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A Qualitative Evaluation of Four Juvenile Diversion Programs Conducted by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension

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A QUALITATIVE EVALUATION OF FOUR
JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAMS CONDUCTED BY THE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

by

Mitchell D. Mason

A THESIS

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May, 1995
CHARACTERISTICS OF FOUR COOPERATIVE EXTENSION JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAMS LEADING TO REDUCED RECIDIVISM AND CHANGE IN PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR

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University of Nebraska, 1995

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Increases in youth crime and ineffective intervention techniques have led to a rising interest in alternative methods of dealing with juvenile delinquency, including juvenile diversion models. The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics of four Nebraska Cooperative Extension juvenile diversion programs which influence recidivism rates and change in participant behavior.

The study was qualitative in nature and was designed to collect data from three sources: participants, program organizers and the juvenile justice system. Interviews were conducted with thirty individuals, selected as being representative of the four programs of interest. Resultant data were categorized by characteristics identified as being critical to reaching program objectives. Recidivism rates were collected and compared to perceived program outcomes. Perceived change in youth behavior, parent behavior, and the parent/child relationship were treated as both dependent variables and as indicators of recidivism.

Recidivism rates of the four programs were 5.4%, 27.3%, 28.6% and an estimated 30%. Increased levels of parent/child interaction and improved relationship were consistent through three programs, while changes in youth behavior were not
consistent outside of the program achieving the lowest recidivism rate. No significant changes in parent behavior were reported.

It was found that parental involvement, level of commitment from the county attorney, and existing alternatives for youth offenders are the program characteristics most likely to effect behavior change and recidivism. Other significant factors include level of collaboration in the community, long-term commitment from stakeholders, and program consistency. Experiential education methods were consistently rated as effective by participants.

In addition, all four Cooperative Extension juvenile diversion programs provided quality opportunities for improved family relationships and assisted in reducing stress on the juvenile justice system.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to those who have provided encouragement and support in seeing me through this long and rewarding process. I am especially grateful to my advisor, Bill Brown for his never ending patience, moral support and timely advice. His words of wisdom will be with me far longer than the words of these pages.

I am thankful for the support of my other graduate committee members; Dr. Leverne Barett, forever a "J", Dr. Osmund Gilbertson and Dr. Del Dearborn. I would also like to recognize the Nebraska Cooperative Extension for their persistence in providing solutions to the problems of Nebraska youth. This project would not have been possible without their support.

To all of the parents, youth, and participants who allowed me into their lives in order for others to benefit from their experiences, I am compelled to express my gratitude. Special thanks to Extension Educators Jeanette Friesen, Kay McKenzie, Scottie McMillan, Cindy Strasheim and Susan Williams.

I would like to thank my mother, Roberta, for believing in and supporting me through out my graduate program. Finally, I dedicate this in the memory of my father, John Newton Mason, whose dedication to family was a work of art in itself.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

How to effectively deal with young people who have broken the law has long been subject to debate by criminologists. In 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice encouraged the use of diversion as an alternative to traditional methods of processing juvenile offenders (Bohnstedt, 1978) stating, "formal sanctioning system and pronouncement of delinquency should be used only as a last resort. In place of the formal system, dispositional alternatives to adjudication must be developed for dealing with juveniles" (Presidents Commission on Law Enforcement, 1967).

Since that time, there have been many efforts to conduct juvenile diversion in a variety of methods and experiments (Palmer and Lewis, 1980). Also in 1967, the Supreme Court determined that the traditional juvenile justice system of separating juvenile offenders from adults was ineffective in the rehabilitation of young people (Maron, 1976).

Since the late 1960's, juvenile diversion has taken on many different faces. While the basic premise remains (to divert youth away from formal court and adjudication), Table 1 illustrates that methodologies have become vast and varied (Palmer and Lewis, 1980).
Table 1

Variations in Juvenile Diversion Programs

1. Point in justice process youth are diverted.
   - After arrest
   - After probational intake
   - Community referrals (non-offenders)
   - before adjudication

2. Characteristics of juveniles being diverted
   - ethnicity
   - economic background
   - rural/urban
   - age

3. Offense
   - severity of offense
   - prior offense?

4. Treatment efforts
   - community based program
   - law enforcement counseling
   - residential treatment
   - family counseling
   - one-on-one counseling

Palmer and Lewis (1980) list five characteristics that juvenile officials expect from a diversion program, to (a) reduce stigma or "labeling," (b) reduce coercion and social control, (c) reduce recidivism (or, more broadly, to improve clients' social adjustment), (d) provide services, and (e) reduce the costs and improve the efficiency of the juvenile justice system.

While diversion programs have been the most popular of recent innovations in juvenile justice, the effectiveness of juvenile diversion has been debated ever since it's conception as a correctional tool (Osgood and Weichselbaum, 1984). Critics have questioned whether it is really cost-effective (Bohnstedt, 1978), whether it actually
increases the number of juveniles being processed (Osgood et al., 1984), and if it does in fact decrease the recidivism rate of its clients (Nejelski, 1976).

As stated, one method of treating juvenile offenders has been by diverting youth to community agencies which provide treatment efforts. The University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension (CE) has been a participant in this effort by working with approximately 252 diverted youth offenders since 1991 in four Nebraska counties, designated County A, B, C and D.

Involvement in juvenile diversion projects in the four counties of study has been instigated by County Extension Educators and juvenile justice officials. Because each of these diversion programs operates independently, there is some variation between them in scope, treatment and diversion methods.

Questions may arise as to why Cooperative Extension is providing services to a specialized population (juvenile offenders) that is beyond what some consider a traditional Extension audience. Although many people may see the CE as being primarily agriculture related, their mission is "to help Nebraskans address issues and needs related to their economic, social, and environmental well-being through educational programs based upon scientific knowledge" (IANR CC302, 1994).

While problems associated with handling juvenile delinquency in Nebraska need to be solved, there has not been a formal evaluation of the current programs involving the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension. It is important that the Extension staff working with juvenile diversion be aware of the effects of their efforts in relation to the mission of both the diversion project and the University of Nebraska
Cooperative Extension.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics of four Nebraska Cooperative Extension juvenile diversion programs which influence recidivism rates and change in participant behavior.

Objectives of the Study

1. Identify recidivism rates of County A, B, C and D juvenile diversion programs between 1991 and 1995.
2. Identify the characteristics of County A, B, C and D juvenile diversion programs.
3. Identify youth perceptions of programmatic effects on:
   a. their behavior.
   b. the relationship with their parent/guardian(s).
4. Identify parent/guardian perceptions of programmatic effects on:
   a. child's behavior.
   b. the relationship with their child.
5. Identify instructor perception of programmatic effects on:
   a. child's behavior.
   b. relationship between parent/guardian and child.
   c. recidivism.
6. Compare characteristics and perceptions of individual juvenile diversion
programs to recidivism rate.

7. Identify those characteristics which correspond to juvenile diversion programs with recidivism rates below average among the four programs.

8. Identify those characteristics which correspond to increased behavior change in youth, parent/guardian and youth/parent/guardian relationship.

Significance of the Study

Despite growth in public concern juvenile crime continues to pose a threat to the security and future of this country. Dr. Barry Krisberg, president of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, states that although juvenile violence rates haven't changed dramatically in recent years, "the death toll is higher because more young people have access to guns." The public is growing more anxious for reasonable solutions to crime. (Davidson and Redner, 1990)

The statistics of Nebraska juvenile arrests between 1989-92 show a mix of increasing and decreasing statistics. According to the Nebraska Crime Commission (1993) arrests of juveniles increased 12.5% over the four year period. Of those offenses with more than 800 arrests over the four years, only curfew/loitering offenses and those involving drugs and/or alcohol showed a decrease. While this is a positive trend, serious crimes such as motor-vehicle theft, larceny misdemeanor assault, vandalism and weapon possession all had increases ranging from a 66.9 increase for stolen property to a 9.1% increase for larceny. Other offenses which experienced marked increases (but did not have 800 total arrests over the four year period) were
sex offenses (77% increase), arson (88.1% increase), felony assault (31.9% increase) and robbery (56.9% increase). The percentage of total violent crimes committed by juveniles increased also as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Felony Assault</th>
<th>Misdemeanor Assault</th>
<th>Murder</th>
<th>Rape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent*</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>1,293</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percent of juveniles out of the total number of arrests for crime.

Source: Juveniles and Violence in Nebraska, September 1993, Nebraska Crime Commission

Increasingly, the public mind set has been that "nothing works" and there are research findings which support this conclusion (Whitehead & Lab, 1989). However, the cost of juvenile delinquency to both the social and economic institutions of Nebraska is too high for the public sector to simply surrender. Unfortunately, the tremendous amount of careful thought has not necessarily led to empirical research (Osgood and Weichselbaum, 1984).

Nejelski (1976) states that "diversion provides the necessary flexibility in a system overburdened with requests for service" and that, "the official system could not survive if every case received the procedures contemplated by statute or appellate decisions" (p. 395).

The need for effective juvenile corrections continues to grow, as does the demand
for accountancy of publicly funded agencies (such as the Cooperative Extension). It is vital that the leaders of programs dealing with youth crime bring about a real change in their communities and states.

Cooperative Extension Educators have traditionally focused on preventive measures, however juvenile diversion is an intervention program. Juvenile Diversion is relatively new to the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, (the first program was instituted in County D in 1991) and the programs must be evaluated for effectiveness and optimal placement of resources.

Definition of Terms

Class

When a juvenile diversion class is mentioned in the text, it is referring to a single segment of the overall juvenile diversion session. A class consists of one evening's lesson.

Juvenile

Whether a young person is a "juvenile is determined by state law; in the cited statistics it will mean a child who has not yet attained his [or her] eighteenth birthday." (Maron, 1976).

Juvenile Diversion

The channeling of cases to non-court institutions, in instances where these cases would ordinarily have received an adjudicatory (or fact-finding) hearing by a court. (Nejelski, 1976).
Non-offender

For the purpose of this study, a non-offender is a youth participant who attends a juvenile diversion program without being referred by the justice system (either police, sheriff or probation). These non-offenders are voluntary and no further adjudication would result from their non-compliance with program rules.

Recidivism

Recidivism will be defined for operational purposes as the apprehension of juvenile diversion participants by law enforcement officials during or after involvement with the juvenile diversion program in any of the four counties up to the time of this study.

Recidivism Rate

The recidivism rate is the percentage of youth program participants who commit an offense during or after participation in a juvenile diversion program.

Session

A juvenile diversion session is made up of four to six classes (see definition of class) over a period of four to six weeks.

Stakeholder

For purposes of this study, a stakeholder is defined as an individual that is involved in the planning, advising, implementation or administration of a juvenile diversion program. This may include, but is not limited to, instructors and volunteers. Youth and parent/guardian participants are not defined as stakeholders.
Status Offender

A status offender will be operationally defined as a youth who commits an offense that would not be a criminal act if that youth was a legal adult. Examples include truancy, minor-in-possession and running away.

Delimitations

This study is delimited to those juveniles who have been referred to juvenile diversion programs offered by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension staff in four rural Nebraska counties from 1991 to February 1995.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the review of literature, the focus will be to identify past studies that examine the effectiveness of juvenile diversion in terms of reduced recidivism and higher life skills. In addition, those studies that have looked at characteristics of successful and failed juvenile diversion programs will be identified.

The Effectiveness of Juvenile Diversion

To evaluate all juvenile diversion projects using the same criterion would be difficult. In 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice recommended that formal diversion of juvenile offenders should become common practice. Following this recommendation, there were hundreds of diversion programs initiated in the United States. By the 1970's, these various programs began to expand and differ in scope and focus (Palmer et al., 1980).

As juvenile diversion programs became more popular, divergent ideas developed concerning objectives and impact. One thing became apparent; there was no large-scale evaluation of these varied efforts (Gibbons & Blake, 1976). One study that took place in 1973 stated that the term juvenile diversion was being used to describe, "almost any discretionary action available to a public or private agency dealing with children and youth." (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1973).

Soon there was concern that juvenile diversion programs (taken as a whole) were
not effective in reducing the penetration of juveniles into the farthest points of the 
juvenile justice system (Maron, 1976). In addition, "another factor in the debate has 
been the ineffectiveness of traditional treatment with criminal populations." 
(Davidson, Redner, Andeur and Mitchell, 1990).

As the practice of diversion further developed, researchers began to fear that in 
actuality, it was expanding the number of youth being administered by public 
agencies. The research had shown that many of the young people that would have 
been released without reaching adjudication (and therefore would not have been 
administered by a public agency) were instead being diverted to counseling, 
rehabilitation or other forms of juvenile diversion programming. Gibbons & Blake 
(1976) referred to this phenomena as "widening the net."

While research has been conducted on the effectiveness of the juvenile diversion 
concept, the results are mixed and dependent upon the situation. Palmer & Lewis 
(1980) found that diversion can be valuable, but their study focused on a 
heterogeneous group of youth in a specific geographic area. Rausch (1980) found 
little or no difference in the recidivism rate of juveniles in Connecticut's diversion 
program versus traditional court processing.

Mixed result are also found for recidivism. While Palmer & Lewis (1980) found 
that those clients who were diverted to individual counseling performed better than
those who were not, juveniles receiving family counseling actually had a higher recidivism rate than the control group.

In their study, Palmer and Lewis also found no significant difference in those youth receiving academic tutoring, group education and/or employment counseling. Rausch (1983) found no difference in the number of status offenders processed through traditional means versus diversion, in terms of recidivism rates.

In a study of 1,983 diversion clients by Bohnstedt (1978), there was no evidence of monetary savings by the court system through juvenile diversion, in fact there was a net loss. In another study, Bohnstedt (1980) looked at nine California diversion projects. He found that there was a significant overall reduction in the recidivism rate, but he did not define this reduction as realistically significant. However, three of the projects did drastically reduce recidivism rates.

Nejelski (1973) suggested that regardless of the success or failure of diversion, "[it] is an inherent part of a system based on decisions by individuals about other individuals. The question is not whether it should exist but when and under what circumstances it is best encouraged." Schur (1973) calls for a "return to the rule of law," including a more hardened response to serious offenders and diversion of lesser offenders to voluntary treatment. This same approach is recommended by Hellum (1979).
Osgood and Weichselbaum (1984) state that many programs have failed simply because they were really not diversion programs, instead they were programs using the same philosophy with different referral methods and treatments. Osgood and Weichselbaum (1984) also found that there was a significant difference in how both clients and service providers viewed diversion versus traditional justice methods.

Osgood and Weichselbaum (1984), studying nine diversion programs in U.S. urban areas, discovered that both service providers and clients felt that diversion programs were less likely to assert a social control over them and were more likely to emphasize serving the clients needs. Also, clients did not feel stigmatized by their service providers. Osgood and Weichselbaum felt that, "if diversion programs are used as an alternative rather than an addition to justice processing," diversion program goals can be attained.

In terms of behavioral and life skills treatment, Whitehead and Lab (1989) found promise in very specific types of interventions: cognitive-behavioral and Outward Bound programs. Utilizing a meta-analysis of fifteen non-justice system diversion programs, Whitehead and Lab reported "somewhat positive" results from behavioral interventions (token economies, modeling, behavioral contracting, positive reinforcement or contingency management).

Whitehead and Lab contribute the concern towards outcome measures besides
recidivism, including educational attainment and improved self-concept, as a reason for the positive results. However, the results from behavioral intervention programs were neither overwhelming nor consistent.

Characteristics of Diversion Programs

While Palmer and Lewis (1980) attempted to identify variations among the different programs labeled as juvenile diversion, Nejelski (1973) listed the following as common elements of most pretrial diversion projects:

1. The use of paraprofessionals typically drawn from the same community as the juveniles being served by the program.

2. The utilization of "crisis intervention" techniques to substitute immediate, short-range aid to juveniles and their families rather than involve them in the long, cumbersome procedures of the judicial system.

3. A reliance on administrators or arbitrators, rather than judges, with a central concern for conflict resolution rather than the determination of guilt.

4. The attempt to avoid the "stigma" of the juvenile court process by not keeping records or by restricting their availability to outsiders.

5. A policy of limiting the population served to status offenders and minor delinquents.
In response to the fifth element, Andriessen (1980) observed that juvenile
diversion programs will continue to widen the net of social control as long as they
provide services only to minor offenders. One characteristic of assessing diversion
programs has been to measure anonymity provided to participants. While many
juvenile court and community agencies recommend this, Cressey & McDermott
(1973) provide the following commentary:

So far as we know, no one has shown that the juvenile offender and his
family perceive their handling as materially different under the auspices of
a diversion unity than under a more traditional juvenile justice agency.
The question is rarely formulated, let alone asked. (p. 59)

In a study of a California diversion program, Nejelski (1976) found in the
Sacramento County 601 Diversion Project that diverted youth were much less likely
to be referred to a court, recidivism rates were reduced and overnight detention was
severely lowered when compared to the non-diversion control group. Nejelski noted
that immediate family counseling was an integral part of the Sacramento project.

Goldstein, et al., (1973) recommends that regardless of whether a juvenile is
diverted or follows through a traditional court procedure, quick solutions to his/her
problems in the best interest of the child.

Nejelski (1976) notes that a continuing issue within diversion is the background of
those giving the treatment. Many diversion programs utilize "paraprofessionals, ex-
ofenders and indigenous members of the community." While advocates of this
method point out that the above mentioned individuals can have more empathy for the youth, are less expensive and bring community together, other feel that juveniles are in need of more experienced or professional help.

An in depth study by Davidson et al., (1990) used a prevention model to compare three variables of the Adolescent Diversion Project (ADP). The study focused on intervention (versus release of offenders with no further action by justice system and court processing), professional level of treatment providers, and method of treatment using experimental and control groups. Comparisons were based on resultant recidivism rates.

It was concluded that:

1. The ADP model produced significantly lower recidivism rates than the control group which was released with nor further action,

2. The varied methods of intervention (behavioral contracting and child advocacy, family-focused, court supervised, interpersonal relationship focused, attention placebo and control group) "were not differentially effective in reducing delinquency," although, "unstructured attention was not as effective as any of the systematic interventions in reducing delinquency."
3. The use of volunteers as treatment providers produced significantly (p < .01) lower recidivism rates than the control group which received no treatment, although there was no significant difference in utilizing volunteers from a university, community college or the community.

4. The ADP model was statistically more likely to produce lower recidivism rates (p < .06) than either release to parent/guardians or court processing.

Elliot et al., (1975) recommended that a successful juvenile diversion program be limited to the following parameters:

1. Clients should be referred to a receiving agency which offers some formal or informal youth development service or delinquency prevention program.

2. The referral should be a substitute for further official processing and adjudication.

3. The receiving agency should be outside the formal jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system.

4. The diversion should occur between apprehension and adjudication.

5. The decision to divert a youth from the juvenile justice system should not be coercive.

Summary

Judging by prior research, evaluations of juvenile diversion programming have been mixed, with some finding diversion to be most effective in dealing with juvenile
offenders (Baron et al., 1973; Davidson et al., 1977) and others finding no superiority (Dunford et al., 1981). Researchers tend to agree that diversion will not help in the rehabilitation of serious offenders and that diversion should be voluntary, with the juvenile having the option of a court appearance.

While there have been a variety of juvenile diversion evaluation efforts, very few studies have gone in depth to examine the treatment given to participants (Davidson et al., 1990). This researcher especially noted a lack of single program case studies. Instead, evaluations have focused on comparing programs to each other while placing treatment efforts into broad, general categories.

Lab and Whitehead (1988) conducted a survey of literature pertaining to Juvenile Diversion programs between 1975-88. Fifty-five research reports were analyzed, each of which met their criteria of having experimental/control groups and providing recidivism rates.

When Lab and Whitehead gave diversion as the treatment activity (as opposed to police caution or family counseling for example), the only descriptive (if any) of the treatment methodology was brokerage, crisis counseling, probation or community counseling. Considering that the term diversion is applied to such a wide variety of treatment activities, it is difficult to compare programs or judge "diversion" practices as either positive or negative, especially with a lack of case studies.
A key might be found in the remarks by Andriessen (1980) who visited the U.S. from Holland in hopes of transferring juvenile diversion to his country. Instead, he was disappointed with much of what he saw, stating, "Diversion does not deal with youth whom we would classify as delinquents; instead, it is limited to runaways and others who present small risk to the justice system. All other juveniles are still handled in the traditional system." (p. 80)

While Andriessen's assertion that current juvenile diversion programs do not focus on serious delinquents may be true, most existing literature appears to support the opposite view, that juvenile diversion programs should not attempt to deal with the multitude of problems that may exist in the lives and environments of serious offenders.

However, Andriessen's comment might suggest that many diversion programs, including the ones proposed for study here, are actually prevention models that are indeed expanding the "web of control." As cautionary as the literature is towards juvenile diversion, it is not consistent in its findings and dependent upon a variety of heterogenous factors. It is important that any diversion program being evaluated be done so on its own merits, independent of dissimilar diversion programs.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics of four Nebraska Cooperative Extension juvenile diversion programs which influence recidivism rates and change in participant behavior. Vital to the success of the study was to design a method that will meet all of the following objectives:

1. Identify recidivism rates of juveniles participating in County A, B, C and D juvenile diversion programs.

2. Identify characteristics of County A, B, C and D juvenile diversion programs.

3. Identify youth perceptions of programmatic effects on:
   a. their behavior.
   b. relationship with their parent/guardian(s).

4. Identify parent/guardian perceptions of programmatic effects on:
   a. child's behavior.
   b. relationship with their child.

5. Identify instructor perception of programmatic effects on:
   a. child's behavior.
   b. relationship between parent/guardian and child.
c. recidivism

6. Compare characteristics and perceptions of individual juvenile diversion programs to actual recidivism rate.

7. Identify those characteristics which represent a successful juvenile diversion program as measured by recidivism rates.

8. Identify those characteristics which represent a successful juvenile diversion program as measured by parent/guardian, juvenile and instructor perception.

Study Design

This study consists primarily of qualitative data, in the form of interviews and document analysis. However, a questionnaire measuring changes in behavior was also used. The results of this questionnaire were used to establish a third measure of behavior change in youth along with recidivism rate and perceptions of change in behavior.

In order to successfully meet the objectives of this study, it was vital that a variety of individuals working with the diversion programs be involved, both stakeholders and the clients. Therefore, the study design sought to draw informants from Cooperative Extension, the community, the juvenile justice system, and from program participants.

This study is a summative evaluation of four juvenile diversion programs. A
summative evaluation is used to determine program effectiveness, or as Patton (1990) stated "to render an overall judgement about the effectiveness of a program, policy or product for the purpose of saying that the idea itself is or is not effective" (p. 155). It is important that the results of this study be useful to those for whom it is intended.

To meet the purpose of identifying characteristics which impact recidivism, this researcher first developed two blocks of information, (a) characteristics of all four juvenile diversion programs, and (b) recidivism rates of the four juvenile diversion programs.

In defining characteristics, the study is essentially referring to independent variables. The list of possibilities could be endless, ranging from the clients grade point average to the weather conditions during the program. However, based on the review of relevant literature and input from key informants, a manageable and measurable list of characteristics was defined (Appendix A). While tangibles such as cost, age and curriculum were included, this study focused strongly on child, parent/guardian and instructor/planner perspectives. In early discussions, program planners mentioned communication among stakeholders, parental/guardian attendance and positive youth perception as factors of success.

The results of this study will provide readers with a sense of what is involved in conducting juvenile diversion programming, what has succeeded and failed in the
four Nebraska programs and which characteristics are associated with lower recidivism rates.

Population

The population of this study consists of stakeholders and participants in four rural Nebraska counties that have conducted a University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension juvenile diversion program between 1991 and 1995.

Selection of the Sample

The case sampling procedure was fairly uncomplicated. There are six counties in Nebraska with juvenile diversion programs that involve the Cooperative Extension staff; the four previously mentioned and additional juvenile diversion programs in County E and County F (which involves only Minor in Possession of alcohol {MIP} offenses). The latter juvenile diversion program is not being studied because of its unique nature with one particular offense. County E is similar enough to County B that study of this program would be redundant.

Preparation of the Data Collection Instrument

Qualitative Data

An interview guide approach (see Appendix B) as described by Patton (1990) was
utilized to allow for conformity in data collected. This approach, "... increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic" (Patton, 1990). Other options considered, but rejected, were standardized open-ended interviews (which may "limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers" (Patton, 1990, p. 289)) and informal conversational interviews (which may take too much time and not allow for uniformity). It was concluded that neither of these interview methods could have added to the validity or reliability of the study.

Quantitative Data

Two forms of quantitative data were employed. The first form of quantitative data was a pre-post, self-assessed behavior questionnaire (Appendix C) completed by youth participants in juvenile diversion sessions being conducted at the time of this study. The null hypothesis was that no change occurred in self-assessed skill level during participation in the juvenile diversion programs.

Counties A and B were the only two programs which were able to provide this information. The other two programs were not conducting sessions at the time of data collection.

The questionnaire was used to measure change in youth participant's behavior after participation in the juvenile diversion program. The questionnaire contained 28 items in a five-point Likert scale format. The overall questionnaire was broken down into
the following sub-scales with number of items following: (a) communications, six
items, (b) decision-making, seven items, (c) self-esteem, nine items, (d)
assertiveness/peer pressure, ten items and (e) locus-of-control, five items.

Constructing the Instrument

The five sub-scales were identified by review of program objectives. The items
concerning communications, assertiveness/peer pressure and decision-making were
taken directly from objective statements of the Dare To Be You (DTBY) curriculum
(Miller-Heyl, 1985). The Dare To Be You curriculum was the core lesson plan in the
first juvenile diversion program and all four programs of study included the DTBY
objectives in their program.

These statements were transposed to a question format. Initially, there were forty
responses measuring assertiveness (which included ability to deal with peer pressure
and self-esteem), twenty-eight measuring decision-making, nine measuring
communication and eight measuring locus of control. A peer review process was
used to eliminate unnecessary items and will be discussed later.

The self-esteem questions were selected from the Piers-Harris Self-Concept scale
(Sherman & Hoffman, 1988). The 40 items on this six-point Likert scale were factor
loaded by Piers and Harris and four significant sub-scales containing sixteen of the
original items were developed: (a) behavior (b) physical satisfaction (c) popularity (d)
anxiety and (e) happiness. All sixteen items were placed on the rough draft of the Juvenile Diversion Questionnaire.

The locus of control questions were derived from the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale, a paper-and-pencil measure. Nowicki and Strickland (1973) estimated internal consistency using the split-half method and measured Cronbach's alpha scores ranging from .63 for 3-5 grade to .81 for Grade 12. For 7-12 Grade, the test-retest reliability was .75 (N=54). Of the forty items on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale, the eight items with the highest item-total correlation scores for males and females in seventh and eleventh grades were placed on the initial questionnaire. Responses were keyed in both directions.

**Peer Review of Questionnaire**

The rough draft, which included 50 items, was considered by the Extension Educators to be too lengthy for both time and attentiveness of the clients. All of the Educators were mailed copies and asked to edit those questions which did not match the intended outcomes of their juvenile diversion programs. They were also asked to judge the instrument on reliability and ease of use. Final editing was done by three of the Educators and this researcher to come up with the final 28 item product. (Appendix C)
Pilot Testing of Instrument

The instrument was piloted with two groups totaling 28 youths ranging in age from 12 to 18 years of age. One group was an urban group home for boys, the other a rural 4-H teen leaders club. The youth were asked to complete the test and make any comments as to comprehension. Youth were assured of complete confidentiality and names were not recorded.

Several grammatical and vocabulary changes were made to the questionnaire as a result of the suggestions. Originally, the peer review had questioned if the young people would recognize such terms as 'body language.' After the questionnaire was completed, both pilot groups were asked if they recognized the terms in question and appropriate modifications were then made.

In addition, the middle response to the Likert scale was changed from "Don't Know/ Sometimes True, Sometimes Untrue" to "Not Sure" at the recommendation of the pilot groups. The pilot groups finished the questionnaire in times ranging from eleven to eighteen minutes.

Instrument to Measure Recidivism

This instrument (Appendix E) consisted of a table which was completed by the Extension Educator and the county attorney.
Collection of the Data

Qualitative Data

In order to identify the critical characteristics and to gain an overall introduction to each of the programs, visits with Extensions Educators were conducted. These were not formal interviews, but were conducted to gain awareness of the programs and to identify potential interview questions. Any documents explaining the purpose, procedures and policies of the program were collected.

Utilizing the information gained from the initial meeting with Extension Educators and the literature review, the critical characteristics and key informants were identified.

As previously mentioned, sampling of informants was significantly limited by confidentiality concerns. Still the question remained which of the many participants would be interviewed. Random sampling of all past participants was not feasible; the informants had to consent. Purposeful sampling was chosen in order to find informants who were willing to be interviewed and would provide valuable information based on their experiences. The idea of purposeful sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) is to intentionally select those informants which will give you rich, thick descriptions of their perspective.

In Patton's (1990) discussion of case sampling methods, he describes a sampling
technique called the 'typical' case. The typical case is selected with help from program staff and knowledgeable participants and represents what is typical to those unfamiliar with the program. This process was used in identifying youth and parent/guardian informants. The instructors of the juvenile diversion programs chose typical informants for the interviews.

Access to informants was through Extension Educators within each county. After the initial meeting with the researcher, Extension Educators identified typical participants of past Juvenile Diversion sessions and proceeded to contact the families. Both adult and child had to consent. Extension Educators informed the participants of the study's purpose and guaranteed confidentiality. In addition, the two counties conducting sessions during the study (County A and B) asked for volunteers following the last class. A goal of two families (parent/guardian and child) from each program was set. This goal was not met in all counties because of limited access, scheduling problems or further interviews were determined as unnecessary.

A sample of instructors were selected to be interviewed. These were identified by Cooperative Extension Educators at the initial meeting as being typical of all instructors. In addition, stakeholders who are involved with the planning and conducting of the overall Juvenile Diversion program (i.e. Police Chief, Sheriff, County Attorney, School Superintendent) were interviewed. In the end, thirty youth.
parents, instructors and stakeholders were interviewed. Interviews with informants were recorded on cassette tape by the researcher and took place at a site of their convenience. Stakeholders were interviewed at their place of work, instructor interviews took place either at the Cooperative Extension office or at their place of employment and family interviews were conducted in homes, extension offices and in one instance at a restaurant. All youth signed a letter of consent as did a parent/guardian (Appendix D). No names are used in the final results and only this researcher had contact with the youth.

Quantitative Data

The primary quantitative data were recidivism rates of participants in the juvenile diversion program. There was a two step procedure for collecting this information:

1. Extension Educators were mailed a blank table to complete (Appendix E). The demographic data provided were name, I.D. number\(^1\), offense, age, ethnicity, gender and whether the youth has committed a second offense. The Extension Educators completed as much of the information as was available to them.

2. The Extension Educators sent this data to the county attorney's office, who had been notified one week prior. The county attorney's office completed the remaining information, removed the names for confidentiality purposes and mailed the information to the researcher.

One county was not able to provide the demographic information due to a lack of

\(^1\) Each county begins their I.D. numbers in increments of 100. For example, County C will begin their I.D. numbers at 400. County A at 500, etc.
assistance with a critical agency. The county did report an approximate recidivism rate in a report to the Cooperative Extension.

Pre- and post- Juvenile Diversion Questionnaires were administered by program instructors in Counties A and B and instructions were given orally as well as printed on the cover of the questionnaire instrument. Only youth who completed both the pre and post test questionnaire (n=14) were included in the statistical information. Seven youth did not complete either the pre or post test.

Timetable

This study occurred over a four month period from January to April 1995:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October - December 1994</td>
<td>Initial meetings with Extension Educators to gather preliminary information, construction of quantitative instruments and data collection procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February-March</td>
<td>Data collection; focus-interviews; recidivism rates; document collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Data analysis; clarification interviews; document analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-May 1995</td>
<td>Writing results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis Procedures

The first step in analyzing the data was to complete the Respondent Matrix presented in Appendix F. A separate record was completed for each informant and all responses were transcribed. One column of the matrix was used in order to record general observations and comments about individual responses for future reference.

As interviews and documents were reviewed, answers were placed into the Respondent Matrix. Each cell contains representative bullet statements made by informants.

Initial categorization (identification of specific independent variables) of the data was based on program characteristics that Extension Educators identified prior to data collection as being critical. Each category was given an identification letter and respondents were identified by number.

Individual responses in the Respondent Matrix were then placed into an appropriate category and assorted on to Variable Sheets using the Cut-Up-and-Put-in-Folders Approach (Bogden & Biklen, 1992). Further categorization was necessary due to the diverse themes that existed within the categories. Subsequent coding was dependent upon the original characteristic, as seen in examples below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Characteristic</th>
<th>Divergent Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior/Relationship Change</td>
<td>- Time spent at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Less fighting in family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Higher self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>- Collaboration/Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Referral methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Administrative responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>- Specific lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional data reduction was necessary to include only that information which most succinctly described the juvenile diversion programs. Data from the Variable Sheets were reduced, producing a final matrix called the Program-by-Variable Sheet (Appendix G). These sheets allowed the researcher to view all comments made by individuals within each program concerning a specific characteristic. The information was then useful for describing, comparing and contrasting the juvenile diversion programs.

Once information was presented in an organized, categorized fashion, an explanation building process was utilized to develop conclusions for each variable's effect on program outcomes (Yin, 1989). Yin (1989) warns that, "explanation building has not been well documented in operational terms. However, one important characteristic is that the final explanation is a result of a series of iterations" (p. 114).
and goes on to explain the process:

- making an initial theoretical statement or an initial proposition about policy or social behavior;
- comparing the findings of an initial case against such a statement or proposition;
- revising the statement or proposition;
- comparing other details of the case against the revision;
- again revising the statement or proposition;
- comparing the revision to the facts of a second, third, or more cases; and
- repeating this process as many times as is needed.

The explanation building process produced general conclusions representing the perceptions and observations of stakeholders and participants. It was also noted that there were critical variables that did not directly impact the program outcome of behavior/relationship change. A flowchart (see Figure 2, p. 122) was therefore designed to show the relationship that each of the program characteristics/variables had on outcomes and other variables.

Statistical information was also collected from the Juvenile Diversion Questionnaire in order to measure self-reported changes during participation in the juvenile diversion program. Individual responses as well as the sub-scales were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests to determine significant mean differences in pre and post tests.
Chapter IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics of four Nebraska Cooperative Extension juvenile diversion programs which influence recidivism rates and change in participant behavior. The following objectives were established to guide the direction of this study.

1. Identify recidivism rates of County A, B, C and D juvenile diversion programs between 1991 and 1995.

2. Identify the characteristics of County A, B, C and D juvenile diversion programs.

3. Identify youth perceptions of programmatic effects on:
   a. their behavior.
   b. the relationship with their parent/guardian(s).

4. Identify parent/guardian perceptions of programmatic effects on:
   a. child's behavior.
   b. the relationship with their child.

5. Identify instructor perception of programmatic effects on:
   a. child's behavior.
   b. relationship between parent/guardian and child.
   c. recidivism.
6. Compare characteristics and perceptions of individual juvenile diversion programs to recidivism rate.

7. Identify those characteristics which correspond to juvenile diversion programs with recidivism rates below average among the four programs.

8. Identify those characteristics which correspond to increased behavior change in youth, parent/guardian and youth/parent/guardian relationship.

This chapter describes informant perceptions and observations for each of the program components that were identified as critical either through a review of the literature, or program stakeholders and participants (Appendix A). Feedback from interviews is provided, typically divided by county, along with a brief summary of the variable.

Findings derived from the Juvenile Diversion Questionnaire are included next and, finally, a model demonstrating direct and indirect relationships between program characteristics is provided.

Description of Programs

A description of programs is provided in Table 3 (p. 37).
Table 3

DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR COUNTIES OF STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Recidivism Rate</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total Sessions*</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Classes per session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>22,794</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Parent/Child</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8,862</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Parent/Child</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18,285</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parent/Child</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>~30%</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>29,625</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Parent/Child</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Instructors</th>
<th>Frequency of Sessions</th>
<th>Juvenile Justice system involvement</th>
<th>Cost/Refund**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Extension Staff Community Health Professionals</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>County Attorney Police/Sheriff County Judge</td>
<td>$75/$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Extension Staff Community Volunteers</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>County Attorney Deputy County Sheriff</td>
<td>$50/$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Extension Staff Juvenile Justice System Personnel School Counselor and Principal</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>Probation Services Diversion Services</td>
<td>$50/$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Extension Staff Community Volunteers College Student Volunteers</td>
<td>October January April</td>
<td>County Judge Probation Office County Attorney Office Police &amp; Sheriff Departments</td>
<td>$6 (cost of materials)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Total Sessions Conducted by program
** Refund to family upon successful completion of juvenile diversion program
Child Behavior Change

It is recognized that the youth participating in the juvenile diversion program have been engaged in some form of deviant behavior. It is a goal of the juvenile diversion program that these youth not engage in this behavior after taking part in diversion programming. The primary measure of this goal is the recidivism rate, a number representing the percentage of participating youth who are convicted of a second offense.

Three of the juvenile diversion programs in this study provided recidivism rates, with County D using approximate rates. In order to maintain complete confidentiality, County D did not record full names of all program participants. However, the Extension Educators did work with the county attorney's office following their fourth session to determine if program goals were being met. An exact figure was not found in the records, but a recidivism rate of "approximately 30%" was used in program documents and literature.
Table 4

Recidivism Rates of Nebraska Extension Juvenile Diversion Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>RATE</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COUNTY A</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTY B</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTY C</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTY D</td>
<td>~ 30.0%*</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* ~ = approximately
** unavailable

These rates represent those youth who committed an offense after completing the juvenile diversion program. It must be considered that there are differences in length of time between the end of some sessions and the time at which this data was collected.

For example, County B has been conducting their program longer than County A. Therefore, youth in County B have had a longer period of time in which to commit an offense. In addition, only those youth committing an offense prior to their nineteenth birthdays are reported. County A participants, who are on average the oldest, will have had fewer years in which a second offense would be counted toward these figures.

County A has the lowest recidivism rate among the three counties reporting which
is notable considering that it has had a greater number of participants than the other two counties which reported. It can be stated that County C has only had one session and it may be too early to judge program effects on recidivism rate.

A noticeable difference in County A, as opposed to other counties, is that the large number of minor-in-possession offenders that are involved in their program. Some have questioned whether there is a need for MIP offenders to be involved in juvenile diversion programs. A Juvenile Diversion Services officer in another county stated, "MIP's are the ones that do the best in [this] program." If MIP's are excluded from the County A statistics, the overall recidivism rate rises to 10.4%, but still far below the other programs rates.

Minor-in-possession offenders had an extremely low recidivism rate of 1.6% and while they accounted for 36.4% of total participants in the three programs of study, only .6% of the repeat offenders were detained for MIP on their first offense.

As this is a qualitative study, an effort was made to gather information that showed examples and perceptions of behavioral change as observed by stakeholders, parents/guardians and youth themselves.

COUNTY A

Youth and parents in County A noted several behavioral changes after participating in juvenile diversion and all were positive and supportive of the program. One female
youth reported a variety of troubles prior to the program including poor school performance, running away (which is why she was in diversion), illegal substance abuse, and a poor relationship with her mother.

She said that many of her behaviors had changed, primarily due to communication improvements within the family and setting goals. "I don't even think about it (running away) now. I said this year I'm going to straighten up. I'm passing with 1's and 2's. Before diversion I was getting straight 5's [lowest grade]."

Her mother has seen improvement as well, "She has changed so much. I most definitely let her know that I am proud of her. She is starting to call more now to let me know where she's at." Her mother goes on to say,

"She's] made a lot of differences since diversion; she brings home school work and she does it. She isn't perfect about staying out late hours but it isn't like it was before. [She] has gotten to the point where she says, 'I gotta go home.' When we went to diversion classes, she'd stay out all night. After school she wouldn't come home. She would stay out until 12, sometimes 4 o'clock in the morning. If she didn't feel like coming home, she didn't.

The girl reports that she still gets a lot of peer pressure and makes bad decisions. Her favorite part of the class was information and activities focusing on alcohol abuse, since she has used it in the past and reports having an alcoholic brother. She is scared of what could happen to her but says, "I don't think I'll end up like him now because of the fact that I went through those diversion classes and I read a lot of
Two males interviewed were both confident in their life skills prior to the program, but were appreciative of what they learned in juvenile diversion. Neither youth reported that they had repeated their previous behaviors with one stating, "I haven't drank [sic] illegally since the class. It just didn't sound good," and the other, who had been diverted for fleeing to avoid arrest and speeding, remarked, "I haven't gotten [a speeding ticket] for a long time. Right now I don't drive over 55."

For the young man who had been speeding, his favorite thing was, "learning about yourself and making choices for yourself." He also felt juvenile diversion helped him in setting goals; "before I took this class, I didn't know what I wanted to do. And then I got focused. I'm going to [college] and see what they got." In addition he said his decision-making skills had improved. Neither of the two male youth felt like they had a problem with peer pressure before or after the class.

Parents in County A saw several behavior and knowledge changes in their children. One father pointed out that his son came up to him after one class and, "[the son] said 'I was really interested by the passive-aggressive behavior.' And that just about floored me!" The same father believed his son, "became, it wasn't overnight, more careful about his actions."

Although all four of the youth and parents mentioned have observed positive
behavior change, there were instances of behaviors that did not change, which did not surprise one instructor; "some of them say [in post-evaluation] 'we didn't do anything different'."

Two adults interviewed who work in the schools observed youth participants that did not exhibit changed behavior. "I see a couple of these kids (at school) and one of them, I'm not real sure he's turned around. So it's been hard to see that," remarked one parent. An instructor who works in a school commented, "For at least those five weeks I could tell the difference at school [of one of the kids]. And then the program ended he was back to his old behavior."

**COUNTY B**

The parents and youth interviewed were content with behavior changes but considered those changes secondary when compared to changes in relationships with parents/guardians. One parent reported that her son "doesn't hang around with some of the [peers arrested with him] now.... he knows that they're bad for him."

A young man who had been accused of shoplifting said he had started to come home more, but felt that had to do with his improved relationship with his father. One instructor felt the evidence of the programs success is that, "by the fact a majority of the kids don't end up back in court."
There were lessons that didn't receive as positive comments, including goal-setting, handling peer pressure, and to some extent, decision-making. One mother said that her son is "still screwing around in school." Dealing with youth that do not modify their behaviors was recognized by instructors as well. An instructor described her least favorite moments as,

when you know what your doing is not going to make any difference. I can think of a couple of them that were pretty angry all the way through. And I know they're back in court. They just had more problems than what the juvenile diversion could deal with.

While there were some participants who did commit a second offense, another instructor explained his feelings, "you put it out there and it's their choice to accept it. I don't accept any credit for what these kids did..nor can I take any blame if they choose to go out and screw up again."

COUNTY C

Two youth were interviewed from County C. One of the youth was a voluntary referral from mental health services and the other was referred from probation and had already been adjudicated.

The youth who was a voluntary participant was not positive about the program effects and when asked what she would say to a friend about the program, "I'd tell them I didn't get very much out of it, it didn't help me." Like most of the youth in the juvenile diversion programs, she did not feel peer pressure was a problem for her, an
opinion her parents did not share.

The other participant, a young man, was somewhat more positive about his experience. He also does not feel he has trouble with peer pressure and most of his growth from the program occurred in his relationship with his mother.

Contrary to what the young woman said about the results of the program, her father felt, "it helped [open her up] some. I don't know about the whole thing." An instructor felt that one positive effect that this program has is that, "this is something else to give them to help them make better choices."

**COUNTY D**

Due to access problems to youth and the length of time between the last session, little information was available on perceived and observed behavior changes of youth in County D. The father and son interviewed stated that they could not remember whether or not the session was helpful in this area.

Conclusion

The data on youth behavior and knowledge change were mixed and dependent upon the program. As many stakeholders have said, it is difficult to measure these changes and all of the stakeholders held the view that they weren't going to, "make grandiose changes in behavior."

Comments were made that instructors and other participants felt they could often
predict which youth were not going to be successful. The implications of these remarks include possible pagmylian effects and the potential for a clearer intake process.

It was observed that the older the youth the more likely they were to open up to the interview process and make statements, either positive or negative. It was not clear whether this was a function of the older youths ability to process what has been taught to them or simply a sign of a mature confidence and the ability to relate to an older person in an interview format.

Again, recidivism rates from 5.4% to approximately 30% are ultimate indicators of behavior change.

**Change in Parent/Guardian Behavior**

A characteristic that separates the Extension Juvenile Diversion programs from the many others is the involvement of the parents/guardians in the treatment process. "Literature keeps saying that it is important for every child at risk to have one significant adult relationship in their life," said an Extension Educator from County D.

The original intent of some of the Extension Educators was to replace ineffective parenting programs with a program that was more likely to help those
parents/guardians who were in immediate need of intervention. County B Extension Educator explains, "we tried some things with parent education and for a variety of reasons felt it was not working out very well. You get parents that are by and large pretty good parents already."

The extent to which the curriculum and instruction is geared towards parenting varies from program to program, but most personal life skill lessons are focused on the child while adults focus on parenting instruction. Several lessons intended to instill life skills in the youth are equally as important for their parents/guardians, but the extent to which personal life skills were gained by parents/guardians is not clear. A majority of the communication and child development skills are delegated to discussion of parent/guardian/child relationship change later in this chapter.

Other exercises, such as goal-setting and peer pressure are primarily for the youth's benefit. Following is the perception of adult behavior and knowledge change in each of the four counties.

COUNTY A

County A juvenile diversion has hopes of bringing about change in the individual parent/guardian, specifically parenting skills. "We're educating parents on how to deal with kids in crisis," believes one county Extension Educator. The County A school superintendent feels that the message to parents is that, "you still have a
tremendous responsibility to the kids."

Although the focus was on parenting skills, not life skills for the parent/guardians, several of the adult participants mentioned competencies they developed, including one mom who said, "I think my communication has improved with other people. I'm more aware." Her son agreed, stating, "I noticed a big difference in my mom....now she gives everything in minute detail." Another mother stated, "the kids don't just learn the parents do, too. I learned a lot."

Instructors noticed behavior and knowledge transformations also; "I know that there were parents who asked, 'where can we get a book on this?'" One instructor mentioned a father who believed enough in the program that, "the father turned the money [refund] back into the program so if there was some student who didn't have the money....and we know they're not a wealthy family, they obviously needed the money."

COUNTY B

County B participants tended to emphasize relationship changes more frequently than any changes in the life skills of the parents/guardian themselves. One mother stated, "No, not really (didn't learn anything new) because with [my older son] we went to a lot of these courses." This mother had been through a variety of intervention and mental health programs with a troubled older child. Another mother
felt communications between her husband and her improved; "we didn't realize what he really was thinking and maybe thought he said." She also felt that she uses newly learned communication tools with others besides her son and husband.

Instructors remarked that when trying to confirm changes in parent/guardian personal behavior, "that's a little harder to know. Generally speaking you see more responsiveness...you can see there's some that are really trying."

**COUNTY C**

An interview with a couple whose daughter had gone through the program demonstrated what several other parents/guardians had also felt; "lot of times I say, 'what'd I do wrong?[with my child]" He, like many other parents/guardians, felt that problems with his child were unique to his family situation. The same father said that while he was in the program he found, "it's good to be able to talk to other people about it too, rather than just talk to a counselor."

His wife had been responsible for bringing their daughter to a mental health counselor and responded that, "it's a good program for somebody that has not had the knowledge of it before. I'd pretty much been through a lot of it already with the counseling."

A high school counselor noted that while it may seem to some that the parents/guardians do not learn many new skills she asserts, "the enlightenment [is
what is learned]. Someday in the future this might click, it might be with the younger child."

COUNTY D

Most stakeholders felt that the primary lesson learned by parents/guardians was to spend more time listening and interacting with their children. For example, one County D Extension Educator found that the most common response from parents/guardians was, "I'm so glad I had this opportunity to learn how to talk with my kid because we didn't talk at all,' or 'thank you, I'm sorry it took something like this to make me realize I need to spend more time with my child'."

A County Judge also noticed changes in parent/guardian's outlook after participation;

When they first came in there they were hostile. They didn't want to be there and they didn't want their kid there and by the time they go through this...program they were glad they were there. I was impressed with the attitude change on parents.

There were also instances where instructors could not affect change on behalf of the parents/guardians. An Extension Educator remembers his least favorite moment with the program, "the thing where the parent wouldn't come. I talked with him [the youth, who did want to attend] and he said his dad may kill his dog. A pretty bad situation." Another instructor recalls, "I think some people left still thinking it was punishment."
Conclusion

Developing personal skills outside of the parenting realm was not listed as a goal for any of the programs, in some instances it does appear to be a side effect to the life skill curriculum that is aimed at their children.

In some programs it is during the life skills sessions that parents/guardians and children are separated and parents/guardians focus on learning tangible parenting skills. This research does find minor effects on interpersonal and life skills of the parents/guardians such as communication skills, and setting limits and boundaries.

Change in Parent/Guardian/Child Relationship

There is an implicit assumption among the juvenile diversion stakeholders that the family environment is often a root cause to deviant behavior of the child. This assumption is often based on practical experience and observations as well as empirical evidence. The County B Extension Educator reminds, "you think about what's probably happened in the family....you know it's probably not been a very happy time. So to bring that to conclusion, it's bound to help family relationship." (8)

Although the curriculum does focus on individual life skills for the youth, stakeholders expressed that lessons in family communications are the most important aspect of the program. It was also the benefit most frequently cited by parents/guardians and youth.
COUNTY A

Participants in County A were most appreciative of the opportunity they had to practice communications skills with their children or parent. One mother said, "I was looking forward to having time to spend with him." Her son, when asked how this program had changed their relationship remarked, "just doing stuff with her. We've always been real close."

A mother-daughter pair reported numerous communication and behavioral problems prior to the juvenile diversion program. "Me and my mom used to never get along," related the daughter. She went on to say:

But ever since I went to the diversion classes me and my mom get along really good. We communicate more and we do more things than we ever did. Now when we get into our fights they're not like, 'I hate you.' It's more like just sit down and talk about it now."

The mother also was encouraged by the results of the program. "What I got out of it most is to sit and communicate. Sitting down and actually talking to her. She stays home a lot now. I've bought all kinds of games. We play games now."

One young man didn't feel like there was much room for improvement in the relationship between his parents. Although he enjoyed the overall program and was thankful for the second chance, he didn't seem to think it was something he needed. He did comment that communications was the most important part of the program. The final parent interviewed was very pleased with the results. "It was very hard
to get interaction before and I think after that it was better. I won't say it was overnight success, but after there was more interaction." The most important aspect according to this father was, "gaining insight and awareness to why we behave as we do."

There was divergent information provided on how behavior changed between the youth and a parent/guardian who did not attend the diversion session. One instructor mentioned a mother that said about her son and his father, "It was such a shock to see them talking more at home and really communicating more." None of the youth reported such a change.

COUNTY B

Participants in the County B program reported significant developments in family relationships. The time spent together was usually identified as the element which brought about change.

One mother was particularly pleased with the relationship change between her son and his father. Although only one parent/guardian was required to attend, she purposely told her husband that he too had to be there. She provided several examples of how their relationship developed. "I was really pleased with what this...has done for the two of them....they are closer. I think it was the whole thing
with communications, the talking and involving."

She went on to add that the program has led to more interaction and stated that the improvement in their relationship has continued,

...and I think it has grown from there. For Christmas that year, [his father] got [him] a model rocket. I was pleased that that was what he got him for Christmas. They bought a car out of a junk yard....him and his father had spent a lot of time working on it.

She also felt that the homework helped. "I think we had a lot more communications by having to do that at home"  Her son, who she described as very shy, felt that the role playing exercises helped; "it was easier to talk to them." He mentioned several times that he spent more time at home after the program because if he didn't, "dad wouldn't help me on the car."

Another mother, who was single and had an older son who lived with a foster parent, was pleased with what she and her son had learned about each other. "I'm more sensitive to his needs. I didn't picture him being as unsteady as he was. I think he's a little bit more open to me now, and I'm more willing to listen to him, too."

An example she related illustrated the change in relationship;

We had to tell ten things that were most important to us. And then you'd be surprised at what the kids put, like I was number one [on her sons]. I thought it would be like "my friend" but he said my mom and then like his brothers and sisters and then friends. And mine was my kids, and then my friends and so on. We'd never talked about that.

She wasn't sure how long the relationship change lasted. "This way [in diversion] we
spent two hours just him and me as where we don't now."

**COUNTY C**

Participants in the County C program expressed a variety of opinions concerning effects on family relationships from no change to significant improvement.

One young female, who had voluntarily joined the juvenile diversion program, did not feel that the program had any positive effects on her parental relationship, in fact she would have preferred that her parents had said no to participation and she did not feel like she belonged there.

On the other hand, both her parents were thankful for the opportunity to participate and felt that "we've come a long, long way. I'd say it's (relationship) a good 75% better." While the mother and father felt the relationship was getting better, they still did not spend time doing things with their daughter after the program was complete.

Another young man, visibly reserved and quiet, felt that the program did help. He rated the impact "probably a 6 or a 7 [on a scale of 1-10]." He reported a tumultuous relationship with his mother, "like yelling at each other and throwing things at each other. Pretty much everything." When asked if arguing decreased due to participation in the juvenile diversion program, he stated, "yeah, a little bit. It kind of gave my mom an idea of why we were arguing so much. [This] taught us ways to get along and have more fun."
COUNTY D

Most of the information from County D is garnered from one parent and from perceptions of the Extension Educator. The father interviewed stated his satisfaction and appreciation for having the opportunity to attend the juvenile diversion program. In fact his favorite aspect was, "where you get to go there and you get to be with your kid and you have to spend time with them."

When asked if he learned anything new about his son he replied, "I really don't think so. I may have developed a perception of kids in general." He did state that one lesson that had an impact on him was, "kids are going to try things and they have to suffer the consequences."

Conclusion

According to the participants, there was a high level of relationship development during the County B program and notable change in the other three. This change was attributed to time spent together and help in developing lines of communications.

For the most part, very few of the parents or youth could point to a particular activity that led to an improved relationship. The two exceptions would be identifying personality styles and the rocket/model building exercise.

The question of how long term relationship changes lasted was asked several times in the course of the study. The data was more supportive of a slack in the relationship
after completion of the program, but the results were inconclusive. There was
evidence that the maintaining the relationship was not easy when it was not mandated.

A County B instructor relates this story;

The last meeting we had, there was a little girl, about nine or so, and her
father couldn't write, and we had some survey things to fill out in the end.
So I sat down with him and I just wrote the stuff down. The little girl said
this has been so much fun because it has been a time where her folks and
her actually sat down and did something together. And she was crying
when she left. She told me she was afraid it would wear out and her folks
would no longer pay attention to her. Your heart just goes out to these
kids.

In the three instances where the youth and parent were of the same gender, the
relationship growth seemed more profound. In addition, three mothers felt more
growth in the son/father relationship than they did between themselves and their sons.
All three reported that there had not been a relationship problem prior to juvenile
diversion.

Program Mission

The mission of the four juvenile diversion programs are similar in that they all seek to
improve the family environment while providing viable, constructive alternatives to
the traditional adjudication process.

The original mission of Counties A, B and D was to teach parenting skills, while
County C reported that improved parenting was important to that program, too.
Unfortunately, "it was obvious that we were not reaching the parents we needed."
Several of the instructors saw juvenile diversion as a method of reaching those parents/guardians who were in need of direction.

**COUNTY A**

This mission statement of the County A Juvenile Diversion program was adopted from County D and is duplicated word for word, "this coalition of youth agencies and concerned citizens provides juvenile offenders with an alternative to the court system by providing opportunities to learn and exercise positive life skills."

County A Juvenile Diversion planners' self-assessment of their programs effects are ground in caution. The realize that they will not be able to, "save everyone." As stated by the county attorney, "everyone understands the shortcomings as well as the strengths of the program." One volunteer is equally honest in her evaluation, "we know this isn't for real dysfunctional families."

However, planners hope to break the cycle they say exists in at-risk families through a curriculum focused on the skills of communications, negotiation, self-respect, parental respect, an internal locus of control and conflict management.

Although most of the instructors and advisory committee members emphasize the family-focused efforts of the program, it was mentioned that benefiting the juvenile justice system is also a goal. The school superintendent stated, "helping the court system was why we met. We were bogged down." As far as recidivism, the chief of
police said, "we certainly hope for 50/50."

Through separating parents/guardians and youth during periods of the program, instructors strive to give parents/guardians the message that, "you still have tremendous responsibility to the kids." However, one instructor believes that this is not a true parenting class because they, "don't have enough pure parenting material."

**COUNTY B**

The Extension Educator says that in developing a juvenile diversion program, it must be asked, "why did they get in trouble? It's probably because some type of breakdown in the family." As in the other three programs, County B Juvenile Diversion seeks to prevent further breakdown in the family through teaching skills in (a) decision-making, (b) assertiveness, (c) communication and (d) self-esteem.

**COUNTY C**

The goal of the County C diversion program is to improve family relations through a series of family activities and discussions. As can be seen by this mission statement, County C differs from other counties by not including justice system relief or avoiding court stigmatization as a primary goal. They seek youth from a variety of referral points including the juvenile justice system. However, they do not seek juveniles directly from the county attorney, instead they receive referrals from probation (post-adjudication) and diversion services (pre-adjudication).
Instructors and advisory committee members focused entirely on family and individual development as being the mission of their program. Communications within the family was the focus of the program with other prerogatives being, "skills to deal with challenges," "enable youth to look at their lives," "make better decisions, build self-esteem," and, "connect their actions today with what they want to be tomorrow."

**COUNTY D**

This mission statement of the County D Juvenile Diversion program reads, "this coalition of youth agencies and concerned citizens provides juvenile offenders with an alternative to the court system by providing opportunities to learn and exercise positive life skills."

Being the first Extension Juvenile Diversion program in Nebraska, County D has a combined mission of (a) developing the family and (b) reducing stress on the juvenile justice system. The county judge stated that, "statistics indicate any time a child is involved, the further he gets in a system, the more likely he is to stay in it." The stakeholders had set a goal of having a recidivism rate of 30% or lower.

The county judge who first pushed for Extension involvement in a juvenile diversion program in County D wanted Extension participation because even though in-house diversion programs exist in the city police and county sheriff's department, 
"none of these people are really formally trained in communications, sociology, psychology." The county judge also is also hopeful that youth will become active 4-H members following their Extension juvenile diversion involvement.

Extension Educators see the juvenile diversion program as a way to, "provide communication skills for parents and children." One Extension Educator compared the juvenile diversion efforts to the efforts of alcohol treatment:

When you take an alcoholic and give them all this help and they go back...without changing the family environment... it's going to be just as hard for them to come back into that the second time as it was for them originally.

The same Extension Educator feels that this program corresponds with the mission of Extension; "I can't see anything better to work on," than juvenile diversion.

In addition, program planners perceived juvenile diversion as a method for participants to practice newly learned skills, view adults in a positive role, have a clean record and to accomplish these tasks while the offenders are young.

Conclusion

There is not a large contrast in the missions of the four programs. All four programs see themselves as serving families in need and this vision was common to all stakeholders. The differences are:

a) There is some variation on the intended benefits to the juvenile justice system. This variation was reflective of the level of involvement of the
justice system in the overall program.

b) The scope of potential participants. This scope ranged from County C, open to any family, to County A and B which focus on those youth and parents/guardians that have exhibited at-risk behaviors.

Participant Fees

Cost of the program (see Table 5) is inverse to the recidivism rate of three of the programs; County A had lowest recidivism rate and highest fees. County A has been rejected for grant funds, "because we're doing the job without any money." Cost does not appear to effect overall program viability.

Table 5

**Participant Fees in Four Juvenile Diversion Programs.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Refund*</th>
<th>Scholarships</th>
<th>Pays for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Materials, Instructor stipends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C**</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>$6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * For successful completion
** Fees were not collected at first and only session.
Instructors

The definition and role of the instructor differed from county to county, but the title is delegated to those people who presented at least one segment of the overall curriculum.

COUNTY A

There are two levels of instructors in the County A program; primary and secondary. Primary instructors consist of the Extension Educator and three volunteers who receive a $125 stipend per session and are actively involved all five classes. These three volunteer instructors represent various community organizations and have extensive backgrounds in family/youth development including conflict resolution, counseling and mental health.

Secondary instructors are representatives of community agencies who speak at one class per session, dealing with goal-setting, responsibility and consequences of actions. They are a superintendent of schools, chief of police and the manager of a K-Mart. The secondary instructors were well received by both parents and youth. One young man who was detained for fleeing to avoid arrest stated, "I like the speakers they brought in." When asked which he like best, he laughed saying, "Oddly enough, the police guy."

The primary instructors have developed a strong bond that they report goes beyond
the juvenile diversion classes. They view themselves as a team and report that, "it is such a team effort that we support each other." Several parents and stakeholders in the community also believe that this team of instructors has a positive effect. The county attorney feels,

"we have such an extraordinary group of people that are doing this one, that's why it works. They've gone out and given programs in other places, and I'll be honest with them, I'm very jealous of their time. I want them here."

Other words that fellow instructors, stakeholders and participants have used to describe the four primary instructors include fun, excellent, knowledgeable, open, goal-oriented, dedicated, role models, bubbly and excited. The school superintendent stated that although he was wary of the diversion concept initially, "when I went to that first meeting.... I said this thing is going to work. It was the people involved."

COUNTY B

County B relies primarily on three individuals to present its curriculum, the Extension Educator and two community volunteers. In addition there are three volunteers who will help with the model rocket activities. The two volunteers were recruited by the Extension Educator based on their work with youth in the past. Both were trained for the Dare To Be You curriculum.

The county attorney expressed, "I trust [the Extension Educator] judgement." and "the determination of [the Extension Educator] has shown." The Extension Educator
was responsible for most of the administrative and educational aspects of the program.

Participants expressed trust and appreciation for all three instructors. "I think you could have called her and talked to her," said one mother. She added that she trusted [the volunteer], "because he was nice, he didn't seem judgmental, he'd say the things that he did wrong." One young man remarked, "they were pretty nice." Both instructors voiced their openness to work with participants beyond the classroom.

Other words that were used to describe the instructors were dependable, determined and willing.

COUNTY C

Instructors for the County C program represent a variety of community agencies. A public high school guidance counselor and principal, probation officer, diversion services officer and the Extension Educator sit on the advisory committee and have teaching responsibilities as well.

Instructors feel a responsibility to be involved with program as an extension of their positions, although none are required to provide their services. The high school counselor stated, "I thought I needed to be involved because I see these kids from day
to day." The probation officer added that he feels, "it enhances our job." Two instructors, the diversion services officer and the high school counselor, assumed the roles of their predecessors.

While the County C program instructors exhibited enthusiasm for the program, there was not a high level of communications reported between them. The diversion officer stated that she rarely visits with the probation officer and some disagreement has occurred between two of the instructors on procedural matters. Participants described the instructors as trustful and felt comfortable in class with them. However, instructors were rarely mentioned and participants had trouble remembering much about them, possibly because not every instructor attended every class.

**COUNTY D**

Instructors, referred to as the Juvenile Diversion Team, consisted of two Extension Educators, a volunteer who participated as a parent in the first session, and students from a local private four-year college. The Extension Educators and adult volunteer were trained in Dare To Be You, a program which served as an outline for the curriculum.

Instructors expressed enthusiasm for the program, but qualified it by stating, "you get a lot of good feelings doing this program, but you get a lot of frustrations."
While much of the instruction was done by volunteers, program and curriculum planning was done by Extension staff. The county judge expressed the importance of this, "You have to have professional staff around."

The volunteers were well received by other two instructors, one of which said, "my enthusiasm fed off [a volunteer] and what she did with the first group."

However, one parent mentioned his concern that the college age volunteers could not help in questions that he had about his child. This parent suggested that volunteers be parents themselves in order for them to commiserate with participants.

Conclusion

The instructors are the people who deliver the curriculum to the participants and it is important that these individuals be well suited to the task. Positive feedback on instructors was reserved for those instructors who exhibited the most experience along with enthusiasm and a caring attitude.

Collaboration

A clear message given by all four programs was that a successful juvenile diversion program is a team effort; "one person could not pull this off." As shown in Figure 2 (p. 122), a consistent, effective program is dependent on many factors and a variety of stakeholders. Research backs this up; "replicating the Adolescent Diversion Program model required intense community activity to initiate and
maintain the source of referrals." (Davidson et al, 1990)

The level of collaboration and inter-agency communications varies greatly among the four programs. The most often mentioned agencies in juvenile diversion coalitions are listed in Table 6.

In three of the programs, County A, C and D, an advisory council/committee exists as part of a collaboration effort. In these programs, the council/committee was designed to provide direction to the program. The degree to which each of these groups were able to contribute to the viability of the respective program varied greatly.

It is important to describe the four coalitions and the extent of their cooperation and collaboration in order to understand their impact on a consistent program and ultimately behavior change in the participants.

COUNTY A

Stakeholders in the County A Juvenile Diversion program have pushed for collaboration to provide direction for it's program. They feel that support must come from the community, businesses, law enforcement and the judicial system.

After discussing the idea of juvenile diversion with a skeptical county attorney and
Table 6

**Collaboration Partners in Nebraska Cooperative Extension Juvenile Diversion Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>County Attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probation Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversion Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>City Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sheriff's Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human/Social Services</td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extension Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Parent/Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Philanthropic Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superintendent Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colleges/Universities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A county judge, two County A instructors publicized and planned an informational session where thirty interested parties, identified by the county attorney, could aid in the design and mission of the juvenile diversion program. The county attorney stated several stipulations in order for him to provide support.

At the informational session, the two people responsible for the start up of the
project presented the general concept of juvenile diversion and asked, "do we need this program?" After receiving confirmation that the program was needed, 12 community members volunteered to sit on an advisory council and two others volunteered to assist in the designing of the curriculum.

Through the infancy of the County A Juvenile Diversion project, the team of four primary instructors consistently relied on the advisory council for guidance and answers. "Every time we had a problem, it would be a council decision until we felt comfortable enough among the four of us we know how the council would handle this. Probably the first three months we had probably six of those type [emergency] meetings"

County A stakeholders are adamant about the importance of communications among members of the coalition. "I think the key to this is communications. Nobody likes to get caught not knowing what's going on." "Communications is vital." The county attorney feels that the instructors, "make sure there's enough talking so the they know what's going on. Nobody's surprised."

Stakeholders in County A exhibit a great deal of pride and satisfaction with their collaboration efforts. Finally, turf was not an issue according to stakeholders. "It's a group of people who are on the same page," said the school superintendent. Instructors and council members regularly display their trust and admiration of other
coalition members; "We're accepting of each other" and "These are goal-oriented, productive-oriented people who wanted to help." When asked what she would recommend to others interested in juvenile diversion, one instructor said, "Clone [fellow instructors]."

COUNTY B

Besides the original coalition of the county attorney, probation officer, county judge and the Extension Educator (who developed the basic design), responsibility for programming decisions and maintenance has been left to the Extensions Educator. There recently has been some involvement on the part of the police department by attending and presenting at one class, but that input has been limited. "Most people are not even aware of the discipline problems we have."

The county attorney, however, is actively involved in the process of diverting youth and he has been highly satisfied with the performance of the juvenile diversion program. The current county attorney was not among those involved in the establishment of the program. There were no turf problems reported, "we don't have a great deal of difficulties among all the agencies." There does seem to be a great deal of communication between the Extension Educator and the county attorney. He was very knowledgeable of the purpose and mission of the program, as stated by the Extension Educator.
COUNTY C

The County C program has been a collaborative effort since its initiation in 1994. Both the Extension Agent and a probation officer were made aware of the County A program and saw it as a way "to improve family relations through a series of family activities and discussions."

Members of the coalition include a high school counselor, a high school principal, the Extension Educator, a probation officer and the Diversion Services officer. These coalition members also serve as instructors of the curriculum. There is very little work done with the county attorney or law enforcement officials.

Diversion Services and the probation officer already receive young people from these sources and act as an intake resource, where they make decisions of corrections instead of the county attorney offices. However, the Diversion Services officer stated that she had only seen the county attorney once in three months and expressed dissatisfaction with the county attorney's interest level in juvenile Diversion Services.

There were few comments on how much communications takes place between the instructors/advisory committee. Two of the instructors admitted that they don't always agree on certain regulations.

COUNTY D

When the county judge encouraged the initiation of a juvenile diversion program.
Extension Educators set up a "brainstorming" session, the first meeting of what was to become the advisory committee. The two Extension Educators had already written the mission statement for the program prior to this brainstorming session.

There was a feeling from the beginning that not all of the parties on the committee were as committed to the project as others. There was not a representative from the police department, but the judge assured the others that there would be at the next meeting. It was the county judge, in fact, that instigated the project from the beginning. "I think they [other agencies] resent him for doing this," (4) remarked one stakeholder. One stakeholder voiced his concern, "I think the police department, probation, sheriff and county attorney, particularly the county attorney, there's too many turf battles."

The advisory committee consisted of the county judge, two Extension Educators, and a representative of sheriff's department, probation and police department. There was no one from the county attorney's office involved. The advisory committee no longer meets because youth are not being diverted to the program and one Extension Educator feels that this led to a loss of their support. One Extension Educator indicates that "they're not that interested in working on something." Another stakeholder blames this on the fact that they have not had advisory meetings. "It [communications] has not been strained, just doesn't happen. And we just laid off of
it because we don't understand what we did, what we didn't do."

The county attorney has ultimate control over how many families are referred, and if they are referred, to a juvenile diversion program. In County D, a new county attorney was elected after the program had gotten off the ground and has not been supportive of the program. Therefore kids have not been referred to the program. "The county attorney always talked good things but never came through. And even more so with the new one."

Extension Educators and the county judge expressed despair over the recent stall in programming: "It's frustrating coming up to the time to start and it just doesn't happen. It's frustrating. They [county attorney] don't seem to be interested." Stakeholders believe that the county attorney is pushing a new program for juvenile delinquency, which will be discussed in County D Alternatives.

Conclusions

When looking purely at recidivism rates, it would appear that an elaborate collaboration effort involving the entire community and multiple agencies is the most effective. The County A program, with a 5.4% recidivism rate, showed a high level of collaboration, the largest number of agencies involved, significant degree of satisfaction of both program and coalition members, constant communication, and involvement of both the judicial system and law enforcement.
While both the County C and D programs involved collaboration with multiple agencies, neither program attained the same recidivism rate or was reported to have the same amount of satisfaction among its stakeholders. Another important aspect of these two programs is even though they involved collaborative effort, in neither county was the county attorney system involved.

The fourth county, County B, did not have the collaborative efforts nearly as large or involved as the other three, yet there was a great deal of satisfaction reported from the instructors and the county attorney. In fact County B had a good working relationship with two different county attorney's, the old and new one.

Several stakeholders have expressed the importance of involving law enforcement and members of the judicial system in the program building process. In the next section, specific agency involvement and the effects of their involvement will be discussed.

Police/Sheriff Involvement

Prior to the act of diversion, most young people's first encounter with the justice system is with an arresting officer. Several subjects reported that it is common practice for police/sheriff officers to conduct an informal evaluation of the situation and determine whether further action is necessary. The County B county attorney stated,
this is the [youth's] first chance for diversion but they probably had two or three chances with the police at least before they even put them on a report to us. The police will try to resolve it, give them a little lecture and inform the parents as to what happened.

COUNTY A

The police and sheriff's department in County A has been more involved than in the other three programs. The county attorney feels, "you have got to have the support of the law officers." As in County D, a representative of the police department sits on the advisory board and in addition presents a portion of the program.

According to the police chief, as far as the actual diversion process, "the only thing we do is the officers hand out the forms at the time of arrest." At one point, the diversion form was a source of confusion for the officers. The team of instructors gave inservice training to the two police departments in the county and visited the sheriff's office as well. No problems have been reported since, although the county attorney asserts, "a few officers, I'm not so sure they understand the whole program because I'm not so sure they understand really what happens to them when they go to court."

Police officers were skeptical of the program at first but, "it does give them some hope that what they're doing is going to help the kids. When an officer gets upset is if
it gets dumped out and nothing happens. Then an officer is going to say why bother?"

It was also reported that diversion, "cuts down on the amount of court time that they
have to go. The number one thing we hate to do it have to go testify."

The chief of police and the county attorney stated that turf battles are a possibility
anytime numerous agencies are involved but feel that very few turf battles exist in the
County A program. The police chief also believes that turf battles are often the fault
of the law enforcers;

policeman are notorious for not understanding their role in the juvenile
justice system. I learned from a very strong county attorney who made
sure there was no doubt in any of the policemen's mind what his role was.
All those things come about when policeman lose sight of what their job
is, and that's to enforce the law, not to convict criminals.

COUNTY B

Youth participating in the County B Juvenile Diversion program are diverted
strictly by the county attorney after receiving reports from the police or sheriff's
office. Law enforcement has little to do with the process; "as far as the police are
concerned, the sheriff's office, they treat them the same as they would have without
the program," stated the county attorney.

Originally, law enforcement was not involved in program planning or
implementation, outside of holding classes at the police department headquarters. In
recent classes, however, a law enforcement official has spoken to the class and given them a tour of the jail facilities, in conjunction with a lesson on consequences of behaviors.

The police/sheriff's office still has a vested interested in the families and "we haven't been good about that [letting the police know what happened] in the past. The police report to us and wonder what becomes of it," according to the county attorney.

**COUNTY C**

Since some juvenile offenders participating in the County C program have already been adjudicated, there is little or no formal involvement on behalf of law enforcement. In the proposal, law enforcement was listed as potential provider of workshop leaders and dollars but not as referrals.

**COUNTY D**

One characteristic that separated the County D program from the other three was the existence of in-house juvenile diversion programs in the city police department and county sheriff's office. According to stakeholders, some saw this new program as threatening and competitive, eventually leading to turf battles. At the first planning meeting, the police department did not send a representative. They were present at later meetings and one instructor stated that, "the police department they will work in it and they have been pretty well."
There has been no involvement from either police or sheriff in the conducting of the class, although plans were to include the police in the next session.

Conclusion

There appears to be four different experiences with law enforcement among the programs; (a) no involvement [County C], (b) involvement in planning and advisory capacity only [County D], (c) participation in program and curriculum presentation [County BJ, and (d) participation in both an advisory and instructional capacity [County A].

The program with the most involvement with law enforcement described a positive relationship that has taken work to build. The association is characterized by frequent communication, involvement in program design, responsibility for instruction and shared vision.

One County A instructor feels that the juvenile diversion program provides relief to law enforcement officers; "sometimes they were placed in a situation where maybe they had to make some value judgements they didn't always feel real comfortable with. And they thought this was an [answer]."

While the County B and C programs did not give any evaluations of law enforcement, County D had mixed reactions from both Extension Educators and the county judge. The biggest obstacle mentioned was commitment on behalf of the law
enforcement officials. The possibility of turf protection (due to competing diversion programs) was a prime source of lack of communications and common vision.

Justice System

Justice system involvement in the four juvenile diversion programs consists of at least one of the four following positions, (a) county attorney (b) probation services (c) county judge and/or (d) juvenile diversion services. The involvement of these individuals is varied among the four programs.

COUNTY A

In County A, the county judge and county attorney have been involved in the program. The county judge was an advisor to the early concept that existed before the advisory council was ever formed and now sits on the advisory council.

The county attorney has remained very involved with the doings of the diversion program. Stakeholders were highly appreciative of the county attorney and the guidance that he gave the program. Initially, he was apprehensive of the idea because, "he had been aware of a lot of juvenile diversion programs and he'd had some experiences with some that were not successful." Although the county attorney became an important and committed partner, "All along he kept saying I won't sign off on this unless you can prove to me that your going to do it right."
After hearing more information on the advantages of the program, the county attorney began to provide advice on how to get it started and one of the instructors said, "I think that was a key point, that both he [judge] and the county attorney were very enthusiastic about us looking into it." When asked what convinced the county attorney, an instructor responded, "I think he knew [us] and he knew that when we said something we would do it."

Currently the county attorney serves on the advisory council and is active in referring offenders to the program. He does not participate in the curriculum. He did display a large knowledge base of what was being taught and the purpose behind it, both from a juvenile justice and a human development point of view.

COUNTY B

The most involved member of the judicial system in County B is the county attorney who refers the youth after receiving the police report and contacts the family. Three agencies (county attorney and judge, probation) were involved in the initial decision to allow the program to exist. Since that time, probation has referred two youth and that has been the extent of their involvement.

The county attorney position has turned over since the start of the program, but both county attorney’s have been supportive of the juvenile diversion classes. The
current county attorney was "negative" at first, "but I didn't know much about it." He mentioned change in parenting skills and monetary savings to the judicial system as advantages he feels are characteristic of this program.

COUNTY C

Both probation and juvenile diversion services are represented on the advisory committee and serve as instructors as well. The probation officer feels that involvement in the juvenile diversion program "enhances our job. You can learn more about people in a group than you can across a desk."

As opposed to the other programs which work at least to some measure with law enforcement and/or the county attorney, County C relies on probation and juvenile Diversion Services to supply youth and families for the program. As stated in the mission, the County C program exists to improve family relations. Although it's origins were based on a true pre-trial diversion program, stakeholders envision a plan to include all families that have a need for their services.

COUNTY D

Three of the four above mentioned justice system personnel have been involved in the County D Juvenile Diversion program, although not all three have had positive effects, according to program stakeholders.

It was a county judge, collaborating with an Extension Educator, that provided the
impetus to start the program in County D. "This never would have started with out [the county judge] wanting it to go." His original intent was that the young people would join 4-H clubs after diversion, but, "my disappointment on it was they seemed to have fun, they did these things, but then they didn't fall into any extension group, they didn't join 4-H." The county judge was also on the original planning group.

Probation services has provided an individual to work with the advisory committee in addition to referring youth from the probation program. "Probation has been supportive, we've gotten quite a few from probation." One person from the probation office even attended the classes with a youth whose parents wouldn't come with their child.

The county attorney has not been involved in the planning or advisory process in the County D program. It has been the responsibility of the county attorney to refer offenders to the Extension Educators for intake and registration into the program but, "they don't appear to be interested." The county attorney's office has been active in another juvenile justice program, and has not referred youth to the program in over a year. One stakeholder stated it is like, "beating your head against the wall." Another stakeholder said, "last summer, the advisory committee was ready to jump back on this. then [a new county attorney was elected]. All those people kind of went, 'what happened?' Well, we didn't never call anybody together because we didn't ever get
clearance [from the county attorney]."

Conclusion

All four counties described some form of involvement with the justice system. The two counties with the lowest recidivism rates were the only two that reported strong involvement from the county attorney. It has been shown that a positive working relationship with the county attorney combined with a common mission will produce a more consistent program and access to families.

County D, which has discontinued it's program, attributed many of their programs weaknesses to disinterest on behalf of the county attorney. Comments were made by some stakeholders that their program could not function without cooperation from the county attorney.

Probation was actively involved in two of the counties. In both of these counties, probation diverted youth to the diversion program and in one the probation officer was actively involved in instruction and program design.

Alternatives Which Exist

Although the first Extension involvement in juvenile diversion was the 1991 County D program, juvenile diversion and similar programs are not new to Nebraska. In some areas, such as County D, law enforcement or the judicial system might supply in-house diversion services. The treatment effort supplied by these services
varies greatly as do other parameters such as age of offenders, severity of offense and previous offenses.

These alternative solutions can affect the Extension diversion projects by creating turf battles (County D), drawing potential clients (County C and D) or using resources that otherwise might be provided to the Extension juvenile diversion program.

In addition, alternatives outside the entire concept of diversion are even more numerous. To those who feel that minor offenders should not automatically be brought into any form of the justice system, an option could be release with reprimand and notice to the parent/guardian. Davidson et al. (1990) found in one medium size Midwestern city that approximately 90% of youth involved with minor or non-serious crimes were released with no further action. Those researchers concerned with the "widening net" of social control frequently advocate this alternative.

Conversely, some feel that juvenile diversion is not severe enough and only full prosecution is acceptable. Another form of diversion might be classes such as alcohol and drugs, defensive driving or decision-making.

COUNTY A

Stakeholders could not identify many options for County A offenders besides adjudication, offense related classes such as a defensive driving course, or immediate
release. "I think in the past when kids got picked up there just wasn't a whole lot to
do with them." If they were brought in, "[In] most of the other programs...you'd bring
the kid in for a day and it would be a day long program on why you shouldn't drink
and take drugs." In addition past diversion alternatives did not have a parenting
component.

Youth frequently cited those programs as boring and ineffective. One young man
said that the juvenile diversion classes were, "a lot better [than defensive driving].
Boring, very boring. You spend eight hours in a classroom watching [a video] you've
seen five times." "I heard the kids laugh about getting picked up for MIP in other
counties. It's a one day [sic]. You go one day. They thought it was a joke."

The county attorney did not see court as a better option either; "the number one
advantage is that they don't get to know the man in the black robe." Every parent and
youth agreed that they would choose the juvenile diversion class over court if they
had to make the decision again. One parent, who is an attorney, said, "in court...you
wouldn't have had the impact, the awareness aspect, insights into behavior. So it's far
better than court."

The county attorney mentioned that if they were to go to court they, "sometimes
fine them, maybe community service." The chief of police stated that probation is not
effective [in changing behavior]. "I know it's not effective. There's no doubt in
anybody's mind it's not effective. This [juvenile diversion] is it."

The youth in the County A program were perhaps the most thankful for this alternative and many considered it their second chance. "I thought it's a chance to save me for something that I didn't know I was going to get in trouble for. It's my second chance" One young man explained his perception of the repercussion of being processed through the judicial system;

If I'd gone through court my name would have been in the paper. That would have embarrassed me. You know people who don't know much about you, like neighbors or something, they'd see that and that would more or less be they're first impression, they'd be like oh, a little juvenile delinquent. That's the part I wouldn't have liked."  

COUNTY B

County B alternatives are similar to County A in that no pre-trial diversion program similar to this one existed prior to it's development. Stakeholders did advocate the juvenile diversion program as a superior alternative to the court system;

Nothing is getting accomplished [through court], no improvement in their attitude, they just get jail smart," said the county attorney. "I don't want to lose the mystery [of the court]. If they walk in and see how nice and shiny the floors are and a TV in the corner and the bed made, in fact cleaner and better than they have at home. It isn't going to be that bad.

A mother adds, "A lot of times I think when they go through the court system, they learn to get revenge. Resentment and revenge." Another mother states, "That's why I didn't want him to go through court, because the court system here doesn't do much. I
just don't have faith in the court system."

The county attorney also does not see probation as a viable alternative; "They generally have four nights of two hours per night in the diversion program...if they got put on probation they might spend another half-hour every month for three to six months, usually." Considering alternative diversion classes, which are held in another county, "often they're ordered to a defensive driving course or a decision making course. That isn't to say it isn't as good, it isn't as much."

One mother was upset when she was told of that the juvenile diversion option existed. She had an older son who had been involved in other alternatives and was not pleased with his results; "This is a joke. With my oldest son, we asked for help and they told me he didn't qualify. I was ticked. We went to Boys Town and that was really stressful."

Parents and youth offered their appreciation of having an alternative to court. One mother stated, "I was happy to hear that they had something like that because it was my sons first involvement with the law. I am so thankful they did not put it on his record." A parent was thankful for the confidentiality involved with the program, "I didn't want everybody to know that [my son] shoplifted."

COUNTY C

Some of the youth in the County C program were actually referred to the program
through agencies that are considered alternatives to the Extension juvenile diversion. A primary referral source is the Diversion Services agency. This is also a pre-trial diversion program, but differs greatly in its treatment method. If this agency feels it necessary it can, and has, required the Extension program. A contract agreement that each youth is required to complete involves, among other stipulations, a fine, community service, a letter of apology and restitution.

According to one stakeholder, Diversion Services has not effective in bringing about the change desired in the Extension diversion program;

Diversion used to be that when your on diversion it was a real privilege, and you were grateful to get that opportunity to do that and your parents were really grateful. We've had a series of diversion officers in there and it's just become kind of a joke. It's not a privilege to take it. Community service wasn't followed up on, apologies weren't followed up on.

A probation officer sees the juvenile diversion program as a way of making the probation process more effective; "I think that's much better than sitting with the kid and talking to him 15-20 minutes once a week." Those youth referred by probation are required to complete the other conditions of their probation contract.

COUNTY D

There are several alternatives for juveniles in County D including in-house diversion at both the police department and the sheriff's office. The county judge states, "they still exist and they're quite competitive with this one. This hasn't been a
smooth transition into one program." These in-house treatment programs do not involve the parent/guardian and child together.

Another option would be adjudication and either placement on probation or incarceration at a youth development center. It was reported earlier that probation had been supportive and referred several youth to the Extension juvenile diversion program. One Extension Educator stated,

I would have to hope that they would think that some kind of diversion program is better for them that first time than those little meaningless things that they them do out on probation. I've people come over and work for us on probation and they always come back and check. But I just have them doing chicken coops.

A new program, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), has emerged that some stakeholders think is meant to replace the Extension juvenile diversion program, at least in the eyes of the county attorney. Explains an Extension Educator.

"Volunteers that take about 30 hours of training to work with an adjudicated child. Relieves duty of an attorney, saving costs. These people have no legal background."

Stakeholders do not feel that CASA and Extension juvenile diversion programs should compete since, "it meets a different need," according to county judge. "That is definitely second or third level intervention, from where our 4-H juvenile diversion program is first level intervention," contends one stakeholder. "CASA's are appointed after a juvenile has been adjudicated. So it's not true diversion in the way we're using
They feel that the county attorney is attempting to replace the Extension juvenile diversion program,

Because the county attorney after saying we would get this program (juvenile diversion) off in the fall went to Kiwanis organization when she was supposed to be asking for money for this juvenile diversion program and asked for money for CASA. And she calls that the [City X] JD program. But it really isn't a juvenile diversion program because they're already adjudicated and in the system.

However, an Extension Educator stated that several youth were referred from probation, which also would not be true diversion from the court system.

Conclusion

The most common theme throughout all four programs is that stakeholders and participants believed juvenile diversion to be superior to the alternative of court. They felt it to be more effective and less costly. In addition, probation and other diversion classes were not seen as being as effective.

It was mentioned that stakeholders felt that juvenile diversion provided law enforcement officials with an alternative to releasing while not requiring full adjudication for minor or status offenders. It was also mentioned as being helpful in reducing time, stress and cost to some law enforcement officers.

There were a variety of alternatives available. The county which spoke of having
the most options for youth offenders is the only one which is no longer functioning. The two counties with the lowest recidivism rates did not report any alternatives that were similar to the one they provide. The fourth county, County D, has combined their program with existing alternatives.

Referral Methodology

Referral methodology pertains to procedures and parameters of directing youth and families into the respective diversion programs. Elliot et al., (1975) recommended that referrals should, "substitute for further official processing and adjudication, should occur between apprehension and adjudication, and should not be coercive." The literature tends to agree that diversion will not help in the rehabilitation of serious offenders (p. 17).

Given these recommendations, the issues of offenses, coerciveness, process, age and point of penetration into the judicial system were considered.

Offenses

The majority of youth participating in the programs of study were either misdemeanor or status offenders. Although some programs worked with youth who were not charged with any offense, none of them accepted felonious youth.

Although there were certain offenses which were commonly referred (i.e. shoplifting, vandalism, stealing, misdemeanor assault), in all four programs there was
at least some form of an intake process where either the police, probation or county attorney could filter the candidates for diversion. Although there was no selection process indicated (outside of being a first time offender), it was mentioned that those responsible for selection based their decisions on their perception of the young person's chances for success in the program.

COUNTY A

This program permits non-offenders from schools and parents/guardians, however almost all of their participants have been first time offenders with minor charges. The chief of police stated, "you don't want to ruin the chances of success of the kids you can get to. You start bringing in felony assault, you start bringing in a serious behavior problem it infiltrates the other kids." The county attorney added, "Guns, weapons, they don't go through the program. I don't care if it's shooting or just possession."

COUNTY B

County B juvenile diversion accepts first time offenders committing minor or status offenses. The County B Extension Educator remarked, "it's not really geared for MIP," because of the age limits, and they have not had any MIP offenses referred. There is no specific component directed toward alcohol use.

COUNTY C
The County C program, which was not designed specifically to be true diversion, has a mix of non-offenders, first time offenders and those who have been placed on probation who have committed multiple offenses. Some of the students had more serious problems and had committed more serious offenses than the typical offender and, "we're not the agency to help the more serious cases."

COUNTY D

County D accepted only those youth who had been charged with an offense because, "I think you might have some problems from parents of kids that committed an offense [if mixed with non-offenders]." It was not reported how serious of an offense would be accepted.

Conclusion

One of the fears raised in the literature was that non-offenders would be stigmatized by participation in a program geared toward those who have been charged with an offense. Although all the programs professed a willingness to review non-offenders, only one program (County C) actually accepted them on a regular basis. One of the youth in that program who had not committed an offense felt that she didn't belong there.

There is also some disagreement in whether MIP's should be allowed. It was found that the program accepting MIP's did not have a shortage of juvenile referrals the
other programs had, but the question was raised if this program is necessary for those youth involved in an MIP offense. In County A, MIP's had an overall lower rate of recidivism and it was mentioned by one stakeholder that MIP's tend to do very well.

Coerciveness

There is a near consensus agreement among researchers that a juvenile diversion program be voluntary in nature (Elliot, et al., 1975). This appeared true in all programs except in certain situations within the County C program. Some youth that were referred from Diversion Services and probation in County C were required by these agencies to participate. In all other instances, youth had the option of taking their case to court, which some did.

Process

In cases where youth were referred to juvenile diversion after committing an offense but before adjudication, the same basic process was used to get youth from the point of contact with law enforcement into the diversion program.

This process, described below for each program, is usually dependent on the police/sheriff for reporting the offense and the county attorney or police/sheriff for providing information about the juvenile diversion program. It is ultimately up to the county attorney to make the decision of whether the youth is allowed the option of juvenile diversion.
In those cases where the youth was diverted from another agency such as probation, schools and diversion services, referral is at the discretion of instructors.

COUNTY A

The process in County A is clearly defined:

1. Police/Sheriff automatically give a youth status/minor offender the diversion information. Any offenders who would not qualify are excluded later by the county attorney.

2. The youth offender contacts the county attorney requesting to enroll in the juvenile diversion program in lieu of adjudication.

3. The county attorney will make decision based on severity of offense, whether the youth is a first time offender and family environment.

4. If the county attorney agrees, the youth's name will be referred to the Extension Educator who will contact family for program details.

Those youth who have not committed an offense, but would still like to participate in the program, must contact the diversion program either through school or as an individual. There have not been many who have come to the program via non-judicial referrals. "We don't promote that [parent/guardian referrals], it just happened."

COUNTY B

County B utilizes a process similar to that of County A except police are not involved outside of the investigation and filing a report, which they would do
regardless of the programs existence, and it is the family's responsibility to contact the
Extension Educator following county attorney approval.

COUNTY C

The County C program has a more open referral process than the other three
programs with youth being diverted from a variety of sources. A majority of the
youth in the first session were assigned to the class at the discretion of either a
probation officer or the juvenile Diversion Services officer. The only referral that
was not required to attend as a condition of their probation/Diversion Services
contract was a voluntary youth whose mental health agency recommended it to her
family.

COUNTY D

At the outstart of the County D program, the county attorney would only refer
youth based on recommendations from the police or sheriff's office. Eventually the
county attorney started making that decision on his own. If the family did agree to
the diversion option, an Extension Educator performed an intake interview with each
family and introduced them to the program. Those families referred directly by
probation would also participate in the intake process.

Conclusion

The process of actually getting the young person and their family to the juvenile
diversion class was reflective of the diversity of offenses allowed. The two counties
with the lowest recidivism rate reported that while their programs were open to
alternative methods, a majority of the families came to their program via the county
attorney office, after apprehension and prior to adjudication. County D received a
majority of their families through police/sheriff and county attorney's office. They
did seek, and were referred, a number of youth from probation.

County A, B and C are open to school referrals but have not been encouraged by
the response. One County B junior high school counselor recommended the program
to twenty parents of youth at risk but not one of the parents signed up for the program.

A question that surfaced was what pull is there for the families to complete the
program if there is no threat of adjudication? The school superintendent explains that
for students who have broke school policies, "we'll kick them out of school."

County A finds it best to have the police handing out the diversion information
forms, although there was confusion among the police and sheriff's officers at first.
Program stakeholders solved this by providing in-service training to both of the
county's police departments and the sheriff's office.

Age

County D and B have set age limitations for participants. County B accepts only
14 and younger while County D tries to restrict their program to no older than 13.
"When they get to be teen age you can see a lot more barriers. You can see they're attitudes are different, not as receptive," one County B instructor stated. A County D instructor agreed, stating, "I don't think we're equipped to handle 15,16,17 year olds. I think they play games with us. Eight, nine, ten year olds are the ones I think you can do something with."

Stakeholders from both County B and D also said that different age groups should not be mixed. "If you're going to have some older ones, you have to have them all older." County C county attorney adds, "Having the old guys with a twelve year old, that's not a very good idea. They're better off with their peers."

The information reported by the counties shows that the most common participants between all three counties is between 15 and 17 years old and most of those participants who are reported for a second offense is 14.

Information shown in Figure 1 might suggest that older students are actually less likely to commit a second offense. It should be noted that recidivism data is confined only to those who committed a second offense while still nineteen years or younger. Therefore, the younger the child, the longer period of time that child has to commit another offense between the time the diversion session ends and his/her nineteenth birthday.
However, it must also be considered that 58.7% of the youth that have gone through the program since 1993 were between the ages of fifteen and seventeen and a vast majority of these youth would not have turned nineteen by the time the data on recidivism was collected.

This information discredits the possibility that a large number of the older students committed an offense after turning 19 and therefore are not included in the recidivism information. This information also counters beliefs that the younger the student the less likely they are to commit a second offense.
Extent of Involvement in Judicial System

True pre-trial juvenile diversion is directed toward those youth who are have been apprehended for an alleged offense but have not been adjudicated (Chaffee, unpublished), in other words no petition has been filed to the court system. Past studies have recommended that including non-offenders or youth that have been introduced to the judicial system in a juvenile diversion system will not be beneficial to these groups.

All of the programs have expanded beyond true juvenile diversion to some degree to include those youth who are not first time offenders or have been exposed to the criminal justice system or have not committed an offense at all. Comments made by Extension Educators and other stakeholders with youth development backgrounds may explain the decision to include youth beyond the customary juvenile diversion client:

- "The four of us view our program as an educational program."
- "Our goal is that the kids learn to respect themselves more."
- "We talk about self-esteem, decision-making, that's what this program is about."

When juvenile diversion is seen as an educational opportunity, youth development professionals may want to be inclusive to the point of inviting all youth who are in need of some form of intervention/prevention.

There was no evidence, however, that any certain group of stakeholders saw youth
and family development as the only goal of their program. Several comments were made by volunteers, school officials and Extension Educators on the advantages of youth not going through adjudication. However, "most people try to make them [programs like JD] too broad and too wide and they become helpful to no one."

County C experienced problems when one of their students went through the adjudication process while in the program. The young person was sent to a youth development center and did not complete the program. Another student, who was a non-offender prior to the class, shoplifted while in the class and was placed on probation.

The most common method of including adjudicated youth was to accept referrals from the probation services. County B, C and D have received youth that have already been through the court system and have been placed on probation. County B has had two youth referred by probation services, with mixed results: "In the one situation I think it probably was O.K. and in the other one, I think the kid had been in court way too many times, too many problems."

The inclusion of either non-offenders or adjudicated youth may be a result of the low number of referrals that plague some of the programs. Regardless of the reason, a study in 1984 found that diversion program goals can be reached if the program replaces, not complements, further processing.
Administration of Program

Juvenile diversion programs do require an administrative role to complete paper work, organize sessions, initiate communication among stakeholders and to ensure that rules are being followed. All four of the programs in this study rely on Extension Educators to play the role of primary administrator and one stakeholder believes, "the way it is now, I don't know how you can get it away from Extension. I don't think your going to get one of them [other stakeholders] to do it." However, several other agencies are involved in administrative roles, either by choice, nature of their positions, or both.

One rule that was consistent to all four programs was that a parent/guardian of the youth (or at another adult in certain situations) was required to attend every session, a rule that many stakeholders and parents saw as critical.

COUNTY A

The Extension Educator is responsible for administrative responsibilities in County A and did not express any reservations of this role. The chief of police seemed relieved stating, "these programs tend to fall back on the county attorney for administration of the program. Fortunately, [Extension Educator] was able to relieve a lot of that stress by taking those administrative responsibilities at the Extension office."
The stakeholders in County A made it a point to recognize the importance of following the guidelines they set up for participants. Payments must be made, families must attend and youth must stay out of trouble. Before the program got off the ground, the county attorney said, "well it's got to be this way, and it's gotta be that way. Which is really important." A stakeholder felt that the county attorney being adamant about rules, "made us aware of what we were doing."

The importance of the rules was mentioned by five of the stakeholders and two of the parents;

- "Don't let them slide, once you do that you've lost your credibility."
- "You gotta have rules, but then you gotta have a human feeling for caring behind them, too."
- "It's just a process I feel needs to be done. We are actually dealing with kids that would normally be in court. To me that's real serious business."
- "They're told, if you don't want to cooperate let's go to court."

A parent mentioned that having to go with his son, "bothered me. After going through the program it turned out to be a valuable thing." A mom felt that "it should be required that both parents come at least once." The school superintendent detailed how one instructor deals with parents/guardians who do not want to attend,

[Extension Educator] is one of the nicest ladies I have ever met in my life. But [Extension Educator] is not afraid to say [to a parent], with a smile on her face, 'you don't understand, if you and your son doesn't [sic] make it, you will be taken from the program tonight, your name will be given to [county attorney] in the morning and you'll have a court appearance in 72
hours. Now you decide'.

The county attorney felt that, "the worst part of the volunteer thing that you don't get any gratification out of would be [the administration duties]." He recommended that if this program was to ever receive funding, secretarial help be established to meet administrative needs.

**COUNTY B**

Administration of the County B program falls on the shoulders of the Extension Educator and no other program relies as heavily on one person for its execution.

"Frankly, I put the load on her to do virtually the whole thing," explained the county attorney. The Extension Educator did make the comment that one frustrating component was, "getting the volunteers schedule together, my schedule together, getting the letters out, the money back. A matter of coordinating."

**COUNTY C**

The administrative duties of the County C program seemed to be the responsibility of the Extension Educator, but it was not as clear as in the other programs whose role it was. This could be because the program is still in its infancy and the roles are not as clearly defined or it may have just not been explained in the interview process.

It did appear that it was the responsibility of the Extension Educator to coordinate efforts of the advisory committee and most literature originated from her position.
Some duties involving referrals from the county attorney that would be the responsibility of the Extension Educator in other programs were taken on by the juvenile Diversion Services and probation officer in County C.

It was stated that, "we didn't have a lot of rules in the beginning. We didn't want people to say things that would hurt others, we did want to start on time, we did want them to attend all the sessions." As far as the fee that was to be charged, "some of the kids were voluntary referrals, so we didn't end up charging the people. We had other resources."

COUNTY D

It takes a key role person to commit to the juvenile diversion program agreed one Extension Educator. "That's the other downfall [of our program]. You see, in our program roles were very clearly defined when we were actually working with the program." She felt that once the task turned to maintenance and organizational structure, ambiguities existed over who should be doing what. The two Extension Educators working on the project, "have a different organizational style. I tried it a different way [from other stakeholder] and it didn't work either in the long run."

The only mention of rules was that one parent attended only three times, but the youth was still not adjudicated according to a stakeholder.
Conclusion

Administrative responsibilities were largely the responsibility of the Extension Educator and were deemed important if not enjoyable. The same administrative responsibilities were observed across all four programs. Establishing rules and setting consequences was highly critical to the County A program. It was stated by County B and D programs that rules were adhered to, but stakeholders did not put the same emphasis on rigidly following the guidelines set as in County A. County C, the youngest of the three programs, seems to still be identifying what the rules should be.

Timing

Three of the four counties reported having occasional to frequent problems with having enough youth to conduct sessions on a regular basis, a problem they referred to as timing. All four classes set a minimum number of youth they need to conduct a session. Only County A reported no problems with referral numbers, but it is also the most open program in terms of ages and offenses that it will accept.

In the County A program, 57.1% of all youth were MIP offenses and as many as 72.7% of some sessions were composed of MIP offenders. Had this program excluded MIP's, as others have either through age limitations or by an outright ban, there would not have been enough youth enrolled to run at least three of their
When a youth is referred to a juvenile diversion program and there are not enough other youth being referred to conduct a session, they must wait up to six months. Several stakeholders saw this predicament as their toughest to solve. The hardest time to fill classes seems to be in the spring, with late summer and fall being the easiest.

There was mixed reaction to this gap between apprehension and treatment with a high school counselor stating, "That concerns me. I don't like a gap between the times we have it." A county attorney adds, "Kids aren't getting something immediate, and they aren't getting disciplined except by their parents and sometimes the parents don't really discipline them." Conversely, another stakeholder believes, "I don't think it hurts the chance of rehabilitation."

Two reasons were stated for the low referral numbers causing the gap between sessions. First, "when your talking about rural Nebraska your talking about volume problems with small counties." The number of juvenile offenders, especially in the winter months is perceived as not being great enough to conduct regularly scheduled sessions. While this was listed as a reason for not being able to schedule sessions, it was not a great concern since lower criminal activity is a goal of the justice system.

The second reason for low referral numbers is sometimes youth that were being
apprehended were not being referred. "I know there's kids out there and they're committing crimes [but not being referred]. They report them in the [city] paper."

This concern of not receiving referrals from the county attorney was discussed in collaboration.

**Curriculum**

The most direct impact that stakeholders have on the youth in juvenile diversion comes through the delivery of the curriculum. When asked what aspect of her program led to a 5.4% recidivism rate, one County A instructor answered, "the material we cover." As stated when discussing the mission of each program, one goal is to improve the family environment and the curriculum has been the primary method of reaching that goal.

Instructors use role playing, experiential learning, lecture, critical thinking, small group techniques, behavior modification and visual aids to deliver the lessons.

The first program in County D based much of the curriculum on an existing life skills program, Dare To Be You, which focuses on decision-making, assertiveness, self-responsibility and self-esteem. These four life skills are common among all four programs.

When asked which skill was the most critical, by and far the most common answer revolved around the communications area. Other areas that have been added (some or
all can be considered subsets of the five skills previously mentioned) are limits and consequences, conflict management, knowledge of personality types, goal-setting, alcohol/drug awareness and parenting.

All four programs utilize traditional 4-H programming in the form of experiential learning. Throughout the classes, adults and youth work as a family team to build either a rocket (County A, B, C) or a model car or plane (County D). This activity is intended to, "get the families together, communicating and talking more," according to one parent in County C. A parent in County A felt, "it's an easy way to illustrate doing something together." During the final class, participants have a chance to operate their model by launching the rockets or racing the car/plane.

Following is a brief description of how each county developed its curriculum and what participants and stakeholders deemed as the most and least effective.

COUNTY A

County A used DTBY and the County D program as a starting point to develop their curriculum but used the expertise of the four members of the instructor team to develop the complete lesson plan, which one instructor felt was the biggest challenge in getting the project going. When stakeholders first met to consider the idea of juvenile diversion, volunteers were recruited to aid in the development of the program and the four people who built the curriculum were also the four who ended up
delivering it.

The curriculum used in the first session has had significant alterations over time. "We actually re-wrote the curriculum about four times. In the last two classes [sessions 8 and 9], we're starting to feel fairly comfortable we finally got our curriculum where we want it."

Those developing the curriculum, "wanted to have some hard hitting stuff. [County attorney] was very definite about that. He said I don't want this to be a cream puff program." Another goal was to have some presence of a male model, since all four of the primary instructors are women. "It is so important that the men come in and speak so there's not just four mother types there," said one of the female instructors.

The communications component, designed to increase interpersonal skills and develop the parental/guardian/child relationship, was often cited when parents and youth described positive program effects on their behavior and relationship change. A youth participant stated, "probably the communications" as being the most important part of the class. When asked what she learned the most, one mother explained, "[that] there's so much miscommunications. This repeating back [technique], that was one thing, too, 'I understood this, is that right?'"

The competencies included in DTBY were received with mixed reviews from
participants, some of which felt these subjects were difficult to teach. Youth and parents made comments such as, "I don't think decision making is a really good subject to try and teach people," and "one thing they could spend more time on dealing with peer pressure....it's so easy for kids to go along." Role-playing and the behavioral contracting, two methods designed to encourage positive habits, were seen as both enjoyable and effective.

County A included alcohol/drug awareness as part of their curriculum and two of the youth mentioned this lesson as effective while the other described it as his least favorite. Both of the youth that enjoyed the alcohol/drug awareness portion had an alcoholic relative. In particular an activity (referred to as an alcoholic valley) where participants attempt to escape labeling associated with alcohol and drug use, and "movies about car wrecks and alcohol" were reported as being effective.

Although instructors stated that this is not a true parenting class, a session on parenting was included and two parents particularly felt audio tapes by H.Stephen Glenn were constructive; "I thought those were good, and then there was a discussion afterward that stimulated."

There are three guest speakers at each session: the superintendent of schools, the chief of police and a retail store manager. The purpose of their presentations are two-fold, the first being the subject of their respective talks, including decision-making,
setting goals and consequences of actions. The second reported purpose is so youth, "see those people in a more human role. There's a tremendous amount of care from us."

COUNTY B

County B follows the outline of DTBY closer than any of the other programs, designing their sessions around decision-making, assertiveness, responsibility and self-esteem. One instructor said that while the basic curriculum has stayed the same, "we've done significant modification through the years. One reason is we've gotten younger kids." She also stated that they have had to be, "very flexible. Sometimes we get through our agenda for the night, sometimes we don't."

One example of where flexibility becomes necessary is with illiterate participants. "I know two, maybe three parents who have been illiterate. And one that did not speak any English what so ever."

Dealing with peer pressure (a derivative of decision-making and assertiveness) was seen as a difficult concept in this program also, "[Kids have problems with] understanding peer pressure or what it means to have responsibility." A parent remembers how the kids, "talked about how hard it [handling peer pressure] is."

When asked what effects the overall program had on (a) themselves, (b) their child or parent and (b) their relationship with their child or parent, parents and youth both
cited increased communications and understanding as the most profound change.

Role playing, group discussion, lecture and experiential learning were teaching methods used in County B. There were no sessions where youth and parents/guardians were separated (i.e. to specifically teach parenting skills to adults).

**COUNTY C**

Since the County C program was modeled somewhat after the County A program, many of the objectives are similar. However, members of the advisory committee made modifications through brainstorming. After the first session, the advisory committee set about revising some of the curriculum based on feedback and observations. Being the youngest program, County C has not had the opportunity to make adjustments that other counties have.

This program uses small group and panel discussion, lecture, experiential learning, reflecting, and role playing as teaching methods.

The six classes focus on (a) personality styles (communications and relationships), (b) alcohol/drug awareness, (c) listening/communications skills, (d) self-control and consequences, (e) responsibility and goal-setting and (f) resolving conflict and valuing others. Only class (a) and (f) are set as the first and last lesson, the others can be scheduled any in order.

The most frequently mentioned activity, in terms of effectiveness, was the
personality style identification process called Real Colors. Parents felt that it was, "really interesting." A parent mentioned that as her favorite part and said it should be emulated in other diversion programs. A mother and father felt that the relationship between themselves and their daughter was improved greatly, but they were not sure whether it was a result of any specific lesson or just the time spent with their daughter during the program.

The parents particularly enjoyed learning how to set guidelines and follow through with consequences according to one instructor. "They would have taken night, after night, after night of that." Role playing was also viewed as an effectual teaching method.

A repelling exercise was used to develop trust and improve interpersonal communications and was rated very high by participants. An instructor remembers, "On the way out there, all the kids in my car were saying, 'this is so stupid, we could be sleeping.' On the way back it was [different] because I think they had a lot of fun." Except for one parent/guardian who didn't actually repel, only the youth were involved in this activity. One youth, who did not feel that she got anything out of the overall program, did reply that repelling, "was fun, I enjoyed that."

Participants were asked in the first class to keep a journal of their experiences but, "no one ever did." "I took it in my coat pocket that one night and then they never
even asked for it." Instructors reported that they failed to enforce the assignment and it was never mentioned toward the end of the session. The goal-setting lesson was described as, "probably the weakest class. I'm not sure if it was concrete enough for the kids." None of the participants interviewed mentioned the goal-setting lesson.

The alcohol lesson was not seen as necessary by the youth because "I don't need anybody to repeat it to me. I knew it all." There was a guest speaker who had been involved in an alcohol related accident and was in a wheelchair. A youth admitted that it affected her and, "kind of upset [me] knowing that happened to him."

**COUNTY D**

The County D program decided on utilizing the DTBY as a resource curriculum as well as materials from diversion program in Kentucky. Along with the instructors, the entire advisory committee attended training at an Extension in-service for the DTBY curriculum. Working with input from other Extension Educators, a curriculum was developed that emphasized the core DTBY skills, communications, relationship building, behavioral contracting and setting limits and boundaries.

As in other programs, role playing activities, used to practice communications and decision-making, were seen as effective along with behavioral contracting and parental guidance (especially setting limits and boundaries). One Extension Educator thought the behavioral contracting was particularly effective, "I don't think all of the
anger and hostility would have been diffused over those six weeks if people wouldn't have been practicing those skills and if something hadn't been taking place outside of the classroom."

**Conclusion**

The curricula of the four programs did not vary greatly in terms of teaching methods, objectives or in perceived effectiveness. The skills of communications and conflict management were seen as beneficial in all four programs, as were teaching methods such as role playing, group discussion and experiential learning. Video and audio presentations were seen as helpful in the few instances they were used and all of the programs have seen modest to significant modifications from the original curriculum.

The building of rockets or models, designed to bring the youth and adult together, was frequently praised by stakeholders and participants for giving youth and parents/guardians a chance to practice skills learned in the class;

- "The only reason he wanted to go was to build the rocket."
- "A really neat point I thought was toward the end, for communications they made us build a rocket."
- "[wanted] more activities....more making rockets and stuff."
- "We made those rockets, can't forget those, it was fun. Boy did we ever mess up a couple of times."
- "We had a good time. It's an easy way to illustrate doing something together."

Lessons on peer pressure, decision-making in some counties and assertiveness
were not seen as being effective by the youth and in some cases by parents and stakeholders. These results must be compared to those found in perceived changes in parent/guardian/child behavior and parent/guardian/child relationship. All of the programs have performed some form of post-test evaluation but all have struggled in terms of evaluating actual effects of curriculum on family environment. County C high school counselor explains it this way,

I don't think you can judge whether a program is a success or a failure, even if you do all kinds of tests before and after. I think the positive effects can be downplayed and the negative effects could be blown out of proportion. I think that you just can't tell, I think it's part of life. The words that are spoken and the things that people remember at certain times, you can't gauge it or judge it and if they make some impact on a life that's great.

Questionnaire Findings

The Juvenile Diversion Questionnaire was developed to measure self-reported changes in behavior which occurred during the youth's participation in the program. A five point Likert scale was used with lower post test scores indicating a greater degree of self-reported life skills. Due to accessibility limitations, only twenty-one youth participants (14 in County A and 7 in County B) completed the survey and seven of those were not able to complete either the pre or the post version.

It must be noted that the small number of responses restricts generalizability of these results. However, the following results at least partially illuminate the programs
of study. Table 7 presents the combined scores of all fifteen respondents.

Scores were also computed for the two individual programs. In County A, there was a significant difference ($p < .05$) in pre and post test scores for the sub-scales shown in Table 8.

In County A there was no statistically significant difference in the pre and post test mean scores for locus of control or self-esteem sub-scales. Communications approached the critical level with a $p = .10$ level. No significant differences were found in the County B program.

Table 7

Mean Sub-Scale and Total Scores for Juvenile Diversion Questionnaire (N=14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-scale</th>
<th>Pre-test Mean</th>
<th>Post-test Mean</th>
<th>2-tail significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness/Peer Pressure</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.037*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>.037*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.044*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at $p < .05$, paired comparison t-tests
Table 8

Sub-Scale and Total Scores of Juvenile Diversion Questionnaire in County A (N=9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-scale</th>
<th>Pre-test M=</th>
<th>Post-test M=</th>
<th>2-tail significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness/Peer Pressure</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.007*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>.013*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant at p < .05, paired comparison t-tests

The difference in means of the pre and post test scores for the combined program would indicate that there was a positive change in those students completing the questionnaire.

The areas of communications, assertiveness/peer pressure and decision-making were heavily emphasized in the qualitative data as being crucial lessons. Locus of control was mentioned often, but the method used to teach internalized locus of control (a desired goal) was not clearly stated by any of the participants.

Relationship Among Juvenile Diversion Characteristics

As this information was being categorized, it became apparent that several of the categories were critical to the overall success of the program but did not have a direct
effect on the behavior changes of the participation. Many respondents, especially in
the county with the lowest recidivism rate, suggested that intangibles such as
collaboration and communications among the stakeholders was the secret to their
success.

It became apparent that in order to see the various effects of the variables on each
other, and eventually behavior change, an illustrated diagram was needed to describe
the various relationships. A flow chart, based on data from respondents, proposing
the relationship between program characteristics is found in Figure 2. This flowchart
was constructed with the help of an Extension Educator from County A.
RELATIONSHIP OF COOPERATIVE EXTENSION JUVENILE DIVERSION CHARACTERISTICS

CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR, KNOWLEDGE, AND RELATIONSHIP

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

ACCESS TO PARTICIPANTS

REFERRAL METHODOLOGY

POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

ENThusiasm & Desire

COLLABORATION/COMMUNICATIONS

INSTRUCTOR

Juvenile Justice

PERCEPTION OF Need

Perception of Meeting Need

Existing Alternatives

NON-THREATENING ATMOSPHERE

Past Juvenile Diversion Experiences

Adjudication

CONFIDENTIALITY

Skills

EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE

Perception of Value

Community

Cooperative Extension

Non-Extension Diversion Programs

Release
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Even as the overall crime rate of the United States has remained stagnant, the increasing rate of juvenile crime continues to plague parents/guardians, law officials, educators and the general public. Traditional and alternative methods of prevention and intervention are being critically examined in order to respond to the phenomena. Pre-trial juvenile diversion has been one alternative used in an attempt to decrease youth crime.

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics of four Nebraska Cooperative Extension juvenile diversion programs which influence recidivism rates and change in participant behavior.

Literature Review

Existing literature has found inconsistent outcomes of juvenile diversion with relation to recidivism and increased efficacy for the juvenile justice system. Few studies have focused on evaluation of treatment efforts for youth, but have instead centered on juvenile diversion as a function of the legal system.

There are near universal recommendations provided by the literature; juvenile
diversion should be voluntary in nature, participation should preclude the youth from any further legal processing, participation should be limited to status, first time and non-serious offenders, referral to juvenile diversion should fall strictly between apprehension and adjudication and administration and implementation of the programs should be conducted outside of the juvenile justice system. These are the generally agreed upon criterion of successful juvenile diversion programs according to the literature.

As educational institutions and agencies become involved in juvenile diversion, there will be a greater need for research based on a youth development model. It is in the area of education and human development that the literature is incomplete.

Procedure

In order to fully describe four juvenile diversion programs conducted by Nebraska Cooperative Extension and uncover which characteristics effect behavior change among the participants, it was concluded that a qualitative evaluation was desirable. Confidentiality of participants limited extensive statistical data collection. In addition, it was determined that only through thick, rich descriptions could a clear, graphic picture of Cooperative Extension affiliated juvenile diversion programs emerge.

Qualitative data was collected through one-on-one interviews with program
participants, instructors, and stakeholders such as county attorneys, police officials and a probation officer. The interview format was informal and semi-structured, using questions that directed informants without leading them.

Thirty interviews were conducted with youth, parents, instructors, community leaders and Extension Educators; eleven from County A, six from County B, eight from County C, and five from County D. A purposeful sampling process was used whereby informants were selected not only because the typified a juvenile diversion case, but also for their ability to provide consistent and descriptive feedback. Extension Educators selected the youth and parents for this study as being typical of participants.

In addition to the qualitative information, recidivism rates were collected as an additional measure of behavior change in the youth. A questionnaire was developed to measure self-reported change in perception of life skills. This twenty-nine item Likert scale instrument was limited in its usefulness because of the small sample size (n=21). The null hypothesis was that no change occurred in self-assessed skill level during participation in the juvenile diversion programs.

The qualitative data was analyzed using a classification system whereby informant responses were placed in categories (labeled as program characteristics) that emerged during the interview process. Matrices were developed that first
arranged responses by informant and then by program characteristic. The final set of condensed matrices provided structure for descriptive text from which conclusions were drawn.

Conclusions

1. **Extension Juvenile Diversion programs did create opportunities for families to build a stronger parent/guardian/child relationship.**

   Parents consistently felt that participation in the juvenile diversion programs provided them with an opportunity to develop communication links and work on projects with their child. Although specific, tangible life skills were the focus of the curriculum, the only lesson that consistently was referred to as effective and enjoyable were those lessons and activities concentrating on communication skills.

   Both youth and parents reported increased understanding and reconciliation. The quantity of time spent together increased during the program, but was not consistently higher after the program.

2. **Parental/Guardian involvement in a juvenile diversion program plays a critical role in producing positive behavior and relationship change among participants.**

   A condition of youth enrollment in the Cooperative Extension juvenile diversion programs was that parents/guardians must also participate. This parent participation
is unique among existing juvenile diversion programs cited by juvenile justice system
officials or in the literature.

This requirement of parental/guardian involvement is probably a function of the
agencies that are responsible for the program. Cooperative Extension, the lead
agency in all four programs, is an educational organization that uses a youth and
family development model in its programs. This is in contrast to alternative juvenile
justice system programs in these counties which use a punitive approach to diversion.

Building on the first conclusion, it is through parent/guardian/child interaction
that behavior change is achieved. Every youth interviewed reported at least one
significantly negative factor in their home environment and it is believed by
stakeholders of these programs that these negative factors are a key factor in the
child's deviant behavior.

Most parents who reported positive relationship change (which all did to some
extent) stated that the relationship growth did not continue at the same pace after
leaving the program. However, they also believed that the growth that did occur
would not have happened without attending the Extension Juvenile Diversion
program.
3. An effective juvenile diversion program is dependent upon it being a consistent alternative to the traditional justice process.

Both the literature and data from this study supported this conclusion. A key term in this statement is 'consistent.' Three of the four programs reported that access to youth referrals created obstacles in providing consistent, timely treatment for participants. Ensuing conclusions will focus on specific characteristics effecting the consistency of juvenile diversion programs.

The phrase 'alternative to traditional court processing' is also crucial. As was discussed in the findings, some counties used juvenile diversion to complement other treatment efforts by including referrals from probation, schools and other service agencies. In some instances non-offenders were included. While these individuals might be able to benefit from this treatment effort, both the literature and data from this study conclude that the most effective programs focus on providing services only for those who are accused of an offense that would be grounds for adjudication.

4. A consistent juvenile diversion program is dependent upon a collaborative effort among those responsible for planning, administration and implementation of the program.

A consistent program establishes confidence and comfort among instructors and stakeholders. It gives credence to the program in the community and most
importantly provides structure to participants who so often lack it in their lives and home environment. As was stated in conclusion 3, access to youth and families in need influences the consistency of juvenile diversion programs.

The best indicator of a consistent juvenile diversion program is the level of collaboration among the stakeholders. The most effective programs have a set communication pattern and established job descriptions.

Strong collaboration efforts in the Extension Juvenile Diversion programs were functions of a common vision, or as one stakeholder put it, being "on the same page." Those programs which expressed a collective purpose were much more likely to communicate more frequently, agree on program details, and hold their co-stakeholders in high esteem.

5. A consistent juvenile diversion program is dependent upon a strong working relationship with the county attorney.

Of all the stakeholders involved from the justice system, it is the county attorney who has the most influence in the actual diverting of youth to the program.

It was found that in County D that the most frequent reason provided for not conducting a class in 18 months is the refusal of the county attorney to refer offenders (simply provide their names) to the Extension Educators.

Refusal of the county attorney to cooperate can be for several reasons, including
negative perception of juvenile diversion in general or application of resources towards alternative programs (see conclusion 3). Both of these conditions consisted among county attorneys in the programs of study. As was stated in conclusion 4, developing a common mission is helpful.

6. **Existing Juvenile diversion programs effect the viability and consistency of Extension Juvenile Diversion programs.**

Although the Extension Juvenile Diversion programs were unique in their treatment efforts, they were by no means the only alternative to divert youth away from adjudication. In some counties, such as County D, several alternatives exist. There was no comparison of the Extension programs to existing alternatives, so no inferences can be made as to what programs would be most effective.

However, if it is a goal for Extension Educators, or any other person, to emulate the format of the Extension Juvenile Diversion program it is necessary to realize that alternative programs exist and will compete for resources. Examples of alternative programs include in-house police/sheriff diversion, defensive driving classes, decision-making classes, drug and alcohol awareness programs, and the option of releasing alleged offenders with no further action taken against them.
7. **Stakeholders and instructors must remain committed to a juvenile diversion program for the long-term.**

Some justice system officials were extremely skeptical about working with juvenile diversion because of negative experiences in the past. Davidson et al. (1990) found that "as important as the informal relationship is the more formal need to convince local justice officials that the project will not be 'here today and gone tomorrow'."

It was noted that enthusiasm often starts high, but frustration with collaborative efforts and frustration from lack of overwhelming success can effect commitment to the program. "There is a tendency for all change agents to drift from intervention models in the face of real world frustration. Our experience and the research literature indicate that this tendency degrades the integrity of the intervention model." (Davidson et al., 1990). County D is an example of this tendency.

8. **Juvenile Diversion participants were responsive to experiential learning methods.**

Adult and youth participants consistently expressed approval of the experiential learning methods that were utilized in the curricula. Role playing, rocket/model building, repelling and other such activities elicited enthusiasm and enabled participants to relate the lesson to their lives.
9. **Extension Juvenile Diversion programs are effective in reducing costs and workload to the justice system.**

Although this study does not provide any definitive empirical evidence regarding programs costs, justice system officials felt that the Extension Juvenile Diversion programs lowered costs to the justice system, reduced justice system workload and were more effective than being processed through the justice system. The justice system officials included a judge, chief of police, probation officer and two county attorneys.

10. **The null hypothesis that no change occurred in self-assessed skill level during participation in the juvenile diversion programs was rejected on the basis of statistically significant differences between mean pre and post test scores on the Juvenile Diversion Questionnaire.**

As seen in Tables 7 and 8 (p. 119-20) there were some significant changes in self-assessed skill levels among participants in two juvenile diversion programs. Overall post test scores were lower (indicating a higher level of self-reported life skills) for the 14 respondents from County A and B. It must be noted that the small sample size limits generalizability of the questionnaire results.
Recommendations

Given the potential impact of diversion programs and the diversity of alternatives, further research will be necessary to explore what an optimal juvenile diversion program should involve. The following recommendations would further add to the development of the Cooperative Extension Juvenile Diversion program:

1. Development of an instrument that can be administered by Extension Educators to evaluate program outcomes. The instrument must be efficient, educational and age appropriate, and easily analyzed.

2. Professional development opportunities focusing on coalition building and strategic planning should be made available for all stakeholders interested in constructing a juvenile diversion program.

3. In rural counties, small numbers of youth being referred is a major deterrent to conducting regularly scheduled sessions. Further exploration with the purpose of developing realistic solutions to this barrier is needed.

4. The justice system is dissimilar in purpose to the Cooperative Extension and other youth service agencies. For those interested in developing a juvenile diversion program, it would be beneficial to receive training on the justice system's mission and procedures.
5. Information on the purpose, history and potential benefits of Extension Juvenile Diversion programs should be prepared. Extension Educators frequently meet disinterested or skeptical individuals who are critical to the success of a juvenile diversion program.

6. Initiation, planning and implementation of a juvenile diversion program must be a decision made on the local level. While providing resources and encouragement from beyond the local level is urged, mandates are not.

In addition, the following are recommendations to further clarify the juvenile diversion program:

1. Evaluation of long term program effects on families and participants.

2. In rural counties, small numbers of youth being referred is a major deterrent to conducting regularly scheduled sessions. Further exploration with the purpose of developing any necessary solutions to this barrier is needed.

3. Further study on the demographical characteristics of juvenile diversion participants should be conducted. The question of what age and offense should be included needs to be answered.
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APPENDIX A

Identified Variables of Study
Identified Variables Corresponding to Changed Behavior in Youth, Parent/Guardians and Youth-Parent/Guardian Relationship

- Child Behavior Change
- Change in Parent/guardian Behavior
- Change in parent/guardian/child relationship
- Mission
- Costs
- Instructors
- Collaboration
  - Police/Sheriff Involvement
  - Justice System
- Alternatives which exist
- Referral Methodology
  - Offenses
  - Coerciveness
  - Process
  - Age
  - Point of penetration into judicial system
- Administration of program
- Timing
- Curriculum
APPENDIX B

Interview Guides
Interview Guideline

Instructor/Stakeholder Questions

1. How did your office first learn about, and then decide to participate in the JD program?

2. How confident were you that the JD program would be successful?

3. When you first became involved in JD, were there clear cut goals? Has progress been made on those goals?

4. What were some of the barriers in getting the first session off the ground? Have those barriers disappeared?

5. How has the program changed since the first session?

6. What was your enthusiasm for the program? What was your perception of other peoples enthusiasm?

7. Can you describe what communication between the various parties was like before the first session? (Informal, strained, non-existent, easy-going, pleasant, etc). Has that communication style changed? How so?

8. What is your perception of how the JD program affects the juveniles behaviors?

9. What is your perception of how the JD program affects the parents behaviors?

10. What is your perception of how the JD program affects the relationship between the parents and youth?

11. Do you believe JD helps reduce recidivism? Why or why not?

12. In your program, who would be in the best position to take overall leadership for the JD program?

13. Describe your favorite moment in the JD program?
14. Describe your least favorite moment in the JD program?

15. Describe the biggest challenge in meeting the goals of the County A JD program?

16. What are some changes that you would prescribe to the County A JD program?

---

**Interview Guideline**

**Youth Questions**

1. What was your first impression when you were told about the JD program?

2. What were your expectations?

3. Tell me what the first night was like?

4. How did these feelings change through the night?

5. Now that you've finished, was the course what you expected?

6. Tell me what things you learned about in JD?

7. Has the JD program had an affect on your behaviors? (i.e. communications, self-esteem, locus of control, decision-making)

8. What effects, if any, did the JD program have on your relationship with your mom? Dad?

9. What was your favorite thing you did?

10. What was the least favorite thing?

11. Has the course changed your relationship with your friends? How?
12. Do you think the JD program helped you completely understand why you did what you did? What could they teach that would be more helpful?

13. What was the most difficult part of completing the program?

14. Would you pick JD again over court? Why?

15. Are you less likely, more likely or equally likely to commit the offense again?

**Interview Guideline**

**Parent Questions**

1. What was your first impression when you were told about the JD program?

2. What were your expectations?

3. Tell me what the first night was like?

4. How did these feelings change through the night?

5. Now that you've finished, was the course what you expected?

6. Are things that you and your son/daughter do different today because of the JD program?

7. What kind of effects did the JD program have on your sons/daughters behavior?
   - communications
   - self-esteem
   - decision making
   - handling peer pressure
   - self responsibility

8. Has the JD program had an affect on you behaviors? (i.e. communications, self-esteem, locus of control, decision-making)
9. What affects, if any, did the JD program have on your relationship with your son/daughter?  
   Has that changed since the end of the program?

10. What was your favorite thing you did?

11. What was the least favorite thing?

12. What was the most difficult part of completing the program?

13. Would you pick JD again over court? Why?
APPENDIX C

Juvenile Diversion Questionnaire
4-H JUVENILE DIVERSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer this survey the best you can. Be honest and feel free to take your time.
If you have any questions please ask those who are leading your meeting. All of
your answers will be kept private. You DO NOT HAVE to answer every or all of
the questions. Please circle the number that describes the closest to how you feel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY</th>
<th>SOMewhat</th>
<th>NOT SURE</th>
<th>SOMEwhat</th>
<th>VERY</th>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>

A Project of the
Nebraska Cooperative Extension

in cooperation with

Department of Agricultural Leadership,
Education and Communication

in the

Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources,
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
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<th>NOT SURE</th>
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<th></th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. T</td>
<td>that people are interested in what I want to say.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I</td>
<td>always think of all my choices before I make a decision.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I</td>
<td>it is O.K. for me to make mistakes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I</td>
<td>don't think of what I want when I make a decision.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My</td>
<td>family expects too much of me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I</td>
<td>don't try hard because things never turn out right anyway.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I</td>
<td>make my decisions based on how it will help me get what I want.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I</td>
<td>like the way I look.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. W</td>
<td>hen I have a problem, I do the first thing I think of.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. M</td>
<td>y family understands me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I</td>
<td>usually do what I think is right.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I</td>
<td>like to keep my feelings to myself.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I</td>
<td>have no right to ask for things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. W</td>
<td>hen someone talks to me about their problems, I...</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. W</td>
<td>hen a friend pressures me to do something I don't want to do, I...</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. K</td>
<td>eep saying &quot;no&quot;.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. T</td>
<td>ell them &quot;I just don't do that.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. C</td>
<td>hange the subject.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>d. Q</td>
<td>uit talking.</td>
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<td>e. M</td>
<td>ake excuses as to why I can't.</td>
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<td>f. S</td>
<td>tall for time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. D</td>
<td>o it and feel guilty.</td>
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APPENDIX D

Letters of Consent
PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAM ON YOUTH'S LIFE SKILLS AND RETURN TO THE LEGAL SYSTEM

You are invited to permit your child to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to allow your child to participate. If you or your child have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Your child is eligible to take part in this study because of his/her participation in the juvenile diversion program.

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of the juvenile diversion program on certain life skills which are being discussed in this program. These skills include decision making, communications, self-control and self-esteem. We will also be asking you to give your perception of how your child has changed after participating in the juvenile diversion program.

This study will take about twenty minutes of your child's time at the first juvenile diversion session and about twenty minutes during the final juvenile diversion session. Your child will be asked to complete a survey rating aspects of his/her life on a scale of one to five. Some items on the survey may cause discomfort because of their personal nature. If you would like a copy of the survey, please ask.

By filling out this survey before and after the diversion meetings, your child will have a chance to think back on what he/she has learned. In addition, he/she will be providing valuable information for future participants in juvenile diversion programs.

Any information obtained during this study which could identify your child will be kept strictly confidential. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but your child's identity will be kept strictly confidential.

Parent's Initials

Your child's rights as a research subject have been explained to you. If you have any additional questions concerning your child's rights, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (UNL IRB), telephone (402) 472-6965.
You are free to decide not to enroll your child in this study or to withdraw your child at any time without adversely affecting his/her or your relationship with the investigator or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled.

DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT

YOU ARE VOLUNTARILY MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE CERTIFIES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE INFORMATION PRESENTED. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP.

__________________________       ________________________
SIGNATURE OF PARENT          DATE

IN MY JUDGEMENT THE PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN IS VOLUNTARILY AND KNOWINGLY GIVING INFORMED CONSENT AND POSSESSES THE LEGAL CAPACITY TO GIVE INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

__________________________       ________________________
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR       DATE

Primary Investigator
Mitch Mason                    Office: 472-0683
YOUTH CONSENT FORM

JUVENILE DIVERSION EVALUATION

We are inviting you to participate in this study because you are in the juvenile diversion program and we are interested in how this program helps people your age. You have the right to ask any questions or stop at any time you wish.

This survey will take about twenty minutes to do. The survey asks you things about yourself like how you make decisions, how you feel about yourself and what you do when you get upset. You will do this once before the juvenile diversion program starts and once after. We will compare your answers to see how much you and the other youth have changed.

Being involved in this study may not help you a great deal, but it will be a big help to others who take this class after you.

We do not want your name or any other information. All of your answers will be kept private and no one will know which answers are yours. We may put all of the scores together and put in a scientific magazine, but your answers will never be separated from the others.

We also asked for your parents or guardians permission for you to do this study. If you are wondering whether or not you should do this, please talk it over with them. If you have any questions at any time, please ask one of the researchers.

If you check "yes," it means that you have decided to participate and have read everything that is on this form. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Yes, I would like to participate in the study.

No, I do not want to participate in the study.

SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

INVESTIGATOR
Mitch Mason
Office: 472-0683
Home: 486-0656
APPENDIX E

Recidivism Table
JUVENILE DIVERSION PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Cooperative Extension

1. Please complete the following information as thoroughly as possible. Try to fill in as much as you can to expedite the process for the County Attorney's office.

2. Keep a copy of the information in your Juvenile Diversion files. It is important that each name matches each I.D. number in case we need to find further information on an individual. For example, the individual or their parent may volunteer to be interviewed.

3. Mail this sheet to the County Attorney in the self-addressed stamped envelope. There will be other information already in that envelope for use by the County Attorney's Office.

4. Thank You!

County Attorney

1. Please fill in any information that has not been provided by the Cooperative Extension Office.

2. If you do not have access to the information leave it blank.

3. Cut the table along the dotted line so as to separate the names of the individuals from the rest of the information.

4. Send in the other information (excluding name) in the self-addressed stamped return envelope.

5. Thank You!

(next page)
EXAMPLE:

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<th>NAME</th>
<th>I.D. NUMBER</th>
<th>OFFENSE</th>
<th>DATE OF BIRTH</th>
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<th>GENDER</th>
<th>2nd Offense? (Y/N)</th>
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<td>Vandalism</td>
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<td>Fighting</td>
<td>10/12/79</td>
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<td>1/27/80</td>
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<td>Theft</td>
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JUVENILE DIVERSION PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

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<th>ETHNICITY</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>2nd OFFENSE? (Y/N)</th>
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APPENDIX F

Example of Respondent Matrix
### EXAMPLE OF RESPONDENT MATRIX

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>And after you got support of the CA?</td>
<td>- We sent out letters to about 30 people telling them what we wanted to do and asked them to come to an information and group sharing session. We had a really good response there. [Instructor] and I went over what we thought our community could do. Then we asked for volunteers to sit on our advisory council. We got 12 people to sit on the advisory council.</td>
<td>County Attorney was at this meeting. I think that may have been very important. Police Chief and superintendent both volunteered for the council (both of which are now important presenters) and that's where they got two instructors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did the CA like it so far?</td>
<td>- All along he kept saying I won't sign off on this unless you can prove to me that you're going to do it right. I'll yank it every time if you don't. He felt comfortable at the information meeting. He saw that the police dept. was buying into it, the county sheriff volunteered to be on the committee. Then he said develop the curriculum.</td>
<td>Look at how complete of an organization process they went through. Very detailed and step by step. Logical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- That's when [three instructors] and I got together and developed the curriculum. We started with the DTBY material, but as we looked at it we felt real strongly that with the background of the team members that there was some other things we wanted to try and incorporate.</td>
<td></td>
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APPENDIX G

Example of a Program-by-Variable Sheet
**Example of Program-by-Variable Sheet**

Variable: **Change in Parent/Child Relationship**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<td>8</td>
<td>- It helps them to be able to talk about things more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>- Some of these kids had never, ever done anything with their parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- (Change how you feel about your parents?) No, not really.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- (Homework help you learn about your parents?) Not really, I knew most everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- I've been talking to him more because we've been working on the car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Yeah, it was easier to talk to them (after the role playing exercise).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Probably more (talking with mom). Most of the time before I'd never be home I'd be somewhere else.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Yeah (home more now). I'd have to come home or dad wouldn't help me on the car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- If I never came home I'd never get to do stuff I wanted, and if I did I'd get to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>- Sometimes he's afraid of me when I'm mad, so I have to watch out when I'm mad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>- (What did he learn about you?) I have to be more forceful and say, &quot;Look, I've had a bad day, and this is where I'm at and I'm about to lose my cool and you'd better leave or other wise I am going to lose it.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>- His goals are different than mine for him. I tell him he's got to go to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>- It had grown too. (mom and son relationship).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>- I think anytime you do that (communication exercises), you don't realize what the other person thinks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>