192925

FINAL REPORT

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CENTER PROCESS AND PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES EVALUATION

SUBMITTED TO:

OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION
FOR GRANT #97-JN-FX-0002

BY
MADELINE WORDES, PH.D. AND THAO LE, MPH

APRIL 12, 2000

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
Headquarters Office 1970 Broadway, Suite 500 • Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 208-0500 • Fax (510) 208-0511
Midwest Office 426 S. Yellowstone Drive, Suite 250 • Madison, WI 53719
(608) 831-8882 • Fax (608) 831-6446

Acknowledgments

This evaluation would not have been possible without the openness of key leaders in each of the communities and the assistance provided to us by the assessment center staff members. The candor of these leaders will help inform the country about the pros and cons of the assessment center models. In the interests of providing service to young people at risk or involved with the juvenile justice system, they understood the task of sharing their knowledge and did so with no reservations. We would especially like to thank the liaisons in each of the sites for their kindness and helpfulness: Jennifer Mankey and Jennifer McClean in Denver, Gerard O'Hare, Tammy Sattler, George Mumma, and Lisa Steele in Jefferson County, Mike Boland, Bill Naylor, and Julie Bayse in Lee County, and Vickie Tanaka, Keith Bostick, Susan Zehel, and Dawn Peoples in Orlando. Again, thank you.

This project also greatly benefitted from the openness of the youths we interviewed and their parents or guardians. They shared with us a difficult time in their lives and we hope that we can use the information they provided to better the experiences of other youths in community assessment centers across the country.

Finally, this project would not have been undertaken and accomplished without the support and hard work of the people at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Shay Bilchik's foresight provided the impetus for evaluating this burgeoning phenomena of assessment centers. Eric Peterson's continuing guidance in evaluation matters was extremely helpful. Debbie Oldenettel's assistance in grounding the concept of a community assessment center into a viable model and assisting in guiding the evaluation was invaluable to the field and to us.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the national evaluation of Community Assessment Centers (CAC) sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The report was prepared by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) for the years 1997 through mid-year 1999. The evaluation covers four sites, two planning and two implementation/enhancement sites. The full report describes and assesses program implementation and preliminary outcomes and provides detailed site-specific reports.

Background

Several factors led to growing interest about CACs. These included fragmented and overburdened systems, long-term cycling within the justice system, high juvenile crime rates, lack of immediate and effective interventions, and large incarcerated populations. As CACs were being developed and planned across the country, little was known about the functioning and processes of this important development in the juvenile justice system. After a review of potential CAC programs in operation around the country, OJJDP developed a basic concept for a CAC. The concept centered on four key components: 1) a single point of entry for all youths at risk of entering the system, 2) immediate and comprehensive assessments, 3) a management information system (MIS), and 4) integrated case management.

In 1996, OJJDP initiated a Request For Proposal (RFP) to provide funding and technical assistance to sites wanting to develop or further develop their CACs. Four sites received funding: two planning sites in Lee County, Florida, and Denver County, Colorado, and two enhancement sites in Orange County, Florida, and Jefferson County, Colorado. OJJDP also initiated an RFP to fund an evaluation to describe the process of planning and implementation for CACs, as well as an investigation into preliminary outcomes. In addition, the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA) was selected to provide training and technical assistance to the four CAC grantees.

Although the CAC model seems promising as a core component of a comprehensive response to juvenile crime, there are critical issues that must be confronted in both the design and implementation of these programs. Process and design issues include integrity to the CAC concept, due process for juveniles, quality of services offered, collaboration and coordination among agencies, and quality and integrity of the management information system. In terms of outcome measures, key issues include client satisfaction, recidivism rates, detention and crime rates, and system changes (such as law enforcement time savings).

NCCD's Evaluation

NCCD began its evaluation of the four assessment centers in 1997, adopting a heuristic model to organize data collection and structure the analysis. The five components of this analytic model include context (all environmental forces in which a CAC operates); identification (the combination of techniques, procedures, and criteria used to identify, screen, assess, and refer juveniles to the CAC, and other services or sanctions); intervention (the full range of programs or system processing reforms utilized to meet the objectives of the CAC program); linkages (formal

and informal relationships and agreements that may hinder or help the establishment of a new CAC or modification of existing facilities), and goals (the measurable outcomes of the CAC, as defined by OJJDP and the CAC sites).

NCCD turned this analytic model into specific research questions. The questions were reviewed and refined by the advisory group, as well as by leaders at the program sites. These questions provided the guiding framework from which the data were collected.

Multiple data collection methods were used to gather the information needed to answer the research questions. These included: 1) gathering data and information from official records and reports to develop a profile of the four counties participating in the evaluation; 2) conducting interviews with key leaders at the beginning of the evaluation and twelve months later using an open-ended questionnaire; 3) conducting face-to-face interviews (using a structured questionnaire) with youths and face-to-face or telephone interview with parents at the time the youths were brought to the CAC, and six months afterwards (only in the two enhancement sites); 4) distributing surveys to individuals in various organizations involved in CAC operations but who were not interviewed in the key leader interviews (e.g., patrol officers and case managers); 5) conducting case file reviews on a random sample of cases in the two enhancement sites; and

6) running analyses on assessment, services, and recidivism on extracts from the enhancement sites' automated management information systems.

Site Summaries

Denver County and Lee County

Planning for and developing community assessment centers in the two planning demonstration sites, Denver County and Lee County, was a long process, involving many individuals and covering many issues. Both sites spent more than two years in the planning process.

The two planning sites were somewhat similar in general population size and youth population, but different in ethnic make-up, and political and juvenile justice climate. There were notable changes in system trends (i.e., arrests and dispositions) in both counties in the 1990s, indicating that the system was changing and an assessment center was viewed as a way to fulfill many needs.

Data from NCCD's interviews of key leaders indicated several reasons for developing a CAC. Many reasons centered on the rising problem of juvenile crime and the system's current deficiencies in handling delinquent and at-risk youths. Both sites saw the CAC as a way to bring more funding to youth services, more collaboration among agencies to reduce duplication of services, better information on which to base juvenile justice dispositions, and as an opportunity to go beyond the traditional domains of the juvenile justice system.

Both sites saw their systems as fragmented, disjointed, and lacking in effective prevention and intervention services. Fortunately, prior to CAC planning, both sites had an early start in the collaborative efforts. In Denver County, the Juvenile Justice Integrated Treatment Network brought together representatives from different agencies and organizations in a dialogue to create more comprehensive and integrated services for substance-abusing juvenile offenders. In Lee County, OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy to address serious, violent, and chronic juvenile delinquency brought various individuals together to work on a variety of juvenile justice issues.

In Lee County, the Deputy State Attorney and the Sheriff spearheaded the planning effort. The Sheriff brought everyone together, while the Deputy State Attorney kept the County Commissioners abreast of community support and issues around the CAC development. While the law enforcement, juvenile justice, and human service agencies involved in the planning process were relatively cohesive, there was some dissension from certain community members and some elected officials. The planning process continued for several years with ongoing discussions about the design, focus (intervention versus prevention), location, target population, and funding streams.

In Denver County, there was a planning/design team consisting of twenty members, which grew to include representatives from many facets of the community and different types of agencies. Relying on lessons learned from the planning process in developing The Network and integrated services for substance-abusing juvenile offenders, they intentionally kept the team that was charged with the actual design and implementation plan small and tightly defined. This team was to present its evolving plans to various stakeholders and collaborators. All decisions were made on a consensus-based decision model; everyone had to agree to the decision before moving on to the next issue. For the planning process, Denver County hired outside consultants to facilitate discussion, which proved valuable and effective.

Denver County and Lee County expressed common goals for the CACs. These goals were:

1) prevention of delinquency or further delinquency; 2) provision of comprehensive services for youths and their families and serving as a resource center for the community; 3) creation of a conduit to share information and improve communication among different agencies; 4) provision of a cost-effective response to juvenile crime; and 5) reduction of the amount of time between arrest and treatment intervention by expediting processing within the system.

Lee County experienced varying levels of support and buy-in from participating agencies and concerned parties on several issues. They encountered political resistance over the location of the property, the actual design (how large the CAC should be), costs, and ideology (prevention versus intervention). They expressed and stressed the critical role of the media in developing or hindering a community consensus for new programs. In contrast, getting buy-in, acceptance, and support from key leaders, stakeholders, and community members in Denver County went relatively smoothly.

Referrals to the CAC will come from several sources in both sites, although predominantly from law enforcement. Lee County plans that all arrested youths will be brought to the CAC and eventually the center will be open to "at-risk" youths as well. In Denver County, youths will not be transported to the CAC. Only families and youths that volunteer for services will be assessed. Both sites will have an early screening and assessment process, and in Denver County, a unique family strength focus. Additionally, each youth in Denver County will be assigned a family advocate who will provide support to the family and help them navigate through the system. Each youth in both sites will also be provided case management, which includes development of a treatment plan, referrals to appropriate services in the community, and ongoing monitoring and reassessment to evaluate whether needs have been met satisfactorily.

Both Denver County and Lee County are still in the process of determining what specific information and data elements will be available, accessible, and shared among the participating agencies. Both sites also have impressive plans for comprehensive and integrated MIS systems.

In terms of overall lessons learned, comments from key leaders in these two planning sites centered around three central concepts: 1) that planning should be collaborative and inclusive, 2) that it was best to start out small and have definite time lines, and 3) that it was important to clearly identify goals and educate new players and the public about them.

Jefferson County

Jefferson County is geographically large and diverse with urban, suburban, and rural areas. It is divided into thirteen municipalities. The population is largely White with about ten percent Hispanic and three percent African-American, American Indian, or Asian. This population is served by thirteen police departments and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department. During the few years preceding development of the CAC, the justice system was in flux, with more youths being admitted to detention, more petitions being filed, and more youths living in state commitment facilities, although arrests for serious crimes stayed relatively constant.

Key leaders offered many reasons for the attractiveness of the CAC and Jefferson County's need for one. These reasons included: 1) highly publicized juvenile crimes; 2) frustration due to lengthy delays in case processing in the DA's office and in the courts, resulting in lack of immediate sanctions; 3) detention overcrowding; 4) the sentiment that patrol officers were spending too much time babysitting youths; and 5) the need for more prevention services and services for at-risk youths.

The District Attorney took the lead and convened members from local law enforcement, the mental health department, human services, the schools, the court, and other county leaders at a Master Planning Initiative in 1994. This group later expanded to include additional community-based organizations, public agencies, and representatives from the community. With financial support from the members of the planning committees and the state, the CAC opened its doors in October 1995. A private non-profit agency called the Jefferson Center for Mental Health became the CAC's lead agency. It oversees the CAC at fiscal and managerial levels.

The CAC evolved into a non-secure facility that currently operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week. The center provides: 1) phone screens to detention, 2) assessments of needs, 3) referrals and diversion recommendations, 4) crisis/mental health counseling, 5) case management, 6) educational assessment and referrals, and 7) the Johnson School for expelled youths.

There are essentially three main goals of the Jefferson County CAC: 1) to eliminate overcrowding in juvenile detention centers, 2) to reduce the number of hours spent on juvenile processing by arresting officers, and 3) to provide a host of support mechanisms for youths and their families. While it is hard to measure accomplishment of the first goal since the CAC only accepts non-detainable youths, it is clear that the CAC has mostly met its goal of quicker case processing, with less police time needed and quicker decisions being made by the District Attorney. Mechanisms to achieve the third goal are ongoing. The assessment center establishes behavioral contracts with most youths as a major component of their case management process.

The overall response has been generally positive, as evidenced by the collaborative staffing at the CAC and responses to NCCD's organizational survey. The Jefferson County School District provides an educational liaison to the CAC; the DA's office provides a juvenile investigator/liaison; and Jefferson County Human Services and Jefferson Center for Mental Health maintain the Family Adolescent Crisis Team which is co-located on the CAC premises. Fiscal support, however, has been less stable. The Jefferson County CAC has relied on grants for basic core functions and existence. They are currently seeking more financial support and buy-in from municipal and county agencies for secure and stable funding, as financial constraints have been a major concern and potential barrier to full implementation.

The target population is such that any juvenile residing in Jefferson County qualifies for participation at the CAC, as well as juveniles picked up by law enforcement for offenses committed in Jefferson County or any juveniles referred by various justice or social service agencies. However, the CAC currently accepts only non-detainable youths. The CAC has two types of cases: transport or referrals. Transport cases are those brought in by law enforcement agencies; referral cases may be original transport cases returning for additional assessment and/or case management services or those referred by other agencies (e.g., the DA the courts, and Human Services) for assessment and/or case management services.

In 1998, approximately 58 percent of the cases were transport cases, with about three quarters of youths being brought to the CAC by law enforcement (i.e., local police departments and the Sheriff's Department). On average, juveniles assessed at the CAC in 1998 were 15 years old and the majority were male (63 percent). Nearly three quarters (70 percent) of juveniles were White. Hispanic juveniles were represented at two times their presence in the general population. There were demographic differences between transport versus referral cases. Of the known offenses, property offenses comprised the most serious offense for 23 percent of transported juveniles; among referrals, traffic offenses were the highest reported known offense. Law enforcement officers have discretion in bringing a youth to the CAC. In one major jurisdiction, the police were more likely to bring females and Hispanics.

In terms of organizational structure, the CAC staff work both for their parent agency and the CAC as its own entity. The CAC director is an employee of the Jefferson Center for Mental Health. The management team includes the director, a school district liaison, a district attorney/law enforcement liaison, and the coordinator of assessment and case management services.

Various documents are completed on transported youths, including a disclosure form, an Advisement of Rights, and a mini-assessment. If the youth is 14 or younger, a parent's signature is needed on the disclosure form, the FACT (Family Adolescent Crisis Team) information release, and the Advisement of Rights. The assessment administered to youths is a two-page questionnaire that elicits information about the current charge, substance abuse, grades, behavior and attendance in school, gang membership, and sexual activity. It also asks about abuse, family relationships, and mental health issues such as suicidal ideation and changes in appetite and behavior. Additional assessments are sometimes used if more in-depth information is needed. The CAC is currently evaluating the assessment tools used and developing a protocol for the reassessment of youths.

Once an assessment is completed, the juvenile is usually placed on a contract. The contract may include community service, reparation of damages, terms for school attendance and misbehavior, anger management, jail tour, and other services appropriate to the offense. A CAC case manager oversees the terms and compliance with the contract. Devising and upholding contracts is the most likely type of case management used by the CAC. According to the CAC database, 41 percent of juveniles in 1998 (i.e., almost all referrals) were placed on a contract, indicating that CAC would serve as case manager for these juveniles. Besides having a contract with CAC staff, 22 percent of juveniles entering the CAC in 1998 were referred to services, mostly mental health or short-term programs like arson classes.

The costs of operating the Jefferson County CAC was approximately half a million dollars in 1998. The capital cost was very low since the facility is non-secure and was donated by the school district. Much of the funding was secured through soft money grants.

In terms of legal rights and representation, youths brought to the CAC without being arrested or referred do not receive a Miranda warning. However, all youths are advised if their rights according to the "Disclosure Form" and "Advisement of Rights" that they sign. The forms stipulate that information on needs will be shared by all staff at the CAC, and that any information concerning criminal offenses will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Defense attorneys are not present at the CAC. More than half the CAC staff did not see the lack of legal representation as a problem, although some did. Another issue of concern regarding the CAC is net widening; that is, inappropriately bringing more juveniles into the system. Many of the key leaders we interviewed felt that the net was not widened, but strengthened.

Because of the multidisciplinary staffing and the nature of the information being collected, there is more sharing of information about individual youths than before the CAC. From the organizational survey, 54 percent of respondents believed that all information across the different

agencies should be shared; however, in interviews, the majority of parents in our small sample, said that information sharing was a critical area of concern.

It is important to note that assessment and services provided at the CAC are voluntary. Yet, based on responses from staff at the CAC and from youths and families, it appears that there is a lack of clear understanding about the nature of voluntary consent.

One of the goals of the CAC is to have a database that would be useful, comprehensive, and integrated. A new database became fully operational in July 1998 and is a great improvement over previous systems. Some structural issues, quality control issues, and relational linkages to other systems remain.

NCCD examined recidivism as one main outcome measure of the CAC. Recidivism is often difficult to define and measure, particularly so when there is no centralized management information system for gathering arrest data from each of the jurisdictions. There is currently no automated way to determine whether the youth has been rearrested. By using two different measures and different data sources, NCCD calculated two different recidivism rates.

First, recidivism was calculated for a subsample of youths transported to the CAC using data collected from the Jefferson County District Attorney's database. These data contain all delinquent actions in the county which were referred to the District Attorney. Twenty-two percent of transported juveniles had at least one offense charge prior to being transported to the CAC in 1998. Twenty percent reoffended at least once within six months after their initial visit to the CAC. At first it seems surprising that those youths on contract reoffended at a higher rate (27 percent) compared to those without a contract (18 percent). However, those youths on contract had more prior offenses than those without contracts. Juveniles with traffic offenses revisited the CAC most frequently (25 percent), followed closely by property and drug offenders (22 percent).

Secondly, youths arrested in one municipal police department during the first six months of 1998 were separated into those brought to the CAC and those not brought to the CAC. This jurisdiction was chosen because it was a large contributor to the population of juveniles brought to the assessment center, but it also chose not to bring many arrested youths to the CAC. In a matched comparison sample, the analysis showed that the two groups reoffended at the same rate, 21 percent. However, the youths not brought to the assessment center re-offended sooner than the CAC served youths.

Overall, key leaders and service providers had positive comments about the CAC. They point to substantial savings in police officers' time, quicker case processing, and increases in collaboration and cooperation among the different agencies. Based on interviews, discussion, and surveys, the main lessons that emerged from the Jefferson County CAC experiences included: the need to acquire more stable funding to sustain and/or improve CAC operations; the need to develop consistent policies and procedures for data entry and database management; and the importance of assessing the validity and reliability of the assessment tools to make sure they serve the target population. Further study is necessary to determine the impact of the CAC on several areas: 1) collection and sharing of more information; 2) early intervention in status cases

and other municipal offenses, 3) minority overrepresentation, and 4) the use of the CAC as a monitor of services provided.

Orange County (Orlando)

Orange County is a tourist destination with a fairly large urban and suburban population. The large majority of people in Orange County are White (80 percent), followed by African American (15 percent). People of Hispanic origin comprise 9 percent of the population and are included in the various racial categories.

The juvenile justice picture in Orange County was one of dramatic changes just prior to the CAC's opening in November 1994. There was an increase in arrests, especially for misdemeanors and of girls, and a doubling in the detention rate. The political climate became more punitive, as evidenced by the increasing number of petitions filed, youths on probation, and detention admissions.

The CAC was a natural development in the Orange County human services' sector due to a combination of factors: increased public concern over a few highly publicized violent crimes committed by juveniles, the demand for more intervention; local law enforcement's desire to spend less time dealing with low-level non-detainable offenders; and a growing need for greater efficiency as key leaders realized that the traditional service delivery model was overburdened, inadequate, fragmented, and unfriendly to youths and families.

Compared to the other three sites, the Orlando community had the least difficulty planning their assessment center because Florida legislation promoted it, an instrumental and respected county commissioner championed it, and funding followed. Within a year of planning, the CAC opened its doors. A contract to run the CAC was awarded to Human Service Associates, Inc. (HSA), a private, non-profit organization.

The various components of the CAC include: 1) a 24-hour receiving and booking unit for all arrested youths in Orange County; 2) a co-located, secure treatment facility called the Addiction Receiving Facility (ARF) ; 3) a co-located Truancy Center; 4) a co-located Juvenile Alternative Services Program (JASP); 5) an on-site screening and interview by the Department of Juvenile Justice staff; 6) co-housed juvenile probation officers who make recommendations for case handling to the State Attorney; 7) assessment and case management functions operated by Human Service Associates Inc.; and 8) a co-housed Family Services Planning Team (FSPT) to coordinate and broker mental health and treatment services. There is definite collaboration among agencies.

Similar to the other sites, the overall goals of the Orlando CAC are: efficiency in case handling, time savings to law enforcement, and access to better information on youths at an earlier time, as well as earlier access to prevention and early intervention services.

The target population at the CAC is quite diverse. All arrested youths are eligible to be brought to the assessment center or referred via citations. Even though police officers have discretionary authority, they transport almost all arrestees to the CAC. Truant youths picked up by the police are brought to the co-located truancy center; and youths deemed as needing secure short-term drug or alcohol treatment are brought to the co-located Addition Receiving Facility.

From the data, it appears that some form of net widening occurred initially and then leveled off. With the assessment center, more youths are being brought in for violations (especially misdemeanors and violations of probation or court orders). However, this trend had already begun prior to the center's opening. Some view this as "taking the blinders off" when it comes to juvenile delinquency, while others see this as unnecessarily expanding the scope of justice intervention.

There are multiple entry points to the CAC. Arrested and transported youths enter the assessment center through a secure door at the back of the building where they are fingerprinted, photographed, and shown a video about the rules and processes of the CAC. Other youths arrive as truants (to the Truancy Center) or through the ARF (Addictions Receiving Facility). Neither of these latter types have contact with other parts of the assessment center. Finally, a small number of youths, called "at large" cases come to the CAC through the front door and sit in an open waiting room for contact with a DJJ intake worker or a TASC assessor. The Orlando CAC sees approximately 10,000 youths a year. A DJJ intake worker completes a detention screen on all arrested youths.

Those youths not sent to detention wait in the secure common area for a parent or authorized family member to pick them up. While the youth is waiting, TASC staff choose youth for full assessments. Youths are typically assessed according to their time of arrival to the CAC; however, priority is given to youths whose short, initial screening instrument (SAMH-1) indicate potential "red flags" and to youths brought in for sex offenses and domestic violence.

The Orange County CAC uses a self-created comprehensive instrument that takes about an hour to complete and covers several domains. They have also searched widely for a better assessment tool. Based on the 540-case file review sample, slightly less than half (47 percent) received full assessments during the first six months of 1998. Staff shortages and the large number of youths coming through the assessment center contributed to this assessment rate. During screening and assessment, youths also sign consent forms and release of information forms. Random urine tests may also be conducted, at the discretion of the assessor.

Some of the assessed youths are chosen for targeted or intensive case management. Intensive case managers have smaller caseloads and focus on linking the youths to services already available in the community.

After conducting a full assessment, assessment staff use a standard form for service referrals. One of the main challenges has been linking the results of the assessment process to subsequent service provision. While some of these links are solid, some problems still need to be resolved,

despite improvements such as increased availability of some on-site services and community-based providers referring youths to the CAC.

Additionally, a key question that cannot be answered with the CAC's currently available automated data is how many youths actually received the recommended services. The CAC leadership believes this is important, however, and is working to remedy the problem. Another important element currently not in place is formal monitoring of service providers for program integrity, efficiency, effectiveness, and client satisfaction.

From interviews with youths and parents, the majority generally felt satisfied with their experiences at the CAC, although they felt that the process and system are still quite confusing. Among those who received referred services, the vast majority indicated satisfaction.

There have been some positive results from Orange County's CAC experience. A recurring theme from both organizational surveys and interviews with key leaders was substantial savings in law enforcement officers' time. Prior to the CAC, officers would spend considerable time babysitting or processing youths. The CAC process greatly streamlined this process. Attorneys and judges indicated that the CAC has allowed more information to be available, and thus contributed to quicker case processing. Key leaders from different service agencies stated that there is more collaboration and cooperation as a result of the CAC.

In terms of recidivism, NCCD examined this question using different types of samples and modes of recidivism. Unfortunately, due to constraints and limitations in the databases (e.g., lack of unique identifiers and missing data) and incomplete access to electronic DJJ case files, the analyses are less than ideal. Nevertheless, the examination of rearrest rates using randomly generated samples and the case file review sample showed little difference in the recidivism rate between those who received assessments versus those who did not. The data reveal slightly lower re-arrest rates for a matched sample of assessed youths to non-assessed youths. In both groups approximately one-third were re-booked at the assessment center within one year. However, non-assessed youths tended to reoffend sooner than assessed youths.

There remain several issues that the assessment center must grapple with. For instance, many of the youths and families interviewed by NCCD did not fully understand the nature of voluntary consent. Due process and the need for legal representation are important concerns to families and defense attorneys. Defense attorneys also expressed concerns over access to files and the extent to which information is equally shared, as well as who has access to information. The data show that the CAC did not seem to have contributed to increased minority overrepresentation, neither did it reduce the problem. The CAC also needs to develop clear confidentiality standards and continue to examine potential net-widening effects. Assessment instruments need to be tested for validity, reliability, cultural appropriateness, and gender sensitivity. And lastly, interagency agreements for data integration (MIS) as well as realistic timelines for data integration remain critical.

Conclusion

In sum, the assessment center concept holds some promise and the collaboratives overseeing the development and functioning of the centers work hard to fulfill the lofty goals. This preliminary evaluation has found many positive effects of the CACs on integration, collaboration, and juvenile justice system functioning. As in many system change endeavors, there are still problems that need resolution. Staffing must be adequate to meet the goals of the program, services offered must be the consistent with best known practices for helping youths and families out of the justice system, management information systems are key underdeveloped components of this concept, and the rights of juveniles brought to the CACs must be clearly understood and protected. Future research will examine more specific justice system outcomes and individual outcomes of participation in individual CACs.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1990's public perception was that serious juvenile crime was growing at an alarming rate and there was much pressure for greater intervention. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders along with the National Juvenile Justice Action Plan to Combat Violence and Delinquency were important responses to this pressure. These initiatives spoke of the need to ensure public safety through treatment and incarceration if necessary, while simultaneously promoting prevention efforts. The development of Community Assessment Centers is one important outgrowth of these OJJDP responses.

According to Howell, 1995, one of the main problems in the current juvenile justice system is that the "fragmented human services system does not effectively serve anyone: not youth, not families, and not communities." Howell added "the system is expensive, it often fails to solve youth's problems and youth are referred from here to there with little follow up." As Krisberg (1995) points out, many youth fall through the system cracks. Ineffective intervention in the careers of those on a trajectory toward serious or repeated offending can be disastrous. It gives rise to an all-too-common pattern: repeated encounters with authorities, perhaps coupled with several short-term detentions, but with no coherent or intensive help provided, culminating in repeated offenses, and ultimately, incarceration in the juvenile or adult systems (Krisberg, et al., 1995).

The Community Assessment Center (CAC) model is an attempt to address juvenile crime by bringing together the fragmented service delivery system in a collaborative, timely and comprehensive manner. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has recognized the need to complete an evaluation of these efforts because the stakes are high. The alternatives to effective early intervention are too often long-term cycling within the justice system, high juvenile crime rates, and large incarcerated populations (Howell, 1995). These consequences are very expensive in terms of social, as well as, financial burdens.

Federal Interest and Investment

OJJDP expressed interest in CACs in 1995 by sponsoring a juvenile justice focus group on the topic. The group saw promise in the concept, but had some reservations as well. They recommended further investigation and OJJDP commissioned a preliminary fact-finding report which was released in June of 1996. This report recommended that OJJDP fund sites to plan new CACs or to improve existing facilities' MIS, case management capability, or evaluation components. Information-sharing among existing CAC sites was also identified as an important activity. OJJDP then funded demonstration sites to plan or more fully implement an assessment center, a technical assistance provision component, and this evaluation.

Goals of the Evaluation

In 1997, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) was awarded a grant by OJJDP to examine the community assessment center model through an evaluation of four assessment centers: two planning and two enhancement sites. Denver, Colorado and Lee County, Florida were chosen as planning sites. Orlando, Florida and Jefferson County, Colorado already had established assessment centers, but received funding to enhance their programs. This grant was an important step in understanding the functioning and processes of this important development in the juvenile justice system. The primary goals of this evaluation were to describe and understand the process of planning and implementation for CACs with an initial review of outcomes.

The process component focused on several issues including: integrity to CAC concept, due process for juveniles, quality of services offered, collaboration and coordination among agencies, and quality and integrity of the management information system. The evaluation of outcomes included: client satisfaction, recidivism rates, detention and crime rates, and system changes (such as law enforcement time savings).

This document is organized into five chapters. The introduction lays the foundation for the CAC concept. Chapter 2 contains a description of the design and methods used to collect data. Chapter 3 is a synopsis of the planning process undertaken in Denver and Lee County. Findings from Jefferson County and Orange County (Orlando) are contained in the subsequent two chapters. The final chapter contains conclusions, recommendations, and next steps.

Concepts Underlying Community Assessment Centers[1]

OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders (Wilson & Howell, 1993) establishes the principle of immediate and effective intervention when delinquent behavior first occurs. "Initial intervention efforts, under an umbrella of system authorities (police, intake, and probation) . . . [should] ensure that an appropriate response occurs and act quickly and firmly if the need for formal system adjudication and sanctions has been demonstrated" (p. 9). OJJDP's *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* (Howell, ed., 1995) calls for creation of a "coordinated, community-based system that offers a continuum of care, including prevention, early intervention, and treatment services. . . collaborative efforts are needed among agencies responsible for assessing the needs of at-risk youth and providing several simultaneous services to maximize efforts" (p. 29). The *Guide* calls for integrating the services of the four child and adolescent systems: the juvenile justice system, the alcohol and other drug treatment system, the mental health system, and the social welfare system (p. 30).

OJJDP is continuing in this policy direction by assisting in creating and assessing community assessment center (CAC) demonstration sites where the goals would be to "make

---

[1] This material is summarized from Howell, J.C, *The Evolution of Juvenile Justice and Youth Violence in America*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

basic and in-depth assessments of the juvenile's circumstances and treatment needs; arrange for detention and release to a safe and appropriate setting; develop recommendations; facilitate access to services; and manage or monitor appropriate treatment and rehabilitation services" (OJJDP CAC solicitation, 1996: 61). The four critical areas of the CAC concept are: 1) a single point of entry for all youth involved in the system and "at-risk" of involvement, 2) immediate and comprehensive assessments, 3) a management information system (MIS), and 4) integrated case management. The elements are discussed in an OJJDP bulletin by Oldenettel and Wordes (2000). There are other important issues for CAC development that stem from OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy. These issues are discussed below and include early and immediate intervention, coordination and collaboration among agencies, and risk and needs focused interventions.

Early and Immediate Intervention

The case for early intervention in delinquent careers is compelling. Programs are needed "that interrupt, at early stages, developmental pathways that lead to serious delinquency and violence before these behaviors have become a stable part of the person's behavioral repertoire" (Thornberry et al., 1995: 233). Older offenders are likely to be involved in various forms of delinquency, to exhibit other problem behaviors, and to have multiple risk factors and social deficits (Thornberry et al., 1995: 233). Therefore, early interventions are more likely to be successful.

The task is complicated by the knowledge that most juvenile delinquency and other problem behaviors develop from multiple risk factors across multiple settings: community, family, school, peer group, and individual characteristics. However, knowing that problem behaviors occur developmentally and that the interplay of individual and family characteristics is most directly related to early onset provides a much stronger basis for designing early interventions.

Immediate intervention is another important theoretical component of the graduated sanctions portion of the Comprehensive Strategy (Wilson & Howell, 1993). Unfortunately, it is the weakest link in the graduated sanctions system. NCCD's national assessment of graduated sanction programs found few effective immediate interventions (Krisberg et al., 1995), making the need for field testing new interventions more pressing.

It is often assumed that adolescents reaching the juvenile court are new offenders, that aside from police contacts and perhaps an arrest or two, juvenile court officials have the first opportunity to correct a child's behavior. This is an erroneous perception indeed. Loeber and colleagues (1995) investigated the problem behavior of boys who had been referred to the Pittsburgh juvenile court, the extent of their problems, and the timing of parental help-seeking. Their study had its foundation in research showing that youngsters appearing in juvenile court for the first time have generally engaged in problem behaviors for some time, usually starting with minor delinquent acts and progressing to more serious offenses (Loeber, et al., 1993).

Loeber et al. (1995) found that by the time these youngsters get to court, their parents may have coped with the child's problem behavior for several years. By the eighth grade (about age 14), 20% of the sample of boys had committed delinquent acts and had been referred to juvenile court. For almost half of the boys, their problems had been occurring for 5 years or more. The average interval between the time of initial problem behaviors and court contact was 4 years. For youths who exhibited more serious problem behaviors, the average interval was two years.

In the same study, the number of help attempts caretakers made was quite high. Among the court group, by the time they reached juvenile court these youngsters had received a mean number of 25 help contacts, 13 of which were from professional sources. In contrast, the non-court group had received 14 help contacts, half of which were from professional sources.

Lerman and Pottick's (1995) study of youths referred to Newark mental health and family crisis centers is instructive on help-seeking behavior. Psychological testing of the children and adolescents (average age, 14.5 years) using the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach and Edelbrock, 1987) revealed coexistence of delinquency, aggression, and psychological problems among most of them. Parents reported that they were aware of the seriousness of their child's problems for about a year before referral. In 71% of the cases, they said that bringing the child to either of these centers was the idea of someone not related to them, generally after police or court contact.

These studies show that parents and other significant adults in a child's life are most likely to notice problem behaviors, yet parents do not know where to turn for help and the sources they initially rely on are often not very helpful. Lerman and Pottick make several recommendations for improving individual-level services: improving the responsiveness of agency systems, helping parents become more effective help-seekers, improving the utilization of services, providing multiple services for multiple problems, expanding sensitivity to gender differences, and encouraging youths to become their own help seekers (1995: 216-236). These recommendations can help inform the design of effective immediate or intermediate intervention programs.

Coordination and Collaboration Models

Clearly there is a co-occurrence of other adolescent problem behaviors with delinquency. Thus, mental health, juvenile justice, education, child welfare, and social services systems must be coordinated. Their history of coordination is not impressive. More advances have been made in this area by the mental health profession than in the juvenile justice system (Lerman, 1995).

Progress has been slow in the juvenile justice system. As Soler (1992) states "most services for children and families in the United States are categorical, fragmented, and uncoordinated. Children labeled 'delinquent' are tracked toward correctional placements aimed at keeping them within a designated setting and modifying their behavior, with little effort to resolve underlying family problems". Exceptions include the Willie M. Program in North Carolina for violent confined delinquents (Soler, 1992), the case management and family

preservation programs created by the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice (Krisberg, 1992), the mental health Ventura County Children's Demonstration Project in California that has reduced correctional placements (Soler, 1992; Lerman, 1995), and Massachusetts' community-based correctional system (Lerman, 1995).

Knitzer's (1982) investigation of the lack of public responsibility for children in need of mental health services led to a federal program called the Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP), funded in 1984 to improve the system of care available at the community level for children and their families (Duchnowski & Kutash, 1996). The CASSP philosophy (Stroul & Friedman, 1986) of child-centered and family-centered mental health services resulted in such innovations as "wrap around" services in North Carolina, a mechanism through which case managers can wrap services around the needs of children and families in a flexible and individualized manner (Duchnowski & Kutash, 1996).

Virginia's Norfolk Interagency Consortium (Pratt, 1994) is a juvenile justice collaboration model that grew out of the CASSP philosophy. It targets youths in residential placement or at risk of such placement. A comprehensive assessment is made of individual youths and their families by an interagency team of juvenile justice, public health, mental health, social services, child welfare, education, parent, and private provider representatives (called the community assessment team). At an assessment conference with parents and the child, the community assessment team members bring the history of their agency's work with the child and his/her family members and their particular expertise in assessing problem behaviors and selecting the most appropriate combination of sanctions and treatment. The result is a long-term treatment plan (supported by nine combined funding streams) that is monitored by the CAT, with rotating lead responsibility among the six involved agencies. The consortium recently began screening youths earlier, at court intake, for mental health, delinquency, and other problem behaviors.

The CAC model is another step in coordinating systems through information sharing, and decision-making. The results of this endeavor in four demonstration sites will be discussed in the remaining chapters.

Risk- and Need-focused Intervention

The graduated sanctions component of OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy incorporates a developmental model of delinquency (Hawkins & Catalano, 1992). According to Hawkins and Catalano's (1992) "social development strategy," young people who are bonded to positive, prosocial family members, adults outside the family (including teachers, coaches, youth leaders), and prosocial friends are less likely to do things that threaten that bond such as using drugs, becoming violent, or committing crimes. When families, schools, and communities have clearly stated policies and expectations for young people's behavior, children are less likely to become involved in crime and delinquency. Healthy beliefs and clear standards, communicated consistently by the significant individuals and social groups to whom the child is bonded, build a web of protection for young people exposed to risk of delinquency and violence.

The Graduated Sanctions component of the Comprehensive Strategy incorporates both treatment needs and protective factors. Thus it uses risk and needs assessments to determine the level of sanctions offenders need for public safety and treatments needed to reduce the likelihood of subsequent offending. Risk factors for delinquency are seen as precursors to delinquency involvement. Interventions such as CACs should thus involve an assessment of risks, needs, and protective factors. A brief review of these follows[2].

Risk Factors for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offending

Community Factors: Children who live in economically deprived areas characterized by extreme poverty, poor living conditions, and high unemployment are more likely to engage in crime and violence (Farrington, 1991; Yoshikawa, 1994). Disorganized neighborhoods, characterized by high rates of crime and violence, high population density, physical deterioration, lack of natural surveillance of public places, and low levels of attachment to the neighborhood, are also associated with high risk for criminal and violent behavior (Sampson & Laub, 1994; Yoshikawa, 1994). The Annie E. Casey Foundation (1994) has estimated that nearly 4 million American children are growing up in "severely distressed" neighborhoods. Characterized by poverty, fathers not contributing to family support, and a high rate of high school dropouts, these neighborhoods put children at risk of drug abuse, delinquency, school failure, teenage pregnancy, and child abuse and neglect.

In a preliminary analysis of boys' progression in individual pathways to crime in different types of neighborhoods, Loeber and Wikstrom (1993), analyzing data from the Pittsburgh Youth Study, detected neighborhood differences in the prevalence of involvement in overt and covert behaviors, and in their progression in these pathways. These differences were observed in different neighborhoods in which boys lived. Specifically, "boys living in low socioeconomic neighborhoods tended to advance further into a pathway than boys living in high socioeconomic neighborhoods" (p. 200).

The Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency recently identified specific neighborhood risk factors for juvenile violence: availability of firearms and crime, transitions and mobility, low neighborhood attachment, community disorganization, and extreme economic and social deprivation (Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry, 1995: 35). These studies have also shown (Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry, 1994) that juveniles who live in underclass areas, regardless of race or ethnicity, have higher rates of self-reported delinquency than do youngsters living elsewhere. The study's authors concluded that "living in underclass

---

[2] "Risk Factors for Health and Behavior Problems," in the Comprehensive Strategy Guide summarizes 30 years of research on risk factors for delinquency and related problem behaviors. It shows the multiple risk factors for delinquency and violence (community, family, school, peer group, and individual characteristics), and that these are also risk factors for other problem behaviors (substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and school dropout).

areas itself seems to increase the chances of delinquency, even when holding other factors constant" (p. 16).

Family Factors: Parental and family influences have been classified in four domains: family demographics (e.g., socioeconomic status), parental characteristics (e.g., personality types), parenting techniques (e.g., lack of monitoring, inconsistent discipline), and parent-child relationships (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). They concluded that lack of parental supervision was one of the strongest predictors of the development of delinquency and violence in their children.

The Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency recently identified other family risk factors for juvenile violence: a family history of high risk behavior, family management problems, child maltreatment, and family conflict (Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry, 1995).

Smith and Thornberry (1995) found that a history of childhood maltreatment significantly increased the likelihood of later self-reported juvenile involvement in moderately serious, serious, and violent delinquency (but not minor delinquency). Maltreatment also significantly increased the chances of being arrested and the frequency of arrests. Both of these findings were affirmed when race/ethnicity, social class, family structure, and mobility were held constant.

In an earlier analysis, Thornberry (1994) found that children who experienced multiple forms of family violence in the home (child abuse, spouse abuse, and family conflict) were twice as likely to commit violent acts themselves. Among youths in non-violent families, 38% reported involvement in violent delinquency. This rate increased to 60% for youths who experienced one form of violence; to 73% for those exposed to two forms of violence; and to 78% for adolescents exposed to all three types of family violence. Previous studies, which only measured official delinquency (see Smith & Thornberry, 1995: 452-455 for a discussion of these), have not shown the strong connection to violence that the self-report measures showed.

Prenatal and perinatal factors are also important predictors of delinquency and other problem behaviors (Farrington, 1996: 83-85). These include absent biological fathers, low income and welfare support. Early childbearing (as a result of teenage pregnancy), drug use during pregnancy, and perinatal complications are correlated with poor parenting techniques, child hyperactivity, impulsivity, low intelligence and low school achievement; which in turn predict childhood behavior problems and later delinquency (Farrington, 1994).

Peer Group Factors: "One of the most stable and well-established findings in delinquency research is that the delinquent behavior of an individual is positively related to the actual or perceived delinquent behavior of that individual's friends (Elliott & Menard, 1996: 29). The strong relationship between delinquent peer group members and delinquent behavior was well-documented almost 70 years ago (Shaw and McKay, 1931), and is largely uncontested to this day. In their analyses of longitudinal, self-reported National Youth Survey data, Elliott and Menard (1996) demonstrated that "the onset of exposure to delinquent friends typically precedes the onset of one's own illegal behavior" (p. 28). Elliott and Menard (1992: 25-26) describe the

sequence as follows: "The typical progression for those who are non-delinquent and in non-delinquent peer groups is (1) movement into a slightly more delinquent peer group, (2) onset of minor delinquency, (3) movement into a more delinquent peer group, (4) onset of Index delinquency, and (5) movement into a predominantly delinquent peer group." When juveniles enter young adulthood they tend to become less involved in both delinquent peer groups and delinquent behavior.

School Factors: Maguin & Loeber (1996) conducted a meta-analysis that is a comprehensive review of school related risk factors for delinquency. They summarized the major risk factors identified in longitudinal and experimental studies. Poor academic performance is related not only to the prevalence and onset of delinquency, but also to escalation in the frequency and seriousness of offending. Conversely, better academic performance is related to desistance from offending. More specifically, there is an incremental effect. The poorer the academic performance, the higher the delinquency. Maguin & Loeber estimate that the odds of delinquency involvement are about 2 times higher among students with low academic performance compared to those with high academic performance. Moreover, the reviewed studies suggested that lower levels of academic performance are linked to a higher frequency of offenses, more serious offenses, and more violent offenses. They also found some evidence that low academic performance is related to early onset of offending. All these findings were consistently stronger for males than for females, and for white youths than for African American youngsters.

The link between early onset and low school performance has been confirmed for general delinquency in the Pittsburgh Youth Study (Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry, 1994). The relationship between reading performance and general delinquency appears for first graders. More generally, school performance, whether measured by reading achievement or teacher-rated reading performance, and retention in grade is related to delinquency. The Pittsburgh Youth Study also found that youngsters who are not highly committed to school subsequently have higher rates of street crimes, which in turn results in reduced levels of commitment to school.

Individual Characteristics: Individual violence proclivity appears to be related to a set of traits that include a fearless and uninhibited temperament, a difficult temperament, impulsiveness, cognitive impairments, and low intelligence quotient (IQ), "that can interact with other factors to produce violence" (Eron & Slaby, 1994: 7). Genetic variation in possible violence-related temperament factors may also contribute to violent behaviors. The literature shows that the most likely linkage between children's individual traits and aggression may be a function of acquired biological deficits, such as prenatal and perinatal complications (Brennan, Mednick, & Kandel, 1991), neonatal injuries (Kolvin et al., 1990), injury to the brain and neurological dysfunction (Rivara & Farrington, 1995), and exposure to neurotoxins, or deficits in their social environments (Loeber, 1990). Thus, the process by which individual characteristics play out, resulting in delinquency and violence, appears to derive from interaction between personal traits and the environment.

Other factors linked to antisocial behavior include learning disabilities (Zimmerman, Rich, Keilitz, & Broder, 1981), schizophrenia and bi-polar disorders (Duchnowski & Kutash,

1996), severe emotional disturbance (Wagner, D'Amico, Marder, Newman, & Blackorby, 1992), abuse and neglect (Smith & Thornberry, 1995; Thornberry, 1994; Widom, 1989a, 1989b), and ADHD. Although the exact relationship of ADHD to delinquency onset and escalation is not clear, studies have established a relationship (Loeber et al. 1993). The Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency identified specific individual risk factors for juvenile violence including: alienation and rebelliousness, early initiation of problem behavior, and favorable attitudes toward problem behavior (Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry, 1995). Bullying is also an important individual characteristic, and a risk factor for violence (Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1992).

The association between delinquency and drug use is well established (Elliott et al., 1985), but the temporal order is not; nor is the relationship between drug use and violence. There is little evidence that drug use leads to delinquency, but serious drug use may prolong involvement in serious delinquency (Huizinga, Menard, & Elliott, 1989). Researchers debate whether delinquency, like drug use, develops in an orderly manner (Loeber and Wikstrom, 1993). Recent research on the relationships among drug selling, illegal drug use, serious theft, and violence suggests that all the other behaviors precede drug selling (Van Kammen, Maguin, & Loeber, 1994). Thus violent crime and serious theft were found to be strong predictors of the initiation of drug selling. The Pittsburgh study, of 13-15 year-olds, also found that selling illicit drugs started significantly later than the other three behaviors. Initiation of drug selling was strongly related to previous involvement in multiple types of delinquency, rather than a single type, but drug trafficking was not causally related to increased violence. Illicit drug use was the strongest independent predictor of drug selling. Van Kammen, Maughan and Loeber (1994) make a strong case that drug use leads to drug trafficking and that drug selling is strongly associated with other serious and violent crimes; not necessarily that juvenile drug trafficking results in more frequent violent offending. It may well be that drug trafficking, serious property offending, and violent offending are expressions of the same underlying problems (Van Kammen et al., 1994).

The CAC fits nicely within the multiple causality framework described above. While we know many of the risk factors, it is necessary to translate those factors into interventions for the appropriate population. One mechanism to translate these risk and protective factors into practice are assessment tools which are briefly described below.

Risk and Needs Assessment Tools: Prevention and early intervention efforts are traditionally more likely than juvenile justice efforts to focus on the community, family, school, peer group, and collective individual conditions. Once a youngster is in the juvenile justice system, the focus of risk assessment usually shifts to the child as the unit of analysis. Risk assessment instruments sort offenders into groups with differing probabilities of reoffending (Wiebush, Baird, Krisberg, & Onek, 1995). These instruments are designed to estimate the likelihood of reoffending within a given time period and are based on the statistical relationship between youth characteristics and recidivism rates (see Wiebush et al, 1995: 181-183 for a discussion of the essential properties of assessment and classification systems). Since risk assessment instruments are based on group data, their effectiveness is limited to prediction of

aggregate outcomes. These instruments cannot predict accurately outcomes for specific individuals, nor whether or not an individual will commit a violent offense.

A core set of variables has been identified in several studies as recidivism predictors for juvenile offenders (Wiebush et al., 1995). Their comparison of seven empirically based risk assessment instruments that were validated for use in probation/parole (see Baird, 1984) shows the consistency of certain predictors. These variables include offense history related items (i.e., age at first court referral, number of prior offenses, severity of current offense, and number of prior out-of-home placements), and other characteristics (i.e., school problems, drug/alcohol abuse, family problems/parent control, and peer relationships). Not surprisingly, these other variables that predict recidivism are almost identical to the five major risk factors for delinquency: community, family, school, peer group, and individual characteristics. There is one exception. Community conditions generally are not included in risk assessment instruments.

Needs assessment instruments contain objective criteria for determining the presence and severity of problems that need to be addressed in major areas of a juvenile's life. NCCD made a comparison of needs assessment items in instruments used in seven jurisdictions (Wiebush et al., 1995). Items on family relationships, school problems, peer relationship, and substance abuse were included in every instrument in the comparison. These and other items in the needs assessment instruments point to areas in offenders' lives in which risk reduction and protective factor enhancement is needed. Use of these instruments will help ensure that the full range of problem and strength areas are taken into account when formulating a case plan. It also ensures that a baseline for monitoring a juvenile's progress is established. With the use of these instruments comes periodic assessments of outcomes, such as treatment effectiveness. Use of needs assessments will also help to allocate scarce resources more effectively and efficiently (Wiebush et al., 1995: 181-183).

Systematic use of risk and needs assessments will improve matching of youths needs to the most promising placements or services that are appropriate for the level of risk they present. Because serious, violent, and chronic offenders possess multiple risk factors, it is important that all of these risk factors be addressed in program services. Achieving the best match between risk-needs and a wide array of program options will result in higher rehabilitation success rates.

Matching services to juveniles based on risk and needs is one of the cornerstones of the OJJDP Comprehensive Strategy. This concept has been referred to as the structured decision-making model. Using a structured decision-making matrix, a youth who commits a minor delinquent offense may be classified into various service/sanction categories depending on his or her score on a risk or needs assessment. In fact, this minor offender with low risk of recidivating may be a candidate for a sanction such as restitution. A youth with the same offense, but with a higher risk-need score may be classified into a higher intervention level and receive more services. Thus, the structured decision-making model is clearly applicable to the Community Assessment Center implementation.

One important component that is generally left out of the risk and needs assessments are measures of protective factors and strengths. One notable exception is the Comprehensive

Adolescent Severity Inventory (Meyers, 1996). This instrument is used in many juvenile justice contexts to evaluate the needs and assets of individual youths. Community Assessment Centers offer an opportunity to implement assessments that rely on measures of risks, needs, and protective factors.

History of Community Assessment Centers

Because the Community Assessment Center idea is relatively new, its history is short. The first CAC in Tampa, Florida is described by Cronin (1996) and discussed at length below. Since their beginnings in 1993, assessment centers have appeared in various iterations all around the country.

The Hillsborough County Juvenile Assessment Center in Tampa, Florida, was the site of the first juvenile assessment center (JAC), which opened in 1993 (Cronin, 1996; Dembo and Brown, 1994). The leader in the development of this JAC was a nonprofit service provider, the Agency for Community Treatment Services (ACTS). Other local juvenile justice stakeholders, including the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, the local branch of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, service providers, and other agencies soon came to see the JAC concept as a way to reform and streamline their juvenile justice system; to increase the effectiveness of service delivery and compliance with court orders, especially for youth with multiple problems; and to reduce costs and police time spent on juvenile cases (Dembo and Brown, 1994).

When it first opened, the Hillsborough JAC accepted only truancy cases, but by mid-1994 was accepting felony and misdemeanor cases as well. Police brought almost all arrested youth to the center, but the only mandate was that youth going to detention facilities be assessed. Among the participants involved in the center's on-site activities were the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, the County Sheriff's Department, the County Public Schools, the Youth Services Department, and the University of South Florida.

The Hillsborough Center was a 24-hour secure facility with a non-secure, classroom-like setting available for truancy cases between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. when schools were in session. The facility also had a detoxification and drug addiction center with 24 beds. When police brought a juvenile to the center, the youth was assessed for immediate medical/psychiatric needs and was either referred to those services or was booked. The youth was searched and given a urinalysis test. The ACTS staff then gave the juvenile a battery of medical, psychological, and sociological assessments and conduct prior history search (the assessment was voluntary for truant youths). This process took an average of an hour and a half. Depending on the current offense, family situation, and/or assessment results, the youth was then given further assessments, transferred to detention, transferred to a specific service provider agency, or released to parent/guardian, or another form of placement. Placement and detention decisions were made by Department of Juvenile Justice staff.

The facility assessment staff prepared a report to the State Attorney's Office and for the juvenile's file containing the results of the assessment. Staff provided case management for

misdemeanor cases and monitor the youth's progress in diversion and treatment programs. The Center's MIS had access to information from the Sheriff's Department, the State Attorney's Office, the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, and the County School Board, and was able to produce caseload statistics and reports, and to track case outcomes.

Two preliminary studies by Dembo and Turner have found that the Hillsborough County Center was effective in targeting youth with multiple problems and a history of delinquent behavior through prior history checks and the use of the Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT) (Dembo and Turner, 1994a; Dembo and Turner, 1994b). Cronin reports anecdotal evidence of the following results: conservation of police time; increased agency cooperation and communication; more arrests and truancy cases brought to the attention of authorities; earlier intervention by service providers or authorities in delinquent and other problem activities; quicker management of juveniles diverted from the system; greater tracking of a juvenile's outcome; and greater communication with policymakers. Cronin finds that the effects noted by Tampa's agency staff are similar to those found by staff in other locations across the country.

At a special session in June 1993, the Florida legislature supported the Juvenile Assessment Center idea by allocating funding for two more JACs. Since then, several other assessment centers have opened in the state. They are now in almost every county within Florida.

While the State of Florida was the first to proliferate assessment center programs, they have been instituted across the country. They are either already developed or in the planning stages in various counties from California to New York and throughout the Midwest and South.

Issues of Unintended Consequences of CAC Intervention

Although the CAC model seems promising as a core component of a comprehensive response to juvenile crime, there are critical issues that must be confronted in both the design and implementation of these programs. The history of "front-end" juvenile justice programs is replete with well-intentioned efforts that have produced unanticipated negative consequences.

Often programs designed to divert youth from further penetration of the formal justice system actually result in enlarging the pool of youngsters who are under some form of social control. For example, juvenile diversion programs often resulted in youths who might have been counseled and released by the police officer, now being referred to some more restrictive intervention program. Or, youths who might have stayed in secure custody for a short while being subsequently retained in non-secure programs for much longer lengths of stay.

Increasing the number of youths who come into the system, might be regarded by some observers as a positive outcome. We suspect that in many communities the justice system is forced to "triage" cases and release youths needing supervision to little or no oversight or with no treatment services. However, increasing numbers can add substantial and unplanned costs to

juvenile justice system operations. For example, it is possible that CACs might permit police to increase the volume of arrests that they make because the CAC streamlines the work that the arresting officer must complete before returning to patrol. But, an increase in arrests might exert major strains on probation intake or detention resources down the line. Moreover, net widening, or inappropriately increasing the number of youths entering the justice system may occur.

Along with the possibility of net widening is a potential increase in minority over representation. The literature on diversion programs suggests ways to structure "front end" options to minimize unplanned net widening of minority over representation and allow communities to better target the kinds of youths that they want. Past experience shows that objective risk screening or intake criteria are essential tools to manage net widening effects and lessen racial disparities in juvenile justice processing.

Another issue has to do with the possibility of increased costs. The CACs may result in unanticipated increased demand for treatment services. It would make little sense to engage in sophisticated diagnostic and assessment methods if the appropriate services are lacking or underfunded. On the other hand, the CACs could provide invaluable data for communities trying to prioritize their efforts to reduce risk factors and build protective factors. More generally, the CACs must make realistic judgments on the levels of support to sustain adequate staffing levels and to provide good data on the outcomes of case referrals.

CACs do not operate in social vacuums. How well these innovative programs function will be affected by other community policies and programs. For example, one concern is the relationship between the CACs and community policing programs and the juvenile probation department. Most advocates of youth-oriented community policing envision patrol officers acting as problem solvers and community mediators to solve crime issues. Theoretically there is some risk that the CACs could discourage police from problem solving — they may believe that the CAC is the agency responsible for this function. Also, there may be conflicting roles between probation officers who perform many of the same roles as staff at a CAC. For instance, case management is traditionally a function of the probation department as are intake decisions into the detention center (in some jurisdictions). These problems can be overcome, but require concerted dialog and planning. Furthermore, for the CAC concept to be implemented fully, systems change must occur, rather than just adding another program.

Another serious issue for the CACs will be the accuracy of the assessments that will be made. Individual-level predictions about future risks can be very unreliable. In NCCD's vast experience with risk and needs assessments, a substantial proportion of youths characterized as "high risk" using screening tools, in fact, do not recidivate. Over-prediction is a major problem and a greater issue in clinical assessment processes. It is critical, therefore, to periodically validate screening tools.

In the treatment area, there are a range of tests and protocols to measure educational achievement, substance abuse problems, family dysfunction, etc. Some of these techniques are more reliable than others (i.e. different raters will view the same case in the same way), while other diagnostic tools have limited predictive ability (e.g., LSAT scores are not good predictors

of law school grade point averages). It will be essential to evaluate the quality of the assessment and diagnostic processes at each CAC. This evaluation must consider issues such as: (1) the track record of diagnostic tools employed; (2) the quality of data available for these assessments, especially the proportion of missing data; (3) the qualifications and training of the assessment staff; and (4) the time and resources allocated to complete assessments. The CAC program must place the highest priority on quality control in the assessment process.

Another major issue is "informed consent" to participate in the assessment process. This evaluation will explore whether the CACs made sure that legal rights were protected and that laws governing privacy and confidentiality were not violated. This area requires regular review and scrutiny. Sites may well vary on how they interpret the need for voluntary participation and parental consent. The potential for subtle and unintended coercion always exists when more onerous legal actions may be a possibility. There are also basic questions about information sharing and the use of the information that is gathered during the assessment process.

All of these issues and unintended consequences will be discussed throughout the remaining chapters of this report. Before discussing the findings, the next chapter focuses on the methods used to collect data and analyze the findings.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

This section presents the design of the evaluation which attempts to answer the critical questions of how CACs operate, the issues and concerns around the CAC model, and preliminary effectiveness issues. The evaluation period covers the two years since September 1997. The conceptual framework on which the evaluation methods are based is described below. Also included are the details of the data collection methods. Multiple methods were used including interviews of key leaders and youths and families, surveys to various organizations, case file reviews and secondary analyses using the automated management information systems. Multiple methods allowed for a detailed analysis of the issues involved in developing and implementing a CAC. Information about the social demographics of the sites is also presented. Incorporated in the discussion of methods are the considerations to keep in mind when interpreting the results of this evaluation.

Conceptual Framework for the Evaluation

In several major studies of the juvenile justice system, NCCD has adopted a heuristic model to organize its data collection and to structure the analysis of complex multi-site programs. This evaluation was organized through this paradigm that consists of the key elements of program development. The five components of this analytic model are shown in Figure 2-1 and are described below:

Context:

The set of environmental forces, organizational issues, and policy assumptions that conceptually define the distinctive features of the CAC concept. Included are policy assumptions guiding the mission of CACs. Also considered will be political forces, fiscal constraints, and organizational factors affecting CAC development.

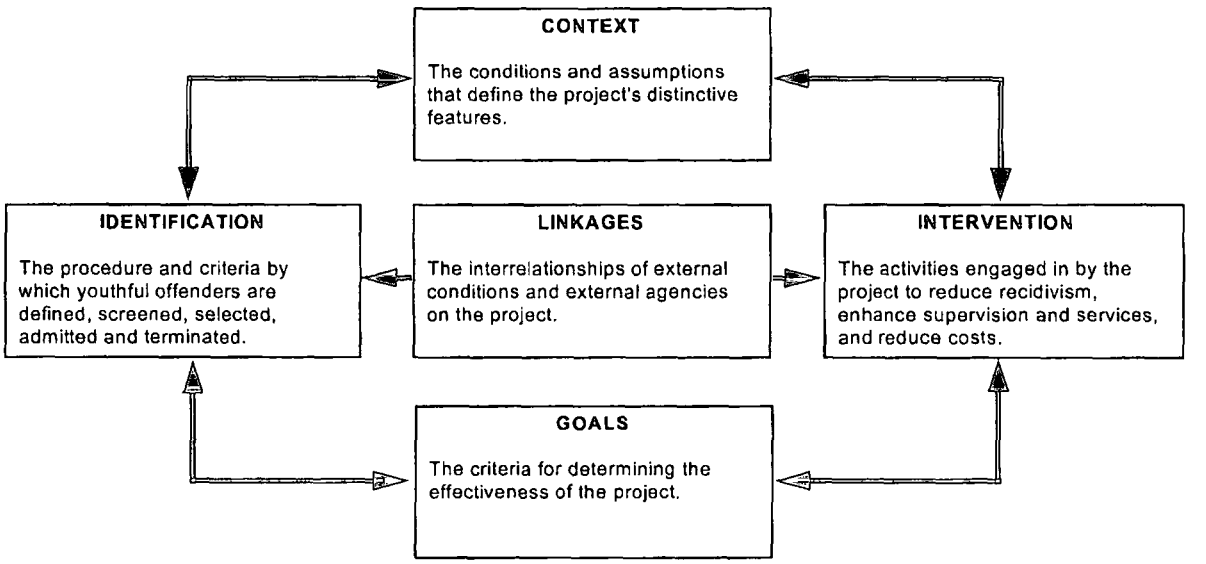
Identification:

The combination of techniques, procedures and criteria used to identify, screen, assess, and refer juveniles to the CAC and other services or sanctions.

Intervention:

The full range of programs or system processing reforms utilized to meet the objectives of the CAC program.

PROGRAM EVALUATION ELEMENTS



Linkages:

Formal and informal relationships and agreements that may hinder or help the establishment of the new CAC or the modification of existing facilities. Linkages may include cooperative or conflictual relationships among the lead implementing agency, law enforcement, prosecutors, public defenders, court officials, probation officers and other case managers, substance abuse or mental health service providers, parents, state or county juvenile justice officials, and community leaders.

Goals:

The measurable outcomes of the CAC as defined by OJJDP and the CAC sites.

Ideally, this CAC implementation effort should possess a high level of internal consistency among its program elements. For example, methods of client selection for various referrals (Identification) should be logically related to core assumptions about the purposes of the CAC (Context) and the services that are provided (Intervention). Observations of incongruities among the major program elements led the research team to probe the reasons for these apparent contradictions. Analysis of the forces leading to program elements being inconsistent or "out of sync" provided a powerful analytic tool to interpret the results of the outcome evaluation.

Comprehensive data collection on changes in the program elements over time allowed for a dynamic assessment of internal and external forces throughout the life of the program. The NCCD process evaluation tracked program changes over time and was linked to measurable outcomes. We know that CAC implementation will be shaped by many contingencies, events and external forces, as well as by explicit policy and program changes encouraged by the local planning or advisory committee, OJJDP, and technical assistance providers. By comprehensively recording the circumstances in which major program elements change, the NCCD analytic approach helps to account for observed outcomes and also helps to develop a common language to discuss CAC components and issues.

NCCD has turned this analytic model into specific research questions. The questions were reviewed and refined by the advisory group as well as by leaders at the program sites. These questions provided the guiding framework from which the data were collected. The results section was also organized according to the specific research questions under each of the five components of the program evaluation. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of the research questions).

Data Sources, Procedures And Data Collection

Multiple data collection methods were used to gather the information needed to answer the research questions. The various data collection strategies are described in detail below. Specific procedures and response rates are also provided.

System Trends

Data and information from official records and reports were gathered to develop a profile of the four counties participating in the evaluation. Specifically, we compiled data from juvenile courts, divisions of youth corrections, departments of juvenile justice, and law enforcement agencies to examine arrest, detention and court processing trends. Specific sources for Jefferson County and Denver included Colorado Division of Youth Correction; Colorado Bureau of Investigation Annual Report; and Colorado Judicial Branch Annual Reports: Statistical Supplements. Data for Lee County and Orange County, Florida came from the research division of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. System trends were examined based on gender, ethnicity and offense group for the four sites.

Key Leaders' Interviews

NCCD asked CAC Directors to identify key leaders from the juvenile justice system and other systems involved in planning and implementation of the CAC including:

- Law Enforcement
- Court (probation, judges)
- District/State Attorney
- Public Defender
- Detention Center
- Community-based Organizations
- City/County Government
- School District
- Mental Health
- Social Services

NCCD conducted face-to-face interviews with these leaders using an open-ended questionnaire. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The initial interviews were conducted within the first two months of the evaluation. Questions for the initial interviews centered on the planning process and objectives. To assess change over time, NCCD conducted follow-up interviews 12 months after the initial interview. These interviews focused on aspects and circumstances that had unfolded during the CAC process, including barriers and obstacles encountered and lessons learned. Table 2-1 shows the number of interviews that were conducted at baseline and 12 months later.

Table 2-1
Key Leader Interviews

	Denver	Lee County	Jefferson County	Orlando
Baseline	11	12	9	12
Follow-Up	8	8	6	10

Youth and Family Interviews

To profile the experiences of youths who entered the CAC, NCCD conducted face-to-face interviews with youths and face-to-face or telephone interviews with respective parents/guardians in the enhancement sites (Jefferson County and Orlando). A sample of youths and their respective family members was conveniently sampled for a structured interview between May 1998 through December 1998. The protocol consisted of NCCD field interviewers approaching youths after they had been through the assessment process, but were still at the assessment center awaiting pickup or transport. The interviews were conducted at various times during the day and evening and on the weekends. Participants were asked to voluntarily participate in an interview for evaluation purposes only. Confidentiality was assured as the consent form (with the child's name) was kept completely separate from the numbered interview. A $5 pass to a local movie theater was given upon completion of the interview. Typically, the interviews lasted about 45 minutes.

Efforts were also made to conduct interviews with the youth's parent or guardian at the CAC. If a face-to-face interview was not possible, then the interviewer contacted the parent/guardian to schedule a phone interview at a later, convenient time. Family interviews averaged between 30 to 45 minutes.

The protocol included an introductory script that all interviewers used to ensure consistency in procedures and covering of confidentiality issues. The questionnaire was designed to capture important elements of the CAC process, as perceived by the youth and family, in a range of areas including: basic background and demographics information; physical and emotional health, drug use, educational history; past and present delinquent activities, stressful life events, and circumstances of recent arrest. The interview protocol included open-ended and close-ended questions from various instruments. The instrument was designed using items taken from Delbert Elliott's Self-Reported Delinquency Scale, the Comprehensive Adolescent Severity Inventory designed by Kathy Meyers, Girls Interview Questionnaire developed by Leslie Acoca, the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire by C. Attkisson, Index of Family Relations by Walter Hudson, Attitude Toward Any Institution by I. Kelly, as well as items developed specifically for this interview. The instrument was pilot tested on several youths for face validity prior to implementation.

At the Jefferson County assessment center, a total of 46 youths were approached and asked to participate in the evaluation at the CAC. Due to a variety of reasons (i.e., parents came to pick up youth, missing contact due to logistical reasons) we were only able to conduct 36 youth interviews. We interviewed parents/guardians of all youth interviewed except for three who were not interested. The majority of the family interviews were conducted by phone.

In Orlando, 102 youths were approached and asked to participate in the evaluation. Four declined to participate because they were either tired or didn't want to answer any more questions; one declined because his mother told him not to answer any questions; one was deaf; one was too high on drugs; and three were picked up prior to interview completion. Consequently, the net number of completed interviews was 92. Getting family members to agree to be interviewed was a little more difficult. NCCD was not able to interview the parent/guardian of 12 youths. Two spoke only Spanish and several declined because they were simply not interested or didn't have a telephone. However, the majority of the family interviews were conducted by phone. Eighty parent/guardian interviews were completed.

For follow-up purposes, NCCD interviewers asked participants to provide names and telephone numbers of at least 3 individuals whom we could contact to help locate the whereabouts of the client in six months. Using this information, interviewers made repeated telephone contact attempts to reach the client and arranged a convenient time to do the follow-up interview. As with the initial interview, a $5 gift certificate to a local movie theater was given to participants who completed the follow-up interview.

Follow-up interviews were conducted at the participants' homes or at another agreed upon location. Questions in the follow-up interview centered on services that the youths received as well as their satisfaction with those services and participants felt that their needs were met.

Follow-up contacts and getting the clients to participate in the follow-up interview proved to be extremely difficult at both sites. The chief obstacle was inability to make phone contact with the participants because of phone disconnection or incorrect phone numbers. NCCD interviewers also tried knocking on participants' doors but that too, proved unsuccessful. In Orlando, NCCD interviewers were able to contact only half of the original 92 youths and families and succeeded in conducting follow-up interviews with 12 youths and 21 parents/guardians. This also proved to be the case in Jefferson County where follow-up interviews were completed for only 9 youths and 9 family members of the original 36 interviewed. Clearly the sample size should be taken into account when interpreting the findings from the interviews.

Organizational Surveys

NCCD designed surveys to gather information from individuals in various organizations involved in CAC operations but not interviewed in the key leader interviews (e.g., patrol officers, case managers). The measures were developed based on the research questions. Key

leaders were contacted by letter or phone and asked for assistance in distributing the survey to staff or colleagues within their organization. Copies of the survey and individual prepaid envelopes were then mailed to the key leaders. To increase the response rate, NCCD made second phone calls to key leaders, asking them to remind staff and colleagues to complete a survey. In several instances, surveys were mailed twice.

The surveys consisted of questions about the JAC and its services, including the impact it has had in the community, the influence it has had in fostering collaboration with other agencies, the goals and objectives and whether they were met. Surveys were five pages long and took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The surveys were tailored to the specific type of organization and some questions were tailored; for instance, the question about changes in school performance was asked only of school administrators and those completing a school survey. However, questions about operations, system changes and goals were standardized across all organizations. Surveys were also completely anonymous. Names were not included in the survey and individuals could not be identified except for position in the organization. Table 2-2 presents the number of surveys that were completed by the different types of organizations.

Table 2-2
Survey Responses to Organizational Questionnaire

	JEFFERSON COUNTY		ORLANDO	
	Sent	Returned	Sent	Returned
Law Enforcement	130	79	220	71
Criminal Justice Agency	11	3	25	10
School	17	10	4	1
Service Provider	13	7	56	12
Staff	28	22	200	75

Additionally, the CAC directors at the two enhancement sites were contacted for a structured phone interview lasting 30-45 minutes. Questions covered such issues as: staff training, budget and fiscal spending, quality assurance, collaboration, and support.

Case File Review

NCCD conducted case file reviews on a random sample of cases in the two enhancement sites. The sample selection for the case file review was slightly different in the two sites. However, for both sites, we retroactively collected case file data on cases coming into the CAC over a five-month period, from January to May 1998. Given the small population in Jefferson County, roughly the entire population for those five months was included (N=520) in our case

file sample. In Orlando, the population entering the CAC was much larger, so we randomly selected ten percent of the monthly intake, or approximately 650 youths over those five months. We also completed case file reviews on all youths who were part of the interview sample. Table 2-3 shows the number of case files that we found and reviewed.

Table 2-3
Number of Cases in the Case File Review Sample

Case Files	Jefferson County	Orlando
Random Sample	520	650
Final Sample	331	546
TASC Cases	NA	80
Interview Sample	36	51

From the original 650 random sample in Orlando, files for 546 cases were found and completed. In Orlando, we also conducted a more in-depth review of cases that were known to be TASC case managed (n=80). This allowed for a closer examination of contacts and referrals to services. The case file review was conducted by reviewing the information contained in the files at the JAC and at the Department of Juvenile Justice, and translating this information to NCCD data collection forms. These forms included items that were designed to answer the identification and intervention research questions. For instance, forms elicited information about assessments– types and whether they were completed, whether consent forms were completed and signed, referral to services, contact information, and offense information (prior, current, and subsequent). Of the 92 interviewed youths, only 51 TASC files (indicating assessments were completed) were found.

In Jefferson County, 169 cases were dropped from the random sample taken from the automated data system because they did not represent youths who were referred or transported to the CAC, but just those screened by telephone regarding detention eligibility. As information on assessments, referral to services and contacts was already contained in the automated management information system, case file review was completed by transferring information from the Jefferson County District Attorney's database, which has offense related data, to an NCCD form.

Automated Management Information System

NCCD requested extracts from the enhancement sites' automated management information system to run analyses on assessment, services and recidivism. We reviewed two

databases in Jefferson County. The first database at the assessment center was created in January 1997 by a staff member. This database was used to record limited information on cases. Prior to that, another database was used only intermittently because staff did not deem it to be useful. This database has three separate tables consisting of demographic, criminal justice, and disposition information on juveniles who have had contact with the CAC. The criminal justice table, or "Charges" table, consists of case, offense charge, and court information. Disposition information included outcomes about the release, transfer, and services provided to juveniles. The database is not a single flat file, and the tables can be merged based on two identifying case numbers. Each juvenile who visits the CAC is given a unique client identification number; similarly, each visit to the CAC is given a unique CAC case identification number. Multiple visits can thus be identified for single individuals. In this database, unique identifiers were used for transport cases but not for referrals. A referral may either be a new case (the unique identifier correctly identifies it as so) or based on a transport case (the unique identifier incorrectly identifies it as a new case). Likewise, for a youth who comes back on a referral after an initial referral, we could not determine whether it was for a new charge or an existing one.

The Jefferson County JAC has recently begun using a new data system which seems to address some of the problems listed above. This new database, called the CAC database, became fully operative on July 1, 1998. The data was backfilled to 1997, and the CAC database currently has all 1998 data as well as 80 percent of the 1997 data. This database contains information on demographics, assessment, needs, referrals, case processing, and outcomes, among other essential data. A major upgrade from the old database, this new JAC database also contains screening information for detention.

In examining and running analyses using this database, we encountered many issues of data quality and integrity. Numerous duplicates, unknowns and empty entries make the data suspect, for instance, duplicates with unknown referral dates prohibited matching service referrals with the event date. We also found that we could not accurately link several critical tables. As an example, sometimes a particular charge and date could not be linked to a particular client. As a proxy measure, we looked at the progress notes and made a best guess estimate. Another serious data issue concerns the inconsistency of variable definition. For instance, the intake date was defined differently according to which case manager entered the data. It could mean the date on which the youth was brought to the CAC or the date on which a case was opened, among other definitions. The date in the Event table was identified to be a potential date on which the youth was brought to the CAC, however similarly, it was not defined consistently by all. Several types of data manipulation were necessary in order to structure the data for analysis. As this database was new, the staff still needed training on its use. More safeguards could be built to address data entry errors.

In Jefferson County, we also received a data extract of all juveniles arrested in one police municipality. This data was used for recidivism comparisons of youths brought to the JAC and those not brought there.

In Orlando, there were six separate databases functioning at the JAC. NCCD had access to four, two of which were useful to this evaluation. We were unable to use the database called

the Case Manager Database which contained demographics, insurance, drug testing, treatment recommendations, and juvenile justice information. NCCD opted not to use this source because data is entered intermittently at the case manager's discretion and cannot be relied upon. We were unable to use a second database called the Mental Health Substance Abuse data (MHSA). Unfortunately, because the youth's name was not entered reliably in the MHSA database, we were unable to match it with other accessible data. Similarly, the social security number is used to identify youths in the MHSA, but not in the other data. The databases not available to us for this report were maintained by the Truancy Center, the Addictions Receiving Facility, and the statewide Criminal Information System. The two automated systems used are called the Intake and the TASC databases. They are described below.

The "Intake" database at the center contains the universe of juveniles coming to the JAC through an arrest and booking process. Started in 1994, this database is maintained by the Orange County Department of Corrections and can be accessed by Corrections, DJJ, and HSA staff. This database contains basic demographics, intake date, and offense information.

Data on whether a youth received an assessment or treatment recommendation is provided in the TASC database system. The TASC database began operation at the end of 1996. The data also indicate whether a youth was brought in as a booking or at-large case. Though there are variables present to indicate rearrest in the six months following the assessment, this data is rarely entered.

Unfortunately, during this evaluation period, there was no unique identifier in use for the various data systems used by the Orlando JAC. There has been discussion and some progress in adding a field for Juvenile Justice Information System identifiers (JJIS#) across databases at the JAC, a unique number assigned once a youth becomes involved in the Criminal Justice system. This will only partially solve the problem of merging data sources however, as not all youth brought to JAC are there for criminal matters, and as such do not have a JJIS#.

Clearly there are limitations and concerns regarding the various data sources in use at the Orlando JAC. Of particular concern is the difficulty in matching cases across the Intake database, the TASC database, and the MHSA database. While DOC Intake Database matched using name and date of birth, the MHSA database does not require that a name be entered. Conversely, the MHSA data does require a social security number, while this data is not a required field for the Intake data, or the TASC data. There has been some reluctance on the part of the Department of Corrections to add social security numbers to their data system, and TASC staff would have to rely on self-reports for this data. Thus, the JAC is still far from the ideal of possessing an integrated management information system. An additional problem with the MHSA data is that few fields are required for completion of the data form on which data are entered. This being the case, important information regarding JAC services (such as specific service recommendations) was not included.

CHAPTER 3

PLANNING FOR A COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT CENTER DENVER, COLORADO AND LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Planning for and developing a community assessment center in the two planning demonstration sites was a long process. Over the years it was at times, contentious, and at times, truly collaborative. Although the sites are clearly different, there are sufficient commonalties in planning processes to permit joint discussion. As in the rest of this report, each chapter follows the heuristic model used for many process evaluations completed by NCCD. First, and by far the most detailed section of this chapter, is the context for the CAC. Obviously the context for CAC implementation makes up the bulk of the planning process. This section is followed by a discussion of how the sites plan to identify appropriate juveniles and/or families for intervention, what the planned linkages among agencies will be, the specifics of the intervention plan, and the planned goals of the new assessment center.

Context

Description of the Communities and Juvenile Justice Trends During the Planning Phase

The communities of Denver, Colorado and Ft. Myers, Florida and the counties surrounding these cities are somewhat different in population size. According to the 1990 US Census, Denver had a population of about 470,000 and Lee County about 335,000. By 1998, the Census Bureau estimated that Denver would have a total population of nearly 500,000 and Lee County's population would be about 400,000. In 1990, both counties had a youth population (10 to 17 years old) which comprised about 8% of the total population. In Lee County this translates to 27,000 young people in Denver had approximately 39,000. Also, both cities are tourist destinations, Denver for the skiing close-by and Lee County for the Gulf coast.

Other than general population size, the two counties are substantially different. Denver has a much larger urban population than Lee County. The race and ethnic breakdown of the population is also quite different. In Denver, over one-half (59 percent) are White, 23 percent Hispanic, 14 percent African American, three percent Asian, and one percent American Indian. Lee County is less racially diverse with 85 percent White, eight percent African American, and six percent Hispanic.

The political climate is also quite different. In general, politics in Denver tend to be more liberal than the politics in Lee County. Lee County and Florida in general have a larger population of Republicans than Denver. Also, Lee County has a large population of senior citizens as many older Americans retire there.

The juvenile justice climate is a reflection of the overall politics in each state. Similar to the national trends, both states have made incarceration and adult sentences more likely for juveniles than in the past. Florida, however, has been the leading state to direct file young people to the criminal courts and incarcerate them in adult facilities.

Arrest trends show there were substantially more arrests in Denver than Lee County. While the number of arrests for delinquency in Denver is about 10,000 per year, in Lee County they fluctuate around 4,000. It is important to remember that while the age of juvenile jurisdiction is under 18 for both states, many more young people are sentenced as adults in Florida than in Colorado.

Juvenile arrests trends show an erratic picture in Denver, with a huge fall in 1996 (see Figure 3-1). This appears to be due to a data collection/entry error. However, there was a definite increase in overall arrests in 1997 and 1998. Table 3-1 shows this increase was across offense types. Ignoring the inaccurate data for 1996, in 1997 and 1998 there were huge increases from the early 1990's in three categories: violent felonies, drug felonies, and status offenses.

Concomitant with these arrest increases were increases in delinquency petitions and admissions to state commitment facilities. The number of petitions filed (both dependency and delinquency) increased from 1,800 in 1990 to 2,800 in 1997. Figure 3-2 shows that detention admissions and the average daily population in detention peaked in 1993, and then returned to 1990 levels. Admissions to detention are mainly controlled by the detention screening instrument instituted with Senate Bill 94 in an attempt to reduce the detention overcrowding problem in Colorado.

The juvenile arrest picture in Lee County is much less volatile than Denver's. As Figure 3-3 shows arrests increased slightly during this time period, by about 300 youths. Detention admissions decreased slightly.

The arrests of girls increased at a faster rate than the arrest of boys. There was no change in number of arrest of African American youths, but the number of White youths arrested increased somewhat. However, while African Americans make up approximately 8 percent of the population in the county, they account for about 50 percent of arrests.

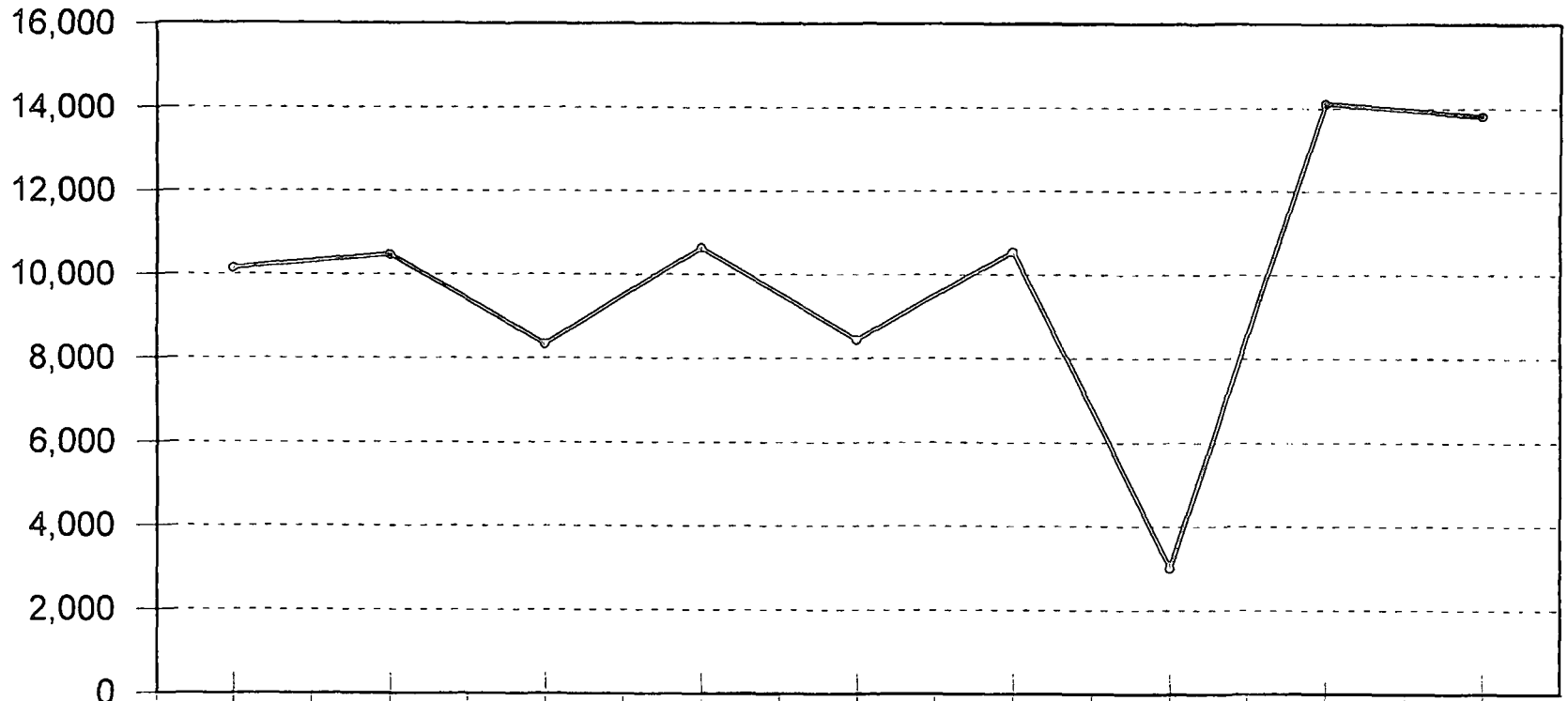
Table 3-1
Juvenile Arrest Trends by Offense Type in Denver County, 1990-1998

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Violent Felony	173	144	84	165	64	13	0	340	233
Weapons Felony	267	271	281	287	113	92	31	264	212
Drug Felony	180	212	223	489	47	596	186	926	962
Property Felony	2,483	2,596	2,007	2,649	1,928	1,537	648	2,728	2,952
Person Misd.	1,004	988	947	1,157	880	1,405	215	1,446	1,208
Drug Misd.	135	216	260	266	285	285	84	293	340
Property Misd.	7	7	5	4	2	0	0	0	6
Other Misd.	2,937	3,101	2,370	2,949	2,470	2,916	801	2,910	3,122
Status	2,962	3,205	2,161	2,675	2,662	3,704	1,048	5,207	4,781

Source: CBI annual report. Years are calendar.

Disposition trends show an interesting phenomenon. Figure 3-4 shows that the number of youth being diverted to JASP (Juvenile Alternative Services Program) dropped by nearly half, compared to its previous years figures, mirroring the sudden increase in the number of youth being placed on community control or commitment. According to key leaders in Lee County, fewer youths were placed in JASP because inappropriate youths were placed in the program thus rendering it ineffective. Also, the number of youths being transferred to adult court has decreased by almost half since 1993.

Figure 3-1
Juvenile Arrests in Denver County, 1990-1998

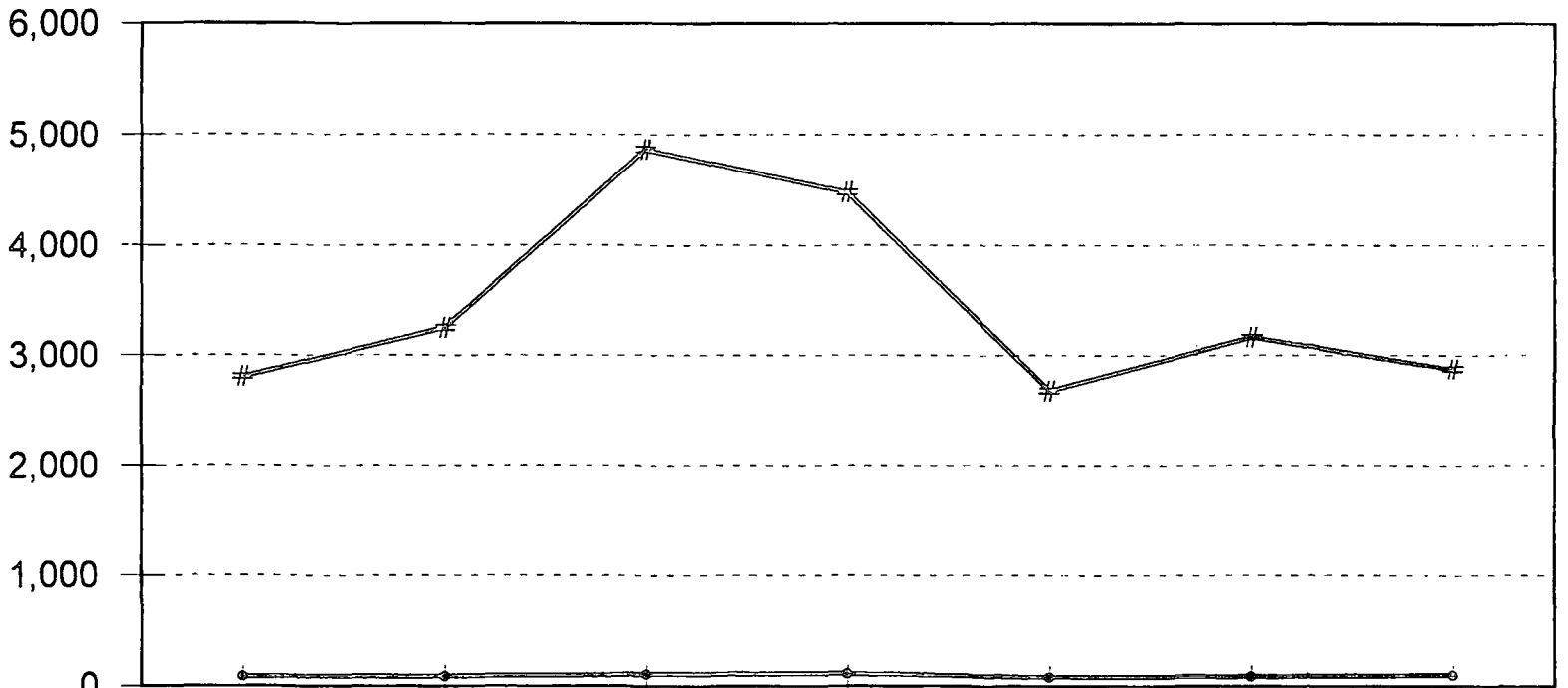


	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Arrest	10,148	10,470	8,341	10,641	8,451	10,548	3,013	14,114	13,816

Juvenile Arrests Source: CBI annual report . Years are calendar.

[f:\users\everyone\cac\planning.pr4]

Figure 3- 2
Detention Admissions and Average Daily Population in Denver County, 1991-1997



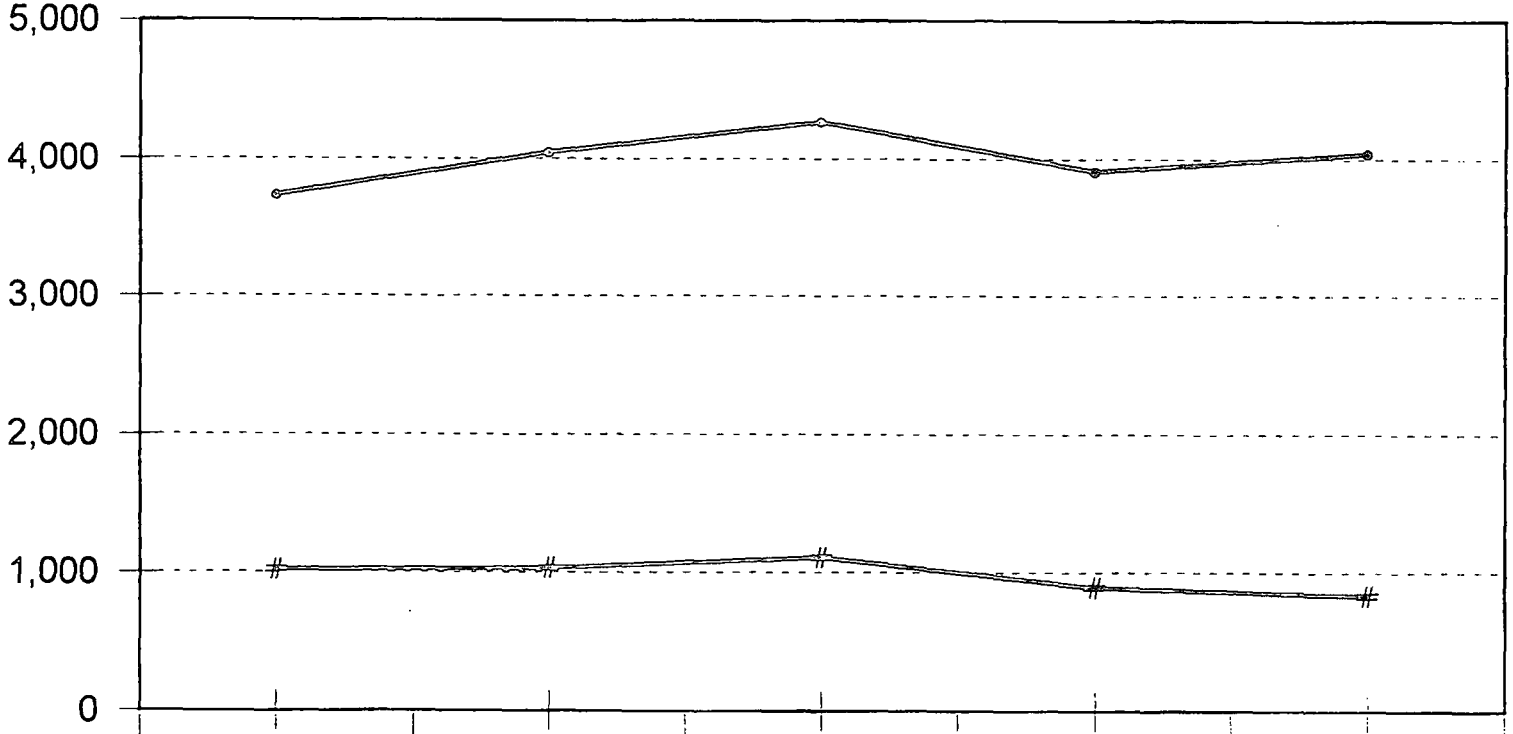
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
** Actual ADP	88.6	86.6	108.7	113.2	78.4	88.1	98.4
* Actual ADM	2,802	3,249	4,866	4,480	2,674	3,163	2,870

Source: SB94 N-Trails 1998 Report, OMNI Institute

* ADM (number of admissions to detention facility). In fiscal year.
** ADP (average daily detention population). In fiscal year.

[f:\users\everyone\cac\planning.pr4]

Figure 3-3
Juvenile Arrest and Detention Admission in Lee County, FY 1993-1998

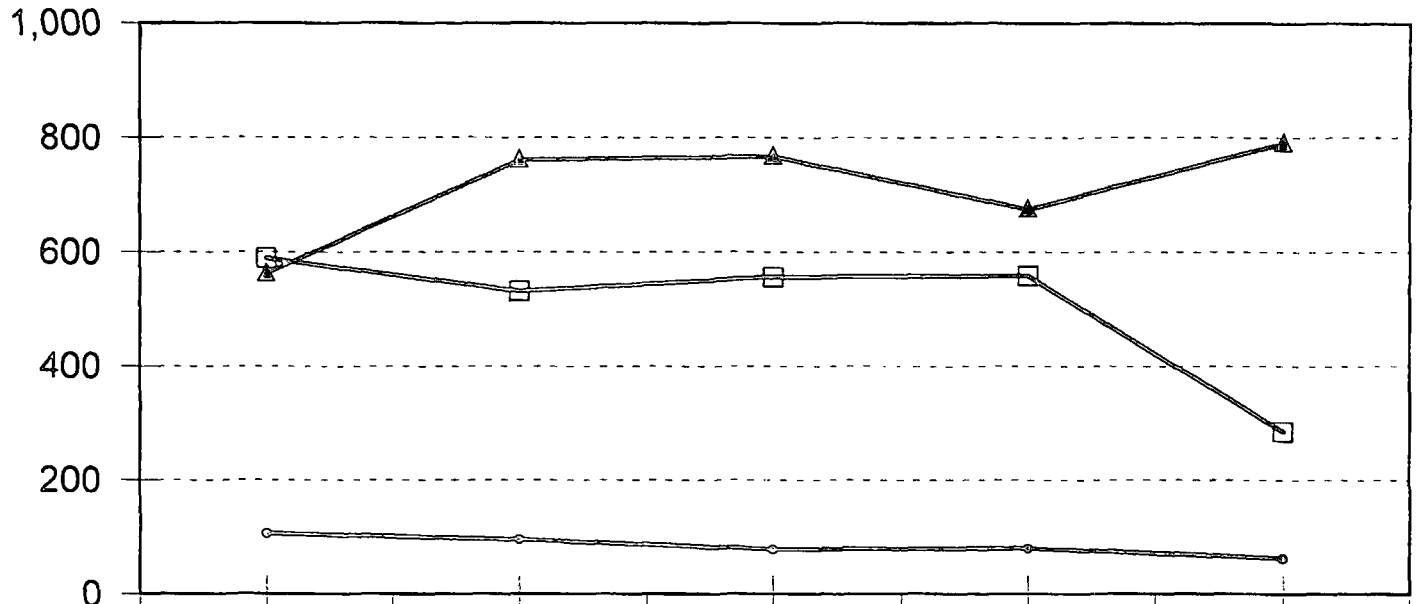


	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Total Arrest	3,733	4,044	4,270	3,910	4,041
Detention Admissions	1,016	1,031	1,108	893	834

Source: DJJ Burea of Research: Profile of Delinquency, March 1999

[f:\users\everyone\cac\planning.pr4]

Figure 3-4
Disposition Trends in Lee County, FY 1993-1998



	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Youths Transferred to Adult Court	107	96	78	80	62
* Youth Diverted to JASP	589	531	556	558	285
Youths Committed to Community Control	562	761	767	674	790

Source: DJJ Burea of Research: Profile of Delinquency, March 1999

* Judicial and non-judicial

[f:\users\everyone\cac\planning.pr4]

In sum, both counties were experiencing change in the composition of their juvenile justice populations and programming/disposition decisions. In Denver arrests for some serious offenses and status offenses were increasing. At the same time, the detention population was being controlled by a screening instrument. Denver clearly needed a solution to the problem of increasing arrests without increasing the detention population. In Lee County, juvenile arrests did not increase, but the number of youths on probation did. The system was changing and an assessment center was viewed as a way to fulfill many needs.

Impetus for Developing an Assessment Center

Data from the NCCD's interviews of key leaders indicated several reasons for developing a CAC. For Denver, the impetus was the problem of rising juvenile crime rates and the system's current deficiencies in handling delinquent and "at risk" youths. The "Summer of Violence" in 1993 was a pivotal factor. During that summer there were a few highly publicized violent juvenile crime incidents. These incidents were accompanied by a media storm of bad press on the efficacy of the juvenile justice system. To deal with increased public attention to juvenile justice, a group of agencies met and began working together to devise solutions. The joint effort resulted in the Denver Juvenile Justice Integrated Treatment Network (The Network).

Although a CAC type model had been discussed by several systems and providers in the mid-to-late 1980's, no action had been taken. This "Summer of Violence" was clearly a key catalyst in the county's move toward agencies coming together to develop the assessment center concept. Thus, the CAC idea was resurrected by The Network in the mid-1990's.

In Lee County, the OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy to address serious, violent, and chronic juvenile delinquency, was a key beginning point for creating the CAC. Prior to the Comprehensive Strategy planning process other groups worked on juvenile justice issues, but not in such an organized planning process. The Comprehensive Strategy fit the needs of Lee County because they "realized that they needed to come together to discuss what the problems from various perspectives, from juveniles themselves, clergy, education, law enforcement, and service providers, among others." The Comprehensive Strategy facilitated addressing two major issues: 1) preventing youth from becoming delinquent by focusing prevention programs on at-risk youth; and 2) improving the juvenile justice system response to delinquent offenders through a system of graduated sanctions and a continuum of treatment alternatives.

Improving the justice system's response to delinquents and "at risk" youths was an important component of each site's decision to pursue opening a CAC. Denver and Lee County faced their deficiencies head on, and through their CAC development process had high hopes for ameliorating the problems. The following is a combined list of system deficiencies listed by site as contributing factors for instituting an assessment center:

1. young people falling through the cracks;
2. gaps in availability of services;

3. lack of communication among agencies;
4. confusion over the system, especially by family members; and
5. need for greater collaboration and integration of services.

The planning sites hoped that a CAC would bring about important changes. From the key leaders comments, we culled the following list of things they wanted to change. First, they wanted a vehicle to bring more funding to their communities to serve the needs of young people and their families. Second, they wanted to have better collaboration among agencies to reduce duplication of efforts by both the families and the agencies involved. As an example, a community member said, "there's a great lack of communication between agencies, and that would be one of the real benefits to something like this. I think more of these agencies are going to start to learn to work together and to respect each other's expertise, rather than seeing it as a power struggle of me being in charge and you doing what I say, and realizing that strength is in all of them working together." Third, they wanted better information on which to base juvenile justice dispositions. Judges especially expressed a great need to have better and more timely assessments done on the children and/or families. Fourth, many people expressed a desire to go beyond the traditional domains of the juvenile justice system. Denver wanted to centrally involve the family and the community in any CAC process. Also, Denver key leaders saw the CAC as an extension of the Substance Abuse Treatment Network that they had been working on for years. Lee County originally planned to have the agency working on child abuse/neglect co-located because so many children in the delinquency population also have been abused or neglected. Subsequently Lee County decided to develop another program to work with dependency issues; that program is to be linked with the CAC upon implementation.

Organizational Relationships Prior to CAC Planning

Lee County key leaders candidly stated that historically, the response to juvenile delinquency has been one of fragmentation, duplication of services, and organizations vying for the same grant dollars. One key leader said "we had lots of community groups going in lots of different directions, pulling against each other, and pointing fingers at each other. We met the enemy and the enemy was us." Lee County's juvenile justice system was characterized as "rigidly drawn agency turf's and budgetary categories, a situation that contributes to fragmented and often wasteful deployment of scarce public resources." Additionally, in Florida, the social services agency which had traditionally run juvenile justice programs was split up and the Department of Juvenile Justice was formed. This added to fragmentation and a re-calibration of organizational relationships.

In Denver, the situation was similarly fragmented and disjointed. According to key leaders, Denver's system had multiple points of entry; lacked adequate prevention and intervention services; suffered from fragmentation and categorical funding of services; and made it difficult for families to navigate and access help. As a consequence, youths penetrated further and further into the juvenile justice system before they received services.

In response to this situation, numerous collaborative efforts were initiated. In Denver, one collaborative effort was The Network discussed earlier The Network represents an approach to delivering comprehensive, integrated services to substance-abusing juvenile offenders in Denver. Juvenile justice agencies and substance abuse treatment agencies came together to build a plan that would address the juvenile's needs for mental health services, primary health care, pro-social activities, education, employment and vocational training through a comprehensive assessment. The Network included representatives from juvenile justice agencies; Denver city agencies (Denver's Safe City); the Colorado Department of Human Services; and community-based treatment and service providers. Denver Juvenile Court is the leading agency for The Network. The CAC planning stemmed directly from the work of The Network.

The Planning Process

In 1994, the Deputy State Attorney in Lee County convened a group of leaders in the community to discuss the development of an assessment center. The group consisted of law enforcement representatives including the Sheriff, various other law enforcement agencies (municipal or city police departments, Florida highway patrol, port authority), Human Services, Child Protection, Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Mental Health providers, and Addiction Services. It later expanded to include interested citizens, families and youths and members of the County Commissioners through the statutory mandated juvenile justice planning forum of the Lee County Juvenile Justice Council. Newspaper and media representatives were also invited to participate in the planning process.

The Deputy State Attorney and the Sheriff spearheaded the planning effort through the Lee County Juvenile Justice Council. The Sheriff brought everyone together while the Deputy State Attorney kept the County Commissioners abreast of community support and issues around the CAC development. The planning process continued for several years with on-going discussion around design, perception of what an assessment center should be (i.e., intervention versus prevention focused, target population, and funding streams). It often took months to get resolution on certain key issues. During the planning process, multiple barriers impeded agreement on the CAC design and function. These included: 1) agreeing on the site location; 2) determining who was going to pay for it and how much support the County was willing to provide; 3) agreeing on the size of the CAC; and 4) deciding what information would be collected and shared in the management information system.

In Denver, the planning/design team consisted of initially 20 members and grew to include representatives from many facets of the community and different types of agencies, including families and community/grass-roots neighborhood representatives. In fact, at the first design meeting there were about 80 attendees. They eventually created subcommittees (Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug; Center for High Risk Youth; Education; Health Care; Integrated Human Services; Juvenile Justice; Mental Health; Pro-Social; and Vocational/Employment) to tackle difficult issues. Relying on lessons learned from the planning process in developing The Network and integrated services for substance-abusing juvenile offenders, they intentionally kept the team charged with the actual design and implementation

plan small and tightly defined. This team was to present their evolving plans to various stakeholders and collaborators. All decisions were based on a consensus-based decision model. The Network also encouraged and sponsored interdisciplinary cross-training to team members. Representatives across different agencies exchanged information about their practices and philosophies within their own agency.

For the planning process, Denver hired outside consultants to help build the team and facilitate the process. The outside consultant played an important role in the planning process. For instance, many individuals said that having an outside facilitator was a very good and positive experience and that the facilitator was able to move the process and discussion along. One meeting participant said, "They help to keep people on time and on track." However, some collaboration members that felt that the facilitators made the discussion more task oriented than process oriented. Even though the consensus process sometimes made planning difficult, most key leaders expressed content with the process and ownership of the assessment center.

Another key element in Denver which was mentioned in terms of coalescing the process and furthering consensus building was having memoranda of understanding. In Denver, these MOUs exist among The Network members, but not elsewhere. As part of the planning for the CAC, other systems began using MOUs making for a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities as well as allowing for cross training.

Individuals in both sites expressed a need for good leadership in managing the planning process. Denver and Lee County took different approaches to this leadership. In Denver, the "leadership" was generally referred to as the two individuals hired through The Network to facilitate the planning process. These individuals managed positive relationships with all the key players. As one service provider said, "We have a good leader (family-friendly person) who is able to bring people from different systems to a common ground." In Lee County, the "leadership" role was fulfilled by the Deputy State Attorney. Many key leaders spoke of his leadership, along with help from the Sheriff, as being paramount to making the CAC plan come to fruition.

Both Denver and Lee County spent more than two years planning the assessment center. As one participant said about the planning process, "It has been frustrating. Too many meetings and things drag on. But I think it has been a good process for incorporating everybody's thoughts and everyone having an opportunity to express how they feel. It has been an interesting experience and very helpful but it does slow things down."

Goals of the Planned Assessment Center

The overarching goals of the CAC expressed by key leaders were essentially the same in Denver and Lee County. One main goal of a CAC was prevention of delinquency or further delinquency. One judge said, "The assessment center would be useful in cases because we can identify the problem early on, determine if it is a family conflict and not a criminal justice

problem and get them the necessary services." A service provider commented that the CAC would be "available not only to the juvenile justice system and to the police and to the schools, but to the population in general so that they could avail themselves of the services earlier before they reach the point where a child has to be incarcerated."

Another main goal was to provide comprehensive services for youths and their families. Many service providers and community members we spoke with saw the CAC as a resource for families that need help, a resource center for the community. The theme of building on family strengths was very important in the design of the Denver CAC. Lee County's theme of a CAC is to have a resource for families to use even before their children become involved in the juvenile justice system and to direct services for those youths involved in the system. They envisioned that assessment instruments would be able to discriminate and determine needs, and enhance the individuality of the juveniles' treatment plans. Further, they saw the CAC as a conduit to share information and improve communication among different departments. In improving communication they believe they will reduce duplication of services by sharing information and improving interagency relationships.

Another goal of the CAC was to create a cost-effective response to juvenile crime. Many key leaders put cost saving as one of their critical goals. They believed that having services co-located and funding streams melded would reduce costs throughout the system.

And finally, a goal expressed by many criminal justice agency representatives was that the CAC would reduce the amount of time between arrest and treatment intervention by expediting processing within the system. In Lee County this includes saving police officer time by having a centralized drop off point for juveniles. In both planning sites this translates to assessments being conducted quickly and comprehensively, thus saving case processing time in the courts.

While the overarching goals were similar, the needs of the communities were somewhat different. Denver, for example, did not focus on obtaining a site for booking arrested juveniles, while a booking unit was an integral component for Lee County planners. Denver already had a centralized booking station for juveniles and their specific goals centered on creating a common, consistent, comprehensive assessment and service engagement process. Unlike Denver, building a new facility site in Lee County was a driving force behind the planning process. Denver, however, plans to build a centralized assessment center that would have booking capabilities, but this goal is long term.

Extent of CAC Acceptance and Buy-In

While everyone generally agreed that Lee County would benefit from an assessment center, there were four main issues engendered varying levels of support and buy-in from participating agencies and concerned parties. The first was the location of the property itself. Initially key players decided that the CAC should be housed in the "Corrections Corridor." The property was owned by the City of Ft. Myers. It seemed to be a good place since it was where

the detention center, Department of Corrections, Mental Health, and a halfway house were located. However, some concerned citizens and participants voiced concerns about the "corrections" feel to it. They also encountered water management problems that took almost a year to resolve. Although they were not part of the planning group, interested community members with County Commissioner support suggested a different site. The criminal justice agency participants felt that the suggested site was insufficient. Finally in April 1999, the County Commissioners indicated that they would appropriate $2.5 million to build a permanent CAC facility adjacent to the Lee County Jail in downtown Ft. Myers.

The second issue that prevented full early acceptance of the Lee County CAC centered around its actual design. During the early phases of the planning process, the commissioners hired a consultant to determine what everyone envisioned for the CAC. The original plan by the committee was that the consultant would incorporate everyone's input. The design became what was coined "the Taj-Mahal." It included a 40,000 square foot facility, addiction receiving beds, beds for abuse/neglect cases, crisis stabilization facilities, places to hold youths for assessment, secure places for arrested youths, nursing and medical components, food and laundry facilities, and a playground. As one person said, "Of course everybody asked for the pie in the sky and then the Commissioners got irate over the findings of the consultant and blamed it on the Deputy State Attorney who was spearheading the process." The debate went back and forth as to how big or encompassing the CAC should be.

The third factor was cost. According to the County Commissioners, cost is a big concern, especially the development of revenue streams to support the CAC. This was a major factor for the Commissioners since there was a "limited amount of money and various issues to fund." The Commissioners were also divided in terms of how much funding to put forth for the CAC.

Finally, there were differences in ideology. While the key leaders and planning group supported the notion that the CAC would include both prevention and intervention as detailed in OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy, there were other individuals that fought for less intervention. As one individual commented, "One group thought that all kids should be locked up and on the other end, another group thought that all kids should not be locked up regardless of what they do, and instead should be treated, and that early intervention should be in place." There were also a few who did not believe that the provider agencies (such as the non-profit that was likely to run the actual CAC) should be involved in the planning process whereas others believed that the process should include everyone. There was also a major philosophical difference concerning the sharing of information. One concerned citizen believed that dependency cases should not be a part of the CAC nor any sharing of information. Some also expressed concerns about the assessments, whether they had been validated and captured only the necessary information.

Developing the Denver model of a CAC was much less contentious. Because of the collaborative and inter-system reform efforts started by The Network and the coordinating council for integrated substance-abuse services, a CAC seemed the next logical step. In contrast to the circumstances and issues encountered in Lee County, getting buy-in, acceptance and support from key leaders, stakeholders and community members went relatively smoothly. Many individuals said that any resistance during the planning process centered around the

specific details of CAC implementation rather than the overall idea of CAC itself. As one service provider said, "We've probably encountered what I would view as resistance, it's not been a resistance really to the Assessment Center, but it may be resistance to someone's interpretation of how it should be managed." Since Denver did not focus on building a new facility, they did not have to deal with the great disagreement that usually arises because of location. However, when Denver began preliminary discussions regarding building a facility, they also encountered the common "not in my backyard" attitude.

Identification

Referrals to the CAC

In Lee County, it is planned that law enforcement will transport every arrested youth to the assessment center. Agencies such as social services, schools, and the juvenile courts may also refer youths to the CAC. It is intended that parents or guardians will be able to bring their children to the assessment center for assessment and assistance as well. The specific criteria to determine which youths qualify for CAC intervention is still in the planning phase.

Referrals to the Denver CAC will come from several sources. Different populations of youths will be "phased-in" depending on the referral source in the early start-up period. Although no youths will be directly transported to the CAC, the Denver Police Department will serve as a main referral source. The Safe Night Diversion program will also refer youths who are "at risk" of juvenile justice involvement. Many of these youths will have received a curfew ticket. The CAC will also take referrals directly from schools and parents/guardians.

The Target Population

In Denver, the initial target population will include 600 juvenile offenders and 200 at-risk youth over an 18 month period. A juvenile offender is defined as one who has involvement with the juvenile justice system (i.e., arrested, cited, pre-trial status, adjudicated, committed, or on parole). An at-risk youth is a young person who shows preliminary signs of delinquency, but who has not had an arrest or citation. They may have a history of running away, being truant or failing in school, or be defined as out of control by a parent, or just be in need of assistance. There will be a phase-in process with different youth populations over an 18 month period. For instance, the first population will include only first time state misdemeanors and non-violent felony offenders and youths who have committed a municipal citation of a delinquent nature. Phase Two involves repeat misdemeanors and non-violent felony offenders; habitual truancy cases; and municipal delinquent and non-delinquent youth. Walk-ins and call-ins from parents requesting assistance as well as juvenile fire setters (referred by Fire Department) will be the final population accessing CAC services in Phase Three.

With Lee County's focus on finding a site and funding to build a new facility, less attention has been paid to specific programmatic issues. The general target population will be all arrested youths within the City of Ft. Myers and the surrounding county. Originally the planning

committee had wanted to include dependent youth at the assessment center, but with the controversy surrounding their inclusion and the subsequent development of new program for these youths they will not be included in the CAC service population. However, it is intended that information will be shared between the two programs making dependency information available at the CAC through an integrated MIS. The assessment center will open doors to other non-delinquent youth, however exact procedures have not yet been specified.

Linkages

Agencies Collaborating to Plan the CAC

In Lee County, the collaborating agencies include members of the Lee County Juvenile Justice Council. This Council organizes all juvenile justice activities. Many individuals on this committee have worked on developing the CAC. The Chair is the Deputy State Attorney. There are also several law enforcement representatives from various departments (i.e., Sheriff, Cape Coral PD, Ft. Myers PD, Sanibel Police Department, Highway Patrol, Port Authority). In addition, Human Services, Child Protection, Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Mental Health providers, and a non-profit private agency called, Addiction Services, are also collaborating to implement a fully operational CAC. In committing to develop and implement a CAC, they have worked to lessen the traditional 'turf' boundaries involved in prevention and intervention efforts.

Similar to Lee County, the collaborating agencies in Denver represent a spectrum of services, from the Probation Department to grass-roots community-based organizations. Specifically these included: Access Behavioral Care (Mental Health managed care organization), the State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies, Denver Budget and Management Office, Denver City's Attorney's Office, Denver County Court and Probation, Denver Department of Social Services, Denver District Attorney's Office and Diversion Program, Denver Health Medical Center, Denver District Juvenile Court, Probation and Juvenile TASC program, Denver Juvenile Justice Integrated Treatment Network, Denver Police Department, Denver Public Schools, State Division of Criminal Justice, State Division of Youth Corrections, Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Gang Rescue and Support Project, Inter Neighborhood Cooperation, Mental Health Corporation of Denver, Office of the State Public Defender, Private Defense Attorneys, Denver Safe City Office and Diversion, School Based Health Clinics, and Volunteers of America. The Denver Juvenile Court will be the lead agency in running the assessment center.

Planned Funding Sources

Lee County has gone through many iterations of the CAC and as many iterations of the funding streams responsible for building, running, and maintaining the assessment center. In 1997, the Sheriff was able to get the legislature to earmark some funds for the operation of the CAC and 50 percent of matching funds for construction costs. Included in this package was the building of more juvenile commitment beds. There was much debate over the building and use

of these commitment beds as well as the appropriate site for such a facility. These debates lingered long enough for the available state funds to disappear. Currently, the county is funding $2.5 million to do the renovation and construction of a scaled down facility (8,800 square feet) from the original intention. Operations will be funded through a combination of sources: state and local government funds, grants, and in-kind contributions from participating agencies. Also, the Sheriff and the Department of Juvenile Justice entered into an agreement which initiates a $3 fee on all court cases to be used as operational dollars for the CAC. The agreement started in September 1996 and funds have been accruing.

Initially the Denver site will be funded through federal grant dollars and participating agencies. Since building a new facility is not planned and there is no need for a secure setting, the start up costs will be considerably less than Lee County.

Intervention

Assessment and Case Management Process

Currently personnel employed by the non-profit agency, Southwest Florida Addiction Services (SWFAS) assess youths for the juvenile court in Lee County. When the CAC begins, they will do the screening and assessments early in the process. Unless the State of Florida changes the requirements, all youths will be screened using the Substance Abuse Mental Health - 1 (SAMH-1), which is a short, initial screening tool. It has 14 questions with yes or no responses (e.g., cruelty to animals, sexual perpetrator, drug use, school problems, homicidal or suicidal ideation). It will be used to determine whether further assessment is needed. If further assessment is warranted, as is true in most cases, a SAMH-2 will be used. SAMH-2 provides more in-depth and additional information. The CAC will also develop additional questions that are thought to be important, but not covered in the standard instruments. Additional services provided by the Case Management team will include emergency domestic violence screenings, educational assessment, and information and referral services. In addition, there have been discussions regarding expanding the case assessment process to include substance abuse screening, physical and mental health screening, and diagnostic testing, as indicated and appropriate. Drug and alcohol urinalysis will also be conducted for arrested youth.

The assessment process may proceed to an intake conference, attended by a DJJ intake counselor and a representative from the SWFAS. Parents and youths would be asked to participate as the process is voluntary. Recommendations to the State Attorney will then be made. Parents and youths would agree to enter services prior to adjudication. One member said that the judge would look more favorably on these youths because they sought help than a youth who refused or who did not do well in the program. A court representative mentioned that currently, assessments are voluntary until the Judge orders a pre-disposition report. It was noted that some individuals may have to pay for referred services.

It is intended that all youths that have assessed needs will receive case management by the Lee County CAC. Case management services include linking youths to the appropriate services as indicated by the assessments.

In Denver, all youth and families voluntarily participating in the CAC will be assessed to identify needs and strengths. A family strengths based assessment will be developed by the assessment center staff. The Denver CAC is unique in that each youth will be assigned a family advocate who should provide support to the family and help them navigate through the system. This family advocate should be instrumental in facilitating the meeting of youth's needs since they will be aware of the issues and circumstances of the youth and his/her family. Each youth will also be provided case management which includes development of a treatment plan, referrals to appropriate services in the community, and ongoing monitoring and re-assessment to evaluate whether needs have been met satisfactorily.

Services Provided at the CAC and Hours of Operation

Co-located services at the currently planned Lee County CAC will include booking, detention screening, urinalysis, mental health screening, assessment, and some form of case management. Based on the findings of the assessments, the CAC staff will make referrals to community agencies as needed (e.g., counseling to appropriate agencies) and conduct follow-up to these referrals. Located in downtown Ft. Myers as a centralized booking facility, the CAC will operate 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

In Denver, the CAC will provide services to non-detainable youth who come to the center voluntarily. The services will include assessments, case management, and follow-up. Referrals to services will be made by the case manager. The center will operate mainly during regular business hours, although they intend to expand their hours if necessary. They also intend to provide services for some detained youths and families at the detention center or after release from detention.

Monitoring of Service Providers

The research and evaluation staff at the Lee County Sheriff's office has been working on two studies related to the comprehensive strategy that will help the process of the CAC: 1) validation of the classification instrument used for DJJ levels of programming, and 2) evaluation of programs. Specifically, the evaluation of programs will provide important information as to whether these programs are effective and appropriate for youths and their needs.

An important innovation in Lee County will be the management information system which will be designed to monitor service referrals. In fact, the providers will be able to link up to the integrated data system to receive referrals and input outcome data. These data on the services provided to each youth will be tracked and success rates will be calculated for the various providers. They plan to use recidivism rates as one measure of success.

Denver has not planned to officially monitor the services provided to youths. Through the family advocates and case managers, they plan to develop a knowledge base of programs

based on family impressions and recommendations. They plan to "monitor" services in a way that focuses on the family feedback in terms of the quality of the services they received and outcome of the services. Services will be tracked manually by service coordinators (i.e., case managers). The development of an integrated management information system necessary to track these cases, is also in the early planning stages.

Training of Assessment and Case Management Staff

Training plays a critical role in ensuring competency among the staff who serve youths and families. The complexity of the justice system requires that staff are knowledgeable and able to address and answer the specific questions that families may have. The Denver CAC development team believed that given the sensitive nature of certain topics (i.e., abuse, mental health, substance abuse), it is important that proper training is provided to the staff and that they be properly credentialed. The assessment staff are master or doctoral level social workers or counselors. Case managers are bachelors level. They will also have in-house training sessions on the assessment and case management process, as well as juvenile justice system functioning.

In Lee County, it has been noted that CAC staff will have already filled similar roles in other agencies. For instance, the DJJ staff will already have done intake and detention screening and SWFAS staff were doing assessments previously. Of course, they will need to complete on-site training in the CAC procedures.

Confidentiality of Information

Both of the planning sites were concerned about the confidentiality of the information and records they collected. However, one goal of an assessment center is to prevent duplication of effort and to share information. In Lee County, they intend to share information on a need to know basis among the collaborative partners in line with state and federal confidentiality laws. They intend that information will be shared with the courts and the Department of Juvenile Justice for juvenile justice involved youth. As indicated in their grant to OJJDP, information on "at risk" youths will not be shared with any criminal justice agency without the express written consent to release information signed by the youth and/or parent as applicable.

In Denver, The Network has been working to develop a "common consent form" that will be signed by the youths and the parent/guardian. This form will allow clients to give permission for information sharing among agencies on a need to know basis. The form will satisfy the requirements of social services, criminal justice, mental health, substance abuse and other programs. The consent form will allow for information to be shared regarding whether an assessment has been done and the type of services recommended. Both Denver and Lee County are still in the process of determining what specific information and data elements will be available, accessible, and shared among the participating agencies.

The Consent Process

In Lee County, detention screenings and SAMH-1 will be mandatory for all arrested youths. Youths will be told that their participation in further assessment is voluntary. They will have to sign a consent form if they choose to participate. There was discussion of whether a youth can consent for the assessment or whether a parent must sign the form. Often a parent will not pick up the youth from the CAC (either because the parent does not want to or because the youth is taken directly to detention). As in the rest of the assessment centers in Florida, Lee County has decided that when possible they will get parental consent for the assessment, but will rely mainly on the consent form signed by the juvenile.

In Denver, the CAC process is completely voluntary. Juveniles are not transported to the assessment center by police. After an arrest, the CAC contacts the families to offer CAC and family advocacy services. Similarly, truant or "at-risk" youths will be asked to participate in a non-coercive manner. This procedure will clearly limit the number and scope of families that are assessed. They expect that many families will choose not to come in for an assessment or service referral.

Management Information System Development

Denver plans to have a networked management information system for the CAC with several accessible terminals for assessment and case management staff. It will contain a case management database to track the CAC staff's contacts and outcomes with the youths. The internal database will also contain the family assessment, the Substance Use Survey, and the Adolescent Self Assessment Profile when used. They also intend to integrate this system with many of the participating collaborative agencies. If it becomes fully operational it will contain school records, criminal histories, and court records.

A private consultant was hired to design and implement the MIS. This consultant also designed the integrated MIS used for The Network. They intend to build in strong safeguards to prevent improper data entry as well as improper access to certain confidential information.

The Lee County Sheriff's office also hired a private consultant to design their CAC MIS. An impressive prototype has been designed. It was developed in Microsoft Access and is consistent with SQL server. In mid-1999, the stand alone system was being pilot tested in two police agencies. The MIS has four main goals: 1) to facilitate case management, 2) to make the screening tool accessible to staff, 3) to help with management of the assessment center, and 4) to be used as a self-evaluation tool. The system is slated to gather "as much information as possible up front to determine the need for further assessments or services." It will also be designed to link to other databases for information gathering purposes. These other databases include: the Clerk of the Court, Sheriff's Department, Department of Juvenile Justice, Children and Family Services (for dependency records) and the School District. The Clerk of the Court and the Sheriff's department have agreed to share data. The other partnerships are still being negotiated.

Interestingly, the MIS will be designed so that referrals to services will be electronically transmitted to service providers. The service providers, in turn, will electronically submit service tracking or service delivery data into the system. In this way, case managers can track their clients access to and progress with a service provider. The system will allow for aggregate reporting of service providers outcomes with clients, as well as tracking recidivism rates, test scores, and school attendance of youths sent to various services.

Lessons Learned from the Planning Process

In interviews with key leaders, NCCD inquired about the lessons learned and recommendations that they would make to other jurisdictions thinking about developing a CAC. The comments generally centered around three central concepts:

1. planning should be collaborative and inclusive;
2. start out small and have definitive timelines; and
3. identify goals and educate new players and the public about them.

Collaboration and Inclusiveness

- ✓ Collaboration is hard, but very important.
- ✓ Don't have one lead agency because everyone has an investment in the success.
- ✓ It is important to make sure not to step on existing programs out there and create turf issues.
- ✓ Every agency who will be part of the assessment center should be involved in the planning.
- ✓ Financial agreements should be part of the planning process, not an afterthought.
- ✓ Get local representatives (e.g., County Commissioners) involved early in the process.
- ✓ Have different levels in the organizations participate. For instance, leaders with global vision, middle management with operational vision, and line staff.
- ✓ Have a fair decision making process. Disagreements should be voiced openly and be discussed to minimize silent sabotage behind the scene.
- ✓ Should have a charismatic leader who either has authority or has no investment in any agency taking the lead.

Set Timelines with Small Starting Group

- ✓ Start with a small committee and work out a plan to enlarge, or start with a large meeting to get the community invested and then use a small work group for planning.
- ✓ Set up realistic timelines.
- ✓ Have the department heads sign off on all time lines which will allow their staff members to work on these issues.

- ✓ Don't get caught up in the details too early, that will come later.
- ✓ Plans shouldn't be fluff.
- ✓ Meet on a regular basis so that it's fresh in the mind.

Identify Goals and Educate New Stakeholders

- ✓ Identify problems that the CAC will address.
- ✓ Clarify goals and develop a position paper which can be used to bring in others.
- ✓ As turnover happens in positions of power (e.g., the Chief Judge, the Director of the Dept. of Juvenile Justice), educate new players.
- ✓ Let new stakeholders become personally invested into the process.
- ✓ Bring the public defender into the process early to avoid potential problems later.

CHAPTER 4

JEFFERSON COUNTY JUVENILE ASSESSMENT CENTER

Context

Site Characteristics and Juvenile Justice Trends at the Time of Assessment Center Planning

Jefferson County is geographically large and diverse with urban, suburban and rural areas. It is divided into 13 municipalities. Along with geographic diversity are people from a wide socio-economic spectrum. The population is largely White with about ten percent Hispanic and three percent African-American, American Indian, or Asian.

County population growth has mirrored the growth in the state of Colorado at about 20 percent since 1990. Jefferson County's population has grown to approximately 500,000. The youth population (ages 10-17) is about 60,000.

This population is served by 13 police departments and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department. These law enforcement agencies generally process their cases through either the municipal courts or the district court. Generally municipal courts handle less serious offenses, such as traffic and curfew violations.

According to the Colorado Bureau of Investigations 4,632 juveniles were arrested in Jefferson County in 1990. As Figure 4-1 shows, in 1992 arrests began to plummet. In fact, according to these data by 1994 only 2,186 juveniles were arrested. The Law Enforcement Liaison at the JAC confirms this trend as a valid representation of the decrease in the number of arrests. The decrease in the number of arrests can be seen in almost all offense categories (see Table 4-1). The decline in arrests for property felonies had the largest impact. Arrests for this category dropped from over 2,000 in 1990 to under 700 in 1994. While arrests generally decreased, the number of status offenders arrested increased considerably in 1994, with arrests for truancy, running away, or curfew violations more than doubling in one year.

The drop in the number of arrests is not necessarily reflected by the number of delinquency petitions filed in the district court. Figure 4-1 also shows that the number of delinquency petitions actually increased during this same time period. The data on detention of youths from Jefferson County also shows that there was a substantial increase in detention admissions, from 826 in 1991 to 1,163 in 1994. However, the average daily population of Jefferson County youths in detention decreased. In 1991 there were 48 youths in detention on an average daily basis and only 35 in 1994. Having an increase in admissions and a decrease in average daily population denotes a drastic decrease in the average length of stay. Youths were being processed more quickly and released from detention in fewer days.

Along with the increase in delinquency petitions and detention admissions, the average daily population of youths from Jefferson County in State commitment facilities also increased. In 1991, 68 youths from the County were living in State facilities compared with 78 youths in 1994.

Table 4-1
Jefferson County Arrest Trends by Offense Type, 1990-1994

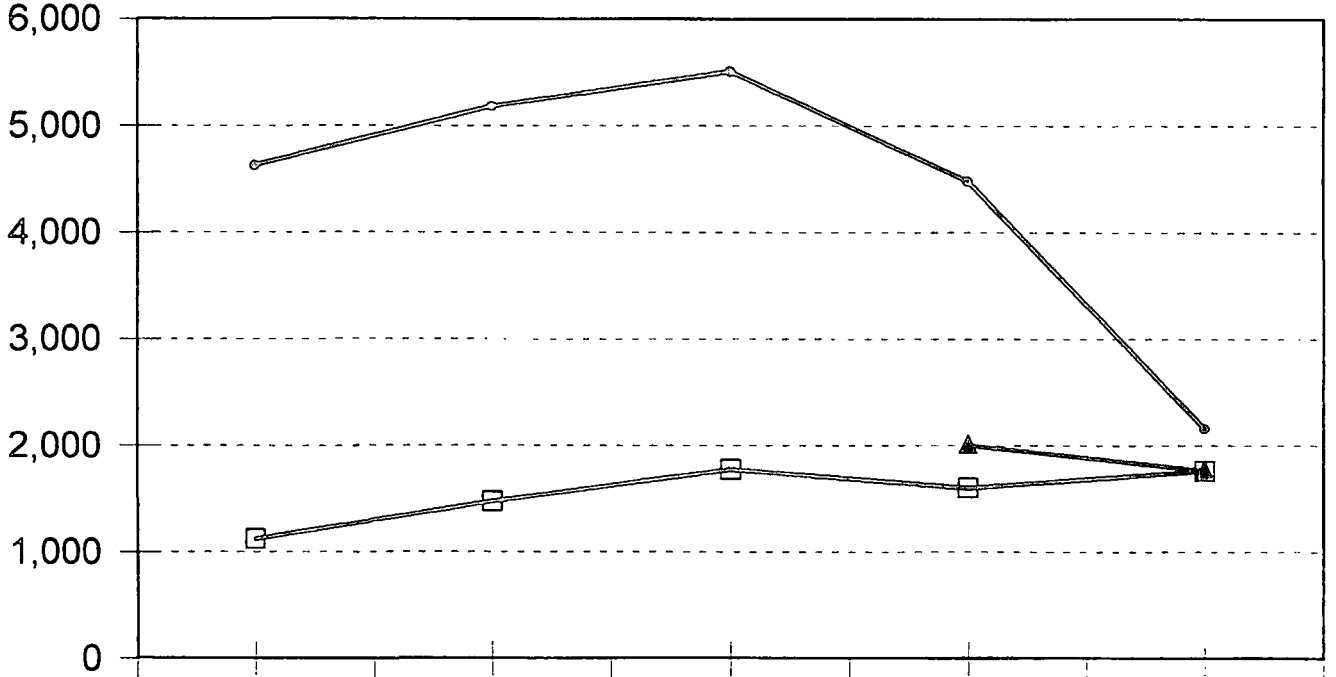
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Violent Felony	165	205	207	145	38
Weapons Felony	66	84	93	83	30
Drug Felony	72	68	143	192	20
Property Felony	2,248	2,455	2,549	1,924	684
Person Misdemeanor	286	288	399	340	120
Drug Misdemeanor	383	624	612	440	504
Property Misdemeanor	69	98	95	87	14
Other Misdemeanor	1,068	1,161	1,117	1,040	205
Status	275	200	297	230	544

Source: CBI annual report. Years are calendar.

It is clear from the statistics above that during the few years preceding the development of the JAC, the justice system was in flux. While the number of very serious crimes stayed about the same or decreased, more Jefferson County youths were admitted to detention, more petitions were filed, and more were living in State commitment facilities.

Figure 4-1

Juvenile Arrests, Petitions, & Detentions in Jefferson County, 1990-1994



	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Arrest	4,632	5,183	5,512	4,481	2,159
New Delinquency Petitions Filed	1,121	1,481	1,773	1,605	1,761
Detention				2,002	1,766

Juvenile Arrests Source: CBI annual report . Years are calendar.
Petition: Colorado Judicial Branch Annual Report: Statistical Supplement.
Detention: Colorado DYC. Years are fiscal.

* District filings include delinquency and dependency.

[f:\users\everyone\cac\golden\jeffco.pr4]

Impetus for Developing an Assessment Center

In the summer of 1993, coined the "Summer of Violence," Colorado experienced a series of violent acts committed by juveniles. These were mainly in the Denver area, but given that Jefferson County abuts Denver, both counties were affected. These highly publicized juvenile crimes fueled the fear of random juvenile crime and the perception that the juvenile crime rate was rising. The media and the public were calling for something to be done. Many public officials clearly supported this sentiment. For instance, a judge we interviewed said that in that year he had more kids on his dockets for shooting people than he had for the first nine years that he had served on the bench combined. As in the rest of the country, the statistics on juvenile crime (as shown above) have little influence when compared to a few high profile tragedies.

The District Attorney in Jefferson County was clearly a leader in the development of the assessment center. He was frustrated by sometimes lengthy delays in case processing both in his office and in the courts for juvenile cases. He believed that as a result of these delays, there were not immediate sanctions and consequences for youth's behavior which resulted in a disconnect between the behavior and consequences for that behavior. He believed the lack of immediate consequences facilitated the perception that the juvenile justice system was ineffective. Further complicating the issue was the problem of detention overcrowding; the Gilliam detention center was facing legal battles because of center crowding.

Some leaders in law enforcement also felt that patrol officers were spending too much time handling juvenile cases. This created a lot of "down time" due to having to "babysit" the youth while they found an individual to whom to release him/her.

Also many key leaders in Jefferson County (representatives from the school district, mental health, district attorney, judges, law enforcement) expressed a desire to move the system toward a more preventive mode. Prior to the JAC, most juveniles who committed relatively non-serious offenses were given little if any sanction or services. Additionally, there were no services for juveniles who were suspended or expelled from school. The system lacked a single point of entry where families could gain direct access to intervention services before the youth got into more trouble or had greater penetration into the criminal justice system.

Thus, while the push for developing this assessment center was mainly from criminal justice leaders, it was strongly supported by the school district and the mental health community. They wanted to create a model that served to keep youths out of the traditional juvenile justice system, served their needs for prevention purposes, and provided immediate sanctions for some youths.

Traditional Service Delivery Model Prior to JCJAC

Prior to the existence of the JAC, youths charged with minor offenses were given a citation by a police officer with a notice to appear in court. Many officers still prefer to handle a case this way rather than bring the child to the assessment center. Such cases would then often

languish in the District Attorney's office because they were not high priority cases. According to the District Attorney's office, prior to the JAC, it took on average 86 days for a case to be filed. With the JAC process instituted, it took approximately one tenth the time for filing. The case was then usually handled by the municipal court. Furthermore there was no criminal justice intervention in a truancy case until it was serious enough to bring the case to court. The advent of the JAC, offered another place to send chronic truants before full intervention by the court. Thus, according to JAC staff the system now intervenes earlier in a truancy problem than before JAC.

Another change was the availability of the JAC as a referral source, with functions similar to those of a diversion program. Prior to the JAC, juvenile case management was only available after the youth committed a serious enough crime to be adjudicated a delinquent and placed on probation. The key leaders believed that case managing a juvenile before they had a serious delinquency problem would reduce the need later.

Key leaders also believed that the community lacked a place to bring troubled children for services. Before the JAC, parents and guardians had no central place to get assistance with a child who would not go to school, was beginning to use drugs, or had been participating in yet had not been officially caught committing a criminal offense. Parents would call mental health agencies, social services, the police, and informal supports because there was no central place to turn.

The Early Planning Process

To begin the planning process, the District Attorney called together members from local law enforcement, mental health, human services, school, court, and other county leaders to a Master Planning Initiative in 1994. This group later expanded to include additional community based organizations, public agencies and representatives from the community, namely youths and families. Under the guidance and leadership of the District Attorney, Sheriff and police chiefs, County Manager, school Superintendent, social services, and mental health, this collaborative met and drew up the plan for the CAC. With financial support from the planning committees and the state, the JAC opened its doors in October 1995. A private non-profit agency called the Jefferson Center for Mental Health became the lead agency for the JAC. They oversee the JAC at fiscal and managerial levels.

Buy-In and Support for the Assessment Center

The extent and nature of support and buy in was generally positive, yet somewhat mixed when it comes to financial support. Clearly, the school district has been very supportive of the assessment center. The school district donated the use of the land and the temporary buildings used by the JAC.

Staffing at the JAC is truly collaborative. It is staffed by a team representing the main juvenile agencies in Jefferson County. For instance, The District Attorney's office provides a Juvenile Investigator/law enforcement liaison who is stationed at the JAC. This investigator

screens all JAC cases for the DA. Jefferson County School District also provides an educational liaison person who assesses juveniles on educational status, interfaces with the DA and arresting officers, and assists in designing the contract with the case manager in truancy and school-related cases. Jefferson County Human Services and Jefferson Center for Mental Health maintains the Family Adolescent Crisis Team which is co-located on the JAC premises. They offer 24 hour crisis management. The Jefferson Center for Mental Health provides the bulk of managerial support including funding for the assessment specialists.

Funding for the JAC has increased every year, although it has been tenuous and unpredictable. Table 4-2 shows the funding sources and amount contributed by various agencies in running this assessment center. Up to this point, the funding has been garnered mostly through grants written by the Director of the JAC. The local law enforcement agencies have also signed an intergovernmental agreement stating that they will contribute proportionately based on the number of youths they bring to the JAC. The collaborative partners, including the Jefferson Center for Mental Health that runs the JAC, also contribute to overhead and salaries. They have currently submitted a proposal to municipal and county agencies for secure and stable funding, thus eliminating the reliance upon grants for basic core functions and existence.

Table 4-2
Revenue Sources for the Jefferson County JAC, Fiscal Year 1998

Revenue Source	Revenue
State & Federal Grants	$218,612
SB 94 - for providing phone screening for detention	$83,836
Local Law Enforcement Agencies - proportional to the number of youths served by JAC	$58,000
Collaborative Partners - for overhead	$46,440
Jefferson Center for Mental Health - the lead agency	$45,000
Arson Funds - for running an arson specific program	$5,000
Other	$20,000
Total	$476,888

Source: NCCD Director Survey

One way to assess buy-in from other agencies is to ask the staff whether they feel that the community supports them. Based on responses from the survey of the JAC staff, we found that staff generally feel supported by related organizations. In fact, 86 percent of staff say that police and sheriffs departments have been supportive or very supportive. Similarly, 82 percent of them believe that the schools are supportive or very supportive.

Another method of defining buy-in from other agencies is to assess whether outside organizations know the goals of the assessment center. In Table 4-3 the goals of the JAC are listed along with the percent of respondents agreeing that each was a goal. The respondents are 132 individuals working in law enforcement, schools, district attorney, public defender, and community based organizations in Jefferson County. More than one-half of the respondents agreed that the goals listed were assessment center goals, except that only 49 percent agreed that having a reliable management information system was a goal. The most agreed upon goal was reducing a police officer's time, followed by identifying the needs of the kids. For the most part, respondents answered "don't know" rather than "no" to the goals listed.

Table 4-3
Organizational Survey Responses to Goals of the JCJAC

Goal	Percent "Yes"	Percent "No"	Percent "Don't Know"
To reduce police officer's time	90	4	5
Identify needs of kids	84	1	15
Place to handle arrested juveniles	75	16	9
Provide comprehensive assessments	75	3	22
Reduce gaps in services	74	3	24
Speed legal processing time	73	5	22
Foster interagency collaboration	71	4	25
Reduce duplication of services	67	4	29
Improve community safety	65	4	31
Offer integrated case management	63	2	35
Have a reliable MIS	49	1	51

Source: Responses from 132 mailed surveys to law enforcement, schools, district attorney, public defender, and community service providers in Jefferson County. Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Identification

Referral of Juveniles to the Assessment Center

Any juvenile residing in Jefferson County qualifies to participate at the JAC as well as any juvenile picked up by law enforcement for an offense committed in Jefferson County.

Juveniles assessed at the JAC are either transported to the center by law enforcement or referred to the center by various justice or social service agencies. Also, families can self refer. A juvenile in police custody can be transported to the JAC if the youth does not require emergency medical attention, detoxification, or is not eligible for detention. Transported juveniles and their families are offered the assessment and case management services of the JAC. Families that agree to the services may return to the JAC for a follow-up appointment. The JAC currently has agreements with all Municipal Courts in Jefferson County to take juveniles with failure-to-appear or failure-to-comply warrants. JAC also handles all juveniles who are picked up by law enforcement with traffic warrants.

Cases become referrals in two ways. First, transported juveniles who return to the JAC can become referral cases. Additional referral cases are juveniles who have been referred to the JAC by other agencies (i.e., Jefferson County School District, District and Municipal Courts, District Attorney's office, FACT and police). Referral cases receive offers of an assessment and some type of case management.

Since previous years data were not reliable, we only considered data for 1998. During 1998, 680 juveniles came to the JAC on an original transport case while 485 juveniles were considered referral cases. Thus, about 42 percent of the cases seen at the JAC in 1998 were by referral. In Table 4-4, about three quarters of youths were brought or referred to the JAC by law enforcement (i.e., local police departments and the Sheriff's department).

Description of the Youths Entering the JCJAC

On average, juveniles assessed at the JAC were 15 years old. Boys comprised about 65 percent of the youths. Nearly three-quarters (70 percent) of juveniles were White. Twenty-two percent of the youths were Hispanic and five percent were African-American, Asian, or American Indian. Hispanic juveniles were represented at two times their presence in the general population.

Table 4-4
The Percent of Cases Transported or Referred to the JCJAC in 1998 by Referral Source

Referral Agency	Transport		Referral		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Police Department	478	70	97	20	575	49
Jefferson County Sheriff Dept	111	16	173	36	284	24
Court	0	0	18	4	18	2
District Attorney	2	0	6	1	8	1
School	4	0	8	2	12	1
Fire Dept/State Patrol	19	4	12	2	31	3
Unknown	66	10	171	35	237	20
Total	680	100	485	100	1,165	100

Source: JAC Access Database

The youths brought in by law enforcement as transports differed demographically from those youths who were referred. Table 4-5 shows that the transported group of youths were slightly older, had more girls, and more Hispanics.

The evaluation design also called for retrieving a sample of transport cases to do more in-depth analyses. These analyses will be presented later in the chapter. It is important, however, to note that the transport sample closely resembled the population as identified in the JAC database (see Table 4-6).

Legal Profile

During assessment at the JAC, multiple charges can be recorded for each case. For example, a juvenile could be brought to the JAC having been charged with two offenses: retail theft and possession of alcohol. For each juvenile, the most serious charge was chosen to represent the case. In the example above, retail theft would be categorized under property crimes. The most serious charge for transports and referrals is reported in Table 4-7 . Of the known offenses, property crime comprised the most serious offense for 23 percent of transport juveniles. Among referrals, traffic violations were the highest reported known offense. However, note that there was a high percentage of missing offenses for these youths. These missing offense types point to serious concerns about data quality from this management information system (discussed later in this chapter). The data had to be back filled from earlier inadequate data systems to the new system which was implemented in July 1998.

Table 4-5
Demographic Profile of Young People Brought to the Jefferson County JAC in 1998

	Transport		Referral		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mean Age	15.6		14.9		15.3	
Gender						
Male	403	60	336	69	739	65
Female	267	40	132	27	399	35
Race						
White/Non-Hispanic	435	64	376	78	813	70
Hispanic	193	28	57	12	250	22
Other (Asian, Black)	41	6	17	4	58	5
Missing	43	2	35	6	44	3
Total	680	100	485	100	1,165	100

Source: JAC Access Database

Table 4-6
Demographic Description of Sampled Transport Cases by Age, Race and Gender in 1998

	N	%
Mean Age	14.8	
Gender		
Male	203	63
Female	120	37
Race		
White/Non-Hispanic	214	66
Hispanic	85	26
Other (Asian, Black)	17	5
Missing	7	3
Total	323	100

Source: JAC Access Database

Table 4-7
Number and Percent of Youth Processed at the JAC in 1998 by Most Serious Offense

Most Serious Offense Type	Transport		Referral		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Violent	25	4	17	4	42	4
Property	158	23	27	6	186	16
Drug	73	11	12	2	85	7
Traffic	105	15	37	8	142	12
Technical or Status	31	5	0	0	154	13
Other	118	17	14	3	132	11
Unknown	170	25	378	77	548	47
Total	680	100	485	100	1,165	100

Violent includes serious violent, violent and weapons. Other includes public order, harassment, and other.
Source: JAC Access Database

The transport cases that NCCD sampled showed a similar pattern to the population in the JAC database. However, since offense information came from a different sources (the district attorney's database was used if the offense was not coded in the JAC database), there are far fewer missing cases for offense types. Table 4-8 indicates that youths were most likely to be brought to the JAC for a property offense, followed by other (mainly public order and harassment), drug possession, and traffic violations.

Table 4-8
Highest Original Offense of 1998 Sampled Transport Cases (N=323)

	Number	Percent
Violent	29	9
Property	103	32
Drug	55	17
Traffic	37	12
Technical or Status	26	8
Other	68	22
Total	323	100

Source: JAC Access Database; Jefferson County DA Database

Self-Reported Characteristics

Information contained in the JAC database on self-reported characteristics were unreliable. Unfortunately, valid responses could not be separated from true unknowns in the database since by default, the responses were coded "yes" for the questions asked; in other words, if the respondent did not answer the question, there was not an option for "unknown" or "missing" to be entered. Hence, we could not use this data to profile the youths coming to the JAC. Instead, we present the responses from the small sample (N=36) of youths interviewed.

In terms of education, almost two-thirds of the youths we interviewed reported attending school regularly. When asked for reasons why they would not go to school, both boys and girls said that they wanted to hang out with their friends. Alarmingly, 69 percent had been expelled or suspended at least once, with almost one third indicating so more than twice. Hence, it is not surprising that more than half of the parents/guardians we interviewed said that their son or daughter has some problems with school or education, with one in five indicating that there was a learning disability issue. Several parents also indicated the need for more evaluation for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and more tutoring and individual attention given to youth.

Almost all youths we interviewed considered their physical health to be good or very good/excellent. Twenty-seven percent of girls and 35 percent of boys said they had sex. Almost half of the parents interviewed thought that their child had a psychological, behavioral or emotional problem, with a few indicating that their son/daughter has made suicide threats or assaulted a family member. A few also indicated that their children were on psychotropic medications.

Experiencing a recent stressful life event such as a death of someone close has been found to be highly correlated with irrational behavior. In the young lives of these youths, slightly more than a quarter of the youths interviewed had been a victim of a crime and slightly more than a third had witnessed some form of severe violence or abuse.

In this sample of youth, cigarettes appear to be the drug of choice with more than half reporting smoking, followed by beer and marijuana. Nearly one half of the girls said they used cigarettes daily and a third of the boys said they smoked every day. Of users, more than three-fourths said they first smoked when they were 14 years old or younger.

Very few of these young people reported using other drug types (e.g., speed, heroine, cocaine, etc.). However, one in ten of these youths perceived that they have a drug or alcohol problem and needed help.

For the most part, most parents knew or suspected that their child was using or had used drugs. While none listed cigarettes as the drug of choice, and few listed alcohol. Most parents suspected marijuana was commonly used.

We also asked about recent delinquent acts. In any self-report survey or questionnaire, there is always the issue of bias (e.g., recall bias), and over-reporting or under-reporting on sensitive questions. Although recall may be the only way of approximating behaviors across time, the data must be regarded with this consideration in mind. The most commonly reported delinquent activity by youths was skipping classes, reported by more than half of boys and girls. The second most common act was drinking alcohol, expressed by more than three-quarters of the girls and almost a third of the boys. The level of delinquent activity of this sample appeared very low on all the other items.

Across all categories, parents/guardians' perceptions of these acts are lower than the youths' self-report. These young people stated that they engaged in these delinquent activities with friends or peers. However, gang membership was mentioned by only two boys.

Profiles of Youths Not Brought to the Assessment Center

Although it is easy to identify the youth who are brought to a particular program, it is generally difficult to discern which young people were not. CACs are no exception. However, there is a large municipality within Jefferson County where police officers exercise discretion in bringing a youth to the JAC. They may choose to transport the youth to the JAC or to take him/her home. Tables 4-9 show the demographics of the youths who were brought to the JAC versus youths who were not brought to the JAC from this police department. Girls were more likely to be brought to the JAC as were Hispanic juveniles (about twice as likely). Although the majority of these youths had no prior arrest record, those who did were more likely brought to the JAC. Those who were brought to the JAC were also more likely to have charges for shoplifting or status offenses, while those not brought to the JAC had charges for drug possession, shoplifting and public order and harassment.

Table 4-9
Comparison of Arrested Juveniles Brought to the JAC and not Brought to the JAC from 1/98 to 6/98 in One Large Police Jurisdiction

	JCJAC	Non-JCJAC
Total Number of Juveniles	77	960
Average Age (mean)	14.8	14.9
Sex		
Girls	43%	32%
Boys	57%	68%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	62%	81%
Hispanic	30%	15%
African-American	5%	3%
Asian/American Indian	3%	2%
Prior Arrest w/i 12 Months		
None	79%	87%
One	10%	10%
Two or more	11%	3%

Source: Database from one municipality in Jefferson County and JAC Access Database

Linkages

Agencies Involved in the Development of the Program and the Provision of Services

The Jefferson Center for Mental Health was chosen as the lead agency for two main reasons. The members of the planning collaborative decided that it was better to have the lead agency be an outsider to the traditional justice practice or government agency. They thought it would reduce tension for an assessment center to be able to meld the various functions of governmental agencies. This seems to have been a very good strategy. Jefferson Center for Mental Health, while private and non-governmental is also the mental health agency for the county.

Deciding what types of programs would be run through the JAC was the duty of the collaborative advisory committee. Many of the programs that are run by the JAC were chosen because of compatibility with the program goals as well as funding opportunities. The Jefferson County JAC is structured for flexibility in that new programs and functions can be taken on when the need arises and funding is found or made available. For instance, one of the JAC case managers took on a case load of sex offenders when funding was available. They also began doing the phone screens for detention because the funding was made available and it fit into one of the goals of the assessment center (to be the repository of information on youths who come into contact with the juvenile justice system).

One of the important programs developed out of the linkage between the schools and the JAC was an alternative school program for expelled students. The school is housed next door to the JAC and each youth has a JAC case manager assigned to him or her. It is a true partnership.

Organizational Structure of the Assessment Center

The staff at the JAC work both for their parent agency and the JAC as its own entity. The Director of the JAC is an employee of the Jefferson Center for Mental Health. The management team running the JAC includes the director, school district liaison, district attorney/law enforcement liaison, and the coordinator of assessment and case management services. Table 4-10 shows the breakdown of the number and types of employees at the JAC.

Table 4-10
Job Titles and Staffing at the JCJAC in 1998

Job Title	Full Time Equivalent Staff	
	Paid with JAC Funds	Paid with In-Kind Funds
Management	2	
Clerical/Administrative	1	1
Assessment Specialists	10.75	
Crisis Intervention/Mental Health		10 - FACT
DA/Law Enforcement	0	2
School		1

Source: NCCD Director Survey

Change in Availability of Services as a Result of the JCJAC

The change in service availability was due to the JCJAC creating in-house programs, rather than identifying a need in the community and having another service provider address it. The staff and key leaders created several new programs run by the JCJAC that had previously not

existed in the community. These include programs for young fire setters, sex offenders, classes for parents of truants, and an alternative school for youths who were expelled. The key leaders interviewed all felt these additional services were extremely positive for the community.

Intervention

Services Offered at the Assessment Center

At its inception the JCJAC provided assessment and case management services during regular business hours. They gradually expanded the services that were offered and their hours of availability. In 1996, they designated an assessment specialist to handle cases dealing with sexual assault. Juveniles referred to this specialist were placed on contract to facilitate offender specific therapy. This specialist has contacts with the D.A.'s office, Human Services, Law Enforcement, and school officials to ensure contract compliance. Due to lack of funding, this position was terminated in 1998.

The JAC currently operates 24 hours a day, 7 days per week and provides services for youths in the criminal justice system and young people referred by schools or parents. During the evaluation period, the JCJAC was awarded the contract for completing the phone screens for detention. The screening that takes place by telephone determines detention eligibility and type/level of placement including detention. JCJAC staff screen youth 24 hours a day, using the Juvenile Detention Screening and Assessment Guide to determine detention eligibility. This instrument is mandated for use throughout the state of Colorado.

The JAC provides the following services:

1. Phone screening: Law enforcement can call the JAC to determine the appropriateness of JAC services or detention.

2. Assessment of needs of juveniles.

3. Referrals and diversion recommendations by assessment staff.

4. Crisis/mental health counseling: FACT provides crisis counseling and consultations and takes JAC referrals.

5. Case management: Staff provide case management for delinquents not being prosecuted and who do not have a case manager from another agency.

6. Educational liaison: On-site administrator from Jefferson County Schools provides access to educational history of youths referred or transported and other services, such as linking youths to alternative educational opportunities.

7. Johnson Program for expelled youth: these are JAC youths, assessed at JAC and charged at District level, who receive intensive case management.

Process for Youth When Entering the JCJAC

As stated earlier, a youth can be transported to the JAC or referred. A juvenile brought to the assessment center by law enforcement is called a transport. Young people who come to the JAC because of school, court, or parent requests are called referrals.

Of the youths NCCD interviewed, slightly less than one-third had previously been to the JAC. Roughly 30 percent reported being handcuffed. Youths brought in by patrol officers were generally handcuffed and then released from the cuffs once inside the assessment center. While at the JAC, all youth sit on a couch in the non-secure setting awaiting assessment or pick up by a parent/guardian. All said that they spoke to at least one individual, although only one in three knew who these individuals were or what agencies they represented.

When a youth is transported to the JAC, the following documents are completed: a JAC disclosure form, FACT information release, JAC rules, Advisement of Rights and a Mini Assessment Form. If the youth is 14 years old or younger, a parent's signature is needed on the disclosure form, the FACT information release, and the Advisement of Rights. The assessor can obtain a verbal agreement from the youth if he/she is 14 years or younger to complete the Mini Assessment or can wait until the parent signs the form. If the assessment reveals a problem or unaddressed need in a particular area, the assessor can use additional forms (e.g., Parent Questionnaire, Education History, Criminal History, CYO-LSI, SUS-IA, FEMA) to obtain more in-depth information. Due to lack of need, these additional forms, are used infrequently.

For juveniles who are referred to the JAC, an assessment is scheduled. JAC staff indicate that ideally, this should happen within 48 hours from time of the referral. Once an assessment is completed, the juvenile is usually placed on contract. The contract may include community service, reparation of damages, terms for school attendance and misbehavior, anger management class, jail tour, and other services appropriate to the offense. A case manager at the JAC oversees the terms and compliance with the contract.

Perception of Young People and Their Families of Their Experience at the JCJAC

In our interview with the youths and family members NCCD asked about their experiences at the JAC and the JAC process (please note the small sample sizes discussed in the methods section.) For the most part, the youths said that they were satisfied with the process and that they were treated well at the JAC. In terms of help from the JAC staff and staff sensitivity to needs, there was an equal split between those who felt satisfied and those who did not. Three youths said that their experiences at the JAC did not make a difference in terms of their behavior while four said it had a positive influence on their behavior. One thought the influence had been negative.

One half of parents indicated that JAC staff contacted them within 2 hours, or that a JAC staff had left a message on their machine. Among the parents, more than three fourths indicated they had spoken to 1-2 individuals. Unlike their children, almost all the parents understood who they were speaking with and which agencies they represented.

Approximately one in three felt very satisfied with the JAC process. Three parents indicated that they would have liked more phone contacts and follow-up. One parent perceived the JAC to be understaffed and the staff to be overworked with little power except to assess youths. One parent thought the process was unclear. However, in general the comments made by the parents at the initial interview were generally positive:

- "I think it's a good place for kids to be held...rather than holding them in jails.."
- "Seems like a good program so far from what I've learned"
- "I think it's a good idea"
- "It's a good idea to hopefully help change the path these kids are on..."
- "Can be helpful to keep him out of the court system"

Six months later parents expressed both positive and critical feedback. The following are some quotes from the follow-up interviews. On the positive side, parent said:

- "staff is great, try to help kids and family"
- "helpful as a first contact."

The negative comments included:

- "It's good as initial diversion, however when contract is over, kid goes back to old way"
- "draining of time and energy"
- "inappropriate utilization of financial resources, having to pay for and be forced to go on jail tour – did not help his mental health– he has less respect for authority."

Assessment and Case Management Description

The mini assessment is a two-page questionnaire that elicits information about current charge, substance abuse, grades, behavior and attendance in school, gang membership and sexual activity. It also asks about abuse, family relationships, and mental health issues like suicidal ideation and changes in appetite and behavior. In 1998, the JCJAC revised and expanded their assessment interview. The revised assessment contains more questions in each of the general areas listed above. Additionally, if a red flag appears for a particular area during the mini assessment, then the assessor can use additional forms (e.g., Parent Questionnaire, Education History, Criminal History, CYO-LSI, SUS-IA) to obtain more in-depth information. The additional forms are infrequently used.

In the NCCD survey, JAC staff were asked whether their assessment instruments identified the needs of the youths. Fifty-five percent responded that most or all needs were identified, 32 percent thought only a few needs were identified, and 14 percent were unsure. When asked if the services offered were consistent with the needs, only 14 percent said almost always. The majority (59 percent) responded that most of the time the services offered were consistent with the needs. Twenty-three percent of staff indicated that only sometimes were appropriate services offered. One staff person was unsure.

Once needs are identified almost all referred youths are put on what is called a "contract." Based on the identified needs and issues arising from the assessment, the juvenile, parent/guardian, and JAC staff person agree on a contract. The juvenile usually agrees to behavior such as going to school, observing parental curfew, or attending a program designated by the assessment staff.

Contracts can be amended by the JAC case manager, based on new information or as consequences to behavior. According to the JAC database, about 9 percent of the contracts were amended during the time the youth was on contract. However, if a contract is broken, the court system may reappear in the process depending on who referred the youth to the JAC and the type of offense committed.

Devising and upholding contracts is the most likely type of case management that the JAC uses. According to the JAC database, 41 percent of juveniles in 1998 (i.e., almost all referrals) were placed on a contract indicating that JAC would serve as case manager for these juveniles. Of those who were placed on contract, 25 percent violated them at some point although some of these youths eventually successfully completed the contract. Table 4-11 shows the percent of youths completing their contracts by sex and race and contract completion status. There was little difference between males and females in terms of contract completion. However, there was a notable difference between Whites and Hispanics. For instance, more than one half of White juveniles completed their contract successfully compared to one third of Hispanic juveniles.

Table 4-11
Percent of Youths Completing Their Contracts by Sex and Race and Contract Completion Status, 1998

	Successful	Not Successful	Other (e.g., transfer)	Open or Unknown
Sex				
Girls	46%	22%	3%	29%
Boys	50%	28%	2%	20%
Race/ Ethnicity				
White	53%	25%	2%	20%
Hispanic	34%	36%	2%	28%

Source: JAC Access database, 1998

Besides having a contract with JAC staff, 22 percent of juveniles entering the JAC in 1998 were referred to services. Referral services include Youth Job Services, FACT, JCMH, Project Pave (mental health), Passageway (mental health), substance abuse, health department, anger management, life management, YET (youth educational tours – jail tour), or Family Tree (shelter). Table 4-12 shows that during 1998, most of the service referrals were to mental health/counseling or to short-term programs like arson class or jail tour.

Table 4-12
Percent of JAC Youths Receiving Service Referrals in 1998

	Total	
	N	%
Education	5	0
Mental Health/Counseling	122	11
Other (arson class, jail tour)	126	11
None	912	78
Total	1,165	100

Source: JAC Access Database

It is difficult to know whether the youths received services they were referred to because the JAC database does not capture that information. NCCD interviewed nine juveniles six months after their contact with the assessment center. Three subsequently were diverted, two had their charges dropped, four were referred to services, and two said that the information just went to court. The services which youth said were referred by a JAC staff included educational services, emotional/mental health service, substance abuse and family counseling. Three youths actually received the service that they were referred to. Family members also indicated that some of the service referrals were court ordered. Regarding the impact of the services, one said that it did not help at all while the other two had no comments.

Rewards or Sanctions for JAC Non-participation

There are no written or official rewards or sanctions applied for complying with the assessment and/or case management process. Although participation is voluntary, the juveniles entering the JAC are told that participating in a contract with the JAC can act as a diversion from the formal court process. If the youth had been arrested for an offense and does not want to complete a contract then the JAC can send the case to the District Attorney for charging.

However, once a youth agrees to being placed on contract, there are sanctions/ consequences for compliance failure. For instance, if youth commits another offense while on contract, then he/she is revoked and sent back to court with the assessment and letter of findings. One staff member commented that this was an obvious message to the judge that "this kid had a second chance/diversion and blew it."

Costs Involved in Developing and Maintaining the Assessment Center

Although costs of services are difficult to accurately determine, it is a very important factor in designing or implementing any program. The JAC facilities were already built and empty when the school district loaned the land and buildings to the JAC. The County gave a block grant of $20,000 for renovations to the building. The first year's operating budget in 1995 was $100,000. The expanded program in 1998 had direct expenses of $493,000 and approximate in-kind staff donations of $278,000. This brings the total cost of the program to approximately $771,000 for fiscal year 1998. Given that JAC served approximately 1165 youths in 1998, the average cost per transported or referred juvenile would be $662. This figure does not take into account the 24-hour detention phone screening done by the JAC.

The JAC provides assessments and case management services without a fee to the families, their insurance, or Medicaid. The services to which the JAC staff refers youths and families are paid for by families, insurance, Medicaid, or by the provider of services. This assessment center is not involved in the brokering of services.

Monitoring of Service Providers

The JAC makes referrals to several different service providers. They do not officially monitor the services. Individual case managers form impressions regarding a referral service and decide whether or not to give that particular referral to a youth.

Training and Salaries of Direct Service Staff - Assessors and Case Managers

The assessment/case management staff at the JAC have a minimum educational requirement of a bachelor of arts degree. They receive on-the-job training at the JAC. For one month they work very closely with a supervisor on the day shift. After the training period, they start working the graveyard shift and then move to afternoons and finally to days. They receive a starting salary of $23,000 to $26,000 per year.

Discussion of Legal Rights and Presence of Defense Counsel

Upon arrest, a youth is given the Miranda warning. Youths who are referred to the JAC or brought to the JAC without being arrested do not receive this warning. Defense attorneys are not present at the JAC. There is a two-sided, two page form that the youth signs called the Advisement of Rights. This form is applicable to youths brought to the JAC on a state charge and municipal charge. It informs the youth of the legal rights that he/she has including a right to an attorney.

In the anonymous staff survey, JAC staff were asked if they thought the lack of legal representation for youths was a problem. More than half (55 percent) responded that it was not at problem at all. Twenty-three percent said they didn't know. Some (14 percent) thought it was a problem, yet not serious, and 9 percent, indicated that it was a serious problem.

Of the few staff members who said that legal representation was a problem, there were several illustrative comments. On one survey, a staff member wrote "cases are referred to JAC for case management from DA's office that could not be tried by court due to civil rights violation, including search and seizure and interrogation." Also "kids are being brought to JAC for no legitimate reason by police for punishment." Another staff member referring to the lack of legal representation for youths wrote "clearly the 'smart' response to any agency by a client is to say nothing without an attorney."

Among the key leaders interviewed by NCCD, their thoughts on the issue of legal representation included:

- "I don't see that they need legal representation if they have parental involvement."
- "If we wouldn't have the right to go walk up to them on the street and demand to know this kind of information, then we don't have the right to demand it about them just

because they are at the assessment center, so we have to be very careful about what we make mandatory."

Sharing of Information

The assessments combine the information collected on the juvenile from his/her criminal record including municipal charges (accessed by the DA liaison), school records (accessed by the educational liaison), and the assessment interview (obtained by the assessors). Because of the multidisciplinary staffing and nature of the information being collected, there is sharing of this information at the JAC.

From the organizational survey of other agencies, 54 percent of respondents believed that all information across the different agencies should be shared. Forty-three percent said it should only be done within defined parameters. Only 2 percent said it should not be done at all. Interestingly, 9 out of 10 of the respondents from the school district said that information should be accessible to all. The respondents from the school district were mostly principals and assistant principals. On the other hand, the vast majority (81 percent) of the community-based providers believed that information should only be shared within defined parameters.

From the interviews we conducted with the parents, the majority of them indicated that information sharing was a critical area of concern.

Comments by the key leaders on the issue of confidentiality are also interesting to note:

- "We operate in the dark too much, hide behind confidentiality."
- "Everyone is afraid of being sued, but I say somebody who is dealing with this family needs to know what the situation is."
- "Once the families become a matter of public interest, then all the agencies of the public who have something to offer that family should share that information. Otherwise, we're working at cross purposes."
- "I think there are going to have to be some intergovernmental agreements on what can be shared."
- "It's stupid that professionals don't share information on a youngster when they're supposed to be working for the kid's good."
- "We don't disclose everything – still have State confidentiality laws to comply with."

The Consent Process and Understanding the Implications of Participating with the Assessment Center

It is important to note that assessment and services provided at the JAC are voluntary. If services are refused, this fact is logged in the case file and the case may be filed by the District Attorney's Office. When staff were asked if parents/guardians and youths understand that some parts of their participation at the JAC are voluntary, the majority of staff (71 percent) responded that not all of the families understand.

When the youth were asked directly by NCCD interviewers what it meant when they signed the consent form, it was clear that only a few of them had an accurate understanding. The comments listed below are examples of the youths understanding of the consent forms they had just signed.

- "Can use information to evaluate me."
- "I don't know really."
- "Understood some of them, legal part confusing."
- "Need to go through a program/class."
- "Let me know that I have to abide by everything I was told and what I signed. If I don't, I'll be sent away."
- "That I am giving this center permission to do whatever they think I need."
- "To tell the truth."

Staff's Perception of Assessment Center's Strengths

According to JCJAC staff, the following are some of the strengths of the JAC:

- "Everyone is at one place with all of their information; there is one phone number to call for all juvenile needs."
- "Teamwork between assessment specialists, having the FACT team on site."
- "Flexibility, availability, and well-trained staff."
- "Minimizes police time spent on minor youth offenses."
- "We provide an interface between juveniles and police departments; typically kids are the most complicated clients police have to deal with and any help that they can get would help greatly; saves police money, time and energy."
- "Giving youth the opportunity to actively make changes and rehabilitate, early detection of youth w/mental health and family issues."
- "Connects youth and family to resources; provides recommendations re: sentencing to judges so most beneficial sentence is issued."
- "Case management and contracts are helpful for youth who will not participate voluntarily with needed services."

Staff's Perception of Assessment Center Problems

The JAC staff were candid in discussing the problems they perceived with the JCJAC. The following comments were taken directly from anonymous questionnaires they filled out.

- "Not totally a single point of entry," "no booking photo or prints."
- "No permanent funding," "at our site, financial planning was woeful," "having to constantly wonder where the funding will come from., i.e., the need is there, the support from local, state or federal agencies is not; we need long-term funding."
- "Turnover rate: 13 people have left within last year and a half because of management," "staff turnover has made consistency difficult."

- "Somewhat vaguely defined roles, limited authority."
- "Inconsistent JAC policies," "no written policy or procedures."
- "Grant funding dictates what services will be provided, causes program to constantly change."
- "Too many kids at times, hard for staff to give them (clients) their full attention," "staff shortage at times, not enough space."
- "Public relations, lots of people don't know about us."

In the organizational survey of other agencies, the respondents picked the following two factors as impeding the operation of the JAC: "not enough money" and "staff shortage."

Goals

New Management Information System

The main goal for using the OJJDP grant funds in Jefferson County was to build a management information system that would be useful, comprehensive, and integrated. They created a new database that became fully operational in July, 1998. The new database contains fields on demographics, assessments, referrals, case contacts, and notes, among other essential data. A major upgrade from the old databases, this new JAC database also contains screening information for detention. Now every time a juvenile is screened for detention an entry is made in the database. There is also a unique identifier for each client and each case/event as it applies to the JAC.

The new database seems very useful to staff for case management purposes. Staff using the child's name can check the database to determine the nature and frequency of any previous JAC contact. This data system can also be useful in planning. The data that was backfilled before July 1998, has many inaccuracies: including duplicate entries, events that did not entail a youth's presence at the JAC, and criminal history records not associated with any event. NCCD data analysts took significant time cleaning these data. Data entered into the new system after July 1998 is much cleaner, more accurate, and therefore more useful.

The new system is clearly a dramatic improvement. There are still some problems with the database structure that can be easily corrected. For example, the system cannot distinguish between an answer of "yes" and a question not asked. Currently a young person may be asked if they have been expelled; the default in the system is "yes." Thus, if a youth was not asked that question, the answer would still appear to be a "yes." This problem makes many important data elements unusable in aggregate form.

A comprehensive data system with little control on the data entry process is bound to have inaccuracies. Allowing many different people to enter data into a system that does not severely limit what information can be put in each field can lead to inaccurate data entry. As in the development of most MIS, there will be a gradual process of improvement. The next

important step in improving the usefulness of these data for planning is to have strict data controls placed on adequately trained data entry staff.

Another important step in the evolution of this database is creating a relational linkage to other systems, such as the courts, law enforcement agencies, detention, schools, and service provider agencies. The Jefferson County JAC recognizes their need for data integration and is working on solutions to difficult task.

Stated Goals of JCJAC

According to a 1997 Fact Sheet published by the JAC, they have three main goals:

1. To eliminate over-crowding in juvenile detention centers;
2. To reduce the number of hours spent on juvenile processing by arresting officers; and
3. To provide a host of support mechanisms for youth and their families.

The goal of reducing the detention population is a very difficult one to achieve with the current design of the assessment center. Most juveniles processed at the JAC are non-detainable. Some juveniles come to the JAC on a failure-to-appear or failure-to-comply technical offense which could be potentially detainable. It is difficult to know whether those youths would have been detained had it not been for the JAC.

The comments from the key leaders interviews further illuminate the second two goals. Goal number two was expressed as the need for better case processing, not only by officers but by court and attorneys as well: "streamline a system that was fragmented at best, that would ultimately give the court better tools and better information; before cops would drive down the road with blinders on. It took three hours out of your day to deal with a kid. Cops didn't want to stop kids. Now when they know they will be in and out of my office in under three minutes, the officers are bringing them."

From the comments of those surveyed and interviewed, it seems that the JAC has substantially met their goal of quicker case processing. Law enforcement officers spend less time with some juveniles than before and the District Attorney's decisions are made much more quickly. Since the District Attorney liaison is at the JAC and specifically assigned to making filing decisions, the process is speeded up considerably.

The third goal, for better services, was expressed as: "create a one stop shop;" "a single point of entry where cops and other community points could access; where all kinds of resources that were needed would be there; and kids would get hooked up with those resources before going back into the community." Clearly there are services provided at the JAC, such as contracts and referrals for minor criminal offenders or status offenders that were not available in a justice context previously. In terms of meeting this goal, one judge said that "the first thing it (JAC) did, I think, was to help communication. And it has provided a great mix of services that families need coming right in the front end." In line with this sentiment, others stated that the

assessment center has become a vehicle that communicates with all the players who don't regularly communicate with each other, providing more coordinated interventions.

Effect of the JAC on Recidivism

One main measure of any delinquency prevention or treatment intervention is the recidivism rate. Recidivism is often a difficult term to define and measure. The usual method is to determine whether a youth has been re-arrested within a certain time frame. Unfortunately, in Jefferson County there is currently no centralized management information system for gathering arrest data from each of the jurisdictions, so there is no automated way to determine whether a youth has been re-arrested. As the system is now set up, we would have to call each of the 13 law enforcement agencies in Jefferson County to determine whether each individual youth was re-arrested.

Since recidivism is so important to measure, NCCD chose three different approaches using three different data sources. First, using information captured in the JAC database in 1998 and mid 1999, we calculated recidivism as measured by phone screens to detention and re-transports to the JAC. We measured recidivism for three different groups which represent different levels of JAC intervention and participation. Second, recidivism was also calculated for a subsample of the youths transported to the JAC using data collected from the Jefferson County District Attorney's database. These data contain all delinquent actions in the county that were referred to the District Attorney. Third, youths arrested in one municipal police department during the first six months of 1998 were separated into those brought to the JAC and those not brought to the JAC. This jurisdiction was chosen because they were a large contributor to the population of juveniles brought to the assessment center, but they also choose not to bring many arrested youths to the JAC. Officers in the police department and JAC staff indicated that the reasons some JAC eligible youths were brought to the JAC and others not, was due to officer convenience. This discretionary decision made a natural comparison group.

Recidivism to the JAC and Detention Phone Screens by Levels of JAC Intervention

The creation of the three groups of youths according to level of JAC intervention provides a convenient way to determine recidivism based on JAC participation. The levels of JAC intervention NCCD delineated for this analysis progressed from receiving no contract or service referral (Group 1) to contract only (Group 2) to both contract and service referral (Group 3). For these three groups, NCCD calculated recidivism based on a re-transport to the JAC or a phone screen to detention within six months of the youths initial contact with the JAC in 1998.

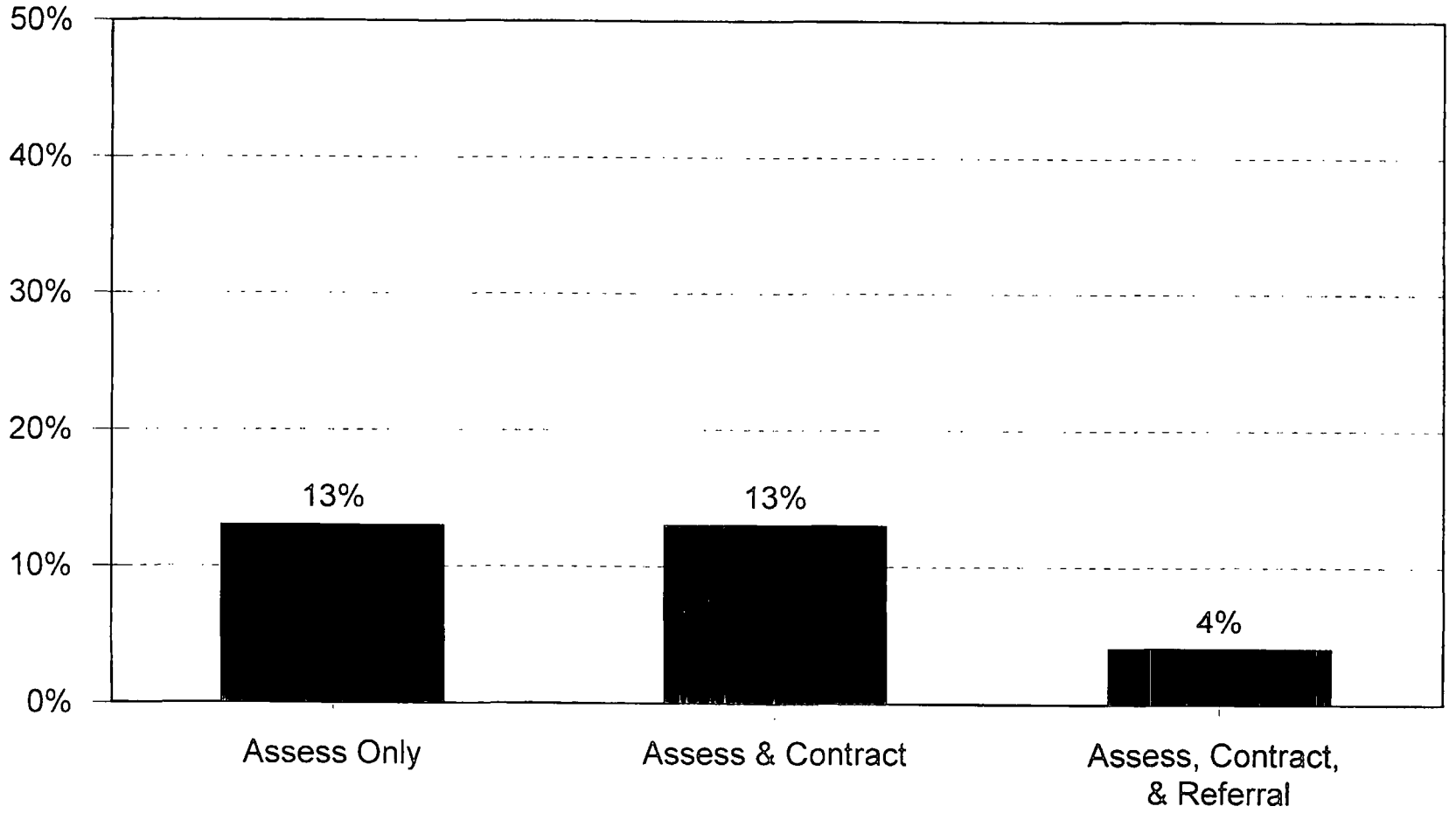
Youths in Group 3 who had both contracts and services had the lowest recidivism rate. Figure 4-2 shows that only four percent of juveniles who had both a contract and service referral returned to the JAC within six months of their initial visit. Groups 1 and 2, those with and without contracts had a 13 percent recidivism rate. Thirteen percent recidivism is quite low for

any juvenile justice intervention, although the youths initially brought to the JAC are minor offenders who are generally less likely to re-offend than more serious offenders.

It would be important to know whether these groups can be identified with particular offenses. In other words, it may be possible that more serious offenders do not receive contracts or service referrals. However, the data system as it functioned in 1998 did not allow for this type of analysis. Unfortunately, with the large quantity of missing offense information regarding the current charge, it is not possible to calculate a reoffense rate by current offense without suffering unknown biases.

Figure 4-2

Recidivism to JAC by Level of JAC Intervention, 1998-mid 1999



Source: JAC database, recidivism is defined by return to JAC or phone screen within 6 months

[f:\users\everyone\cac\golden\jeffco.pr4]

Recidivism to the JAC or District Attorney for Transported Youths

Not all juveniles arrested are processed at the JAC or phone screened into detention. In order to get a better picture of recidivism, NCCD used the District Attorney's database to calculate re-offenses and accurately record prior offenses. This database contains arrest, filing, and disposition data on all juveniles processed by the District Attorney's office in Jefferson County. For the 323 juveniles who were transported to the JAC in the first five months of 1998, NCCD recorded information on their prior offense history and subsequent activity captured in both these databases. Accordingly, 22 percent of juveniles that were transported to the JAC had at least one prior offense in the District Attorney or JAC records. Twenty percent re-offended at least once within six months after their initial visit to the JAC.

Table 4-14
Six Months Recidivism and Prior Offenses for Case File Review Cases (N=323)

	Percent Reoffended (at least once)	Percent with Priors (at least one)
Total	20	22
Contract		
Yes	27	29
No	18	19
Original Offense		
Violent	16	41
Property	22	15
Drug	22	18
Traffic	25	22
Technical or Status	12	19
Other	22	28
First Disposition Outcome		
Dismiss, Decline Prosecution	46	50
Diversion, Fine, Restitution	28	33
JAC	11	6
Plead Guilty	29	48
Probation	35	68
Other	11	50

Recidivism calculated as coming back to the JAC or having an entry in the Jefferson County DA database after the original JAC date.
Source: JAC Access Database; Jefferson County DA Database
Note: Cases between January to May 1998.

At first glance it seems surprising that those youths on contract re-offended at a higher rate (27 percent) compared with those without a contract (18 percent). However, those youths on contract had more prior offenses than those without a contract. Juveniles with traffic offenses revisited the JAC most frequently (25 percent) followed closely by property and drug offenders (22 percent).

Disposition data was also captured for this sample of transport cases. Nearly half (46 percent) of the juveniles whose cases were dismissed by the District Attorney had reoffended within six months, compared to 11 percent whose dispositional outcome was to the JAC. However, these two groups were not necessarily comparable since half of the juveniles that were dismissed had a prior record versus only six percent of juveniles who were referred to the JAC.

The time to re-offense varied widely by original offense and first disposition (see Table 4-15). For instance, the average time to first re-offense for status or technical offenders was 24 days, versus 125 days for violent offenders. Those whose cases were dismissed by the District Attorney re-offended on average in 59 days, in contrast to those who were diverted, fined, or placed on restitution (128 days).

Recidivism Based on Matched Arrest Comparison Groups

The third type of recidivism analysis NCCD conducted included generating a matched comparison group using the arrest data from a municipal police department in Jefferson County. The cohort of youths chosen were those arrested within the first six months of 1998. The police data was merged with the JAC data to determine whether the youth was brought to the JAC on that charge. In this way youths were separated into JAC youths and non-JAC youths. To create a comparable group of non-JAC youths, NCCD matched the groups on several factors: sex, race, number of prior offenses, and charge type.

Recidivism was calculated as a re-arrest by the police department within six months of the original arrest. This analysis showed that the two groups re-offended at the same rate, 21 percent (see Table 4-16). The JAC group had more re-arrests for property and status offenses, while the non-JAC group had more re-arrests for traffic and violent offenses.

Table 4-15
Average Number of Days to First Reoffense for Transported Cases (n=323)

	Average No. Days to First Reoffense
Original Offense	
Violent	125
Property	81
Drug	95
Traffic	73
Technical or Status	24
Other	94
First Disposition	
Dismiss, Decline	59
Diversion, Fine, Restitution	128
JAC	85
Plead Guilty	90
Probation	65

Recidivism calculated as coming back to the JAC or having an entry in the Jefferson County DA database after the original JAC date.
Source: JAC Access Database; Jefferson County DA Database
Note: Cases between January to May 1998.

Interestingly, non-JAC youths re-offended sooner. Of the matched youths not brought to JAC, 77 percent of re-offenders did so within three months. Only 46 percent of the JAC youths who were re-arrested, did so within three months. This finding suggests that intervention by the JAC delayed re-offending.

Table 4-16
Re-Arrest Rates for Comparable Groups of Juveniles Arrested by a Large Municipal Police Department in Jefferson County, January to June 1998

	Brought to JCJAC	NOT Brought to JCJAC
Number in Sample	77	79
Percent Re-Arrested w/i 6 Months	21%	21%
Time to Re-Arrest		
Less than One Month	13%	24%
One to Two Months	13%	29%
Two to Three Months	20%	24%
Three to Six Months	53%	24%
Charge on Re-Arrest		
Violent	0%	8%
Weapons	6%	0%
Drug Possession	19%	18%
Property	25%	6%
Shoplifting	12%	12%
Public Order and Harassment	27%	18%
Traffic	0%	12%
Status	12%	0%

* Matched on sex, race, number of priors, and original charge.
Sources: Police Dept. Automated Data; JAC Access Database

Law Enforcement Time

The JAC database records officer time in and officer time out, and the juvenile release time for each transport case. Officers spend on average 5 minutes at the JAC. Time the officer spends driving the youth to the JAC is not recorded. Law enforcement officers that we interviewed said that prior to the existence of the JAC, they may have spent hours in some cases finding an appropriate place to bring a juvenile. Juveniles brought to the JAC by the police spent on average 2.3 hours there.

Arrest Rates and Detention Rates after JAC Implementation

One issue of concern regarding the JAC is net-widening, that is, inappropriately bringing more juveniles into the system who would otherwise not have been brought in. As illustrated in Figure 4-3, overall rates of juvenile arrests in Jefferson County increased after 1994. Before the JAC opened (1993-1994), there was a dramatic drop in the number of youths arrested.

Table 4-17 shows the offense categories for arrested youths in Jefferson County between 1994 and 1998. The pattern for most offense types is erratic. However, the number of status offenders arrested doubled after the JAC opened in 1995. Also, arrests for "other misdemeanors" increased considerably. It is plausible that the opening of the JAC and its availability to take status offenders and minor offenders, caused the increase in arrests for these offenses. At the same time, the number of drug offenders arrested for felonies increased quite dramatically.

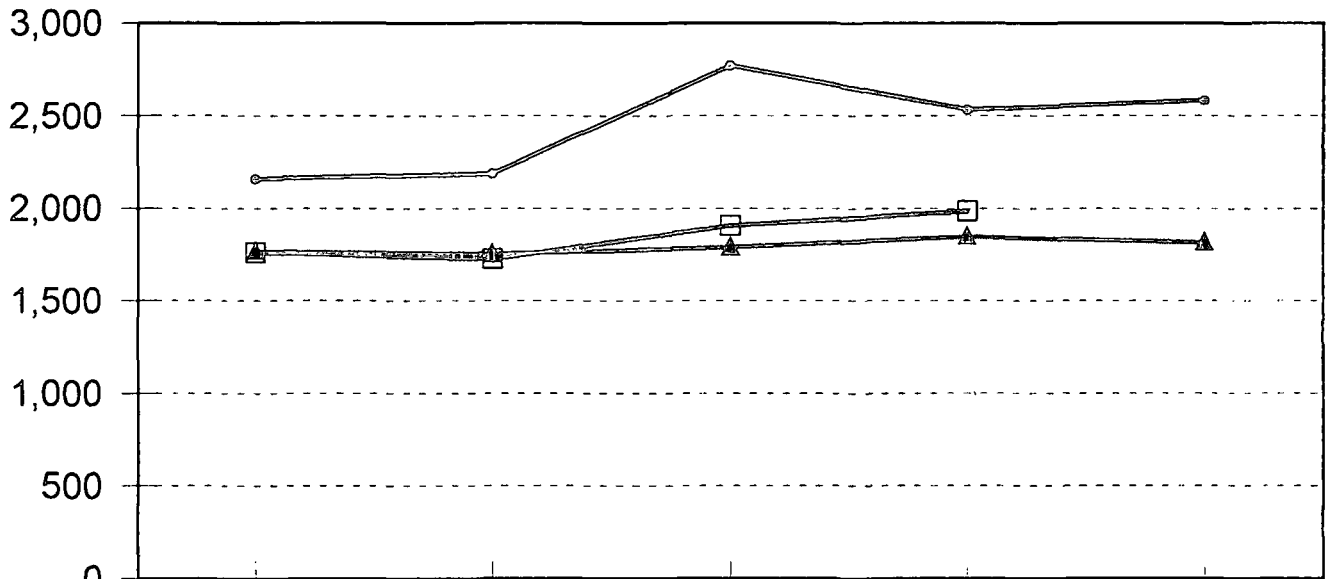
As arrests for certain types of offenses increased, delinquency filings and petitions increased about 200 cases between 1994 and 1998. For the few years for which we have data on social services admissions, the data show a doubling of out-of-home placements and non-residential social services between 1995-1996. Whether this is due to the JAC is a matter of speculation. Some JAC proponents would argue that the JAC functions as a diversion, so fewer youths would be filed on. Opponents could argue that intervening in minor offenses that would previously go virtually unnoticed by the justice system will get attention if the youth fails to comply with a contract with the JAC. This could cause increased filings and petitions.

Figure 4-3 shows that detention admissions have increased slightly since the JAC opened its doors. There are also conflicting arguments concerning the JACs potential effect on the detention rate. On one hand, the services at the JAC were designed to be used as a diversion for certain types of cases. The JAC director argues that this will reduce the detention rate either directly or indirectly by keeping the youths out of further trouble with the law. On the other hand, the JAC collects information from all of municipalities on a youth's record. Before the JAC there was no central repository for data on municipal offenses. For instance, a youth may have been caught for a curfew violation in one municipality, traffic warrant in another, and a truancy offense somewhere else. Before the JAC each incident would have been unknown to other parts of the system. More justice system intervention may stem from the JAC's improved ability to track youth within the county.

Most key leaders we interviewed did not see net-widening as necessarily negative (NCCD did not provide a prior definition of net widening). Two particular comments by criminal justice agency personnel illustrate this: "a lot of programs that I think are really successful or progressive really widen the net a great deal, how they deal with children. I think that's good so I will readily acknowledge that's the case. I think we're simply net widening in terms of services that we provide to at-risk kids;" and "I don't see net-widening as bad. If there are children out there committing burglaries and aren't getting caught, it just emboldens them that much more to commit the next one"

Figure 4-3

Jefferson County Arrests, Petitions, and Detentions After JAC Implementation, 1994-1998



	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Arrest	2,159	2,186	2,771	2,534	2,584
New Delinquency Petitions Filed	1,761	1,726	1,907	1,986	
Detention	1,766	1,753	1,789	1,847	1,814

Juvenile Arrests Source: CBI annual report . Years are calendar.
Petition: Colorado Judicial Branch Annual Report: Statistical Supplement.
Detention: Colorado DYC. Years are fiscal.

* District filings include delinquency and dependency.

[f:\users\everyone\cac\golden\jeffco.pr4]

Table 4-17
Jefferson County Arrest Trends by Offense Type, 1994-1998

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Violent Felony	38	13	37	31	21
Weapons Felony	30	28	25	14	20
Drug Felony	20	70	116	97	116
Property Felony	684	354	620	236	391
Person Misdemeanor	120	432	129	295	71
Drug Misdemeanor	504	263	278	278	424
Property Misdemeanor	14	14	6	11	3
Other Misdemeanor	205	287	321	301	308
Status	544	725	1,239	1,271	1,230

Source: CBI annual report. Years are calendar.

CHAPTER 5

ORANGE COUNTY JUVENILE ASSESSMENT CENTER

Context

Site Characteristics and Juvenile Justice Trends at the Time of Assessment Center Planning

According to the latest U.S. Census, 1990, the population of Orange County is close to 700,000. Approximately 11 percent or 75,000 of the population is between the ages of 10 and 18. The large majority of people in the county are White (80 percent), followed by African-American (15 percent), Asian or American Indian (2 percent), and Other Race (3 percent). People of Hispanic origin comprise 9 percent of the population and are included in the various racial categories.

The JAC opened its doors in November 1994. Statistics for prior years show a steady growth in the number of youths received into the juvenile justice system. Table 5-1 indicates a spurt just prior to the JAC's inception, a 16 percent growth in juvenile cases received with a corresponding population growth rate of only 2 percent. Overall there was a 48 percent increase in the number of youths entering the juvenile justice system in the five years preceding the opening of the Juvenile Assessment Center.

Table 5-1
General Youth Population and Number of Youths Arrested and Received by DJJ in Orange County, FY 1989-90 to 1993-94

	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Orange County Youth Population Ages 10-17	66,499	68,457	69,607	71,089	73, 654
Cases Arrested and Received by DJJ	6,886	7,681	8,003	9,261	10,212
Percent Change from Previous Year's Arrest Rate	10%	11%	5%	16%	10%

Source: DJJ Bureau of Research: Profile of Delinquency, March 1999

Fiscal year (1992-1993) also marked the first time in the 1990's that the number of African-American youths being received into the system surpassed the number of White youths (see Table 5-2). The number of boys in the system was substantially higher than the number of girls. Twenty-two percent were girls in FY 1989-90 and 28 percent were girls in FY 1993-94.

However, the number of girls arrested almost doubled in those five years, while the number of boys increased by 40 percent.

Table 5-2
The Number of Youths Arrested and Received by DJJ in Orange County by Race and Gender Categories, FY 1989-90 to 1993-94

	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Race					
White	3,604	3,882	3,999	4,527	5,039
African-American	3,212	3,744	3,969	4,636	5,088
Asian	61	50	34	81	60
American Indian	5	4	1	5	1
Unknown	4	1	0	12	24
Gender					
Males	5,634	6,161	6,372	7,126	7,923
Females	1,252	1,520	1,631	2,133	2,285

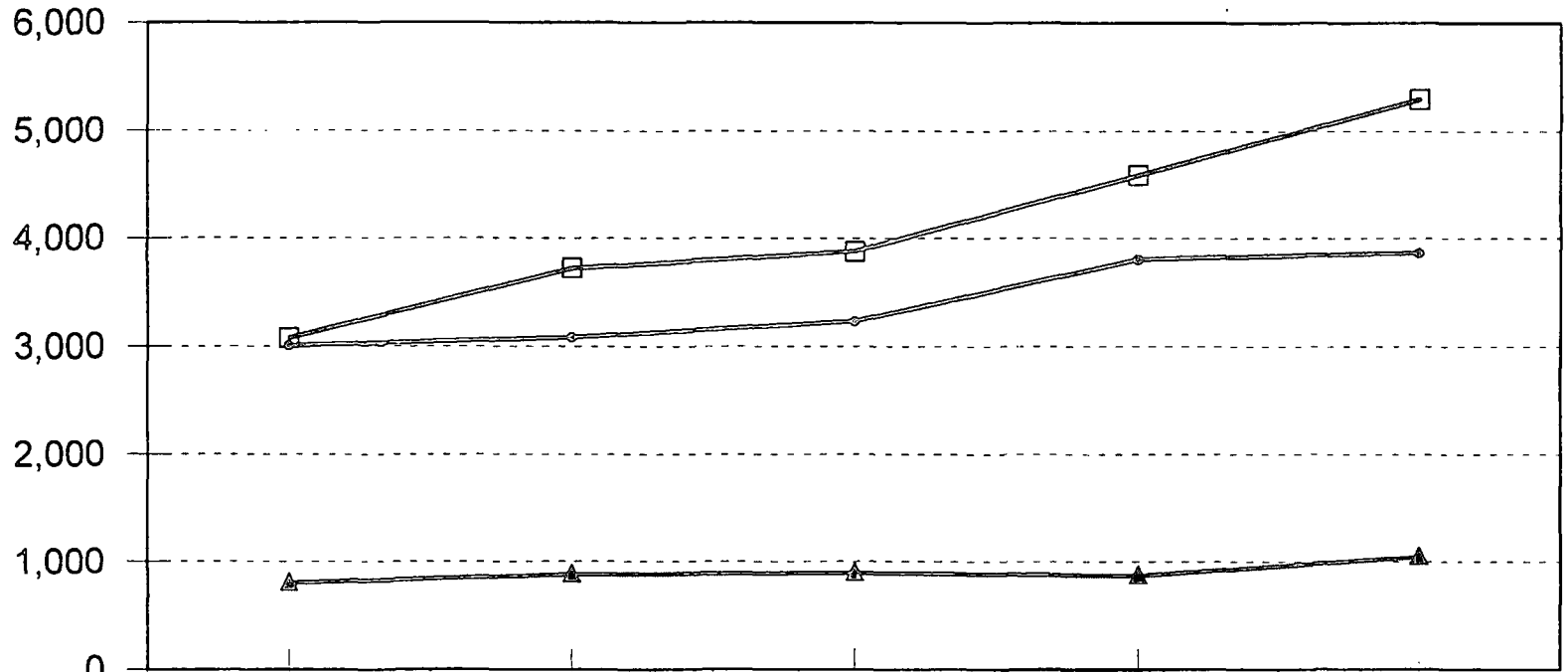
Source: DJJ Bureau of Research: Profile of Delinquency, March 1999

Figure 5-1 shows that the growth rate in misdemeanors far outpaced the growth rate in felony offenses. Felony arrests increased by 28 percent, but misdemeanors increased by 42 percent. Thus, a large portion of the increase in total referrals to DJJ were for misdemeanors.

The systems response to these offenses was also changing. Nearly twice as many young people were detained in Orange County in 1993-94 than were held in 1989-90. Figure 5-2 illustrates the large jump in detentions that occurred in the year prior to opening the JAC.

In sum, the juvenile justice picture in Orange County showed dramatic changes just prior to opening the assessment center. There was an increase in arrests, especially for misdemeanors and girls, and a doubling in the detention rate.

Figure 5-1
Offense Categories of Arrested and DJJ Received Youths in Orange County, FY 1989-1993



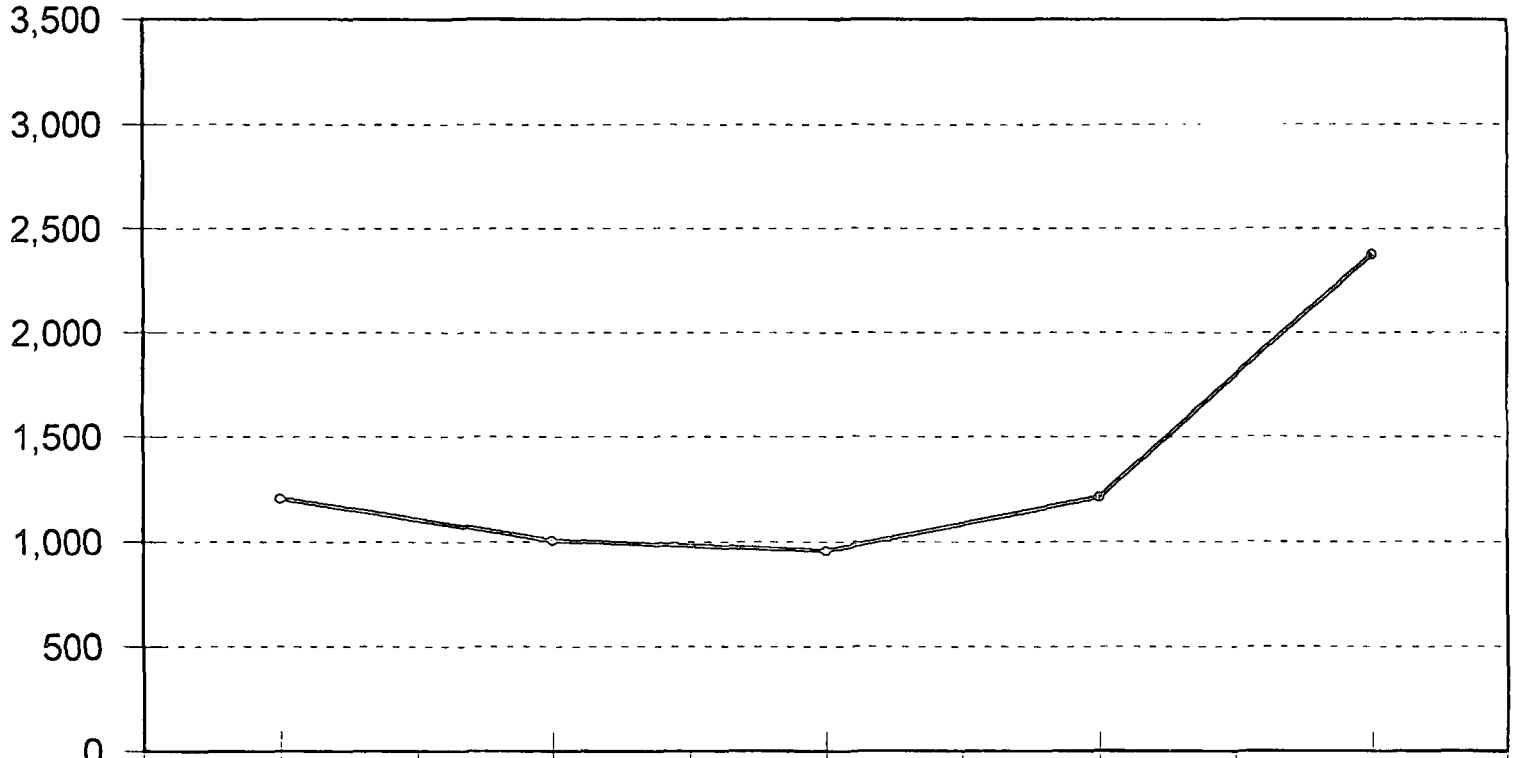
	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Felony	3,009	3,081	3,230	3,807	3,867
Misdemeanor	3,074	3,720	3,877	4,585	5,296
Other*	803	880	896	869	1,049

Source: DJJ Burea of Research: Profile of Delinquency, March 1999

* Judicial and non-judicial

[f:\users\everyone\cac\orlando\orlando.pr4]

Figure 5-2
Number of Juveniles Admitted to Detention in Orange County, FY 1989-1993



	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Detention Admissions	1,205	1,007	956	1,213	2,377

Source: DJJ Bureau of Research: Profile of Delinquency, March 1999

[f:\users\everyone\cac\orlando\orlando.pr4]

Impetus for Developing an Assessment Center

Key leaders stated several reasons for deciding to develop an assessment center in Orlando. These reasons have been paraphrased below. There were a number of publicized violent juvenile crime incidents in Florida the early 1990's. The perception of a high juvenile crime rate was in part fueled by the media attention and public concern about incidents in which the victims were tourists. Florida relies heavily on tourism and the perception that visitors were not safe in Florida was damaging the economy.

There were also other specific issues such as law enforcement spent babysitting juveniles if there was no one to take custody of them. According to law enforcement officials, this prevented them from patrolling the streets and dealing with more serious and pressing problems. Law enforcement was also adjusting to a change in Florida's detention policies. Florida had instituted a statewide mandatory detention screening process. Screening limited officer discretion in bringing any youth to detention. Thus, some youths were not eligible for detention because they did not meet the new criteria. Law enforcement had to deal with finding suitable custody arrangements for the non-detainable (according to the screening instrument) youngsters.

Other key leaders decried the "revolving door" of the justice system, that youths were readily coming back to detention and into the system. They believed that accurately assessing and attending to the youths needs early in a juvenile justice trajectory would help reduce recidivism.

A number of system deficiencies led key stakeholders in Orange County to believe that the juvenile justice system needed to take a new direction. These included: youngsters falling through the cracks of the system due to deficiencies in case processing and case management; problems faced by mental health providers who were negatively affected by Medicaid cuts and services; a lack of communication among key agencies; and families confused by the system. These problems, discussed candidly by key leaders, were important factors in looking to an assessment center as a solution.

Furthermore, in 1993, the State of Florida passed legislation that authorized the creation of new assessment centers following the Hillsborough County model. Florida Statute 39.047, reads in part:

> "The DJJ shall work cooperatively with substance abuse facilities, mental health services, law enforcement agencies, schools, health service providers, and other entities involved in children to establish a juvenile justice assessment center in each district. The assessment center shall serve as central intake and screening for children referred to the department. Each juvenile justice assessment center shall provide services needed to facilitate initial screening, physical and mental screening, and diagnostic testing, as appropriate. The entities involved in the assessment center shall make the resources for the provision of these services available at the same level to which they are available to the general public."

Traditional Service Delivery Model Prior to CAC

Prior to the opening of the JAC, key leaders indicated that the traditional service delivery model was overburdened, inadequate, and fragmented with multiple entry points into the system. For instance, before JAC, all arrested youth that were going to be taken into custody and booked were transported to Orange County's Central Booking which was housed in the adult jail. Because separation of youths and adults was required, this often created a disruption of the jail's activity. This also created long delays and challenges to the system, the youth, and the public. Along with the fact that officers would often have to "babysit" youths until an appropriate guardian or placement was secured, many key leaders felt that officers would in many instances turn a 'blind eye' to certain activities. Law enforcement officers said that delivering arrested youths to the JAC for booking by correctional officers allowed them to go back to patrol much quicker than before.

Another problem that frustrated law enforcement was that they lacked an easily accessible place to bring substance abusing juveniles. Prior to JAC, officers would often have to stay with these juveniles until they were sober or turn another "blind eye" to them. The Addiction Receiving Facility became an important co-located component of the JAC design.

Further indicator of an inadequate or overburdened system was the length of time it took for cases to be processed. All levels of criminal justice personnel, from public defenders to state attorneys to judges lamented the fact that it took weeks, sometimes months, before a case was filed. Judges also complained that the information that they would received was often inadequate. JAC provided another place to send youths and another mechanism for getting more in-depth information. Attorneys and judges now say that they get the files much sooner than before, and commend the JAC for providing more information on youths.

Another element of the fragmented and inadequate system was the lack of comprehensive and complete assessment. Prior to JAC, assessments and case management were often disjointed and deficient. Only youths who committed crime serious enough to be adjudicated a delinquent and placed on probation qualified for full assessment and case management services. Key leaders believed that proper assessment and intervention for youths before further penetration into the system was desperately needed. Also, key leaders believed that without proper information, youths who could have been diverted were not being identified.

The Early Planning Process and JAC Components

The Chair of the Orange County Commission was an instrumental leader in the JAC planning process. Many key leaders from various agencies that NCCD interviewed said that her strong leadership was a key factor in the planning and development of JAC. In 1993, the Commissioner convened a meeting of the Juvenile Justice Task Force which included representatives from various public and private agencies to propose a solution to Orange County's juvenile justice problems. As part of the planning process and analysis of the current juvenile justice system, they visited various juvenile facilities, attended town meetings, and

conducted focus groups. They soon decided that a "one-stop-shop" program with proper assessments and ability to address multiple needs was needed in their community.

Within a year, governmental and private entities including the Orlando Police Department, Orange County Sheriff, Public Defender, State Attorney, State of Florida, juvenile judges, Department of Children and Families, Department of Juvenile Justice, Clerk of the Circuit Court, public school, and Orange County Human Services came together to bring the JAC concept to fruition in Orange County.

In November of 1994, as a result of the planning process and input from many agencies, the JAC opened its doors. A contract to run the JAC was awarded to Human Service Associates Inc. (HSA), a private non-profit organization. The Orange County JAC was the first assessment center run by this organization. As of 1999 they ran six JACs in the state of Florida. HSA's stated vision for the JAC was to support collaboration of key agencies, provide enhanced services for a larger population of juveniles, and function as the managed care organization– brokering service dollars to get more services to youths and families.

Listed below are the basic components of the Orange County JAC:

1. The largest component is the 24-hour receiving and booking unit for all youths arrested in Orange County.

2. A secure treatment facility called the Addiction Receiving Facility (ARF) is co-located on the premises. The 20-bed ARF provides drug and alcohol detoxification and stabilization services. Youths can be committed to the ARF by the police, mental health professionals, or their parents/guardians.

3. The Truancy Center is also co-located at the JAC. This center is run by the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the City of Orlando Police Department. Truant youths are picked up by the police and brought to the center until a parent/guardian comes to pick them up.

4. Another co-located program is the Juvenile Alternative Services Program (JASP). This is a diversion program for minor delinquent offenders.

5. The Department of Juvenile Justice has on-site staff interviewing and screening youths who enter the JAC through the receiving and booking unit. They make the initial custody decision (i.e., detention, non-secure facility, home).

6. Juvenile Probation Officers are also housed at the JAC who make recommendations for case handling to the State Attorney (prosecutor) and to the Judge if the case is formally handled.

7. Human Service Associates runs the assessment and case-management functions of the JAC called TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities). It is

intended that all youths processed by the DJJ unit will be screened and assessed by TASC assessors. Some of these youths will be provided a TASC case manager or be slated for targeted case management services.

8. The Family Services Planning Team (FSPT) is also housed at the JAC. FSPT coordinates and brokers mental health and treatment services to youths with multiple needs.

Buy-In and Support for the Assessment Center

The building housing the JAC was purchased by the Orange County Commission and renovated and furnished at a cost of approximately $1.6 million. Table 5-3 shows the 1998/1999 Interagency Cooperative Agreement for funding of the JAC for the most current fiscal year. The table shows that the JACs sources of revenue are quite diversified, with the bulk of funding coming from two state agencies, the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Children and Families.

Another measure of support of the JAC is whether outside organizations know its goals. Table 5-4 shows the results of an anonymous survey of school, criminal justice agency, police, and service provider staff (n = 88). The majority of respondents (76 percent) agreed that a goal of the JAC was to reduce the time police officers spent with arrested juveniles. Across goals, people were more likely to respond that they did not know whether a particular goal was in place rather than disagree that it was a goal at all. Less than 50 percent agreed that offering integrated case management and having a reliable MIS in place were goals of the JAC. These last two goals were recently added, thus it makes sense that referring agencies might not know of them.

Table 5-3
Financial and In-Kind Support of the OCJAC by Agency and Services Provided in 1998

Agency	Service	Financial/ In-Kind Support
Orange County Government	JAC Building	In-Kind-473K
Orange County Corrections	Corrections Staff	In-Kind-986K
Orange County- Division of Health and Community Services	Funding for ARF; JASPk Case Worker for Truancy Unit	Direct-265K; In-Kind-278K
Office of the State Attorney	24- Hour Access	In-Kind -47K
Orange County Sheriff's Office	Office for Truancy Unit	In-Kind -62K
Office of the Public Defender	24- Hour Access	In-Kind-50K
Clerk of the Court	Access to Juvenile Court Records	In-Kind-2K
Orange County Public Schools	Liaison for School Records; Clerical support for Truancy Unit	In-Kind-46K
Orlando Police Department	Officer for Truancy Unit	In-Kind-68K
Department of Children and Families	Funding for TASC Unit (including operations); ARF; Juvenile Drug Court	Direct-2million
Department of Juvenile Justice	JAC Operations; Contracted Intake Services; Department Intake Services	Direct-1.9million

Source: JAC Director Survey

Table 5-4
Organizational Survey Responses to Goals of the OCJAC, 1998

Goal	Percent Yes	Percent No	Percent Don't Know
Reduce police officer's time	76	6	18
Identify needs of youngsters	55	5	40
Place to handle arrested juveniles	88	1	11
Provide comprehensive assessments	53	4	43
Reduce gaps in service	59	5	36
Speed legal processing time	61	5	34
Foster interagency cooperation	61	7	32
Reduce duplication of services	52	6	42
Improve community safety	56	8	36
Offer integrated case management	44	5	51
Have a reliable MIS	40	6	54

Source: Organizational Survey

Identification

Referral of Juveniles to the Assessment Center

As mentioned above, the JAC serves as a processing center for arrested juveniles in Orange County. Police officers have discretion of whether to bring a youth to the center, but almost always do. Other juveniles are referred by the courts, schools, and occasionally by family members. Some enter the JAC through a civil citation. These juveniles are called "at large." The Addiction Receiving Facility receives referrals from several places including families, courts, and law enforcement. The truancy center, while co-located, is quite separate from the assessment center process. Youths are brought to the truancy center by law enforcement and remain there until picked-up by a parent/guardian. Youths are given a short assessment by the truant officer or a social worker, but this process is completely different and separate from the assessment used for the delinquent juveniles.

Accurate records are collected on the numbers of youths coming through the booking process at the assessment center. These youths make up the bulk of assessment center activity (70%-80%.)

Since its inception about 9,000 youths per year have been booked at the JAC. That number has been virtually unchanged. Table 5-5 presents numbers of youth being booked each year by race, gender and age groupings. One in four of these youths were girls and approximately half were African-American. The percentage of African-American youths has increased slightly over the years. It is important to remember that only 15 percent of the county population is African-American, thus indicating a large problem of minority over-representation. This is not necessarily due to the JAC, but an ongoing problem.

Table 5-5
Number of Bookings at OCJAC by Race, Sex, and Age, 1995 to 1998

	Intake Year			
	1995	1996	1997	1998
Race				
African-American	48%	49%	50%	52%
Hispanic	14%	14%	14%	13%
White	37%	36%	35%	34%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%
Sex				
Female	25%	26%	25%	25%
Male	75%	74%	75%	75%
Age				
11 or under	3%	4%	3%	3%
12 to 14	26%	27%	26%	27%
15 to 16	44%	43%	41%	43%
17 or older	28%	26%	29%	27%
Total Number	9,097	9,040	8,799	8,942

Source: Intake Database, Orange County Department of Corrections

Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

From its inception to 1998, the largest percentage of JAC cases were for misdemeanors (see Table 5-6). However, the number of court order/warrant cases surpassed the number of felony cases in 1997 and 1998. Felonies against persons and felony weapons charges only constituted one in ten of all young people booked at the JAC. Approximately 30 percent of the

youths were charged with some type of technical violation (either violating a court order or failing to appear in court).

Table 5-6
Most Serious Charge of Cases Booked at the OCJAC, 1995 to 1998

	Intake Year			
Most Serious Charge	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**
Felony	31%	29%	28%	27%
Person	8%	9%	8%	8%
Weapon	2%	2%	2%	1%
Property	13%	12%	12%	12%
Drugs	5%	4%	4%	5%
Other	3%	2%	2%	1%
Misdemeanor	45%	42%	42%	42%
Person	7%	5%	8%	7%
Property	20%	22%	19%	16%
Drug	3%	5%	5%	5%
Disorderly	8%	7%	7%	7%
Other	7%	3%	3%	7%
Court Order or Detention Order	24%	28%	30%	31%

Source: Intake Database, Orange County Department of Corrections

In interviews of youths at the JAC, NCCD gathered data related to family life. Single-parent households comprised more than one-half of the cases, with 53 percent of youth reporting that they were being raised by their mother, 2 percent raised by their father, and 23 percent raised by both biological parents. The remainder lived with guardians other than their parents. Self-reported relationships with the primary care-giver were good, with 84 percent of youth saying they got along pretty well or very well. Only 3 percent reported they got along very poorly or not very well with the person who raised them, and an additional 13 percent of youth had mixed feelings on the matter.

Net-Widening

One of the questions that arises from the JAC referral process is whether more youngsters are being brought into the system than before or whether net widening has occurred. It is sometimes difficult to determine whether these youths were delinquent or just not caught before, or less serious "at-risk" youths being caught up in the expanding net of the justice system. Arrest and detention statistics are presented in the goals section. Interviews with key leaders in the Orlando JAC collaboration indicated that most people believed that more juveniles are being arrested, yet have mixed feelings on whether this is inappropriate net-widening. The following quotes are selected as representative of the opinions expressed.

- "...if you build it they will come. And I think that's what happened. It's made it more convenient for the police to handle cases. So, yes, we have more now. But I don't think that the police are saying let's go hassle some youngsters tonight."

- "This place has not significantly done anything with netwidening to me. What I tell people is that there was no net or else the net had a lot of holes in it because the piranha were out there chewing through the mesh."

- "One of my problems with having a JAC center is that it's much easier for law enforcement to make arrests now, because they just drop them off and that's the end of it. So instead of making a decision is this really important enough, or can we give him a note, it's like everyone is getting schlepped up here."

- "I mean, it's having fights on the school grounds, boys fight, girls fight, where two people punch each other and they are getting arrested. So I think that had it been the old way, maybe somebody *(implying police)* would make a determination of do I want to spend my days doing this?"

One key leader gave NCCD an example of her belief that net widening had occurred:

"A statute was amended three years ago (in 1996) that provides for law enforcement to be able to go out and arrest any child on probable cause when it is on a violation of community control. Now, because they are in partnership with JAC and the system, they have immediate access to information. It makes it easy for them to dump the youth at the JAC and go out and get the next youth that violated his curfew by 5 or 6 minutes. But it's not an arrest, it's taking into custody. And a lot of times it never gets filed or does get filed, but eventually dismissed. That, maybe, five years ago wouldn't even have gotten to this point because somebody along the way would have said this is too big of a hassle for me."

Linkages

Organizational Structure of the Assessment Center

As mentioned earlier, and illustrated in Table 5-7, a number of agencies are co-located at the JAC. They provide a wide spectrum of services. The issue of collaboration and co-location is difficult to sort out, however. For instance, while the Truancy Center is co-located at the assessment center, it is not linked either by function or a management information system (although there are plans for this linkage). Similarly, the JASP diversion program is located at the JAC, but functions no differently than if it were located elsewhere. However, this co-location may help the community understand that most of the juvenile justice related services and sanctions can be found in one location, at the Orange County JAC.

The organizational structure is also influenced by the problems of vacancies for certain positions. The staffing pattern at the JAC is listed in Table 5-8. Assessment and case management positions make up a large portion of JAC staff. During this evaluation period, the number of vacancies among assessors had been a problem at the JAC. Due to their funding source, they were required to hire "OPS" staff, that is, staff who are paid hourly with no benefits such as personal leave, insurance, etc. The JAC managers eliminated this type of position in November of 1998.

Links Between Services, Youths and Families

One of the operating assumptions of the Orlando JAC is that there is a conceptual link between the assessment process and subsequent service provision. Some of these links are solid, but others still need to be strengthened. Interviews with key leaders in the community show that while assessment, referral, and follow-up to services exists in some cases, the relationship is often a tenuous one:

- "They send the report to the intake worker, and they expect the intake worker to put that on the recommendation to the court, to include that as part of the treatment plan, and then either the intake worker will have to make those referrals, or just send it here to court. That's the problem."

Table 5-7
Inter-Agency Linkages at the OCJAC, 1998

Agency	# of JAC Allocated Staff	Function	Co-located at JAC?
Mental Health	14	TASC Assessments	Yes
Human Services/Child Protective Services	0	None here but contacted if needed.	N/A
State Attorney	0	N/A	No
Court	1	Court Liaison	Yes
School District	2	School Liaison ARF Teacher/Truancy Clerical	No Yes
Substance Abuse	N/A	Addictions Receiving Facility (ARF)	Yes
Department of Corrections	17	Booking/Fingerprinting/Processing/Secure Booking/Safety and Security	Yes
Department of Juvenile Justice	N/A	Screening/Detention/Case Management	Yes
Law Enforcement	2	Truancy Center Arrest-Transport to JAC	Yes No
Public Defender/ Defense Counsel	N/A	Contacted as Needed	No
Juvenile Alternative Services Program (JASP)	8	Diversion Program	Yes
Civil Citation/Pre-diversion	1.5	Diversion	Yes

Source: JAC Director Survey

Table 5-8
OCJAC Staffing Patterns in 1998

Type of Staff	Total FTE's	Number of Vacancies
Administrative and Upper Management Staff		
Upper Management	1	0
Mid-management	12	1
MIS/Computer Staff	2	0
Accounting/Financial Staff	0	0
Client/Legal Records	0	0
Quality Assurance	0	0
Clerical/Administrative	21	2
Direct Service Staff		
Assessors	14	6
Case Managers	20	3
Psychologists	contracted out	
Medical Personnel	5	0
Volunteers/Interns	1	0
Transportation	0	0
Law Enforcement Officers	2	0
Assistant Assessors	3	1
ARF Techs	12	2
ARF Case Managers	5	1
Drug Court Managers	4	0
JASP Case Managers	6	0

Source: JAC Director Survey

- "There's a communication problem between intake workers and the probation units. If you write a PDR *(pre-disposition report)* about all these fabulous things that you have in mind and the judge orders it but there's no way to get those things done because it's a totally unrealistic plan, then the probation officer is sunk. They're starting off on the wrong foot."

Various other issues were mentioned during key leader interviews as having a negative impact on the planning and implementation of recommended services. One of these was lack of follow through: "They do a treatment plan and it sounds good and the judge follows it because it really sounds good, this is what the child needs...we don't know how to secure the funding, we don't have the funding to put services in place."

The JAC collaborative has tried to impact the problem of service provision. Some services are now more available as a result of providers coming to the JAC location to serve youth and their families. Some of the services now offered on site include group sessions in the following areas: anger management, relapse prevention, domestic violence, and parenting education. In addition, some community based agencies have begun referring youths to the JAC services.

Intervention

Process for Youth Entering the JAC

One of the areas NCCD set out to explore relates to the conditions in which young people are being held following their arrival at the facility. All arrested and transported youths enter the assessment center through a secure port at the back of the building. Most are released from handcuffs when the police drop them off. They are fingerprinted and photos are taken by a Correctional Officer. Then they watch a video describing the procedures and rules at the assessment center. Other youths arrive at the JAC as truants. These youngsters are brought by law enforcement to a side entrance and are not involved in any way with other parts of the assessment center. Still others arrive at the ARF and are ushered in to the locked treatment facility. They also have no contact with other parts of the assessment center. Finally some youths come in to the assessment center because they have been issued a ticket by law enforcement and told to appear at the JAC. They come in the front door and sit in an open waiting room for contact with a DJJ intake worker or a TASC assessor. They are called "at large" cases. These cases represent 20 to 30 percent of the cases processed at the JAC.

Most of the interviews NCCD conducted were with young people who were brought by police to the back door and booked. However, some were brought in "at large." The vast majority of youths (of 92 interviewed) reported that during their time at the JAC, they were unrestrained and "held" in a large room. Nine percent of those interviewed said they were put in a holding cell. Although a restraint chair is clearly visible in the large room, staff report rarely using it, and none of the youths interviewed were restrained in that manner.

In the initial assessment by a DJJ intake worker, a detention screening instrument is completed. Those youths not sent to detention wait in the secure common area for a parent or authorized family member to pick them up. The detainable juveniles await a van that will transport them to detention. They are handcuffed prior to departure. While the youth are waiting, TASC staff choose youth for full assessments. Youths are typically assessed according to their arrival to the JAC, however priority is given to youths who indicate potential "red flags" on the initial short screening instrument called the SAMH-1 and to youths brought in for sex offenses and domestic violence.

Assessment and Case Management

In addition to receiving the screening instrument, SAMH-1, it was originally intended that all youth brought to the JAC would receive an in-depth assessment. That already would have been a difficult goal to reach given the 9,000 juveniles booked each year (and the other youths entering the JAC through non-secure avenues), but the problem has been exacerbated by low staffing levels.

The assessment staff use an instrument called the "biopsychosocial." The instrument was developed specifically for this assessment center and has been refined over the years. Done as an interview with the staff recording responses on paper, it takes approximately one and a half hours to complete. The assessment staff has sampled and pilot tested several other instruments, but as of 1999 decided to keep using the biopsychosocial. They felt that the other instruments they tested were either took too long, were not comprehensive enough, or contained irrelevant questions.

After conducting a full assessment, TASC assessors use a standard form for service referrals. It is grouped into 7 categories and within each category are the names of the service providers and phone numbers. These categories include mental health counseling, educational concerns, parent resources/teen pregnancy, neighborhood centers for families, teen programs/activities, substance abuse counseling, anger management, and self sufficiency centers. The staff person usually checks off one of the categories and gives the recommendation to the parent, if available, or sends it (with a brief explanation letter) by mail to the parent. If the parent is available, the TASC assessor attempts to gather parental feedback regarding the recommendations. Often, after sending this form, the JAC staff telephone the parent/guardian to see if they received the recommendation. This is recorded in the written case notes in the files.

Some assessed youths are chosen for targeted or intensive case management. The need for targeted or intensive case management is determined by the criteria of a youth needing multiple services. How the service will be paid for is determined by their payor source (e.g., Medicaid, state contracted dollars, etc.).

Intensive case managers have relatively small caseloads of approximately 20. They focus on linking the youth to services already available in the community. For instance, the case

manager may help the family get a full psychiatric evaluation and residential placement if necessary or refer them to other applicable services, such as a mentoring program.

NCCD also asked key leaders whether they thought the types of services recommended to youth were adequate and whether subsequent case management was successfully achieved. The following quotes illustrate responses to these questions:

- "What really frustrates me is when I see the child and family come back in court, they get basically the same recommendations because they have the same issues, and then nobody ever asks the question, 'Excuse me, but did you ever attend anger management? Did you ever do these sanctions that were imposed prior?"

- "You can refer a kid until you're blue in the face for services. Need to actually follow through to see, and some of the stuff more than helping the family with a phone call."

During follow-up interviews conducted by NCCD, among the 12 youths we were able to find, three were referred by the JAC staff to educational services (however only one received it), two to substance abuse services, one to Family Service Planning, and one for a jail tour. Slightly more than half (n=7) said that they were never contacted by a JAC staff after the assessment.

Types and Amounts of Service at the JAC

Given its nature as a one-stop, post-arrest, pre-detention or release facility, a number of services are provided at the JAC. Some of these services, such as booking, have transferred from Adult Central Booking. Other services, such as suicide screening, detention screening, and preliminary assessment (through the use of the statewide SAMH-1 form) are conducted by DJJ staff housed at the JAC facility. These screenings were conducted prior to the existence of the JAC, but were housed elsewhere. The detention screening (risk assessment) includes the suicide screening and the SAMH-1 screening. Table 5-9 contains a list of services available at the OCJAC, and the approximate percentage of youths receiving these services.

As stated earlier, most youths entering the JAC are booked. According to the JAC Director, slightly less than one-half are given a urinalysis. However, the majority of assessed youths are given a urinalysis. The preliminary assessment is the SAMH-1 which is a form required by the state of Florida. DJJ completes this form on all youth received into DJJ. In-depth assessments are the biopsychosocial instruments. Depending on the time frame and the data source, the percentage of youths receiving in-depth assessments fluctuates. NCCD's analysis of the data shows a slightly different assessment rate than the one reported by the Director in Table 5-9 due to these factors.

The service most open to interpretation is case management, in which it is reported that 100 percent of youth are served in this capacity. Case management can mean many things, discussions with JAC staff indicate that even in-house definitions have fluctuated. The Director noted that case management in this case was covered by DJJ, TASC, JASP, and Targeted Case

Management (TCM). However, case management in terms of assigning a TASC case manager and conducting in-depth assessments is a different issue and is discussed elsewhere in this report.

Table 5-9
Some of the Services Offered at the OCJAC and the Percent Receiving Services in 1998

Service Type	Offered	Approx. % of Youth Receiving Service
Booking	Yes	81%
Urinalysis	Yes	46%
Preliminary Assessment	Yes	100%
In-Depth Assessment	Yes	65%
Referrals to Service Providers	Yes	65%
Case Management	Yes	100%

Source: JAC Director Survey

Staffing

When asked in the organizational survey what factors impeded the operations of the JAC, of 28 respondents to this question, 57 percent cited staffing shortages at JAC as being a problem. This problem is related not only to the assessment process mentioned earlier, but also in the availability of only 20 beds at the Addictions Receiving Facility (ARF) co-located at the JAC. One County Administrator told us, "One of my concerns was that there were a lot of referrals that come into the ARF, and unfortunately they don't have enough staff or manpower to professionally screen the individuals for proper placement in the ARF."

Education/Training

TASC assessors have a minimum requirement of a bachelor's degree and two years experience in the mental health or substance abuse field. Also, some social work students, working towards a master's degree, perform assessments under supervision from their department. The four staff members hired as intensive case managers as part of the OJJDP grant are master's level.

Monitoring of Services

According to the OCJAC Director, there is no formal performance monitoring for service providers who take JAC referrals. The JAC is currently conducting follow-up phone calls to interview 25 percent of the youths who were referred to services regarding the utilization of services and the quality of the services received.

Legal Rights and Consent Issues

An issue that must be discussed regarding JAC operations relates to discussions of legal rights and consent. Though youths are Mirandized by law officers following arrest, there is no requirement for an additional Miranda warning once the child arrives at the JAC and begins the intake and assessment processes. There is some question as to whether children and their parents are aware that the child has a right to have an attorney present if they desire one, or that they do not have to answer questions during the assessment process. Part of the detention screeners protocol is to advise the youth of his or her right to an attorney. There is a placard at the JAC indicating that youths have a right to an attorney, but it seems that many of the young people do not understand this right. When asked during NCCD interviews, one-third of the boys and 21 percent of the girls believed they had been offered legal representation.

While most youths do not need to consent to be taken to the OCJAC (all arrested youth are brought there), their consent is required before TASC workers collect information for the assessment. TASC assessors have the youth sign the consent forms and explain the option of refusing the assessment. A refusal form is provided to any youth who refuses the assessment. Youths rarely refuse.

NCCD collected consent information in the case file review by looking through the TASC case files for signed consent forms. Seven of these forms provide a space for parental signature. Of these seven forms, the Release Agreement was the most likely to be signed (20 percent). This form is signed when parents/guardians come to pick up the non-detainable child from the assessment center. Four forms of concern are presented below in Table 5-10.

Table 5-10
Percent of Parents/Guardians Singing Consent or Other Forms at the OCJAC

Type of Form	Percent Signed by Parent/Guardian
Release of Information	2%
Grievance Procedures	4%
Parent Survey	2%
Release Agreements	20%

Source: Case File Review Database

It is also important to explore the nature of understanding of the consent forms. The 92 youth who were interviewed at the JAC were asked about the consent forms and what consent means to them. While there were a handful of youth who seemed to understand what consent meant, the overwhelming majority of youths reported they did not know, or when asked to explain consent, gave an explanation that was erroneous such as, "Don't know, just said sign," "Giving permission to ask questions and stuff," and "Means a whole lot, not really sure what."

Clearly the issue of consent is one that should be further explored in the continued development of CAC programs, particularly since information from the assessment process can ultimately make its way to the formal juvenile justice process, for example through DJJ case managers' (juvenile probation officers) use of assessment information in sentencing recommendations. The opposite side of the coin is that if parental consent is sought, far fewer youngsters will be assessed. The balance between these two issues will largely define the continued evolution of CAC programs that serve as single points of entry for the juvenile justice system.

Access to the JAC files

Access to the JAC records is limited to juvenile justice and human service personnel. As mentioned earlier in the sections on legal rights and consent, it appears that while juvenile justice officials such as probation officers and judges have access to data gleaned during the assessment process, defense attorneys do not. At the time of the assessment, the name of the defense attorney is not often known. The assessment is passed on by TASC staff to DJJ case managers (probation officers), who use this information to make recommendations to the judge. Thus, information that youths may mistakenly believe to be confidential can actually work against them in the official juvenile justice process.

Most key leaders we interviewed feel that the information collected at the JAC is shared with others for positive outcomes. Defense counsel disagreed. Each type of opinion is illustrated below:

- "It's stupid that professionals don't share information on a youngster when they're supposed to be working for the kid's good"

- "I don't see the DA's getting more information as being conducive to treating children. I see it being used as ammunition against the child"

Perception of Young People and Their Families of Their Experiences at the JAC

How then, did the youth describe their feelings about the JAC process? (Please note that this is based on a very small sample of 12 youths and 21 parents.) Forty-eight percent of youth reported having mixed feelings about the JAC, 34 percent said they were either somewhat or very satisfied with the experience, and 27 percent reported that they were either somewhat (17 percent) or very (10 percent) dissatisfied. When asked how they were treated at the JAC, two-thirds reported being treated either reasonably or very well, with 22 percent saying they were treated either "somewhat alright" or "not very well at all." There were no large differences across race or gender groups, although females tended to be slightly less satisfied with the JAC experience than were males.

In interviews with parents, it was found that of those reached by the JAC staff, most indicated that they were contacted within two hours, or that a JAC staff member had left a message on their machine. However, several of the parents/guardians were displeased because they had not been notified soon enough.

Some parents were confused about the purpose and services at the JAC. Navigating through the maze of acronyms and agencies can be very difficult. In fact, two parents thought that the detention center and the JAC were the same place. The following two comments are illustrative of this problem:

- "They should have called that morning, but they didn't let him make a phone call till the next day."

- "My daughter was taken to JAC on Friday for running away; she stayed until Monday."

Goals

Goals and Objectives of the JAC

A general goal of the JAC is to ensure that all youth within the juvenile justice system are assessed and have access to necessary services, while balancing the critical issue of public safety. Another explicit goal of the JAC during this evaluation period was the enhancement of its integrated case management services. Enhancement of this service includes hiring masters level managers, improving coordinated treatment planning, and referral and monitoring of service delivery.

Additional information regarding goals of the JAC and to what extent they have been met can be garnered from responses by key leaders, which included the following:

Better Services:

- "It's (the ARF) a life saver. I just feel that way so strongly because I always have a place that I can send them if they become unmanageable and a lot times, unfortunately, I have parents that don't want to pay money. And then the kid's life is in jeopardy."

Improve Case Processing:

- "Shorten the time from first contact with child to whatever the resolution."

- "Streamline a system that was fragmented at best. That ultimately would give the court better tools and better information."

- "When it helps the police, then it helps our process. We're getting less phone calls from DJJ and police officers trying to find out what do we do with this kid, where do we put him, where do we take him."

Information Sharing:

- "Before, officers may release the youth to the parents without doing anything, without getting any information from the parents so that DJJ would have to come back and schedule an appointment for an intake assessment. Now, they can do it right away when the parents come to pick up the youth. "And I think they get more truthful response from the parents as far as the kid's behavior, when it's still fresh in their mind... so that they can make better recommendations to us."

- "I know we're diverting more of the more serious cases than we used to...It's not just sending them to diversion, it's sending them to the right diversion program."

Early Prevention:

- "May start to see that we may have a problem with this child. The second time they come in then you kind of get a better understanding of where they're going to go, and make a determination at that point. I may need to really jump on this thing here and get this child squared away."

Overall Juvenile Justice Processing in Orange County

The following tables and figures show the flow of cases along various measures of juvenile justice processing in Orlando, just prior to and after the opening of the JAC. There was a rise in the number of cases received in Orange County following the inception of JAC operations in November 1994. As Table 5-11 shows, from fiscal year 1993-94 to fiscal year 1994-95, there was a 12 percent increase in cases received with no concomitant increase in the number of juveniles at-risk between the ages of 10 and 17. Figure 5-3 shows the offense types of arrested youths from Orlando over time. During the first year the number of misdemeanors rose by 14 percent following the trend from the previous year (as shown earlier in Figure 1). During the second year of JAC operations, the total number of cases received stabilized, then began to decline. By FY 1997 (ends in June of 1998), the number of felonies was down considerably, misdemeanors were back to 1993 levels, and arrests for "other" offenses had increased dramatically. The "other delinquency" category includes the following offenses: contempt of court, technical violation of community control, prosecution previously deferred - cases reopened, felony traffic and other traffic offenses, violation of furlough status, violation of county or municipal ordinance, and delinquency cases reopened upon apprehension of a youth.

While it appears that the JAC may have had some initial impact on the total number of juveniles brought in by law enforcement, this appears to have leveled off since that time. However, while felony arrests were decreasing, "other" offenses such as being brought in for technical violations and traffic offenses (traffic offenses are not handled at the JAC) were increasing. During that same time period, policy changes allowed police to pick up youths who violated probation as stated earlier in the net-widening section. These youths would also be included in the "other" category.

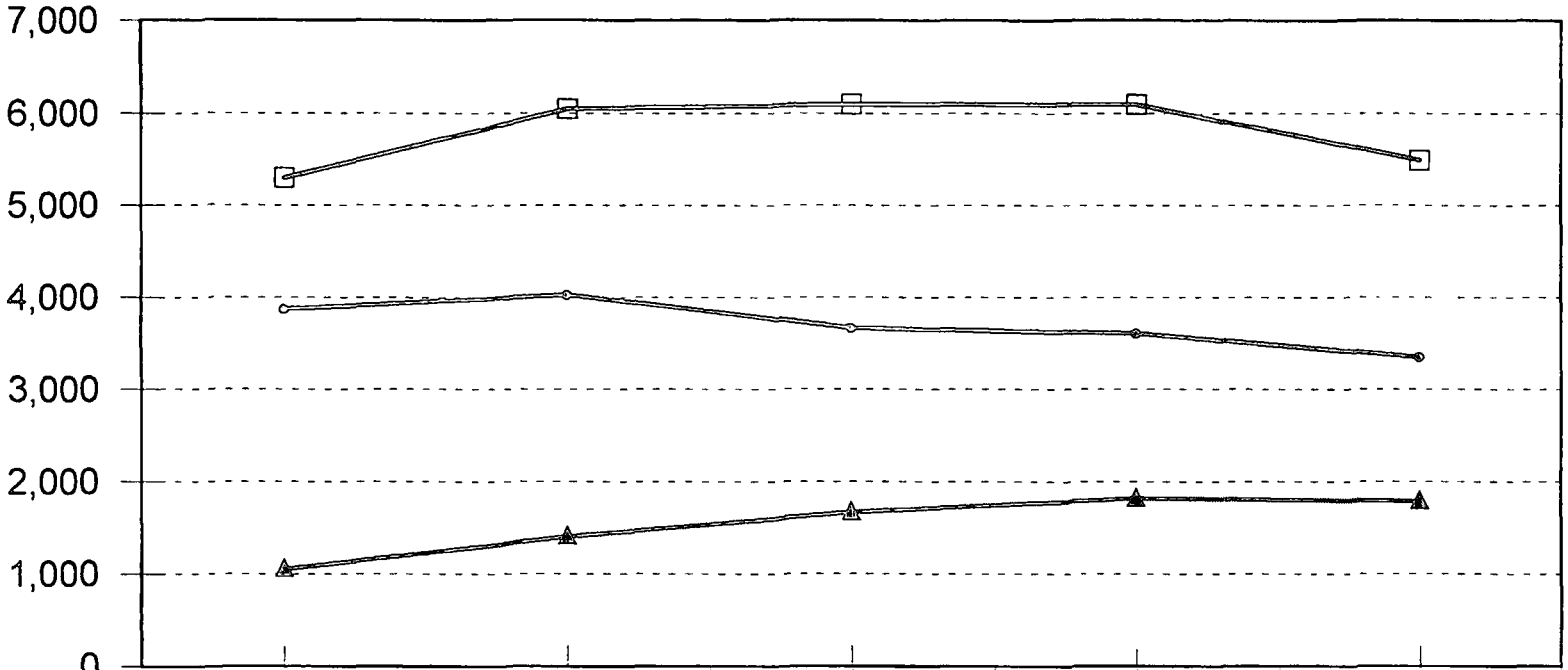
White and African American youth each make up close to 50 percent of cases each year, continuing an over-representation of African-American youth that began prior to opening of the JAC . From these data, it seems that the JAC has not contributed to greater over-representation nor has it alleviated the problem. The number of girls brought into the system increased throughout the tenure of the JAC, while the number of boys increased at first and then returned to 1993 levels.

Table 5-11
Cases Received by DJJ in Orange County by Race, FY 1993-1997

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Race					
White	5,039	5,684	5,801	5,770	5,187
Black	5,088	5,689	5,545	5,653	5,318
Asian	60	74	50	65	59
Indian	1	2	15	9	23
Unknown	24	34	32	24	43
Gender					
Boys	7,923	8,738	8,538	8,558	7,748
Girls	2,285	2,741	2,896	2,961	2,875
Unknown	4	4	9	2	7
Total	10,212	11,483	11,443	11,521	10,630

Source: DJJ Bureau of Research: Profile of Delinquency, March 1999

Figure 5-3
Offense Categories of Arrested and DJJ Received Youths After JAC Implementation in Orange County, FY 1993-1997



	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Felony	3,867	4,025	3,663	3,605	3,349
Misdemeanor	5,296	6,047	6,095	6,095	5,491
Other	1,049	1,411	1,675	1,821	1,790

Source: DJJ Burea of Research: Profile of Delinquency, March 1999

[f:\users\everyone\cac\orlando\orlando.pr4]

In addition, the number of youths admitted to detention has continued to rise steadily (see Table 5-12). This began with a near doubling of cases just prior to the opening of the JAC. Just as the JAC opened in 1994, legislation was passed that required the detention of youth who were arrested on certain charges, such as domestic violence, gun-involved incidents and violators of community control. Not only did the number of detention admissions continue to rise, but the percentage of arrests who were detained increased. By FY 1997, one in four juvenile arrestees were detained compared to the early 1990's when 13 percent were detained. During this same time period, the number of felony offenses decreased and changes in Florida statutes required detention for same non-felony charges. Thus, it seems that less serious offenders were filling up detention beds.

Figure 5-4 shows the dispositions of judicial and non-judicial cases just prior to the JAC inception and after. The numbers of youths diverted to the Juvenile Alternative Sanctions Program (JASP) dropped dramatically. In effect, the program at the JAC was shut down by the State during the evaluation period. Youths sentenced as adults fluctuated showed no distinctive trend. More youths were placed on community control (probation) in Orange County the first year of JAC operations, however, those numbers have been reduced to less than pre-JAC numbers in the later years.

Table 5-12
Number of Detention Admissions Compared to Cases Received by DJJ, FY 1989-1997

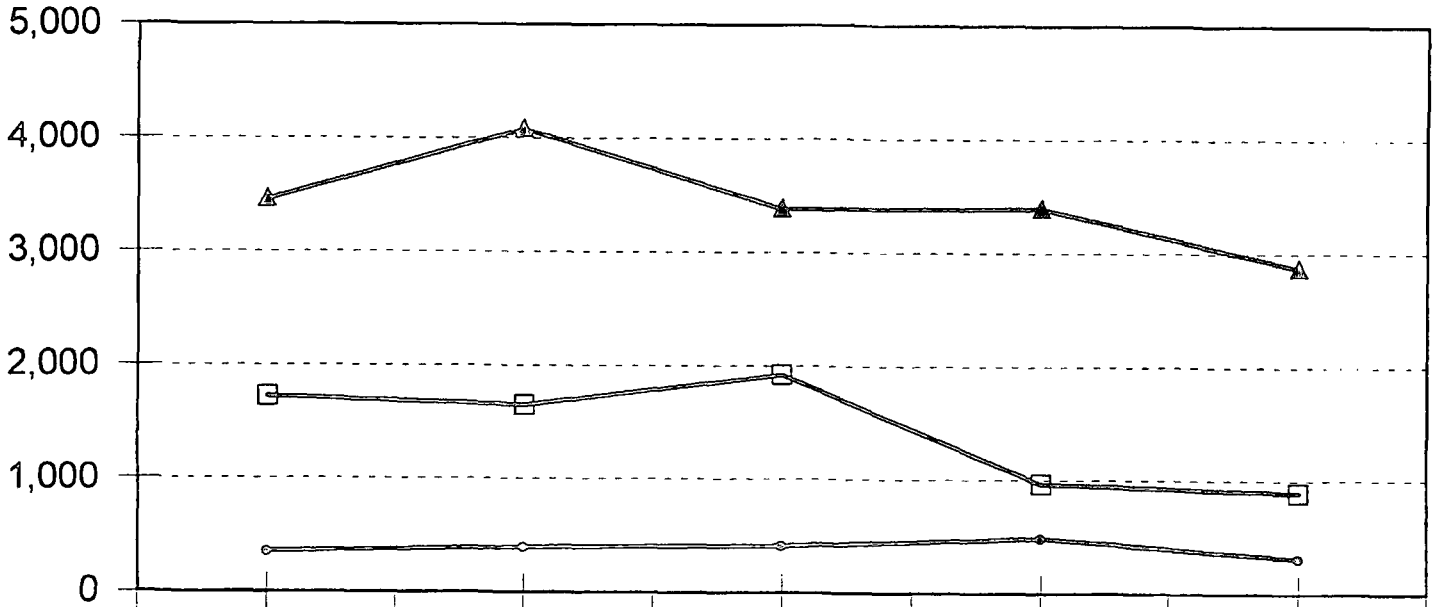
	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Cases Received	6,886	7,681	8,003	9,261	10,212	11,483	11,443	11,521	10,630
Cases Detained	1,205	1,007	956	1,213	2,377	2,893	2,932	2,912	2,575
% of Cases Detained	17%	13%	12%	13%	23%	25%	26%	25%	24%

Source: DJJ Bureau of Research: Profile of Delinquency, March 1999

Service Provision and Utilization

A key question related to JAC operations is the extent to which services were both provided and utilized. Of the 546 randomly chosen cases on which NCCD conducted an in-depth case study review, 260 had a full biopsychosocial assessment completed. This represents a 47 percent assessment rate for a random sample of cases booked at the JAC during the first six months of 1998. Staff shortages and large numbers of youths coming through the assessment center were factors in this assessment rate.

Figure 5-4
Disposition Trends for Youths in Orange County, FY 1993-1998



	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Youths Transferred to Adult Court	360	399	417	488	313
* Youth Diverted to JASP	1,722	1,648	1,922	965	891
Youths Committed to Community Control	3,455	4,080	3,380	3,391	2,869

Source: DJJ Burea of Research: Profile of Delinquency, March 1999

* Judicial and non-judicial

[f:\users\everyone\cac\orlando\orlando.pr4]

Of those assessed, Table 5-13 shows that 60 percent were referred to some type of service, though not usually to a particular service provider. Because a youth could be recommended for more than one type of service or program, total recommendations across type exceed 100 percent. Substance abuse counseling was the most frequent referral at 30 percent. Family counseling, anger management, and education programs were also recommended for about 25 percent of cases. Only 5 percent of the youth were referred for individual mental health counseling.

The 40 percent of assessed youth who were not recommended for services can be explained by various factors. One is that some of the youth were viewed by TASC case managers as not in need of any specific intervention. Additionally, some youth were already in programs that had either been recommended earlier by TASC, or more likely had emanated from family, school, or other criminal justice intervention. It was also noted during the case file review that even youth with recommendations for services, were rarely directed to a specific provider. While the TASC packet includes a checklist listing specific programs and providers, the checklist was frequently not completed and references to services were culled from the case managers' notes.

Table 5-13
Service Recommendations for Juveniles Assessed at the OCJAC, January to May 1998

Type of Service Recommendation	
Substance Abuse Counseling	30%
Family Counseling	24%
Anger Management	23%
Education Programs/Mentoring	26%
Mental Health Counseling	5%
Total Recommended to Services	60%

Source: Case file review of 260 assessed youths

Thus, the majority of the 47% of youths who received the full biopsychosocial assessment received a recommendation letter and a checklist of services. Discussions with both the TASC Director and the JAC Director indicate that the list of service providers is being updated and will include more information regarding the specific programs (i.e., conditions of acceptance, payment types).

A key question that cannot be answered with the automated data currently available at the JAC is how many young people actually get the services that were recommended. The JAC

managers believe this is important data and are working to remedy this deficiency. In the interim, JAC staff will track a randomly selected 25 percent of juveniles in order to follow-up on their release recommendation.

Staff will attempt to contact one of every four youths who were assessed by TASC. Initially the follow-up process was designed to begin 30 days after the youth was assessed. The contact would be made by telephone. Each youth or family would be called up to four times in order to make contact. They began this follow-up process in December of 1998. The information gained from the telephone contact is coded on a sheet of paper and submitted to NCCD for data entry and analysis.

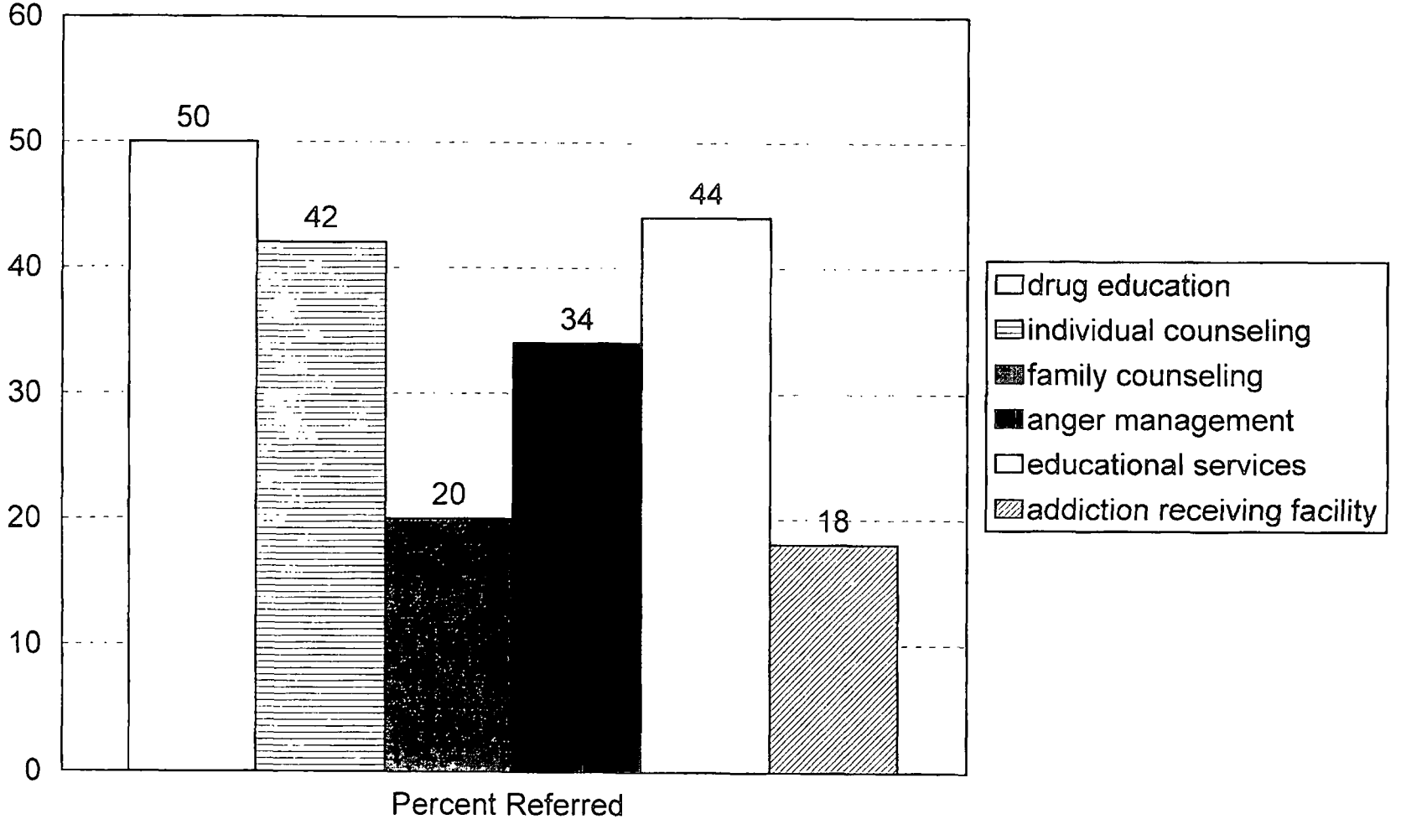
NCCD conducted a review of the follow-up process of youths through March 1999. Due to staff and administrative changes, there was a long delay in the follow-up for youths assessed in December and January. Instead of the 30 day follow-up intended, youths assessed in these two months were contacted in March. Youths assessed in February were reviewed in March, and youths assessed in March were reviewed in April. For these four months, 422 youths were selected for contact and service review. About one-half (52 percent) were contacted within four attempts. The JAC staff were not able to contact the other half.

Prior to contacting the youth and family, the JAC staff reviewed the files to determine the types of services to which the family was referred. Youths may have been referred to one or more services. Figure 5-5 presents the type of referrals. Since youths were often referred to several services, the percentages far exceed 100 percent. Drug education was highest (50 percent) followed by educational services (44 percent) which included tutoring, alternative education, school guidance, and GED. Counseling was the referral for 42 percent of youths and 20 percent of families. About one in three referrals was to anger management classes with one in five was referred to the Addiction Receiving Facility.

Of course, not all youths and families referred to services actually participated in and received those services. Also, JAC staff were unable to contact about half the youths or families. Thus, of the total sample, only about one-quarter of attempted follow-ups indicated receiving the referred services. Figure 5-6 illustrates the percentage of youth that the JAC was able to contact who indicated that they actually received services. In general, about one-half of the contacted youths and families said they received the services. They were most likely to receive anger management services (54 percent) and least likely to receive services from the Addiction Receiving Facility (39 percent).

Figure 5-5

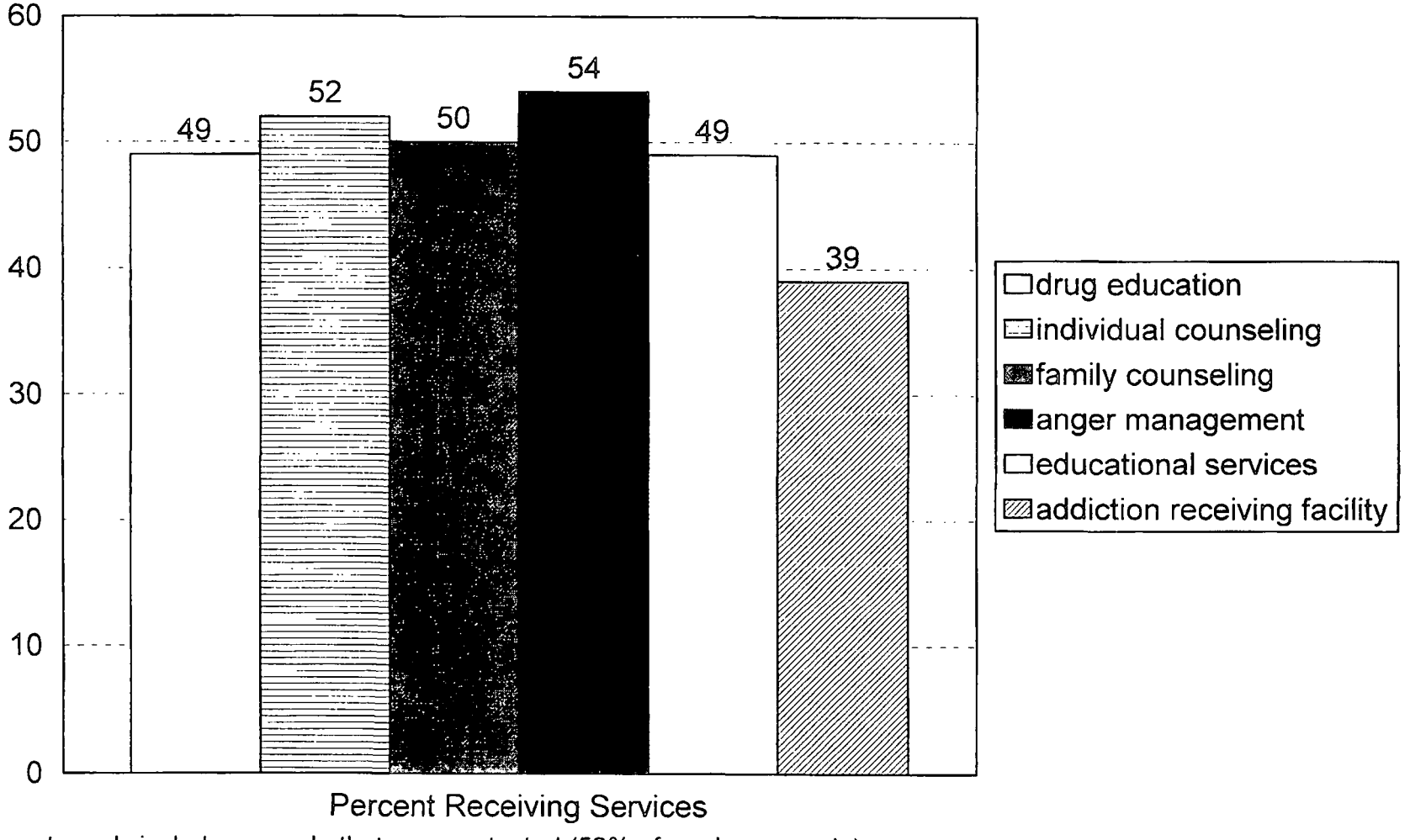
Percent of Assessed Youths Referred to Various Types of Services
Orlando JAC, 12/98-3/99



source: phone interviews by JAC staff

Figure 5-6

Percent of Follow-up Contacts Indicating Receiving Services
Orlando JAC, 12/98-3/99



note: only includes sample that was contacted (52% of random sample)
source: phone interviews by JAC staff

Only 37 people were asked about their satisfaction with the services they received. Of these, the vast majority 81 percent said they were very or extremely satisfied with the services they were referred to. Staff are continuing to improve their follow-up procedures to gather more data on satisfaction with services.

Law Enforcement Time

One recurring theme from both the organizational survey and interviews with key leaders was that law enforcement officers saved considerable time by utilizing the JAC. Prior to November 1994, juveniles were brought to Adult Central Booking following arrest, and often officers would be forced to sit and wait with the juvenile both while conducting booking tasks and waiting for parents/guardians in case of release. The JAC process greatly streamlined this process.

According to an evaluation report issued by the Institute for Health and Human Services Research (1997), once an officer has brought a youth to the JAC and the youth has been securely detained or is under the control of JAC staff, the officer is free to return to the streets. Thus, each officer is only with the juvenile for the time it takes to transport him or her to the centrally located assessment center. This time savings claim is supported by the results of our organizational survey, in which 78 percent of police officers said the presence of the JAC brought about a time savings, while only 6 percent said it did not.

Recidivism

One of the hopes of the assessment center is to reduce recidivism by providing a single multiple service-oriented point of entry for troubled youth. Through identification of needs and recommendations to specific services, it is hoped that problem areas will be identified and dealt with, to the extent that future behavior does not lead to additional contacts with the juvenile justice system. In reading the tables below, one should use caution in interpreting the relationship between JAC participation and recidivism. One of the key areas of study, actual service provision, was not reliably available. Though one can make inferences regarding the JAC experience and subsequent behavior, the critical link of actual service provision results in an unknown factor that adds another dimension to these conclusions.

NCCD looked at recidivism rates using different types of samples and modes of recidivism. Ideally this analysis would have been completed using DJJ electronic case file information, but this data was unavailable for this report. Instead, arrest information from the intake/booking database was used, as well as DJJ and TASC information collected during our case file review. Four types of analyses are presented below. First, re-arrest rates were calculated on a randomly selected subsample of booked youths at the JAC. Re-arrest was defined as being received by DJJ anywhere in the state of Florida. Second, recidivism was calculated for the entire cohort of youths booked at the JAC in 1997. Recidivism in this sample was more narrowly defined as returning to the JAC for another booking. Third, assessed and

non-assessed youths were compared based on another booking at the JAC. Fourth, re-booking rates were compared for youths referred to various types of services.

Subsample Re-Arrested Across the State

From our review of 546 case files, we gathered six month rearrest rates using DJJ face sheets for youths who had been initially brought to the JAC between January and July, 1998. DJJ is able to detect arrests across the entire state of Florida. Thus, if a youth moved out of the county and was re-arrested somewhere else, his or her records are still available. Arrests that occurred less than three days after the initial intake (because intake dates were recorded slightly differently and we wanted to avoid double counting), and those arrests that involved a previously deferred prosecution were excluded. Of the 546 cases, 36 percent of the young people were rearrested within the six-month follow-up period. The six month period begins at the point of initial arrest. The majority were rearrested on a felony charge (62 percent), followed by misdemeanors (24 percent), probation or parole violations (9 percent), and status offenses (5 percent).

Boys (38 percent) were more likely than girls (29 percent) to be rearrested, mirroring state and national trends. Additionally, 12-to-14 year olds were the most likely to be rearrested and brought to the JAC. Forty-five percent of African-American youth were rearrested, along with 26 percent of White youth and 35 percent of Asian, Hispanic and other youth.[3]

Re-Booking at JAC for 1997 Cohort

Before presenting rearrest data from a 1997 cohort of all youths arrested and booked at the JAC during that time period, we must revisit the problems inherent in using that data as a source for calculating returns to the JAC. The Intake Database does not contain a unique identifier, making matching of cases across time more difficult. Our matching process was based on name and date of birth, which has the inherent flaw that misspellings of name, or incorrect dates of birth result in cases not matching with future intakes.

For example, a juvenile with the name of Doe, John, DOB 1/29/85 is brought to the JAC in February 1997. He is rearrested in July 1997, but his name is misspelled Do, John when the data is entered for this second intake. This mistake leads to an undercounting of recidivists in the data set, because the youth in question would be coded as a new case, not as a recidivist. Additionally, a case has been added to the overall number of youth served at the JAC for that year. Every attempt was made to alleviate this problem, however, some incorrect data remains. As such, the numbers presented here are likely a slight underestimate of actual return rates to the Orlando JAC.

---

[3]The rearrest rate for Hispanic, Asian, and other youth is based on a very small sample size. The rate presented in the larger Intake population is a more valid measure.

According to the analysis of the 1997 cohort, 40 percent of youth brought to JAC returned within one year. Of this number, nearly 50 percent were returned within 3 months of their initial intake, and by the sixth month following their initial intake, 73 percent had been returned to the JAC. Table 5-14 shows return rates and reason for return for various demographic categories. African-American youth were most likely to be returned to the JAC within one year (50 percent), followed by Hispanic youth (34 percent) and White youth (32 percent). Boys (43 percent) were more likely to recidivate than girls (31 percent), though the difference is much greater for new crimes than it is for returns for court orders and warrants.

The 12 to 16 year olds had higher recidivism rates than younger or older youths. Of course, the older youths would be taken to jail if they were 18. Youth whose original reason for intake was a court order or detention order were returned to the JAC within one year at a rate of 48 percent, compared to 43 percent of felons and 35 percent of misdemeanants.

Re-booking of Assessed Versus Non-Assessed Youth

One area for further exploration was the rearrest rate for youth who had a full assessment completed at the JAC, versus those who did not. Beyond just receiving a full assessment, the assessed group was different in that they were eligible for TASC case management services. As mentioned earlier in this report, while there are various reasons why a youth may or may not be selected for an assessment, the decision is often based on staff availability. However, staff indicated that priority in giving full assessments was given to youth exhibiting higher levels of needs in the preliminary assessment as well as sex offenders and domestic violence cases.

There is limited data on which to compare the assessed and non-assessed youths to determine whether these groups were initially equivalent. The following two tables represent the best available data to measure comparability of these groups. Table 5-15 shows the demographic characteristics of the two groups. They were slightly different in terms of sex, race, and age. More girls were in the assessed group than the not-assessed group. Also, a higher percentage of African-Americans were in the not-assessed group. Table 5-16 demonstrates that these groups of youths were mostly similar in terms of the felony and misdemeanor offenses charged, except that the assessed group contained more youths charged with misdemeanor property offenses. However, those youths who were brought in on court orders or warrants were much less likely to be assessed. Forty-one percent of the youths who were not assessed were brought in for court orders or detention orders. Given that these youths were already in the justice system and likely involved in other services, these youths did not receive priority for assessments. Youths brought to the assessment center for court order violations were much more likely to be transferred to detention. In fact, three times as many non-assessed youths were bound for secure detention compared to assessed youths.

Table 5-14
One Year Re-booking Rates by Race, Gender, Age, and Offense Type

	New Crime	Court Order/Warrant	Total
Ethnicity/Race			
African-American	35%	15%	50%
Hispanic	23%	11%	34%
White	21%	11%	32%
Other	9%	6%	15%
Sex			
Female	18%	13%	31%
Male	31%	12%	43%
Age			
11 or under	24%	8%	32%
12 to 14	32%	12%	44%
15 to 16	30%	14%	44%
17 or older	20%	13%	33%
Original Charge Type			
Court or detention order	28%	20%	48%
Felony	32%	11%	43%
Misdemeanor	25%	10%	35%
Total Re-Arrest Rate			40%

* Calculated from 1997 cohort using Dept. of Corrections Intake Database, 1997-1998

Table 5-15
Demographic Characteristics of Youths by Assessment Status, 1997 Cohort

	Not Assessed	Assessed
Sex		
Female	23%	32%
Male	77%	68%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	37%	41%
African-American	48%	40%
Hispanic	14%	17%
Asian and Other	1%	2%
Age		
11 and under	3%	5%
12 to 14	23%	30%
15 to 16	43%	41%
17 and older	31%	24%
Total Sample	2,930	2,929

Sources: Dept. of Corrections Intake Database and TASC database

Table 5-16
Offense Types and Release Status of OCJAC Youths by Assessment Status, 1997 Cohort

Offense Type	Not Assessed	Assessed
Felony		
Person	8%	9%
Weapons	1%	2%
Property	11%	14%
Drugs	4%	4%
Other	1%	1%
Misdemeanor		
Person	6%	11%
Property	16%	35%
Drug	5%	7%
Disorderly	5%	10%
Other	2%	3%
Court/Detention Order		
Court Order	34%	4%
Detention Order	7%	0%
Release Status		
Secure Detention	62%	21%
Home Detention	5%	8%
Home	29%	68%
Other	4%	3%
Total Sample	2,930	2,929

Sources: Dept. of Corrections Intake Database and TASC Database

In order to better compare the re-arrest rates for comparable groups, a group of assessed youths was modified to match the non-assessed group. For the following analysis the groups were matched to contain the same portion of males/females, misdemeanors/felonies, African-

American/White/Hispanic/Other juveniles, and under 12 years old/12-14 year olds/15-16 year olds/over 16 year olds. The youths brought in on court orders or detention orders were eliminated from the following analysis because so few of these youths were assessed.

Table 5-17 shows that when youths were matched on race, sex, age, and offense type, the assessed group was slightly less likely to recidivate. While 45% of the non-assessed youths were re-booked within one year, 41% of the assessed youths re-offended. Approximately one in three of each group came back to the JAC on a new charge. A slightly higher percentage of non-assessed youths were re-arrested on a court order.

Youths who were not-assessed tended to recidivate sooner than those youths in the matched group who were assessed. The not-assessed group re-offended about 20 days sooner on average than youths who were assessed.

These data suggest that youths who had a full assessment (and whatever subsequent JAC case management service and referral to service) were re-arrested on a new offense at the same rate as those who were not assessed. They were slightly less likely to be re-arrested for a court order. JAC engagement does, however, seem to lengthen the time to the next re-arrest. This suggests that while being assessed at the JAC did not serve to prevent re-arrest on a new charge, it may have positively effected the issuance of a court order, and likely delayed re-arrest somewhat.

These findings must be interpreted with caution because there may be other unmeasured factors that make the groups non-equivalent. NCCD was only able to match these youths on some basic characteristics. The youths in the assessed group may be different from the non-assessed group due to the selection criteria. The assessment staff tried to give priority for full assessments to youths who showed a "red flag" on the SAMH-1 initial assessment. Having a "red flag" on the initial assessment could indicate a mental health or substance abuse problem that cannot be accounted for in this analysis. Unfortunately, the data from the SAMH-1 was unavailable for evaluation purposes, so it is difficult to discern whether this is a differential factor.

Table 5-17
One Year Re-booking Rate of Matched Groups of Assessed and Not-Assessed Youths, 1997 Cohorts

Charge Type at Re-Arrest	Not Assessed	Assessed
Percent Re-Arrested w/in 12 months	45%	41%
New Crime	32%	32%
New Court Order/Warrant	14%	9%
Average Number of Days to First Re-Arrest	Mean = 110 Median = 81	Mean = 130 Median = 104
Number of Youths in Sample	1,734	1,206

Note: Numbers were rounded and do not always add to exactly 100%
Source: Dept. of Corrections Intake Database, 1997-1998 merged with TASC database

Re-Booking and Service Recommendations

For this analysis, NCCD explored the connection between the types of services recommended by TASC case managers, and the subsequent re-arrests of these youths. The information presented below was collected during the case file review of 546 youth. As mentioned earlier in this report, NCCD was unable to get reliable data regarding whether services recommendations were actually followed by either youths or their families. That missing data is an important piece in exploring recidivism differences.

Table 5-18 indicates that youths who were recommended for some type of service program returned to the JAC within six months at a slightly higher rate (38 percent) than those assessed youths who were not (35 percent). Within two individual categories of service recommendations there were larger discrepancies. Those recommended to "anger management" services were returned 48 percent of the time, while those who were not were returned 34 percent of the time. Those recommended to "education services" returned at a rate of 51 percent versus 34 percent of those who were not recommended to these services. Though the number of cases is very small (because this was calculated on a random subsample of the case file reviews) and is not conclusive, this analysis suggests that the known predictors of juvenile deviant behavior are being measured by the TASC assessors and those youths exhibiting these problems are more likely to re-offend. However, this analysis also suggests that while the assessment staff is recommending services to the youths more likely to re-offend, the services are not being accessed or they are unsuccessful in terms of curbing delinquent behavior. Clearly, there is an important difference between being able to detect these problems and being able to create successful interventions.

Table 5-18
Six-Month Service Provision Rates for Assessed Youths by Recommendations, January to May 1998

	Returned to JAC	Not Returned to JAC
Recommend Any Service		
Yes	38%	62%
No	35%	65%
Recommend Education Program		
Yes	51%	49%
No	34%	66%
Recommend Anger Management		
Yes	48%	52%
No	34%	66%

Source: Case File Review Database

Agency Perception of Goal Attainment

Though the goals of the JAC were discussed earlier in this chapter, we would like to end this chapter with an analysis of whether other organizations and the JAC staff themselves believed that certain goals were met. This information is derived from surveys of people in various organizations who have dealings with the JAC (schools, police, criminal justice agencies, and service providers), along with members of the JAC staff.

For all eleven goals listed, more than three-fourths of respondents indicated that the JAC had at least somewhat reached its goal. Table 5-19 shows that reducing police officers' time (76 percent) and serving as a place to handle arrested juveniles (80 percent) were the areas in which the highest percentage of people believed the JAC had nearly or completely reached its goal. Goals related to assessments and supervision tended to be rated lower than the other goals, though the highest combined percentage of barely or not all reaching the goal was related to community safety. This does not necessarily mean that respondents believed the JAC had a negative effect on community safety, but that they believed it did little to improve it.

Table 5-19
Goal Attainment Responses from Survey of JAC Staff and Related Organizations, 1998-1999

Goal	Not at All	Barely	Somewhat	Nearly	Completely
Reduce police officer's time (n=63)	0%	2%	22%	32%	44%
Identify needs of youngsters (n=47)	4%	13%	57%	17%	9%
Place to handle arrested juveniles (n=76)	0%	3%	17%	40%	40%
Provide comprehensive assessments (n=47)	2%	13%	57%	24%	4%
Reduce gaps in service (n=49)	8%	12%	43%	31%	6%
Speed legal processing time (n=50)	6%	10%	28%	44%	12%
Foster interagency cooperation (n=50)	6%	14%	42%	36%	2%
Reduce duplication of services (n=43)	5%	16%	42%	28%	9%
Improve community safety (n=47)	9%	25%	45%	19%	2%
Offer integrated case management (n=37)	6%	16%	54%	16%	8%
Have a reliable MIS (n=33)	9%	21%	52%	15%	3%

Source: NCCD Organizational Survey

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

While the sites were evaluated separately, the evaluation was also charged with discussing the issues to inform policymakers nationwide about planning and implementing a community assessment center. Clearly, the circumstances and implementation issues faced by the planning and enhancement sites differed, but there were commonalities. These differences and similarities will be summarized in this chapter along with conclusions that can be applied generally–not just to the four demonstration sites. The findings and conclusions will be organized similarly to the other chapters and within the same analytical framework.

Context

The CACs were developed in a national political climate of greater intervention and harsher sanctions for juvenile delinquents. Each of the sites manifested these trends, albeit in somewhat different ways. Prior to CAC implementation all of the sites experienced an increase in arrests for minor offenses and/or status offenses. Denver also experienced an increase in the number of youths charged with violent felonies. Orlando showed the greatest increases in arrests (about 40%) in the 1990's prior to implementation of their assessment center. This punitive political climate was also generally evident in the increasing number of petitions filed, youths on probation, and detention admissions. Interestingly, Lee County had the smallest increase in arrests and no increase in detentions. This may have impacted their planning process as they had a relatively difficult time sustaining the assessment center momentum that had built up throughout Florida.

The reasons the key leaders expressed for starting an assessment center were very similar across sites. In both Florida and Colorado, juvenile justice officials were dealing with a few highly publicized violent crimes committed by young people. This led communities to focus on greater intervention to reduce juvenile crime. Another impetus for CAC development was that local law enforcement felt they were spending too much time dealing with low level non-detainable offenders. Along with this inefficiency in using police resources, other key leaders stressed the need to increase efficiency in their entire juvenile justice system to increase their efficacy. On going efforts such as the OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy in Lee county and the Juvenile Justice Substance Abuse Intervention and Treatment Network in Denver played large roles in crystallizing their efforts to create a CAC.

To achieve these goals, the planning process was highly collaborative in all sites. The size and diversity of these collaborations was unique to this new development in their communities. The large collaboratives provided both strength and division. The collaboratives used their considerable breadth to amass funding, but sometimes encountered disagreements about implementation options. Overall it seems that the Orlando community had the easiest time

planning the assessment center because legislation promoted it, a county commissioner championed it, and funding followed. Planning for the Jefferson County JAC also went relatively smoothly because of the coherence of the key leaders in the tight knit community, as well as relatively low start up costs. The planning process in Denver and Lee County differed in that it took longer, was well funded, and was watched carefully. This increased attention to detail was often difficult and frustrating to the stakeholders, but may prove useful in smoothing implementation problems later.

The overall goals for the assessment centers in each site were quite similar. They included: efficiency in handling cases, saving time for law enforcement, obtaining better information on youths at an earlier time, and connecting youths and families to services such as prevention and early intervention.

Identification

In general, identification of the target population as a whole has been determined by the consensus of the planning and operational collaboratives, as well as by funding opportunities. Specifically, the target population for each site was defined by the discretion of the referral source or the discretion of the assessment center. Populations were added when a need surfaced and funding opportunity became available, e.g., the new school for expelled students co-located at the Jefferson County JAC.

In Orlando, the target population is quite diverse. All arrested youths are eligible to be brought to the assessment center or referred via citation. Even though police officers have discretionary authority, they transport almost all arrestees to the JAC. Truant youths picked up by police are brought to the co-located truancy center and youths deemed as needing secure short term drug or alcohol treatment are brought to the co-located Addition Receiving Facility. Lee County plans to accept youths brought by police and eventually various other types of referrals. Jefferson County takes non-detainable youths brought in by police, those referred from various sources including the courts and district attorney, and expelled youths. Denver will also accept various types of youths, but they unlike the other CACs, will not be a drop off center. Also, the target population for the Denver assessment center is the family rather than the youth.

Identification of particular juveniles is mostly done at the discretion of the person making the referral or transport. For instance, schools do not have strict criteria dictating which youths are eligible. While some flexibility is desirable in determining who is given or offered services, this can also contribute to net-widening.

Net-widening is another term with multiple definitions. Most of the defense counsel representatives we interviewed stated that more youths were being (or will be) brought into the justice system because of the assessment centers. Generally, they said that youth who should not be involved in the juvenile justice process were entwined by the assessment center under the guise of getting help. Not surprisingly, law enforcement and the district or state attorney representatives tended to express the opposite sentiments. They believed that youths who were

previously overlooked by an inefficient and overburdened system were now entering the system appropriately.

This disagreement illustrates two sides of the net-widening argument. The first refers to more of the same types of eligible youths being brought in. The second refers to previously ineligible youths coming under justice system control. It appears that both of these phenomenon are occurring at the assessment centers. In Jefferson County, youths are brought into the system much earlier than before. For instance, a truant juvenile may be brought to the assessment center by a school police officer sooner than he or she would have been brought to the municipal court for sanctions. Some see this early intervention as a positive step toward ending a trajectory toward delinquency. Others view it as unnecessarily stigmatizing and negatively labeling non-delinquent youths.

From a review of trends in Orlando and discussions with key leaders, almost all believe that some form of net-widening has occurred. With the assessment center, more youths are brought in for violations (especially misdemeanors and others which include violations of probation or court orders). Some view this as "taking the blinders off" when it comes to juvenile delinquency, while others see this as unnecessarily expanding the scope of justice intervention. In Orange County, we are not able to discern what would have happened to arrest trends had the JAC not existed. There are no realistic comparisons available. However, there were dramatic increases in arrests the year prior to JAC implementation, which gives some support to the notion that arrests would have increased even without the implementation of the JAC.

Critics have been concerned that net-widening or net-strengthening would lead to greater disproportionate minority representation in the justice system. Available data from the state of Florida shows that while there is a great over-representation of African-American youths in arrests in Orange County, it does not seem to have been exacerbated by the assessment center. The CAC has not, however, served to reduce the over-representation problem. Data from the truancy center were not available for this report, thus its effect on over-representation was not calculated.

In Jefferson County, the over-representation of Hispanic youths is clearly an issue. The data do not allow for determining whether the JAC has made the problem worse. However, in one municipal police department, data show that minority youths were more likely to be brought to the JAC than similarly charged White youths, who were more likely to be taken home. The director of the Jefferson County JAC is deeply concerned about disproportionate minority representation at the JAC and has explored grant opportunities to address this issue.

Linkages

In all four communities, positive collaborative relationships among various agencies have been built with the assessment center as the cornerstone. While the lead agency differs in each locale, the same sets of agencies are represented in the collaboratives (e.g., probation/DJJ, law

enforcement, social services, mental health, substance abuse services, schools, community based providers, etc.).

The configuration of the linkages in each county is somewhat different. While the Sheriff and the Deputy State Attorney were leaders in developing the CAC model in Lee County, a non-profit provider will run the center. Similarly, Human Service Associates, Inc. runs the Orange County JAC although early leadership in development was provided by a county commissioner. In Denver, family advocates, mental health agencies, and substance abuse treatment providers, along with the Denver Juvenile Court all took leadership roles in their collaborative. The Jefferson County JAC was championed by many agencies especially the district attorney's office and the public schools, though the non-profit provider of community mental health services runs the assessment center.

Similarly, funding for the assessment centers comes from a variety of sources. The diversity of in-kind and direct financial contributions shows the broad based juvenile justice, human service, and government support for the assessment center concept.

Goals

The goals of the assessment centers were semantically similar, yet actually meant different things in each site. The goals can be summarized into OJJDP's main concepts underlying a CAC: 1) single point of entry, 2) comprehensive assessments, 3) integrated case management, and 4) management information systems.

Single Point of Entry

The centers are striving to become single points of entry for both juvenile justice involved youths and "high-risk" youths. In Denver, the plans are to make the center accessible to all youths and families who voluntarily want to participate. They will begin taking first-time non-violent offenders and expand to repeat offenders and truant and "high-risk" youths. While the center will be open to a wide range of juveniles and families, it will be limited by the relatively small number of youths it will process through its system. The Jefferson County JAC is open to all non-detainable delinquent youths, truants, and "high-risk" youths. Also, all arrested youths in the county are screened over the phone for detention eligibility. Preliminarily, Lee County will take all arrested youths with plans to expand the scope of the population they assess to "high-risk" youths. The Orange County JAC is the point of entry for various systems, from arrested youths, to truants, to substance abusing youths, and those entering a diversion program, although these various populations of youths do not all go through the assessment process.

Each center has tried to balance the issues of incorporating various populations under its purview against providing adequate services to a targeted population. The sites are drastically different in this respect. For instance, the Orlando JAC processes more than 10,000 youths per year (not including truants), compared to the Jefferson County JAC which has approximately

1,000 youths pass through its doors each year. Denver plans to serve 50 families a month, whereas Lee County will take every youth who is arrested.

If several conditions are met, a true single point of entry is a laudable goal. These conditions include: 1) clear confidentiality safeguards, 2) separation of different types of juveniles (e.g., dependent, truant, and delinquent), 3) adequate numbers of qualified staff, and 4) services designed to meet the needs of specific populations. These conditions are difficult to fulfill in an arena of turf issues and limited resources. However, model CACs are poised to tackle these difficult issues, although this will entail substantial system reform efforts.

Comprehensive Assessments

Each site has a goal of completing comprehensive and meaningful assessments. The term "assessment" at these CACs generally refers to screening instruments. In general, youths are not fully assessed for mental health or substance abuse for instance, but they are screened for signs of having these problems and referred for further assessment if necessary. The comprehensive nature of these assessments refers to the breadth of subject areas covered. The purpose of these assessments is to inform assessment center staff for service referral and case management purposes and for use by juvenile justice personnel such as court intake officers, probation officers, and judges.

Denver will create a family strengths based assessment that will also address needs. Jefferson County also created its own assessment instrument that has been revised to better capture the desired information. Lee County intends to use the standardized assessment process used by the Department of Juvenile Justice in Florida and add other needs based items. The Orange County JAC uses a self-created comprehensive instrument and has searched in vain (as of this writing) for a shorter instrument that they feel satisfies their needs for depth and breadth.

None of the instruments used have been tested for reliability and validity. Also none have been compared to outcomes. At this point, Lee County is the only site that is specifically planning to create and test items for predictive validity. Furthermore, risk based instruments are not being used at the assessment centers, except for state mandated detention screens which are completed in some sites. CACs could greatly enhance their effectiveness by implementing structured- decision-making based on risk and protective factors collected by their assessment instruments. This structured system could help allocate limited treatment resources in providing more intensive case management for youths and families with the most assessed needs and risks. Given the central focus on assessment and appropriate referral based on these assessments, testing these instruments for reliability and validity is a very important matter.

Integrated Case Management

Case management is another area in which the assessment centers are working to create systems that eliminate duplication, increase efficiency, and fill in gaps in services. They have

had mixed success. As the previous chapters showed in detail, they have filled some gaps and provided new services for youths and families. They have also had some success in increasing efficiency. For example, in Orlando, the assessments are completed at the time of arrest and immediately given to DJJ for use in their pre-disposition reports. The process of incorporating assessments into these reports previously took much longer.

Much work still needs to be done in case management. Youths involved in multiple systems still have case managers for the various systems (e.g., probation, mental health, child protective services, etc.). An assessment center adds yet another case manager to the bureaucracy. Increased collaboration across systems could greatly reduce the maze of case managers that some youths and families must negotiate.

Furthermore, "case management" has many different definitions and is used loosely at each site. Denver is the only site of the four thus far to have definitive plans for initial case management/planning by a team. Lee County is also in the early stages of this planning. The Denver site plans to create a team that will consist of representatives from various agencies who plan services for the family based on the assessment and family wishes. The Orlando JAC has intensive case managers who also attempt to integrate the work of multiple systems. In Jefferson County, the case managers limit their contact to youths who are not on probation, in an attempt to avoid duplication. Lee County has not yet developed its case management process, but they propose to add community based providers to their MIS which should result in less paperwork and more information provided to case managers. Overall the sites recognize that case management is an important component and are working to improve their current processes.

Management Information Systems

Each site has approached the MIS issues in a similar manner. While the states of Florida and Colorado are working on large integrated systems that would greatly enhance the capabilities of the assessment centers, their scope and size have caused long delays. Instead of waiting for these systems, the assessment centers have created their own internal systems with the intention of later integration. These "home grown" databases have limitations and are constantly being improved upon.

The needs and desires for a fully integrated MIS are great, but the feasibility, problems with interagency agreements, and costs are prohibitive. For a CAC to fully operationalize the other three components listed above (single point of entry, comprehensive assessments, and integrated case management), a comprehensive and integrated MIS is essential. There were several important lessons to be learned from the sites regarding MIS: 1) start small and do not wait for the new panacea system, 2) tightly control data entry for quality so that information gleaned is useful, 3) plan for integration early through interagency agreements, 4) utilize competent experts in MIS design, 5) keep the system flexible, and 6) set realistic benchmarks for progress on MIS development and integration.

Next Steps

This report laid out the foundation on which assessment centers were built, the concerns that should be addressed, and preliminary findings regarding their efficacy. The assessment center concept holds much potential in creating a more efficient juvenile justice system and providing better and more comprehensive services to youths and families. However, more work needs to be done to implement the programs according to their goals and best practice, while at the same time protecting the rights and best interests of young people and their families. The four sites described in this report are each working to fulfill these goals, yet large system changes are difficult to achieve.

Finally, a more in-depth and rigorous outcome evaluation will be conducted to better understand the effects of the CACs on the juvenile justice system and the youths and families who are involved in these services. The outcome evaluation will focus on determining the various impacts of the new Denver Juvenile Community Assessment Center and the Orange County Juvenile Assessment Center.

REFERENCES

Achenbach, T. M. & C. Edelbrock. 1983. *Manual for The Child Behavior Checklist and Revised Child Behavior Profile.* Burlington: University of Vermont, Department of Psychiatry.

Attkisson,C. Clifford. 1979. Client Satisfaction Questionnaire in *Measures for Clinical Practice: A Sourcebook.* (pp. 120-122). New York: The Free Press

Annie E. Casey Foundation. 1994. *Kids Count.* Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Baird, S. C. 1984. *Classification of Juveniles in Corrections: A Model Systems Approach.* Madison, WI: National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

Brennan, P., S. Mednick, & E. Kandel. 1991. Congenital Determinants of Violent and Property Offending. In D. J. Pepler, & K. H. Rubin (Eds.), *The Development and Treatment of Childhood Aggression* (pp. 81-92). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Cronin, R. C. 1996. *Fact-Finding Report on Community Assessment Centers (CACs): Final Report.* Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.

Dembo, R. & R. Brown. 1994. The Hillsborough County Juvenile Assessment Center. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse* 3:25-43.

Dembo, R. & G. Turner. 1994. A Study of Truants Processed at the Hillsborough County Juvenile Assessment Center. *The Journal of At-Risk Issues* 1:38-42.

Dembo, R., G. Turner, et al. 1994. Screening High-Risk Youths for Potential Problems: Field Application in the Use of the Problem-Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT). *Journal of Child and Adolescent Substance Abuse* 3(4):69-93.

Duchnowski, A. J. & K. Kutash. 1996. A Mental Health Perspective. In C. M. Nelson, R. B. Rutherford, and B. I. Wolford (Eds.), *Comprehensive and Collaborative Systems that Work for Troubled Youth: A National Agenda* (pp. 90-110). Richmond, KY: Eastern Kentucky University.

Elliott, D. S., D. Huizinga, & S. S. Ageton. 1985. *Explaining Delinquency and Drug Use.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Elliott, D. S., & S. Menard. 1996. Delinquent Friends and Delinquent Behavior: Temporal and Developmental Patterns. In J.D. Hawkins (Ed.), *Delinquency and Crime: Current Theories* (pp. 29-67). New York, NY: Cambridge.

Eron, L. D., & Slaby, R. G. 1994. Introduction. In L. D. Eron, J. H. Gentry, & P. Schlegel (Eds.), *Reason to Hope: A Psychosocial Perspective on Violence and Youth* (pp. 1-22). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Farrington, D. P. 1991. Childhood Aggression and Adult Violence: Early Precursors and Later Life Outcomes. In D. J. Pelper & K. H. Rubin (Eds.), *The Development and Treatment of Childhood Aggression* (pp. 5-29). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Farrington, D. P. 1994. Early Developmental Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency. *Criminal Behavior and Mental Health* 4:209-227.

Farrington, D. 1996. The Explanation and Prevention of Youthful Offending. In J. D. Hawkins (Ed.), *Delinquency and Crime: Current Theories* (pp. 68-148). New York, NY: Cambridge.

Hawkins, J. D. & R. F. Catalano, Jr. 1992. *Communities That Care.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Howell, J. C. (Ed.). 1995. *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Howell, J.C. *The Evolution of Juvenile Justice and Youth Violence in America.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hudson, Walter W. Index of Family Relations (IFR) in *Measures of Social Psychological Attitudes.* (pp. 440-442). Survey Research Center. Institute for Social Research. Revised Edition 1973.

Huizinga, D., R. Loeber, & T. Thornberry. 1994. *Urban Delinquency and Substance Abuse: Initial Findings.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Huizinga, D., R. Loeber, & T. P. Thornberry. 1995. Recent findings from the Program of Research on Causes and Correlates of Delinquency. Report to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Kelley, I.B. Attitude Toward Any Institution in *Scale for the Measurement of Attitudes.* New York, (pp. 553-555). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Kolvin, I., F. J. W. Miller, D. M. Scott, S. R. M. Gatzanis, & M. Fleeting. 1990. *Continuities of Deprivation?* Aldershot: Avebury.

Krisberg, B. 1992. *Juvenile Justice: Improving the Quality of Care.* San Francisco, CA: National

Council on Crime and Delinquency.

Krisberg, B., E. Currie, D. Onek, & R. G. Wiebush. 1995. Graduated Sanctions For Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders. In J. C. Howell, B. Krisberg, J. D. Hawkins, & J. Wilson (Eds.), *A Sourcebook: Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* (pp. 142-170). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lerman, P. 1995. Child Protection and Out-Of-Home Care: System Reforms And Regulating Placements. In G. B. Melton & F. D. Barry (Eds.), *Protecting Children from Abuse and Neglect* (pp. 353-437). New York, NY: Guilford.

Lerman, P., & K. J. Pottick. 1995. *The Parents' Perspective: Delinquency, Aggression, and Mental Health*. Chur, SWITZ: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Loeber, R. & M. Stouthamer-Loeber. 1986. Family Factors As Correlates and Predictors of Juvenile Conduct Problems and Delinquency. In M. Tonry & N. Morris (Eds.), *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research* 7:29-149. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

Loeber, R. 1990. Development and Risk Factors of Juvenile and Antisocial Behavior and Delinquency. *Clinical Psychology Review* 10:1-41.

Loeber, R., & P. H. Wikstrom. 1993. Individual Pathways To Crime In Different Types of Neighborhood. In D. P. Farrington, R. J. Sampson, & P. H. Wikstrom (Eds.), *Integrating Individual and Ecologica.*

Loeber, R., P. Wung, K. Keenan, B. Giroux, M. Stouthamer-Loeber, W. B. Van Kammen, & B. Maughan. 1993. Developmental Pathways In Disruptive Child Behavior. *Development and Psychopathology* 5:103-133.

Maguin, E., & R. Loeber. 1996. Academic Performance and Delinquency. *Crime and Justice* 20:145-264.

Meyers, K. 1996. Comprehensive Adolescent Severity Inventory. University of Pennsylvania Treatment Research Institute, Version 1.0.

Oldenettel, D. & Wordes, M. (in press). The Community Assessment Center Concept. OJJDP Bulletin, Washington, D.C.

Olweus, D. 1992. Bullying Among School Children: Intervention and Prevention. In R. D. Peters, R. J. McMahon, & V. L. Qinsey (Eds.), *Aggression and Violence Throughout the Life Span* (pp. 100-125). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Pratt, G. 1994. Community Based Comprehensive Wrap-Around Treatment Strategies. Paper

presented at the Juvenile Justice Research Symposium, Phoenix.

Rivara, F. P., & D. P. Farrington. 1995. Head Injury And Criminal Behavior. In D. Johnson, B. Pentland, & E. Glasgow (Eds.), *Head Injury and Litigation.* London, ENG: Sweet & Maxwell.

Sampson, R. J., & J. H. Laub. 1994. Urban Poverty and the Family Context of Delinquency: A New Look at Structure and Process in a Classic Study. *Child Development* 65:523-540.

Shaw, C. R., & H. D. McKay. 1931. *Social Factors in Juvenile Delinquency. Report on the Causes of Crime*, Vol II. National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Smith, C. & T. P. Thornberry. 1995. The Relationship Between Childhood Maltreatment and Adolescent Involvement in Delinquency. *Criminology* 33:451-477.

Soler, M. 1992. Interagency Services In Juvenile Justice Systems. In *Justice and Public Policy: Toward a National Agenda* (pp. 134-150). New York, NY: Lexington Books.

Stroul, B., & R. Friedman. 1986. A System of Care for Severely Emotionally Disturbed Youth. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, Child and Adolescent Service System Program Technical Assistance Center.

Thornberry, T. P. 1994. Violent Families and Youth Violence. *Fact Sheet # 21.* Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Thornberry, T. P., D. Huizinga, & R. Loeber. 1995. The Prevention of Serious Delinquency and Violence: Implications from the Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency. In J.C. Howell, B. Krisberg, D. Hawkins, & J. J. Wilson (Eds.), *A Sourcebook: Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* (pp. 213-237). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Van Kammen, W., E. Maguin, & R. Loeber. 1994. Initiation of Drug Selling and Its Relationship with Illicit Drug Use and Serious Delinquency In Adolescent Boys. In E. G. M. Weitekamp & H. Kerner (Eds.), *Cross-National Longitudinal Research on Human Development and Criminal Behavior* (pp. 229-241). Netherlands: Kluwer.

Wagner, M., R. D'Amico, C. Marder, L. Newman, & J. Blackorby. 1992. *What Happens Next? Trends in Postschool Outcomes of Youth with Disabilities.* Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

Wiebush, R. G., C. Baird, B. Krisberg, & D. Onek. 1995. Risk Assessment and Classification for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders. In J. C. Howell, B. Krisberg, J. D.

Hawkins, & J. Wilson (Eds.), *A Sourcebook: Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* (pp. 171-212). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Widom, C. S. 1989a. Does Violence Beget Violence? A Critical Examination of the Literature. *Psychological Bulletin* 106:3-28.

Widom, C. S. 1989b. The Cycle Of Violence. *Science* 244:160-166.

Wilson, J. J., & J. C. Howell. 1993. *A Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Yoshikawa, H. 1994. Prevention as Cumulative Protection: Effects of Early Family Support and Education on Chronic Delinquency and Its Risks. *Psychological Bulletin* 115:1-27.

Zimmerman, J., W. Rich, I. Keilitz, & P. Broder. 1981. Some Observations on the Link Between Learning Disabilities and Juvenile Delinquency. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 9:1-17.