

# Probation

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**Three Strikes and You're Out!: The Political Sentencing Game** ..... *Peter J. Benekos*  
*Alida V. Merlo*

**Electronic Monitoring in the Southern District of Mississippi** ..... *Darren Gowen*

**Helping Pretrial Services Clients Find Jobs** ..... *Jacqueline M. Peoples*

**Specialist Foster Family Care for Delinquent Youth** ..... *Burt Galaway*  
*Richard W. Nutter*  
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**United States Pretrial Services Supervision**..... *Probation and Pretrial Services Division*

**The Supreme Court and Prisoners' Rights** ..... *Jack E. Call*

**Restorative Justice: Implications for Organizational Change**..... *Mark S. Umbreit*  
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**Juvenile Restitution and Recidivism in a Midwestern County** ..... *Sudipto Roy*

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MARCH 1995

**U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Justice**

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# Federal Probation

A JOURNAL OF CORRECTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE  
Published by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts

VOLUME LIX

MARCH 1995

NUMBER 1

## This Issue in Brief

**Three Strikes and You're Out: The Political Sentencing Game.**—Recent sentencing initiatives which mandate life sentences for three-time convicted felons may appeal to the public, but will they address the realities of crime? Authors Peter J. Benekos and Alida V. Merlo focus on the latest spin on sentencing: "three strikes and you're out." Their article reviews the ideological and political context of recent sentencing reforms, examines "get-tough" sentencing legislation in three states, and considers the consequences of increasing sentencing severity.

**Electronic Monitoring in the Southern District of Mississippi.**—Although many criminal justice agencies now use electronic monitoring as an alternative to prison, some still hesitate to use it in supervising higher risk offenders. Author Darren Gowen explains how the U.S. probation office in the Southern District of Mississippi began its electronic monitoring program with limited expectations but successfully expanded it for use with higher risk offenders. He describes the district's first year of experience with electronic monitoring and discusses the selection criteria, the types of cases, the supervision model, and offender demographics.

**Helping Pretrial Services Clients Find Jobs.**—Many pretrial services clients lose their jobs because they are involved in criminal matters; many have been either unemployed or underemployed for a long time. Some are released by the court with a condition to seek and maintain employment. Author Jacqueline M. Peoples describes how the U.S. pretrial services office in the Northern District of California addressed the issue of unemployment among its clients by launching a special project to identify employers willing to hire them. She also explains how the district developed an employment resource manual to help clients find jobs or training programs.

**Specialist Foster Family Care for Delinquent Youth.**—Authors Burt Galaway, Richard W. Nutter, Joe Hudson, and Malcolm Hill contend that the current focus on treatment-oriented or specialist foster family care as a resource for emotionally or psychiatrically impaired children and youths may disguise its

potential to serve delinquent youngsters. They report the results of a survey of 266 specialist foster family care programs in North America and the United Kingdom. Among their findings were that 43 percent of the programs admitted delinquent youths and that the delinquents were as likely to be successful in the programs as were nondelinquent youths.

**United States Pretrial Services Supervision.**—In June 1994 the Probation and Pretrial Services Division, Administrative Office of the United States

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# Specialist Foster Family Care for Delinquent Youth

BY BURT GALAWAY, RICHARD W. NUTTER, JOE HUDSON, AND MALCOLM HILL\*

## Introduction

**T**HE CURRENT focus on treatment-oriented or specialist foster family care as a resource for emotionally or psychiatrically impaired children and youths may disguise its potential to serve delinquent youngsters. Foster families have been an alternative to institutional placement of delinquents (Heard, 1990; Kagan, Reid, Roberts, & Silverman-Dollow, 1987), institutionalization for juvenile sex offenders (Lee & Olender, 1992), jail for young adult offenders ages 16 to 22 (Forrester, 1984; Field, 1992), a resource for drug offenders (Hazel, Schmeds, & Korshin, 1983), and an aftercare resource for very serious delinquents who required secure institutional care (Bullock, 1990). The Kent Family Placement Scheme, which became the model for most specialist foster family care in the United Kingdom, initially served primarily delinquent youngsters (Hazel, 1978, 1989; Smith, 1989); more recently it has shifted to emotionally disturbed youths because delinquents tend to be less difficult to manage and can be served in less intrusive, nonresidential community programs.

Foster family care has been identified as one of an array of programs to reduce the use of institutions for delinquents (Rowan & Keho, 1985; Barnes, 1980; Tutt, 1978; Bakal & Polsky, 1979; Allinson, 1983; Lewis, 1978). However, a study of services to status offenders and delinquents funded under Title XX of the U.S. Social Security Act found that states prohibiting institutionalization of these offenders were no more likely to provide high levels of foster care than were states not prohibiting institutionalization, although the former were more likely than the latter to provide other services to juvenile offenders (Nelson, 1982).

Family care providers are able to manage delinquent youths within their homes, and the behavior of those youths tends to improve (Hazel, 1989). Fos-

ter family care is more likely to contribute to the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders than is institutional care (Cape, 1973; Witherspoon, 1966). Chamberlain (1990; 1995) found that youths released from an assessment center to specialist foster family care were less likely to recidivate than were those released to group homes. A study of the placement experiences and subsequent criminal activities of children who were victims of child abuse found that placement did not increase the risk of criminal behavior (Widom & Hindelang, 1991). Another study found that placement of delinquents in short-term foster care facilitated the involvement of their parents in counseling services (Kagan et al., 1987). Still another study of youth who entered alternative programs, of which specialized foster family care was one, compared to those who entered institutions found no differences between the two groups in post placement delinquency but did find that placement in alternative programs was associated with a marked decrease in the amount of time children were in placement, the level of restrictiveness of the placement, and resulted in an average savings of \$1,230 per child over a 2-year period (Rosenthal & Glass, 1986). An English study found that young adult offenders ages 16-20 could be cared for in foster families equally as well as in jail or other forms of incarceration (Dartington Social Research Unit, 1993).

A recent survey of North American and United Kingdom specialist and treatment foster family care programs secured data on the reason for referral for the 10 youngsters most recently placed in the programs as well as the 10 youths most recently discharged from the programs (Hill, Nutter, Giltinan, Hudson, & Galaway, 1993; Hudson, Nutter, & Galaway, 1994). One reason for referral was delinquency. These data permit comparisons of youths who were referred to specialist foster family care (SFC) programs for delinquency with youths referred for other reasons. The analysis reported in this article was designed to address the following questions:

1. Are youngsters referred for delinquency concentrated in programs that specialize in serving delinquent youths?
2. Do youths referred for delinquency differ from those referred for other reasons in sex, age, ethnicity, pre-admission living arrangement, legal relationship to parents, birth parent involvement in placement planning, and birth parent visits?

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3. At discharge do youngsters who were referred for delinquency differ from others in age, sex, ethnicity, length of time in care, reason for discharge, discharge living arrangements, age at discharge, birth parent participation, birth parent visits, and legal relationship to birth parents?
4. Are there differences in the use of specialist/treatment foster care for delinquents between Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom (excluding Northern Ireland)?

### *Methodology*

Snowball sampling procedures were used to supplement lists of specialist/treatment foster family care programs available from treatment foster care program organizations and from previous surveys. A questionnaire was mailed to programs identified as potential treatment or specialist foster family care programs; the same questionnaire was used in the United Kingdom and North American except for some minor language differences reflecting usage variations between North America and the United Kingdom. For example, in the United Kingdom the term specialist foster family care was used as this is the prevailing term, whereas in North America the term treatment foster family care was used. The term foster carers was used in both the United Kingdom and North American questionnaires. The questionnaire was adapted from a previous survey and was designed and pretested to secure data regarding program information, characteristics of the 10 youth most recently placed in the programs, and characteristics of the 10 youth most recently discharged from the programs.

Answers to six questions were used to differentiate specialist/treatment foster family care programs from other foster care programs:

1. Is the program explicitly identified as a specialist or treatment foster care program with an identifiable name and budget?
2. Are payments made to treatment foster carers at rates above those provided for regular foster care?
3. Are training and support services provided to the treatment foster carers?
4. Is a formally stated goal or objective of the program to serve clients who would otherwise be admitted to or retained in nonfamily institutional settings?
5. Is care provided in a residence owned or rented by the individual or family providing the treatment services?
6. Is the treatment foster carer viewed and dealt with as a member of a service or treatment team?

Programs were considered as treatment/specialist foster family care ones if program staff answered all six questions affirmatively. A total of 220 U.S., 18 Canadian, and 28 U.K. programs comprised the study group and provided the data included in this analysis.

Information regarding program characteristics, youngsters admitted, and persons discharged has been reported elsewhere (Hill, Nutter, Giltinan, Hudson, & Galaway, 1993; Hudson, Nutter, & Galaway, 1994). The analysis here only considers the differences between delinquent and nondelinquent youth at the time of placement and discharge. Only youth ages 12 through 17 inclusive at the time of admission or ages 12 through 20 inclusive at the time of discharge were considered. Many of the programs serve younger children, but younger children were excluded because the purpose of this analysis was to compare delinquent with nondelinquent youth. Youths were classified as delinquent if the reason for referral was reported as delinquency or criminal behavior. In this analysis these youth were compared to all other youths served in these SFC programs. Of the 1,362 youth placed and 1,496 youth discharged only 137 were the same youths. The data on youth admitted referred to the 10 most recent admissions to SFC before October 1, 1991, in Canada and the U.S. and before January 1, 1992, in the U.K. The discharge data referred to the 10 most recent discharges before November 1, 1991, in Canada and the U.S. and February 1, 1992, in the U.K. The percentages of delinquent and nondelinquent youth by country are summarized in table 1.

### *Findings*

#### *Programs Serving Delinquent Youth*

The question of whether delinquent youth tend to be concentrated in some programs was answered by examining the proportion of total program referrals that were delinquent youths. Fifty-seven percent (151) of the programs reported no delinquent youths among their last 10 admissions, and 6 percent (16) reported that all of their last 10 admissions were delinquents. The vast majority of programs that admit delinquent youths also admit other youngsters. Typically, programs that admit both delinquent and nondelinquent youths report that less than half of their 10 most recent admissions were delinquent youths. There are no important cross-country differences in regard to the proportion of delinquent youths admitted to the programs.

#### *Delinquent and Other Youth Admissions*

Data were available across the three countries for 332 delinquent youths admitted to the SFC programs and 1,030 persons admitted for other reasons. These data allowed us to look for background differences between these two groups. There were some differ-

TABLE 1. DELINQUENT AND OTHER YOUTH ADMITTED AND DISCHARGED FROM TREATMENT/SPECIALIST FOSTER CARE PROGRAMS BY COUNTRY

	U.S.A.	Canada	U.K.	Total
Delinquent Admitted (ages 12-17)	(265) 24%	(20) 25%	(47) 24%	(332) 24%
Other Youth Admitted (ages 12-17)	(825) 76%	(59) 75%	(146) 76%	(1030) 76%
Total Youth Admitted (ages 12-17)	(1090) 100%	(79) 100%	(193) 100%	(1362) 100%
Delinquent Youth Discharged (ages 12-20)	(284) 23%	(27) 31%	(57) 29%	(368) 25%
Other Youth Discharged (ages 12-20)	(926) 77%	(60) 69%	(142) 71%	(1128) 75%
Total Youth Discharged	(1210) 100%	(87) 100%	(199) 100%	(1496) 100%

ences in demographic characteristics of the two groups of youths. The delinquents were more likely to be young men. Seventy-three percent (241) of the delinquents were boys compared to 45 percent (467) of the other youths admitted.<sup>1</sup> There was a tendency for the delinquent youths admitted to SFC to be older than the other admissions. The average age for the delinquent youths was 15 years compared to 14.3 years for the other youths. Sixteen- and 17-year-olds made up 42 percent of the delinquent youth admitted to SFC compared to 26 percent of the other youth. There were no important differences in the race of delinquents compared to other youth admitted. Sixty-seven percent of both groups were white, 23 percent of the delinquent and 22 percent of the other youth were of African descent, and the balance were of other racial or ethnic groups.

Table 2 shows the living arrangements of the youths just prior to admission. There is very little difference in the pre-admission living arrangements of delinquents compared to other youths admitted to SFC programs. Slightly more of the delinquent youth were admitted directly from the community or from institutional programs rather than from other community programs such as foster care and group homes. Delinquent youths admitted from institutions were equally divided between those who came from residential treatment facilities and those who came from correctional facilities whereas all of the other youths admitted from institutions came from residential treatment facilities.

Slightly more of the parents of delinquent youths were likely to have their parental rights intact or have experienced a temporary removal of parental rights by

courts than the parents of the other youths; conversely, slightly more of the parents of other youths have permanently relinquished their rights or have had them permanently terminated by courts. Parental rights were intact for 35 percent of the delinquent youth compared to 29 percent of the other youth. Parental rights were temporarily relinquished or removed for 50 percent of the delinquents compared to 43 percent of the other youth; parental rights were permanently terminated for 15 percent of the delinquents compared to 28 percent of the other youth. These differences are small, however, and are unlikely to be of any practical significance. Table 3 presents information regarding parental participation in planning for delinquents and other youths admitted to SFC. The differences between parents of delinquent youths and parents of other youths are small, although slightly more of the parents of delinquent youths have participated than have parents of other youths.

*Delinquents and Other Youth Discharged from Care*

Programs also provided data for the 10 most recent discharges from SFC; data were available for 368 delinquent youths and 1,128 youths who had been admitted for other reasons. The distributions of this group on the demographic variables were very similar to the distribution of the youths recently admitted to SFC. Seventy-three percent of the delinquent youths discharged were boys compared to 47 percent of the other youths; there were no important differences on ethnic distribution with both groups being predominantly white (71 percent of the delinquents and 70 percent of the other youths. More of the delinquent youths who were discharged were older than the oth-

TABLE 2. PRE-ADMISSION LIVING ARRANGEMENT FOR DELINQUENT AND OTHER YOUTH ADMISSIONS

	Delinquent	Other
<u>Directly From Community</u>		
Living Independently <sup>2</sup>	(6) 2%	(15) 1%
Birth Parent, Family Friend, or Relative	(87) 27%	(229) 22%
Adoptive Home	(3) 1%	(20) 2%
<b>Directly From Community Subtotal</b>	<b>(96) 30%</b>	<b>(264) 26%</b>
<u>From Community Programs</u>		
Emergency Shelter	(20) 6%	(96) 9%
Regular Foster Family Care	(29) 9%	(141) 14%
Treatment Foster Family Care	(7) 2%	(38) 4%
Group Home	(43) 13%	(138) 13%
<b>Admitted From Community Program Subtotal</b>	<b>(99) 30%</b>	<b>(413) 40%</b>
<u>From Institutional Programs</u>		
Residential Treatment <sup>1</sup>	(64) 20%	(312) 30%
Correctional Facility	(64) 20%	(23) 2%
Nursing Home/Medical Hospital	(0) -	(9) 1%
Educational Facility <sup>1</sup>	(2) 2%	(10) 1%
<b>Admitted From Institutional Program Subtotal</b>	<b>(130) 40%</b>	<b>(354) 34%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(325) 100%</b>	<b>(1031) 100%</b>

TABLE 3. PARENT PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING FOR DELINQUENT AND OTHER YOUTH ADMITTED TO SPECIALIST FOSTER FAMILY CARE

	Delinquent Youth*	Other Youth*
Parent consulted in planning youth treatment?	(216) 66%	(583) 57%
Parent met with SFC professional to plan youth's treatment?	(173) 52%	(468) 46%
Parent met with foster parent to plan youth's treatment?	(120) 36%	(381) 37%
Parent visits with youth are part of treatment plan?	(218) 66%	(621) 61%
Did youth and parent visit in last 30 days?	(175) 58%	(504) 53%
Average number of visits in last 30 days for youth who visited with parents.	4.8	4.1

\*Yes responses only.

ers. Mean discharge age for delinquent youths was 15.6 years compared to 15.2 years for the other youths. There were slight differences in the distribution of parental rights; 39 percent of the parents of delinquent youths and 31 percent of the parents of other youths had parental rights currently intact; parental rights were permanently terminated, either voluntarily or by

court order, for 19 percent of the delinquents and 29 percent of the others.

Table 4 shows that parental participation for youths being discharged from SFC closely parallels that of recently admitted youths. There are only small differences in parental participation when comparing delinquents with others. Slightly more parents of

TABLE 4. PARENT PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING FOR DELINQUENT AND OTHER YOUTH DISCHARGED FROM SPECIALIST FOSTER FAMILY CARE

	Delinquent Youth*	Other Youth*
Parent consultation planning youth's treatment	(235) 65%	(610) 54%
Parent met with SFC professional to plan youth's treatment	(200) 55%	(520) 46%
Parent met with foster carer to plan youth's treatment	(147) 40%	(437) 39%
Parent visits with youth are part of treatment plan	(232) 63%	(666) 59%
Did youth visit with parent in last 30 days?	(201) 59%	(561) 53%
Average number of visits in last 30 days for youth who visited with parents.	5.6	5.4

\*Yes responses only.

delinquent youths than parents of other youths were consulted about treatment planning. Likewise, slightly more parents of delinquent youths compared to parents of others had visited with their youngster in the 30 days before discharge.

Table 5 shows the reasons for discharge. There were no important differences when comparing the reasons for discharge of the delinquents compared to other youths. Forty-one percent of each group had been discharged because treatment goals were accomplished; 14 percent of the delinquent youths and 15 percent of the other youths had been discharged because of lack of progress and 33 percent of the delinquents and 34 percent of the others had been discharged because of placement breakdown. There may be a difference in the reason for the placement breakdown, however; more of the delinquent youths requested removal from placement than did the other youths and more of the foster carers for the others requested a change of placement than did the foster carers for the delinquents. There were some important

differences in the length of time in care. The other youths were in SFC for longer periods of time than were the delinquent youths. The average length of care for the delinquent youths was 7.5 months compared to 13.2 months for the others; 67 percent (245) of the delinquent youths were in care 9 months or less compared to 45 percent (506) of the other youths.

Table 6 presents information regarding the post discharge living arrangements of youths discharged from SFC. These two tables also show no important differences between the delinquents and other youths. Seventy-seven percent of the delinquent youths were discharged directly to the community or to a community program, such as a group home or foster home, compared to 80 percent of the others; 23 percent of the delinquent youths and 20 percent of the other youths were discharged to institutional programs.

*Cross-Country Comparisons*

The study group was heavily skewed toward U.S. programs; thus possible differences between delin-

TABLE 5. REASON FOR DISCHARGE OF DELINQUENT AND OTHER YOUTH DISCHARGED FROM SPECIALIST FOSTER FAMILY CARE

Reason for Discharge	Delinquent Youth	Other Youth
Treatment goals met	(150) 41%	(460) 41%
Administrative discharge	(44) 12%	(100) 9%
Lack of progress	(51) 14%	(171) 15%
Breakdown - client	(99) 27%	(233) 21%
Breakdown - foster parents	(21) 6%	(146) 13%
Youth died in care	(1) - (366) 100%	(5) 1% (1115) 100%

TABLE 6. POST DISCHARGE LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF DELINQUENT AND OTHER YOUTH DISCHARGED FROM SPECIALIST FOSTER FAMILY CARE

	Delinquent	Other
<b>To Community</b>		
Living Independently <sup>2</sup>	(63) 18%	(195) 18%
Birth Parent, Family Friend, or Relative	(141) 40%	(376) 35%
Adoptive Home	(3) 1%	(39) 4%
<b>Discharged Directly to Community Subtotal</b>	<b>(207) 59%</b>	<b>(610) 56%</b>
<b>To Community Programs</b>		
Emergency Shelter	(9) 3%	(30) 3%
Regular Foster Family Care	(18) 5%	(95) 9%
Treatment Foster Family Care	(6) 2%	(34) 3%
Group Home	(31) 9%	(102) 9%
<b>Discharged to Community Program Subtotal</b>	<b>(64) 18%</b>	<b>(261) 24%</b>
<b>To Institutional Programs</b>		
Residential Treatment <sup>2</sup>	(40) 11%	(181) 17%
Correctional Facility	(38) 11%	(20) 2%
Nursing Home/Medical Hospital	(0) -	(4) <1%
Educational Facility <sup>2</sup>	(2) <1%	(13) 1%
<b>Discharged to Institutional Program Subtotal</b>	<b>(80) 23%</b>	<b>(218) 20%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(351) 100%</b>	<b>(1089) 100%</b>

quents and other youths in Canada and the United Kingdom may have been overwhelmed or suppressed by the fact that most of the data were from U.S. programs. All the previous relationships were examined, controlling for country, to check for this possibility.

No differences were found across the three countries for the age and sex of the delinquents compared to other youths admitted to SFC. Across all three countries from 70 to 74 percent of the admitted delinquents were boys compared to from 44 to 48 percent of the admitted other youths. This is consistent with the findings that delinquent youths are more likely to be older and young men than other youths admitted to specialist foster care programs. A difference was found, across countries, in the ethnicity of delinquents compared to other youths admitted to SFC programs. The pattern of no difference held for the United States; in the U.K. programs, however, 94 percent of the admitted delinquents were white compared to 84 percent of the others, and in the Canadian programs 55 percent of the delinquents admitted were white compared to 73 percent of the others. In the Canadian programs, 45 percent of the delinquent youths admitted to SFC were of other ethnicity compared to 25 percent

of the youths admitted for other reasons. The delinquent youths admitted to Canadian SFC programs were more likely to be Aboriginal youths or youths from other visible minority groups (except black) than were other youths admitted to SFC.

Some differences were also found, especially in youths from the United Kingdom, when comparing pre-admission living arrangements for delinquents and other youths controlling for country. Fewer delinquents, compared to other youths in the United Kingdom programs, were admitted directly from the community and more were admitted from institutional programs than in the U.S. and Canada. Forty percent of the United Kingdom youths admitted because of delinquency were admitted from the community, compared to 52 percent of the youths admitted for other reasons; 43 percent of the U.K. youths admitted to SFC because of delinquency were admitted from institutional programs compared to 13 percent of the others. There were no important differences in either Canadian or American programs regarding the pre-admission living arrangements for delinquents compared to other youths.

Some differences were also found in the status of parental rights controlling by country. Parental rights for youths admitted to programs in the United King-

dom were more likely to be intact than were those for youths admitted to programs in either Canada or the United States. Parental rights were intact for 72 percent of the delinquents admitted to SFC programs in the U.K. compared to 15 percent in Canada and 31 percent in the U.S. Within the U.K. programs, the difference in the status of parental rights between delinquents and others was small; parental rights were intact for 72 percent of the delinquent youths admitted to SFC in the United Kingdom compared to 62 percent of the other youths. Canadian programs were more likely than either American or United Kingdom programs to have admitted youths where the court had permanently terminated parental rights and, in Canada, there is a difference between delinquents and other youths; 50 percent of the delinquents admitted to Canadian SFC programs have had their parental rights permanently terminated compared to 31 percent of the other youths admitted. There was also a difference in the United States but it went in the other direction; 8 percent of the delinquent youths admitted to American programs had their parental rights terminated compared to 18 percent of the other youths. Generally the level of parental participation for youth admitted to SFC was higher in the United Kingdom programs than in either the Canadian or American programs.

The same demographic variables were examined, controlling by country, for the group of discharged youth. Across all three countries, the delinquent youths discharged from SFC tended to be older than the other youths; for both the U.K. and the U.S., the delinquent youths were more likely to be young men than the other youths. In Canada, there was no difference in the proportion of delinquent boys who were discharged compared to other boys. The pattern of ethnicity of discharges, controlling by country, paralleled the findings in the admissions data. In both the U.K. and the U.S., there were no important differences in the ethnicity of the delinquents and the other youths discharged from SFC; 95 percent of the delinquents discharged from U.K. programs were white compared to 88 percent of the others; 68 percent of the delinquents and 68 percent of the others discharged from the U.S. programs were white. Fifty-two percent of the delinquents discharged from Canadian programs, however, were white compared to 78 percent of the others; 48 percent of the delinquents discharged from Canadian programs were members of visible minorities compared to 20 percent of the others.

There were only small differences in the discharge living arrangements for delinquent youths and other youths discharged from U.S. and United Kingdom programs but some differences were observed for youth discharged from Canadian programs. Sixty-five

percent of the delinquents discharged from Canadian programs were discharged directly to the community compared to 47 percent of the others; likewise, 15 percent of the delinquents discharged from Canadian programs were discharged to community programs compared to 40 percent of the others.

Differences were also found in the various measures of parental participation. Parental participation was somewhat higher for delinquents in U.S. programs than for others being discharged from SFC. The opposite pattern emerged for the Canadian and U.K. programs. In the Canadian programs, 48 percent of the parents of delinquents were consulted regarding discharge planning compared to 58 percent of the parents of others; in the U.K. programs, 71 percent of the parents of delinquents were consulted compared to 82 percent of the parents of others. In the Canadian programs, 33 percent of the parents of delinquent youths met with SFC professionals to plan the youths' treatment compared to 56 percent of the parents of other youths; there was no difference on this variable in the U.K. programs. Fewer parents of delinquent youths in both the U.K. and Canadian programs met with the foster carers than did parents of others. Fewer delinquent youths than other youths in the U.K. and Canada had parental visitation plans included in the treatment plans. Also, fewer Canadian delinquent youths, but not U.K. youths, visited with their parents than did other youths.

Differences were also found in the reasons for discharge. In the United States there were no important differences in reason for discharge comparing delinquents with others. Slightly fewer delinquents than other youth in the U.K. programs were discharged because treatment goals had been met; 44 percent of the delinquents were discharged for this reason compared to 50 percent of the others. In the Canadian programs, however, 11 percent of the delinquent youths were discharged because treatment goals were met compared to 40 percent of the others, and 30 percent of the delinquents were discharged because of administrative reasons compared to 7 percent of the others. Likewise, in Canada, 48 percent of the delinquents were discharged because of a placement breakdown attributed to clients compared to 32 percent of others. This analysis suggests that there may be some differences across the three countries; these differences, however, should be treated with caution given the relatively small numbers from both Canada and the United Kingdom.

### *Summary*

Delinquent youths were integrated into SFC programs serving other youth. While less than half the programs served delinquents, very few served just

delinquents. For most, delinquents accounted for less than half of the programs' admissions. Clearly these programs were integrating delinquent youths into their general program and were not specializing in providing care for delinquents. The delinquent youths admitted to SFC tend to be slightly older than the other youths and were more likely to be male. No important differences were found in the ethnicity, status of parents' legal rights, participation of parents in planning the program for youths, or the pre-placement living arrangements of delinquents compared to other youths. Other than being slightly older and more likely to be male, delinquent youths were very similar to other youths served in treatment foster care programs. Discharge data suggested that delinquents were just as successful in treatment foster care programs as were other youths, although delinquents spend substantially less time in treatment foster care than do other youths. There were no important differences across the two groups in reason for discharge, post discharge living arrangements, and the extent of parental participation in discharge planning.

The examination of the data by country suggests that there may be some differences across countries. The U.K. programs may be more likely to take delinquents who are white than other youths and were more likely to admit delinquents from institutional settings than other youth. Differences were found when comparing youths in the Canadian programs to youths in the American and U.K. programs. Delinquent youths admitted to Canadian programs were more likely than other youths to be nonwhite (primarily Aboriginal youth) and were also more likely than other youths to come from situations in which parental rights have been permanently terminated. Delinquent youths in both the United States and the United Kingdom were as likely as other youths to be discharged from SFC because treatment goals were met. In the Canadian programs, however, delinquent youths were less likely than other youths to be discharged because treatment goals have been met and were more likely to be discharged for either administrative reasons or because of placement breakdown attributed to youths. The number of Canadian and U.K. youths involved in this research was quite small and, thus, caution is necessary before reading too much into these findings. At best these differences may be taken as an indication of future research needs. For example, are Canadian SFC programs designed and delivered in a way that is appropriate for Aboriginal youth and for youth whose parental rights have been terminated?

Overall, this analysis indicates that specialist foster family care is a viable resource for delinquent youths.

All the SFC programs claimed to be serving youths as an alternative to institutional care; thus, specialist foster family care appears to be a viable alternative to institutional care for delinquent youths.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Copies of all tables not published with this article are available from Burt Galaway, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2; fax: (204) 261-3283.

<sup>2</sup> Living arrangement categories of living independently, educational facility, and residential treatment included the following:

##### Living Independently included:

- armed services
- private boarding home
- homeless
- own home
- with friend
- supervised independent living
- runaway
- college

##### Educational Facility included:

- residential school
- school or hospital for developmentally delayed
- maternity home
- nunnery
- Outward Bound
- job corps

##### Residential Treatment included:

- residential treatment center
- psychiatric or mental hospital
- psychiatric ward of general hospital
- drug or alcohol rehabilitation center

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