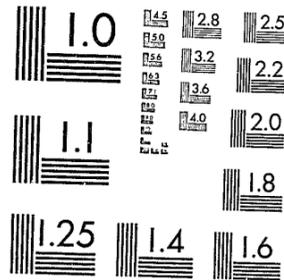


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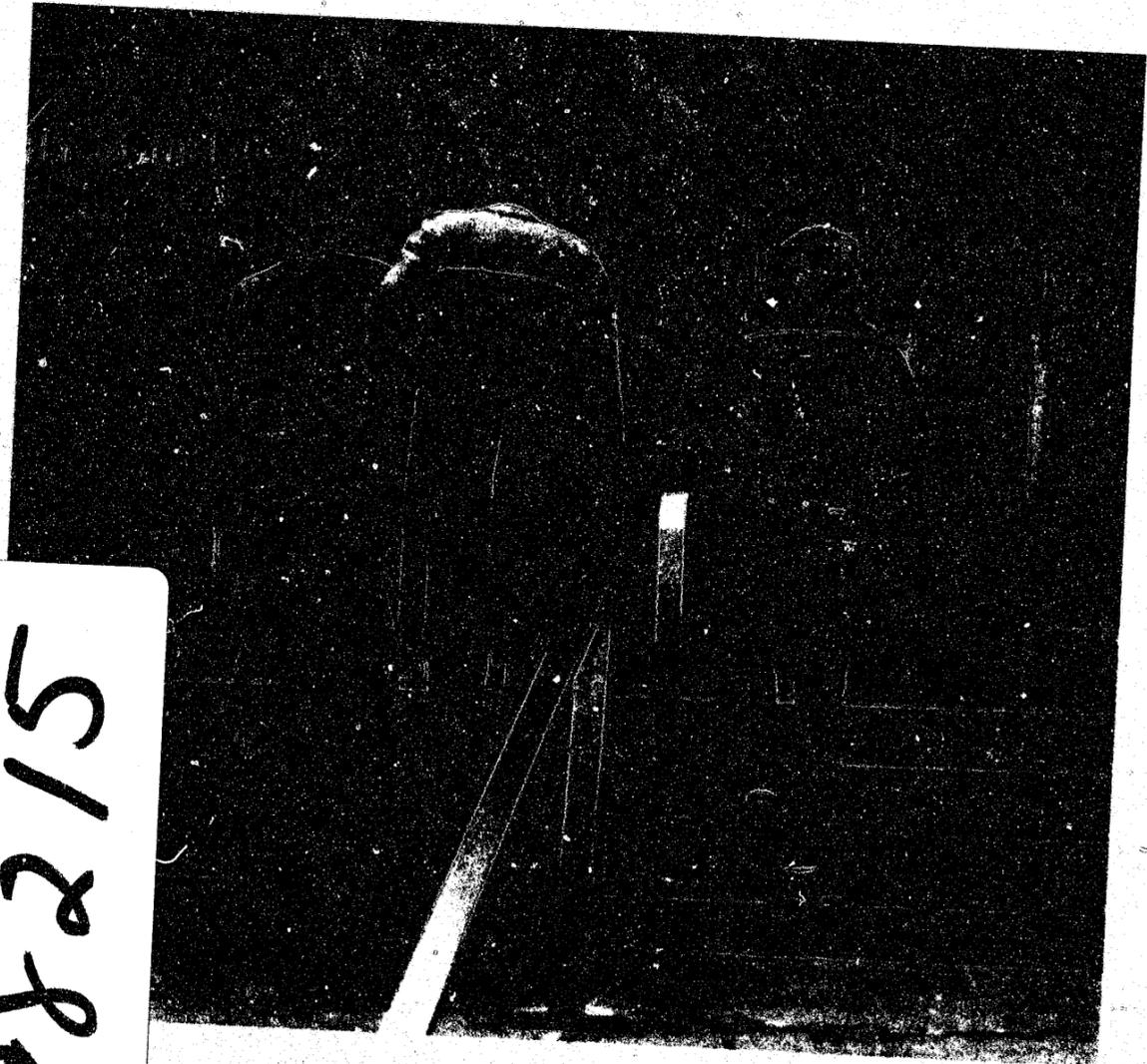
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PARENT & YOUTH PERSPECTIVES: THE JUVENILE JUSTICE EXPERIENCE



88215

JUVENILE JUSTICE STUDY
Dane County Youth Commission

U.S. Department of Justice
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PARENT AND YOUTH PERSPECTIVES:

THE JUVENILE JUSTICE EXPERIENCE

JUVENILE JUSTICE STUDY

December, 1981

Dane County Youth Commission

Division of the Office of the County Executive

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1979, the Dane County Youth Commission began a two-year study of the county's juvenile justice process, under a grant from the Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice. Financial support was also provided by the County of Dane and the City of Madison. This two-year study was divided into two phases. The first phase, of which this report is a major portion, primarily involved an assessment of the informal or pre-adjudication phase of the process. During the second phase of the Commission's study, the formal or post-adjudication phase of the juvenile justice process was examined, with particular attention paid to the use and availability of various dispositional alternatives. During the pre-adjudication phase of the study three major dimensions of the process were addressed:

- 1) All Dane County law enforcement agencies -- state, county and municipal -- were surveyed to develop a better understanding of their contacts with youth, records management, criteria for making decisions on handling of individual cases, disposition of cases, perceptions of youth problems, and opinions regarding delinquency causation and the recently revised Wisconsin Children's Code.* The results are reported in Perspectives: Juvenile Law Enforcement in Dane County, Dane County Youth Commission, 1981.
- 2) The second aspect of the study, conducted during the summer of 1979, involved interviews with youths who had been referred to juvenile court intake in 1978 and their parents, concerning their experiences with

* Chapter 48 of the Wisconsin State Statutes, 1978

police, court and social service workers, court proceedings, and community agencies. Their perceptions are contained in this report along with descriptive profiles of the youths and their parents.

- 3) The final phase of the pre-adjudication study consisted of a survey of all youth-serving agencies, public and private, which offer programs or have resources applicable to the pre-court stage of the juvenile justice process. This descriptive information includes data on agency objectives, staffing patterns, funding sources, eligibility requirements and other program characteristics. The results of this portion of the survey were used as a basis for developing a comprehensive directory of youth services in Dane County.*

The Youth Commission and project staff wish to express their appreciation for the vital help and guidance provided by Maureen Torphy, Juvenile Court Administrator, Jerry Hancock, Deputy District Attorney, and Randine Celusta, juvenile court intake worker. The Commission also wishes to give special acknowledgment to the work of the two research assistants, Pam Brouillard and Louise Miller, who flexibly scheduled and conducted most of the interviews reported in this study.

* Youth Resources Directory, Dane County Youth Commission, 1980-81

CHAPTER I: METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Population

The youths and parents who were interviewed in this study constitute a sample of the cases referred to Dane County juvenile court intake from January, 1978, to January, 1979. Reasons for referral to court intake include allegations of delinquent behavior, the need for protection or services (CHIPS cases), or alleged violations of civil laws or ordinances. Cases involving parental neglect, dependency, and termination of parental rights were excluded from the scope of this study.

Sampling procedures

The names of juveniles referred to the intake unit during 1978 were systematically drawn from chronological referral records maintained by the juvenile court intake coordinator (CHIPS) and Assistant District Attorney (delinquency). Initially, 200 names (150 from the delinquency roster and 50 from the CHIPS roster) were drawn. This initial sample was adjusted to fit the total intake population of 34% females, 66% males, 65% Madison residents, 35% non-Madison residents, 75% delinquent, 26% non-delinquent, and to eliminate duplicate names. Additional requirements were that no matter be currently pending before the juvenile court, and that at least three months had elapsed between the disposition of the case and the date of the interview. These procedures produced a systematic sample of 188 youths, approximately 14% of the 1,641 intake referrals in 1978.

To solicit the participation of parents and youth in the interview process letters were sent by the Dane County Juvenile Court Program Administrator which explained the project purpose and asked for their cooperation. A stamped, self-addressed postcard was included with the letter, to be returned

to the juvenile court office if the family were not willing to be interviewed by project staff. After a specified period of time, the project staff contacted the remaining families, explaining in further detail the purpose of the project and offering examples of the topics to be included in the interview and the type of questions which would be asked. If the parents expressed willingness to be interviewed and for their child to be interviewed, a convenient time and place was scheduled. In a limited number of cases, when it was not possible to meet in person, telephone interviews were conducted. These procedures resulted in parent interviews regarding 52 different juvenile offenders and 20 interviews with the youth themselves.

Interviews

The interviewers were trained in interviewing techniques and also involved in the development of the survey questions. The youth survey instrument was pre-tested with residents of the Dane County juvenile Shelter Home and appropriate modifications were made. Copies of both parent and youth interview materials are available at the Youth Commission. Project staff, in consultation with the juvenile court, developed standards and procedures to assure confidentiality of all information gathered through the interviews. All staff members signed a statement indicating their agreement to abide by state and federal confidentiality regulations.

Offenses involved

During the interviews with parents and youths, the most recent court referral was always the focus of the interview questions, unless the parent had more involvement with a particular segment of the juvenile justice process due to some other offense having been committed by their child. For example, if a child had not spent time in the juvenile detention center for the most recent

offense, but had for a previous offense, the questions related to the detention center would be asked in reference to that earlier offense.

The reasons for the most recent court referral are categorized into general case types and presented in Table I. In cases of multiple charges in the same referral, the most serious offense was used to categorize the case. The offense distribution of the sample is similar to that of the total 1978 intake population.

TABLE I
CATEGORIES OF MOST RECENT OFFENSE COMMITTED BY YOUTH IN SAMPLE

<u>Category of Offense</u>	<u>Number of Youth</u>	<u>Percent of Youth</u>
Status Offense	15	28.8%
Crime Against Property	28	53.9%
Crime Against Persons	4	7.7%
Traffic, Motor Vehicle & Boating Violations	5	9.6%
<u>Total</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

The first category, status offenses, includes runaway from home, chronic school truancy, uncontrollability, and juvenile drinking (all offenses which would not be crimes if committed by an adult). The category of "crimes against property" includes all types of theft, vandalism, burglary and criminal trespass. "Crimes against persons" includes all types of physical assault, including sexual assault and obstructing an officer. The final category includes citations for traffic violations.

Characteristics of parents interviewed

Of the 52 parent interviews conducted during the course of this study, 16 included both the mother and father, 32 were with the mother only, and four with fathers only. It was often difficult to arrange interviews with both parents due to conflicting work schedules. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the interviews took place in the parental home, 10% in the Youth Commission office, 8% by telephone, and 8% in other meeting places.

Information regarding the educational level of the parents, their employment status, marital status, annual income, age, and type of housing were obtained in the interview. Most of the parents interviewed were the natural parents of the juveniles; 42% were still married; 48% had been divorced, with 34% remaining single and 14% remarrying. Separated parents made up 8% of the sample and 2% were widowed. Most of the parents were between 40 and 44 years old. The most frequent family size was two children. Detailed demographic data on both parents and youths involved in these interviews are available at the Youth Commission.

Levels of parental education, occupation and income are fairly close to those of the parents of the young people who participated in the Youth Commission's Needs Assessment Project*, indicating that these families do not differ significantly from the general population of Dane County families on these factors.

The average grade level completed in school was quite high -- 12.9 years of education for fathers and 12.4 years for mothers. (These averages included

* Needs Assessment Project, Volume I: Youth Survey, Dane County Youth Commission, 1980.

the non-interviewed spouse, if the family was intact.) Compared to parents in the Youth Needs Assessment Project, these parents are only slightly over-represented in the "grade school only" category, and slightly under-represented in the highest educational and occupational categories. The majority of the divorced mothers who remained single held full-time employment. Most of the fathers were also employed full-time.

A large majority (81.6%) of the families lived in single family homes. The Needs Assessment Project found only a slightly higher figure of 89%. About 78% of the families owned their own homes. More than half of the families interviewed had lived in the same dwelling for six or more years and in the same community or neighborhood for over ten years.

In short, the parents who agreed to be interviewed appear to be fairly representative of the general population of parents on basic education and socio-economic scales.

Characteristics of youth interviewed

The 20 youth who could be contacted and agreed to be interviewed by the project team averaged 16 years of age. More than half had lived in their current neighborhood over five years. Eight (40%) were living with both natural parents at the time of the interview. Fourteen of the youths (70%) resided in Madison at the time of the interview. The majority were still attending school; several had recently graduated from high school or had received an equivalency diploma (GED). Seventy-five percent (75%) of the interviews with the youths took place in their homes, 15% were held in group home facilities, and 10% were conducted over the telephone.

Note: Copies of both the parent and youth interview schedules and collated responses to all questions are on file at the Youth Commission.

Comparison of interviewed and non-interviewed families

Significant differences between the profiles of the interviewed and non-interviewed families in the sample were seen in several areas. Those who consented to be interviewed tended to be more urban. The youths were in trouble for more serious allegations and had been placed outside the home an average of one time more than the youths of non-interviewed families. Finally, social workers more often mentioned a problem with the youths of interviewed families drinking or being aggressive. The interviewed group seemed to self-select for those having more experience with the police and juvenile court.

Limitations on the interpretation of these data

It should be emphasized that the information included in this report is based only on the responses of those parents and youths who agreed to be interviewed. From the original sample of 188 cases, only 52 parents and 20 youths agreed to be interviewed. We have reported several differences between the original sample and the interviewed sample. Others probably exist which were not measured. Clearly, the self-selection process limits the generality of the findings. However, there are consistent themes in the attitudes and evaluations expressed which are probably characteristic of the larger group and, therefore, of value in helping to see the problems and process from a consumer point of view.

CHAPTER II: RESULTS OF PARENT INTERVIEWS

Parents' perceptions of their child's problems

Parents were read a list of factors and asked to indicate whether or not they felt that each factor contributed to their child's delinquent behavior. After going through the list, the interviewer returned to the "yes" responses and asked parents to rate the importance of these factors as contributors to their child's delinquency. These responses are presented in Table II.

Most parents chose only one or two factors to rate as extremely significant in contributing to their child's problems and a few other factors as having secondary influence. "Impulsiveness" was the most frequently chosen factor, with 81.3% of the parents thinking this factor contributed to their child's becoming involved in law violations. Other factors mentioned by over 60% of the parents were "has problems getting along in school", "skips school", "thinks that he/she knows it all", "is depressed", and "hangs around with kids who get into trouble". Factors receiving very high "importance" ratings from parents who selected them were "has learning problems", "feels he/she needs money", "runs away", "drinks too much", and "feels physically different".

Factors not on the list that parents thought contributed to the delinquency of their children were also recorded. The factors suggested by parents tended to carry a higher "importance" rating than those on the list since parents generally named these factors as the primary cause of their child's trouble.

Examination of Table II suggests that most parents do not blame their child's trouble with the law on external forces, such as "police picking on the child". Many of the frequently mentioned factors are either personal characteristics (impulsivity, depression), or are typical teenage behavior patterns

TABLE II

PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR CHILD'S GETTING INTO TROUBLE

Number responding = 48

Rating Scale: Not Important to Very Important
 1 2 3 4 5

Factor	# Yes	% Yes	Average Rating of Importance
Feels he/she needs money	19	39.6%	4.2
Has learning problems	17	35.4	4.1
Is too impulsive (doesn't think before acting)	39	81.3	4.0
Skips school	29	60.4	4.0
Hangs around with kids who get into trouble	34	70.8	4.0
Has problems getting along at home	20	41.7	3.9
Thinks he/she "knows it all"	29	60.4	3.9
Runs away	19	39.6	3.8
Drinks too much	15	31.3	3.8
Feels physically different (overweight, disabled)	5	10.4	3.8
"Talks back" too much	23	47.9	3.7
Rebels against you as parents	28	58.3	3.7
Has problems getting along at school	29	60.4	3.6
Is turned off by society	16	33.3	3.6
Thinks he/she is "cool"	27	56.3	3.5
Has feelings of failure	27	56.3	3.5
Feels rejected by many kids his/her own age	19	25.0	3.5
Just happens to be in wrong places at wrong times	19	39.6	3.4
Uses drugs too much	19	39.6	3.4
Is depressed	31	64.6	3.3
Police "pick on" him/her	8	16.7	3.0
No idea	0	0	--
Anything else: (see below)	24	50.0	4.5

Additional Factors

Additional Factors	Importance Rating
Feelings of intimidation, low self-esteem	5.0
Fighting with siblings	5.0
Learning to be independent, making own decisions	5.0
Has to prove macho image, wants to seem older	5.0
Takes the attitude, "I don't know why I do it"	5.0
Is angry	5.0
Has chemical or brain disorder, can't relate to people	5.0
Knows nothing would be done about it	5.0
Status, conforming to high standard of living of friends, jealous	4.5
Having no father around, no male role model	4.5
Unpleasant childhood (mother/father conflict, divorce)	4.5
Wanting more love from mother	4.0
Bored	3.0

reflecting increased interaction with peers and attempts to achieve greater independence from parents. Important related factors involve school difficulties and the use and abuse of alcohol or other drugs.

Parents were then asked whether they had ever sought help or advice in attempting to deal with the problems identified. Forty-two (42) parents (84%) responded that they had tried to obtain help from outside agencies. The average number of times these families sought help was 3.7. The most frequently mentioned agency was the Dane County Department of Social Services, which becomes automatically involved in all juvenile court referrals.

Parents were generally not satisfied with the help sought. The overall number of times families were satisfied with the sources of help listed in Table III was 59 or 37.6% of the time. Many parents were not satisfied because they had seen no change in their son or daughter's behavior as a result of the agency contact. Others reported that they were satisfied with the agencies' attempts to help, but realized that their child's refusal to cooperate thwarted the agency's efforts. Understandably, parents had different expectations of what the agencies could do for their child, so this measure was very subjective. Some contact with helping agencies were "one-shot" experiences or very short-term relationships, while other agency involvement was on a more long-term basis.

Parents whose help-seeking contacts were seen as positive were able to list some reasons for this success. Some parents reported that they felt more "in control" after being given help or guidance in methods for handling their child. Some parents felt that the contact was supportive, helping the family

pull through the crisis and improve family communication. Many parents were impressed with the rapport professionals were able to develop with their child, even though the parents commented that their child "bailed out" or stopped cooperating with agency personnel too soon for the help to have a lasting effect. Parents of youth who had few police contacts reported that simply having a social worker or police officer "talk straight" and explain the possible serious consequences of further illegal behavior was extremely effective. One father thought the best "cure" for his son was going to see a maximum security prison as part of the Project Aware Program.

Those parents who reported no change in their child's behavior were asked if they had any ideas about the reasons for this lack of success. The majority responded that their child did not want to participate, was not motivated, or did not accept help. Several parents mentioned that social workers and police don't seem to have enough support from the court, so they (the police) can't or don't consistently enforce minor law violations. This gives their children the feeling that they "can get away with anything". One family stated that they ran out of money for therapy; another family said the problem was too serious and complex for easy or fast solutions.

TABLE III
SOURCES OF HELP TRIED BY PARENTS

Sources of Help	Total Attempts to Obtain Help	Level of Satisfaction					
		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Dane County Social Services Department	36	12	33.3%	12	33.3%	12	33.3%
Psychiatrist or Psychologist	28	5	17.9	10	35.7	13	46.4
School Personnel	27	10	37.0	7	25.9	10	37.0
Friends	15	7	46.7	6	40.0	2	13.3
Mental Health Center	13	2	15.4	3	23.1	8	61.5
Others*	12	10	83.3	1	8.3	1	8.3
Relatives	10	5	50.0	3	30.0	2	20.0
Doctor	9	4	44.4	3	33.3	2	22.2
Lawyer	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	0	--
Clergy	3	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3
<u>Total</u>	<u>157</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>37.6%</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>29.9%</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>32.5%</u>

* Other Sources Mentioned

District Attorney's Office (1)	Family Counselor (1)
Police or Sheriff's Department (3)	Group Home Staff (1)
Marshfield Clinic (1)	PICADA (1)
Briarpatch (1)	Home Detention Program (1)
Lutheran Social Services --	
Martin Luther Center & Adolescent Center (2)	

Forty-two families tried to get help. Of these, the average number of attempts per family is 3.7.

Other factors in family situation

Parents were asked questions about school problems or family stresses which may be related to their current problems. Table IV presents information on school problems.

TABLE IV
YOUTHS' SCHOOL PROBLEMS

<u>Parents' Response</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes, youth has been in trouble with school authorities*	28	53.8%
No, he/she has not been in trouble in school	8	15.4
No response	16	30.8
<u>Total responses</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

<u>* If yes, kind of trouble youth has been in:</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Skipping classes/truancy from school	17	60.7%
Fighting/bad temper	5	17.8
Being verbally abusive to teachers	3	10.7
Drinking	1	3.6
Vandalism	1	3.6
Being teased, fighting for being in a learning disabled class	1	3.6
<u>Total responses</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

Parents felt that actions taken by the school were sometimes helpful. They did, however, criticize suspension policies, since this action only complicated the problem of maintaining regular school attendance. Many parents also complained about slow truancy reporting. In general, those with more contact with the juvenile justice system were more satisfied with the schools' efforts and praised special programs, such as small groups for "temper control", or tutoring.

Families with children in trouble are often under great stress. The extent to which the stress is caused by the youth's trouble or the youth's trouble is caused by the family stress is often difficult to determine. The purpose of asking about stress and family disruption was to obtain insight into the nature and extent of other problems which complicate the lives of these families. The interviewers read a list of potentially stressful events or problems, asking if any of them had occurred during the past year, or were associated in time with their child's recent problems with the law. When the response was affirmative, the interviewer asked the parents to rate the degree of stress or disruption each meant for the family. The list of problems and parents' responses appear in Table V.

The individual factors rated as most stressful were financial problems, eviction, physical violence, and alcohol and other drug problems in the family. The stress factor mentioned most frequently was the youth's not attending school. The high incidence and impact of illness, injury and death in these families is striking, as is the feeling of loss of control -- reflected in the number of youths "not obeying parents" and "running away from home". Single parents reported significantly more stressful situations than either married or remarried parents.

These data tend to reemphasize the importance of knowing and working with the total situation which both parents and youth are experiencing at the time of referral to court intake.

TABLE V
FAMILY STRESSES AT TIME OF YOUTH'S OFFENSE

Event*	Parents Experiencing These Events		Average Rating of Stress
	#	%	
Youth not attending school	27	54.0%	4.1
Youth not obeying parents	21	42.0	3.9
Someone moved out of family home	18	36.0	1.7
Family member starting new job	17	34.0	2.7
Serious illness or injury in family	16	32.0	3.8
Youth placed outside the home	16	32.0	3.3
Death of a family member	15	30.0	3.5
Youth running away from home	14	28.0	4.1
Family member having drinking or other drug problem	13	26.0	4.5
Physical violence among family members	10	20.0	4.4
Family moved to new neighborhood	9	18.0	2.8
Someone moved into family home	7	14.0	2.3
Serious financial trouble	6	12.0	4.5
Suicide attempt of family member	5	10.0	3.2
Family member sentenced to jail/prison	5	10.0	2.5
Divorce or separation of parents	4	8.0	3.8
Family member laid off work	2	4.0	1.0
Eviction from home	1	2.0	5.0
Family member fired from work	1	2.0	3.0
<u>Total Responses</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	

* Ordered from highest to lowest percentage of reported occurrence.

Parents' perceptions of police contact

Parents were asked to describe and evaluate their contacts with the police. In 32% of the cases, it was a member of the youth's family who originally summoned the police. Such cases usually involved the mother summoning the police to help handle a "status offense" incident. Only 21% of the parents were present when their child was taken into custody by the police. However, the majority of the parents reported that they were either visited in person by the police or received a call from a police officer regarding the incident. Of those parents who had no police contact for the most recent referral, 28% were initially contacted by a counselor from the Dane County Reception Center. Other parents stated that they were initially contacted by a hospital, social worker, group home counselor, Assistant District Attorney, or a friend. One mother stated that she called the police department to find out if her son were there.

Most parents did not know the police officer with whom they had contact. About 63% of the parents indicated that the police officer took the time to explain what could happen to their child as a result of the alleged offense. A few parents (17%) stated that they had trouble getting information from the police about what happened.

Parents were asked to describe their face-to-face experience with the police by rating them on a list of characteristics. The respondents were asked the question, "How well did the officer fit these descriptions?". As can be seen in Table VI, the highest rated characteristic was "confident". The lowest was "physically rough". Parents generally rated the police positively.

TABLE VI
PARENTS' RATINGS OF POLICE

Characteristics	Number of Parents Selecting Ratings					N*	Average Rating
	Not at All (1)	Not Very (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)		
Confident	2	1	6	12	15	36	4.03
Polite	3	2	5	17	10	37	3.78
Friendly	4	3	10	11	9	37	3.49
Understanding	6	2	4	18	7	37	3.49
Patient	5	3	6	14	8	36	3.47
Quick to judge	17	1	7	3	8	36	2.56
Angry	19	3	6	3	5	36	2.22
Loud	20	8	8	0	1	37	1.76
Physically rough	30	2	0	0	2	34	1.29

* Number of parents responding

Results in Table VI show that most parents were impressed with the effectiveness of the police and their ability to handle tense situations. Many parents who had called the police found them to be extremely helpful and cooperative. For the most part, police apparently explained the juvenile justice process effectively and reassured worried parents.

TABLE VII

PARENTS' RATINGS OF POLICE BY PRIOR CONTACT & TYPE OF POLICE DEPARTMENT

# of Police Contacts	Positive Characteristics - Average Rating -		Negative Characteristics - Average Rating -	
	Number	Rating	Number	Rating
No prior police contact	12	3.85	12	1.59
1-3 prior police contacts	14	3.59	14	2.15
4 or more police contacts	11	3.50	11	2.14
<u>Type of Police Department</u>				
City	23	3.68	22	1.94
Suburban*	7	4.03	7	1.58
Rural	7	3.30	7	2.32
<u>Total Responses</u>	<u>37</u>		<u>36</u>	
<u>Average Rating</u>		<u>3.65</u>		<u>1.97</u>

* Includes Dane County Sheriff's Department

As indicated in Table VII, parents whose children had no prior contact with police rated the police handling of their child's case more positively than those parents whose children did have previous police contacts. Suburban police appear to be perceived as most positive, with city and rural police following in that order.

The parents of youths who were apprehended by the police were questioned about their reactions to this experience. Most parents were concerned about their child's future or immediate well-being. Many wanted more information about the apprehension. Only five parents (10.2%) said that they had not been worried -- either because they had been through the procedure before, had been assured that the incident was not serious, or did not understand the juvenile justice system.

Fourteen percent (14%) of the parents who were interviewed had complaints about the way the police handled their child's situation. These comments included "they should have released the child sooner", "the police should have explained more", and "they should have had us present when they picked up our child at home".

Parents tended to focus on their child's need for counseling, treatment or outside placement, the need for stricter, earlier consequences from the juvenile court or some authority, or the need for greater provision for holding a child in secure custody. One parent stated that "we're now having trouble with our younger kids who saw our oldest child picked up and sent home repeatedly with no consequences for misbehaving". This parent saw the police as "handicapped by the lenient law".

In general, police were seen by parents as polite and understanding, though sometimes quick to make judgments about the child. Reactions of parents of "first offenders" were more positive than were reactions of parents who had prior police contact. When informed of their child's apprehension, most parents expressed concern for their child's future, for his/her well-being, or for more information about the incident.

Parents' perceptions of the Dane County Reception Center

The Dane County Juvenile Reception Center is part of the Juvenile Court Program, and is located adjacent to the Detention Center in locked facilities on the third floor of the City-County Building. Reception Center staff are on duty 24 hours a day to handle police requests for temporary physical custody, to interview children and parents, and to provide crisis intervention counseling for youths brought in by the police. These counselors have the authority to recommend a temporary placement for the child or release of the child, based on information given to them by the police, the child's parents, and other parties. Twenty-nine (29) of the 52 parents had experience with the Juvenile Reception Center. Twenty-four (24) of the children represented in this group of parents had been in the Reception Center for their most recent offense and five children had earlier experience in being referred to the Reception Center.

Most parents stated that they had received a call from the Reception Center. Twelve parents (41.4%) went to the Center to speak with the staff concerning their child. Of those parents who either spoke with the Center staff in person or by telephone, 18 (75%) said that the counselor gave them an explanation of the decision which was made. Twenty-four percent (24%) reported receiving referrals to other agencies for help with their child.

Reception Center staff were generally seen positively by parents. Most parents understood and accepted the Center staff's decision regarding their child. However, 25% of the parents said they did not understand the decision, and over 30% reported that they were not informed of their parental rights. The responses suggest a need for staff to be very sure that parents, who are usually under some strain when talking with Center staff, understand decisions made and options available to them.

Parents' perceptions of the custody hearing and the Detention Center

The Dane County Detention Center is a locked facility with a capacity for a maximum of 18 youths. An intake worker may place a juvenile in secure detention for up to 24 hours. Longer placements require a court custody hearing before a judge or court commissioner. A juvenile can only be held in secure detention if the following criteria, contained in Section 48.205 of the revised Wisconsin Children's Code (1978), are met:

- 1) The youth has committed a delinquent act, and:
 - a) presents a risk of physical harm to others; or
 - b) presents a risk of running away as evidenced by previous acts or attempts;
- 2) The youth has run away or committed a delinquent act while placed in non-secure custody and no other suitable alternative exists;
- 3) For protection of the youth from imminent physical danger;
- 4) The youth has run away from another county or state and would run away from non-secure custody before his or her return.

Of the 28 parents whose children had physical custody hearings, 27 attended the proceedings. Parents were divided on what they thought of the representation provided their child by the Public Defender's Office.

Those parents who had been through physical custody hearings in the past knew what to expect. Some parents were shocked that their children were not required to speak for themselves. Some parents thought that the defense attorney encouraged their child's attitude "I don't have to do anything I don't want to". Others felt that the experience was beneficial in that having his/her own attorney gave their child a feeling of responsibility and independence. Many parents thought it increased the feeling of conflict and "side-taking" rather than "cooperation and problem-solving". Twenty-three or 85% of the parents felt that they were given sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions at the hearing.

Twenty-eight parents had the experience of having their child held in secure detention, 19 for the most recent offense and nine for a prior offense. As indicated in Table VIII, the length of stay in detention for these youths ranged from less than six hours to over three weeks, with the average length of stay in secure detention being six to seven days.

TABLE VIII

LENGTH OF TIME IN DETENTION

<u>Time in Detention</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than six hours	2	7.1%
6 to 24 hours	6	21.4
2 to 3 days	4	14.4
4 to 6 days	2	7.1
1 to 2 weeks	6	21.4
2 to 3 weeks	1	3.6
Over three weeks	6	21.4
Don't remember	1	3.6
<u>Total responses</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

Parents generally felt that their children were treated fairly while in Detention. However, three parents mentioned that they thought the treatment was "too good" and "too lenient". Half of the 28 parents saw behavioral changes in their children as a result of being in secure detention. Most of the reported changes were positive, with parents saying that their child seemed calmer or that they had less trouble with their child. Only three of the 14 parents said that their child seemed smug, thinking that nothing would happen to him/her. Seven parents offered their thoughts on what might have caused these changes. Four parents thought the sudden physical restrictions forced their child to think about the consequences of his/her actions. Three parents felt that the peer pressure and exposure to similar "problem kids" was detrimental to their child. These three parents also felt that the Detention Center had fewer responsibilities than home, gave youths few decisions to make, and let their child have a good time while not facing his/her problems.

Many parents expressed ambivalent feelings concerning the Detention experience, saying that they were relieved that their child was safe and off the streets, but at the same time wishing that they didn't have to be locked up in a place that probably wouldn't help them. Those with sons and daughters who were placed in Detention for the first time and remained only a few days were more likely to say that the experience scared their child into being good.

When parents were asked what they would alter about the Detention experience, 13 parents responded. Three (23.1%) would make no changes. Three wanted more restrictions on the children and more constructive activities. The other parents made a variety of specific suggestions, such as "don't use volunteers or students", "control drugs", and "improve notification of hearings".

In summary, slightly more than 50% of the parents had experience with the Detention Center. The average length of stay for the youths was six to seven days. Again, most parents felt that their child was treated fairly and they noted some positive changes in their child, particularly being less impulsive and less likely to get into trouble. A few parents felt that the Detention Center was too lenient and that the lenience and exposure to other "problem kids" was detrimental to their child's facing his/her own problems.

Parents' perceptions of the Shelter Home experience

The Dane County Juvenile Court Program also operates a non-secure (unlocked) living facility on the east side of Madison to which juveniles may be assigned. The Shelter Home provides temporary housing and physical care for a maximum of eight males and eight females who do not require secure confinement and are awaiting court hearings or custody placements. Most juveniles in the Shelter Home attend school during the day and return to the Home after school. The average length of stay in 1978 at the Shelter Home was 19.4 days.

Two families who were interviewed had children placed in the Shelter Home in conjunction with their most recent court referral and 11 other parents reported that their child had been previously placed at the Shelter Home. Nine of the 13 parents (69.2%) felt comfortable calling the Shelter Home staff with questions or problems and nine said that they were able to keep in regular contact with their child by telephone and visitations.

The majority of parents remembered that the Shelter Home personnel had explained the rules to them. Some parents tended to feel that Shelter Home rules were less rigid than they would have liked. It was their impression

that there were inadequate consequences for such things as foul language, illegal use of drugs, and other rule violations.

Five parents (38.5%) observed changes in their child's behavior as a result of their stay in the Shelter Home. Two of the parents (15.4%) thought that being at the Shelter Home had helped their son or daughter. These parents saw the help provided as "being off the streets and out of trouble", or that their child had been helped to calm down. Three parents felt that the changes were not positive. One parent reported the change as "becoming sick on drugs". One mother claimed that her daughter was spoiled by going to all the urban activities (i.e., movies, concerts, roller skating) while residing at the Shelter Home. After returning home to a small town, she expected the same type of activities even though the family could not afford to provide them for her.

In general, parents felt that Shelter Home should be more strict and restrictive with their children and were concerned about the influence of contact with other residents.

Court intake conference

A formal referral to juvenile court initiates an intake inquiry or investigation. Usually, the juvenile and his/her parents are asked to meet with the intake worker from the Dane County Department of Social Services for an intake conference. The purpose of the intake conference is to provide the juvenile and the parents with information concerning their legal rights, to clarify the juvenile justice process for them, and to collect information on the circumstances surrounding the referral. If the case is to be handled formally with a court petition being filed, the family and child are so advised. If the

initial intake screening decision is to close the case or handle the matter in some informal fashion, this conference is utilized to explore various courses of action with the child and parents, including entering into an informal dispositional agreement.

Only one family of the 52 in the sample did not participate in an intake conference with a county social worker. Approximately 90% of the parents reported that the purpose of the conference and the juvenile justice process were explained to them, concern was shown for their situation, they were treated with respect, and that the social worker obtained sufficient information to make a fair recommendation. Some parents complained about individual social workers being tardy, disorganized, and somewhat uncaring. However, other parents wanted the intake worker to continue as the ongoing case worker with their child.

Twenty-six families reported that they had further contact with the Department of Social Services after the initial intake session. This contact ranged from court-ordered supervision, requiring weekly individual and family counseling, to simple understandings that the social workers would be available to consult with the family on an "as needed" basis. Nine of the 26 families (34.6%) felt that their contacts with the social workers were positive; 11 families (42.3%) believed that these contacts were not effective; and six families (23.1%) did not respond to this question.

As a result of the intake conference, 12 families (23.5%) stated that they were referred to other agencies for further help. In most cases the social worker made the initial contact with the agency. Among the agencies involved were PICADA, the Dane County Mental Health Center, Operation Fresh Start, a

parenting group, a group home, a psychologist, and two psychiatrists. Often these referrals were for further evaluation. Many parents said that they had only one meeting with the agency. Other parents claimed that they had tried so many professionals on their own before they had contact with Social Services, that there were no more places to which to be referred.

Parents' perceptions of the court experience

As previously mentioned, the scope of this report on the pre-adjudication process covers the time of contact with juveniles for law violations before a formal court hearing. Court processing and disposition is the focus of the second phase of the Juvenile Justice Study. However, many of the cases which found their way into this sample were petitioned into juvenile court and formal proceedings were held. Since the procedures to obtain permission to interview parents and children were quite complicated, project staff took the opportunity to interview the parents and youth concerning their court experience.

For the most recent offense, 31 of the youths (59.6%) were petitioned into court. Ten others had been to court for prior referrals. Three-fourths of the parents who went to court felt that they had been adequately prepared for that appearance (usually by the social worker), and felt that they had been treated fairly by their social worker and by the juvenile judge. Many parents expressed the feeling that court intervention would have been more effective if it had come earlier and/or resulted in "tougher" action.

General impressions of the juvenile justice system

The final interview questions dealt with the parents' overall impressions and attitudes concerning the juvenile justice process in Dane County. They were asked to respond from the full breadth of their experience and not just from their most recent involvement with the juvenile court system. Table IX gives their responses.

TABLE IX

PARENTS' GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE DANE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Was there anyone you could turn to for an explanation of this process?

<u>Parents' Responses</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes (see below)	31	60%
No	20	39
No answer	1	2
<u>Total responses</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>If yes, to whom did you turn?</u>		
Social worker	17	38%
Lawyer	7	15
Friend	5	11
Police officer	4	8
Relative	3	6
Home Detention worker	2	4
Reception Center/Detention counselor	2	4
Detective	1	2
District Attorney's Office	1	2
Child's foster parents	1	2
Psychologist	1	2
Court Commission	1	2
<u>Total "Yes"</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>100%</u>

(continued)

Did you feel there were pressures to go along with or agree with things you didn't want to do?

<u>Parents' Responses</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes (see below)	18	35%
No	29	56
No answer	5	10
<u>Total responses</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>If yes, from whom did these pressures come?</u>		
Social worker	5	28%
Police	3	17
Court	3	17
Public Defender	2	11
Myself	1	6
My child	1	6
No answer	3	17
<u>Total "Yes"</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>100%</u>

Do you feel the overall experience of going through the juvenile justice system helped your son/daughter in any way?

Yes (see below)	21	40%
No (see below)	25	48
Yes and no	2	4
No answer	4	8
<u>Total responses</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>If yes, how did it help?</u>		
Consequences scared him/her; learned you eventually get caught	8	38%
Made him/her take responsibility; face up to seriousness	4	19
Having to leave home helped; decided home wasn't so bad after all	2	10
Other (bitter for a while, but stayed out of trouble; strict supervision helped)	5	24
No answer	2	10
<u>Total "Yes"</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>100%</u>

(continued)

If no, why didn't it help?

<u>Parents' Responses</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Child needed help sooner; child knows nothing will happen and laughs at system	5	20%
Child learned how to use his/her rights and Public Defender	2	8
System didn't help -- the child or family changed	2	8
Other: made son resentful of us all; didn't have enough in- volvement to help; child ex- pects county to pay for every- thing	3	12
No answer, don't know	13	52
<u>Total "No" or Don't Know"</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>100%</u>

Parents who felt the juvenile justice system was not helpful tended to have children who:

- according to their parents, skipped school, drank or used other drugs too much, were turned off by society, or felt the need for more money;
- were in the status offender category;
- had been placed in the Detention Center, Shelter Home, and/or had a court hearing;
- came from an urban setting (rural parents were most likely to see the system as helpful; suburban -- Monona, Middleton, and Sun Prairie -- parents were in-between);
- had been placed outside of the home;
- were presently living out of the home.

These parents rated police lower and had had several contacts with social service agencies. In short, parents of children who had lengthy and complex interaction with the juvenile justice system tended to feel that the system was not helpful or effective. Parents were more likely to say, "Yes, it helped" if they were parents of first offenders and had no prior contact with the juvenile justice system.

Parents' suggestions for improving the system

Parents were asked what suggestions they would like to make for improving programs in the community to help their children stay out of trouble.

Table X presents their responses.

TABLE X

PARENTS' SUGGESTIONS ON WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN STAY OUT OF TROUBLE

What ideas do you have for programs in your neighborhood that might help your child stay out of trouble?

<u>Parents' Suggestions</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Supervised drop-in center, recreation center or open school; teen rap groups; parent-teen rap groups; neighborhood adults volunteering	8
Nothing -- teens don't like organized activities; stick together as a family instead	3
Programs helping kids get jobs	3
Improve school academic programs; back to the basics; better teachers; integrate special groups	3
Programs set up through police and fire departments, such as junior police program	2
Alcohol treatment program	1
Free family counseling	1
"Scared Straight" prison visitation program	1
No idea	6
<u>Total responses</u>	<u>28</u>

(continued)

What in the system would you change if you could?

<u>Parents' Recommended Changes</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
<u>Courts</u> -- speed up the process; be less lenient; be tougher on habitual offenders; use more restitution programs; first appearance should be less intimidating, more personal	11
<u>Social Services</u> -- more time and contact needed; supervision hurts more than it helps if nothing is done; put kids in programs sooner	7
<u>Laws</u> -- stricter Children's Code; better enforcement or eliminate laws so kids don't think they are defying them; minimum age for drinking and driving should be the same; give some rights to parents; keep status offenders out of court	7
<u>Police</u> -- better training so they're more understanding; notify parents sooner; give police more authority	3
<u>Schools</u> -- don't encourage grouping and the stigma of learning disabled kids; provide more structure	1
<u>General</u>	
-- give more information on laws and regulations to the public	1
-- publish juveniles' names and offenses in the paper	1
-- change everything	1
-- nothing	1
<u>Total responses</u>	<u>33</u>

Parents' suggestions for avoiding the justice system focused on alternatives such as recreational activities, rap groups, jobs, and stronger school programs. Most of the parents' suggestions for improving the system stressed tougher laws, tougher handling of juveniles, and earlier, more effective intervention. Parents' responses to two additional open-ended questions appear in the Appendices.

Parents' responses: summary

The 52 parents interviewed for this study were fairly representative of Dane County parents in general. Most were high school graduates, employed, earned over \$15,000/year, and had lived in their residence three or more years.

Parents felt that the most important factors contributing to their child's getting into trouble were the child's impulsiveness, friends' influence,

attendance and behavior problems at school, and problems at home. Most of the parents had sought help from the Department of Social Services, therapists, school people, or friends and relatives (84% of the parents had sought help an average of 3.7 times). They were generally not satisfied with the help they received, however, usually because the child did not cooperate or was not motivated to change his/her behavior.

Parents found police to be confident and polite, although somewhat quick to judge their child. Very few parents were present when their child was apprehended, so their police contact was less stressful than their child's. Parents of first offenders rated police more positively than did parents who had had previous police contacts.

Parents felt well-treated by Reception Center staff, whom they saw as either acting as mediators or taking the child's side. Many parents, however, felt that they did not receive an adequate explanation of their rights as parents and would have liked more help with referral to other agencies.

The 28 parents whose children were held at the Detention Center generally felt that their children were treated fairly. About half of these parents saw some changes in their child, most often noting that the child was calmer and subsequently got into less trouble. A few parents felt that the Center was too lenient. Parents of first offenders were more likely than "experienced" parents to say that the Detention Center had helped their child.

Only 13 parents' children had been placed in the Shelter Home. Most of these parents felt comfortable with the staff and were able to maintain contact, but most did not think that the experience helped their child. Many of the parents felt that the Shelter Home situation was not as tightly controlled or

restrictive as they would have liked. This is a common theme throughout the parent interviews, and appears to reflect a discrepancy between parents' hopes and expectations and what the court and its programs are actually able to provide. The Shelter Home is, by legal requirement, a non-secure facility, designed to provide temporary care and supervision for teenagers who have no other suitable living arrangement. Most of its clients have complex histories of previous court involvement and/or placements and are not appropriate candidates for care in secure detention, either on legal or other grounds. Evaluation of a youth's experience while at Shelter Home also provides the court with information useful in further case planning.*

Almost all of the parents interviewed felt that the intake social worker treated them well, explained the situation adequately, and made recommendations which were fair. About half of the families had further sessions with Social Services personnel -- although only about one-third of the parents said that these contacts were helpful. The contacts ranged from court-ordered supervision to infrequent, irregular calls or meetings, and obviously had different goals and potential for direct help.

Many of the parents had been to court for previous violations by their children. About three-fourths of them felt that they had been prepared for the experience and had been treated fairly by the court. Several parents felt that the court should have been tougher or intervened earlier.

Parents of first offenders tended to be more positive in their evaluations of the system. Parents with previous police, Social Services, or court contact and parents of status offenders were more critical of the system and more

* For further information on the Shelter Home population and function, see the Dane County Juvenile Court 1980 Report, pages 75-79.

likely to say that the system did not help their child. There was also a strong indication that the parents wanted tougher, earlier handling of juveniles.

Finally, the study found that most of these children had experienced serious personal problems at home, or major stresses on the family as a whole, including death, accident or injury, physical violence, and alcohol and other drug involvement. Parents felt that strengthening school programs, establishing rap groups for youth or youth and parents, and developing improved work and recreational activities would all be of help to their children.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS OF YOUTH INTERVIEWS

Youths' perceptions of the police

Of the 20 youths interviewed, two had no police contact. One was referred to the juvenile court authorities by a social worker and a parent for a status offense. The other youth was summoned directly to meet with juvenile court authorities. Of the 18 who were apprehended by police officers, five (27.8%) had spoken with the police officer before, all in situations involving previous apprehensions. The police officers with whom the youths had contact were all male. Twelve of the 18 were apprehended in the company of friends.

Most youths admitted that their first inclination was to run or leave the scene when they saw the police coming toward them. Most, however, did not run but waited for the approaching officers. Comments from those who did not attempt to elude the police were, "I started to sweat and thought of stories to tell them"; "I dumped the drinks and waited"; "I was polite and asked the approaching officer if I could help him". Four youths (22.2%) said that they felt more relaxed and calmer after a few minutes with the police. The others reported no difference. One youth said that he first gave the police a false name and then, later, gave his correct name. Another felt angry because he was placed in handcuffs.

Six of the 18 youths had used alcohol, and four had used other drugs prior to their police contact. Only one youth reported being drunk. Of the four who had been using other drugs (three, marijuana, and one, Valium), three said they were still feeling the effects of the drugs when contacted by the police.

Eight youths (44.4%) said they would act differently toward the police if they could do it over again. Their answers varied from "wouldn't have run" to "would have told them the truth sooner". Several said they would not have been so polite or truthful, while others said they would have been more cooperative. One youth said that he would have tried to get more information from the police at the time and one said that she would have requested a different officer. Youths were also asked to rate the police on the same scale used with their parents. Most of their answers tended toward the middle of the scale. First offenders were more severe in their negative ratings of police than were "experienced" youths. The majority of the interviewed youths did not find police officers physically rough and generally rated them as patient and confident. Table XI presents their ratings.

TABLE XI
YOUTHS' RATINGS OF POLICE

Characteristics	Number of Youth Selecting Ratings					N*	Average Rating
	Not at All (1)	Not Very (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)		
Patient	3	3	3	3	6	18	3.33
Quick to judge	1	3	6	6	2	18	3.28
Confident	3	1	5	6	3	18	3.28
Understanding	3	4	3	5	3	18	3.06
Angry	7	0	4	3	4	18	2.83
Polite	3	8	1	3	3	18	2.72
Friendly	6	3	3	3	3	18	2.67
Loud	4	7	2	3	2	18	2.56
Physically rough	9	4	2	2	1	18	2.00

* Number of youth responding.

When comparing the ratings of police by parents (Table VI, page 18) with ratings by their children, it is clear that parents reacted to the police more favorably. The circumstances of the police contact were usually much different for parents, with youths usually being apprehended and the parents being contacted initially by telephone or under other less stressful circumstances.

Half of the young people interviewed (10) thought the police should have handled the situation differently. Five thought their attitudes should have been "better", "nicer". Other individual suggestions were: should have explained what they were doing; shouldn't have frisked me; should have read me my rights; should have waited for my mother to get home before taking me away and questioning me; shouldn't act like running away is a crime; "should have taken Mom up there too -- she committed just as much of an assault as I did".

About half of the youths interviewed had relatives who had been arrested by the police for offenses other than traffic violations. Only two felt that having relatives who had previously been in trouble with the law made it more likely that they would get into trouble. One thought there was a relationship because siblings stick together and get into trouble together. The other said that police get to know a family and watch out for other family members, expecting similar behavior from them. In addition, 70% of the youths stated that one or more of their close friends had been picked up before by the police.

TABLE XII

PREVIOUS ARRESTS/APPREHENSIONS OF YOUTHS' RELATIVES

Relative	Number	Percent
Siblings	5	45.4%
Cousins	4	36.4%
Uncles	2	18.2%
<u>Total*</u>	<u>11*</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

* 55% of all interviewed youth

Eleven of the youths (61%) felt that being picked up by the police had kept them from getting into further trouble. These young people expressed feelings that they did not want to get caught again, being arrested was a bad experience and it scared them. One youth did not want to run the risk of being waived into adult court for further delinquent behavior.

Seven of the youths didn't think that their most recent arrest would keep them from getting into more trouble with the law. One youth said that the police "don't help you like social workers do". One status offender didn't think that she had done anything wrong in the first place. Surprisingly, those youths who said that having been recently arrested would keep them from getting into more trouble with the law had, on the average, more extensive police records (6.4 prior contacts) than those youths who stated that they didn't think the arrest would prevent them from getting into further difficulty with the police (4.7 prior contacts).

Youths' perceptions of the Dane County Juvenile Reception Center

Fourteen of those interviewed had been at the Dane County Reception Center either in conjunction with their most recent apprehension or on some previous occasion. Most of these youths were transported to the reception center by the police in the evening or during the night. Twelve youths stated that they had been interviewed by a reception center counselor, with six reporting that the counselor seemed to show concern for them and their situation. Four youths reported that the counselor spoke with them and their parents together. Two of these said that the counselor tended to take sides against them during the interview.

Five youths (35.7%) were released after the interview. Six were placed in

the secure detention facility, and the remaining three went to either the Shelter Home, a foster home, or the hospital.

Eight youths (57.1%) remembered that they had had a physical custody hearing. Half of these youths reported that they were given a chance to express their views at the detention hearing. When asked whether they thought the hearing resulted in a fair decision, four of the eight replied in the negative. Two thought that placement in the Shelter Home instead of the Detention Center would have been fairer. One wanted to return home, and one said that only the negative aspects of his behavior ("not the good stuff") were considered at the hearing.

Youths' perceptions of the Detention Center

Six of the interviewed youths were placed in the Detention Center in conjunction with their most recent violation. Another five had been placed in Detention for some earlier offense, but not the most recent one. More than half of the youths who were placed in Detention were acquainted with other youths in the facility. According to many of the youths interviewed, peer pressure was quite strong in the Detention Center; 45% remembered violating Detention rules because of the influence of other youth. Fifty percent (50%) reported that they made friendships which extended beyond their stay in Detention. Two began "boyfriend/girlfriend" relationships while in Detention.

After arriving at the Detention Center, eight youths (72.2%) had negative feelings about being there (mostly fear, anger and resentment). After the first day, five of these eight said that they felt better about being in Detention, and indicated they "got used to it", "calmed down", and "made friends". Three youths continued to have negative feelings about being placed in Detention.

The detention experience was pretty much what most youths expected it to be. Several thought it would be more like jail, and one youth felt that it was not as boring as it could have been. Nine youths (81.8%) said that the staff's expectations for their behavior were reasonable and that they felt comfortable talking to at least one staff member.

The Detention Center's point system for earning privileges received mixed reviews by the youth. One youth commented that no one would attend the school classes if the point system did not exist. Another youth objected to doing the "same things over and over again" to earn bonus points. Their attitudes are summarized in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII

YOUTHS' REACTIONS TO DETENTION'S POINT SYSTEM

<u>Reaction</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Liked it a lot	2	18.2%
Liked it some	2	18.2
Didn't mind it	1	9.0
Didn't like it	2	18.2
Hated it	2	18.2
No answer	2	18.2
<u>Total Responses</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

When the youths were asked what they liked best about the Detention Center experience, the most popular answer was "the color TV". The staff and being able to play ping pong were mentioned twice. The detention rules were mentioned most often as the least appreciated aspect of being there.

Eight youths (72.7%) did not think that being in detention helped them, and seven of these youths felt that it hurt them to be there. They gave the following reasons:

- It made me feel stupid.
- Being there took away my freedom.
- You could get influenced by the kids, and they get influenced by you.
- My sense of feeling became numb, especially for my parents, who I began to hate.
- I really got bad thoughts about the system.
- Being there really made me miss a lot of school. I still passed my classes but my grades went down.

Youths who spent time in detention were also asked what changes they would make in the system if they were able to. Most wanted more exercise and activities, better food, less noise and more relaxed rules. One commented that there was "too much time sitting around trying to act cool". Another worried about missing school and getting lower grades.

Youths' perceptions of the Shelter Home

Only one youth who was interviewed had been placed in the Shelter Home for his most recent offense. However, six other youths had been at the Shelter Home on previous occasions and were willing to comment on their experience.

Six of the seven reported that they formed close friendships while staying at the Shelter Home. These six stated that after their stay at the Shelter Home they continued to associate with these friends, going to movies, concerts, parties, and other recreational activities. One girl insisted that "we never got into trouble". However, another young woman admitted that she ran away with a friend whom she had met at the Shelter Home. Two youths (28.6%) stated that they made friends they would consider a boyfriend or girlfriend, which made their stay at Shelter Home "much nicer". Six youths reported that they liked the coeducational living situation, but one said that the staff was too "grouchy and suspicious of couples".

Peer pressure to "get high" and smoke marijuana was mentioned by several youths. Others mentioned that their friends helped them calm down and avoid fighting with other residents.

All seven youths felt that the Shelter Home rules placed reasonable expectations on their behavior and that they were treated fairly. Aspects of the Shelter Home which received favorable comment were the relatively free environment (being able to go out to school, to movies, and feeling "really loose") and good relationships with at least one staff member. Four youths (57%) thought the Shelter Home experience helped them by "straightening out my head", "helping me relate to other people better", "become less rowdy", and "going to school more" as a result of being there. None thought their stay at the Shelter Home hurt them in any way. Suggestions for changes to improve the program fell into the category of modifying current rules, including liberalizing the curfew, visiting and signing out privileges. It is interesting to note that the interviewed youths had a much more positive view of their stay in Shelter Home than did their parents. Again, it should be emphasized that neither Detention nor Shelter Home is primarily a treatment facility, but rather, a temporary group living facility.

Youths' perceptions of the court intake conference

Sixteen of the 20 youth (80%) recalled having had an intake conference with a social worker. Over half of these youths said they had met the social worker before their recent referral, either in conjunction with a previous referral or in regard to ongoing services with their families. Thirteen (81.3%) said that they understood what kind of recommendations would be made by the social worker following the conference. Over 75% of the youths thought the social worker treated them with respect, adequately explained the juvenile justice system and procedures to them, and seemed to know what he or she was doing.

Enough information was collected by the social worker from the youth and his or her family to make a recommendation, according to half of those youths having been involved in an intake conference. Four of the youths (25%) recalled being referred to other agencies for additional help. One youth commented that the social worker was "too new to know what was going on".

Youths' perceptions of the court experience

Fifteen interviewed youth (75%) had been to juvenile court -- ten for the most recent offense and five for previous referrals. When asked how many court appearances they had all together, over half responded that they had only been to court once. The number of court appearances of these youths is presented in Table XIV.

TABLE XIV

NUMBER OF COURT APPEARANCES

<u>Number of Appearances</u>	<u>Number of Youth</u>	<u>Percent</u>
One	8	53.3%
Two	1	6.7
Three	2	13.3
Four	1	6.7
Five	2	13.3
Nine or ten	1	6.7
<u>Total</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

These 15 youths were also read ten statements designed to characterize different aspects of the juvenile court experience and they were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement. Their responses appear in Table XV.

The majority of those involved in a court hearing clearly felt somewhat positive about the fairness and thoroughness of the procedures, but had some reservations about the decisions made and the adequacy of their representation, and did not fully understand "all of what went on in the courtroom".

Approximately half of the youths had expected a different outcome from the court proceedings. They had the following comments:

- I thought it would be worse.
- I expected probation, but went to Wales!
- I thought I'd go to a treatment center, but I went to a foster home instead.
- I didn't expect home detention because it was my first time.
- I thought they would be easier on me since I told the truth.
- I don't think I should have gone to a group home.
- I thought they'd do something, but they set another hearing and sent me back to the Shelter Home.



TABLE XV

JUVENILES' PERCEPTIONS OF COURT EXPERIENCE

Statement	Number of Youth Selecting Each Response					Average Rating
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Don't Know (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	
The judge gave you a chance to speak in court.	1	2	0	10	2	3.67
The judge treated you fairly in court.	0	2	4	7	2	3.60
Your lawyer fully understood the facts of your case.	1	2	1	7	2	3.54
The judge seemed to understand the facts of your case.	1	2	3	7	2	3.47
The social worker assigned to your case thoroughly understood the facts of your situation.	1	6	1	3	3	3.07
You felt that the court decision was fair.	4	2	1	5	3	3.07
Your lawyer represented your case well in court.	1	5	2	4	1	2.92
You understood all of what went on in the courtroom.	2	6	2	3	2	2.80
The social worker presented your case well in court.	3	3	3	4	1	2.79
You agreed with your social worker's recommendations.	5	3	1	3	2	2.57

Youths' general impressions of the juvenile justice system

Toward the end of the interview, the youths were asked general questions regarding their experience with the juvenile justice system. Eleven (55%) of the youths interviewed felt that their experiences with the juvenile justice system kept them from getting into more trouble. Their comments are presented below.

Comments -- Yes, it kept me from getting into more trouble. (11 youths)

- I am scared of going to Wales.
- I don't want to be in detention again.
- I don't like the cops.
- It's not worth getting a record.
- The first time it was severe, the next time it was worse and it scared me about losing my license or going to adult court.
- It shook me up and I won't let it happen again.
- I can't stand getting caught.
- It calmed me down more.
- Now I know. Before I was led by people. Now I say "no".
- My experience at Wales keeps me out of trouble.
- I want to keep my license and not go to jail -- now I'm 18.

Comments -- No, it didn't keep me from getting into more trouble. (9 youths)

- Kids do things anyway. Some are lucky and don't get caught.
- You can always get into trouble, even in detention.
- I don't think I did anything wrong in the first place.
- One time doesn't stop you from drinking.
- When you're living with bad parents, fights will occur anyway. The system doesn't stop anything.

The group which reported that their experience had had a deterrent effect tended to be younger, have fewer out-of-home placements including Detention or Shelter Home, but more previous contacts (Central Index) and appearances in court. In view of the small numbers involved and the self-selected nature of the sample, these findings are suggestive only. Such findings could become aids to case management if confirmed by systematic follow-up on a significant sample of court-referred youth.

Seven of the youths (35%) reported that they and their parents had gone to some agency for help since their court involvement. These youths averaged one more police contact (6.5 contacts) than those who did not go to some other agency for assistance (5.5 contacts). Information volunteered on how or whether the intervention helped was quite sketchy. It seemed that the youths were not willing to admit that they could change as a result of contact with a particular agency or professional. Two youths thought that their family situation was somewhat improved after family counseling, but said that they themselves were not helped.

Youths who were interviewed were also asked, "What else happened to you during the whole experience that we have not talked about?". Their responses are given below.

- It's easy to get picked up for little stuff, like blowing up the trash can in the school bathroom.
- Thirty days of home detention didn't affect me. They checked me once a day -- I didn't like that.
- They treated me like a baby -- I couldn't go outside without a parent; too strict.
- The cops think they know it all; they're too quick to judge kids and then what the cop thinks holds true in court.

- I didn't get a chance to say one thing in court.
- It doesn't make sense to send me 100 miles away for treatment. They should keep kids from one county in the same county.
- It's all negative. They look at your record and tell you how bad you are when you already know what you've done. There are no results.
- You can't judge how a cop will act, unless it happens. They are prejudiced against different people and trust them differently. That's unfair. They should treat everyone the same for what they did, not who they are.
- They shouldn't put kids in residential treatment who haven't done crimes. They should have better school programs in treatment centers.
- Some parents just don't like kids.

Summary of youth interviews

The 20 youths who could be located and agreed to be interviewed were similar to the intake population in the distribution of offense types. However, they were more likely to be urban residents, involved in more serious offenses and have more police, court and out-of-home placement experiences than the group not interviewed.

Two-thirds of the 18 apprehended by police were in the company of friends at the time and had been drinking or using drugs prior to their police contact. They were somewhat less positive in their ratings of the police than were their parents, but generally found them to be patient and confident, though somewhat unfriendly and quick to judge. Very few reported the police to have been either "physically rough" or "loud".

Not surprisingly, reactions to the experience of being in the Detention Center were largely negative, although all who had been placed there (11) reported that they were treated fairly and were comfortable talking with at least one staff member. Most did not feel that it was a helpful experience.

Only seven of those interviewed had spent time in the Shelter Home. Reactions were largely positive. Four felt that the experience had helped them in specific ways; none felt that it had hurt them to be there. In both settings, youth tended to make friendships which carried beyond their stay, and to feel a good deal of peer pressure -- sometimes negative, sometimes positive.

The majority of those involved in court hearings felt somewhat positive about the fairness and thoroughness of the personnel and procedures, but had some reservations about the decisions made and the adequacy of their representation, and did not fully understand "all of what went on in court".

About half of those interviewed felt that their experience with the juvenile justice system kept them from getting into more trouble. In most cases the experience was apparently frightening or unpleasant enough for them to want to avoid further encounters with the law. In general, this group was younger, had more extensive police records and court experiences, but less experience in Detention and Shelter Home, and fewer placements outside their homes. Many of these conclusions are similar to parents' evaluations of the system.

Parents of first offenders, parents with fewer contacts with the Department of Social Services, the Reception Center, Detention, Shelter Home, and court, and parents whose children had fewer placements outside of the home felt that the system had helped their child. However, it must be emphasized that there is no implication in this study that contact with the system causes increased delinquency or family problems. Obviously the amount of contact is strongly related to the history and complexity of the problem. These findings do emphasize that court intervention is more likely to be effective in cases not complicated by long, complex problem-histories.

Finally, only seven (35%) of the youths reported that they had had contact with helping agencies since their initial police contact. Treatment attempts are often seen as ineffective by both youths and their parents. A summary comparison of parent and youth perceptions of different aspects of the juvenile justice process follows.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS -- PARENT & YOUTH PERCEPTIONS

POLICE

Parents' Reactions

(# responding = 37)

- Overall very positive, saw police as confident, polite, friendly and patient.
- Even parents having multiple contacts with police emphasized positive characteristics.
- Suburban police received highest ratings, followed by city and rural departments.

Youths' Reactions

(# responding = 18)

- When police arrived, the majority wanted to run, but didn't.
- Characterized police as:
 - 1) patient
 - 2) quick to judge
 - 3) confident
- 55% had used alcohol or other drugs just prior to being apprehended.
- 60% felt that police apprehension had prevented them from getting into further trouble.

RECEPTION CENTER

(# responding = 29)

- Most parents who responded gave reception center staff a positive rating.
- 25% of the parents were referred to other agencies for help.
- Opinion was equally divided as to whether the reception center had any effect on their child.

(# responding = 14)

- 50% of the responding youth felt the intake counselor was concerned about them and their situation.
- 64% had experienced an out-of-home placement, but not all for the most recent offense.

CUSTODY HEARING & DETENTION CENTER

(# responding = 28)

- Almost all parents attended their child's custody hearing.

(# responding = 11)

- 50% of the youth responding felt the detention decision was unfair. (All were placed in detention.)

- 85% felt they had sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions.
- Opinion was divided as to the effectiveness of the Public Defender's Office.
- Most thought their child had been treated fairly and professionally.
- 50% of the parents saw a change (usually positive) as a result of detention.
- 50% felt they had an opportunity to express their views.
- Most youth knew someone already in detention.
- 50% formed new friendships at the detention center which extended beyond their stay there.
- Almost all indicated that their stay was what they expected, or better than what they expected.
- 82% rated the staff positively.
- 72% said detention was of no help and 64% felt it "hurt them to be there".
- Suggested changes included more activities, more lenient rules, and more comfortable accommodations.

SHELTER HOME

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(# responding = 13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most parents felt comfortable with Shelter Home staff. - Most parents felt that Shelter was too loose, lenient or permissive. - Only two parents saw positive changes in their child as a result of his/her stay at Shelter. | <p>(# responding = 7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Six out of seven youths formed close friendships during their stay at the Shelter Home. - Only one found the rules to be "very strict". - All felt fairly treated. - Four youths felt the stay helped them. - None felt hurt by the stay. |
|---|---|

COURT INTAKE CONFERENCE

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>(# responding = 52)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtually all families participated, understood the process, and felt they were treated fairly. | <p>(# responding = 16)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75% of the youth felt their social worker was fair, concerned and competent. |
|--|---|

- Half of the families had subsequent contact with the Social Services Department.
- A third of the parents felt their contacts with the social worker were positive.
- A fourth of the families were referred to other agencies for help.
- 25% remembered being referred for additional help.

JUVENILE COURT

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(# responding = 41)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75% of the parents felt they had been treated fairly and that the disposition was appropriate. - Those with criticisms felt that court should have intervened sooner, or with harsher penalties. - 75% of the parents said lawyers represented their children in court. | <p>(# responding = 15)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 53% of the youth had been to court only once; 26% had been there more than three times. - 80% reported having had a fair chance to speak. - There was generally a positive view of the judge, lawyer and social worker. - About half expected a different outcome (some better, some worse). - About half felt the court decision was fair. |
|--|--|

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(# responding = 52)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 60% of the parents could identify resources to explain the juvenile justice process to them. - 56% felt no coercive pressure from the court process. - 48% felt the system had helped their child; 40% saw no help resulting. - Most who saw positive results cited fear of consequences as the main reason for improvements. - Those who saw no or negative results cited slowness or perceived ineffectiveness of the system as the main problems. | <p>(# responding = 20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 55% of the youth responding felt their experience would help keep them out of more trouble. - 35% reported that parents had sought agency help. - The overwhelming majority had no additional overall impressions to share and were generally unwilling or unable to describe or evaluate their experience with the juvenile justice system. |
|---|---|

APPENDIX A

Parents' responses to the question:

What experiences in the whole system or process did you have that we missed in this questionnaire?*

- Middle school seems too early for sixth graders to be with the older kids. They're just starting to develop into teenagers. It forces more un-needed peer pressure too young.
- They've picked up my other son without notifying me and I don't know what will happen -- they haven't told me.
- Courts don't help to collect child support.
- A staff person at the Reception Center is really great.
- Eliminate laws that aren't enforced.
- Courts are over-protective; it demoralizes parents.
- We had a bad experience with school counselors at West High School.
- The Big Brother Program is good -- we had two great big brothers.
- A school counselor at West High School has a very positive relationship with our son.
- Social Services is bad. Our child's offense was not a big deal and they came in trying to run the family. They are disruptive and interfering, just justifying jobs. The offense was not serious enough to bother with (car theft -- joy ride -- returned the car). They should spend more time on more serious, repeater cases.
- Social Services brought up our nephew's case, which we didn't even know about -- this violates confidentiality regulations.
- Need harder and more embarrassing punishments; put kid's name in paper.
- Get kids involved in programs that use their creativity.
- Peer pressure is very strong for kids to do these things.
- The Judge is not available to talk with.
- The Court doesn't help when the child needs it.
- Public Defenders always recommend too lenient a placement.

* Responses are presented as recorded by the interviewer. However, person-identified responses have been deleted.

- Social workers don't spend enough time with you.
- We had to fight to survive in the system (both parents and child).
- Ladd Lake has a good school program but not enough constructive activities. The kids still get into trouble. They sit around and then the staff dares them to do something wrong so they can pounce on them.
- The court system is too lenient.
- Parents have no rights. Meanwhile, kids get away with everything. It makes parents give up. Fifty years ago things were handled differently and better.
- All the problems stem from my kid's drug abuse.
- We couldn't find out who our social worker was for a week. Then we were transferred to another worker on vacation, so a temporary worker talked to us. We prefer an underqualified one to a qualified one who changes constantly. Kids need stability and the lack of it causes problems.
- Parents have to be desperate to put child up for county custody.
- The new Children's Code should be changed to allow drug abusers and drinkers into Detention; the police won't even keep the kid.
- We didn't take it seriously -- such a minor offense (boating violation) and all that time and money spent on it that would be better spent on people who need it. I resented it.
- I wished it could have been taken care of informally. The police fingerprinted and photographed our child. They could have taken more time to look into the situation and not treat everyone the same.
- Laws are so complex; it's difficult to get anything done.
- Court was so cut and dried. The Judge's speech sounded like something he told everyone.
- You have to have a police incident to get any help from the system.
- Madison police treat teens rough -- no compassion.
- We wanted to do something earlier but couldn't; residential treatment wouldn't take her.
- Social workers think they know it all and tell you of worse cases, but this is our child and we know our case best.
- We were on the verge of pressing criminal charges to force action.
- No one to turn to -- get a parent sharing group.
- The school was neglecting to report skipping to us.

- Small communities need to put more time and energy into teenagers -- more prevention; it doesn't work well after the fact.
- Freedom House is bad.
- Schools should discipline kids more.
- Schools should teach more vocational trades and shouldn't ask parents to teach kids fractions, etc.
- I was dissatisfied with Briarpatch -- went to a conference and nothing was discussed. We didn't even talk about my child.
- A lot of this treatment from Social Services was because my wife and I are racially different. They talked to my wife around me; one even told my wife to divorce me.
- The new Children's Code is good because runaway is no longer illegal.
- Supervision is only a name, nothing is done, no consequences, and the problems become worse.
- Social Services couldn't find a treatment center to take our daughter. Later, she was too old for them.
- Too much time is spent assessing with too many people -- no treatment, wasting time all over, will cost the system more in the end.
- The system now says, "Who is she hurting?" -- but it is a problem and needs help. There is a need for a status offender program.
- School suspended our daughter for smoking after she finally went back. They don't keep a timely record of skipping. They aren't prepared to enforce the rules. Even the school board doesn't know who or where the truant officer is.
- Kids laugh at the system, it's so lenient. Must change the laws.
- Speed up the system. Everyone's forgotten the offense or it's been repeated by the time anything happens.
- The juvenile system is a mockery.
- I don't recommend Dane County Social Services or Detention. I do recommend Briarpatch, Home Detention, and Parents Anonymous.
- We need something for treatment without all the red tape.
- Even the phone company was asinine. My daughter kept making long distance calls to her boyfriend, charging it to our number (with monthly bills of \$299). There is no way to stop it, they said -- just tell her not to.
- Shelter Home doors are locked on the wrong side. We couldn't get in, but the kids could leave any time!

- In reports in front of the Judge a recommendation for a psychological evaluation was included. The Public Defender disagreed with it and I couldn't afford it on my own. Who knows what they may have found, and maybe we could have been helped earlier. Another time, the Judge went against the group home staff's refusal to take my daughter -- everyone was upset. It doesn't help the kids with marks against them like that in a group home.
- If we lock our daughter in her room it's child abuse; if custody gets to the county they lock her in Detention. Why can't we take care of it at home?
- The Public Defender was good. He let our son make up his own mind and didn't pressure him.
- Open-campus schools are not good for most 13-year-olds; they can't regulate attendance, but neither should schools babysit.
- Madison patrol cops are great, but detectives are asinine.
- The group home had an incapable staff who didn't supervise -- for example, smoking marijuana was allowed. There was less supervision than at home. Contracts don't work with teenagers. The stuff the group home did was busy-work, meaningless activity. The staff needs more training. The kids just sat around.
- Parents have no control, no say.
- We need someone to speak the legal language.
- Alcohol is too easy for kids to get.
- The police did not call us right away when our child was picked up.
- Kids look and act older now -- but they're not necessarily mature.
- There is no prevention going on at all.
- We had a good school social worker at East High.
- Economic pressures of today are hard on families and kids.
- Need to take a longer view of the problem, not just from one incident. It's a lengthy problem.
- The new Children's Code forces kids to commit a crime to be placed somewhere.
- My social worker was supportive of my feelings, that single mothers need more help and that it's not always the fault of parents.
- Group homes are not strict enough. My kid could come home drunk as long as he didn't carry a bottle.

- Parents need a better shake. Our son had rights and a lawyer assigned to him. I didn't have any rights to have him or not have him at home. They listened to our son only, but I still had to bear the financial responsibility for his acts.
- Parents need a place to turn to for dealing with an uncontrollable child without placing him outside the home. Now efforts are directed toward placement rather than helping families stay together.
- Social Services people just don't care.
- The Judge needs to be harder sooner; he feels sorry for kids and lets them off too much.
- The Detention building is inadequate. They need more room.

APPENDIX B

Parents' responses to the question:

If a friend of yours with a son or daughter in trouble asked for your advice, what are the five or six most important things to tell him or her?*

- For runaways -- when apprehended, insist on informal handling through Briarpatch -- anything but the legal system or official Dane County system.
- Keep communication open at all times, even to the extent of bringing in a third party other than the legal system.
- Remember you can't make kids do things.
- If you go to court, get someone who knows what's going on to explain it and advise you.
- Take the risk of the child's well-being by trying not to bring in the county -- try to settle it informally.
- I can't advise others. I haven't handled it well and I blame myself for some of the trouble.
- I'd explain what we went through.
- Sit down and discuss everything with your child, have the child open up to you; keep good communications.
- Be very demanding of help from Social Services; don't let them put you off.
- Communication with everyone, especially your child, is important.
- I'm in no position to give advice since it still seems so close, too close to tell if it did any good.
- Don't automatically take your child's side, but do support him/her through it -- make him/her face the consequences.
- Don't give up and don't abandon your child. Don't take the attitude, "Let him sit in jail".
- Make sure the Judge knows what you want.
- Find someone you can relate to in the District Attorney's Office.

* All responses are presented as recorded by the interviewer. However, persons' names have been deleted.

- Go to Social Services for help when the kids are younger; it doesn't do any good when they are older.
- Consider all the resources available. There are a lot.
- Find a good, understanding social worker.
- Get family counseling.
- If there are younger kids in the family, get troubled older ones out so they don't influence younger ones or get them into trouble.
- For drug problems, take the child to the hospital to see what can happen -- sort of like shock therapy.
- Go to clergy for help, but don't force it on the child.
- Get some help early -- do something; don't let it go.
- Listen to your child, not just the police.
- Take control and treat the child like a five-year-old for a while.
- In the end tell them they're on their own unless they straighten up.
- "Scared Straight" idea is good.
- If the child is on drugs, insist on counseling.
- Talk with someone who has been through the experience.
- I can't advise others. Every family has to do it its own way.
- Give kids all the time and attention you possibly can.
- Love your kids and show interest in them.
- If you ask or demand something, follow through.
- Give kids responsibilities, chores when they are young.
- Accept kids and give them credit whether they achieve or fail.
- Single parent families have it rough. Have a good father figure get close to your son.
- My child got into the wrong group of friends. I don't know how to select my child's friends.
- Live a day at a time.
- Trust in the Lord.
- You have to go on despite feeling defeated, inadequate and embarrassed.

- Get the proper placement suited to your child -- Martin Luther Homes are good.
- Don't allow special education -- these kids are labeled by teachers and other kids; peers tease them, etc.
- Offer more trade training in schools, not just all academics.
- Seek professional help.
- Be extremely patient.
- Seek help appropriate to the nature of your child's offense.
- Pull the reins tight on kids when they test the system. Tell them what's right and what's wrong.
- Try to talk with kids about authority -- when to question it, when it's right and wrong.
- Get a good lawyer.
- Don't be afraid of the system. Try everything.
- Seek help from the county.
- Agree with your spouse on decisions, back each other up.
- Be firm with your child. Use "yes" and "no", not "maybe".
- Don't get mixed up with Social Services.
- Avoid Detention unless the child is violent.
- Be aware of drinking and drugs. Kids can hide their involvement. Don't allow it.
- Don't let the system force you to keep the child at home if it just won't work out.
- Publicity and information are needed so everyone knows what's available.
- There is a need for a number to call so you can talk to someone without legal hassles.
- Don't let things ever get out of control.
- Move to another state.
- Change the Children's Code so parents' rights aren't ignored and so kids can take some responsibility.
- Don't get help from the system. Get it on your own. Watch out for the stigma of going to professionals.
- I don't know. The courts are too "lolli-poppy"; work toward changing the laws.

END