotypical assumptions about who commits them. Young men, and particularly young African-American men, are perceived as major drug sellers; young women as prostitutes; and young European-American women and young people of color as shoplifters. People who fit these descriptions are especially likely to be suspected of these offenses and thus more likely to be arrested for them. The visibility of the offense and the ease of making a charge stick may also be reflected in arrest rate differences (Horowitz and Pottieger). Solicitation for sex or drug sales tends to take place on the streets and requires personal contact. These offenses are good targets for neighborhood vice and crime “sweeps”—they are relatively easy to detect and to connect with specific individuals and, with police providing the evidence, conviction is more easily obtained.

It is important to remember that official statistics describe only the number of female juvenile offenders arrested annually. Thus, the arrest data provide one piece of the whole picture. Common practices, including informal processing of offenders and allowing parents to place their delinquent daughters in private facilities instead of having them brought to court, continue to blur the picture.

## **Risk Factors Associated with Involvement in Juvenile Delinquency**

Extensive research has identified some risk factors for participation in delinquent behavior (American Psychological Association, 1993; Dryfoos, 1990; Reiss and Roth, 1993; Tolan and Guerra, 1994). These risk factors are related to family circumstances, individual/peer characteristics, school situations and community issues. Studies consistently suggest that approximately 10 percent of young women are at extremely high-risk of serious life consequences as a direct result of their behaviors and life situation. Young women may be involved in one highly dangerous activity, such as violent crime or cocaine use, or multiple and often interrelated illegal and/or self-destructive activities, including truancy, heavy alcohol use and high-risk sexual intercourse (Dryfoos, 1990; PRIDE, 1996; Tetlin, 1990; Wilson and Howell, 1994). The following section discusses the risk factors from each of these domains that have been found to be associated with female juvenile delinquency.



## **Association with Delinquent Peers and Gangs**

Results of OJJDP's study examining the causes and correlates of delinquency suggest that when young women associate with peers who engage in delinquent behaviors, they are more likely to become involved in delinquency themselves and to continue to associate with delinquent groups. Association with peers involved with drug abuse was found to be an even stronger predictor of both of these negative outcomes (Krohn, Huizinga and Van Kammen, 1993). The study found these relationships held for both girls and boys, regardless of race and ethnicity or the city in which they were studied.

Girls who have been rejected by more popular or competent peers are often willing to participate in delinquent behavior that helps them be accepted by some peer group, no matter how marginal (Hugo and Rutherford, 1992). Girls whose impulse control and social competence are poor to begin with are at particular risk—the same behaviors that make it difficult for them to establish positive relationships make it hard for them to realize when they are being manipulated by their peers.

The stereotypical negative peer group is the gang. Male gangs require violence, almost by definition, to assert masculinity, demand or gain respect and relieve boredom (Campbell, 1993; Chesney-Lind, Shelden and Joe, forthcoming; Taylor, 1993). Female gangs may also use violence to ensure that members are willing and able to back each other up in dangerous situations or to discourage victimization through a reputation for being "crazy," but violence is not an essential element for them (Campbell, 1990). What is more critical to them is that their "sisters" in the gang become a surrogate family, a source of physical safety and companionship and possibly a source of financial or other assistance (Campbell, 1990; Chesney-Lind, Shelden and Joe).

Until recently, gang researchers focused almost exclusively on studying males. Boys' perspectives on gang membership and activities were assumed to be accurate. Girl gang members were viewed as auxiliaries who provided sexual favors, carried contraband and entrapped members of other gangs (Campbell, 1990; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995). An estimated six percent of gang members are female. Thirty-two percent of female gang members admit to participating in violent offenses on behalf of the gang, 43 percent admit to property offenses and 10 percent confess to committing drug-related offenses. A study in three communities where gang involvement is common suggested that more girls than boys consider themselves members of gangs that adhere fairly closely to the classic definition (e.g., having signs and "colors"; claiming and fighting for their "turf") (Esbensen, Thornberry and Huizinga, 1993). In a nationally representative survey, nine percent of girls in grades 6 through 12 reported taking part in gang activities, although less than three percent reported participating "often" or "a lot" (PRIDE, 1996).

## **School Problems**

Academic failure and a lack of commitment to school are significant risk factors related to involvement in delinquency and violence. These behaviors often lead to school dropout, truancy or both, which often subject a young person to adjudication. While many juvenile female offenders perform well in school, a significant number experience problems. In a study of incarcerated women in three states, Acoca and Austin (1996), found that a large number of these women had experienced serious problems in school. Twenty-six percent of them had been placed in a special class, 46 percent had been expelled and 28 percent had repeated a grade.

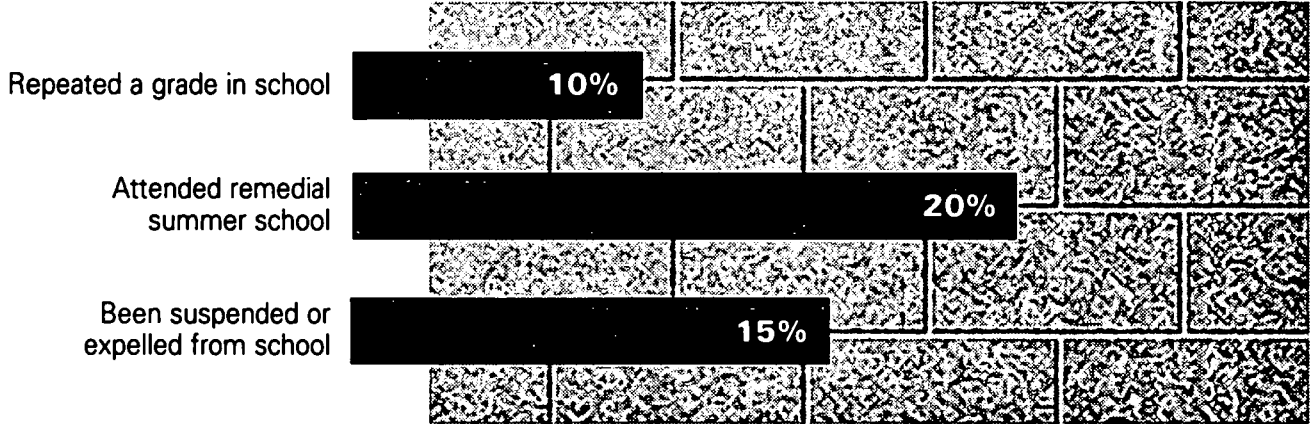
Little attention has been paid to analyzing the reasons why girls stay away from school or drop out of school. In a survey of girls in the juvenile justice system and adult women in the criminal justice system, the majority of offenders said that they left school because they were bored and could not get along with teachers (American Correctional Association [ACA], 1990; Snyder and Sickmund, 1995). Twenty-seven percent of juvenile female offenders dropped out of school because they were pregnant, with 20 percent dropping out because they were parents and needed to take care of their children. Studies suggest that all too often young women from low-income families or minority backgrounds are isolated, ignored or actively pushed out by teachers, curricula and school policies (Fine, 1986; Fine and Zane, 1989).

**FIGURE 3**

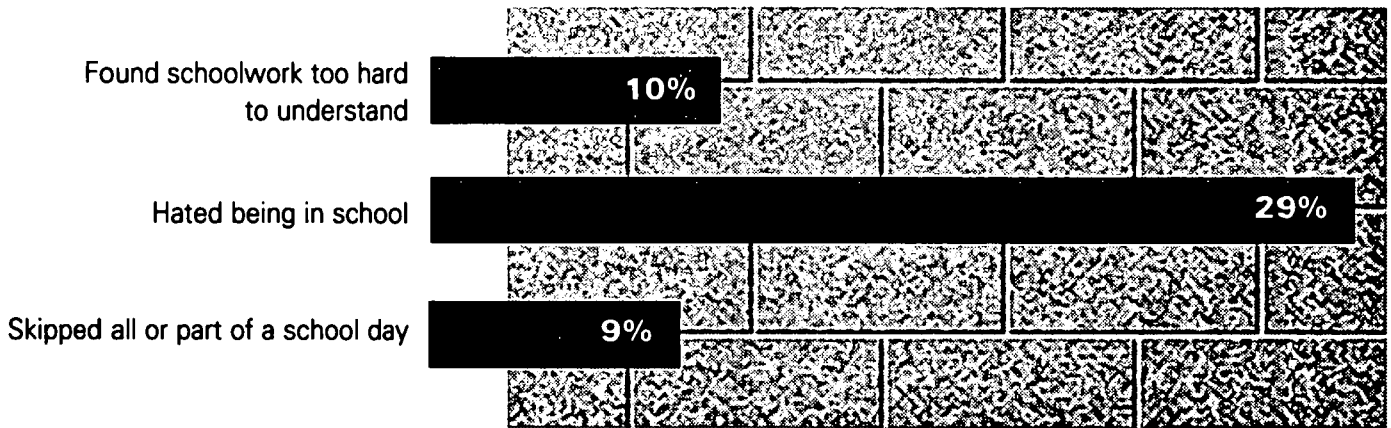
# Self-report of school problems among 12th-grade girls

Source: Bachman, Johnston and O'Malley (1993)

## Percentage of high school seniors who have:



## Percentage of high school seniors who in the past year often or almost always:



Finally, too many young women find their studies difficult and unrewarding. Figure 3 (Self-report of school problems among 12th-grade girls) indicates the proportion of young women reporting a range of school problems. As this graph does not include young women who drop out of school prior to their senior year, it almost certainly understates the percentage of young women experiencing school problems.

A variety of studies confirm that a disproportionate number of girls involved with the juvenile justice system have learning disabilities (Acoca and Austin, 1996; ACA, 1990; Calhoun et al., 1993; Hugo and Rutherford, 1992). When a learning disability is diagnosed early, girls are generally more successful than boys in using alternative learning strategies to compensate in problem areas (Perlmutter, 1987). However, first the disability must be recognized. Girls with learning disabilities typically remain undiagnosed and without help, putting them at special

risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system (Miller et al., 1995). A recent study of incarcerated women in three states found that more than one in four had repeated a grade or had been placed in a special class, often because of learning disabilities. The fact that less than one-fourth of these women (22 percent) reported graduation as a reason for leaving school, whereas 15 percent reported earning their school or vocational diplomas in a juvenile justice facility, provides additional evidence that a disproportionate percentage of young women who experience problems in school end up in prison (Acoca and Austin, 1996).

## **Substance Use**

Less than three percent of the young women arrested in 1994 were arrested for drug abuse violations. About twice as many (5.6%) were arrested for liquor law violations, drunkenness or driving under the influence (FBI, 1995). These percentages, however, significantly understate the connection between substance use and involvement with the juvenile justice system. In a study of state training schools, the American Correctional Association (1990) found that half of these facilities reported that more than 60 percent of the girls they serve need substance abuse treatment at intake and that over half of the girls they serve are multiply addicted.

Most models attempting to show the time sequence and interrelationship of delinquency and substance abuse have involved males. Evidence suggests that substance abuse is part of the complex of risk factors that include early sexual activity and teen parenthood, school failure and dropout, and delinquent behavior for both boys and girls (Bergsmann, 1994; Dryfoos, 1990; PRIDE, 1996). Some studies argue that, although boys use more substances, there is a stronger connection between substance use and disruptive behavior for girls. In one study, Loeber, Van Kammen, Huizinga and Krohn (1993) found that girls tended to become involved in delinquent behavior before they began substance use.

More than three-fifths of all girls have tried at least one cigarette and four-fifths have tried at least one drink by the end of high school. Significant percentages of young women use or abuse other substances, most commonly marijuana, LSD, inhalants and stimulant "diet pills" (Johnston, O'Malley and Bachman, 1995; PRIDE, 1996). As long as a girl does not obtain these substances in a flagrant and public manner, or make too much of a nuisance of herself while under the influence, her drug use is likely to be ignored. Girls are more likely than boys to abuse substances they can buy legally, for example, cough medicine and lighter fluid, and to obtain illegal substances from family stashes or boys rather than buying them (Bodinger-de Uriarte and Austin, 1991; Girls Incorporated, 1993). Taylor (1993) suggests that young women involved in the crack trade for its financial rewards have learned from watching what happens to male dealers who flash money, expensive possessions and weapons that keeping a low profile decreases their risk of arrest.

Some evidence exists that girls are less likely than boys to display behavioral signs of substance abuse. Girls involved with drugs (including alcohol) are more likely to keep up with school and behave appropriately at home. Girls tend to use substances more moderately or as a form of self-medication (Andersson, 1993; Bergsmann, 1994; Taylor, 1993). Girls' substance use also goes unnoticed because of societal and law enforcement perceptions that underage drinking and trafficking in drugs are not typical female activities. Significantly more boys than girls are arrested for violation of liquor laws and for drug crimes (Adams, Schoenborn, Moss, Warren and Kann, 1995; FBI, 1995; United States General Accounting Office, 1995), with African-American boys arrested disproportionately for selling drugs (Bishop and Frazier, 1992; Federle and Chesney-Lind, 1992). Girls who are arrested for drug crimes, however, tend to be treated more severely. Although only one-third (34 percent) of all arrests for drug crimes lead to hearings in juvenile court, nearly half (48 percent) of drug crime arrests involving young women do (Bergsmann, 1994; DeComo et al., 1995).

**TABLE 3**  
**Actual and potential involvement**  
**in physical violence**

Source: Adams et al. (1995) (ages 14-17; 1992 data)  
 Kann et al. (1995) (grades 9-12; 1993 data)

	Females	Males	Source
<b>INVOLVED IN:</b>			
physical fight in past year	34%	51%	Adams et al.
	32%	51%	Kann et al.
four or more physical fights in past year	9%	15%	Adams et al.
<b>FOUGHT WITH:</b>			
stranger	7%	15%	Adams et al.
friend	24%	46%	Adams et al.
date/romantic partner	8%	2%	Adams et al.
parent/sibling	34%	9%	Adams et al.
other	4%	6%	Adams et al.
several of the above	24%	26%	Adams et al.
<b>CARRIED WEAPON</b>			
in past month	7%	17%	Adams et al.
	9%	34%	Kann et al.

## Violence

Research is divided as to whether violent or aggressive behavior in childhood is as predictive of later delinquency for girls as it is for boys (Eron and Slaby, 1994; Kasdin, 1994; Windle, 1990). Society tends to view aggression in girls as more deviant than in boys. Girls are more likely to act aggressively within the family, so that much of female aggression is out of public view (Bachman et al., 1993; Pepler and Slaby, 1994). These statistics are consistent with self-report data from young people on physical fights, as presented in Table 3.

In a study of incarcerated women in three states, Acoca and Austin (1996) found that one of the most universally shared characteristics of women in prison is a history of being exposed to violence. The results of their study indicated that 68 percent of the participants had been victims of violence as children.

## Early Sexual Activity

Many young women become sexually active during their teen years. Results of a national survey indicate that nearly one-third (32 percent) of 9th-grade girls have already had sexual intercourse. Almost one-quarter (23 percent) of the 12th-grade girls surveyed have had at least four sexual partners (Kann et al., 1995). In many jurisdictions sexually active teens are delinquent by definition (Weiher, Huizinga, Lizotte and Van Kammen, 1993). While this law is generally honored in the breach, it allows parents to refer children who are involved in sexual relationships of which they disapprove to the courts as incorrigible or beyond parental control. Parents and other authorities tend to monitor girls' sexual activity more than boys' and condone it far less. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that it is almost exclusively girls who are referred to the juvenile justice system because of their sexual behavior (Chesney-Lind, 1995; Ensminger, 1987).

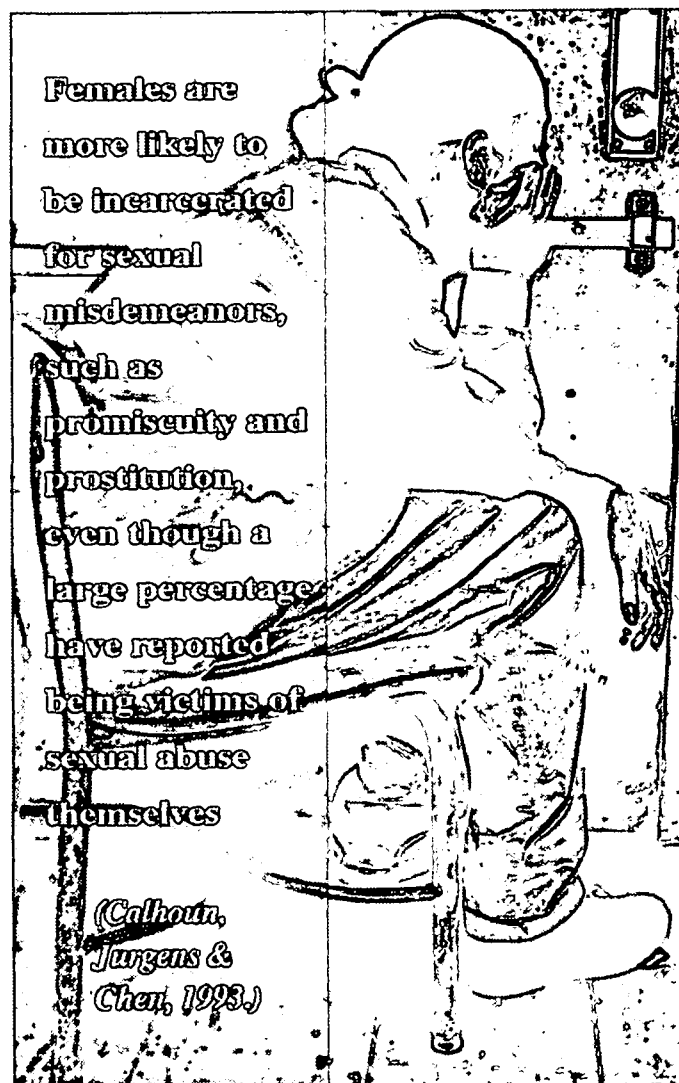
Weiher et al. (1993) report that some but not all researchers have found a correlation between drug use, early sexual activity and delinquent behavior, with the clearest pattern suggesting that sexual activity precedes street crime or drug use. They also note that patterns of early sexual activity vary not only by gender but by cultural norms, which may be mediated by race, ethnicity and community.

Harvey and Spigner (1995) found that girls who used tobacco and alcohol and who were under considerable stress were more likely than their peers to be involved in early sexual activity. Girls who were engaging in sexual intercourse were far more likely than their peers to skip school, use drugs and get involved in fights. Although these findings were applicable to both sexes, not all risk factors were the same for boys and girls. Girls with less-educated parents were more likely to have early sexual intercourse, although boys in similar families were not. Boys, but not girls, with high educational aspirations, were likely to postpone sexual activity. A limitation of the Harvey and Spigner study is its failure to include a history of sexual abuse as a risk factor.

## Sexual and Physical Abuse

Estimates indicate that 34 percent of all girls suffer some form of abuse before they reach adulthood (Benson, 1990). Evidence of a link between victimization and subsequent delinquent behavior exists. The estimates of the proportion of young women in the juvenile justice system who have been abused are even higher than those of the population as a whole, ranging from 40 to 73 percent (ACA, 1990; Acoca and Austin, 1996; Miller et al., 1995). Sixty percent of young women involved with the juvenile justice system report physical abuse (ACA; Miller et al.; Acoca and Austin), in contrast to 21 percent of girls in the national survey (Benson).

Girls often respond to abusive situations by fighting back or running away. These actions may result in the girls becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Many abused girls first come into contact





with the juvenile justice system when they run away from home (Bergsmann, 1994; Robinson, 1994). Running away is the only offense category in which arrest rates for girls are higher than those for boys. Fifty-seven percent of all juvenile arrests for running away involve females (FBI, 1995).

In their attempts to escape from an abusive home, girls are often labeled delinquent and forced to return to the same abusive situation (Chesney-Lind, 1995; Federle and Chesney-Lind, 1992; Reed, 1994; Robinson, 1994). Abused girls sometimes respond to abuse by acting out, redirecting their anger at others or at themselves. Bergsmann (1994) points out that much of girls' violence is directed against family members. This suggests that many violent girls may be striking back against their abusers. Overall, adolescents are particularly likely to act out as opposed to admitting abuse or other untenable situations. As a result, adults—including parents, school personnel, counselors and probation officers—may address the acting-out behavior as opposed the underlying problem (Straus, 1994). Many girls who have been abused resort to substance abuse as a form of self-medication, which may lead to their becoming involved in other delinquent activities while under the influence of drugs (Bergsmann, 1994). Others act out with violent behavior, using violence to feel powerful and in control (Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995).

Sexually abused girls who run away from home are at higher risk than either other runaway girls or runaway boys for prostituting themselves (Bergsmann, 1994). Some use their sexuality to survive on the streets, trading sexual activity for money, drugs or a place to sleep. Others have come to believe that they have no value beyond being a sexual object and are unworthy of more positive life options (Calhoun et al., 1993; Chesney-Lind, 1995; Mann, 1984; Moore, 1991; Robinson, 1994;). Sexually abused girls living on the streets are also especially likely to use drugs and to steal (Bergsmann; Chesney-Lind; Moore). These activities provide resources for physical and emotional survival, and also increase girls' involvement with others involved in illegal activities so that these activities become normative in an abnormal situation (Moore).

## **Family Factors**

Girls from single-parent families are more likely to become involved with the juvenile justice system than those who live with two parents (ACA, 1990; Adolescent Female Subcommittee, 1994; Bergsmann, 1994; Daniel, 1994; Robinson, 1994). Single mothers of color are often presumed to be inadequate parents when their children get into trouble. Children of such mothers are therefore disproportionately likely to be removed from their families (Kempf, 1992). It has been suggested that the number of parents is less critical than the quality of parenting and the availability of other resources. Arguments have been made that one competent and concerned adult can make the difference in a girl's life (Ianni, 1989).

For girls, initial detachment from the family seems to precede delinquency and drug use. Once involved in these activities, girls tend to become even more detached from their families (Smith, Weiher and Van Kammen, 1993). Additional large studies that include girls who are not involved with the juvenile justice system might indicate how generalizable this pathway to delinquency may be.

Self-reports from young people not involved with the juvenile justice system suggest that boys stay out overnight without permission more often than girls and are more likely to spend those nights in risky places (Adams et al., 1995). Nevertheless, more girls than boys come to the attention of the juvenile justice system for running away from home (FBI, 1995; Poe-Yamagata and Butts, 1996). This may reflect a societal assumption that girls need to be protected more than boys. Estimates of the percentage of young women who are "justified" in running away vary widely—from five to 80 percent. Low figures assume that girls should not run away unless faced with immediate danger; higher figures consider the variety of situations in which a girl may feel unsafe or unsupported at home to the point that she is willing to take the chance that leaving is better than staying (Chesney-Lind, 1995; Straus, 1994).

**FIGURE 4**

# Dispositions of delinquency cases referred to juvenile court, 1992

## Girls

429 are handled formally

1 is waived to criminal court

52 result in placement

136 result in formal probation

30 result in other dispositions

8 result in dismissal

226 are adjudicated in juvenile court

202 are not adjudicated

5 result in placement

52 result in informal probation

29 result in other dispositions

116 result in dismissal

571 are handled informally

3 result in placement

154 result in informal probation

136 result in other dispositions

278 result in dismissal

Of every 1,000 delinquency cases referred to juvenile court

## Boys

555 are handled formally

9 are waived to criminal court

95 result in placement

180 result in formal probation

39 result in other dispositions

13 result in dismissal

327 are adjudicated in juvenile court

219 are not adjudicated

4 result in placement

49 result in informal probation

29 result in other dispositions

136 result in dismissal

479 are handled informally

2 result in placement

122 result in informal probation

101 result in other dispositions

218 result in dismissal

Of every 1,000 delinquency cases referred to juvenile court

Source: Poe and Butts (1995), Figure 4

A girl who lives “on the streets” for any length of time is likely to engage in what Grossman (1987) calls “crimes of a self-emancipating nature”; that is, crimes such as petty thefts and prostitution that help her to survive (Chesney-Lind, 1995). She also is likely to use drugs for a variety of reasons, including dealing for financial gain, receiving drugs from sexual partners as part of or payment for sexual activity and blotting out reality.

## Differential Treatment of Female Offenders in the Juvenile Justice System

Juvenile justice systems vary from state to state. In some states, the system dealing with neglected, abused or dependent children (e.g., child welfare, child protective services) is formally, if not always in practice, separate from the juvenile justice system. In other states, young offenders and children in need of services negotiate almost identical paths through the juvenile or family court. Young people charged with status offenses may or may not be handled differently than those charged with delinquent offenses. Even so, there are enough similarities between state juvenile justice systems to describe how a young person enters, proceeds through and leaves a generic state juvenile court system.

Most juveniles first come into contact with the system as children in need of supervision and/or services. This first contact may stem from suspicion of abuse or neglect. In addition, very young children who commit status or delinquent offenses usually are treated as children in need of services. It is often a judgment call as to whether a girl who comes to the attention of the juvenile court should be considered and treated as a child in need of services or a juvenile offender (Smith, 1994).

In general, young people between the ages of 10 and 17 can be referred to and adjudicated by the juvenile justice system for committing delinquent or status offenses. The upper age limit for jurisdiction varies by state and, in some states, by type of offense—the age limit being higher for delinquent offenses. Most states allow, and sometimes require, cases involving young people accused of specific violent or serious offenses to be waived to adult criminal court. Some states also allow young offenders to request waiver to adult court (Krisberg and Austin, 1993).

For a girl to enter the juvenile justice system a credible adult authority must first agree that something is wrong.<sup>2</sup> Unless a juvenile is “caught in the act,” most referrals to the juvenile justice system originate with adults other than police. These most commonly include intended or actual victims of crime (or their guardians), school officials reporting illegal activity or truancy and parents faced with their child’s delinquent or “incorrigible” behavior. Parents are particularly likely to refer their daughters for status offenses (Chesney-Lind, 1995).

Police may handle such situations formally or informally. While informal handling diverts the juvenile from further processing, it also results in a minimal paper trail. Alternatively, the girl may be diverted to the growing private system of substance abuse treatment programs, ranches, group homes and psychiatric facilities. Girls are particularly likely to be incarcerated in private facilities “voluntarily” or without having been formally charged with any offense (Table 2b).

As illustrated in Figure 4 (“Dispositions of delinquency cases referred to juvenile court, 1992”) young people referred to juvenile court may be handled formally or informally. As Figure 4 shows, less than one-fourth of cases involving girls are adjudicated in juvenile court, but more than one-half of those adjudicated result in formal probation or placement. The flow chart also shows that cases involving boys are more likely to be handled formally, to be adjudicated in juvenile court and to result in formal probation or placement. Placement outside of the home is a relatively rare outcome for either sex (about six percent for girls and 10 percent for boys). Differential treatment by gender may be partly a function of the different kinds of offenses with which boys and girls are charged.

<sup>2</sup> “Girl” is used throughout this section for simplicity of language and to keep the focus on young women. Boys proceed through the juvenile justice system in the same way.

## **Detention/Placement Hearing**

Once formal charges are filed, a girl may be released to her parents or guardian or placed somewhere other than her home to await a hearing. Possible placements include secure detention for delinquent offenses, nonsecure detention for status offenses, placement in the child welfare system (e.g., foster care) or release to a parent or guardian. The same private and foster care placements often serve girls arrested for delinquency or status offenses and girls in need of services.

## **Petitioning to Court**

The next decision to be made is whether a petition will be filed, which is the formal equivalent of an adult receiving an indictment. A juvenile can respond to the petition by entering a plea bargain. In most states, a young person charged with an especially serious or violent crime (e.g., murder) can be, and in some states must be, waived to adult court (Butts et al., 1995). In many states young people and their families can request a waiver to adult court. This option is often exercised because of the perception of juvenile offenders that they will not be treated as harshly in the criminal court. As indicated in Figure 4, only one of every thousand girls referred to juvenile court for a delinquent offense has her case waived or transferred to adult court.

## **Adjudication and Disposition**

Those cases that proceed to juvenile court are adjudicated; that is, heard and decided. Girls whose cases are not dismissed are subject to "disposition" (i.e., options for sentencing or placement of a young person who has been adjudicated). Common dispositions include the following:

### ***Dispositions for girls adjudicated delinquent***

- Confinement in a secure facility ("training school").
- Confinement in a staffed secure facility (ranch, camp).
- Placement in a nonsecure facility.
- Community service, fines and/or restitution.
- Informal sanctions (e.g., lectures).

### ***Dispositions for girls adjudicated delinquent or in need of services***

- Treatment (mental health and/or substance abuse) in a closed setting.
- Day programs, with the girl living at home or in a foster care situation.
- Community-based options (positive youth development).
- Counseling.
- Probation (intensive or not).
- Foster care (including group homes and other out-of-home placements).
- Placement with a relative or other known and trusted adult.
- Adjudicated delinquent/in need of services, but no action taken.

Factors affecting how girls are treated in the juvenile justice system include the following:

### ***Gender***

Throughout history, there have been significant differences in the reasons why girls or boys have become involved with the juvenile justice system. Girls have been brought before the juvenile court selectively—often by parents—

for the same sexual or defiant behavior that was tolerated in boys. Studies of girls and the juvenile justice system from the 1960s through the 1980s showed that girls were much more likely than boys to be referred to the juvenile court for status offenses. Once in the system, girls were more likely to have a hearing in court, to be detained before that hearing and to be placed in institutions on the basis of these status offenses. Conversely, the majority of boys in the system were there because of delinquent offenses (Chesney-Lind, 1995; Mann, 1984).

One of the core requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (JJDPA), deinstitutionalization of status offenders, is designed to curb the practice of detaining and incarcerating girls for status offenses. However, this provision is compromised by the practice of “bootstrapping.” Behavior that in the past would have been characterized as a status offense is increasingly deemed delinquent, thus continuing to subject girls to detention and incarceration. Additionally, in recent years young women have been disproportionately “transinstitutionalized,” that is, placed by their parents or the social service system into private treatment facilities for behaviors that 25 years ago would have put them into public custody (Chesney-Lind, 1995; DeComo et al., 1995).

There is only limited research on gender bias in the treatment of young people by the juvenile justice system. Bishop and Frazier (1992) concluded that boys accused of delinquent offenses were handled more harshly than girls or status offenders at every stage of the juvenile justice system. Part of this difference appears to stem from the fact that status offenders tend to be younger than delinquent offenders and are more likely to be first-time offenders. According to Bishop and Frazier’s findings, status offenders almost **had** to be first-time offenders. Repeat status offenders are more likely to be found “in contempt,” and thus by definition become delinquent offenders.

While Horowitz and Pottieger (1991) found some bias against males in sentencing dispositions, they also found that girls who had committed relatively minor delinquent offenses—particularly prostitution—were punished more harshly than boys who had been charged with more serious offenses. European-American girls tended to be treated leniently for a first, or even a second, offense but were given especially severe dispositions for repeat offenses. Johnson and Scheuble (1991) reported similar findings for all girls. They suggest that girls are treated chivalrously for their first offense but lose their claim to special treatment if they are referred to court a second time. They also found that girls were much more likely than boys to be placed outside of their homes.

### ***Bootstrapping***

The distinction between delinquency and status offenses has been further muddied by “bootstrapping.” A 1980 amendment to the JJDPA allows secure detention for violation of a valid court order, on the basis that such an action (or inaction) constitutes the delinquent offense of contempt. The valid court order holds even when the original offense that brought the young person into the juvenile justice system was a status offense. The offense that violates probation can be a status offense (e.g., running away, violation of a court-imposed curfew, truancy) or a behavior that would be no offense at all were it not a condition of the court order (e.g., missing counseling appointments). A teen can thus be “bootstrapped” into the status of delinquent offender and punished accordingly for behavior that would not be a crime for an adult. The penalty for contempt in Florida, for example, is incarceration in a secure facility for up to six months—a harsher penalty than that incurred by many young people who initially commit delinquent offenses (Bishop and Frazier, 1992).

Bishop and Frazier (1992) found in their study of the Florida juvenile justice system that the young people most likely to be “bootstrapped” were girls who had committed status offenses. This transformation of status offenses into delinquency offenses results in large numbers of girls being punished far out of proportion to the seriousness of their offenses (ACA, 1990). As Table 4 illustrates, the percentage of girls detained for probation or parole violations is double the percentage of boys detained for these offenses. More recent national statistics (Chesney-Lind, 1995; Poe-Yamagata and Butts, 1996) confirm that disproportionate “bootstrapping” of female offenders continues. On a positive note, over half of the states have enacted regulations that disallow this practice.

**TABLE 4**  
**Juveniles detained in public facilities by sex, 1993**

Source: National Center for Juvenile Justice. National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile Court Case Records 1993. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Census of private and public juvenile detention, correctional and shelter facilities 1993.

	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
<b>Most serious offense</b>		
Person	29%	37%
Property	28%	30%
Drug	6%	9%
Public order	14%	11%
Probation/parole violation	24%	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Race and Socioeconomic Status

Young people of color are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system (Bergsmann, 1994; Chesney-Lind, 1995; Krisberg and Austin, 1993). States are currently conducting analyses of the differential handling of young people of color within the juvenile justice system. African-American females represent the fastest growing category of young people adjudicated for delinquent offenses. The weight of the evidence suggests that, once arrested, African-American young women are treated more harshly than their European-American counterparts at all stages of the juvenile justice system (Bergsmann, 1994). Because in the United States a much higher percentage of people of color than of European descent live in poverty it is also extremely difficult to disentangle differential handling by race and by socioeconomic status.

A lack of cultural sensitivity and knowledge among juvenile court personnel can often result in girls of color not being afforded the same presumptions of femininity and innocence that are often extended to white girls. African-American girls may be seen as aggressive or showing a lack of remorse when they act assertively rather than deferentially. Thus they often receive harsher punishments than girls who act more conventionally feminine (J. Bell, personal communication, November 29, 1995; Mann, 1993). By contrast, Asian-American, Native-American and Latina girls, often taught to show deference to adults, may exhibit subdued conduct that is perceived as evidence of guilt or rudeness (Mann, 1993).

### Family Resources

Girls whose families have sufficient resources (money or insurance coverage) can place their daughters "voluntarily" in private facilities that often amount to secure detention (e.g., locked mental health and drug treatment facilities). Conversely, girls in desperate need of treatment for psychiatric problems or drug addiction

whose families do not have these resources are likely to end up in the juvenile justice system because of their delinquent behavior (J. Bell, personal communication, November 29, 1995; Chesney-Lind, 1995; Kempf, 1992). Parents who are better off financially can more easily afford child care or time off from work and can find transportation to appear at every appointment and hearing or can hire a lawyer to do so on their behalf. By contrast, parents who do not have these resources are perceived as insufficiently interested in their children's behavior and well-being (J. Bell, personal communication, November 29, 1995; Kempf, 1992; Krisberg and Austin, 1993). The problem is compounded when a parent is not fluent in spoken or written English. A child may be placed in detention only because a parent did not come for her, whether out of inability or lack of understanding.

## **Prehearing Detention**

While the percentage of girls being detained before appearing in court is decreasing (Butts et al., 1995), in 1991 girls were still twice as likely as boys to be detained and were detained on the average three to five times as long as boys (Bergsmann, 1994; Daniel, 1994). Detention is often used inappropriately as a pretrial punishment for girls who pose no danger to the community. Sixteen percent of girls referred to the court are placed in secure detention between referral and disposition (Poe-Yamagata and Butts, 1996). Girls of color are particularly likely to be detained inappropriately (Kempf, 1992). This practice of detaining female offenders has serious ramifications when one considers the fact that prehearing detention is highly correlated with the severity of outcome at further decision points. Cases where juveniles are detained initially are more than twice as likely to result in an out-of-home placement (Bergsmann, 1994; Bishop and Frazier, 1992). Unfortunately, the studies do not indicate whether these statistics take into account the seriousness of the offense for which the girl was brought before the court. Nor do they note whether an assessment of the girl's danger to the community is a consideration in the prehearing decision.

## **Seriousness of Offense and Prior Record**

The more serious the delinquent offense, and the more severe any prior dispositions, the more likely a young person is to be adjudicated delinquent (Bishop and Frazier, 1992). Bishop and Frazier found that Florida intake officials were particularly likely to recommend formal processing for young people who had previous experience with the courts. Older teens, African-Americans and boys were more likely to be recommended for formal processing, with boys about as likely to be recommended as girls about 2 years older. Male gender was about half again as powerful as race in predicting formal processing for delinquent offenses.

## **Placement Options**

The juvenile justice system offers more placement options for boys than for girls. As a result, girls are often inappropriately placed in adult facilities or in secure settings. Limited options and the need to fill beds allotted to girls also increase the likelihood that girls who have committed no offenses or have committed status offenses will be placed in single-sex facilities with girls who have committed serious delinquent offenses or in mixed-sex facilities with girls and boys who have committed serious offenses.

The scarcity of placement options interacts with gender, race and socioeconomic status to affect the disposition of girls in the juvenile justice system. Noting fairly small numbers, Kempf (1992) found that more white girls were placed outside their homes and more girls of color were put on probation. It has been suggested that the scarcity of placements for young women of color may play a role in this finding (C. Mann, personal communication, October 1995).

Another factor in this apparent discrepancy is the timing and funding of each type of placement. The decision for or against detention is made before the decision to adjudicate, and it involves considerable discretion on the part of a variety of authorities. When parents are in a position to offer to place their daughter in a private treatment



facility, probation and court personnel usually concur. Placement in a private facility can substitute for virtually any option available in the juvenile justice system. The court can order private placement for a girl whose family has few resources. However, rather than allocate scarce resources to pay for private placement, juvenile courts often resort to publicly funded, and less appropriate, options. Providing private treatment for their delinquent daughters is an option that is open primarily to those parents who are highly educated, reasonably well-off and have comprehensive insurance coverage. This has the direct effect of lowering the average socioeconomic status of girls in the public juvenile justice system, which in turn increases the percentage of girls of color in the public system.

Girls whose mothers were young teens at their birth and who were involved with the juvenile justice system are at particularly high risk for repeating the pattern (Casteel, 1987; Acoca and Austin, 1996), yet there are few programs for pregnant and parenting girls or women in the juvenile justice system (Acoca and Austin). Those programs that do exist have long waiting lists and have difficulty finding funding for both mothers and children (Bergsmann, 1994). In reviewing programs for this publication, it became clear that many promising programs are reluctant to take teen mothers at all, and will do so only if the children are placed in the custody of another. Treatment programs that provide specialized care for girls who abuse drugs and alcohol are also in short supply.

Placement decisions sometimes bypass appropriate alternatives. A girl who reports abuse by a family member may be removed from her home, even when removing the accused offender would leave her in a safe and supportive situation. Also, extended-family placements—with a favorite relative or a friend's family—can create an opportunity to give daughters and parents a needed respite from each other while maintaining girls' ties to family and community. Often such placements are not even considered. When girls suggest them, the possibility often is rejected out of hand as a manipulative attempt to thwart parental authority (Chesney-Lind, 1995; Robinson, 1994).





In seeking to establish effective programs for juvenile female offenders, three objectives need to be addressed. It is essential that programs seek to address the risk factors that increase girls' likelihood of delinquent behaviors. A continuum of program options ranging from prevention to intervention to aftercare needs to be established for young women involved in the juvenile justice system. Policies need to be established at the local, state, and federal levels that recognize the special needs and strengths of girls and that support the most effective programs and resources. In order to meet these objectives, it is essential that all of the programs implemented are supported by research and are gender-specific.

### ***Early Intervention and Prevention***

Girls often find themselves involved in the juvenile justice system as they attempt to meet their own needs within the limits of the resources available to them (Robinson, 1994; Chesney-Lind, 1995). Early intervention programs could help such girls to resolve many of the problems that place them at risk for engaging in delinquency. In addition, virtually every girl would benefit from good prevention programs: initiatives that help girls acquire the skills, knowledge and values that will promote health, happiness and productivity. Risk factors associated with female delinquency that could be addressed by appropriate prevention and intervention programs include alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; associating with delinquent peer groups; school problems; and abuse. In addition to prevention and intervention programs, juvenile female offenders who are leaving the system require effective aftercare programs to facilitate their transition back into society. Resources and programs need to be spread across a continuum of care in an effort to prevent problems before they occur, intervene when problems occur and provide followup after intervention to ensure that gains made are maintained.

Much remains to be learned about the factors that increase or decrease girls' chances of involvement with the juvenile justice system and about the types of prevention, intervention and treatment programs that are likely to benefit girls. Replication of well-conducted but necessarily small-scale studies of girls in state and local juvenile justice systems (e.g., Bishop and Frazier, 1992; Horowitz and Pottieger, 1991, Johnson and Scheuble, 1991; Kempf, 1992) would help to show whether their findings are unique to particular regions or specific juvenile justice systems or are representative of national trends. More large-scale and preferably longitudinal studies similar to OJJDP's Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency are vital. Knowing more about the prevalence of prosecutable behaviors among all girls will help to show both how frequent and how "normal" some offenses are among young women who are unlikely to come to the attention of the juvenile justice system as well as among young women at high risk of involvement. Additionally, this information is needed to determine whether there are predictable pathways that some girls, like some boys, are likely to follow towards delinquency in the absence of targeted interventions.

## ***Programs Designed Specifically for Girls***

Given the fact that juvenile delinquency has been and continues to be perceived as primarily a male problem, the correctional industry and profession revolves around establishing programs that meet the needs of boys. This approach has resulted in few prevention, intervention and treatment programs and facilities that are designed specifically for girls. Many are coed, with the specific needs and strengths of girls ignored or shortchanged because they are outnumbered by the boys being served. Where programs are single-sex, far more options exist for boys than for girls. For example, a recent list of "potentially promising programs" identified by OJJDP (Howell, 1995) cites 24 programs specifically for boys in contrast to two programs specifically for girls. The one program for incarcerated teen fathers has no counterpart for incarcerated teen mothers.

The range of programs and facilities for boys makes it more likely that their individual needs can be accommodated while girls must instead accommodate themselves to the few available options. Furthermore, the few programs that serve girls well constantly face pressure to serve boys. Just as facilities and programs designed for boys are not necessarily appropriate for girls, it is not reasonable to assume that successful programs designed for girls will continue to succeed with girls or boys if they begin to operate on a mixed-sex basis.

Gender-specific services are defined by OJJDP as those that are designed to meet the unique needs of female offenders, that value the female perspective, that celebrate and honor the female experience, that respect and take into account female development and that empower young women to reach their full potential.

## ***Education, Employment, and Health and Wellness***

Effective programs for juvenile female offenders need to focus on providing educational opportunities and vocational training while promoting the health and wellness of individuals. States should continue to phase out large "training schools" in favor of a variety of smaller, more flexible options. A great need exists for more community-based options for female offenders that will allow them to remain within their own community and simultaneously address their needs.

All girls, including girls in the juvenile justice system, deserve the educational and vocational support commensurate with their interests and abilities. Too often, it is assumed that the most girls in the juvenile justice system can hope for is education at the high school level and low-skilled, low-paying jobs (Robinson, 1994; Krisberg and Austin, 1993). Yet many girls have demonstrated that they have the capacity and will to achieve far more, if only given the opportunity. It is important that young women's abilities are addressed and that they are provided with guidance in deciding how best to harness their potential. Educational and vocational programs must be meaningful and must address the individual needs of the young woman, not simply act as an external control method. In particular, special education needs of girls in the juvenile justice system, often ignored, must be addressed (Grossman, 1987). For the significant percentage of girls in the juvenile justice system struggling with learning disabilities, interventions supported by the system may be their first and last chance to find out that they too can learn, achieve and aspire.

Although young women deserve high-quality vocational training and employment opportunities, employment is not an automatic cure for delinquency (Calhoun et al., 1993; Mann, 1984; Taylor, 1993). Some young offenders engage in prostitution, theft or fraud strictly for economic gain; others to support a drug habit or to survive. Some legitimate employment may actually facilitate offending, as coworkers join in drinking or other substance abuse or discretionary income permits these activities (Huizinga, Bashinski and Lizotte, 1993). Huizinga, Bashinski, and Lizotte also found that for young people living in high-risk situations, employment does not decrease the likelihood of involvement in street crime. Clearly, far more research needs to be conducted on factors leading to expectations of and pathways to jobs in the legitimate economy as compared to illegal activity or dependence on welfare.

Programs aimed at female juvenile offenders need to incorporate specific health and wellness issues for girls into their curriculums. Many girls in the juvenile justice system have real physical and mental health needs that have been ignored or gone undiagnosed. These needs range from missed immunizations and the need for eyeglasses to sexual abuse, tuberculosis and suicidal depression. It is especially critical to diagnose or rule out medical conditions that might be confused with acting-out behavior (Reed, 1994). Such conditions might include narcolepsy, petit mal seizures and Tourette's syndrome. On every level, it is essential that health and medical problems are treated or ameliorated.

Examples of how this might be accomplished include providing a girl with speech therapy, prescribing a course of antibiotics long enough to clear up a chronic infection or helping a girl who feels unattractive and lethargic to learn to take care of herself by choosing a healthy diet and enjoyable physical activities.

In addition to providing adequate health care, programs for female juvenile offenders should promote wellness through providing good nutrition and exercise options. On the prevention front, female juvenile offenders need education on sexual wellness, pregnancy, parenting, eating disorders and HIV/AIDS. Sexual abuse and substance abuse treatment and prevention education are needed for many juvenile female offenders.

The provision of treatment and education in health and wellness does more than improve girls' health. Girls improve their sense of well-being and ability to learn, gain skills useful throughout their lives and find a sense of their own value that will help them exit from the system. The juvenile justice system may be the one institution that has interest in girls long enough and has the resources or connections to them to provide necessary and desirable health and wellness treatment and education.

### ***A Legislative Model***

In order to implement the proposed types of effective programming for juvenile female offenders, it is essential that leadership in this area be provided at all levels of policy making—local, state, and federal. The groundwork has already been laid at the federal level with the 1992 Amendments to the JJDP Act, which directly addresses the issue of gender bias in the juvenile justice system. Section 223(8)(B) of the JJDP Act requires states participating in the formula grant program to provide for an analysis of gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency. This analysis must also include a plan for the provision of gender-specific services. Most states are in the process of completing their analysis.



The 1992 amendments to the JJDP Act also authorized Part E Challenge Grants (42 U.S.C. 5667c), providing incentives for juvenile justice improvements at the state and local level in ten distinct areas. Gender bias is one of the Challenge Grant areas that states may choose to focus on. Challenge Activity E calls on states to develop and adopt policies to prohibit gender bias in placement and treatment and to establish programs that ensure that female youth have access to the full range of health and mental health services, treatment for physical and sexual abuse, self-defense instruction, education in parenting and other training and vocational services. A state that undertakes a concerted effort to address gender bias in the juvenile justice system will qualify for an increase in funding equal to some ten percent of its overall formula grant allotment. To date, 23 states have accepted this challenge.

On the state level, the Equal Access for Girls Committee of Children First for Oregon, a statewide group concerned that girls and young women did not have equitable access to a variety of services, drafted model legislation, HB 3576, to ensure equal treatment for girls in the juvenile justice system. The committee called for equitable (not necessarily identical) services for girls, including services targeting the special needs of girls relating to abuse, substance use, early sexual activity and education.

Key excerpts of HB 3576 follow:

**SECTION 1.**

- (1) The Legislative Assembly hereby acknowledges that females under 18 years of age often lack equal access, both individually and as a group, when compared with males under 18 years of age, to the facilities, services and treatment available through human services and juvenile corrections programs provided by or funded by the State of Oregon.
- (2) The Legislative Assembly therefore declares that, as a matter of statewide concern, it is in the best interests of the people of this state that equal access for both males and females under 18 years of age to appropriate facilities, services and treatment be available through all state agencies providing or funding human services and juvenile corrections programs for children and adolescents.  
.....
- (4) ....disparities include, but are not limited to, disparities in:
  - (a) The nature, extent and effectiveness of services offered for females under 18 years of age within the areas of teen pregnancy, physical and sexual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, services offered for runaway and homeless females under 18 years of age and services offered for females under 18 years of age who are involved in gangs or other delinquent activity; and
  - (b) The equity of services offered to at-risk children and youth with respect to gender within the areas of physical and sexual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse and services offered to runaway and homeless children and youth.

Although HB 3576, first introduced in 1993, has not yet been enacted, it has helped to raise the awareness of the legislature and the public. The committee's lobbying efforts persuaded the legislature to allocate funds for ongoing data collection on gender equity in state-funded services to young people in contact with or at high risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system and to fund one pilot program to serve girls in contact with the juvenile justice system (V. Merck, personal communication, August 30, 1995).

Ongoing monitoring of the services available to girls promotes equitable allocation both of the variety of services available and the funding that they require. This initiative provides a model for both government and private organizations working to ensure that girls not only are served but are served well.

## **Conclusion**

Increasing numbers of young women are becoming involved with the juvenile justice system daily. While the majority of them are arrested for status offenses, notably running away, more and more young women are engaging in violent crime. It is essential that the girls' needs are incorporated into the workings of the juvenile justice system from policy making all the way down to services and program implementation. It is not enough to provide programs and services that were designed for boys for female offenders.

Public policy needs to reflect the admission that female juvenile offenders have unique needs. Research studies on juvenile delinquency in general need to include females in their population samples. Studies that focus solely on female offenders and risk factors for female delinquency need to be conducted. Policies acknowledging that girls have special needs and strengths are a necessary starting point in ensuring that adequate resources are dedicated to the provision of gender-specific services and programs. Research information will assist further in determining what constitutes effective, efficient programming for juvenile female offenders.

It is imperative that these young women receive equitable programming and services. Equity does not imply that juvenile female offenders will receive the same amount or types of services as juvenile male offenders, but that they will receive services that are designed specifically for them and that meet their particular needs (Albrecht, 1995). The policy recommendations listed below offer suggestions for how to achieve this goal of equitable programming and how to cross the bridge from theory into practice.





## **Expand research on young women.**

The dearth of research on girls in and out of the juvenile justice system helps to maintain misguided stereotypes and inadequate programming. Research on juvenile offenders should include significant samples of girls so as to identify and address the impact of gender on girls' life situations, behaviors, strengths and needs.

To prevent girls and young women from becoming involved in the juvenile justice system we need to know which girls are likely to become involved in the system. Efforts to predict which young people are likely to engage in the riskiest behavior, based on early childhood behavior, have proved only moderately successful for boys and even less so for girls. This suggests both that factors important in predicting girls' risky behavior (e.g., a history of abuse) need to be included in models and that prevention efforts may be particularly important for girls.

## **Promote gender specific instead of gender stereotyped interventions.**

Girls are individuals and need to be treated as such. Some girls' interests and talents lie in areas traditionally considered female, other girls' interests and talents do not. Efforts need to be made to ensure that girls are familiar with both traditional and nontraditional career options. What all girls need is an understanding of how to prepare for interesting, well-paying work and educational and practical opportunities that will help them reach their goals. Empowering young women and preparing them for a positive future must be a key priority in prevention, treatment and intervention.

## **Focus on risk-based prevention and early intervention.**

It is far easier and far less costly in both monetary and human terms to prevent problems before they occur or to intervene as soon as they are discovered than to wait until a girl is in serious trouble (Wilson and Howell, 1994; Howell, 1995). The best interventions are those that strengthen families, helping parents access skills and resources to bring up their children in a safe, nurturing and stimulating home and community. Interventions need to begin early and to include families as well as individual children; however, well-designed interventions can also be effective with girls whose involvement with the juvenile justice system has already been considerable (Chaiken, 1995; Wilson and Howell, 1993; Howell, 1995).

## **Tailor treatment to fit individual needs.**

Recognition of girls' common problems should not obscure awareness of individual differences—such as race, culture and sexual orientation—that may influence individual girls' conduct and their responsiveness to particular treatment programs. Young women also need access to a wide variety of programs and placements in order to address their specific needs, such as drug addiction, learning disability or teen motherhood. Substance abuse programs specifically designed for girls are in short supply. There are few programs for pregnant and parenting girls in the juvenile justice system (Bergsmann, 1994). Many of the best programs will accept teen mothers for treatment only if they place their children in the custody of another.

## **Create more alternatives to abusive home situations.**

Girls' contact with the juvenile justice system is often precipitated by their attempts to escape abuse at home. Young women need access to a continuum of placement options in which their safety can be assured while they address the issues that brought them into the system and the resources they will need to leave it. Many of these options can be nonpunitive or nonsecure, including placement with trusted relatives or friends, foster care in private or group homes or residential substance abuse treatment programs.

## **Stop differential treatment of female juvenile offenders.**

The practice of “bootstrapping”—charging young people with a delinquent offense for violation of a court order—should be immediately reviewed with an eye toward abolishing it. Evidence strongly suggests that bootstrapping results in harsh and inequitable treatment of girls charged with status offenses (Federle and Chesney-Lind, 1992; Table 4).

## **Prepare girls for a positive future.**

While girls' offenses should not be ignored, intervention and treatment should focus on girls' needs. An encounter with the juvenile justice system benefits a girl—and her community—only if she leaves the system better able to live a healthy, productive and law-abiding life than she was before she entered it.







**A**lthough most juvenile justice programs focus on boys, a growing number of prevention and intervention programs focus on the specific needs and strengths of girls. These include local and national programs, funded publicly and privately, providing services and support along the spectrum from prevention through intervention, treatment and follow-up.

Promising programs for girls share the philosophy of positive youth development. That is, they begin from the premise that the young people they serve, rather than needing to be “fixed,” deserve the knowledge, skills and support to become contributing and valued members of the community. Most serve young women exclusively, in order to provide literal or figurative “safe space” where girls can work on who they want to become without being overwhelmed by the needs and sheer numbers of young men. All take young women seriously.

The programs described in this section represent some promising approaches for young women at high risk. They have been selected to represent insofar as possible the populations of girls and young women in risky situations and the variety of programs that can make a difference. A more complete list of noteworthy programs serving girls and young women appears in the Appendix.

## **National Programs**

### **Girls Incorporated<sup>SM</sup>**

Affiliates and outreach programs of Girls Incorporated (formerly Girls Clubs of America) offer programming to 350,000 young people yearly at over 900 program sites. The organization primarily serves girls and young women ages six through 18. Many Girls Incorporated members live in risky situations, such as neighborhoods characterized by low income and high crime rates.

All Girls Incorporated affiliates provide a variety of opportunities that encourage young women to develop their skills and interests and to plan for interesting and productive futures. Research-based national programs are available to all affiliates and are widely implemented. Three programs most pertinent to young women living in risky environments are Friendly PEERsuasion<sup>SM</sup>, which helps young women avoid substance use by providing accurate information, practicing refusal skills and developing healthy, fun ways to reduce stress and teaching what they have learned to younger children; Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy, with age-appropriate components that encourage parent-daughter communication about sexuality and other difficult subjects, provide girls with the information and skills they need to postpone sexual activity without losing friends, engage girls in life planning and provide access to health care, including reproductive health care; and Operation SMART<sup>SM</sup>, which provides engaging, hands-on activities in science, mathematics and relevant technologies to encourage young women to

persist in these areas vital to everyday life and interesting, well-paying careers. The Teen Connections<sup>SM</sup> program, recently implemented, helps girls to access health and educational services and to address issues of transportation and personal safety. In addition, most affiliates offer a wide array of locally-developed programs spanning the program areas of Careers and Life Planning, Health and Sexuality, Leadership and Community Action, Sports and Adventure, Self-Reliance and Life Skills, and Culture and Heritage.

Several affiliates have developed programs specifically designed for young women at high risk of involvement with or already involved with the juvenile justice system. Two of these programs are described below.

### **Girls Incorporated of Alameda County (San Leandro, CA) - *F.U.T.U.R.E.***

At Girls Incorporated of Alameda County, graduates of Taking Care of Business<sup>SM</sup>, the life planning component of the Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy program, decided to take action to help other young women avoid such risky situations and behaviors as substance abuse, physical and sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, early pregnancy and gang involvement. These teen women, who named themselves F.U.T.U.R.E. (Females Unifying Teens to Undertake Responsible Education), spoke from experience: half had been suspended from school for violent behavior, most were survivors of sexual abuse and at the age of 17 one out of five were mothers. Like the young women they planned to serve, about three-quarters were young women of color. With adult support but through their own efforts, they planned and carried out a survey of the critical needs of young women in their community, culminating with a Health Summit at which they presented their findings. They also recruited other young women to continue the program, with an expanded emphasis on the role of cultural and ethnic identity in making life decisions. F.U.T.U.R.E. provides participants with a continuing positive peer group, a sense of their ability to identify and challenge barriers to their success and the realization that they can help to make a difference in their communities. They also experience relationships with adults who hold high but realistic expectations for them and are willing to guide and advise them while letting them learn through experience.

### **Girls Incorporated of Greater Harrisburg - *Business Entrepreneur Project***

With funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, the Business Entrepreneur Project of Girls Incorporated of Greater Harrisburg helps young women develop job skills and legitimate sources of income, initially through stipended employment. In this diversion program, teens who have had a first contact with the juvenile justice system or are on probation participate in a business curriculum. After conducting a needs survey, participant teams develop plans for their own businesses. An advisory board composed of community businesspeople approves the plans and serves as a resource. The teams then set up and operate their businesses in the real world.

Initially the Business Entrepreneur Project was a stand-alone program. But when evaluations revealed that participants were not making progress in other areas of their lives, Girls Incorporated of Greater Harrisburg adopted a more holistic approach. Teen women involved in the Business Entrepreneur Project now participate in individual and group counseling, educational remediation and training in social skills, including anger management and impulse control. They also participate in age-appropriate Girls Incorporated programming, such as Friendly PEERsuasion<sup>SM</sup>, Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy and sports and fitness activities. These activities provide important knowledge and skills. Perhaps more important, they give participants a chance to interact with other teen women on an equal footing, encouraging a positive peer group and minimizing the stigmatization that can come from participating in entirely separate programming.

## **Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. - *Girl Scouts Beyond Bars***

Girl Scouts Beyond Bars is a prevention program, serving adult women in custody and their daughters ages five through 18. Girls whose mothers are incarcerated are at high risk in many respects (Acoca and Austin, 1996; Mann, 1984). Having a relative in jail is stigmatizing in any case and even less socially acceptable when that person is not only female, but one's mother. In many cases mother-daughter relationships were strained or unhealthy before the mothers were incarcerated; the necessary transfer of custody compounds the problem of establishing appropriate relationships. Infrequent contact and time and security constraints make it even more difficult for mothers and daughters to know what to say to each other or to do with each other when they are together.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. responded to these needs with the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars program. In an increasing number of cities, local Girl Scout staff and volunteers work with daughters and mothers to enjoy many of the benefits of Girl Scouting. At regular intervals volunteers transport the girls to the facility where their mothers are incarcerated. Mothers, daughters and volunteers participate in Girl Scout activities appropriate to the ages of the girls involved and time and space available. These activities give both adults and children a chance to do something fun or challenging together and help to structure time and interaction. In addition, the seriousness with which young girls make their Promise and accept the Girl Scout Laws, including trying one's best to be honest and to keep promises, encourages some adult participants to consider their own actions.

Girl participants, besides being reassured about the environment in which their mothers live (some girls imagined that their mothers were kept in chains), have the experience of doing something with their mothers that can be freely shared with the outside world. Their meetings behind bars alternate with more traditional meetings, allowing the girls to participate in activities not possible in the prison setting and together with other Girl Scouts. In some cases Girl Scout leader training is offered to mothers, providing them with information about child development and behavior management while reaffirming them as adults, mothers and members of a community.

## **Local Programs**

### **The City, Inc. Community Intervention for Girls (Minneapolis, MN)**

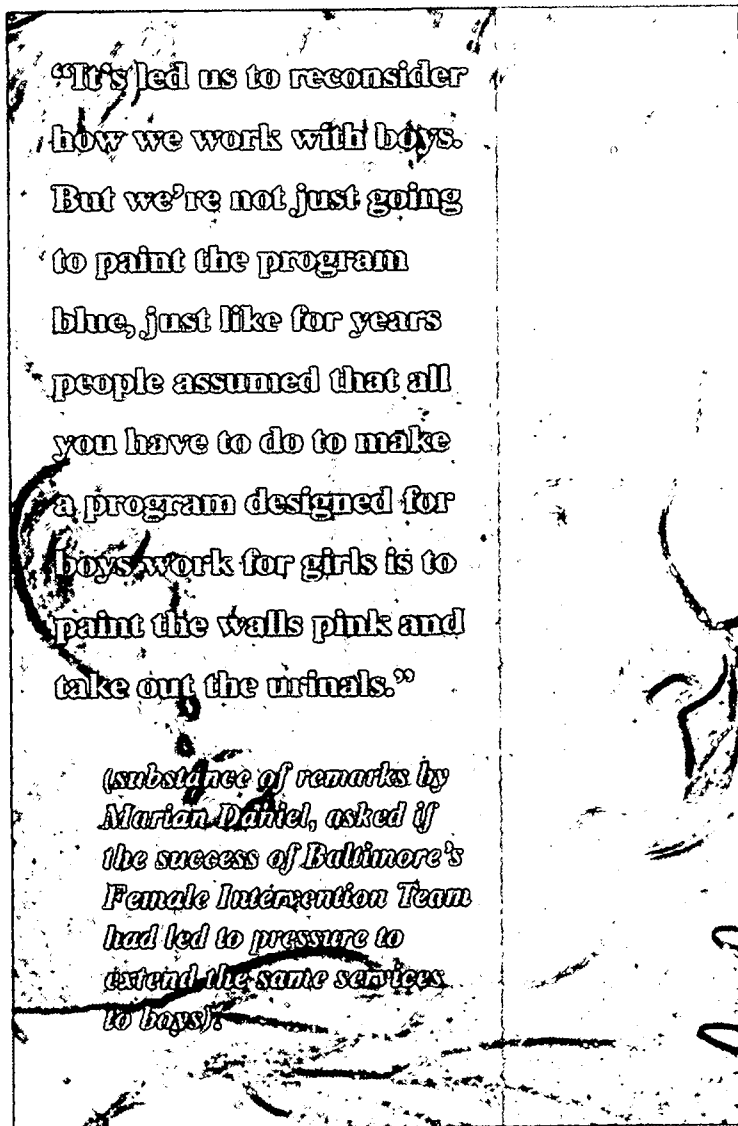
The City, Inc. defines itself as a "crossroads place" providing opportunities for learning, healing and advocacy. The City provides a comprehensive range of services which address issues including substance abuse, employability, family relationships, basic education and literacy, day-to-day survival skills, pregnancy, parenting, urban poverty and involvement in the criminal justice system. Treatment and intervention programs based on cultural and traditional practices involve young girls and their families. Programs such as *Kupona Ni' Uhuru* (Healing is Freedom) and *Oshki Bug* (New Leaf) are based on healing practices from the African-American and Native-American cultures, representing the cultures of most of the young women ages 13 through 20 served by The City. Ninety percent of the young women served have a chemically dependent parent, and over half are chemically dependent themselves. Primary funders are the state of Minnesota and United Way; The City also receives some federal and municipal funding.

The City's program for young women is a day program with a drop-in center. After an intake interview to determine if the program fits the needs of the young woman she participates in an orientation and is given a service plan. Basic services for each girl include one-on-one counseling, group and family therapy, advocacy and substance abuse treatment. There is an alternative school on site for girls who cannot attend public schools and a group home for girls who may need more intensive services. Average stay in the program is a year. A transition program utilizes advocacy workers to help participants move back into the public school system and into alternative living situations for those who cannot return home.

Participants in The City are required to become involved in community service and events that increase their attachment to their culture. For example, Native-American teen women are encouraged to participate in traditional rituals such as pow-wows and dance circles; African-American teen women visit historically Black colleges. In addition, The City works with community organizations that provide well supervised and culturally appropriate programs that empower girls to become productive, responsible members of the community.

## Female Intervention Team (Baltimore, MD)

The Female Intervention Team (FIT) is responsible for supervision and treatment planning for all young women adjudicated delinquent or in need of services in Baltimore. Before the institution of FIT in late 1992, individual counselors had no special training for working with the two or three young women in their case loads. Many complained that working with girls was far more difficult than working with boys. FIT began with ten female and two male counselors who volunteered to work with girls only, enabling them to focus on the special strengths and needs of girls and to offer programs to adequate numbers of girls. These counselors participate in ongoing training in working with young women.



FIT works with young women ages 11 through 18. Almost all are African-American and come from low-income, single parent families. Most have been sexually abused and act out sexually; most have also fallen behind in school. Typically clients have been truant from school and have been adjudicated delinquent for assault. Based on an assessment of her particular needs, each client is assigned to the most appropriate case manager. In turn the case manager assigns her to groups that address her needs and follow her progress.

Activities sponsored by FIT take place in an area designed, in the words of founder Marian Daniel, to "make it look as if girls might want to come." The inviting setting includes toys and furniture for young children; an infant and toddler program run by FIT staff helps clients practice parenting skills. Other FIT-run programs include family counseling for teens, their parents and, in some groups, grandparents, and tutoring. Guest speakers recruited from the community share their stories, showing clients that people like themselves have overcome abuse and other difficult life circumstances. A Rites of Passage program gives older teens a positive introduction to womanhood and opportunities for community service. A graduation ceremony and certificate of completion provide tangible proof that clients can reach a valued goal. Most programs are designed for eight to 15 girls; even if a few girls do not come there are usually enough in attendance so that the program can take place. In all programming counselors strive to provide a "nurturing but firm" environment.

FIT also takes full advantage of programs and activities available in the Baltimore area, both to make best use of limited funding and to involve girls in activities they can continue after they are released from the court's jurisdiction. Frequently used resources include programs offered through local hospitals, the Baltimore Urban League, church-based and secular mentoring programs and Girl Scouting. FIT is also active in encouraging the development of new community-based activities. In addition, clients participate in a wide variety of recreational activities. Aftercare is provided through these community support systems, although former clients are welcome to keep in touch with FIT staff.

FIT case managers, as probation officers who are thoroughly familiar with their clients, are well placed to make recommendations to the juvenile court on the continuing disposition of a young woman's case. The case management approach has meant that fewer young women need to be placed out of their homes; those who must be return home sooner. Similarly, before FIT young women were routinely kept on probation until they reached age 18 and left the jurisdiction of the court. Now case managers are able to go back to the court and to present evidence of their clients' accomplishments and ability to return safely to the community, so that few young women remain on probation more than a year (M. Daniel, personal communication, August 25, 1995).

## **Female Offender Program Kalamazoo County Juvenile Court**

Through the collaborative efforts of 14 community agencies and a planning committee and funding from the state of Michigan and Kalamazoo County, since 1988 the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Court has provided selected young female offenders with the opportunity to participate in challenging and appropriately risky activities and support in taking control of their actions and lives. Young women ages 13 through 17 from a variety of backgrounds are referred through the juvenile court system. Many of these young women are survivors of physical or sexual abuse and are involved in a variety of self-defeating behaviors; virtually all come from homes where substance use is a problem. In the short term, the program is designed to help young women get off probation; in the long term, to help them mature into independent, self-supporting, law-abiding adults.

The program begins with a three-day outdoor experience, immediately addressing issues of self-reliance and survival. Structured initiatives, ropes courses and climbing activities require effort and commitment from each participant, fostering group problem solving and conflict resolution. The group building and self-disclosure facilitated by this intense experience carry over into the next part of the program, 12 weeks of day treatment. Group counseling sessions address such issues as self-esteem, anger management, trust of self and others, giving and receiving feedback and responsibility. In 1992 the program was expanded to a year-round community-based treatment program, providing continuing support by involving girls in community service and a series of workshops as a support mechanism.

## **First Avenue West (Des Moines, IA)**

First Avenue West is the only program in the state of Iowa and one of the few anywhere in the United States to develop and provide services specifically for female sexual offenders. Program objectives include assisting teen women in developing and maintaining a non-abusive life style through treatment focused first on inappropriate sexual behavior and subsequently on issues of victimization. Clients acknowledge and accept responsibility for their own behavior while learning to break patterns of victimization in order to live safely in their communities. Participants in this residential program, funded by Children and Families of Iowa, are between the ages of 12 and 17 1/2; their current behaviors place them at greater risk if they remain in the community. Ten young women can be served at one time in a staff-secure setting.

The program initially dealt with issues of young women as victims of abuse. The number of young women who disclosed their own sexually abusive behavior revealed the need for a female sexual offender program. Clients receive group therapy, family therapy, individual therapy and substance abuse counseling; they also participate in family social skill groups, recreation and educational opportunities. Each client has an individualized treatment plan that includes peer input on how to achieve her goals in order to be discharged.

The Des Moines public schools provide individualized education for each client, including home-bound education whenever necessary for treatment and safety reasons. Because of the stigma attached to sexual offenses, there has been a concerted effort to work with school officials and community leaders to integrate clients appropriately into the activities of their peers. Girls who are placed in transitional living situations are monitored by a case worker and are encouraged to maintain communication with program staff. Grant moneys are available to help participants continue their education where appropriate.

## **Harriet Tubman Residential Center (Auburn, NY)**

The Harriet Tubman Residential Center, a program of the New York State Division for Youth, serves teen women ages 13 through 17 from diverse backgrounds who have been adjudicated delinquent. These young women are referred through the court system and other agencies.

In order to provide programs that successfully address the needs of young women in the juvenile justice system, program developers reviewed the literature on developmental theory and sought input from experienced staff in a variety of agencies and facilities providing services to juvenile offenders. The Center, which opened in August of 1994, is a non-secure residential facility. Its gender equity focus addresses how girls view the world and empowers them to define their roles in society rather than having the roles defined for them.

All New York State Division for Youth programs offer the same basic components; however, the Center's focus on women's issues and development is carried throughout the variety of services it offers: education and vocational training; physical and mental health services, including substance abuse treatment, victimization issues and reproductive health services; mediation, parenting and independent living skills; spiritual guidance and recreation. Some activities include directed volunteer work. Participants also conduct research on women in history, utilizing the on-site women's library and resource center.

The mental health counseling component is based on a "circle of completion." This holistic program encourages girls to look at issues of social responsibility and tolerance for differences. Participants strive to understand and value their life experiences and to use what they have learned in positive ways as they return to their communities.

## **Marycrest Euphrasia Center (Independence, OH)**

The Euphrasia Center, funded by the Ohio Department of Youth Services, is one of the few residential centers in the country that is licensed for female offenders who are mothers to have their children live on site with them during treatment. The center's service population includes young women ages 13 through 21 who have committed felony-level offenses and who are pregnant and/or parenting. All come from urban areas; most are African American.

Marycrest has provided service to girls at high risk for 125 years. All of its programs emphasize the delivery of family-focused, culturally competent services with a strong empirical basis. The Euphrasia Center program uses a curriculum that addresses the unique needs of African-American parents as members of families and of communities. The program model, based on research conducted at the National Institutes of Health, strives to address family-based risk factors that are strongly associated with the onset of delinquency in order to provide a

healthy alternative to young women. The comprehensive program is designed to help young women succeed at home and in their communities. Residents participate in PREPARE, a curriculum evaluated as effective in reducing verbal and physical aggression, increasing self-regard and diminishing antisocial behaviors. The residential program also includes health services, including medical services, individual and group counseling and family therapy, substance abuse services and programs for survivors of abuse; parent effectiveness training, an on-site school, employment readiness and vocational skills development; a mentoring program; and an on-site nursery.

The framework of the program emphasizes the successful reintegration of participants into the home and community. This process is facilitated by transition counselors and mentors who monitor participants' home environments and educational and vocational objectives and help them to connect with existing community resources.

The Euphrasia Center is in its second year of operation. A comprehensive evaluation methodology has been developed to monitor efficacy and facilitate replication of the program.

### **P.A.C.E. Center for Girls Inc. (Jacksonville, FL)**

P.A.C.E. is a gender-sensitive, non-profit, non-residential, community-based program providing comprehensive education and therapeutic intervention services to troubled girls. The mission of P.A.C.E. is to improve the quality of life for at-risk girls between the ages of twelve and eighteen. P.A.C.E. enables these young women to further their education, build self-esteem and develop personal, social and family relationship skills. Services provided by P.A.C.E. include offering accredited high school completion courses and basic skills education, developing and implementing a career education plan for each participant, preventing substance abuse through education and counseling and promoting cultural awareness. Students attending P.A.C.E. participate in an educational program, life management classes, counseling and community service.

Currently over 180 young women are served on a daily basis with approximately 400 students served annually. Admission to P.A.C.E. is voluntary and there is no cost for services. The length of participation can range from four months to one year or longer depending on individual needs.

### ***Peem Tsheej Nthais Hluas (Struggle for Success for Young Women)* (St. Paul, MN)**

The Hmong are the largest and fastest growing Asian ethnic group in Minnesota. Hmong-American teen women face multiple challenges in finding their place within the traditions of their culture and in the big city, as adolescents, as young women and as members of the first generation of their families to grow up in the United States. *Peem Tsheej Nthais Hluas (Struggle for Success for Young Women)* uses a unique culture-specific approach to support Hmong girls and families through Americanization and adolescence. The focus is on keeping families intact while helping girls live in two different cultures and providing support for educational and vocational choices.

Struggle for Success for Young Women is an early intervention program originally developed as a diversion to gang involvement. Funding is provided by the state of Minnesota and city of St. Paul. Participants are ethnic Hmong teen women between the ages of 12 and 21 living in the urban St. Paul area. They are involved with the juvenile justice system or are at high risk of involvement. Most girls are referred by families or friends; some are referred by probation officers.

Struggle for Success for Young Women provides a continuum of activities and services designed to empower young women while affirming them as members of their families and the larger Hmong-American community. These include recruitment, intake and assessment services; case management services; enrichment activities and recreational and social activities. Culturally-based programming includes both traditional Hmong activities, such as dance and music lessons and performances and community events; and providing resources for self-reliance and independence through guest speakers, employment training, job referrals and educational support. The day program and drop-in center are highly visible in the Hmong community and located so that they are easily accessible to participants.

## **PIVOT (Partners in Vocational Opportunity Training) (Portland, OR)**

PIVOT (Partners in Vocational Opportunity Training) is a joint effort of the Portland (Oregon) Public Schools and Job Corps and receives state and Job Corps funding. This non-residential program provides intensive services in the areas of academic and vocational education, case management, health services, pre-employment training, parenting skills and behavior management to parenting young women on public assistance. Participants are ages 17 through 21 and come from a variety of backgrounds.

Program logistics are designed to offer participants the “best chance for change.” All educational and support services are provided at a centralized location. Van transportation and bus passes are provided to participants, and child care and medical services are available on site. GED classes are augmented by computer-assisted instruction. All participants take two or more semesters of business skills and receive career counseling.

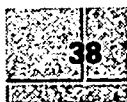
After participants are placed in jobs or enter into advanced training or education, transition specialists continue to assist them with practical application of the survival and work skills that will keep them in the work force. Resources available in the aftercare component, called “HOW To,” include access to safe and affordable housing, health care benefits and practice in budgeting and self-management. An evaluation conducted by Job Corps found that 90 percent of participants who complete the program are placed in jobs.

## **Sakonnet House (Providence, RI)**

Sakonnet House provides a protective and supportive transitional living situation for girls ages 11 through 15 who have been removed from homes considered to be unsafe. Residents are referred through the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families and come from urban areas. The program is funded by the state of Rhode Island.

Sakonnet House uses a program model specifically designed for female adolescents, based on intensive group therapy with a focus on mediation skills. All services and activities at Sakonnet House are designed to increase self esteem, improve self-protection and assertiveness skills, provide practice in critical thinking skills and help young women learn how to build healthy relationships. As residents acquire these skills they are able to move to a less restrictive setting and begin planning for and moving towards a more productive and enjoyable future.

During the orientation phase, the staff works closely with each girl in order to convey a sense of safety, support and acceptance. The safe, attractive and homelike environment (a rambling house in a rural area) adds to the feeling of security and “time out” that helps residents decrease anxiety and acting-out behavior and encourages respect for





persons, property and above all themselves. Opportunities to attend cultural events allow these young women to practice behavior management and social skills in low-risk settings, experience a variety of healthy and potentially enjoyable activities and learn about a variety of occupations and role models.

Treatment services available on site include intake, assessment and orientation; treatment planning; therapeutic milieu and behavior management; individual, group and family therapy; psychological testing; psychiatric evaluation; recreational and vocational programming; and a community mentoring program. After leaving Sakonnet House, former residents have access to the continuum of care available through Family Service, Inc. including therapeutic foster care, supervised semi-independent living, respite care, community-based mental health services, outreach and aftercare services.

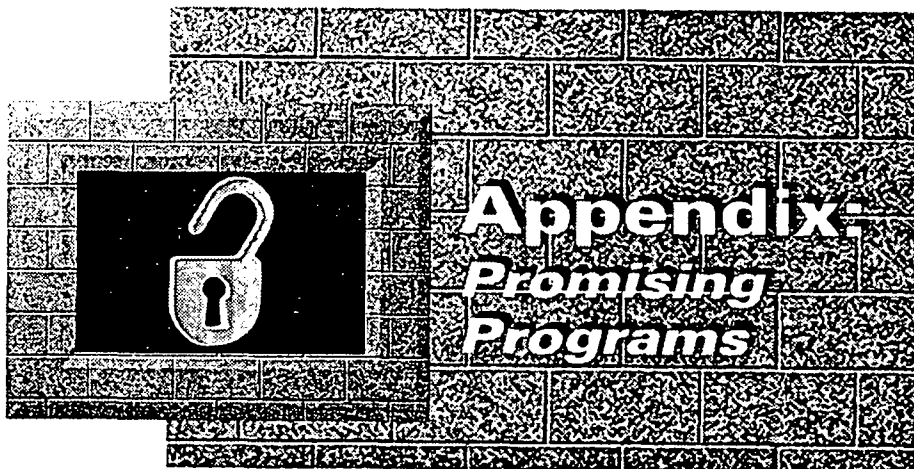
## **Sistas' (Washington, D.C.)**

This twelve-week, hands-on program provides practical survival and life skills to African-American teen women (ages 12-17) living in low-income urban settings. Over half of the participants come from single parent homes. Participants are self-referred; many learn of the program through recommendations from earlier participants. The program, structured as a rite of passage, ultimately strives to expose false belief systems that underlie poor decision making and destructive behavior patterns and to present positive and realistic alternatives.

Sistas' is funded through private donations and a grant from the Washington, D.C. Community Prevention Partnership, which is currently evaluating the program. The program's comprehensive approach covers topics from personal hygiene and etiquette to handling personal finances and career planning. Programming includes guest lectures, exercise drills, practical assignments, field trips and panel discussion. Sistas' includes a mentoring program as well as weekly presentations by young African-American women who are leaders in the community.

Participants are guided in developing their own logical approach to decision making and experience a sense of intellectual continuity. They receive intensive follow-up for six to eight months, facilitated through the school system. This service provides them with a support system through which they can continue to develop skills that will enable them to avoid compounding the very real hardships of their situations and make responsible life choices for a brighter future.





***Abraxas Center for Adolescent Females***

437 Turrett Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
412-441-5233 FAX 412-441-1308  
Mary Ann Turkal, Clinical Director

*Alternative to incarceration for teen women, most chemically dependent and survivors of sexual abuse. Addresses multiple issues.*

***Adelphoi Village Group Home***

354 Main Street  
Latrobe, PA 15650  
412-537-3052 FAX 412-539-7060  
Deborah Campbell, Program Director

*One component of a variety of day and residential services. Most clients are from low-income, rural families. Programs serve girls and boys.*

***Bridge Over Troubled Waters***

47 West Street  
Boston, MA 02111  
617-423-9575 FAX 617-482-5459  
Barbara Whelan, Executive Director

*This program provides intensive street outreach through a van providing medical services 24 hours a day to youth living on the street. Other services provided include reconciliation/runaway services, education, pre-employment education, counseling and transitional living for young mothers and their children.*

***Business Entrepreneur Project  
Girls Incorporated of Greater Harrisburg***

500 North 17th Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17103  
717-232-4898 FAX 717-236-0608  
Angela Brooks, Executive Director

*Described in text.*

***Cane River Children's Services***

P.O. Box #2453  
Natchitoches, LA 71457  
318-352-9349 FAX 318-357-9468  
Jennifer Johnson Graham, Executive Director

*Intensive, long-term program for teens, virtually all survivors of abuse. Emphases for female clients include skill-building for self-sufficiency and addressing personal needs versus societal expectations.*

***Christian County Day Treatment***

4400 Lafayette Road  
Stadium Complex  
Hopkinsville, KY 42240  
502-887-1147 FAX 502-889-6561  
Sanda Robertson, Counseling Supervisor

*Day program that keeps young women in their homes and communities. Participants referred by the juvenile court. Originally coed, now female only.*

**Circle C Youth and Family Services**

2121 Noblestown Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15205  
412-937-1605 FAX 412-937-1236  
Paul Guilot, Intake Manager

*Mixed-sex and single-sex group homes offering programming based on the Young Life model of ministry. Residents come from a wide variety of backgrounds and may be referred by court, as offenders or in need of services, or enter voluntarily.*

**The City, Inc. Community Intervention for Girls**

1545 East Lake Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
612-724-3689 FAX 612-724-0692  
Richard Garland, Vice President

*Described in text.*

**Echo Glen Children's Center**

33010 SE 99th Street  
Snoqualmie, WA 98065  
206-831-1405 FAX 206-831-1320  
Shana Hormann, Program Director

*Secure residential program for young people ages 12-21 who have committed serious offenses. Developmental program balances dealing with past history and taking responsibility for actions. Continuing struggle to serve young women well in a mixed-sex program.*

**Expanded Life Choices  
Stearns County Community Corrections**

705 Courthouse Square Room 445  
St. Cloud, MN 55303  
320-656-6160 FAX 320-656-6161  
Steven Holmquist, Director

*A prevention program supporting young women at high risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system, developed from a program for adult women.*

**Female Intervention Team**

321 Fallsway  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410-333-4564 FAX 410-333-6687  
Marian Daniel, Assistant Area Director

*Described in text.*

**Female Offender Program  
Kalamazoo County Juvenile Court**

1400 Gull Road  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001  
616-385-6000 FAX 616-385-8588  
Kathy Flack, Probation Officer

*Described in text.*

**First Avenue West  
Children and Families of Iowa**

1111 University Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
515-289-2272 FAX 515-289-2272  
Rita Furneau, Program Director

*Described in text.*

**F.U.T.U.R.E. (Females Unifying Teens to Undertake Responsible Education)  
Girls Incorporated of Alameda County**

13666 East 14th Street  
San Leandro, CA 94578  
510-357-5515 FAX 510-357-5112  
Melanie Hope, Program Coordinator

*Described in text.*

**Girl Scouts of Central Maryland**

730 West 40th Street  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
410-358-9711 FAX 410-358-9918  
Robin Gamble, Field Manager

*Pilot site for the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars program described in text.*



**Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.**

420 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10018-2702  
212-852-8000 FAX 212-852-6509  
Sylvia Barsion, National Director

*Provides a wide variety of programming, emphasizing life skills, values and service to others, for girls and young women ages 5 through 17. Targeted programming for girls at high risk includes the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars program described in text.*

**Girls Incorporated of Metropolitan Dallas**

2040 Empire Central  
Dallas, TX 75235  
214-654-4530 FAX 214-350-8115  
Ruth Collins, Director of Field Services

*Provides a wide variety of outstanding programming for inner-city girls and young women. In the best Girls Incorporated tradition, members participate in age-appropriate activities that build skills, increase knowledge and encourage personal development and lifelong learning for a productive and enjoyable future.*

**Girls Just Want To Have Fun  
Marion County Juvenile Court**

1440 Mt. Vernon Avenue  
Marion, Ohio 43302  
614-389-5476 FAX 614-389-2060  
Julie Heil, Juvenile Probation Officer

*A diversion program for teen women ages 12-17, providing knowledge, skills and enjoyable activities in areas of particular concern to women (e.g., violence prevention and self-defense, job skills and career planning, body image and self-respect).*

**Girls Ranch**

930 E. Drahner, P.O. Box 9  
Oxford, MI 48371  
810-628-2561 FAX 810-628-3080  
Janet McPeak, Executive Director

*Day program for teen women, focusing on education, health and sexuality and women's roles and expectations. Participants help set their treatment goals.*

**Harriet Tubman Residential Center**

6752 Pine Ridge Rd.  
Auburn, NY 13021  
315-255-3481 FAX 315-255-3485  
Ines Nieves Evans, Creator/Executive Director

*Described in text.*

**Marycrest  
Euphrasia Center**

7800 Brookside Road  
Independence, OH 44131  
216-524-5280 FAX 216-524-2127  
Dr. Paul McKenzie, Executive Director

*Described in text.*

**P.A.C.E. Center for Girls, Inc.**

100 Laura Street, 10th Floor  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
904-358-0555 FAX 904-358-0660  
LaWanda Ravoira, State Director

*Described in text.*

**Pathways**

**Lake Land College**

5001 Lake Land Blvd.  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
217-234-5262 FAX 217-258-6459  
Susan Fleffner, Administrator

*Day program in which teens (female and male) contract to complete high school or GED and employability plans*

**Peem Tsheej Nthais Hluas/Struggle for  
Success for Young Women**

Hmong American Partnership for Hmong Girls  
1600 University Ave., Suite 12  
St. Paul, MN 55104  
612-642-9601 FAX 612-603-8399  
Laura Schlick, Program Director

*Described in text.*

***PIVOT (Partners in Vocational  
Opportunities Training)***  
2508 N.E. Everett Street  
Portland, OR 97232  
503-280-6170 FAX 503-280-6168  
Anna Street, Program Director

*Described in text.*

***Sakonnet House  
Family Services, Inc.***  
55 Hope Street  
Providence, RI 02906  
401-331-1472 FAX 401-331-8272  
Margaret Holland, Program Director

*Described in text.*

***Second Chance Girls  
Youth Service Project***  
3942 W. North Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60647  
312-772-6270 FAX 312-772-8755  
Mary Scott Boria, Associate Executive Director

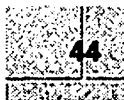
*Helps young Latinas (ages 12-21) move away  
from gang involvement through life skill  
development and constructive community  
involvement.*

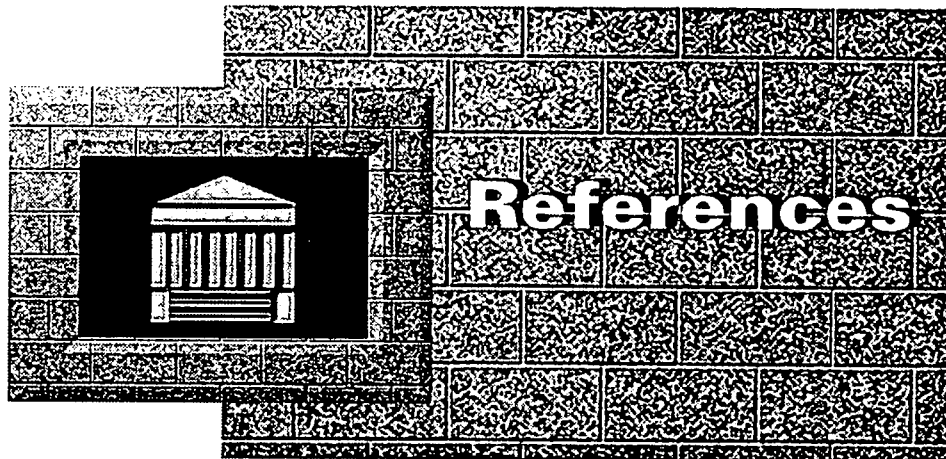
***Sistas'***  
7828 Allendale Drive  
Landover, MD 20785  
202-675-9175 FAX 202-675-9127  
Loretta Jones, Executive Director

*Described in text.*

***The Tower  
YWCA of the Capitol Area***  
624 Ninth Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
202-626-0700 FAX 202-347-7381  
Josephine Pamphille, Executive Director

*Group home for teen women, primarily status  
offenders. Emphasis on women as leaders.*





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**U.S. Department of Justice**

Office of Justice Programs  
*Office of Juvenile Justice and  
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*Washington, D.C. 20531*

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**Girls Incorporated<sup>SM</sup>**

**Headquarters**

30 East 33rd Street  
New York, NY 10016-5394  
Tel: (212) 689-3700  
Fax: (212) 683-1253  
E-mail: HN3578@handsnet.o

**National Resource Center**

441 West Michigan Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3233  
Tel: (317) 634-7546  
Fax: (317) 634-3024  
E-mail: HN3580@handsnet.o

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