TOWARDS
A
NEW
GENERATION

A Primary Prevention Plan for New Jersey

of the Governor’s Juvenile Justice and
ency Prevention Advisory Committee
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DELINQUENCY PREVENTION
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March 30, 1990
TOWARDS A NEW GENERATION

A Primary Prevention Plan for New Jersey

"True peace is the presence of Justice"
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Submitted by: The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Committee's Prevention Subcommittee.


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TOWARDS A NEW GENERATION

A Primary Prevention Plan for New Jersey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New Jersey does not have a clear, uniform primary prevention policy. Although there are many programs and efforts aimed at serving children, youth and families, there is minimal coordination to ensure effective delivery of these services. There are many barriers to the effective coordination and planning of services between departments and divisions at every level of government. Consequently, services to children and families are fragmented, crisis oriented, inaccessible to sectors of the population and generally are not improving the quality of life and well-being of the community.

Hundreds of thousands of children in New Jersey are at risk because of problems associated with severe poverty, housing shortages, deficient educational services, immoral social messages, rampant drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and child abuse. More than 400,000 children in New Jersey live in poverty; many of them are homeless. Preventive health services are not readily accessible; teenage pregnancy is on the rise. In 1988 more than 2,500 children died from disease or other preventable causes; 27,000 children lived apart from their families for some part of the year in foster care, or other institutions; more than 20,000 children were physically and/or sexually abused; more than 18,000 students dropped out of school between the 9th and 12th grades and more than 42,000 youths entered the juvenile justice system on delinquency charges. The statistics are grim and the children are the victims; but there is hope.

The New Jersey Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Committee and its Prevention Subcommittee have developed an interagency plan to promote primary prevention activities statewide. The plan is entitled, “TOWARDS A NEW GENERATION” — A PRIMARY PREVENTION PLAN FOR NEW JERSEY. The plan identifies the initial steps which must be undertaken by major sectors of the community to begin to effectively coordinate activities and reverse the negative trends impeding progress for the community.

Through this plan the New Jersey Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Committee offers a working definition of primary prevention which states: “Primary prevention is a dynamic process that enhances the building of competencies of individuals, organizations and systems which promote positive development of children and youth, in their schools, in their own self-esteem, among their peers and in their communities. These efforts reduce the likelihood of juvenile delinquency and other socially unacceptable behavior before treatment and/or intervention by authorities.” This definition is supported by the Hawkins-Weis Social Development Model of Prevention which contains three essential prerequisites for programs that encourage and enhance the building of competencies. These are: 1) Opportunities for positive involvement in a particular environment; 2) Appropriate skill development to effectively utilize those opportunities; 3) Adequate rewards to reinforce utilizing skills and opportunities.

The authors of the plan make a call to action for parents, teachers, community and officials at every level of government to examine their role(s) as part of the problem and the potential solution to juvenile delinquency. The call to action also suggests a revitalization of the Caring Community, a concept of positive adult interaction which nurtures positive behavior, social values, and a proper balance of freedom and discipline in the context of the home, school and community environments. The concept of the Caring Community reminds us that we have a mutual responsibility for the care of our children.
“TOWARDS A NEW GENERATION” offers six major goals. These include:

1. Increase public awareness of primary prevention activities and promote effective parenting within the general population.

2. Encourage increased participation of industry and the private sector to facilitate opportunities for youth.

3. Increase the primary prevention planning and implementation activities of the state, county and municipal level youth serving organizations.

4. To establish a statewide clearinghouse network for primary prevention that will provide technical assistance to communities.

5. Increase state level primary prevention policies and programs which will impact positively on children, youth and families.

6. Improve the education of our youth to increase competencies and skills and impact the serious problems of high drop-out, suspension and truancy especially among urban youth.

The plan also provides specific objectives and implementation activities for each goal. This plan is not to be considered a static document, but rather as a process which will evolve over time with the input of responsible citizens and government officials. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Committee encourages all responsible individuals to participate actively in this process of advocacy and proactive planning.
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INTRODUCTION

In 1986 the National Coalition of State Juvenile Justice Groups (NCSJJG) established its position to support the development and implementation of primary prevention programs and activities. At that same annual conference the NCSJJG recommended that State Advisory Groups develop an interagency plan to promote primary prevention activities statewide.

In New Jersey the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Advisory Committee accepted the challenge and adopted the recommendation in April 1987. The JJDP Advisory Committee established a Prevention Subcommittee and charged it with the task of developing an interagency plan to promote primary prevention activities statewide.

The JJDP Prevention Subcommittee conducted an extensive study of the prevention plans and legislation of six jurisdictions to determine what had been done. These states included Connecticut, Maine, Oregon, Vermont, Virginia and the District of Columbia. In addition, various prevention program models available in New Jersey and throughout the nation were also reviewed.

Early in its work, the Prevention Subcommittee identified delinquency as one of many behaviors exhibited by our youth today which represents a symptom of a much deeper problem within the family unit. In addition to delinquency there are various socially non-accepted behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse, teen pregnancy and a host of serious and violent crimes that are creating great social concern. Many of these acts are learned behavior that are reinforced with the breakdown of the family unit. When viewed collectively these acts can be defined as the youth's cry for help in dealing with conflicts that are beyond their control. It is their way of telling us something is wrong. Many youth are unable to cope with the expectations which society places upon them. These statements of socially unacceptable behavior reiterate the need for early identification and intervention, not only with the youth but with his/her family and the community at large.

Within this document the term "family" is defined in its broadest sense. It should be understood that there are many combinations of individuals that form a family unit.

In light of the elimination of the State Law Enforcement Planning Agency (SLEPA) in June of 1990, any reference in this report to SLEPA will now refer to the Division of Criminal Justice.
THE DEFINITION

In June 1988 the JJDP Advisory Committee adopted a definition of primary prevention as an attempt to bring common understanding to the task of prevention development.

PRIMARY PREVENTION IS A DYNAMIC PROCESS THAT ENHANCES THE BUILDING OF COMPETENCIES OF INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS AND SYSTEMS WHICH PROMOTE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THEIR FAMILIES, IN THEIR SCHOOLS, IN THEIR OWN SELF-ESTEEM, AMONG THEIR PEERS AND IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. THESE EFFORTS REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND OTHER SocialLY UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR BEFORE TREATMENT AND/OR INTERVENTION BY AUTHORITIES.

The New Jersey definition of Primary Prevention as developed by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Committee is best supported by the Hawkins-Weis Social Development Model of Prevention which says that prevention programs that encourage and enhance the building of competencies contain three essential prerequisities:

1. Opportunities for positive involvement in a particular environment.
2. Appropriate skill development to effectively utilize those opportunities.
3. Adequate rewards to reinforce utilizing skills and opportunities.

In applying these principles it is important that we address the four major environments that impact on a child's life: family, school, peers and community. Each of these environments impact the child at different developmental stages beginning before birth through adolescence. Each of these environments have changed over the past twenty-five years, some more than others. Therefore, different strategies and techniques must be applied at each developmental stage within each of the four environments.
THE MISSION

The JJDP Advisory Committee believes that parents, schools, and the community as well as officials at every level of government should begin to examine their role in youth delinquency as part of the problem and the potential solution. The committee further believes that the time has come to act proactively in anticipation of the needs of youth and establish those services, programs and activities that will prevent youth from becoming delinquent. The crisis oriented system in which we are currently submerged is far too costly both financially and socially. To this end, the subcommittee has developed the following goals:

1. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF PRIMARY PREVENTION ACTIVITIES AND PROMOTE EFFECTIVE PARENTING WITHIN THE GENERAL POPULATION.

2. ENCOURAGE INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF INDUSTRY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO FACILITATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH.

3. INCREASE THE PRIMARY PREVENTION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES OF THE STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL LEVEL YOUTH SERVING ORGANIZATIONS.

4. ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE CLEARINGHOUSE NETWORK FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION THAT WILL PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO COMMUNITIES.

5. ESTABLISH A UNIFORM POLICY AND SYSTEM OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN AGENCIES WHICH ASSURES EFFECTIVE PREVENTION PLANNING ON AN ON-GOING BASIS.

6. IMPROVE THE EDUCATION OF OUR YOUTH TO INCREASE COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS AND IMPACT THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF HIGH DROP-OUT, SUSPENSION AND TRUANCY ESPECIALLY AMONG URBAN YOUTH.

The Committee has reached a clear consensus that the key to effective primary prevention activities is to concentrate on the empowerment and support to the family unit. The Committee developed the concept of the Caring Community that responds positively to the needs of youth in the context of the home, school and community environments. In the Caring Community, parents and families understand their positions as caretakers and role models. They nurture positive behavior and values; enforce clear limits, with a proper balance between freedom and discipline. Parents are supported in their role through training and receive reinforcement from friends, neighbors, school personnel and government programs.

In the Caring Community, children and youth have a clear definition of their roles in the family and in the community. Respect for the law and for others is taught and applied. Violations against a person or property are dealt with immediately. Consequences are taught and enforced by the parent. The community supports and protects the parent's authority.

Posterity is important in the Caring Community. Children are provided with a well-rounded education that prepares them to achieve in the complex society in which we live. A "Thorough and Efficient Education" is not limited because of one's economic or social status. A child's education is not limited to reading, writing and arithmetic or how to pass a standard test but also how he or she can defend himself/herself from the vices in our environment and develop skills to analyze problems and reach logical conclusions which will require him/her to make a decision. Good or bad, decisions have consequences. Children must learn the difference. The Caring Community allows teachers to identify when a child is having problems not only academically but with the human experience and to have available appropriate referrals that will respond in a timely manner.

The Caring Community is created through an integrating of service systems that function to support the human experience at all levels in all environments. No one entity is solely responsible. All are equally invested and responsible for the success or demise of the Caring Community. All planning and development of programs and services should be coordinated to benefit the youth and the family so as to improve the quality of life and the environment for all.
**DEFINITION:** Primary prevention is a dynamic process that enhances the building of competencies of individuals, organizations and systems which promote positive development of children and youth in their families, in their schools, in their own self-esteem, among their peers and in their communities. These efforts reduce the likelihood of juvenile delinquency and other socially unacceptable behavior before treatment and/or intervention by authorities.

**THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

Sequential impact of major systems/environments on child development =

![Diagram showing the social development model](image)

- Family → Schools → Peers → Community
- Pre-requisites → Bonding → Outcomes

(Intervention points)

- Building Competencies and Skills
- Enhancing Environments Opportunities
- Rewards and reinforcements
- Bonding to Families, Schools, Peers, Community
- Commitment
- Attachment
- Belief
- Positive Youth Development
THE PROBLEM

New Jersey does not have a clear, uniform primary prevention policy. Although there are many programs and efforts aimed at preventing adolescent pregnancies, child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, delinquency, school drop-out, truancy and other socially unaccepted behavior, there is minimal coordination to ensure effective delivery of these services. There are many barriers to the effective coordination of services between departments and divisions at the State and county levels. Consequently, services to children and families are fragmented, crisis oriented, inaccessible to sectors of the population and generally are not impacting on the general well-being of the community.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

In 1986, 2,296 students in 34 public high schools were surveyed by the Department of Law and Public Safety's Taskforce on Juvenile Drug and Alcohol Use in New Jersey. The sample studied were tenth, eleventh and twelfth graders. Among the many findings of this report were:

—About nine in every ten students (89.2%) reported use of alcohol at some time in their lives.
—Marijuana is clearly the most often used illicit drug, with 49.0% reported use at some time in their lives, 40.0% reported use in the past year, and 21.3% reported use in the past month.
—The most widely used illicit drug, other than marijuana was cocaine, with 19.2% of the students reporting use at some time in their lives.

While the trend of drug use among students has been reported to be declining, the data reported indicate that the prevalence of use is still at unacceptable levels.

It cannot be assumed that the findings can be generalized to the entire population between the ages of 15 and 18. It cannot be assumed that those who have dropped out of high school exhibit the same rate of substance use as those who remain in school.

Many lower class drug abusers are inner-city, high school dropouts who learn at an early age that they are excluded from legitimate avenues to conventional forms of the "good life" and the values that earn status and respect in our society. Drugs are a powerful economic incentive. Drugs promise them money for economic survival not only for themselves but also for their families. (Rosenbaum)

The Department of Health (DOH) reports that of a total of 16,152 persons admitted for drug abuse treatment in 1988, 1,005 (6%) were between the ages of 11 and 17. This represented a 2% increase over 1987.

Of all the admissions cited for drug treatment, 39% of all admissions reported the age at first use before age 17.

REPORTED FIRST USE OF DRUGS BETWEEN AGES 7 AND 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crack</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marijuana, tobacco and cocaine (considered "gateway drugs" because they lead to more serious drug use) are still used by about 15% of all teenagers, with tobacco used by 80%. (NJ Alternatives)

Alcohol is the preferred substance used by teenagers and a factor in 50% of deadly auto accidents. (NJ Alternatives)

There were also 3,380 youth under the age of 18 admitted for alcohol treatment in 1988. (DOH)
It is not quite evident from the listings of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Treatment Facilities and Rehabilitation Facilities developed by the DOH how many of these facilities serve youth and where they are located. It should be noted that the lack of effective community based drug counseling, treatment and rehabilitation services for youth were among the recurring concerns of the Prevention Subcommittee. Services should be readily available at the onset or identification of the problem.

Education

Today, New Jersey enjoys a reputation of being an education leader among states. There has been an extraordinary commitment to improving the educational system in this state. It was in 1982 that an assessment of the education system revealed that our graduates lacked the necessary abilities to read, think critically, write coherently and apply mathematical reasoning. While there are many major education initiatives being conducted throughout the State, the effects of these innovations are not being realized in many school districts. There are still a multitude of major problems, especially in the poor and urban areas.

There were 1,080,871 students enrolled throughout 616 public school districts in New Jersey as of September 1988. There are a number of select programs conducted in each county. Almost half of all enrolled students participate in one of the select programs. The following programs are of particular concern and require a more in-depth investigation of the methods, practices and the impact these programs are having on the children enrolled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN 1988</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981, Chapter 1</td>
<td>129,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Compensatory Education</td>
<td>200,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-Lingual ESL</td>
<td>35,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>100,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-School Suspension</td>
<td>40,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant Students</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate School</td>
<td>2,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>509,835</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1988 the Department of Education reported a school dropout rate of 5.1% which means that 18,651 students (ninth through twelfth grade) never completed the prescribed course of study during the 1987-88 school year (see Department of Education Table X on page 19). Of the total 18,851 reported students leaving school, 16,953 or 90% were known to have discontinued school and 1,698 or 9.1% had moved to a new residence and the school status was unknown. The percent of county minority dropout was 51.9%. However, in some urban districts the minority dropout rate was as high as 87% (see Table XII on page 20).
Of the freshman class entering high school in 1983-84, 16.1% dropped out before their classmates graduated in 1988. The reasons for dropping out of school are categorized into seven major categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical, Mental, Social or Emotional Disability</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Exclusion</td>
<td>2,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with School/Behavioral/Academic</td>
<td>7,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic/Entered Employment</td>
<td>4,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married or Pregnant</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons Unknown</td>
<td>1,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Residence School Status Unknown</td>
<td>1,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL DROPOUTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,651</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two major categories account for three-fifths (63.1%) of the total dropouts. "Dissatisfied with School/Behavioral/Academic Difficulty" accounted for 41% and "Economic/Entered Employment" accounted for 22.1%. The detailed explanation provided for "Dissatisfied with School" included: behavioral difficulty; academic difficulty; poor student/staff relationships; poor peer relationships; lack of appropriate curriculum; and/or an active dislike of one or more aspects of his/her school experience. The "Economic" category explanation states that the student was needed at home; encouraged by parents to leave school; was unable to pay expenses associated with school attendance; or left to seek employment and/or had accepted employment. (NJ Department of Education)

Although there has been a remarkable effort to raise the standards of public school teachers, there have been few supports and resources added to assist teachers in doing their job. The verdict is still out on how New Jersey will finance public education. The disparity of funding among school districts and the wide variation in per pupil expenditures also reflect the quality of teachers and the quality of learning that is provided in the school district.

Teachers have been intentionally deprived by their own unions and by the administrations of many school districts. Some of their contracts limit their participation in the community past the regular work day schedule. Many of them are intimidated by authoritarian administrations, who in turn are under threat of penalties which will be imposed if the school district does not meet minimum standards. The first priority is preparing students to pass the test. What happens to real learning in this process? Then, as if all of this weren't enough, teachers are burdened and overwhelmed by the social changes and the impact it is having on the behavior of students. Society places great demands on teachers, but it provides little or no back-up support with which they can get the job done.

Unfortunately, there are some teachers who are one-dimensional and are unwilling to take a look at the whole child with the many factors that affect them. Others have basic social flaws that stifle the child's learning experience, i.e. classism and racism. Teachers must know that they have a powerful influence on students. In school districts with high concentrations of poor and multi-cultural populations, teachers and administrators have an additional challenge to examine their own personal biases that translate to disrespectful and offensive behavior toward their students. At a time when racial tensions are so high in our society, administrators should be addressing these issues through intensive in-service training and additional workshops.
Courts

The Administrative Office of the Courts reports that in 1988 over 42,000 juveniles entered the New Jersey juvenile justice system on delinquency charges. These charges represented 104,218 offenses. Most of the juveniles (56%) entering the juvenile justice system were between 16 and 18 years old. Another 34% were 13-15 years old and 8% were under 12 years old. Males represented 82% and females 18% of all delinquency charges. The race and ethnicity profile of the juveniles were: Asians (1%), Blacks (40%), Hispanic (11%), White (46%) and 2% were unknown origin. It should be noted that minority youth represent half of all cases docketed, but their numbers increase proportionately as they move through the stages of the system (see chart on page 27). Of particular significance are the statistical reports of the Department of Corrections-Juvenile Services Division which show that as of January 10, 1989 minority youth represented 85% of the total incarcerated population.

A study published by the Juvenile Delinquency Commission in 1987 shows that the majority of juveniles entering the court on delinquency charges live in a few counties. Seven counties accounted for 74% of court-involved youth. These counties, in the order of ranking are: Essex, Monmouth, Bergen, Union, Hudson, Middlesex and Camden.

An extensive study conducted by the Committee on Delinquency Causes and Prevention of the 1989 Judicial Conference: Juveniles, Justice and the Courts, identified the municipalities of juveniles charged with person and property offenses for the 1988 calendar year. The cities in their ranking order included: Newark, Paterson, Jersey City, Trenton, East Orange, Camden City, Atlantic City, Bridgeton City, Asbury Park, New Brunswick, Union City, Long Branch, Perth Amboy and Passaic. The study showed that only 18% of New Jersey’s youth population live within these 14 municipalities which represented twice the juvenile offense rate of the state.

The Family Court system provides an opportunity to promote a comprehensive approach to the problems of troubled children, youth and families by utilizing non-judicial interventions wherever possible and to divert them from the courts. There were 1,701 Family Crisis petitions filed in 1988. These were the cases that actually were heard in court. There were, however, approximately 10,174 Family Crisis cases disposed without petitions. Many of these petitions stem from parent/child conflict which results in truancy, the youth’s unauthorized absence from the home, a serious threat to the youth’s safety or well being or serious disregard for parental authority. But few preventive and community-based programs have been developed to address the needs of these children and families. Consequently, thousands of young people reach the juvenile justice system and ultimately the courts without ever having received preventive services. Further, many children are needlessly detained or incarcerated in costly, locked facilities because appropriate alternatives have not been developed.

Substantial numbers of young people must contend with family and economic stresses which place them at risk of becoming troubled or troublesome youth. Over the past decade, divorce rates have risen by nearly 500%. At the same time, reported incidents of child abuse have risen dramatically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>7,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>8,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>14,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>18,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>17,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>19,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>20,948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Out-of-Home Placement

The Association for Children of New Jersey reported that too many children in New Jersey are victims of the State's over reliance on out-of-home placement. In 1988 over 27,000 children lived apart from their families for some part of the year in foster care, group homes, residential placements, psychiatric institutions, juvenile crisis and children's shelters, detention centers and correctional facilities. Over 800 of these children are in placement in out-of-state facilities.

NEW JERSEY CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

*Categories reflect total placements for 1988.
Total population of children placed equals 26,950.*

![Diagram showing percentages of placements]

A look at the characteristics of these children is revealing:
—Minority children comprise the greatest number of children living away from their parents.
—Over 73% of the children in foster care are African-American and Hispanic.
—More than 80% of admissions to juvenile correctional programs are minorities, even though the arrest rate of white juveniles is more than double that of minority youth. (See p. 28)
—White children are more apt to be served in therapeutic settings. They account for the largest percentage of children in residential placement and in institutional settings in the mental health system.

It seems that where children are served is largely a matter of race. White children tend to be treated in therapeutic settings while similar behavior in minority children results in incarceration. (Zalkind)
Economic

An estimated 400,000 New Jersey children are growing up in poverty. In New Jersey, Hispanic children are more at risk than any other group. They have the highest poverty rate, a national dropout rate of 40-50%. By the 21st century, 20% of American children will be of Latino origin. (NJ Alternatives)

To compound the problem, there are limited job opportunities for these young people who try to enter the labor market. New Jersey’s youth unemployment rate is 20.4% and in major urban areas the rate has been estimated to be as high as 60%.

The Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) Programs have provided opportunities for our youth.

### JTPA PROGRAM—YOUTH SERVED

**JULY 1, 1988-JUNE 30, 1989**

![Pie chart showing age distribution of youth served]

- **AGE 14-15 (19.6%)**
  - 9,077
- **AGE 16-17 (16.6%)**
  - 7,707
- **AGE 18-21 (14.4%)**
  - 6,667
- **OVER 21 (49.5%)**
  -

Data Collection and Analysis

New Jersey enjoys the status of being a leader in innovative programming and monitoring capabilities. Yet our recordkeeping, data gathering and reporting systems are inadequate at best and uncomplementary to the administrative responsibilities associated with mandated laws and programs. Each level of the system maintains autonomous control of recordkeeping independent of advances and new developments in other inter-related levels. Inter-departmental coordination in the planning and development of community programs is generally not practiced in any kind of systematic fashion. While there are a few departments and commissions that strive to coordinate their efforts, there is very little incentive for planners of State departments to dialogue and exchange ideas on common areas of interest which could result in cost-effective programming. This lack of coordination and absence of a uniform state-wide data management system creates role confusion, gaps in service and duplication of services. It fosters little regard for accountability and diminishes the impact of performance and services to the community.

Conclusion

From the problems identified in this section stem the development of the goals and objectives. The goals are long range goals and should be considered the basis for future developments. The objectives take on characteristics of sub-goals and should be considered for implementation within the next 18 to 24 months.
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL #1
Increase public awareness of primary prevention activities and promote effective parenting within the general population.

Objectives:
1a *The Governor's Office should set up a mechanism to identify and coordinate all existing primary prevention public awareness programs in state government. Departments should be encouraged to develop public awareness campaigns focused on the causes of delinquency (poverty, low self-esteem, lack of cultural pride, etc.) in addition to those focused on its symptoms (teenage pregnancy and drug abuse, etc.). These public awareness campaigns should be comprehensive, in the functional language of the target populations, and include all media: print and electronic (brochures, newspapers, radio and television).

1b *The Governor's Office should establish a mechanism to determine the availability of parenting information within state government. Consistency in format and distribution should be achieved.

1c *All county and local agencies, serving the parent population, should be encouraged to provide parenting information.

1d *The Department of Education should establish parent outreach programs and parenting curricula in all New Jersey schools. A mechanism should be put in place to ensure full implementation of these services.

GOAL #2
Encourage increased participation of industry and the private sector to facilitate opportunities for youth.

Objectives:
2a *The JJDP Advisory Committee shall coordinate its efforts with the State Employment and Training Commission and the Department of Labor. JJDP shall also participate on the Employment and Training Commission’s committees and task forces dealing with at-risk youths.

2b *The JJDP Advisory Committee shall coordinate with the Divisions of Employment and Training and Employment Services in the Department of Labor to enhance relationships with Job Training Partnership Act programs at the community level.

2c *The JJDP Advisory Committee shall encourage and support the development of partnership programs with schools, community agencies and the religious community.

2d *The JJDP Advisory Committee shall encourage community-based organizations, religious organizations and schools to actively seek the participation of private businesses through the sponsorship of youth and families.
GOAL #3
Increase the primary prevention planning and implementation activities of the state, county and municipal level youth serving organizations.

Objectives:
3a *Seek endorsement and adoption of Primary Prevention definition from Youth Serving Organizations and encourage their formal involvement as local level planning entities for primary prevention activities.
3b *Youth Services Commissions should collaborate with other youth serving organizations to sponsor monthly meetings in local neighborhoods and communities and provide information for parents and providers that stimulate action for prevention activities.
3c *State and County Youth Services Commissions should provide the needed resources and technical assistance required by the municipal commissions to implement effective monthly meeting.
3d *County and Municipal Youth Services Commission should coordinate with local Alliances to promote prevention information through existing media contacts.
3e *Municipal Youth Services Commissions and other community based agencies should encourage local school boards to make school facilities more accessible to the community for after-school activities.

GOAL #4
To establish a statewide clearinghouse network for primary prevention that will provide technical assistance to communities.

Objectives:
4a *Collaborate with the Governor's Committee on Children's Services Planning in expanding its statewide clearinghouse on children's services so that it includes a primary prevention component.
4b *JJDP Advisory Committee should make a formal request to all clearinghouses which serve at-risk youth to include primary prevention resources in their data base.
4c *Identify one entity in each county which can serve as the depository for primary prevention information for all municipalities in that County. Encourage the Youth Services Commission to identify a broker for these services.
GOAL #5
Establish a uniform policy and system of collaboration between agencies which assures effective prevention planning on an on-going basis.

Objectives:
5a *The JJDP Advisory Committee and the State Youth Services Commission should jointly plan a series of workshops on effective prevention methods for appropriate State departments.
5b *The JJDP Advisory Committee and the State Youth Services Commission should also provide the technical assistance necessary to promote and implement workshops on effective prevention methods in the community.
5c *The JJDP Advisory Committee should work with the Governor and the Legislature to develop a funding mechanism for youth development through primary prevention planning.
5d *The JJDP Advisory Committee should request through the Governing Board that the Attorney General allocate monies to a public awareness campaign from the Drug Control and Systems Improvement Formula Grant Program.

GOAL #6
Improve the education of our youth to increase competencies and skills and impact the serious problems of high drop-out, suspension and truancy especially among urban youth.

Objectives:
6a *Decrease the rate of drop-out, suspension and truancy statewide by 10% over the next two years. Identify local school districts with high truancy, school drop-out and suspension rates and provide these districts with resources necessary to reduce the incidence of truancy, drop-out and suspensions.
6b *Identify Substance Awareness Coordinators to assist in identifying truancy and suspension activities and provide with resources to reduce the incidence.
6c *Develop additional alternative education programs for youth who fail in the traditional academic setting.
6d *Provide information and education representative of the history of people and the contributions to world culture in a method that cultivates cultural and ethnic pride and respect for all people.
6e *The Department of Higher Education should mandate the incorporation of courses that will increase competency of teachers to impart information, handle questions of bias and race relations and cultivate ethnic pride in the students. Additionally, the training of teachers should also incorporate current practices of primary prevention, theories and techniques.
6f *Structured after school programs should be made available to every school-age youth. A structured after school program would employ youth mentors to work with lower grade students to reinforce daily lessons and provide support in general life skills.
IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

Goal #1
Increase public awareness of primary prevention activities and promote effective parenting within the general population.

a. The primary target for the campaign should be the young people of New Jersey. The secondary targets are parents, teachers and other adults that interact with children.

The target area for the campaign is the inner cities of New Jersey. Priority areas will be selected from areas known to have high rates of delinquency. Among those areas targeted are: Atlantic City, Asbury Park, Camden, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Long Branch, Newark, Paterson, Perth Amboy, Trenton and Vineland.

Many of the social problems, such as drug use and distribution, and teenage pregnancy have been receiving public attention through various means. However, the causes of delinquency are rarely touched. A possible delinquency prevention message for children should involve the development of self-esteem through cultural pride awareness.

A secondary message for adults will be the concept of the Caring Community. Parents and adults will be challenged to protect their own children and invest in the future.

More specifically, a suggested concept involves a radio and TV spot with young people saying, “I am somebody,” and telling what is special about them and what their plans for the future are. Other suggested slogans are:

“Our children are just an attitude away from greatness.”

“The parent is the child’s first teacher.”

“Children learn what they live.”

“Our youth are the future. Let’s invest in our future.”

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

(Show parent playing with child then cut to a teenager behind bars.)

In addition, JJDP will assist the Governor’s Office in identifying what is currently being done in the area of prevention by other agencies. Achieving this will require finding out what is available and seeing how it can best be redirected. For example, the PTA has a 12-minute film on self-esteem called “Mirrors.” JJDP could assist the PTA in distributing this tape to a wider audience through local cable stations and existing community prevention groups.

b. As a pilot program, two Human Services Advisory Councils in identified counties with high urban areas, should provide an ongoing video program that targets audiences in public waiting rooms. The videos should focus on the issues of parenting skills, self-esteem, symptoms and causes of substance abuse, local resources, etc. These videos would be obtained from various state departments, commissions, associations, corporations, etc.

c. The implementation of Goal #1 requires a full-time staff person. This designated person would further develop the public awareness plan, set realistic time goals to insure action, and utilize the Prevention Subcommittee for contacts and recommendations. The JJDP Advisory Committee will be responsible for the coordination of the implementation of this goal.
Goal #2

Encourage increased participation of industry and the private sector to facilitate opportunities for youth.

a. A member of the JJDP Advisory Committee has been nominated to the Employment and Training Commission At-Risk Youth Task Force to advocate for programs that prevent juvenile delinquency. The At-Risk Youth Task Force examines and facilitates coordination among programs that serve youth administered by Job Training Partnership Act Programs (JTPA), Private Industry Councils (PIC), the New Jersey State Employment Service and the Department of Education. The JJDP Advisory Committee will work with the Employment and Training Commission to identify and enlist one youth oriented organization in each of the seventeen JTPA service delivery areas to seek membership on PICs to represent JJDP interests.

b. The JJDP Advisory Committee should obtain reports prepared by the New Jersey Division of Employment and Training about JTPA service delivery area programs or activities that impact on delinquency prevention. These reports would serve as a source for program planning and development.

c. The primary prevention concepts should be actively promoted in local communities through community based organizations that receive state funding or program resources. The resources of the New Jersey State Employment Services (NJES) that can assist youth and effect delinquency prevention should be known to organizations that receive SLEPA-JJDP grants. NJES community offices are in contact with employers seeking workers and can be useful to organizations assisting youth needing jobs. In addition, NJES provides testing and assessment services which can help youth explore occupational career choices. JJDP will encourage linkages between SLEPA youth program grantees and NJES to ensure that NJES resources are used when appropriate.

d. The JTPA Service Delivery Agencies (SDA) are searching for organizations that have the capability of implementing programs. JJDP programs are required to assume the cost of program operations within three years of funding. JJDP funded programs should be encouraged to seek funding from the SDA's whenever the JJDP program complements the SDA criteria of developing competencies and decision-making skills and skills training in a general trade.

Further, JJDP should support and encourage SLEPA subgrantees to support and advocate partnership programs that foster delinquency prevention activities, programs such as:

- the 10,000 Graduates—10,000 Jobs Program
- the Make Jersey Work Roundtable
- the National Alliance of Business

e. Private businesses and business associations are becoming sponsors or mentors in many communities in New Jersey as a way of enhancing the quality of the work force. Business persons are serving as mentors to provide career exposure and literacy training. JJDP can promote business sponsorships/mentorships by identifying and enlisting the cooperation of selected community based and religious organizations. These organizations should seek support from local chambers of commerce, the Private Industry Councils and the National Alliance of Business. The CBOs would screen, match and refer youths and their family members to mentors or programs that have mentoring services.
Goal #3

Increase the primary prevention planning and implementation activities of the state, county and municipal level youth serving organizations.

a. Youth Services Commissions should provide the leadership to develop a system of information sharing and prevention advocacy for the communities that they serve. Mailing lists should be expanded to include parents and community people concerned about their neighborhoods. The municipal administration should be approached to serve as a resource and support to the effort. The political structure of block captains and committeemen and women should also be utilized wherever feasible.

b. County Youth Services Coordinators should develop the contacts in their areas for effective communication of prevention information to be delivered to the community through existing media. A public information committee should be developed to continue the effort and expand the resources for prevention education.

c. Municipal Youth Services Commissions or other community based organizations should foster dialogues to increase accessibility to public school facilities for youth activities. They should encourage discussion to determine the need and the logistics for utilizing the school facilities for after school and general community activities.

Goal #4

To establish a statewide clearinghouse network for primary prevention that will provide technical assistance to communities.

a. Depositories for prevention related materials from all disciplines should be established as part of County Library services. Freeholders should be requested to consider proposals for implementation. The Governor's Committee on Children's Services Planning should assist in the establishment of the county prevention depositories in an effort to provide coordination in the gathering of information.

b. The Youth Services Commissions should identify a youth serving organization to serve as the broker for Primary Prevention Services.

Goal #5

Establish a uniform policy and system of collaboration between agencies which assures effective prevention planning on an on-going basis.

a. The State Youth Services Commission and the JJDP Advisory Committee should appoint representatives to a joint prevention taskforce which will be charged with the responsibility of designing the workshops on effective prevention methods. The workshops will be focused on interdepartmental communication and coordination which will ultimately serve in better planning for the community. These workshops should serve to stimulate the planning and development of prevention initiatives that will benefit the community.

b. The JJDP Advisory Committee shall request support from the SLEPA Governing Board to seek an Executive Order from the Governor and a resolution from the Legislature establishing Primary Prevention as a priority for the State of New Jersey and encouraging cooperative program planning and development throughout the State. The resolution shall also establish primary prevention as a priority for the State departments where applicable.

c. SLEPA shall identify existing barriers to developing a unified service delivery system between departments, develop evaluation criteria that will measure the impact and effectiveness of state monitored programs, review and evaluate existing programs to determine what works, what doesn't work, what can be expanded or amended.
d. SLEPA shall provide technical assistance as needed in developing departmental policies and programs which would compliment and support the primary prevention mission.

e. SLEPA shall provide a written report of findings and recommendations to the Governor/Legislature on an annual basis.

Goal #6

Improve the education of our youth to increase competencies and skills and impact the serious problems of high drop out, suspension and truancy especially among urban youth.

a. Request that the Governor through Department of Education develop guidelines to establish a framework for planning, implementing and evaluating suspension and expulsion practices and programs which assure that each student is provided an educational program which effectively decreases the behavior(s) leading to the need for disciplinary action; and he should encourage allocation of resources to address the goals that decrease behaviors leading to the need for disciplinary action.

Request the Department of Education to develop a uniform data collection system of all dropout, suspension and truancy activities statewide. Particular emphasis should be placed on decreasing the practice of expulsion and suspension. Adequate funding for innovative educational programming should be made available to school districts with high rates of drop-out and truancy.

The social security number or another unique identifier of each child should be added to that child's permanent record folder. This would be the first step of an in-state tracking system.

Review and modify the NJ state law governing suspensions of children from school to encourage parental involvement prior to the time of intervention.

1. Each district's code of conduct should include the following mandates: The child's parent will be notified before a decision is made to suspend a child;

2. Some other appropriate intervention program must take place prior to suspension.

b. Identify local school districts with high truancy, school drop-out and suspension rates.

1. Identification will be made through the county monitoring system. The Department of Education (DOE) should monitor the disciplinary practices of the local school districts to assure the Department's guidelines are followed and no district relies unnecessarily on suspension to sanction students. To this end, the DOE should formally monitor local school districts' suspension practices on an annual basis and review the findings as part of the certification process. School districts which evidence excessive and unwarranted use of suspension should not be certified by the Doe until a plan for corrective action has been established by the school district.

2. Local school districts should be required to maintain logs of all disciplinary actions that result in a youth's suspension or expulsion from school. The log should indicate the number of times and number of days each youth is excluded from school. The log should specify: reason for action; a summary of all that had been done previously, to handle the problem, including alternative methods of discipline; the nature and extent of the sanction; the policy which has been violated; and the age, sex, race and grade of the student. These logs should be forwarded monthly to the county superintendent who should report this information on a quarterly basis to the Commissioner of Education. The county superintendent should monitor the due process aspects of the exclusion issue. (NJ Action Plan)
Target existing Alternative Education Program resources to five school districts. As part of the grant process, the targeted school districts will work in a truly collaborative manner with the NJ Department of Education to address the needs of the target population. Each targeted school district is to develop a plan, implement and evaluate it in a time frame agreed upon by the district and the Department of Education.

Provide school districts incentives to develop alternative education programs. Access additional resources to address the needs of children at risk of truancy, suspension and dropping out:

1. Legislatively remove the socially maladjusted (SM) category from the special education classification and place the state funds that follow that category into alternative programming because SM is not a federal category so no federal money comes into that program. It is funded with state dollars. Few school districts utilize this category because the dollar amount is low per child. If SM is removed from the special education classification, regular teachers may be used and there is not the intensive intervention on the part of the child study team—therefore lower program costs.

2. Integrate the Substance Awareness Coordinator (SAC) into a regular counseling program to work with youngsters at risk of truancy and/or suspension. Many SACs are working part-time in a school because of insufficient alcohol or drug dollars. School districts should be encouraged to establish full-time SACs by accessing local, county and state dollars.

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of "C" level classes (general education, not college bound) at the high school level. This should be accomplished through the county superintendent's monitoring process. If these classes are not addressing the needs of the students assigned to them, then the school should receive assistance from the Department of Education to reallocate resources to provide alternative education programs for those students who are not learning in the traditional academic setting.

4. Encourage inclusion of these at-risk students in the regular programming of the school district; i.e. vocational education, gifted and talented programs and extra-curricular activities.

Augment teacher and administrative in-service training in cultural sensitivity and awareness with methods that will strengthen their ability to impart information, handle questions of bias and race relations with their students and cultivate ethnic pride in the students.

Local school boards must be directed by the Governor to develop structured afterschool programs. These programs could serve as alternative learning programs and integrate academics through tutoring, cultural awareness through games of children around the world and the study of the history of the countries representative of the student's heritage. Structured recreational activities could also be offered in a way that will increase the youth's appreciation for health and exercise.

**Conclusion**

The above implementation strategies should not be considered as all inclusive but reflect the suggestions and ideas of the committee. Additional means to carry out the goals and objectives of this plan should be set forth in a coordinated fashion by the leadership of the Executive, Judiciary and Legislative branches of government in the State of New Jersey.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Committee is committed to the achievement of the goals and objectives, herein, and to the improvement of the quality of life for New Jersey's children. It encourages all responsible individuals to participate actively in this process of advocacy and proactive planning.
### TABLE X
**SUMMARY OF KNOWN AND UNKNOWN DROPOUT REASONS**
**BY COUNTY**
*September 1987 to August 1988*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>Physical Disability</th>
<th>Mental Disability</th>
<th>Social or Emotional Disability</th>
<th>Administrative Exclusion</th>
<th>Disatisfied with School/Behavioral/Academic</th>
<th>Economic Entered Employment</th>
<th>Married Pregnant</th>
<th>Reason Unknown</th>
<th>New Residence School Status Unknown</th>
<th>TOTAL DROPOUTS</th>
<th>1984 Enrollment</th>
<th>Dropsouts as a % of Enrollments</th>
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Note: New Jersey State Department of Education/IRM
### TABLE XII

PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT DROPOUTS
BY COUNTY AND RACIAL/ETHNIC ORIGIN
September 1987 to August 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>WHITE (Number)</th>
<th>BLACK (Number)</th>
<th>HISPANIC (Number)</th>
<th>AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE (Number)</th>
<th>ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER (Number)</th>
<th>Total Number of Student Dropouts</th>
<th>Percent Total State Dropouts By County</th>
<th>Percent of 9th Grade Dropouts</th>
<th>Percent of County Dropouts</th>
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<td>15 1.1 0.6</td>
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NEW JERSEY'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM: SIX MAJOR LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCESS

LEVEL I
LOCAL POLICE ADJUSTMENTS

POLICE CONTACT

- Released
- Community-Based Programs and Services (CB P&S)
- Station House Adjustment
- Referral to Appropriate Agency

LEVEL II
JUVENILE-FAMILY CRISIS INTERVENTION UNITS

JUVENILE FAMILY CRISIS INTERVENTION UNIT

- CB P&S

LEVEL III
COURT INTAKE

COURT INTAKE UNIT

- Out-of-Home Placement Petition
- Temporary Placement
  - Host Shelter
  - Foster Home
  - Group Home
  - County Shelter
  - Other suitable family setting
- Hearing

- Juvenile Family Crisis Petition
- Marked Inactive
- Pre-Judicial Conference
- Conference Committee
- Pre-Disposition Hearing
- Predisposition Evaluation
- Disposition Hearing
- Disposition Suspended
- Fine and/or Restitution
- Released to Parent or Other
- Department of Human Services (DYFS, DMH&H, DMR)
- Department of Corrections

LEVEL IV
FORMAL ADJUDICATION AND DISPOSITION

- Formal Disposition
- Released
- Disposition Suspended
- Fine and/or Restitution
- Department of Human Services
  - Community Based Programs
  - Mandatory Program Participation
  - Probation Supervision by person or agency
  - Youth Advocacy Project

LEVEL V
PROBATION OF SUPERVISION

LEVEL VI
INCARCERATION OR RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT

- Long Term Out-Of-Home Placement
- Department of Human Services (DYFS, DMH&H, DMR)
- Department of Corrections

Source: NJ Action Plan
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<th>OFFENSES</th>
<th>WHITE</th>
<th>BLACK</th>
<th>AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE</th>
<th>ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER</th>
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<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
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<td>1,060</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1,431</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Burglary</td>
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<td>1,569</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Assault</td>
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<td>3,809</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forgery and Counterfeiting</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Embezzlement</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Sex Offenses (Except Rape and Prostitution)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
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### ARRESTS BY ETHNIC ORIGIN—1988

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<th>ADULTS Hispanic</th>
<th>Not Hispanic</th>
<th>JUVENILES Hispanic</th>
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<td>195</td>
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<td>380</td>
<td>3,020</td>
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<td>1,181</td>
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<td>Curfew and Loitering Law Violations</td>
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<td>1,347</td>
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<td>–</td>
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<td>Runaways</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>5,803</td>
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<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>43,158</td>
<td>380,903</td>
<td>33,252</td>
<td>295,947</td>
<td>9,906</td>
<td>84,956</td>
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</table>
REFERENCES


New Jersey PL 1987, c. 387, An Act Establishing Substance Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Referral Programs in the Public Schools.


