Executive Summary

There are many programs in North Carolina aimed at providing therapeutic services to juveniles who are at risk for delinquency. This exploratory study examines one particular model: programs that help adolescents and their families build skills in communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Results from interviews with four program directors reveal on-the-ground perceptions of how well this model is working in the North Carolina system. In addition, program effectiveness is evaluated through analysis of recidivism data for one program. Results indicate that this programmatic model is working at a level consistent with other treatments for juvenile offenders in North Carolina, but that effectiveness is limited by under-utilization of programs and logistical challenges. Recommendations are provided at both the system-wide and programmatic levels.
BACKGROUND
A voluminous amount of research has addressed the problem of juvenile delinquency. From roughly the early 1970s through the 1990s, juvenile justice policy-making in the U.S. was based on the doctrine that “nothing works”—that the justice system cannot intervene successfully in the lives of young people to steer them away from criminal behavior. Most researchers now view the “nothing works” theory as a persistent myth. Multiple meta-analyses and other studies have consistently found that under the right circumstances, some interventions do work. On average, successful interventions with juvenile offenders appear to reduce recidivism by 10-12 percent, a small but not insignificant success rate. Although much remains to clarify, there is a consensus that effective programs or interventions:

- Are highly structured and use a cognitive-behavioral approach
- Are based on a rehabilitative or therapeutic philosophy
- Employ frequent evaluation, well-trained staff, and adherence to the program model
- Are delivered in the community rather than in an institutional setting
- Are of sufficient duration and intensity
- Observe general principles of effective correctional intervention

In addition, research has established the importance of accurately assessing juveniles’ risk of offending, using this assessment to match offenders to appropriate interventions, and addressing offender needs that are changeable and criminogenic (i.e., that contribute to criminal behavior).

The North Carolina Context
The juvenile justice system in North Carolina attempts to incorporate much of this research into its operations. Specifically, the North Carolina system is based on the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders, a federally-developed framework responding to research on the risks and prevalence of serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offending. The Comprehensive Strategy (CS) approach was adopted by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in 1993 and by North Carolina in 1998. The CS is based on prevention and graduated, targeted sanctions. It emphasizes a “continuum of care” that matches research-based interventions with offenders at every level of risk, from community-based delinquency prevention programs for lower-risk youth to intensive interventions and sanctions for serious and chronic offenders.

The North Carolina system allows lower-risk juveniles who have committed less serious crimes to be “diverted” to a community-based program rather than go through a trial (see Appendix A). Roughly a quarter of youth who have charges filed against them are diverted to a community program. In theory, these community-based programs serve several valuable functions in the juvenile justice system in North Carolina: they provide needed rehabilitative services to at-risk youth, they decrease the burden on the courts and juvenile corrections, and they help to reduce re-offending among lower-risk youth.

Research Question
Many therapeutically-oriented programs serve as diversion options in North Carolina, such as counseling, vocational development, and skill-building programs. This research examines one particular model: programs that engage youth and their families in building communication, conflict-resolution, and problem-solving skills. In this model, adolescents and at least one family member attend group sessions with other adolescents and their families to learn and practice these skills. This exploratory study focuses on this model and examines the following questions:

- What are the perceptions of program directors about the effectiveness of this program model?
- How well are these programs succeeding as diversion programs for youth as intended by the North Carolina Juvenile Justice Reform Act and as measured by a) self-reported skill improvement, and b) short-term recidivism data?
Methodology
This study combines qualitative case studies with a deeper analysis of one particular case to allow for more meaningful conclusions. To respond to the first question, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with four program directors across the state who run community-based diversion programs based on this model (see Appendix B).\textsuperscript{xviii} There are fewer than 20 such programs in North Carolina.\textsuperscript{xix} Five potential interviewees were chosen based on expert judgment from juvenile-justice professionals and on geographic diversity. The experts consulted were asked to identify high-performing programs in the eastern, western, and central parts of the state.\textsuperscript{xii} Four out of the five invited programs participated. Interviews with program directors were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for trends and themes. See Appendix C for a comparison of included programs.

For the second question, quantitative data from one case study were used: the Dispute Settlement Center (DSC) of Orange County provided de-identified data on participants in its diversion program, “Family Table” (see Appendix D). Data used consisted of demographic information about individual participants, pre- and post-test scores on an instrument measuring desired outcomes for participants (see Appendix E), and data on the number of participants who were charged with a criminal offense within one year of beginning the program. The data set was limited to Family Table juvenile participants from 2001 – 2010 who had both a pre- and post-test score on record; this yielded a sample size of 93 juveniles.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS
Results demonstrate that family-based skill-building programs are being implemented with a high level of consistency across the state. For instance, all the programs included in the study had similar clients, were structured similarly, and used similar curricula (see Table 1).

| Table 1: Comparison of Programs Included in Study |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Program         | Program A       | Program B       | Program C       | Program D       |
| Age served      | 12-17, average age 15 or 16 | 11-17, average age 14 or 15 | 10-17, average age 14 or 15 | 11-17, average age 15 |
| Disposition level served* | At-risk, diverted | At-risk, diverted, some adjudicated | At-risk, diverted | At-risk, diverted, and adjudicated |
| Referral sources** | DSS, DJJDP, adult courts, parental self-referrals, United Way | DJJDP, DSS, parental self-referrals, schools, mental health services, law enforcement | DJJDP, law enforcement, schools, parental self-referrals | DJJDP, parental self-referrals, schools, occasionally DSS |
| Duration & frequency | 6-week sessions, one 1.5-hour class / week (9 hr total) | 14 weeks, one 2.5-hour class / week (35 hr total) | 8 weeks, 12 sessions, 2 hours / session (24 hr total) | 12 weeks (formerly 6 weeks), 2 hours / week (24 hr total) |
| Curriculum Used | Unofficial curriculum\textsuperscript{xxi} | Strengthening Families\textsuperscript{xxii} | Resolve It Together\textsuperscript{xxii} | Resolve It Together (adapted, re-named “Family Table”) |

* “Disposition level” refers to the participants’ treatment by the court system. “At-risk” participants enter the program through a non-court referral (parents, schools), “diverted” participants are sent to the program by court counselors, and “adjudicated” participants go through a trial and are assigned to the program by a judge. Adjudicated cases are generally more serious than diverted cases.

** DSS = Department of Social Services; DJJDP = Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Program directors’ descriptions of their programs also indicated that all four programs abide by many of the principles that research has linked to program effectiveness (e.g., staff are trained in the curriculum, staff use positive reinforcement with participants, and programs employ a structured, skill-building approach that gives participants opportunities for practice and feedback.)
Previous research has established that regular evaluation is another component of effective programs; on this measure the four programs varied more widely. All of the programs in this study employed post-session surveys of their participants. Only the DSC used a pre- and post-test to measure changes in attitudes about conflict and in (self-reported) ability to use conflict-resolution and communication skills. See Table 2 for a comparison of each program’s evaluation practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Evaluation Practices</th>
<th>Program A</th>
<th>Program B</th>
<th>Program C</th>
<th>Program D (DSC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-session survey? (self-report)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff assessment of knowledge or skills?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (via observation)</td>
<td>Yes (via pre- and post-tests)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows up with families?</td>
<td>No (plan to)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks re-offending?</td>
<td>No (plan to)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Program-Level and System-Level Effectiveness**

All four program directors expressed a perception that this model is working fairly well in the North Carolina system. However, they did identify some challenges that limit effectiveness:

- **Inattendance.** Three of the four directors explicitly said that attendance matters, and that missing sessions reduces effectiveness for individual participants. Three directors identified lack of transportation as major problem that drives attendance down. The fourth program avoids this problem by providing transportation for participants who need it.

- **Variation in participant and parent attitudes.** All four directors pointed to parental engagement and participants’ willingness to learn as important factors for success. The literature has not identified these as important elements of effectiveness, perhaps due to difficulty of measurement.

- **Occasional inappropriate referrals.** All of the directors reported that their programs are less effective for participants who need more intensive services—an unsurprising conclusion, as these community-based skills programs are intended to serve lower-risk juveniles. This finding aligns with the literature, which has established the importance of matching juvenile offenders with programs that are appropriate for their risk level and that address their specific needs. The North Carolina system relies on accurate assessments, and consistent dispositions that reflect those assessments. The perception among program directors was that this system is working fairly well: for the most part, they receive youth of the appropriate risk levels. All four directors reported trying to correct occasional referral errors by sending participants with greater needs or higher risk levels to other, more intensive services.

- **Program under-utilization.** The Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (DJJDP) standards allow up to ten families for every staff member (see Appendix F). Yet the directors reported sometimes running sessions with as few as three or four families. This lower-than-required utilization can be traced to several potential causes: lack of awareness about the program among referral sources; internal organizational pressures to keep class size low; and the logistical difficulties of managing class size. Three directors also discussed the challenges of having more than a month elapse between session start dates. The programs included in this study ranged in duration from six to 14 weeks. For programs with longer durations, there can be a long lag time for some participants between initial referral and participation in the program. This leads to increased attrition, which contributes to below-capacity class sizes.
Quantitative Findings
Over the last ten years, roughly 35% of participants in the DSC’s “Family Table” program have entered the program through non-court referrals; the other 65% have been referred by judges or court counselors. Analysis of demographic, test-score, and recidivism data provided by the DSC yielded two main findings:

- Family Table appears to have become more effective over the years. It is not clear whether this trend is a result of improved performance, more appropriate referrals, or structural changes.

- Recidivism rates for Family Table participants over the program’s entire history are about the same as recidivism rates statewide for comparable juveniles. However, over the last four years the program has achieved a statistically significant reduction in recidivism compared to state averages.

Increasing Effectiveness
Outcomes for Family Table participants have improved since the beginning of the program (See Figure 1). For instance, the recidivism rate for court-involved participants from recent groups (2006 and later) is only 10.7%, compared to 61.5% for court-involved participants from 2005 and earlier. Although it is not possible to give a definitive explanation for these improved outcomes, one potential explanation is that the DSC’s ability to provide an effective program has improved. Another explanation is that in the early years, the court was sending more serious cases to Family Table, and the higher recidivism rates in those years were a reflection of the higher risk of the participants. Several structural changes might also explain the improvement: in 2006, the DSC began using staff members instead of volunteers to facilitate Family Table sessions, which allowed for more consistency. Family Table also switched from a 6-week to a 12-week format in 2007 to comply with new Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP) standards. The program director of Family Table attributes the difference to a combination of factors, including organizational learning, longer duration, and better engagement of facilitators.

Recidivism Rates
For Family Table participants, as for juveniles statewide, higher levels of involvement with the justice system are correlated with higher rates of recidivism (at a 99.99% confidence level). None of the Family Table youth referred from non-court sources had any charges filed against them within one year of beginning the program. In contrast, court-referred juveniles re-offended at a rate of 41.5%. This higher rate of re-offense is consistent with research that has demonstrated that one of the biggest predictors of offending is prior offenses. However, this finding does help to forestall fears of potential iatrogenic effects of Family Table—it appears that interaction with other at-risk youth does not increase risk of offending for other juveniles. For those participants who had already committed offenses (i.e., the court-referred youth), Family Table appears effective at levels consistent with other programs used by the court: statewide, recidivism rates for comparable youth range from 34.2% to 44.7% (see Appendix G).

Test Scores and Recidivism
The DSC administers a pre- and post-test to Family Table participants, intended to measure changes in attitude and in self-reported ability to use conflict-resolution and communication skills. An analysis of participant scores showed no correlation between test-score improvement and reduced recidivism. This may reflect the fact that changes in attitude are an intermediate goal of Family Table and programs like it, while reduced recidivism is a long-term goal. The relationship between the intermediate goal of improved skills and the long-term goal of lowered recidivism is complex. The many intervening variables make it difficult to establish a clear causality between the two, especially lacking a comparison group.
Figure 1: Number of Family Table Participants with and without Post-Program Charges, by Session

* Missing sessions reflect missing data (2005), or sessions in which no classes were held due to lack of funding (Fall 2007, Spring 2008) or inadequate class size (Fall 2006). Listed recidivism rates are for court-referred participants only. Post-program offense rates for all participants (court-referred and non court-referred) were 42.9% for the “Early” group and 7.3% for the “Recent” group. Confidence interval for “Early” group is 99.9%; offense rate for “Recent” group is not statistically significant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are based on both analysis of the Family Table data and on interviews with program directors across the state. Because the four cases studied were similar, recommendations drawn from analysis of the DSC data can be tentatively extrapolated to all programs of this type in North Carolina.

- To address the issues of inconsistent evaluation practices, programs should adopt standardized and streamlined evaluations. For example, all programs should track new charges for one year after program start, and should note the date and type of charges filed, along with affirmatively noting the absence of new charges during the follow-up period. This will help the DJJDP compare the effectiveness of program models as well as specific programs.
- Programs should follow up with participants. Program C does this by inviting families back to the program site for individual interviews 45 days after the program ends. These check-ins provide a chance to evaluate effectiveness and to offer continued support to those clients who need it.
- Providers should engage in more outreach with referral agencies, to improve program utilization.
- Programs should continue to engage both court-referred and non-court-referred participants. Although DJJDP standards give court-referred juveniles priority, this evidence suggests that participation in these programs do not create negative effects for non-court referred participants.
- The DJJDP should consider reducing its recommended program length to 8 or 9 weeks to encourage fuller utilization of these programs. Shorter sessions would allow for more frequent start times and reduced attrition, by reducing the lag between initial referral and program start. Alternately, programs can quicken the pace of sessions, meeting more often, as Program C does.
- The DJJDP and county Juvenile Justice Prevention Councils should track utilization of these programs and strive to use them more often. Family-oriented skill-building programs in North Carolina seem to be serving appropriate populations, but are not being used to their full capacity.
- The DJJDP should make allowances for organizational learning when evaluating newer programs, and should put greater value on mature programs. This analysis suggests that Family Table’s effectiveness (as measured by recidivism) increased over time. It is possible that other programs also experience low effectiveness in early years.
The Mediation Center of Eastern Carolina developed the “Resolve It Together” curriculum in 1994, and serves over 100 families per year in five counties in Eastern North Carolina with the Resolve program. In 1998, the curriculum was published and the Mediation Center began training other agencies throughout the state to use it. See

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**Notes:**

1. Gendreau, Smith, & French, 2006
2. Cullen, 2005; Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; Gendreau et al., 2006
5. The definition of “effective” can of course vary, but recidivism—also called re-offending—is often the main outcome of interest. Most interventions with at-risk or delinquent juveniles strive to reduce the chances that participants will commit criminal offenses in the future. Other definitions of “effective” can include making positive changes in the various protective or risk factors associated with juvenile delinquency.
7. Lipsey et al 2010
8. Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Gendreau et al., 2006; Lipsey 2009
x. Izzo & Ross, 1990; Lipsey, 2009
xi. A number of researchers have identified general principles of effective correctional intervention, and have found that programs that observe these principles are more effective (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006; Bonta & Andrews, 2007; Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; Howell, 2009). The principles include accurately assessing risk and needs, appropriately matching offenders and interventions, using skill-building approaches, employing more positive than negative reinforcements, recruiting “natural communities” like families and peer groups to provide support, regularly evaluating program effectiveness, and providing offenders with feedback. Many of these principles support the conclusions of other researchers. For example, Greenwood (2004) has found that skill-based programs that focus on family interactions are more effective than programs without a family component. These principles also overlap with the “risk-need-response” model of the Andrews group (Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2006; Bonta & Andrews, 2007).
13. For example, the required standards for programs funded by Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils across the state follow the research-based principles listed in the bullets above. See Appendix C.
17. Where “succeed” is defined as: the program is well-used by court counselors, the program is serving the juveniles it is intended to serve (as measured by risk levels of participants), and the program is achieving its goals of building skills and reducing recidivism among participants.
18. Interviews were designed to find out whether participating programs seem to be operating according to the principles of program effectiveness outlined in the literature, and to seek program managers’ perspectives on how well this type of program is functioning within the North Carolina system. Interview protocols were developed by creating a data map that connected findings in the literature to specific interview questions, and interviews were field-tested with colleagues for comprehensibility. See Appendix B for interview script.
20. Juvenile diversion professionals were consulted for guidance on which programs to interview. These professionals included DiShon Cain, program director at the Dispute Settlement Center of Orange County; and Steve Day, Research Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina’s School of Social Work. See O’Sullivan, Rassel, & Berner, 2008, p. 147 for more on purposive sampling.
21. Curriculum developed by program director and other mediation center staff. Curriculum draws on the conflict-resolution materials of the mediation center.
23. The Mediation Center of Eastern Carolina developed the “Resolve It Together” curriculum in 1994, and serves over 100 families per year in five counties in Eastern North Carolina with the Resolve program. In 1998, the curriculum was published and the Mediation Center began training other agencies throughout the state to use it. See
the Mediation Center of Eastern Carolina’s website: http://www.mceconline.org/about/our-history

Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Gendreau et al., 2006; Lipsey 2009

This program provides transportation upon request through an arrangement with a local cab company.

Statement based on program directors’ statements about who their programs are intended to serve. Also see Bonta & Andrews, 2007; Lipsey, 2009; and Lipsey et al, 2010 for more on the importance of matching offenders with programs that are appropriate for their level of risk.

See Bonta & Andrews, 2007; DeMatteo & Marczyk, 2005; Lipsey, 2009; and Lipsey et al, 2010

Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2006.

The recidivism rate for comparable juveniles statewide is statistically significantly greater than the recidivism rate for court-referred Family Table participants from 2006-2010, at a 99% confidence level.

The difference between the recidivism rate for court-referred participants in the “early” group compared to the “recent” group is statistically significant at a 99% confidence level.


34.2% in Schwalbe et al, 2004 (p. 9), and 44.8% in North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, 2009 (p. 15). See Appendix D. Robust statewide recidivism rates per se are not readily available, but it is possible to get a sense of the context by looking at data on the status of youth entering the court system. According to the DJJDP’s 2009 Annual Report, 58% of youth receiving court dispositions in 2009 had prior referrals to Juvenile Court Intake (p. 23). Of course, crime rates in general for youth ages 10-17 are much lower than crime rates for youth who are already in the court system (or who are at risk of becoming involved with the court system). See Appendix E for complaint rates among this population in Orange County and statewide.

It’s possible that the relatively higher offending rates of early Family Table sessions are confounding the results. Considering only those sessions held in 2006 and after shows a statistically significant correlation between test scores and new charges (N = 41, chi-square = 0.50).
**REFERENCE LIST**


APPENDIX A
North Carolina Juvenile Justice System Flowchart
Provided by the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Retrieved from: http://www.juvjas.state.nc.us/court_services/flowchart.html
APPENDIX B
Semi-Structured Interview Script

SECTION ONE: Program Characteristics

General:
- Please describe your juvenile diversion program.
  
  \textit{Probes:}
  - What specific topics does the program cover?
  - What kind of activities does the program use? (Role-playing, discussion of what-if scenarios, etc.)

- How did you design the curriculum for this program?
  
  \textit{Probes:}
  - Who was involved?
  - What was the source? Was it based on a particular model?
  - Why did you make the choices you did?

- What are the goals of the program?
  
  \textit{Probes:}
  - Does it attempt to teach new skills or ways of thinking?
  - What risk factors or needs does program try to address?

Connection to Juvenile Justice System and to Community:
- Does the program involve anyone besides the juveniles themselves?
  
  \textit{Probe:}
  - Does it involve family members or other community members?

- How are participants referred to the program?

- Does the program receive funding or other support from the JCPC?

Implementation Practices and Staff Skill Level:
- What skills and qualifications do you look for in program staff?
  
  \textit{Probes:}
  - Degrees in relevant fields?
  - Experience with therapeutic interventions?

- What kind of training do program staff receive?
  
  \textit{Probes:}
  - Do they receive specific training in how to implement this particular curriculum?
  - Do they receive (or have) training in best practices?

- Tell me what really successful interactions between staff and participants would look like.
  
  \textit{Probes:}
  - Looking for use of “core correctional practices”

Program Duration, Frequency, and Attendance:
- How long does the program last?
• How long and how frequent are sessions?

• Can you share any recent attendance numbers with me?
  
  Probes:
  - Are these numbers typical? If not, how do they differ from typical attendance rates?
  - Is there a difference between people who are referred to the program but don’t enter, those who start but don’t finish, and those who finish?
  - Is there a minimum number of sessions participants are required to attend in order to stay in the program?

SECTION TWO: Participant Characteristics

• What is the demographic make-up of program participants (age, gender, race/ethnicity)?

• Do you find that the program is more effective for certain demographics, or do demographic factors not seem to matter?

• Please tell me about the risk level and risk factors of program participants.
  
  Probes:
  - Is there a range of risk levels?
  - Do you notice any specific risk factors among your participants?

• What kinds of offenses have participants committed, generally?
  
  Probes:
  - Do you see a variety? (Status offenses vs. delinquency)
  - Do you find that a participant’s offense makes a difference in terms of how effective the program is for that person?

SECTION THREE: Evaluation & Outcomes

• What kind of evaluations or measurement do you do (if any)?
  
  Probes:
  - Do you track recidivism?
  - What other participant outcomes do you measure?
  - After participants finish the program, what happens?

• What kind of contact do staff have with agency administrators or directors?
  
  Probe:
  - How are program staff evaluated?

• Either through your measurements or from your own observation, what seems to affect recidivism (and/or other outcomes) the most?
  
  Probes:
  - Skills of staff members?
  - Appropriate matching of participants to this particular program?
  - Specific participant needs that program is well-equipped or ill-equipped to meet?
  - Attendance of participants?
  - Level of support from JCPC?
• What seems not to matter at all?

  Probes:
  - Gender, age, race, prior offenses?
  - Other factors?

• Without revealing confidential or identifying information, could you tell me of one or two circumstances you would define as successful? What made these cases successful?

• Again without revealing confidential or indentifying information, can you tell me about some times when the program didn’t work? In your opinion, why do you think the program was not successful in these cases?

• What are the biggest needs for the program? What would make the program more successful?

• Do you have any reports you can share with me?

* * *
APPENDIX C

Comparison of Programs Included in Study

The four programs studied were selected as high-performing representatives of the program model that is the focus of this study. Background information on the four programs is given in Table C1 below. Program “D” is Family Table at the Dispute Settlement Center (DSC). The four programs studied were broadly similar in their structure, size, and location. These programs represented geographic diversity throughout the state, but did not represent urban/rural diversity. A possible valuable avenue for future research is to examine the effectiveness of this program model in rural settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D (DSC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational setting</td>
<td>Community-based</td>
<td>Multi-purpose organization: provides assessment,</td>
<td>Community-based</td>
<td>Community-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mediation center</td>
<td>case management and mediation services</td>
<td>mediation center</td>
<td>mediation center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program location</td>
<td>Western NC</td>
<td>East-central NC</td>
<td>Eastern NC</td>
<td>Triangle area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of program county</td>
<td>~238,000</td>
<td>~319,000</td>
<td>~168,000</td>
<td>~134,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of program city/town</td>
<td>~80,000</td>
<td>~181,000</td>
<td>~84,000</td>
<td>~20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service area</td>
<td>Home county</td>
<td>Home county</td>
<td>Home county and 4</td>
<td>Home county</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>surrounding counties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff (organization and program)</td>
<td>12 total staff, 1 program staff</td>
<td>10 total staff, 1 program staff</td>
<td>18 total staff, 1 program staff</td>
<td>8 total staff, (3 program staff, including 2 part-time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year program began</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Demographic Characteristics of Family Table Participants, and Orange County Context

Data provided by the DSC and the Orange County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council

Tables D1-D4 refer to the 93 Family Table participants who comprised the data set used for this study (i.e., juvenile participants from 2001 – 2010 who had both a pre- and post-test score on record). Figure D1 puts Family Table participation within the context of all Orange County dispositions, 2006 - 2010.

**Table D1: Race of Family Table Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table D2: Age of Family Table Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>39.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table D3: Risk Level of Family Table Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At-Risk (non court-referred participants)</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 (court-referred participants)</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table D4: Gender of Family Table Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure D1: Family Table (FT) Dispositions as Percentage of Orange County (OC) Dispositions**

- FY 06-07: Total OC dispositions = 58
- FY 07-08: Total OC dispositions = 79
- FY 08-09: Total OC dispositions = 86
- FY 09-10: Total OC dispositions = 58

- Green: Number of dispositions to FT resulting in successful FT enrollment
- Blue: Number of OC dispositions to programs other than FT
APPENDIX E

Family Table Pre-Test/Post-Test
Provided by the Dispute Settlement Center of Orange County

Name_______________________  Family:___________________  Date: ______________

Part A

1. Conflict happens just “out of the blue.”               TRUE   FALSE
2. Usually there is only one option to resolving conflict. TRUE   FALSE
3. Brainstorming is a way to uncover needs.              TRUE   FALSE
4. It’s better to respond to conflicts with quick decisions. TRUE   FALSE
5. Conflict is always the beginning of something negative TRUE   FALSE
6. To resolve a conflict, somebody usually loses out.     TRUE   FALSE
7. In a conflict, it is important to prove one is right.   TRUE   FALSE
8. Taking a strong position is the best way to negotiate TRUE   FALSE
9. It’s important to figure out who's correct in a conflict. TRUE   FALSE
10. We really can’t help how we feel.                     TRUE   FALSE
11. Summarizing after listening means agreement.         TRUE   FALSE
12. The best way to help one solve a problem is to give advice. TRUE   FALSE
13. I should expect resistance when I assert myself.      TRUE   FALSE
14. People lose their tempers because they can’t help it. TRUE   FALSE
15. Restating what someone tells you often helps build trust. TRUE   FALSE
16. Sharing your needs in a conflict usually improves things. TRUE   FALSE
17. Conflicts often happen because people don't hear each other. TRUE   FALSE
18. You don't have to give up what you want to settle a dispute. TRUE   FALSE
Part B:  

5 = strongly agree  4 = agree  3 = not sure  2 = disagree  1 = strongly disagree

1. I don't know how to deal with conflict with my parent/teen effectively.  
   5  4  3  2  1

2. I often find myself with no choices.  
   5  4  3  2  1

3. I think giving my parent/teen what they're looking for is a way to make situations better.  
   5  4  3  2  1

4. I am able to approach conflict situations with an open mind.  
   5  4  3  2  1

5. I am able to turn a difficult situation into something more positive.  
   5  4  3  2  1

6. I don't often see ways to meet everyone's needs.  
   5  4  3  2  1

7. I don't feel OK about things until my parent/teen tells me I'm right.  
   5  4  3  2  1

8. I can connect with my parent/teen even if we disagree.  
   5  4  3  2  1

9. Even if my parent/teen is angry with me, I am able to listen to him/her.  
   5  4  3  2  1

10. I am able to control my anger with my parent/teen.  
    5  4  3  2  1

11. There is never a good time to bring up conflicts with my parent/teen.  
    5  4  3  2  1

12. I try to share my experiences with people who are having a problem.  
    5  4  3  2  1

13. I can get past hard feelings and make a situation with my parent/teen better.  
    5  4  3  2  1

14. I try to point out my parent/teen’s mistakes rather than listening to their reasoning.  
    5  4  3  2  1

15. I have the skill to repeat back a summary of what my parent/teen says.  
    5  4  3  2  1

16. Given if I disagree with my parent/teen, I am able to still speak up about my concerns.  
    5  4  3  2  1

17. In a conflict with my parent/teen, I am able to listen to them first.  
    5  4  3  2  1

18. I have skills to discover ways to meet everyone's needs.  
    5  4  3  2  1
APPENDIX F

Standards for Structured Activities Programs

Provided by the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Retrieved from: http://www.juvjus.state.nc.us/jcpc/policy.html

DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

NUMBER: JCPC 8.1  PAGES: 5
SECTION: Structured Activities Programs
SUBJECT: Skill Building

APPROVED BY:  DATE SIGNED: 01/03/06

RELATED NCAC CITATION: N/A

RELATED LEGISLATION:
1. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7B-2506, Dispositional alternatives for delinquent juveniles; and

RELATED STANDARDS: N/A

INDEX AS: Skill Building, Structured Activities Programs; Parent/Family Skill Building (Parental responsibility classes); Interpersonal Skills; Tutoring/Academic Enhancement; Vocational Development

PURPOSE: To establish minimum standards for the design, implementation, and operation of structured activity programs funded by Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPC).

POLICY STATEMENT: Non-residential programs shall establish operational procedures to address a service plan for each juvenile and for those programs with a parent/family skill building component, a service plan for their parents/families.

1. OPERATION
   A. Services Provided: Structured activity services include planned interventions that shall be curriculum-based and may target individuals, groups of individuals, or family members. These services develop, practice, and master pro-social skills including interpersonal skills, problem solving, anger management skills, academic enhancement, vocational development, and other essential life skills.

   1. Parent/Family Skill Building: Programs or components thereof whose primary purpose is to provide opportunities for parents and/or juveniles and other family members to learn skills and attitudes needed to build healthy, non-abusive family interactions, solve problems together through effective communications using a strength-based, family centered approach and structured curriculum, and group activities led by trained group facilitators.

   2. Interpersonal Skills: This type of program is a treatment technique focusing on
developing the social skills required for an individual to interact in a positive way with others. The basic skills model begins with an individual’s goals, progressive to how these goals should be translated into appropriate and effective social behaviors, and concludes with the impact of the behavior on the social environment. Typical training techniques are instruction, modeling of behavior, practice and rehearsal, feedback, reinforcement. This may also include training in a set of techniques, such as conflict resolution or decision making, that focus on how to effectively deal with specific types of issues that an individual may confront in interacting with others.

3. Life Skills: This type of program focuses on effectively managing everyday living. This may include a wide range of issues such as general problem solving, social/moral reasoning, balancing responsibilities, how to deal with housing issues, time and money management.

4. Tutoring/Academic Enhancement: This type of program provides juveniles assistance with understanding and completing schoolwork and/or classes or trips designed to be an enrichment of or supplemental experience beyond the basic education curriculum.

5. Vocational Development: A structured activity whose overall emphasis is on preparing the juvenile to enter the work force by providing actual employment, job placement, non-paid work service (non-residential based), job training, or career counseling.

6. Experiential Skills: This type of program uses outdoor adventures and physical activities or challenges to instruct, demonstrate, and provide opportunities to practice effective interpersonal, problem solving, communication and similar skills to achieve the goals of increasing self-esteem, building interpersonal skills, and building pro-social behavior.

B. Frequency: Individuals must be scheduled for services at least once weekly to include no less than two (2) hours of direct service per week, which may include group activity sessions. There shall be contact with the juvenile’s primary custodian at least once every two (2) weeks while the juvenile is receiving services from the program.

C. Length of Stay: For all types in this section, except for tutoring/academic enhancement, the minimum length of stay is 12 weeks for both adjudicated and non-adjudicated juveniles. For tutoring/academic enhancement programs, the minimum length of stay is 20 weeks.

D. Target Population: Juveniles between the ages of six (6) and 17 who are engaging in delinquent or undisciplined behavior, involved with the Juvenile Justice system, or at-risk for involvement, and/or their family members. The court may order the parent/legal guardian of a juvenile who has been adjudicated undisciplined or delinquent to attend parent/family skill building services when available in the judicial district.

E. Capacity and Juvenile to Staff Ratio: Service group size is limited to no more than 10 youth with a training facilitator. Groups may be expanded by five (5) juveniles for each additional trained facilitator. The minimum active caseload for full time, direct service staff members shall be eight (8) and the maximum shall be 50. Minimum and maximum caseloads for less than full time staff shall be adjusted proportionally.

F. Referral Source: Priority shall be given to referrals from Juvenile Court Counselors.
II. REFERRAL, ADMISSION AND TERMINATION PROCEDURES

A. Referrals: The program must receive a written referral form for juveniles or family members to participate in the program. All JCPC funded program shall:

1. Develop a written referral form to address individual program and juvenile or family needs and provide copies of this form to the referral agency. The referral form shall indicate the reasons for referral and the concern(s) to be addressed. The referral form must be placed in the juvenile’s file; and

2. Have initial contact with the juvenile and the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) within 10 business days of the referral to schedule an intake appointment.

B. Admissions: Programs shall develop admission criteria covering age and gender appropriateness, the primary reasons for which juveniles are considered for admission and any applicable admission restrictions. Family participation shall be required if defined by the program and/or if court ordered. All JCPC programs shall:

1. Provide a response to referring agencies regarding their admission decision within 10 business days of receipt of the referral; and

2. If the juvenile/family is deemed appropriate for the program, provide a participation agreement that is developed and signed by the program provider, juvenile, and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) during an intake appointment. All elements of the agreement should be dictated by the specific needs of the juvenile/family. This agreement shall include:

   a) Program guidelines, requirements, and projected completion dates of the program;

   b) Informed consent of parent(s)/legal guardian(s) for participation in the program;

   c) Specific requirements of the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) (if applicable); and

   d) Consequences for non-compliance.

C. Terminations: Programs shall develop termination procedures, including a written termination form and policies governing documentation of a juvenile's termination from the program. A termination form must be completed for all referred juveniles within seven (7) business days of termination from the program detailing the activities, results and recommendations. A copy must be submitted to the referring agency and parent(s)/legal guardian(s), and placed in the juvenile's file. The program shall not terminate any juvenile from program services, for reasons listed below under 2 (b), (c), or (d), without prior direct oral or written communication with the referring agency. The termination form shall include:

1. The last date of program contact;

2. The reason for termination:

   a) Successful Completion: Indicates a high level of juvenile participation in program activities.
b) **Satisfactory Completion**: Indicates an acceptable level of juvenile participation and behavior improvement even though the juvenile did not complete all program activities and did not meet all behavior goals.

c) **Unsuccessful Completion**: Failure to meet specific goals and requirements described in the participation agreement or make sufficient progress in the program.

d) **Non-Compliance**: Unexcused absences or refusing to participate in treatment activities;

3. The names of persons and agencies receiving notice of a juvenile’s termination; and

4. The name of the program staff person completing the documentation.

D. **Aftercare**: When indicated, the program will make appropriate referrals for aftercare and follow-up.

### III. STAFFING

A. **Program Managers**: Program managers must possess at least a Bachelor’s degree in a Human Service or related field, or a four (4) year degree in any other field with at least two (2) years experience as a direct service professional in a juvenile serving agency. It is the responsibility of the Program Manager to:

1. Ensure that the program meets all appropriate standards and licensing requirements;

2. Maintain sufficient information to allow for the determination of program effectiveness;

3. Cooperate with Department Area Consultants during monitoring and evaluation activities; and

4. Complete a “JCPC Program Agreement” (*Form JCPC/PA 001*) including all Sections (I-VIII) that provide basic program information, a line item budget, and statement of provisions compliance.

B. **Program Staff**: Must have at least an Associates Degree in a Human Services related field, or a high school diploma with at least two (2) years of direct service experience in an juvenile or family serving program, preferably with at-risk youth. Staff responsible for regular case oversight and supervision must possess no less than a Bachelor’s level Human Services degree and receive no less than one (1) hour monthly of clinical supervision, if applicable, for services rendered. This person may be a para-professional, provided that an individual meeting the criteria in the preceding sentence directly supervises the person. Staff implementing curricula, or facilitating groups based on curricula shall be appropriately trained and qualified in both curricula content and facilitation techniques.

C. **Volunteer Program Staff**: Programs may use professional or community volunteers to assist or augment services provided by paid staff. The program shall

1. Develop a job description for all volunteer positions;

2. Ensure that a completed “Program Volunteer Application” (*Form JCPC/EA 001*) or “Data Sheet” (*JCPC/EA 002*), including four (4) references is provided for each volunteer;

3. Screen each applicant and determine that the volunteer possesses
credentials/skills/experience commensurate to the requirements of the job description:

a) Obtain a criminal background check;

All potential volunteers must receive a criminal background check prior to contact with any juvenile in the program. This background check must provide a clear record of any criminal convictions. Any criminal activity that would be a direct conflict with this program type or with providing any service to juveniles shall eliminate an applicant/volunteer from consideration.

b) Obtain a current driver license history;

c) Check and document references; and

4. Provide an orientation to the program and training appropriate to the job function.

D. Staff and Volunteer Orientation and Training

1. Each JCPC funded program must provide its staff and volunteers with orientation and training within 30 days of employment to include policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the program and Department. Written documentation of the program orientation and training on policies must be available to the JCPC and/or Department upon request.

2. Programs must provide training that will lead to the continued personal and professional development of the staff and volunteers. Volunteers shall complete pre-service training specific to the program type prior to direct service delivery to juveniles.

3. Programs must provide on-going training for direct service staff in basic interaction skills relating to juveniles.

4. Programs providing treatment services shall employ staff who are eligible by degree or credentials to provide such treatment, or who receive clinical supervision by someone who is eligible to provide such treatment. All professional and volunteer staff who lead program activities that require special skills or certification must be trained in the skills necessary for each particular activity.

5. Staff must be appropriately licensed for the service type provided and receive training regularly.

IV: ATTACHMENTS: NONE

NOTE: The Program volunteer Application (FORM JCPC/EA 001), JCPC Program Agreement (Form JCPC/PA 001), and Data Sheet (JCPC/EA 002) are available at http://www.juvjus.state.nc.us/jcpc/forms.html.
APPENDIX G
Family Table Outcomes & Recidivism Among Comparable Juveniles

Figure G1: Family Table Recidivism Rates by Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Involvement</th>
<th>Subsequent [Juvenile] Complaints</th>
<th>Adult Arrests</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudicated</td>
<td>6,304</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>6,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissed</td>
<td>2,050</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>2,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverted</td>
<td>4,951</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>4,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>5,449</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>4,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,754</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>17,011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>