



ProDES Policy Report
Program Development and Evaluation System

Juvenile Justice Trends and Projections

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*Intake:
Key Results*

Executive Summary

This report documents some of the key trends in the characteristics of Philadelphia juveniles admitted to delinquency programs from 1994 through 2000 and offers projections through the end of 2001. Some of the more important findings are:

At Intake

- *There has been consistent growth in the overall monthly numbers of DHS (Philadelphia) funded cases and an equally consistent decline in the number of DPW (State) funded cases. In late 1995, DPW cases comprised one in three or four of the total caseload; by 2001, it is projected that the proportion will be about one in six.*
- *The aftercare caseload for both DHS and DPW cases has grown consistently and is projected to grow during the coming year or so.*
- *Despite increased demand for their services, there has been no increase in the number of placements to drug and alcohol programs.*
- *Though referrals to day treatment programs are not declining in absolute terms they are declining in relative terms. With continued growth in overall caseloads and stable numbers entering day treatment the fact is that day treatment programs receive a smaller proportion of all cases in 2000 than they did in 1994.*
- *There is no question that the fastest growth area in terms of placements is in institutions -- from about 50 per month in 1995 to a projected 120 per month in 2001. Increased use of boot camps is largely responsible for this growth.*
- *Considered in terms of the location of programs, the fastest growth is in placements outside-of-the area (including mostly Western PA and out-of-state).*
- *There is a growth in the number of first time offenders in the system and a slight decline in the number of juveniles with two or more prior arrests.*
- *Almost all the increased numbers of cases are accounted for by drug offenders.*
- *The number of juveniles with two parents at home is staying stable as the number of juveniles with one or no parent figure is increasing.*
- *Most indicators of the quality of family relationships indicate no decline (and, in some cases an increase) in the number of juveniles entering the*

Discharge:
Key Results

system from poor home environments. The one possible exception to this conclusion is the recent downturn in the number of juveniles with a history of family violence.

- Most indicators of the number of special needs type cases-- sex offenders, mental health problems, chronic drug abusers -- all point to increasing numbers of cases. One exception is a clear decline in the number of cases involving alcohol abusers.
- Focusing on juvenile socio-demographic and other descriptor characteristics, we find a number of interesting and significant trends. Though average age is constant, the fact is that the caseload increase is almost all among juveniles who are either older (17 plus) or younger (under 13). There has been no change in the number aged 14-16.
- The number of juveniles with a low to very low IQ is increasing; the number with an average/above average IQ is falling. In 2001 -- for the first time since 1994 at least -- the proportion of the latter group will be below that of the former group.
- The number of juveniles with alcohol abuse problems is falling (though not the number with chronic abuse). The number with drug abuse problems is stable; but the number with chronic drug abuse problems is slowly rising.

At Discharge

- For both DHS and DPW cases, it is very clear that average length of stay is declining. The proportion of DHS funded juveniles staying more than 12 months in programs is projected to fall from almost 30 percent in 1994 to less than 10 percent in 2001. This trend can be in part explained by the increased use of 90-day boot camps during the past five years.
- The proportion of juveniles who go AWOL at least once during their program stay has decreased in both community-based and non community-based programs.
- In-program juvenile arrests have also declined for both community-based and non community-based programs.
- Despite all the various changes occurring in the composition of the incoming juvenile population, the fact remains that programs are no more or less likely in 2000 than in 1995 to report juveniles as 'inappropriate placements'.

Follow-up:
Key Results

At Follow-up

- *It would seem that there has been no change in the rate of offending (as measured by new petitions) for the period from program intake to six-months after discharge..*
- *In fact, this apparently stable trend masks two quite different patterns -- a decline in the proportion of cases with new petitions during the program stay and an increase in the proportion with new petitions during the six-month post-discharge follow-up period. One possible explanation is that increased institutionalization has effectively reduced the number of juveniles at-risk during the program intervention, but that, upon release back to their community, these juveniles re-offend at rates above those hitherto experienced.*
- *Separate analysis of the new petition data by type of program (community-based or not) shows that the decline in new petitions while in a program is experienced by both types of programs. This result challenges the belief that the reduction in offending is largely due to an incapacitation effect since juveniles are almost constantly at-risk in the community-based programs.*
- *Analysis of the post-discharge new petition rates by type of program show that re-offending rates remain stable for non-community based programs and have increased for community-based programs. This result may reflect the fact that non-community based cases often receive six-months aftercare supervision while community-based cases receive none.*
- *Examination of the type of offenses being committed in and post program shows a very clear trend --each year a larger proportion of the new petitions are for drug offenses.*
- *The follow-up telephone survey data show that although juvenile and parent/guardian confidence in the programs is generally high, the trend is generally downward. The proportions who report the programs to be 'helpful' or 'extremely helpful' are projected to decline from around 70 percent in 1995 to about 60 percent in 2001. In contrast, satisfaction with probation officers remains high (around 70 percent) and, if anything, is projected to get better rather than worse by 2001.*

***Understanding
the past and
forecasting the
future***

"There is no doubt that the nature of the juvenile population projected for 2001 is quite different to that found in 1994, the start of the ProDES study period."

Introduction

Effective and efficient policy-making involves not only reacting to current needs and demands but trying to anticipate and plan for the future. With this in mind, the Department of Human Services in Philadelphia has sponsored the development and operation of a comprehensive evaluation based information system (*ProDES*) that allows them to monitor past trends and forecast future changes within the juvenile justice system of the City.

This report utilizes up to six years worth of *ProDES* data to examine key trends within the juvenile justice system of Philadelphia. Such analysis allows one to not only better understand what has already occurred but also to forecast what is most likely to happen in the near future. Given the inevitable time delay that occurs between the recognition of an urgent need (such as additional resources for mental health or drug treatment cases) and the development of programs or interventions to address them (from expanding existing programs to contracting with new ones), it is clearly vital that policymakers have ready and continued access to such information.

The data presented suggest that the size of the delinquent system in Philadelphia is expanding and changing at the same time. There is no doubt that the nature of the juvenile population projected for 2001 is quite different to that found in 1994, the start of the *ProDES* study period. In most cases the changes identified have direct implications for resource planning -- whether it be in terms of program staff requirements for a diversifying delinquent population or specialized resources for a juvenile population that is demonstrating a broader range of needs.

The report confines itself to the analysis of past patterns and the forecasting of future trends. Little attention is devoted to discussion of alternative policy responses. It is hoped that the report will stimulate discussion of the possible causes of identified trends and appropriate responses to projected future patterns.

Caseloads are increasing and changing.

Trends At Intake

Type of Juvenile Case

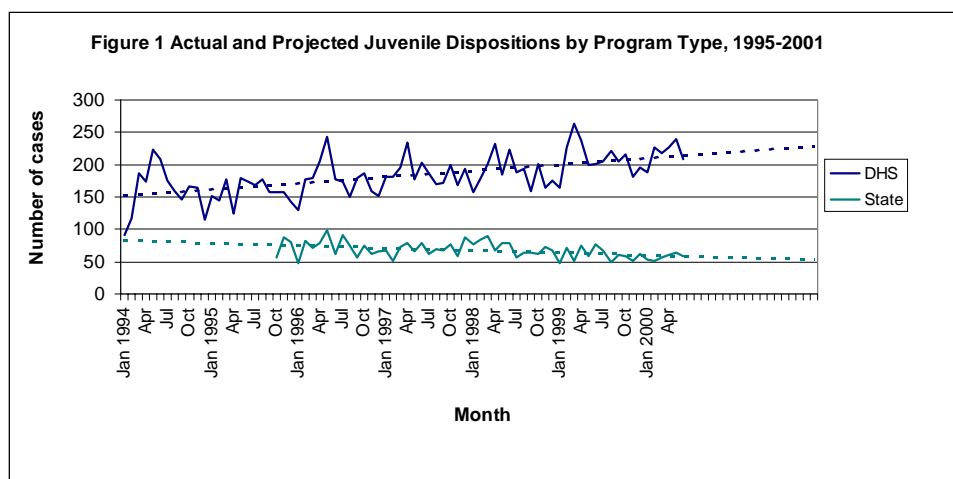
The *ProDES* database contains information on four types of cases:

- juveniles whose disposition involves placement in a Department of Human Services (DHS) funded primary treatment program;
- juveniles entering private or state programs as Department of Public Welfare (DPW) cases;
- juveniles entering DHS funded aftercare programs;
- juveniles entering DPW funded aftercare programs.

Most of this report considers only the first two types of cases-- those juveniles leaving Family Court for either a DHS or DPW funded disposition. However, during the initial discussion of caseload it is helpful to discuss all four types of case in order to better understand system-wide trends.

Overall Caseloads

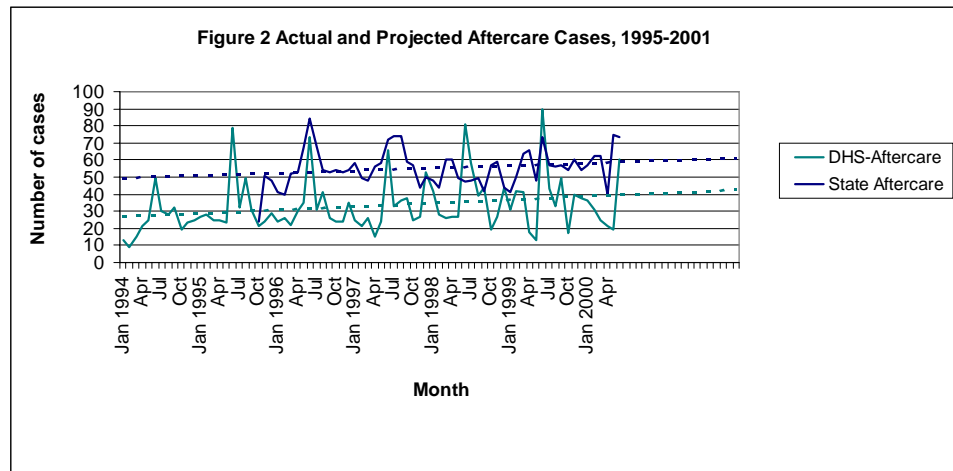
Figure 1 shows the trends in monthly caseloads for DHS and DPW dispositions (the former series begins January, 1994; the latter series in October, 1995). Despite the seasonal fluctuations, there are quite clear underlying trends to each series. There has been a consistent increase in



Caseload trends and projections

the number of DHS intakes -- from about 150 per month in 1994 to a projected 240 by the end of 2001. In contrast the DPW (State) caseload has declined slightly, from about 80 per month in 1995 to a projected 50 per month in 2001.

The figures for aftercare dispositions are a little different, showing slight increases in both series throughout the study period and into 2001 (Figure 2). The disparity in the numbers is due to the fact that all DPW cases are followed by aftercare whereas only residential and institutional DHS cases



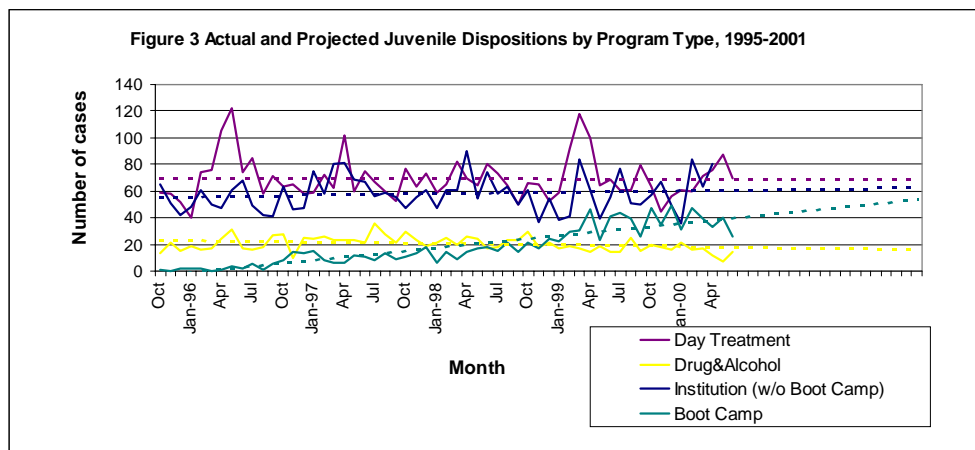
"The figures for after-care dispositions are a little different, showing slight increases in both series throughout the study period and into 2001."

are followed by an aftercare component.

Type of Program

If we focus specifically on the initial DHS and DPW funded dispositions (i.e., excluding aftercare), we can classify each case according to the type of program in which a juvenile was placed. Figure 3 presents the results for three selected types of programs -- day treatment, drug and alcohol and institutional. Each shows quite different trends. The day treatment programs have fluctuated significantly in monthly caseloads but overall, the total number has remained more or less stable. This means that there will be about as many juveniles entering day treatment programs in 2001 as there were in 1995. Given the growth in the overall caseload this means that day treatment programs are lagging behind in caseload numbers.

Type of program placement



The drug and alcohol monthly caseload has been in slow decline -- from about 22 per month in 1995 to a projected 18 or less per month in 2001. This decline is all the more surprising when considered against the fact that there has been a significant increase in the number of juveniles with serious drug and alcohol abuse problems.

The trend for all institutional programs shows a strong and significant increase throughout the study period -- though most of the increase is the result of a sharp rise in the number of boot camp placements. For example, in 1995 there were about 55 juveniles per month were being sent to institutional placements and, despite DHS' overall goal of reduced institutionalization of juveniles, this number has increased to a projected 120 a month by 2001. In 1995 placements to boot camps were virtually non-existent; by 2001 the projected number is more than 55 per month.

It is important that we recognize the implications of these figures. In the last three months of 1995, there were 163 juveniles entering institutional placements; in the last three months of 2001 the projected figure is 348 -- an increase of 113 percent in just six years. Much of this growth has been in short-term (generally 90-day) boot camp placements. Given the relatively short stay in these programs, we would expect some reduction in some of the program outcomes such as average length of stay, AWOL rates and in-program re-arrest rates.

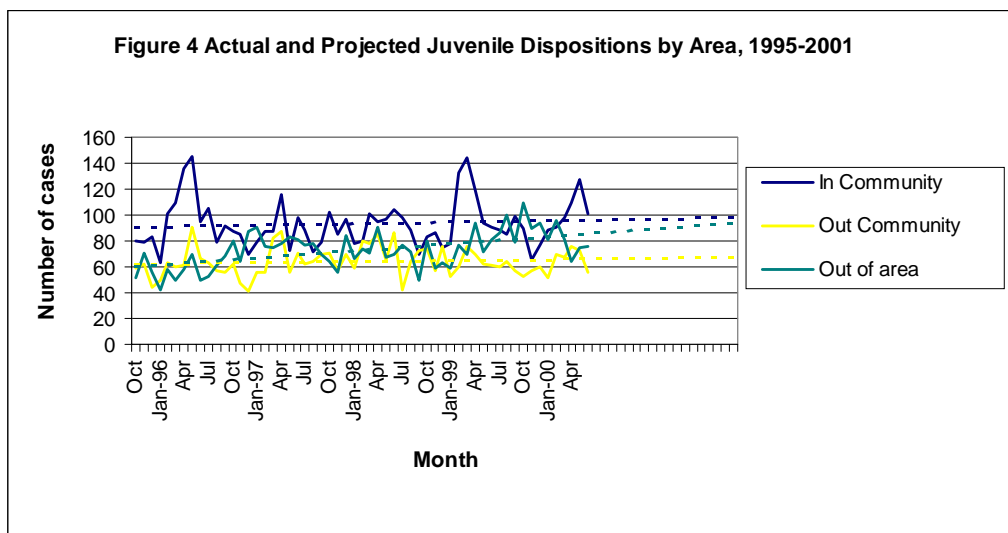
"in the last 3 months of 1995 there were 163 juveniles entering institutional placements; in the last three months of 2001 the projected figure is 348 -- an increase of 113 percent in just 6 years."

**Where are
the juveniles
going?**

Location of Program

It is possible to classify programs not only in terms of their primary 'type' but also in terms of their location. For sake of simplicity, we have classified programs as being within the home community (such as local day treatment and school based programs), out-of-the-community (perhaps in or near Philadelphia but clearly not in their home area) and out-of-area (programs that are distant from Philadelphia and, in some instances, outside Pennsylvania).

Figure 4 Actual and Projected Juvenile Dispositions by Area, 1995-2001



"Thus, by late 2001 juvenile dispositions in Philadelphia are not only far more likely to involve institutionalization, they are more likely to take the juvenile out of the region."

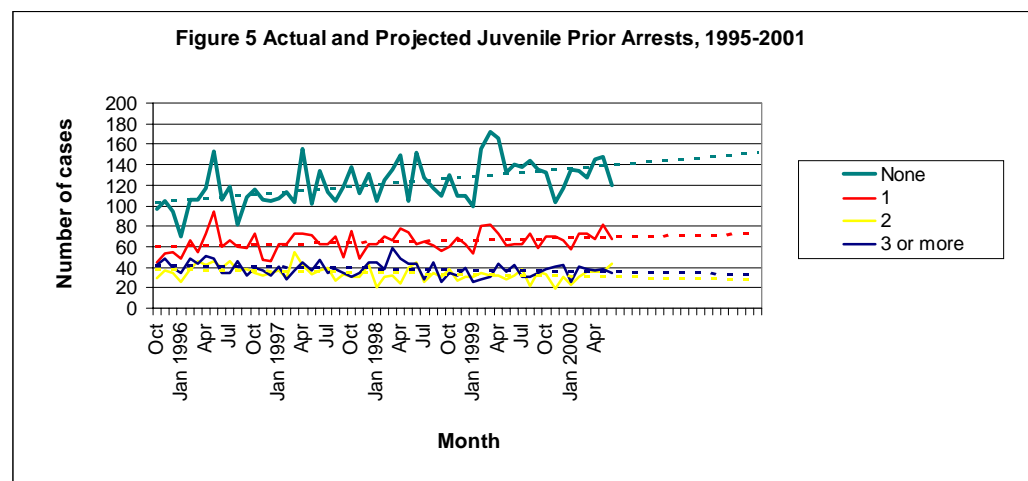
Figure 4 shows the pattern of placements into each of these three types of program for the study period. The key point is that almost all the growth in caseload seems to have been in out-of-area placements -- with much of this increase reflecting the use of boot camps located well away from Philadelphia. In the last quarter of 1995, there were 179 juveniles whose disposition took them outside the area; for the last quarter of 2001, the projected figure is 279 -- an increase of 56 percent. Thus, by late 2001 juvenile dispositions in Philadelphia are not only far more likely to involve institutionalization, they are more likely to take the juvenile out of the region.

Trends in type of juvenile cases

Type of Juvenile Case

There are a number of factors that might explain some of the trends noted in terms of type and location of program. There may be an increase in the number of chronic or repeat offenders, an increase in the seriousness of the offenses committed, a worsening of the juveniles home environments or perhaps an increase in the need for specialized treatment by the juveniles themselves. These factors, either alone or in combination, could explain why there have been such noticeable shifts in the pattern of juvenile dispositions. during the last six years. Fortunately, the *ProDES* data allow us to test each of these propositions.

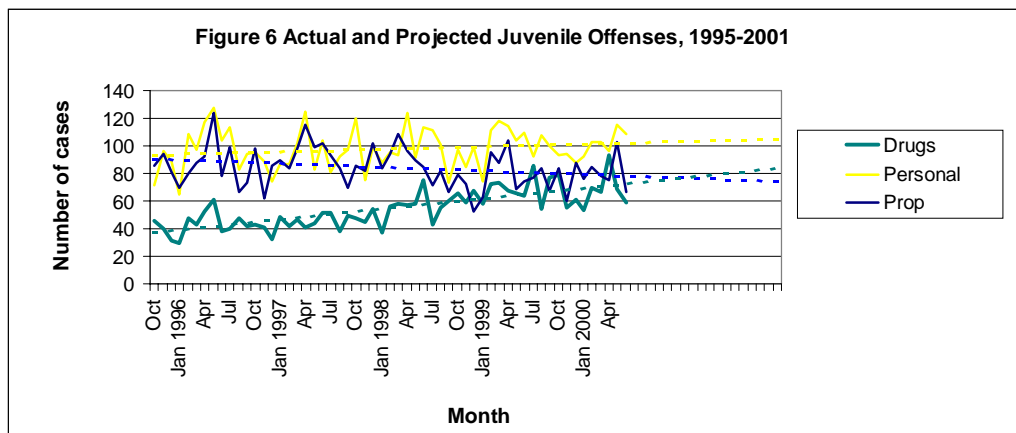
"There is no evidence to support the idea that the juvenile caseload is becoming more serious in terms of prior offenses."



First Time Offenders

As shown in Figure 5, there has been a clear increase in the number of first time juvenile offenders entering programs. In late 1995, there were about 100 first time offenders per month and about 40 with 2 and 3 prior arrests. By late 2001, the comparable figures will be around 155 and 35 respectively. There is no evidence to support the idea that the juvenile caseload is becoming more serious in terms of prior offenses -- indeed the data support an alternative conclusion, suggesting that the system is dealing with less serious cases comprising more first and second time offenders.

Changes in type of offense



Type of Offense

There have been some discernible changes in the offense mix of the juvenile caseload during the study period (Figure 6). The number of drug offenses has increased sharply from about 40 per month in late 1995 to a projected 80 plus per month in late 2001 (an increase of 100 percent in six years). Similarly, there has been an increase -- albeit much less sizable -- in the number of personal offenses -- from about 85 per month in late 1995 to a projected 100 plus per month in late 2001. In contrast to these trends, the number of property offenders has declined continuously -- from just under 90 per month in late 1995 to a projected 75 in late 2001 (a decrease of about 17 percent during the six years).

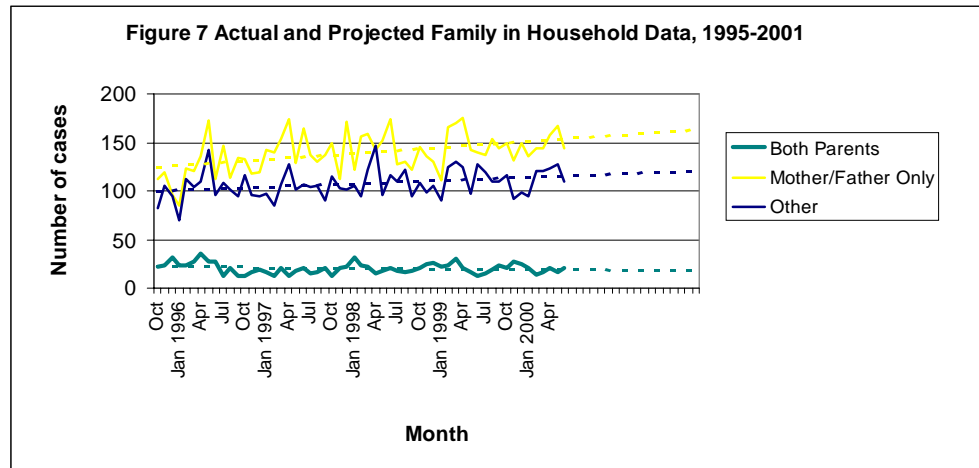
So, at a time when overall caseload is rising, we find that there are higher rates of increase for personal and drug offenses and an absolute decline for property offenses. This finding suggests one possible explanation for the increased use of institutionalization noted earlier -- juveniles are being considered higher 'risk' on the basis of their current offense more than on the basis of prior arrest records.

Home Environment

ProDES contains a number of measures that are useful proxy measures for the quality of home environment. Discussions with probation officers and social workers suggest that factors such as home living arrangements

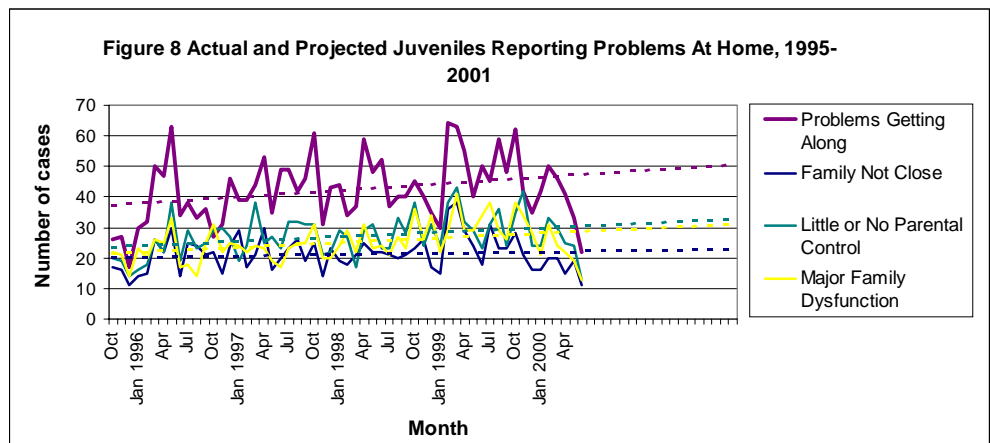
"At a time when overall caseload is rising we find that there are higher rates of increase for personal and drug offenses and an absolute decline for property offenses."

Changes in home environment



(both parents, one parent or no parents), the presence of family violence and evidence of 'problems' at home are all factors that would be considered in a placement decision. These and other such variables are measured in *ProDES* and the trends, along with forecasts to 2001 are presented in Figures 7 and 8.

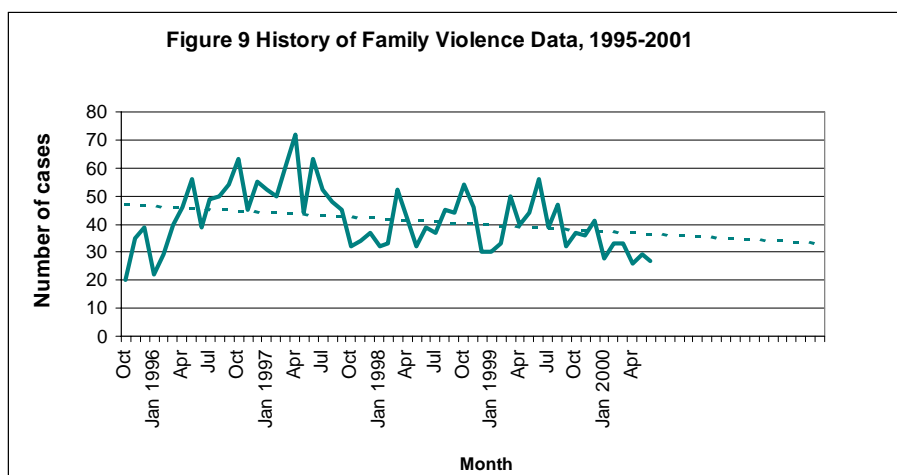
Figure 7 shows the trends for a juvenile's home living arrangements. There has been no change in the number of juveniles from homes with two parents; all the increase in caseload involves juveniles who are either from homes with just the natural mother or the natural father or from homes with some other arrangement (often mother and grandmother or other relatives). Figure 8 provides a range of self report and staff reported data



Need for specialized treatment

"Taken together these figures suggest that many juveniles face problems of one sort or another at home and that their prevalence in the overall caseload is growing."

pertaining to the quality of the family environment. The results show a consistent pattern of slow but steady increases in the number of juveniles who either self-report ('problems getting along' or 'family not close') or are



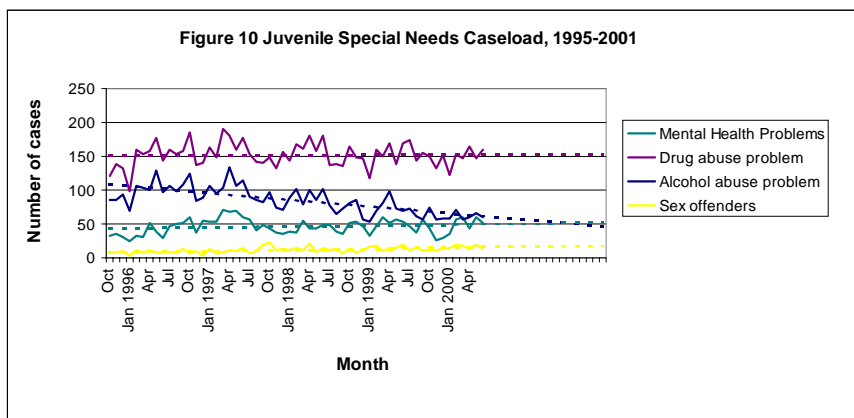
reported by staff ('little or no parental control' 'major family dysfunction') as experiencing family problems at home.

Taken together these figures suggest that many juveniles face problems of one sort or another at home and that their prevalence in the overall caseload is growing. There is one noticeable trend that contrasts with this image of a worsening home environment. Data indicating whether or not juveniles are from homes with a history of family violence are routinely collected from the Family Court 'J' File. The trend shown in Figure 9 suggests that during the past two years the number of such cases has declined -- and is projected to continue declining through 2001.

Need for Specialized Treatment

As with home environment, *ProDES* offers a range of measures that are indicators of specialized need. Figure 10 presents a few of these measures -- juveniles with a history of mental health problems, juveniles with chronic alcohol or drug abuse problems and juveniles whose current offense involves a sex offense. Significant increases in any or all of these factors could explain the trend toward increased institutional placements.

**Time to new
offense and
type of re-
offending**



"The number of juveniles with chronic drug problems has not increased during the study period, and the same is true for juveniles with a history of mental health problems."

The data (all taken from Family Court 'J' Files) show some surprising results. The number of juveniles with chronic drug problems has not increased during the study period, and the same is true for juveniles with a history of mental health problems. In addition, the number of juveniles with chronic alcohol abuse problems is actually in decline. The only indicator moving upwards is the number of juvenile sex offender cases -- from less than 10 per month in late 1995 to a projected 25 per month by late 2001. This is a second possible factor to explain, at least in part, the increased use of institutional and out-of-area programs since 1994.

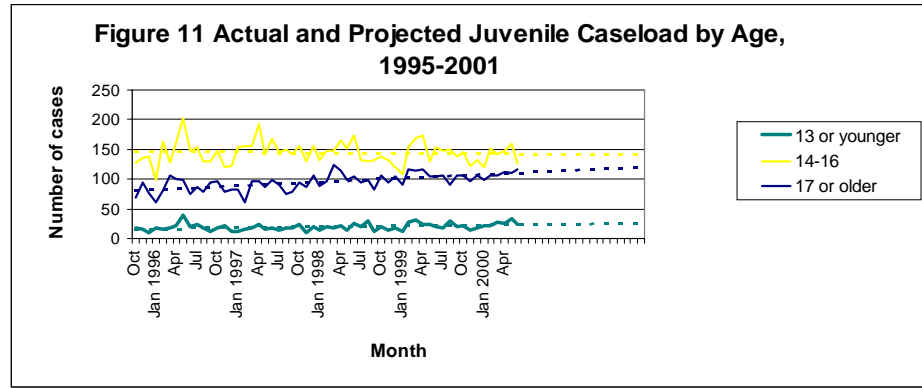
Type of Juvenile

Having reviewed aspects of the juvenile case, it is worth considering also some aspects of the juveniles themselves. There is no evidence of change in the racial composition of the caseload -- the numbers for each of the three racial groups are increasing at comparable rates.

There is a noticeable increase in the number of female delinquents in the system -- from about 19 per month in late 1995 to a projected 40 per month in late 2001. This trend has obvious implications for Family Court and DHS since placements for females have traditionally been very difficult to find, and much research suggests the need for gender-specific programming.

As Figure 11 demonstrates, the age of the juveniles in the system is be

Type of juvenile

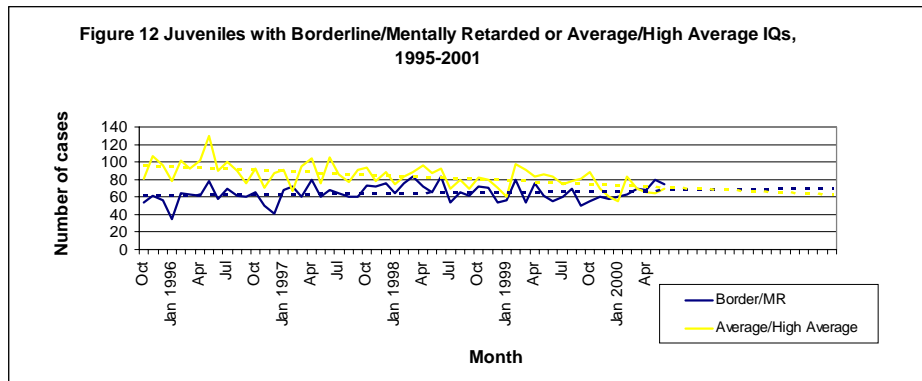


changing slightly -- with increases in the number of juveniles who are either young (aged 13 or younger) or 'old' (aged 17 or older). These population trends are not evident if considered in terms of the average age of juveniles in the system -- which remains almost unchanged. However, the fact remains that during the next few years programs will be receiving more and more cases involving juveniles who are either very immature or almost into the adult system.

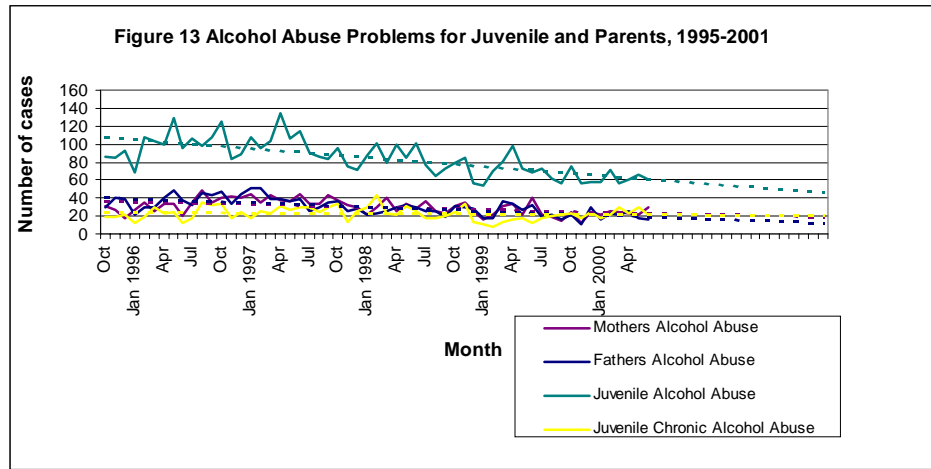
Another characteristic of the juveniles that seems to be changing is their IQ (see Figure 12) -- the number with 'average' or 'high average' IQ scores is declining slowly while the number with 'borderline' or 'mentally retarded' scores is growing. The projections suggest that the lower IQ juveniles will outnumber the higher IQ juveniles as early as mid 2001.

One final aspect of the juvenile population that deserves close attention

"the fact remains that during the next few years programs will be receiving more and more cases involving juveniles who are either very immature or almost into the adult system."



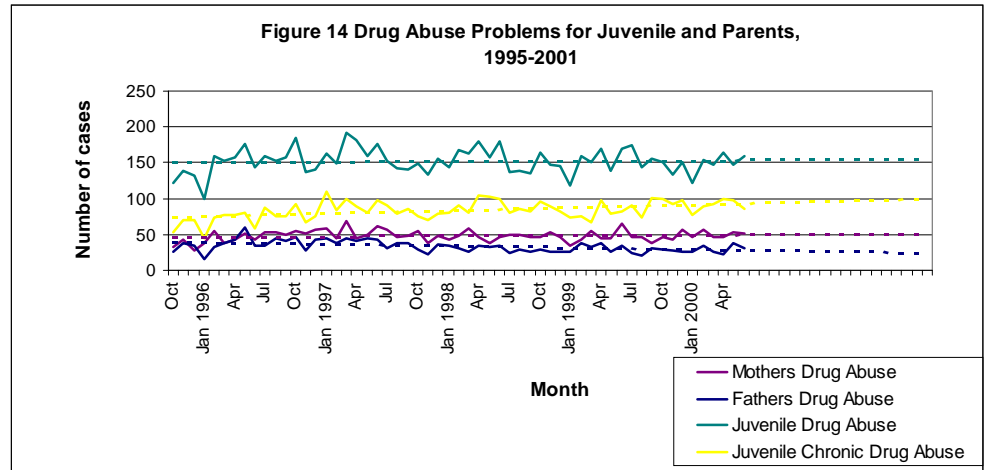
Alcohol and drug abuse



is that of drug and alcohol abuse. Figure 13 presents several trends for alcohol abuse. The three closely bound lines at the bottom of the figure represent the number of juveniles reported by 'J' File records to have a chronic alcohol problem, as well as the number of mothers and fathers reported as having an alcohol abuse problem. The fourth trend represents the number of juveniles reported as having an 'occasional' or 'chronic' alcohol abuse problem. Perhaps the most important feature of this chart is the downward trend of all four series.

" if we focus specifically on chronic abuse it is evident that the numbers are rising -- from about 70 per month in late 1995 to a projected 100 per month by the end of 2001."

Figure 14 presents the same trends for drug abuse and it is apparent that the trends are a little different. The number of juveniles reported as



Trends at discharge

having mothers or fathers with drug abuse problems is holding steady as is the number of juveniles reported in the 'J' File as having an 'occasional' or 'chronic' drug problem. However, if we focus specifically on chronic abuse, it is evident that the numbers are rising -- from about 70 per month in late 1995 to a projected 100 per month by the end of 2001. Interestingly, as noted earlier, the number of drug and alcohol program placements by Family Court is projected to remain stable at about 20 per month.

Trends At Discharge

For all DHS funded juveniles at private programs, *ProDES* collects data at the point of a juvenile's discharge. This is not done for any of the DPW funded cases -- for which the only discharge data collected is the date of discharge. Accordingly, with the exception of time in program, all the information presented in this section refers only to DHS funded cases to private program.

In addition to information on the services provided by the program, *ProDES* collects self-report and staff assessed data from the juvenile and program staff respectively (on all the scales previously measured at intake), information on the juvenile's behavior while in the program (AWOL's and arrests) as well as the nature of the discharge itself.

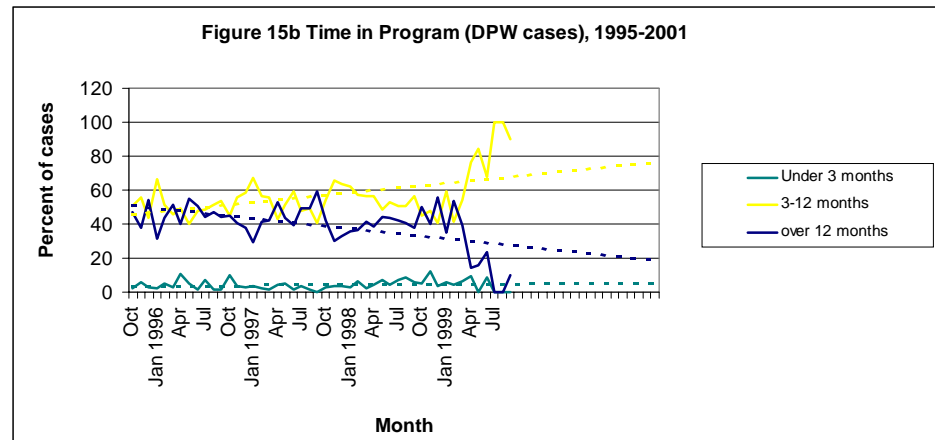
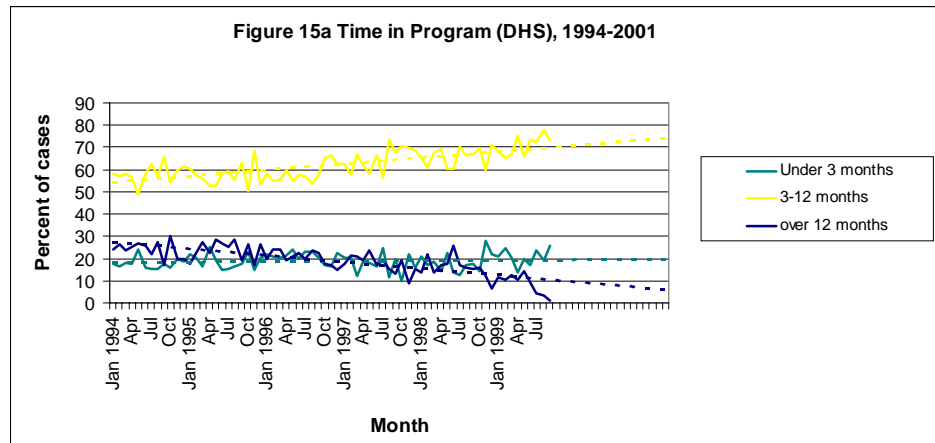
Finally, since there is a great deal of interest in the relative outcomes of community and non-community programs, we present some of the discharge data separately for both types of case.

Time in the Program

Figure 15a shows for all DHS funded cases the actual (as distinct from presumptive) average length of stay for each monthly intake cohort. It is evident that about 20 percent of juveniles stay less than three months -- a figure that has remained more or less constant throughout the entire six year period -- despite the increased use of short stay boot camps in the last two or three years. The proportion staying more than 12 months has

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Time in the program



"The proportion staying more than 12 months has declined significantly -- from about 28 percent of the early 1994 intake to a projected 8 percent for the late 2001 intake cohort."

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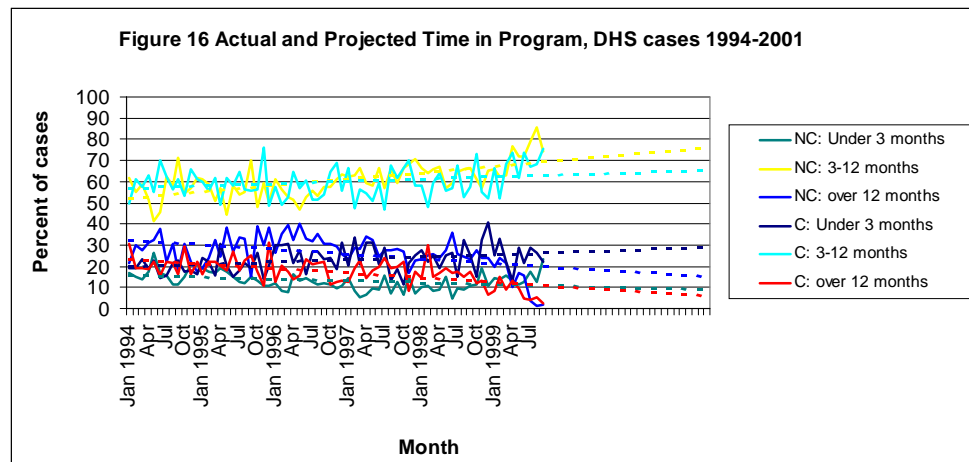
The data for state cases (DPW) show similar trends -- a constant proportion (less than 5 percent) staying less than 3 months and a declining proportion staying 12 months or more (for DPW cases the number has dropped from just over 50 percent of the late 1995 intakes to a projected 20 percent for the 2001 intake cohorts).

The decline in overall length of stays may be caused by one of several possible explanations. The first is that some or all programs are reducing their presumptive length of stays (either through choice or necessity). We know, for example, that there has been a recent increase in the use of boot

AWOL's and re-arrests

camps for which the presumptive stay is just three months. A second possibility is that juveniles are 'dropping-out' or 'failing out' of programs more quickly than before (a fact that we can test by examining whether or not in-program AWOL and re-arrest rates have increased).

Figure 16 casts some light on this issue by comparing trends for all DHS funded juveniles entering community and non-community based programs since 1994. In both instances it is clear that the proportion of juveniles staying more than 12 months is in decline, a result that suggests that it is reduced presumptive stays rather than increased AWOL's or re-arrests that

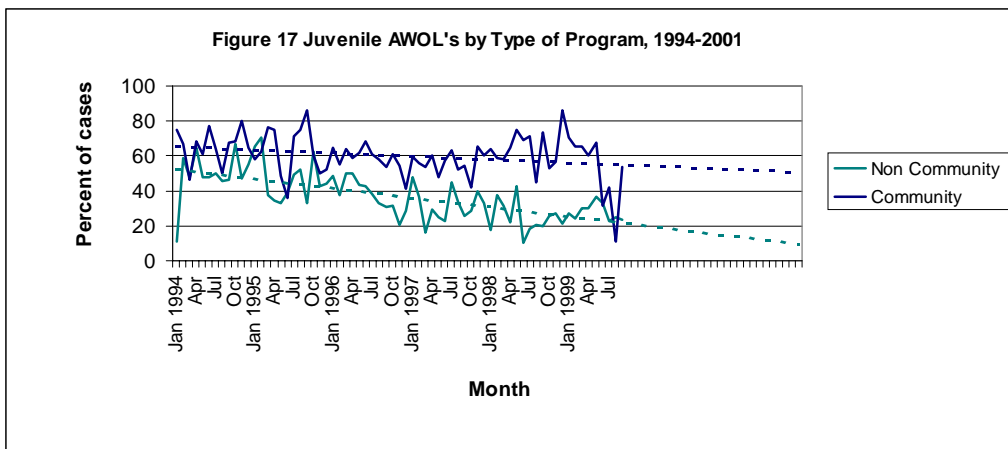
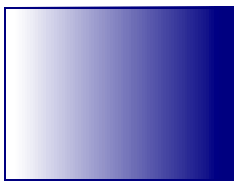


"... for both community-based on non community-based programs there has been a consistent decline in AWOL rates throughout the entire study period."

is driving down average time spent in program.

AWOL's and Re-arrests

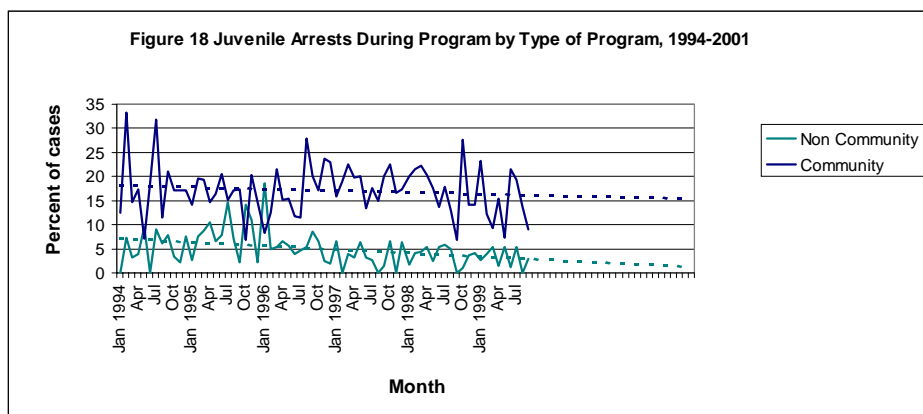
Programs that provide discharge data for DHS funded cases are asked to indicate how many times the juvenile was AWOL from the program or was re-arrested while in the program (not all of which will become formal court petitions recorded in follow-up). Figure 17 shows that for both community-based on non community-based programs there has been a consistent decline in the proportion of juveniles who go AWOL at least once during their program stay. Among community-based programs, the rate has fallen from more than 65 percent among early 1994 intake cohorts to a projected 50 percent among the intake cohorts of 2001. For non



community-based programs the decline is even more marked, from over 50 percent among the early 1994 intake cohorts to a projected 10 percent among the 2001 intake cohorts.

Figure 18 provides the same type of trends, this time for reported arrests of juveniles while in the programs. According to the program's own reports, the in-program arrest rate for community-based programs has dropped from about 18 percent for early 1994 intake cohorts to a projected 15 percent for juveniles entering in 2001. For non community-based programs, the comparable figures are from about 7 percent in early 1994 to around 2 percent in 2001. We note that this decrease is partly explained by the increased use of boot camps which, given their relatively short at-risk period, are characterized by very low AWOL and re-arrest rates (2

"Clearly, the reduced average time in program is not a consequence of increased AWOL rates in programs."



Appropriate clients?

"...programs consistently report around 80 percent of all referrals -- about 4 in every 5 cases -- were felt to be 'appropriate' for their program. "

percent and 1 percent respectively).

Whatever the explanation, the fact remains that there has been a downward trend not an increase in AWOL's and re-arrests and these factors are not the cause of the reduced average time in program.

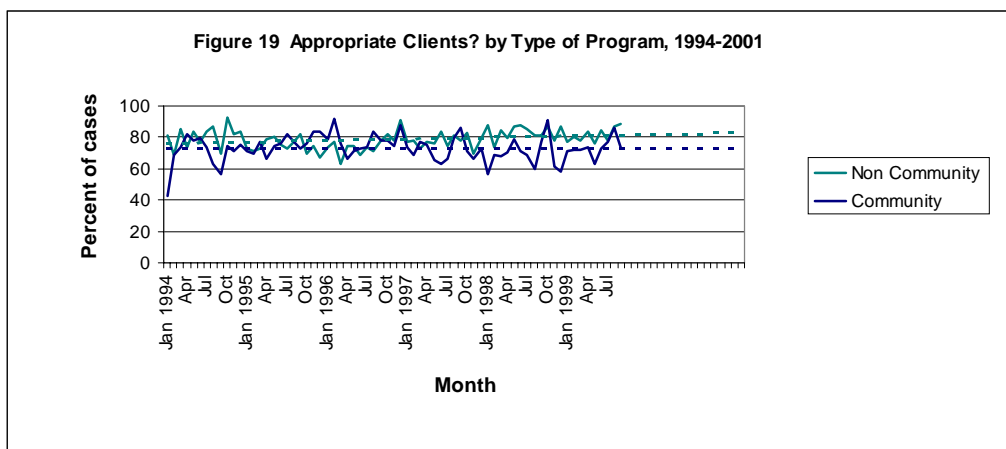
Appropriateness of Referrals

Program staff are asked in the discharge forms to indicate whether or not they feel that the juvenile they received was an 'appropriate' placement for their program. The purpose of such a measure is to examine the extent to which programs or types of programs feel they are receiving clients who just do not fit the programs target population. In some ways this measure reflects on the ability of the system to match the needs of juveniles with the services of different programs.

Figure 19 shows that programs consistently report around 80 percent of all referrals -- about 4 in every 5 cases -- were felt to be 'appropriate' for their program. Furthermore, there is no real difference in either the level or the trend for community-based and non community-based programs. Given the importance of matching the needs of a juvenile with the appropriate program services these are encouraging results.

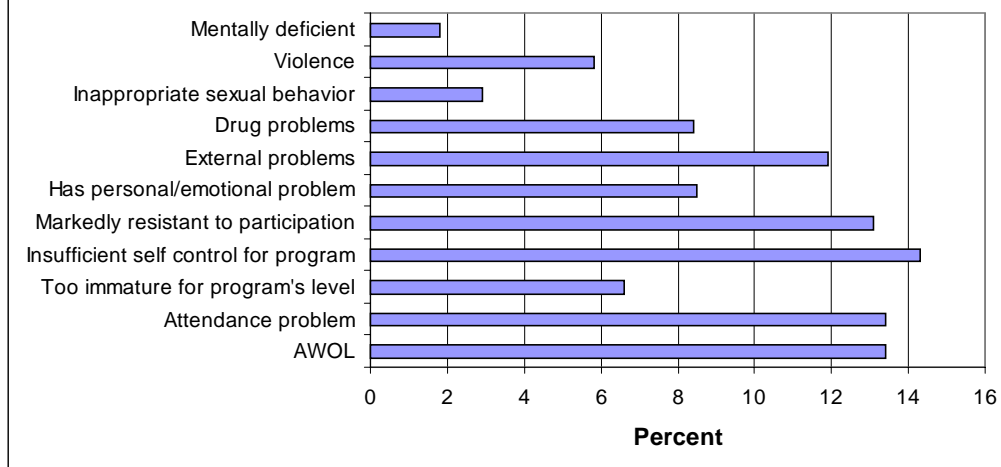
In addition to asking whether or not the juvenile was appropriate *ProDES* has recently started asking the reasons why a juvenile is considered 'inappropriate'. Figure 20 presents the most common responses (more than one reason can be given in each case).

Finally, *ProDES* asks programs to indicate the reasons why a juvenile



Follow-up

Figure 20 Reason Why Juvenile Not Appropriate



"As before, these results must be treated cautiously since almost all the increase in completion rates among non community-based programs is attributable to the increased use of boot camps."

was discharged -- including such things as AWOL's, transfers and program completions. The overall program completion rate is lower for community-based than non community-based programs -- about 35 percent compared with over 60 percent respectively. Furthermore, the projections would suggest that completion rates are improving far more quickly in non community-based programs -- from about 55 percent in 1995 to a projected 80 percent plus by the end of 2001. As before, these results must be treated cautiously since almost all the increase in completion rates among non community-based programs is attributable to the increased use of boot camps (for which completion rates approach 95 percent). Remove the boot camps and we find there has been almost no improvement in completion rates for non community-based programs.

Trends At Follow-Up

Six months after a juvenile is discharged from a program *ProDES* conducts two separate projects. First, in all cases (DHS and DPW) a check is made of juvenile and adult court records to determine whether or not the juvenile was petitioned in court at any time from the date of intake to the program to the follow-up date six months after discharge. Second

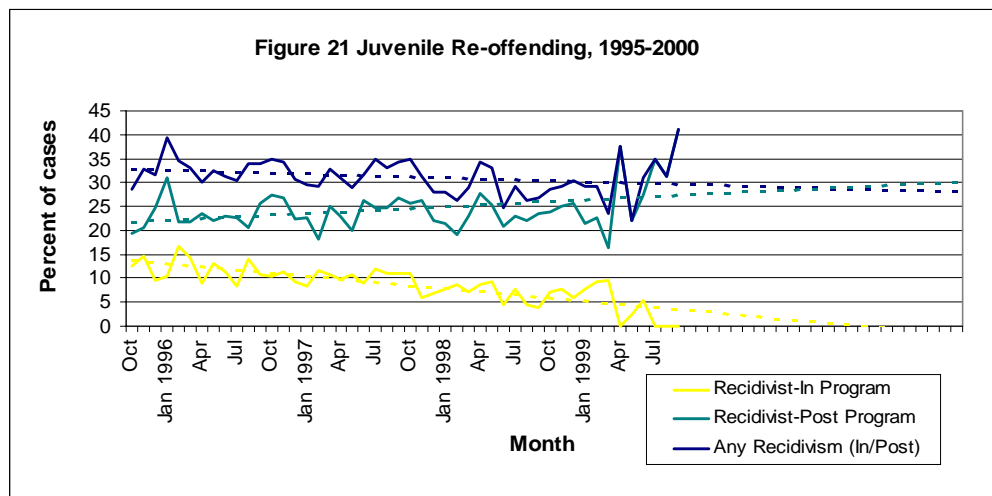
**New petitions
during the
program**

(though only in DHS cases), an attempt is made to complete a telephone survey with both the juvenile and a parent/guardian.

New Petitions

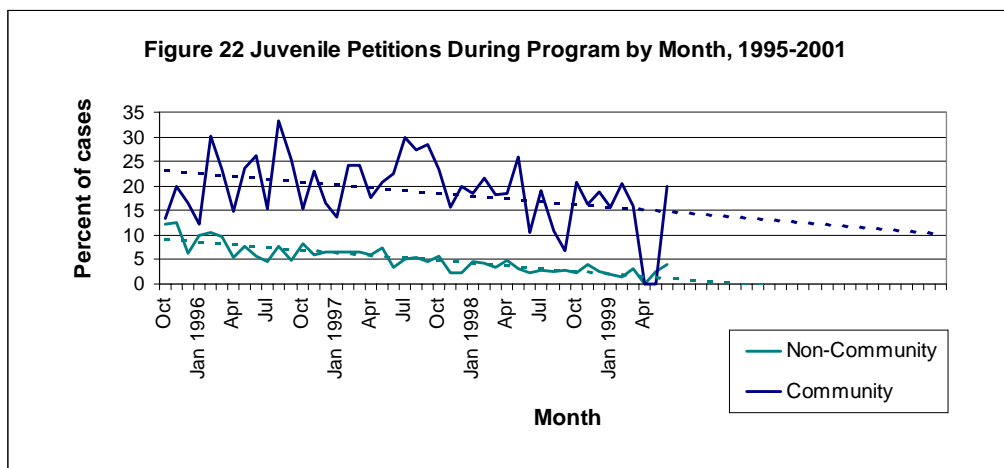
Figure 21 show the trends for new offenses occurring while in the program, during the six month follow-up and for both time periods combined. One clear feature of the chart is the fact that the apparent stability of the overall new petition rate in fact masks two quite different trends for in-program and post-discharge behavior. New petition rates during the program stay are declining. There are several possible interpretations of this trend. One is that it reflects a true decrease in delinquent behavior. A second is that it reflects the increased use of institutional and residential programs during the study period. That is, the decline may reflect an incapacitation rather than a treatment effect. Third, it is possible that the reduction merely reflects the reduced at-risk period resulting from the decline in average time in program noted earlier.

"...the declining trend [in in-program new petitions] exists for community-based and non community-based programs even though one group is more at-risk than the other."



Some insight to the causes of the decline can be obtained by examining new petition rates separately for community-based and non community-based programs. Figure 22 shows that the declining trend exists in both instances even though one group is more at-risk than the other. Though

**New petitions
after the
program**



these data do not dispel the 'reduced time in program' argument (since that applies to both types of program) it does at least support the belief that more effective interventions are occurring in the programs. The key question, of course, is whether the impact of these interventions carries over to the post-discharge period.

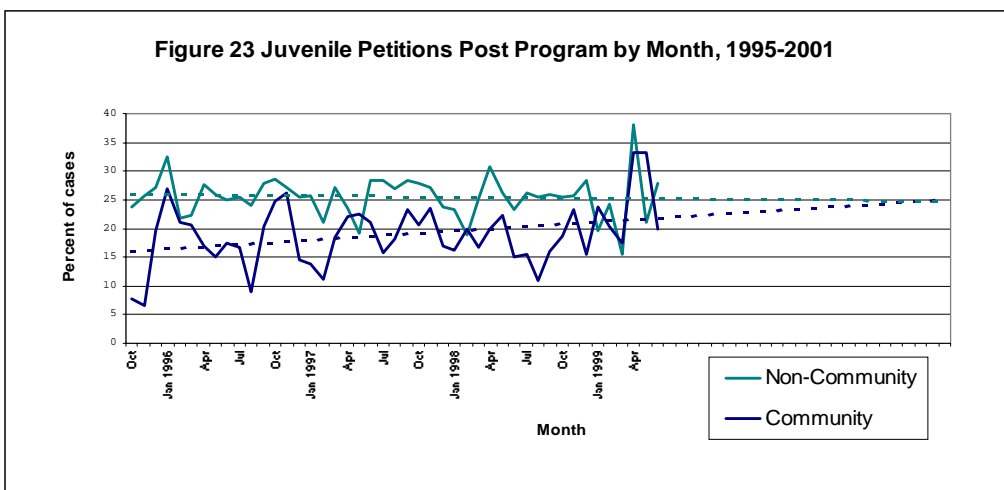
It is worth noting that the non-community program data are in part affected by the increased use of boot camps. Since such programs combine short at-risk periods with high levels of supervision/incapacitation it is not unexpected that their in-program new petition rates are very low -- less than 1 percent.

As Figure 23 shows the trend for the six month post-discharge new petition rate is upward -- from about 22 percent for the late 1995 intake cohorts to a projected 30 percent among 2001 intake cohorts. Since the post-discharge follow-up period is a standard six months and all youth are at-risk (at least until they re-offend) the interpretation of these figures is less confused. Despite an increased use of aftercare services for all institutional and residential cases we have to conclude that the medium term effectiveness of program interventions is not improving.

Figure 23 presents the post-discharge data separately for community-based and non community-based programs -- and the results are intriguing. For community-based programs the post-discharge new petition rate has increased from about 15 percent for late 1995 intake

"Despite an increased use of aftercare services for all institutional and residential cases we have to conclude that the medium term effectiveness of program interventions is not improving."

**New petitions -
- total**



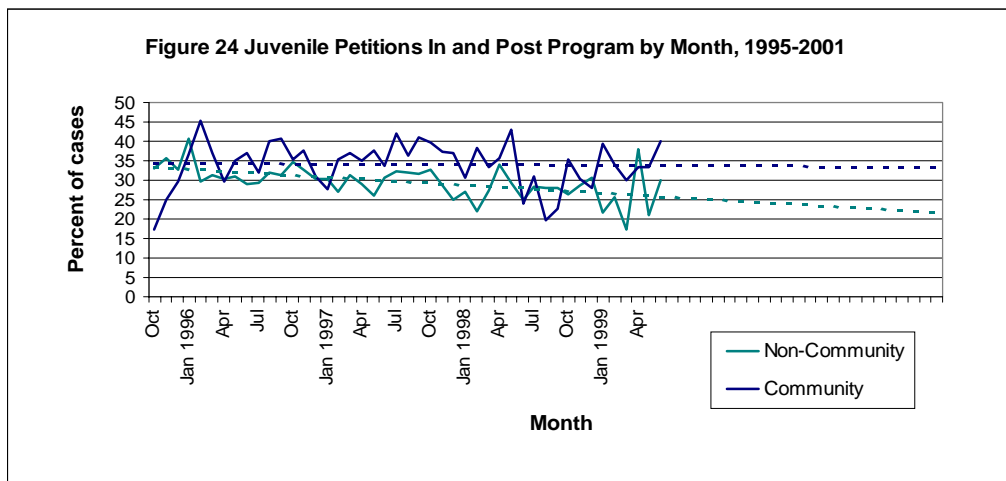
".. overall new petition rates for community-based programs have remained stable at around 35 percent (and are projected to stay that way) while for non community-based programs they have actually declined."

cohorts to a projected 25 percent for 2001 intake cohorts. In contrast, the rates for non-community based programs have remained stable around the 25 percent mark. Interestingly, if we separate out boot camps from the non community-based category we find that their post-discharge new petition rate is higher -- 30 percent -- despite the fact that they receive six months of aftercare services following release.

It would seem that community-based interventions are less effective today in terms of their medium term impact (six months after discharge) than they were five years ago. One might argue that such results reflect the changing nature of the incoming juvenile (increased needs, increased drug abuse etc.) though this is not reflected in the programs own assessment of client appropriateness (which has not worsened). Even with the increased rate of post-discharge new petitions we note that rates for community-based programs are still comparable with non community-based programs and well below those for boot camps.

Figure 24 presents the data on new petition rates for the entire period from program intake through 6-months post-discharge. The data show that overall new petition rates for community-based programs have remained stable at around 35 percent (and are projected to stay that way) while for non community-based programs they have actually declined. Though

Type of new Offenses



".. it is clear that drug offenses are increasingly coming to dominate re-offending."

these data are accurate their interpretation requires caution. For community-based programs the reduced new petition rates during the program (which may well simply reflect reduced time at-risk due to shortened length of stay as much as improved program effectiveness) are offset by increased rates post-discharge petitions. For non community-based programs the overall decline is driven almost entirely by decreased in-program new petition rates -- which again may be a reflection of reduced time at-risk due to shortened length of stay.

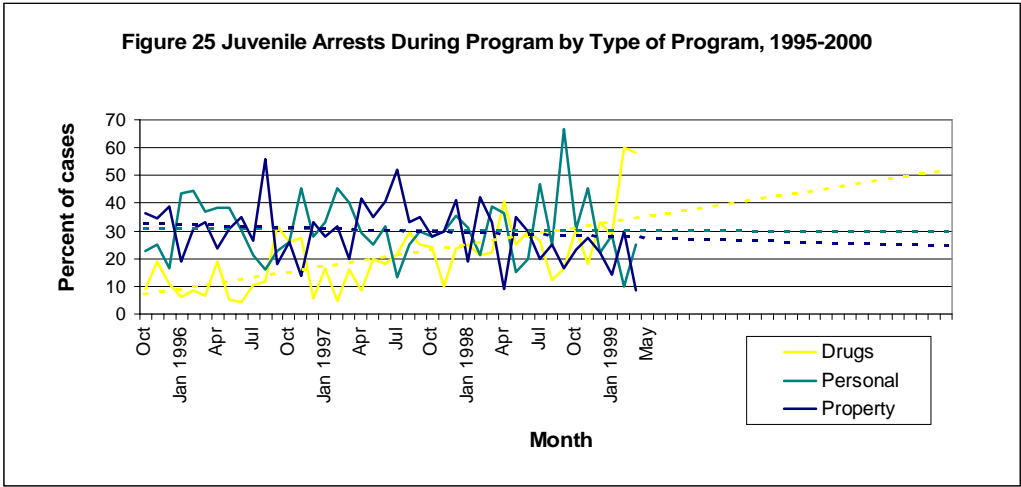
Type of New Petitions

Beyond knowing how much new offending occurs, it is important to monitor the nature of the re-offending. Figures 25 and 26 show the type of first offense for juveniles who re-offend during the program and post-discharge respectively. In both instances, it is clear that drug offenses are increasingly coming to dominate the scene.

Parent and Juvenile Perceptions of the Program

Though customer satisfaction measures are standard components of any business information system they are rarely sought and even more rarely reported within juvenile justice systems. In all DHS funded cases, *ProDES* attempts to complete interviews with each juvenile and a

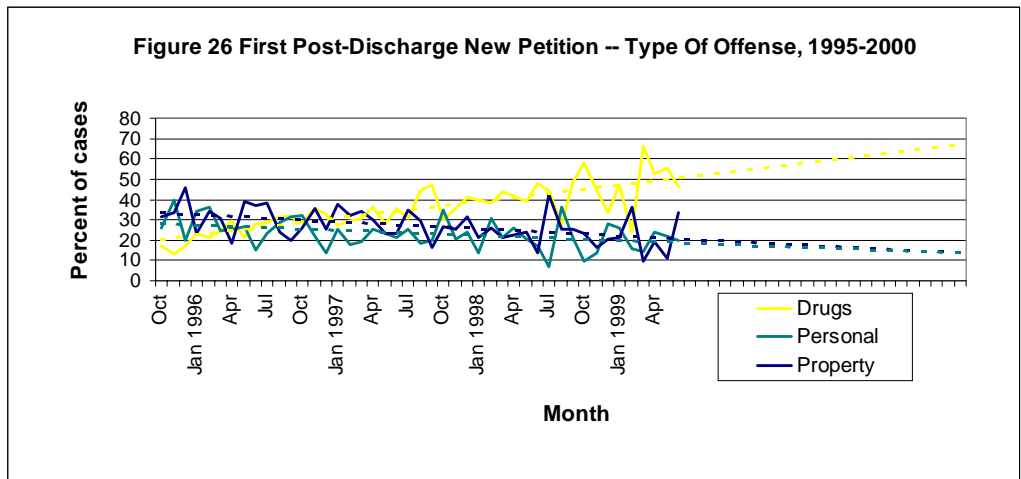
Interview Data



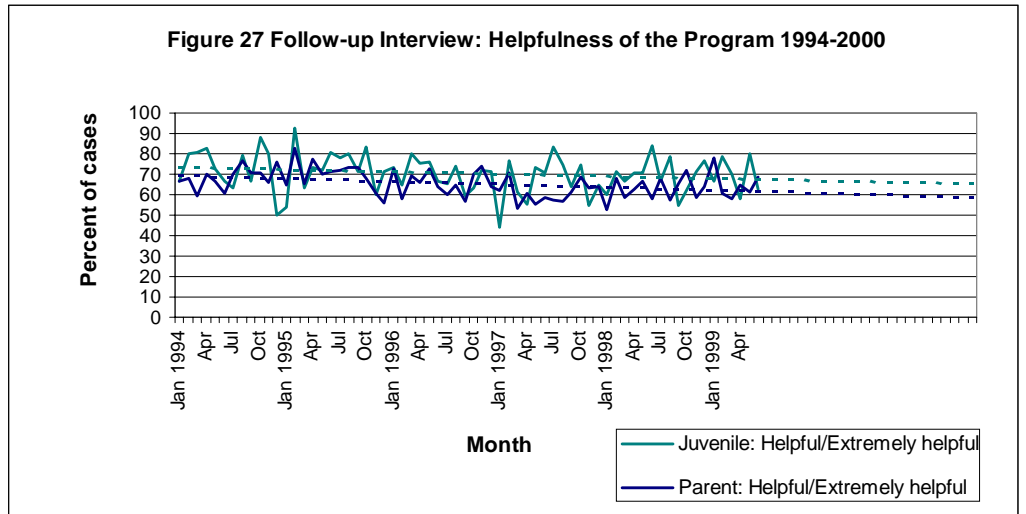
"From 1994 to the present about four in every five interviewees (juvenile and parent) said they would recommend the program."

parent/guardian when the juvenile has been out of the program for at least six months. Among the questions asked are the juvenile and parents overall rating of the helpfulness of the program. As Figure 27 shows there has been a slow but consistent decline throughout the period in the proportion of both juveniles and parents rating the programs as helpful. Separate analyses confirm that this trend is found for cases in both community-based and non community-based programs.

Despite the decline in the helpfulness rating, there has been no drop in the proportion of either juveniles or parent/guardians interviewed who said



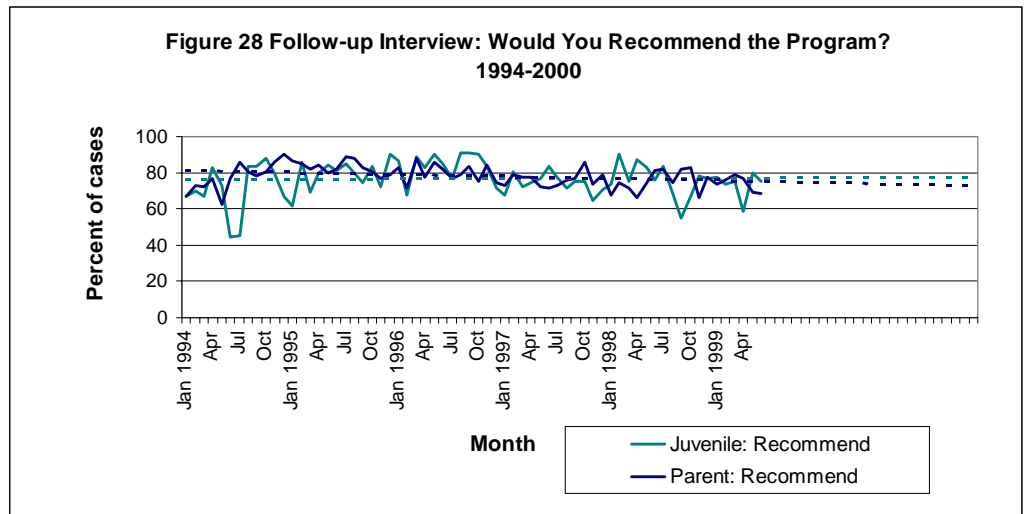
**Recommend
the program?**



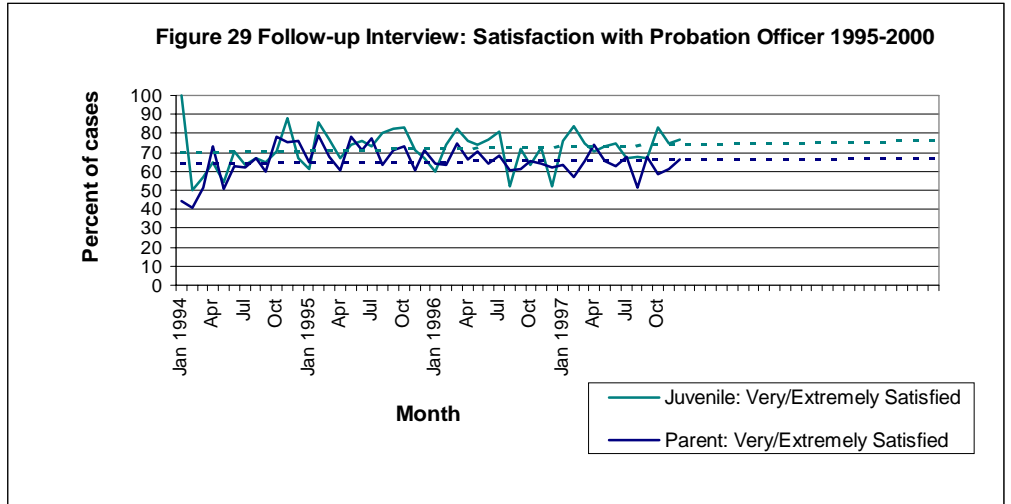
they would recommend the program that they attended (Figure 28). From 1994 to the present about four in every five interviewees (juvenile and parent) said they would recommend the program.

Interviewees were also asked whether or not they were satisfied with their probation officer. As Figure 29 shows this trend is also stable with about 70 to 75 percent answering that they were 'very' or 'extremely' satisfied with their probation officer -- a high rating given the nature of the

"During the study period the proportion of parent/guardians who felt the juveniles had changed while in the program has declined consistently."

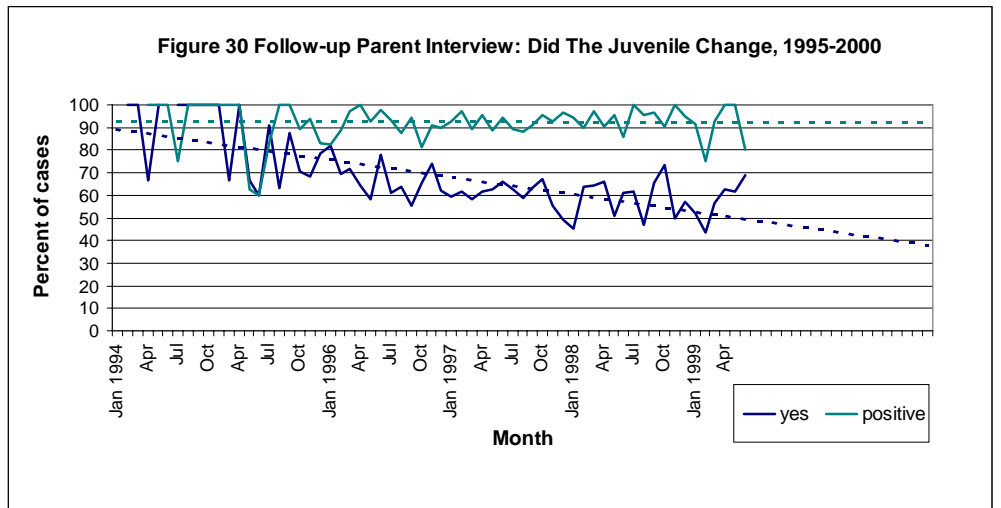


*Did program
make a
difference?*

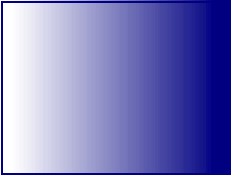


relationship being assessed.

Finally, parents/guardians were asked whether or not they thought that the juvenile had changed as a result of the program and, if so, whether that change was positive or negative. Figure 30 presents the findings. During the study period the proportion of parent/guardians who felt the juveniles had changed while in the program has declined consistently -- from levels at or above 90 percent during 1994 to a less than 60 percent in



1999 and a projected 40 percent in 2001. Despite this downward trend the



fact is that when parents/guardians do say the juvenile has changed they almost always say the change was for the better.

Summary

This report began with the statement that rational and effective decision-making requires information not only about what has happened in the past and what is happening currently, but what is most likely to happen in the future. In many ways, juvenile justice is based upon a series of predictions and forecasts of what may happen -- either to an individual, a program or an entire system. In this report, we have tried to highlight some of the key trends in Philadelphia's juvenile justice system. Despite the complexity of the data, it is impossible not to venture some thoughts -- both positive and negative -- on what we have found.

On the positive side, we must be encouraged by the fact that in-program new petition rates are falling -- both in non-community and, especially, in community-based settings. We must also be encouraged by the fact that AWOL rates are in decline -- again, in both types of setting. Finally, we should note the fact that client (both juvenile and parent/guardian) feedback is generally very positive on programs of all types.

On the negative side, we should be disheartened to find that, despite the stated goals to avoid the institutionalization trend, Philadelphia is institutionalizing more juveniles in 2000 than it has in any of the previous study years. Moreover, the City is also sending more of its juveniles away from the immediate region, in many cases out-of-state -- at the risk of undermining any remaining school and family ties that might have existed. We must closely examine why it is that despite increases in the overall 'needs' of incoming juveniles (e.g. sex offenders, chronic drug abusers, juveniles with a history of mental health problems, juveniles with very low IQs), the number of juveniles being placed in specialized programs (such as drug and alcohol) is not increasing. Finally, we need to consider ways in which the rich information we have on juveniles through a system such as *ProDES* can be utilized to try and achieve improving rather than worsening trends on our outcome measures.

"...despite the stated goals to avoid the institutionalization trend, Philadelphia is institutionalizing more juveniles in 2000 than it has in any of the previous study years. "