

Group Home Programs

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Juveniles at Intake

From 1994 through September 1999, Group Home programs admitted 268 delinquent boys and girls from Philadelphia (see Figure 1). As the total number of juveniles entering the system has slowly grown, the number of admits to Group Home programs remained at about 35 to 55 juveniles a year -- between 1½% and 3% of all admits.

The juveniles who entered Group Home programs ranged in age from 12 to 20, with 63% between 15 and 17 and an average age of just over 15½. Almost four-fifths (79%) of juveniles were African-American, 11% were White, and 8% Latino. About 79% were male.

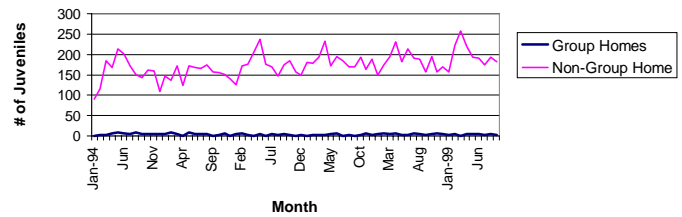
About half (52%) of the juveniles had one or more prior arrests and a large proportion -- 38% -- had a history of prior dependency referrals to DHS. More than a quarter of juveniles (27%) had a reported history of family violence. Only 3% of the juveniles' mothers had a criminal record, but for fathers, the figure was 16%.

About half of incoming juveniles were referred for personal offenses and 35% for property offenses (see Figure 2). About one-fifth (21%) of all intakes involved offenses where a victim was injured, and slightly fewer (14%) involved the use of a weapon. Using CJRI's risk assessment tool, we found that 35% of the incoming clients were low risk, 38% moderate risk and 27% at high risk of re-offending.

Only 6% of juveniles lived with both parents at the time of intake; 39% lived with their mother alone, 14% lived with their natural mother and stepfather/ paramour, and 27% lived with other relatives.

Alcohol abuse by the mother was noted in 19% of cases; by the father in 17% of cases. Maternal

Figure 1: Group Homes -- Monthly Intake of Philadelphia Juveniles (1994-1999)



drug abuse was reported in 31% of cases; paternal drug abuse was reported in 17% of cases. The proportion of juveniles with a history of alcohol abuse was high -- at 36% -- with 6% said to have a chronic drinking problem. Juvenile drug abuse was reported in 45% of cases -- with 19% reported to have a chronic abuse problem. In addition, probation records show a quarter (25%) of Group Home clients to have had a history of mental health problems.

About 13% of Group Home clients were found to have low self-esteem. Almost 44% of juveniles had either an antisocial (26%) or very antisocial (18%) values orientation.

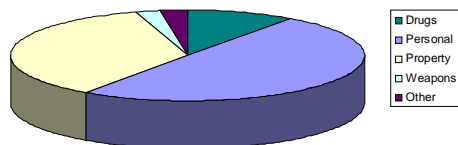
Juveniles at Discharge

The average program stay in Group Home programs was 33 weeks -- about average for many program types (see Figure 3). Group Home program staff reported that a large proportion -- about 36% -- of their clients were 'inappropriate' placements. This is one of the highest rates of inappropriate placements among all program types.

One-quarter (25%) of the intake were reported as having completed the program. Slightly less than one-third (31%) were reported as being discharged because of AWOL's and an additional 12% because the juvenile was 'appropriate but not responding to the program'. Other reasons for discharge included 'unsuccessful/reason unknown' (14%), the juvenile not considered 'appropriate' for the program (9%) and rearrest (4%).

If we examine the changing behavior and attitudes of the youth from intake to discharge, we find some mixed results. Overall, it is common for between half and three-quarters of the youth to remain fairly stable from intake to discharge on most of the measures. However, there are some measures where the findings are quite different or offer notable results. Before describing these results, we should note that there is a relatively small number (approximately 35) of complete pre-post cases for Group Home programs and therefore we report numbers instead of percentages. We are able to report percentages for **Overall Juvenile Need** because for this particular item, we have data on over 120 cases.

Figure 2: Type of Offense of Group Home Incoming Clients

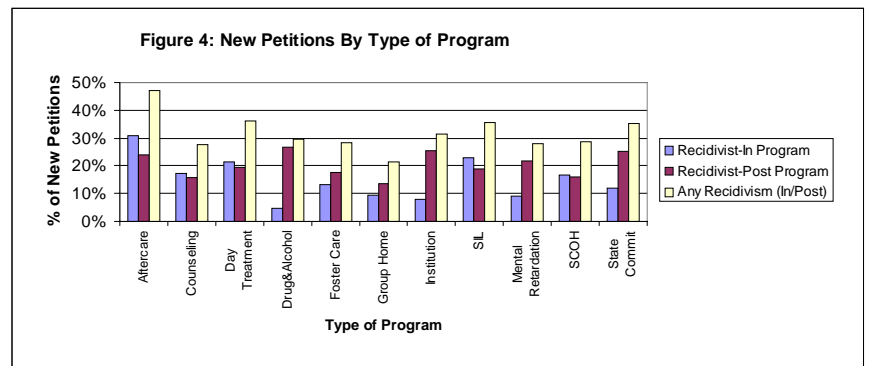
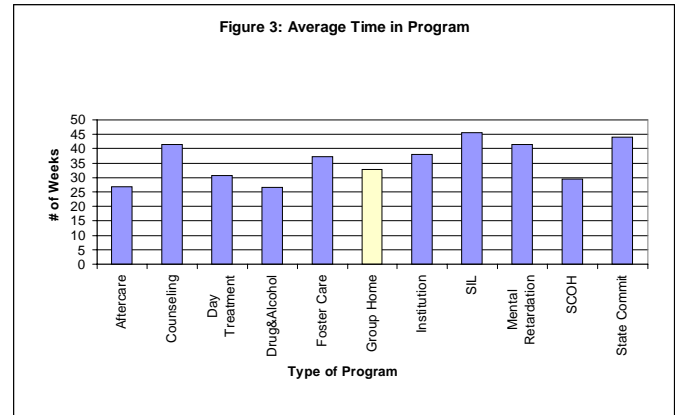


- Of the nine juveniles for whom self-esteem changed while in the Group Home, there were more juveniles with increased than decreased self-esteem (5 and 4 respectively).
- Twelve juveniles had more prosocial values at discharge than they did at intake compared with just two who had more antisocial values at discharge.
- On the family bonding measure ***caring and trust***, 30 juveniles remained unchanged from intake to discharge. Of those that did change, two exhibited lower levels of caring and trust at discharge as compared to intake and two exhibited higher levels at discharge.
- For the family bonding measures of ***instrumental communication***, we find three juveniles to have changed from intake to discharge. For this measure, more than five times as many juveniles (11) showed an improvement rather than a decline (2).
- On the school bonding measure of ***attachment to teachers***, about eight juveniles reported more attachment and almost as many (six) reported less attachment by discharge.
- Only seven of the juveniles experienced an increase in ***community involvement*** from intake to discharge while nine experienced a decrease.
- Staff reports show that there was a change in the level of ***overall juvenile need*** in 61% (74) of cases -- with the same amount showing an increase in overall need as a decrease (31%, or 37).

Juveniles at Follow-up

When juveniles have been discharged for at least six months, CJRI independently completes a follow-up court record check. Of the 149 Group Home cases for whom we have these data, about 9% received a new petition for an arrest while in the program. Only 13% received a petition for a new arrest during the six months following discharge. The total new petition rate -- from intake to six months following discharge -- of 22% for Group Homes clients is the lowest figure for any program type. Furthermore, if we examine the new petition rates through the study period, we find that they are declining slowly.

The new petition data show that re-offending varies considerably by the intake risk-classification of the juveniles -- with only about 10% of low and moderate risk juveniles having new petitions (from intake to six



months following discharge) compared with 46% of high risk juveniles.

Of the juveniles petitioned during the program the most common offense was 'escape' (36%). Of the post-discharge petitions, 35% were theft offenses, 10% drug possession and 15% escape. Together, robbery and aggravated assault comprised 20% of post-discharge petitions.

We can compare rates of new petitions for Group Homes and other program types -- see Figure 4. The data show that although the in-program new petition rates for Group Homes are among the lowest of any program type, the post-discharge and combined (in- and post-program) rate is the lowest of all types. If we control for the risk classification of juveniles at intake, we find that the total new petition rates for Group Homes programs are the lowest for low and for moderate risk juveniles but one of the higher rates for high risk juveniles.

For more in-depth information on the information presented here, or to request additional analyses, please contact Lori Grubstein at (215) 627-0496 or prodeslori@aol.com.