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# **WHAT ABOUT GIRLS IN INDIANA'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM?**



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## ABOUT THE INDIANA CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE

Guided by a Board of Trustees representing all components of Indiana's criminal and juvenile justice systems, the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute serves as Indiana's planning agency for criminal justice, juvenile justice, traffic safety, and victim services. The Institute collaborates with state and local organizations, conducts research, and develops strategic plans for the allocation of justice funds to help create safer communities, effectively address the rehabilitation of delinquent and criminal offenders, and assist victims of crime. Funds from the United States Department of Justice help the Institute put plans into practice throughout Indiana.

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## ICJI YOUTH DIVISION

The mission of the Institute's Youth Division is: *To improve Indiana's juvenile justice system, prevent juvenile crime, and promote positive youth development through community collaboration.* Per the requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) of 2002, each state is required to establish a State Advisory Group appointed by the Governor to guide planning for and the administration of the federal funds received from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

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We appreciate the contributions of the juvenile justice, mental health, academic, and prevention professionals who participated in the strategic planning workshop at the outset of this initiative. We are especially indebted to executive leadership in Indiana State Government for their vision, encouragement, and support of this work.

This research endeavour was supported, in part, by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice (grant number 2001-JF-FX-0018) and the Justice Research and Statistics Association (grant number IN29-2002-003). Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or the Justice Research and Statistics Association.

## FOREWARD

In 1983 Cleon Foust, former Attorney General of Indiana and Dean of Indiana University's School of Law—Indianapolis, and a group of forward thinking criminal justice planners created the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute to give justice researchers and practitioners the opportunity to come together to develop significant research initiatives that were relevant and of value to practitioners.

For this most recent research project Mary Ziemba-Davis, ICJI's Deputy Director for Research and Planning, assembled a talented team to consider influences that result in girls entering Indiana's juvenile justice system. Indiana's Gender Relevant Programming Initiative takes into account not only objective analysis of delinquency indicators but the observations of girls in shelter care and detention, women in Indiana prisons, and the professionals who work with adolescent girls.

As we continue to improve the science of juvenile and criminal justice, this work provides a valuable tool for policymakers to understand influences that cause girls' delinquent behavior and to act to prevent that behavior. The work is worthy of the high standards set by those forward thinkers. Dean Foust would be pleased.

Catherine O'Connor  
December 2004

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## INTRODUCTION

Research and data demonstrate that those of our daughters who become involved in the justice system are, in some important ways, different from their male counterparts. . . . Efforts must be made to further understand the individual needs of girls in the justice system, to develop gender-specific community based services and alternatives for girls, and to map out the pathways to female delinquent behavior in order to develop effective intervention strategies and reduce recidivism. (American Bar Association & the National Bar Association, 2001, forward)

Historically, there has been little time and effort spent on researching female offenders (Belknap, 1996; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Leonard, 1982; Morris, 1987), particularly because most crimes are committed by males and male crime is typically more violent than female crime. It is now well-documented, however, that things are changing. For example, female delinquency rates in the United States have outpaced the growth in male delinquency rates in recent years (Poe-Yamagata & Butts, 1996). In other words, more girls are getting into trouble than ever before. While a majority of girls still enter the juvenile justice system for status offenses (e.g., truancy and running away) and property crimes, more and more girls are being arrested for battery and other violent crimes (Poe-Yamagata & Butts, 1996).

As recently as May 2003, Loeber, Farrington, and Petechuk (2003) noted that “The intersection of race, gender, and early childhood offending is a largely unexplored terrain. Too often, policymakers, law enforcement agents, and social services agencies rely on stereotypes and assumptions concerning race and gender when dealing with juveniles” (p. 8). For the most part, the cadre of prevention, intervention, and correctional programs (as well as the funding for these services) has been developed with youthful, male offenders in mind (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1998; Wells, 1994). Some progress has been made, but not nearly enough to adequately address the alarming increases in juvenile female delinquency. Where improvements have been made they are the direct result of research among academics and other justice experts serving youth who recognized that much of the programming provided to girls and young women did not address their specific developmental, social, and psychological needs (Belknap, Dunn & Holsinger, 1997; Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1998).

Although the lack of gender-relevant programming virtually went unnoticed in the past, there is now widespread consensus that dramatic increases in juvenile female offending can no longer be ignored (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1998; Poe-Yamagata & Butts, 1996). Awareness that juvenile justice processing must be responsive to developmental differences between girls and boys resulted in the federal government asking each state to address gaps in gender-specific services in the 1992 Reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, (JJDP Act of 2002, Sec. 223 (a) (7) (A) – (B)). In a publication titled “What About Girls?” (Budnick & Shields-Fletcher, 1998), the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention described their multilevel approach to the problem including a review of state initiatives addressing female juvenile offenders (see *Juvenile Female Offenders: A Status of the States Report*, 1998) and the development of training protocols and gender-relevant programs for girls (see *Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming: An Inventory of Best Practices*, 1998).

Accordingly, Indiana’s Gender-Relevant Programming Initiative (IGRPI) was designed to address the question “What About Girls in Indiana’s Juvenile Justice System?” by employing a comprehensive research approach to identify the unique program and service needs of 10 to 17

year-old girls involved in or at-risk of becoming involved in the state's juvenile justice system. The specific goals of the initiative were to (a) assess what is known about the gender-relevant needs of Indiana youth and (b) identify the availability of gender-relevant programs for youth in Indiana. Findings from this study will be used to facilitate the development and/or expansion of thoughtful, gender-relevant programs in Indiana which can be widely implemented and systematically assessed.

## OVERALL METHOD

As the Designated State Agency for the administration of juvenile justice funds received from the United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (the "Institute") facilitates and coordinates systematic and evidence-based approaches to juvenile justice program planning, development, and implementation throughout the state by providing training, technical assistance, and grant funds. Indiana's juvenile justice system is decentralized with all but the very end-point of the system—secure confinement in state correctional facilities—autonomously administered at the local county level. While such a system makes it possible for local jurisdictions to address the needs of youth within the context of their communities, it creates unique challenges for the statewide coordination of systematic, evidence-based policies, programs, and practices. Hence, community collaboration is the primary focus of the mission of the Institute's Youth Division: *To improve Indiana's juvenile justice system, prevent juvenile crime, and promote positive youth development through community collaboration.*

Indiana's initiative began with an information-gathering workshop held during the annual *Keeping Kids Safe Conference* hosted by the Institute and Community Systemwide Response of Purdue University. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Sheila Peters, a nationally recognized expert on gender-relevant programming for youth<sup>1</sup>. On the first day of the workshop, key stakeholders including juvenile justice, mental health, academic, and prevention professionals from around the state were introduced to gender-relevant programming concepts and learned about existing gender-relevant programs in Indiana. Presentations on the status of 10 to 17 year-old youth involved in or are at-risk of becoming involved in Indiana's juvenile justice system and information about successful gender-relevant programming initiatives in other states were provided on day two. Professionally facilitated discussions were held to define the primary questions of interest to stakeholders. Stakeholders were most interested in learning more about:

- Multidisciplinary approaches to deal with at-risk and delinquent youth informed, for example, by the socioeconomic, health, education, social services, mental health, juvenile and criminal justice, and crime victimization literatures;
- Information on developmental differences between girls and boys;
- Information on differences in the pathways to delinquency among juvenile females and males;
- What at-risk and delinquent girls in the system thought;

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sheila Peters licensed clinical psychologist with Greene, Peters, and Associates and Assistant Professor of Psychology at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee is a recognized expert in youth development and juvenile justice programming planning, evaluation, training, and technical assistance. Dr. Peters provides training and technical assistance on girls' programming to the United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, states, and local jurisdictions.



- What the parents of at-risk and delinquent girls thought;
- Input from juvenile justice professionals and youth service providers who work with at-risk and delinquent youth;
- Information on the availability of gender-relevant programs, services, and treatment for Indiana youth;
- Information on best practices and gender-relevant model programs and services;
- Definitions of gender-relevant programs, services, and treatment for Indiana
- The development of a protocol for evaluating gender-relevant programs, services, and treatment for youth in Indiana;
- Evidence-based policy statements regarding gender-relevant programs, services, and treatment for at-risk and delinquent youth in Indiana;
- Mechanisms for “selling” the importance of providing gender-relevant programs, services, and treatment for youth (e.g., “political champions” of the initiative).

Drawing on information obtained at the workshop, the Institute’s Deputy Director for Research and Planning, its Youth Division Director, and an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis designed Indiana’s multifaceted research approach. The final study design included (a) an analysis of state and national data to identify gender differences in delinquency and factors predisposing youth to delinquency, (b) focus groups investigating the unique needs and experiences of at-risk and delinquent girls from the perspectives of girls, woman who were involved in the juvenile justice system as girls, and the professionals who work with them, and (c) a statewide survey assessing the gender-relevant needs of youth from the perspective of juvenile justice professionals and youth service providers. Specific methods and findings are presented in the next three sections of this paper.

## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DELINQUENCY AND FACTORS PREDISPOSING YOUTH TO DELINQUENCY: AN ANALYSIS OF STATE AND NATIONAL DATA

To be effective, delinquency prevention and intervention efforts must target those areas of a young person's life which are most related to the genesis of delinquent behavior itself. Until recently, differences among the criminogenic needs of delinquent girls and boys, as well as the nature of the offenses they commit, have been largely "unexplored terrain."

Risk and protective factors are essential to understanding and preventing delinquency. Risk factors have been defined as "...those characteristics, variables, or hazards that, if present for a given individual, make it more likely that this individual, rather than someone selected from the general population, will develop a disorder" (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994, p. 127 in Shader, 2003). Protective factors are characteristics that "...mediate or moderate the effect of exposure to risk factors, resulting in reduced incidence of problem behavior" (Pollard, Hawkins & Arthur, 1999, p. 146 in Shader, 2003). There is strong consensus that it is unlikely that a single risk factor will result in delinquency, that the likelihood of delinquency increases as the number of risk factors increase, and that the proportion of protective factors relative to risk factors plays an important role in the likelihood of delinquent behavior (Loeber, Farrington, and Petechuk, 2003; Shader, 2003; Wasserman et al., 2003).

Risk factors for delinquency have been categorized by early onset (ages 6-11) and late onset (ages 12-14) into five groups—individual, family, school, peer group, and community (Shader, 2003). Wasserman et al. (2003) similarly noted that:

...[E]arly on in a child's life, the most important risks stem from individual factors (e.g., birth complications, hyperactivity, sensation seeking, temperamental difficulties) and family factors (e.g., parental antisocial or criminal behavior, substance abuse, and poor child-rearing practices). As the child grows older and becomes integrated into society, new risk factors related to peer influences, the school, and the community begin to play a larger role. . . .[S]ome common protective factors against child delinquency and disruptive behavior are female gender, prosocial behavior (such as empathy) during the preschool years, and good cognitive performance (for example, appropriate language development and good academic performance). (p. 2)

While simply being female can serve as a protective factor against delinquency (Wasserman et al., 2003), there are a number of specific factors that can increase the likelihood of female delinquency. In particular, Loper (2000, p. 4) identified the following six risk factors as particularly salient for girls:

1. A history of sexual and physical abuse, which can lead to other risk factors (such as unhealthy relationship patterns), status offenses (such as incorrigibility or running away from home), and delinquent behavior (such as substance abuse or prostitution);
2. Family distress including single parent status, parental conflict, parental criminality, poor family management, and residential mobility;
3. Substance abuse;

4. Mental illness (in particular depression, eating disorder, suicidal inclination, and a history of psychiatric hospitalization), which is more typical of female juvenile offenders than male juvenile offenders;
5. Teenage parenting which is linked to delinquency by association with other risk-taking behaviors such as drug use and fighting; and
6. Academic failure, specifically poor academic achievement, low commitment to school, and frequent school changes.

A recent meta-analysis of 11 published studies on predictors of female delinquency (collectively representing 5,981 study subjects and 97 effect size estimates) confirmed that some of the strongest predictors of male delinquency—a history of antisocial behavior, antisocial peers, antisocial attitudes, and antisocial personality—also are among the strongest predictors of female delinquency (Hubbard & Pratt, 2002). In addition to risk factors highlighted by Loper (2000), Hubbard and Pratt (2002) also found that school attachment, relationships with female and male friends at school, and lower IQ were significant predictors of delinquency. However, socioeconomic status (consisting of measures of parental education, girls' employment status, and aggregate SES measures), anxiety, age, self-image, and social adjustment were found to be relatively weak predictors of delinquency among girls.

In other studies, a perceived lack of opportunity and traditional beliefs about women's roles also were identified as risk factors for girls (Weiler, 1999). As Weiler noted in her review of research on girls and violence:

Programs serving young violent women effectively must take into account girls' status in a gendered society. While delinquent and violent girls share with their male counterparts many of the same problems, girls' problems are often a result of their status as females (such as sexual abuse, male violence, oppression by family members, occupational inequality, and early motherhood). As such, they require different program approaches from boys. (p. 7)

To provide a context in which to understand the nature of girls at-risk and the scope of female juvenile offending in Indiana, this section of the report presents data on [a] factors which may place girls at greater risk for delinquency and [b] indicators of delinquency. When possible, data are provided that compare Indiana girls to Indiana boys and to girls in the United States.

In the year 2000, Indiana's total population was estimated at just over 6 million, ranking Indiana the 14<sup>th</sup> most populous and the 26<sup>th</sup> fastest growing state in America (Indiana Business Research Center, 2004; United States Census Bureau, 2004). Persons aged 10 to 17 (338,368 girls and 357,437 boys) represented 11.4% of Indiana's total population—an increase of 7.6% since the last census in 1990. The proportion of adolescents in Indiana's general population mirrored the proportion of 10-17 year old girls and boys nationally, with persons aged 10-17 accounting for 11.6% of the country's total population (United States Census Bureau, 2004).

#### *Factors Which May Increase Risk for Delinquency*

Loeber et al. (2003) categorized risk factors associated with disruptive and delinquent behavior by developmental era and source (child, family, community, etc.) as follows:

### 1. Risk Factors Emerging During Pregnancy and from Infancy Onward

Child	Pregnancy and delivery complications Neurological insult Exposure to neurotoxins after birth Difficult temperament Hyperactivity/impulsivity/attention problems Low intelligence Male gender
Family	Maternal smoking/alcohol consumption/drug use during pregnancy Teenage mother High turnover of caretakers Poorly educated parent Maternal depression Parental substance abuse/antisocial or criminal behavior Poor parent-child communication Poverty/low socioeconomic status Serious marital discord Large family size

### 2. Risk Factors Emerging from the Toddler Years Onward

Child	Aggressive/disruptive behavior Persistent lying Risk taking and sensation seeking Lack of guilt, lack of empathy
Family	Harsh and/or erratic discipline practices Maltreatment or neglect
Community	Television violence

### 3. Risk Factors Emerging from Midchildhood Onward

Child	Stealing and general delinquency Early onset of other disruptive behaviors Early onset of substance use and sexual activity Depressed mood Withdrawn behavior Positive attitude toward problem behavior Victimization and exposure to violence
Family	Poor parental supervision
School	Poor academic achievement Repeating grade(s) Truancy Negative attitude toward school Poorly organized and functioning schools
Peer	Peer rejection Association with deviant peers/siblings
Community	Residence in a disadvantaged neighborhood Residence in a disorganized neighborhood Availability of weapons

#### 4. Risk Factors Emerging from Midadolescence Onward

Child	Weapon carrying
	Drug dealing
	Unemployment
School	School dropout
Peer	Gang membership

The vast majority of these indicators of risk are not available as standard data sets for Indiana children and youth. Moreover, when they are available they often are not available by sex. A comprehensive understanding of the risk for delinquency among Indiana girls would in essence require a special study in and of itself, but a few related indicators are presented below.

##### *Poverty*

In 2000, Indiana had the 10<sup>th</sup> lowest poverty rate in the nation: 12% of Indiana children under the age of 18 lived below the U.S. poverty threshold compared with 16% of children nationally (Indiana Youth Institute, 2002). Indiana's poverty rate is lower than that for children in four neighboring states: Illinois (14.6%), Kentucky (19.3%), Michigan (13.7%), and Ohio (14.1%). And, the proportion of Indiana children living in poverty in 2000 decreased by 20% since 1990 compared to a national decrease of 15%. The number of Indiana children less than 18 years of age living in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment decreased by 28% between 1990 (when it was 29%) and 2000 (when it was 21%). Nationally this statistic decreased by only 20%, from 30% in 1990 to 24% in 2000 (Indiana Youth Institute, 2002).

Despite decreases in poverty levels, the number of children living in "severely distressed neighborhoods" increased significantly in America between 1990 and 2000 (Mather & O'Hare, 2003). Measures of neighborhood distress assess neighborhood quality since, as the authors stated: "Neighborhood norms can help launch a child toward college and a stable work life, or increase the likelihood that he or she will commit a crime or become a teenage parent" (p. 11). Research cited by Mather and O'Hare (2003) indicates that children growing up in severely distressed neighborhoods are more likely to perform poorly in school, are more likely to conceive a child in their teenage years, and are less likely to readily transition into the work force. Severely distressed neighborhoods were defined as census tracts with at least three of the four following characteristics: (a) high poverty rate of 27.4 percent or more, (b) high percentage of female-headed families—37.1 percent or more, (c) high percentage of high school dropouts—23.0 percent or more, and (d) high percentage of working-age males unattached to the labor force—34.0 percent or more). In 2000, 7,000 *fewer* Indiana children lived in severely distressed neighborhoods than had done so in 1990 (an 11% change). Nationally, the number of children living in such neighborhoods increased by 19% (Mather & O'Hare, 2003).

##### *Education*

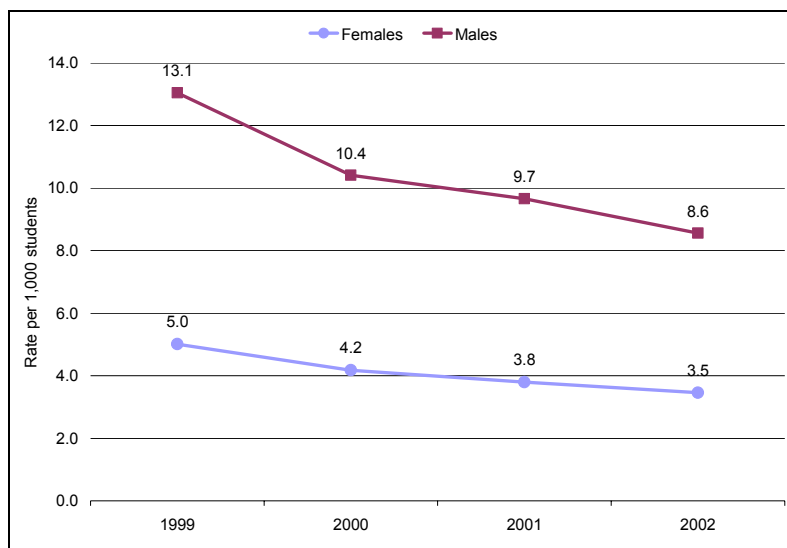
In the 2003 school year, 996,057 students were enrolled in Indiana public schools (Indiana Department of Education, 2004). Among high school seniors, 93% of females and 90% of males graduated during the 2003 school year. Fifty-eight percent of students planned to attend a four-year college and 7% planned to attend vocational or technical schools. Year 2000 data for highest educational attainment among 18 to 24 year-olds in Indiana indicate that females are more likely to achieve some level of college education, perhaps in part because fewer males

than females complete high school. Sixteen percent more females than males reported “some college” and 24% more females than males reported having attained an associate’s or bachelor’s degree (K. Lane, personal communication, July 2004).

The number of students dropping-out of Indiana public schools has steadily declined each year since 1990 when more than 17,000 students left school to only 6,769 students dropping-out in 2003. (Information was not available separately by race and ethnicity which may be meaningful predictors of school drop out rates, and thus may disproportionately increase the risk for delinquency among minority students.) The dramatic reduction in school drop-out rates may be due, in part, to increased student retention through alternative school programs (K. Lane, personal communication, July 2004). The purpose of Indiana’s 270 alternative education programs is to meet the needs of at-risk students who are not succeeding in a traditional school setting (Indiana Department of Education, 2004). Students are provided with a variety of options which can lead to graduation and are supported by services essential to their success. Between 1992 and 2002, alternative school participants in Indiana increased from 1,034 to 30,011 students.

As can be seen in Figure 2-1, school expulsion rates also have declined dramatically in Indiana between 1999 and 2002 among both females and males (K. Lane, personal communication, July 2004).

Figure 2-1: School Expulsion Rates for Students in Indiana Public Schools, 1999-2002



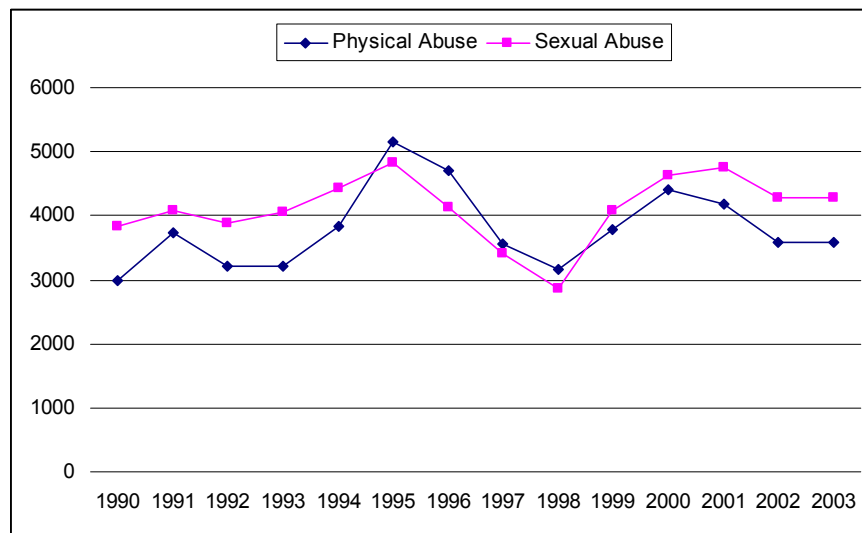
Source: Indiana Department of Education

### *Abuse and Neglect*

In fiscal year 2003, there were 4,290 substantiated cases of sexual abuse against Indiana children age 17 or younger, 3,584 substantiated cases of physical abuse, and 12,269 substantiated cases of neglect (Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Family and Children compiled by The Indiana Youth Institute, 2004). Females

represented 77% of sexual abuse cases and 45% of physical abuse cases in 2003. The most common underlying factors reported for abuse cases were (a) lack of parenting skills and pregnancy/new child; (b) family discord/marital problems; (c) heavy child care responsibilities, insufficient income; (d) domestic violence, and (e) emotionally disturbed. Figure 2-2 presents the number of physical and sexual abuse cases in Indiana for the last 14 years (data not available by sex).

Figure 2-2: Number of Substantiated Cases of Physical and Sexual Abuse Among Indiana Children Age 17 or Younger, 1990-2003



Source: Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Family and Children compiled by The Indiana Youth Institute, 2004

Information about services provided by the Indiana State Office of Guardian Ad Litem/Court Appointed Special Advocates (GAL/CASA) provides another window on the scope of abuse and neglect in the state (Indiana Supreme Court, Division of State Court Administration, 2004). Unfortunately, the data are not available by sex. GAL/CASA volunteers are assigned to child abuse and neglect cases by Indiana judges to gather information and make recommendations in the best interest of the child. Some GAL/CASA volunteers are appointed to other juvenile matters (such as delinquency cases) but most focus on abuse and neglect. In 2003, GAL/CASA volunteers were appointed in a total of 13,709 child and juvenile cases, donating an estimated 741,753 hours of service. The number of cases in 2003 represents a 5% increase over the number of cases in 2002. Estimated donated service hours among volunteers increased by 64%, despite a 2% decrease in the number of GAL/CASA volunteers. At the end of 2003, there were 3,475 children still waiting for a GAL/CASA volunteer in Indiana, reflecting a 115% increase in children in need of services since the end of 2002.

### *Weight and Weight Control*

The *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)* maintained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, monitors risky health behaviors for youth in grades 9 through 12 through national, state and local school-based

surveys. The YRBSS "...was developed in 1990 to monitor priority health risk behaviors that contribute markedly to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "About the YRBSS").

Concern about weight, the fear of rejection, and the need for perfection, particularly as adolescent girls become women, have been documented as significant developmental issues which can influence one's sense of self-worth and impact the "blue print" girls and young women develop to map out their relationships with others (Pipher, 1994). YRBSS findings for 2003 reveal that slightly fewer 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade girls in Indiana are overweight compared to their peers nationwide, yet more Indiana girls described themselves as overweight, reported they were trying to lose weight, had recently eaten less to lose weight or to keep weight off, and recently had taken diet aids (see Table 2-1).

<b>TABLE 2-1: WEIGHT ISSUES: INDIANA JUVENILE FEMALES COMPARED TO INDIANA JUVENILE MALES AND TO U.S. JUVENILE FEMALES AND MALES, 2003</b>				
	<b>Indiana</b>		<b>Nation</b>	
	<b>% Males</b>	<b>% Females</b>	<b>% Males</b>	<b>% Females</b>
Actually Overweight	14.0	8.8	17.4	9.4
Described Themselves as Overweight	23.1	41.9	23.5	36.1
Trying To Lose Weight	29.1	65.0	29.1	59.3
Ate Less Food To Lose Weight or to Keep From Gaining Weight During the 30 Days Preceding Survey	26.1	61.0	28.9	56.2
Went Without Eating for 24 Hours or More To Lose Weight or to Keep From Gaining Weight During the 30 Days Preceding Survey	8.7	18.4	8.5	18.3
Took Diet Pills/Powders/Liquids to Lose Weight or Keep From Gaining Weight During the 30 Days Preceding Survey	6.4	13.9	7.1	11.3
Vomited or Took Laxatives to Lose Weight or To Keep From Gaining Weight During the 30 Days Preceding Survey	2.2	7.5	3.7	8.4
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System				

### *Alcohol and Drug Use*

Alcohol remains the drug of choice among American youth. The prevalence of alcohol and drug use among 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade Indiana girls was very similar to prevalence rates for girls and boys in the same age range both in Indiana and nationally (see Table 2-2). Alcohol consumption in the past 30 days was high among all the groups, but even more so among girls—with nearly 50%



reporting having done so. However, fewer Indiana girls had smoked marijuana or used other drugs (except methamphetamine) than any of the other groups.

**TABLE 2-2: ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE: INDIANA JUVENILE FEMALES COMPARED TO INDIANA JUVENILE MALES AND TO U.S. JUVENILE FEMALES AND MALES, 2003**

	Indiana		Nation	
	% Males	% Females	% Males	% Females
Used Alcohol One Or More Times During the 30 Days Preceding Survey	44.5	45.4	43.8	45.8
Used Marijuana One Or More Times During the 30 Days Preceding Survey	25.3	18.9	25.1	19.3
Used an Inhalant One Or More Times During the 30 Days Preceding Survey	4.4	2.8	4.3	3.4
Used Cocaine One Or More Times During the 30 Days Preceding Survey	3.6	2.6	4.6	3.5
Used Cocaine One or More Times During Lifetime	8.7	7.1	9.5	7.7
Used Methamphetamine One or More Times During Lifetime	9.4	7.0	8.3	6.8
Used Heroin One or More Times During Lifetime	3.7	1.0	4.3	2.0
Used a Needle to Inject Any Illegal Drug One or More Times During Lifetime	2.4	0.8	3.8	2.5

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System

### *Sexual Behavior*

Adolescent female offenders are at higher risk for both sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancy than their non-delinquent peers because they engage in sexual activity at an earlier age (Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming: An Inventory of Best Practices, 1998). The YRBSS survey asked high school students about their sexual behavior. Data in Table 2-3 indicate that more Indiana girls (and boys) had sexual intercourse in the three months preceding the survey than girls (and boys) nationally. It is significant to note that when they did so, they were less likely to use condoms, not protecting themselves from sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies.

**TABLE 2-3: SEXUAL BEHAVIOR: INDIANA JUVENILE FEMALES COMPARED TO INDIANA JUVENILE MALES AND TO U.S. JUVENILE FEMALES AND MALES, 2003**

	Indiana		Nation	
	% Males	% Females	% Males	% Females
Had Sexual Intercourse During the 3 Months Preceding the Survey	37.6	38.3	33.8	34.6
If Sexually Active, You or Partner Used a Condom During Last Sexual Intercourse	61.0	49.7	68.8	57.4

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System

### *Behaviors that Contribute to Violence*

YRBSS variables addressing 'Behaviors that Contribute to Violence' provide a few final indicators of risk for delinquency among girls. As shown in Table 2-4, the prevalence of each of these indicators is similar among Indiana and U.S. girls (as are comparisons among Indiana and U.S. boys). There were two interesting issues that should be noted from these data. First, it is remarkable that one-fourth of girls in grades 9 to 12 in Indiana reported having engaged in a physical fight in the last year. Second, more Indiana girls (9.3%) and boys (14.1%) had been victims of dating violence.

**TABLE 2-4: BEHAVIORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO VIOLENCE: INDIANA JUVENILE FEMALES COMPARED TO INDIANA JUVENILE MALES AND TO U.S. JUVENILE FEMALES AND MALES, 2003**

	Indiana		Nation	
	% Males	% Females	% Males	% Females
Dating Violence: Had Been Hit, Slapped, or Physically Hurt on Purpose by Boyfriend or Girlfriend During the 12 Months Preceding Survey	14.1	9.3	8.9	8.8
Physical Fighting One or More Times During the 12 Months Preceding Survey	37.7	23.0	40.5	25.1
Physical Fighting on School Property One or More Times During the 12 Months Preceding Survey	15.0	6.7	17.1	8.0
Injured in a Physical Fight One or More Times During the 12 Months Preceding Survey	4.2	2.7	5.7	2.6
Carried A Weapon (e.g., a Gun, Knife, or Club) on One or More of the 30 Days Preceding Survey	29.9	5.2	26.9	6.7
Carried a Gun on One or More of the 30 Days Preceding Survey	9.8	1.5	10.2	1.6
Carried a Weapon on School Property (e.g., a Gun, Knife, or Club) on One or More of the 30 Days Preceding Survey	9.7	2.7	8.9	3.1
Threatened or Injured with a Weapon (e.g., a Gun, Knife, or Club) on School Property One or More Times During the 12 months Preceding Survey	8.4	4.9	11.6	6.5

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System

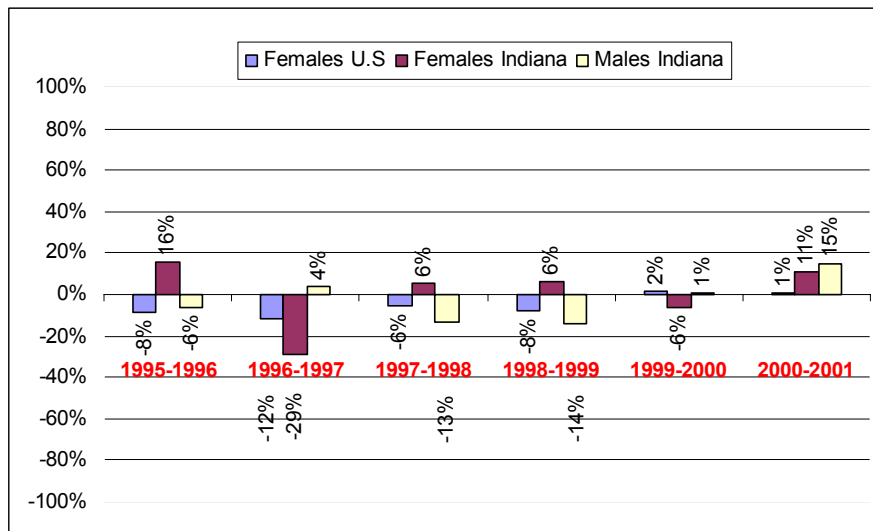
### *Indicators of Delinquency*

#### *Arrests*

In 2001, 11,976 girls and 26,867 boys under the age of 18 were arrested in Indiana (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2002). Figure 2-3 shows the percent change year to year in Violent Crime Index arrests between 1995 and 2001 for juvenile females in the United States and juvenile females and males in Indiana.

The Violent Crime Index is comprised of arrests for murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. With the exception of two time frames (1996-97 and 1999-2000), the predominant trend has been that arrests of girls in Indiana for violent crimes have increased; while arrests of boys in Indiana and girls nationally decreased. Of note, are the substantial increases in arrests among Indiana youth between 2000 and 2001. Indiana experienced an 11% increase in violent crime arrests among girls (in contrast to a 6% decrease the year before) compared to a relatively small increase among girls nationally. The growth in the arrest rate for violent crimes among Indiana boys outpaced that of the girls.

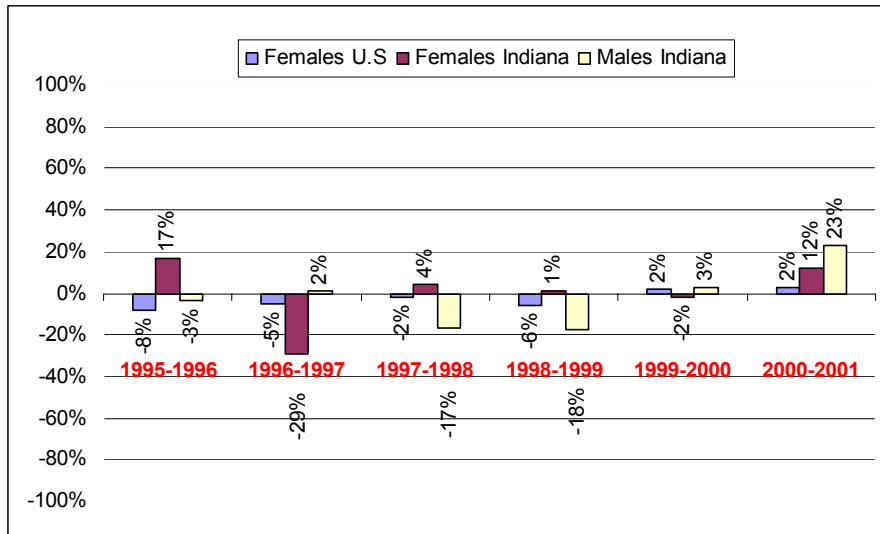
Figure 2-3: Percent Change in Juvenile Arrests for Violent Crime Index Offenses by Year, 1995-96 to 2000-01



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Report 2002

Between 2000 and 2001, there were negligible changes in the number of arrests for three of the four offenses comprising the Violent Crime Index among juvenile females and males in Indiana (i.e., forcible rape, murder and non-negligent manslaughter, and robbery). As shown in Figure 2-4, however, there were dramatic increases in arrests for aggravated assault among Indiana girls (a 12% increase) compared to the increase for girls nationwide (2%).

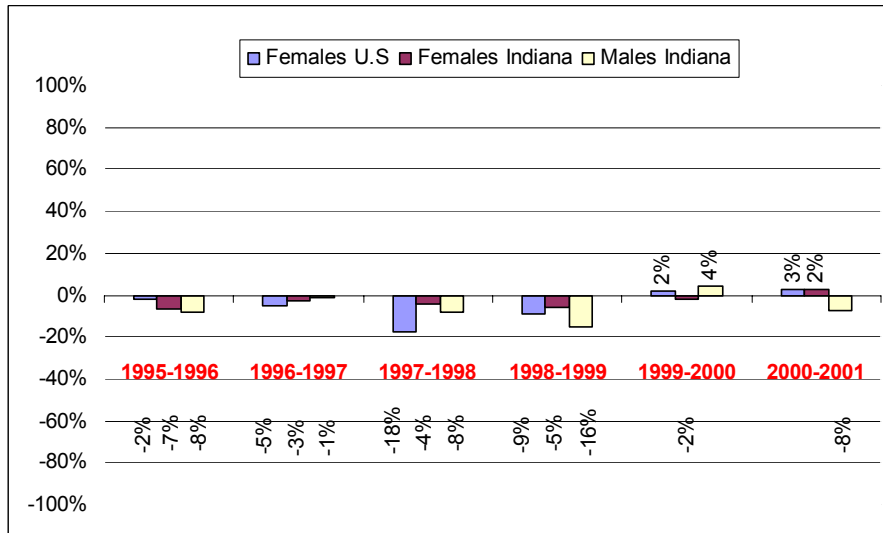
Figure 2-4: Percent Change in Juvenile Arrests for Aggravated Assaults by Year, 1995-96 to 2000-01



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Report 2002

From 1995 to 1999, *Property Crime Index* arrests (burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft combined) decreased among females and males nationally and in Indiana, but there have been slight increases in arrests for property crime since that time (see Figure 2-5).

Figure 2-5: Percent Change in Juvenile Arrests for Property Crime Index Offenses by Year, 1995-96 to 2000-01



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Report 2002

## Court Filings

Effective calendar year 2000, Indiana juvenile courts were required to maintain and report statistics on delinquency case filings, status offense cases, children in needs of services (CHINS) cases, and juvenile miscellaneous filings (e.g., informal adjustments). As shown in Table 2-5, both delinquency and CHINS filings increased by 9% among girls but decreased among boys between 2000 and 2002. Status offense filings for both girls and boys dropped slightly during the same time frame (Indiana Supreme Court, Division of State Court Administration, 2004).

**Table 2-5: Cases Filed in Indiana Juvenile Courts by Case Type and Year: Rates Per 10,000 Indiana Juvenile Males and Females Under Age 18**

	Delinquent		Status		CHINS		Miscellaneous	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
2000	218	76	48	39	37	32	41	31
2001	209	80	53	41	35	28	39	26
2002	215	83	43	38	34	35	36	25
% Increase/Decrease	-1	9	-2	-3	-8	9	-12	-19

Source: Indiana Supreme Court, Division of State Court Administration

## Detention

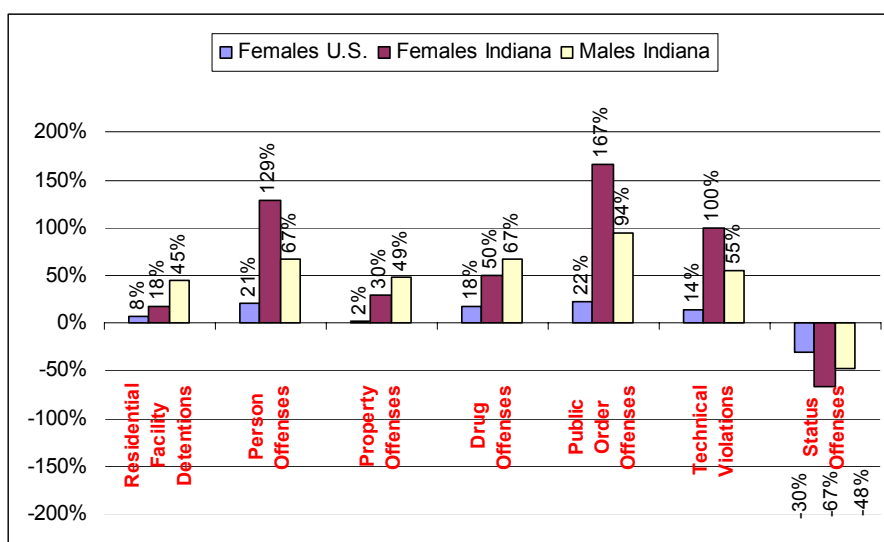
Pursuant to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2002 (JJJPA Act of 2002, Sec. 223 (a) (14)) each state is required to compile and report data to the administrator of the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention on progress toward remaining in compliance with core requirements of the act, including: (1) the deinstitutionalization of status offenders; (2) sight and sound separation of adult and juvenile offenders; and (3) the removal of juvenile offenders from jails and adult facilities. To this end, the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute developed *Indiana's Compliance Monitoring Database* to maintain information gathered from adult and juvenile facilities throughout the state. Females comprised 28% of all juveniles detained between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001, representing an increase of six percent since 1997 when girls accounted for 22% of all Indiana juveniles detained.

The National Center for Juvenile Justice, the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, maintains the *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP) Databook* (Sickmund, Sladky, and Kang, 2004). Containing state and national demographic profiles of juvenile offenders in residential placements, the *CJRP Databook* provides additional information on detained youth. Youth detained in residential placement facilities include those held awaiting a court hearing, adjudication, disposition, or placement elsewhere.

Figure 2-6 shows the percent change from 1997 to 2001 in the most serious offense for which female and male juveniles in Indiana and all girls in the United States were detained. From

1997 to 2001, the number of Indiana juvenile females detained increased in all offense type categories except status offenses. The largest increases were seen in the number of Indiana girls detained for offenses against people (129% increase), public order offenses (167% increase), and technical violations (100% increase). (Public order offenses include, for example, driving or operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, weapons offenses, escape from confinement, disorderly conduct, and traffic offenses. Technical violations are violations of probation, parole, or valid court orders.) Growth in the number of Indiana girls detained in residential facilities significantly outpaced growth among girls in the nation at large, and often outpaced growth rates among Indiana boys.

Figure 2-6: Percent Change from 1997 to 2001 in the Most Serious Offense for Which Juveniles Were Detained in Residential Placement Facilities



Source: Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP) Databook  
 Notes: The CJRP Databook rounds counts on which chart percentages are based to the nearest multiple of three to preserve the privacy of the juvenile residents.

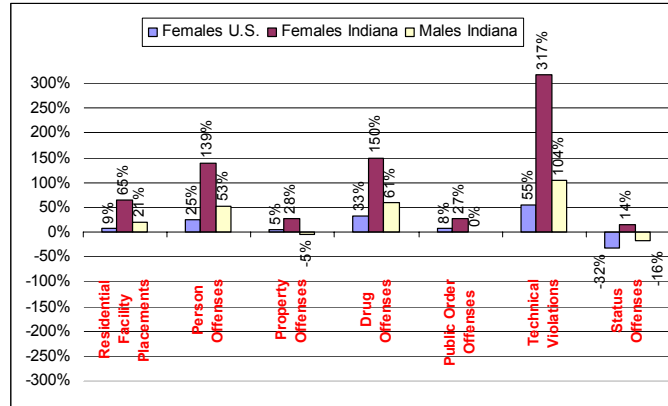
### Residential Placements

The *CJRP Databook* also contains information on juvenile offenders committed to residential placement facilities. Committed juveniles include those placed in residential facilities as part of a court ordered disposition.

Between 1997 and 2001, the number of Indiana girls committed to residential placement facilities increased by 65% compared to a 21% increase for Indiana boys and a 9% increase for girls nationwide (see Residential Facility Placements in Figure 2-7). Girls led the growth in commitments to residential facilities in Indiana between 1997 and 2001, outpacing boys in all offense categories, including offenses against persons (a 139% increase among girls vs. a 53% increase among boys), drug offenses (150% vs. 61% increase), and technical violations (316% vs. 104% increase). The number of Indiana girls committed for status offenses increased by

14% between 1997 and 2001, whereas status offense commitments decreased by 16% among Indiana boys and 32% among girls nationally.

Figure 2-7: Percent Change from 1997 to 2001 in the Most Serious Offense for Which Juveniles Were Committed to Residential Placement Facilities



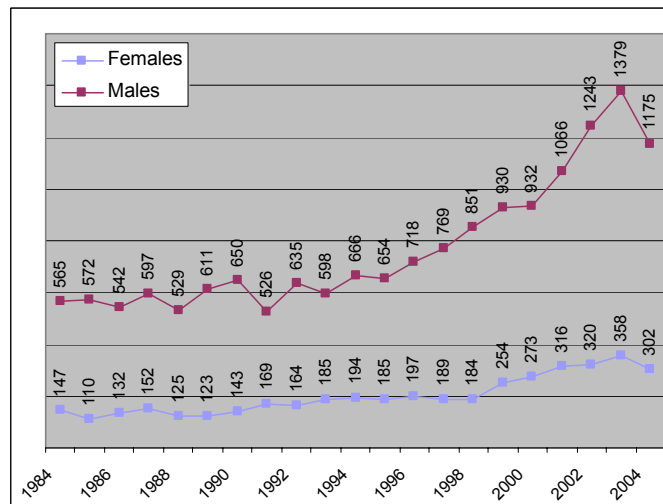
Source: Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP) Databook

Notes: The CJRP Databook rounds counts on which chart percentages are based to the nearest multiple of three to preserve the privacy of the juvenile residents.

### Commitments to State Juvenile Correctional Facilities

The total juvenile population incarcerated at an Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) facility is shown by sex and year in Figure 2-8. Between 1984 and 2004, the female and male juvenile offender populations increased by 105% and 108%, respectively, but the growth curve for males was far more dramatic over time. Both populations decreased by about 15% between 2003 and 2004.

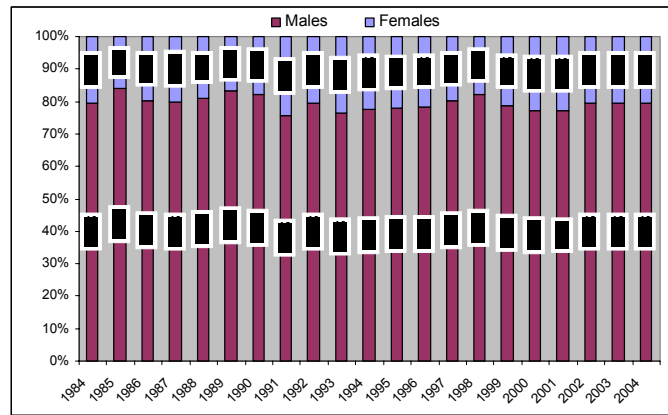
Figure 2-8: Population of Incarcerated Juveniles: 1984-2004



Source: IDOC Research and Planning Division

As seen in Figure 2-9, the proportion of females and males incarcerated at a state correctional facility has remained relatively constant over time.

Figure 2-9: Proportion of Incarcerated Juvenile Population by Sex: 1984-2004



Source: IDOC Research and Planning Division

IDOC employs four security classification levels for juveniles incarcerated in Indiana. These levels are based on the offender's most serious committing offense.

**Level I Violent Offenders:** The most common offenses among females are battery, robbery, and criminal recklessness. The most common offenses among males are child molesting, robbery, and battery.

**Level II Serious Offenders:** The most common offenses among females are escape and intimidation. The most common offenses among males are resisting law enforcement, escape, and intimidation

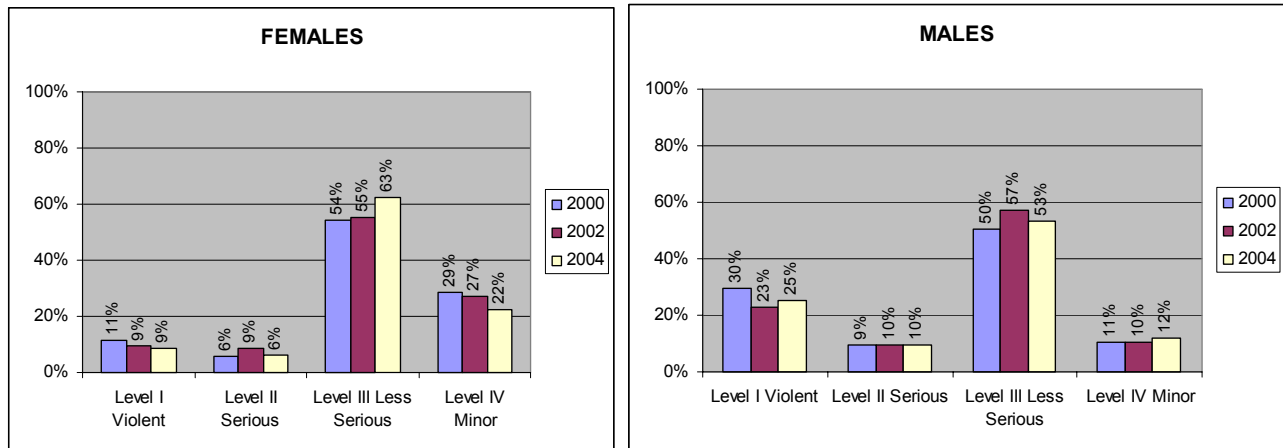
**Level III Less Serious Offenders:** The most common offenses among females are battery, theft, and conversion. The most common offenses among males are burglary, theft, and battery.

**Level IV Minor Offenders:** The most common offenses among females are truancy, disorderly conduct, and running away. The most common offenses among males are possession of marijuana and truancy.

Figure 2-10 shows that more females were classified as Minor and Less Serious offenders, whereas more males were classified as Violent and Serious Offenders in all three years for which data are available. The figure also shows that the distribution of offenders by security classification level has remained relatively stable for both females and males across all three years.



Figure 2-10: Juvenile Incarcerated Population: Security Classification Level By Most Serious Committing Offense: July 1, 2000, 2002 and 2004



Source: Indiana Department of Correction, Research and Planning Division

Note. 58 females and 30 males unclassified as of July 1, 2000 are not represented here.

The proportion of all girls age 12 to 17 committed to the IDOC each year from 1994 to 2001 was analyzed by most serious committing offense for this report (not shown). (Juveniles under age 12 are not placed in IDOC facilities.) This analysis revealed that, in any given year from 1994 to 2001, the majority of girls sent to IDOC were committed for conversion, theft, or stolen property (range: 23% to 32%), status offenses (range: 20% to 28%), and battery or aggravated battery (range: 13% to 17%). In 1994, 70% of all girls were incarcerated for one of these three offenses. However, the number of girls committed for one of these offenses dropped to 63% by 2001 in large part because commitments for disorderly conduct and drug offenses were greater in 2001 than they were in 1994.

Examination of the proportion of all girls sent to IDOC for an offense against people revealed that more girls were sent to IDOC for battery and aggravated battery than for any other violent offense (a low of 13% in 1994 to a high of 17% in 2000). The second most prevalent 'people offense' was intimidation/harassment/criminal confinement which accounted for fewer than five percent of all juvenile female commitments during those years. In terms of property offenses, proportionately more girls were committed for conversion, theft and stolen property (range: 24% to 32%) than for burglary or residential entry (less than 5%) in any given year.

Demographic profiles of the 235 female and 1,077 male juvenile offenders incarcerated in Indiana's state correctional facilities on December 17, 2004 is provided in Table 2-6. The majority of girls and boys were 16-year-old White youth who had completed the eight or ninth grade and were committed to the Indiana Department of Correction for a property offense. Most females and males were classified as Less Serious offenders (although more males than females are classified as Violent offenders).

**TABLE 2-6: PROFILE OF INDIANA JUVENILES IN STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AS OF DECEMBER 17, 2004**

	<b>Females n = 235</b>	<b>Males n=1077</b>
<b>RACE</b>		
African American	43%	36%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0%	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0%	0%
Caucasian	52%	57%
Other	5%	6%
<b>INTAKE AGE</b>		
12	0%	2%
13	9%	6%
14	19%	16%
15	24%	25%
16	32%	29%
17	16%	23%
18	0%	0%
<b>HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED UPON INTAKE</b>		
3rd	0%	0%
4th	0%	0%
5th	2%	2%
6th	6%	8%
7th	14%	14%
8th	27%	29%
9th	29%	28%
10th	17%	15%
11th	5%	2%
GED Obtained	0%	1%
High School Diploma	0%	0%
<b>MOST SERIOUS OFFENSE TYPE</b>		
Status	5%	1%
Alcohol	1%	1%
Controlled Substance	6%	6%
Person Offense	25%	30%
Property Offense	35%	41%
Public Health, Order and Decency	12%	6%
Public Administration	13%	10%
Vehicle	2%	1%
Violations	0%	0%
Weapons	1%	3%

**TABLE 2-6: PROFILE OF INDIANA JUVENILES IN STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AS OF DECEMBER 17, 2004--continued**

	<b>Females n = 235</b>	<b>Males n=1077</b>
<b>SECURITY CLASSIFICATION LEVEL</b>		
I Violent	9%	24%
II Serious	7%	10%
III Less Serious	63%	58%
IV Minor	20%	8%

Source: Indiana Department of Correction, Research and Planning Division

*Note.* As statutorily defined, Public Health, Order and Decency offenses include crimes such as intimidation, harassment, stalking, rioting, indecent exposure, prostitution, etc. Public administration offenses, for example, are bribery, perjury and other falsifications, interference with governmental operations (assisting a criminal, resisting law enforcement, escape), interference with a firefighter, etc.

## GIRLS, WOMEN, AND FRONT-LINE WORKERS SPEAK: AN ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP DATA

Programming initiatives and criminal justice research endeavors rarely ask those directly affected by the justice system what they think about what works and does not work in the system. The focus group component of Indiana's initiative was conceived with that specifically in mind—providing offenders and those who directly service them a forum to discuss their ideas about what brings girls to the attention of the justice authorities, what they believe girls need from the system, and what needs to be changed in the system. Participating groups were at-risk and adjudicated girls, incarcerated women, and front-line juvenile service providers. The purpose of the focus group research was to obtain the perspectives of these groups as the first major step in conducting a comprehensive, research-based assessment of gender-relevant program and service needs in Indiana. Focus group findings aided the research team with (1) the development of the final phase of the overall project—the statewide survey of juvenile justice professionals and youth service providers; and (2) the identification of gaps in services, training, policy recommendations, and planning activities.

### *Method*

#### *Sample*

Focus groups were convened to acquire in-depth, qualitative information about the gender-relevant needs and experiences of at-risk and delinquent females. Focus group participants included:

- Juvenile females in shelter care, detention, and state juvenile correctional facilities;
- Adult women incarcerated in state correctional facilities who were involved with the juvenile justice system as adolescents; and
- Front-line staff members who work with youth, including shelter care, detention, and probation staff.

To gain access to the targeted populations, key stakeholders were contacted at facilities in locations selected to be geographically representative of the state. The Henry County Youth Center and the Bartholomew County Youth Services Center approved the study and granted access to both their shelter care and detention centers. The Juvenile Division of the Superior Court of Lake County, the Marion County Superior Court Juvenile Division, and the Southwest Indiana Regional Youth Village also approved the study and granted access to their detention centers. Additionally, the Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Correction approved the study protocol and granted access to all of the institutions targeted by the research team: the Fort Wayne and Indianapolis Juvenile Correctional Facilities, the Indiana Women's Prison, and the Rockville Correctional Facility.

The facilities, region of Indiana covered by each site, number of focus groups held, and number of participants in each group can be found in Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1: Location, Number, and Size of Focus Groups**

Name of Site	Region of State Covered by Site	Girls in Shelter Care	Girls in Detention Centers	Front-Line Staff
Bartholomew County Youth Services	South Central	7 participants 1 group	2 participants 1 group	14 participants 2 groups
Henry County Youth Center	East Central	3 participants 1 group	0	9 participants 2 groups
Lake County Juvenile Justice Complex	Northwest	0	12 participants 2 groups	4 participants 1 group
Marion County Juvenile Detention Center	Central	0	20 participants 2 groups	14 participants 2 groups
South West Regional Youth Center	Southwest	0	17 participants 2 groups	11 participants 2 groups
Total Number of Participants		10	51	52
Name of Site	Region of State Covered by Site	Girls in State Juvenile Correctional Facilities	Incarcerated Adult Women	
Fort Wayne Juvenile Correctional Facility	Statewide	20 participants 2 groups	na	
Indianapolis Juvenile Correctional Facility	Statewide	31 participants 3 groups	na	
Indiana Women's Prison	Statewide	na	15 participants 2 groups	
Rockville Correctional Facility	Statewide	na	19 participants 2 groups	
Total Number of Participants		51	34	

*Juvenile females.* Five different shelter care/detention facilities in different parts of Indiana were chosen as focus group sites. Focus groups also were held at both of Indiana's state correctional facilities for juvenile females. Fourteen of the 27 focus groups conducted by the research team were with juvenile females. Two were conducted with shelter care girls, seven with girls in detention, and five with girls in state correctional facilities. A total of 112 juvenile females participated in the study. Each focus group had between two and 13 participants ranging in age from 11 to 18.

*Adult women.* Four focus groups were conducted with 34 women incarcerated in Indiana's two women's prisons (i.e., the Rockville Correctional Facility and Indianapolis Women's Prison). In order to participate in these groups, the women had to have been involved with the juvenile justice system as adolescents. The women's groups had between seven and ten participants ranging in age from 18 to 53.

*Front-line workers.* Focus groups also were held with shelter care, detention center, and probation staff. Fifty-two front-line workers from five shelter care/detention facilities and four

probation departments participated in nine separate focus groups sessions. Nearly two-thirds of all front-line participants were shelter care and detention center staff. Front-line worker focus groups had between two and nine participants who ranged in age from 23 to 63.

### *Procedure*

Focus groups sessions were conducted in the spring of 2003. Participation was strictly voluntary. After the study's purpose and objectives were explained to potential participants, informed consent was obtained. Refreshments such as soda, chips, and candy bars were given to detainees and inmates. Front-line staff volunteers received movie tickets as compensation for their participation.

The same individual, Dr. Crystal Garcia, facilitated all 27 focus groups. Focus groups lasted approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours. The facilitator employed an informal discussion method using a semi-structured interview schedule. While some questions were asked of all groups, specific questions were asked depending on who the participants were (i.e., girls, incarcerated women, or staff). Questions included in the interview schedules were formulated after an extensive review of the literature and several meetings with the research team. The domains covered in the different groups are described below.

- Detained Girls and Incarcerated Women: high-risk behaviors (e.g., drinking and doing drugs), the influence of family and friends on the girls' behavior, perceptions of how girls and boys are treated in the juvenile justice system, and program, treatment, and service needs.
- Front-line Workers: perceptions regarding differences in the program, treatment, and service needs of girls and boys, differences in working with girls and boys, differential treatment of girls and boys in the system, gaps in programs, treatment, and services available to girls and boys, and the training needs of staff who work with girls and boys.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

The focus group facilitator administered a one-page questionnaire that included simple demographics at the beginning of each session. Once the questionnaire was completed, the facilitator asked for permission to tape the sessions. All but one of the focus groups were tape recorded. In addition to the group facilitator, at least two other members of the research team were present during every group to note body language, record (in written form) participant comments, and note major themes in the discussions.

Focus group analysis is a unique form of qualitative analysis. Researchers consider not only the answers offered by subjects, but also the words chosen, the context in which the focus group took place, the internal consistency of the discussion, the frequency, extensiveness, specificity and intensity of comments, and what was not being said. After focus group sessions were completed at each site, the facilitator and research team members took time to debrief—discussing the flow of the groups, particular themes that stood out during the sessions, and any group dynamics or relational issues that might have influenced the discussions. Focus group data were organized and synthesized along the domains of interest in a manner that allowed for the identification of important points and common themes. Focus group findings are presented for three major categories: girls, adult women, and front-line workers.

## Findings

### *Girls in Indiana's Juvenile Justice System*

**Demographics.** The research team had hoped to recruit and speak to at least 100 girls: 15 in shelter care, 60 in detention, and 25 in state correctional facilities. The team successfully reached the overall target of 100 (n=112), but was unable to recruit as many girls in shelter care (n=10 instead of 15), and detention (n=51 instead of 60) as initially planned because there were fewer of these types of girls in residence than expected when the research team visited the facilities. Recruitment efforts at state correctional facilities exceeded initial targets (n=51 instead of 25).

As Table 3-2 indicates, participants in girls' focus groups ranged in age from 11-18. And, as one would expect (because they have traveled a longer path through the system), girls at state correctional facilities were slightly older than girls in shelter care and detention centers.

The majority of shelter care girls identified their racial/ethnic group as White, whereas only one-half of girls in detention centers and state correctional facilities self-identified as White. The majority of non-white girls were African-American; however, 10 self-identified as Hispanic, two as Bi-racial, and two as Native American.

<b>Table 3-2: Girls' Demographics</b>			
	<b>Girls in Shelter Care (n=10)</b>	<b>Girls in Detention Centers (n=51)</b>	<b>Girls in State Correctional Facilities (n=51)</b>
Age Range (in years):	12-17	11-18	13-18
Average Age (in years):	15.2	15.6	16.5
Race: White Non-white	90% 10%	53% 47%	49% 51%
Education Level: <8 <sup>th</sup> grade 9-10 <sup>th</sup> grade 11-12 <sup>th</sup> grade	50% 50% 0%	51% 39% 10%	30% 48% 22%
Average Age at 1 <sup>st</sup> Arrest (in years):	13.9	13.4	13.7
Parent's Marital Status: Never Married Married Divorced	30% 20% 50%	33% 29% 38%	28% 37% 35%
Has Had at Least One Child:	0%	13%	13%

The average age at first arrest was fairly consistent across the three groups, ranging from 13.4 to 13.9 years. There were some differences among the groups in terms of who came from intact families of origin—20% of shelter care, 29% of detention, and 37% of state facility girls' parents were married at the time of the focus group session.

Only a small number of girls reported having a child. No shelter care girls had children and 13% of both detention and state facility girls reported they had one or more children at the time of the study.

*Familial criminality.* Group participants were asked, "Has anyone in your family ever been incarcerated? If yes, who?" A majority of girls in the study (between 90% and 96%) responded that they had at least one family member who had been incarcerated at some time. Table 3-3 shows the breakdown of familial incarceration by family member type.

The Child Welfare League of America has recognized **Indiana's Family Preservation Program** as one of five model prison programs in the United States. The program gives incarcerated mothers the opportunity to spend extra one-on-one time with their children and to learn better parenting skills. Services for the children also are provided.

Recent statistics indicate that only eight percent of **Family Preservation Program** participants returned to prison compared to a 20% return rate in the adult female population at large. Indiana's program received Program of the Year awards from the National Correctional Health Care Institute and the Indiana Correctional Association in 2003.

Seventy-five percent of women incarcerated nationwide are mothers. Two-thirds have children under the age of 18. (Child Welfare League of America, 2004)

Of the 90% of shelter care girls who responded affirmatively to the question, two-thirds reported that their father had been incarcerated, while 44% reported that their mother and/or a sibling had been locked-up. Even more detention girls (96%) reported having experienced familial incarceration. Fifty percent of this group had fathers and siblings incarcerated. Girls in state correctional facilities experienced slightly less overall familial incarceration than the detention girls (90%). Fewer girls in state facilities reported having their mother, father, a sibling, or an extended family incarcerated than the other two groups.

**Table 3-3: Percent of Girls Reporting Familial Incarceration**

	Girls in Shelter Care	Girls in Detention Centers	Girls in State Correctional Facilities
Mother	44.4	22.9	8.9
Father	66.7	50.0	26.7
Sibling	44.4	50.0	39.1
Extended Family	33.3	37.5	22.0



*Paths to delinquency.* One of the first questions asked of all focus group girls was, “What kinds of things get girls into trouble?” A number of risk behaviors and outside influences that lead girls into trouble can be seen in Table 3-4.

<b>Table 3-4: Things That Get Girls Into Trouble</b>			
	<b>Girls in Shelter Care</b>	<b>Girls in Detention Centers</b>	<b>Girls in State Correctional Facilities</b>
Alcohol	√	√	
Battery	√	√	√
Boyfriends	√	√	√
Dating Older Men			√
Drugs	√	√	√
Family—Instigation	√	√	
Friends	√	√	√
Gangs			√
Incorrigibility	√	√	√
Peer Pressure	√	√	
Physical Abuse	√	√	√
Relational Aggression	√	√	
Running Away	√	√	√
Sex	√	√	√
Sexual Abuse	√	√	√
Truancy	√	√	

The responses offered by the three types of groups were markedly similar. In fact, the lists generated by girls in shelter care and detention centers were identical. Battery, boyfriends, drugs, friends, incorrigibility, physical abuse, sex, sexual abuse, and running away were major themes identified in all groups. Shelter care and detention girls additionally identified alcohol, familial instigation (i.e., their parents or other family members actually introduced them to drugs, alcohol or other crime), peer pressure, relational aggression (e.g., girls employing the techniques of harassment, bullying, and ruining reputations for the purpose of socially isolating another girl or girls), and truancy. (Please note that quotes are inserted as illustrations throughout the document.)

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*“I think for me, its family problems because it’s like when you are home you get hit on a lot or something, it causes you to run away, to skip school, and you get into a lot of trouble with, you know, your friends, and start doing drugs just so you don’t feel pain.”*

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As previously mentioned, drug use was identified as one of the major “things” that get girls into trouble. Marijuana, alcohol, methamphetamine (e.g., crank and speed), cocaine, and ecstasy were identified as the drugs most commonly used among acquaintances and peers of girls in all three groups. Girls in state correctional facilities additionally said that inhalants, prescription pain killers (i.e., Vicodin, OxyContin, and Hydrocodone), hash, tranquilizers (i.e., Xanax, Valium, and Klonopin), and over the counter medications (specifically large doses of Robitussin, Coricidin, and Benadryl) were regularly used by themselves or girls they know. Throughout the various discussions, prescription pain killers and tranquilizers were most often mentioned by White girls, whereas over the counter medications were most often brought up by Non-white girls. When follow-up questions were asked about why girls start using drugs, many responses spoke to the notion that drug use was a learned behavior and that much of the modeling of that behavior was done in the home.

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*“...some of the effects on the females come from their family background about how they was raised in their homes—what went on, what drugs was used or if they were abused. If somethin’ went on at home and they didn’t know how to handle it they turn to drugs for help.”*

*“Some girls do drugs with their parents. Like someone I knew, uh, their father taught them how to roll blunts and how to smoke them and everything.”*

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Girls in state correctional facilities, most of whom appeared to be slightly more criminally sophisticated, identified dating much older men (between the ages of 20 and early 30’s) and gang involvement as precursors to getting into trouble. Another theme that was touched on in all but one of the focus groups with girls, but was particularly important in discussions with state correctional facility girls, was “cutting” or self mutilation. A number of girls intimated that they or other girls they knew got into trouble for cutting themselves on their arms, legs, etc. When asked why girls cut themselves, several explained that it helped them cope with their problems and gave them a sense of control over their situation.

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*“It’s relief...Yeah, like when a whole bunch of feelings just bunch up inside and then I don’t know, it’s weird. When you cut yourself, it’s just sort of like all of the emotions are going away.”*

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Attempting to escape from undesirable family situations, whether they are literal attempts like running away or figurative attempts such as escaping with drugs, also dominated this line of discussion. Some participants voiced the belief that some girls go to extremes to escape—going so far as to get pregnant as a means of obtaining legal independence.

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*“...it is really sad that girls want to get pregnant that are our age just for a way out, but it’s true because there are so many more rights for a pregnant teenager than just a regular teenager.”*

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*Getting arrested.* When asked what girls get arrested for most often, the top three reasons given by all three groups were battery (often against parents), drugs/alcohol (use and possession), and running away from both parents and placements. Clearly, poor family relations play a large role in the motivation behind many of the risky behaviors these girls participate in. Several focus group participants offered what they considered to be reasonable explanations for why girls batter their parents and why so many girls runaway.

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*“Some’s point of view is when their mom and dad hit on them, so you hit back.”*

*“You just want to get away—even though you already know the consequences already, but you don’t care because you know that sometimes being locked up will be better than being at home.”*

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Other commonly cited reasons for arrest were incorrigibility, driving without a license, theft, auto theft, and truancy. The only difference in reasons given for arrest among the groups came from state correctional facility girls who reported that selling drugs and gang activity were common reasons for arrest among their female peers.

*Where they’ve been.* Girls in shelter care, detention centers, and state correctional facilities were asked to identify the out of home placements they have been sent to and whether or not they found them to be helpful. Focus group participants were no strangers to placements—it was not uncommon for the girls to have been in a number of out of home placements. Even shelter care girls had been in placements beyond shelter care. Table 3-5 presents the range of out of home placements that were common among girls in the study.

**Table 3-5: Common Out Of Home Placements Among Girls**

Type of Placement	Girls in Shelter Care	Girls in Detention Centers	Girls in State Facilities
Shelter care facility	√	√	√
Foster home	√	√	√
Guardian home	√	√	√
Behavioral hospital	√	√	√
Detention center	√	√	√
Group home		√	√
Private residential facility		√	√
State correctional facility		√	√
Boot camp			√
Out of state correctional facility			√

Not many girls found their placements helpful to their situations. The overriding theme among all the three groups of girls was that the people who work in these placements don't care what happens to them. However, there were several instances when individual girls said that there was an adult who helped them or had a positive impact on them and their lives. These adults were almost always front-line staff working in programs or placements.

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Shelter Care Girl: *"...to give you the truth, I really didn't think they help. I mean as soon as you get out of the place, you are going to be put back into the place you came from and it's the same."*

Detention Center Girl: *"...places that have helped me have staff that listen, but also hold me accountable for everything that I did...other places the staff was smokin' and tellin' me not to!"*

State Correctional Facility Girl: *"Some are good. Some staff have a lot of influence on us like talkin' to us or sharing what might be helpful for us, and then some just say, "I don't care, I still leave at 2:30 so it don't matter to me."*

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*Fairness and equity.* Focus group participants were asked whether they felt that the justice system has treated them fairly. The responses given were not simple. While many felt that they were not treated fairly, the reasons given greatly varied. Not unexpectedly, there were some girls who thought that they should not be locked up, ever. Others complained that there was no equity in the system—meaning that other girls with the same or similar charges were dealt with more leniently and that their punishment depended on what probation officer or judge a girl “got stuck with.”

Another interesting line of discussion dealt with whether or not girls and boys received differential treatment in the system. Most girls believed that boys and girls received similar punishments for serious offenses. However, they felt that when they were locked up, boys received preferential treatment—getting all of the attention.

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*"Boys get the best programs, better rec, more activities."*

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The girls had very different ideas about the treatment of boys and girls when it came to less serious charges. Several girls argued (rather passionately) that they were dealt with more harshly for status offenses, particularly when it comes to running away. These girls claimed that most boys are not locked up for running away. As one girl said, when it comes to status offenses, *"they don't do anything to boys."*

A large number of girls believed that the system has treated them fairly. These girls claimed that they had been given several chances by their parents, probation officers, and judges, but that it was them (the girls) that had *"screwed up."*

The only group that was adamant about the “unfairness” of their plight was the shelter care girls. These girls felt doubly victimized. They argued that first they were victims at the hands of

parents, guardians, etc. Then, they were removed from their homes and kept in shelter care—victimized a second time by the system.

*Programs and interventions.* Focus group participants were asked about the types of programs and interventions they had experienced and whether they believed they had been useful to them. Practically every girl in the study had been involved in counseling of some type both before and after entering the juvenile justice system. Unfortunately, most of the girls were unable to provide much information about they type of counseling they received. As a group, the girls were split about how helpful counseling was. Girls who thought that counseling was very helpful preferred one-on-one counseling. However, many girls did not care for individual counseling, citing trust issues. They did not believe that conversations with their therapists were confidential because their parents, probation officers, and judges always seemed to know what they talked about with their counselors. When girls chose to participate in counseling, they seemed to prefer group counseling that focused on specific themes such as sexual abuse or grief and loss. Most girls found non-specific group counseling unhelpful. Interestingly, a number of girls said they would like to participate in family counseling because they were working hard to change, but their families remained exactly the same.

Focus group girls had experienced other types of “treatment” in addition to counseling. Table 3-6 lists common programs and interventions that girls had participated in, along with their observations about the usefulness of each program.

<b>Table 3-6: Girls’ Observations on the Usefulness of Programs and Interventions</b>	
<b>Program</b>	<b>Observations on Usefulness</b>
Anger Management	<i>Mixed responses</i> – Many said that curriculum was too obvious (e.g., count to 10).
Drug/Alcohol Education and Other Substance Abuse Treatment Programs	<i>Mixed responses</i> – Drug education programs were less favored. Other treatment programs were more favored, but girls said these programs need to be led by people who have had prior drug/alcohol problems for credibility.
Probation	<i>Mixed responses</i> – Many said they had little contact with their probation officers.
Parenting and Prenatal Classes	<i>Somewhat useful</i> – The girls want more practical information; almost all said that everyone should participate in parenting programs.
Independent Living Classes	<i>Useful</i> – But the girls wanted more “practice” scenarios with what they learned (e.g., practice job interviews, assistance with setting up a home).

**Table 3-6: Girls' Observations on the Usefulness of Programs and Interventions--continued**

Program	Observations on Usefulness
Peer Mediators	<i>Useful</i> – Not a lot of girls had experienced peer mediation, but those that did said that it was a useful way to resolve conflicts at school.
12 Step Programs	<i>Useful</i> – The small number of girls who specifically mentioned Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous said they helped.
Cognitive Renewal/Thinking for a Change	<i>Very useful</i> – Girls seemed very enthusiastic about these programs, particularly girls in state correctional facilities.
Grief and Loss	<i>Very useful</i> – Many had never been able to grieve the loss of significant people in their lives.
Teen Court	<i>Very useful</i> – Girls liked that they were really a “part” of the program and it taught them about the system.

On the whole, participants were not overly enthused about their experiences with anger management, drug/alcohol treatment and education programs, and probation. The biggest complaint about probation was their probation officers' perceived lack of interest in their cases. Girls believed they should be meeting with their probation officers far more than they did.

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*“We should get to see our PO’s and social workers when we need to, especially when we are locked up. I’ve written my PO twice since I been here, staff even let me call and she hasn’t come to see me. My dad tried too.”*

*“I know I was on probation, but I ain’t never really seen her ‘til I come to court.”*

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Focus group participants appreciated prenatal and parenting classes and believed that their own parents would also benefit from participation in parenting classes. However, they did note that the information in these classes needs to be more specific and practical. They were more favorable towards independent living classes, peer mediation, and 12 Step programs. The girls were most enthusiastic about cognitive renewal classes, grief and loss groups, and teen court.

*What a girl wants.* There was overwhelming consensus among the groups regarding what they wanted in programs and services. Girls said they want programs that teach practical skills and career development—something that teaches them how to make a living. They stated

(in a very clear manner) that they were capable and could do more with their lives, but they did not know what to do or how to do it. As one participant said, *“I want to do more than be on welfare.”*

Focus group girls said they wanted more programs that deal with physical and sexual abuse and their long term consequences. While not directly asked whether they had been victims of physical or sexual abuse, all of the girls said that they knew girls who had been victims of both types of abuse, and many girls volunteered that they themselves had been victimized. These girls seemed to understand that such victimization could affect them throughout their lives, but were unable to articulate how or why this was the case.

Mentoring programs were brought up by the girls. Most girls were familiar with these programs but had not been able to take advantage of them. If they were to participate in mentoring programs they would like the programs to use “successful” women as mentors...the best program would use women who had been like them (the girls) when they were young but who had “made it” now.

A few participants discussed the possibility of going to college. When college became a topic of conversation, many girls explained that they did not know anyone who had ever gone to college and explained that they would have no idea how to go about applying or paying for it. As a result of these conversations, many of the girls said that they would like to take part in classes which explain in detail how to go college and how to pay for it.

The last major point girls made about “what a girl wants” from programs and services was that they wanted the people who work in these programs to explain the process to them (i.e., what is happening to them and why it is happening). Even though the girls acknowledged that they understood that their actions had consequences, they felt that they never really understood what could happen to them in the system.

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*“...they never tell me ‘til they already done it.”*

*“The judge gave me lots of chances and didn’t really do nothing, then one day he up and send me to Girls’ School.”*

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*What a girl needs.* The research team’s question about what girls need from the justice system elicited spirited discussions and highlighted some major themes. Girls were emphatic about the following six needs:

1. Respect;

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*“If you want respect you should give respect. And everybody, just because people make mistakes, like me, just because I’m here don’t make you no better than me, ‘cause I’m sure that everybody’s done did something and you ain’t been caught, but you did somethin’ wrong. So that gives you no right to look down on nobody.”*

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2. A “voice” in their proceedings and to be heard;

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*“The kid has a story and the parent has a story, and say a person or social worker is looking through ‘em, the parent is always right. I mean always! They never listen to us!”*

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3. Someone who will listen and not judge;

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*“You learn early, don’t talk, don’t tell, don’t trust!”*

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4. Staff who care and are not there just for a paycheck;
5. Accountability with caring, not just punishment; and
6. People to work with them who are more like them and can understand where they came from.

*Wrap up.* There was little denial of personal responsibility among the juvenile girls involved in the study. Blaming others for the situation they found themselves in really only occurred in any systematic way among girls in shelter care, who as noted earlier felt victimized by their situation. Denial of personal responsibility among some of the girls in shelter care is an understandable response in that some were removed from their homes because of the actions of their parents. For example, one parent had abused a study participant yet she was removed from her home and from the non-abusing parent with whom she wanted to stay.

A few additional global themes emerged in different forms throughout the focus group sessions with girls involved in the justice system. They believed they had been given mixed messages at every step in the process by different people who appeared to have differing objectives or agendas. The girls simply wanted to know what was going to happen to them. Finally, girls wished they had more structure in their lives and felt they would have benefited from facing more consequences along the way, rather than having the court impose stiff penalties, as they called it, “out of the blue.”

Juvenile girls in Indiana had a good idea about what leads girls into trouble, what they get arrested for, and what they need from the system. Interestingly enough, information offered by girls in the study was similar to what incarcerated women and front-line workers said in response to the same questions.

### *Incarcerated Women Look Back*

*Demographics.* The research team hoped to speak with 40 incarcerated adult women who had been involved in the juvenile justice system as adolescents. Although 40 women volunteered to participate, the research team was only able to meet with 34 because of scheduling and security conflicts. As shown in Table 3-7, the 34 adult female participants in our study ranged in age from 18 to 53, with an average of 26.5 years. While participants were not asked why they were incarcerated, many women self-disclosed their current convictions to the research team. Convictions ranged from drug possession and sales, to larceny, theft, and



homicide. Some of the women had been incarcerated for just over a year and two women told the facilitator that they had been incarcerated for more than 20 years.

The majority (64%) of adult women self-identified as non-white, with most being African-American. Few had earned a high school diploma or GED by the age of 18 and many had been arrested at an early age. The average age at first arrest (13.8 years) was identical to that of the girls who participated in this study. While a large number of the women (71%) has had another family member incarcerated, this percentage is far lower than that of the girls participating in the study. Finally, most of the women who participated in focus groups are mothers, 21% were mothers before age 18 and 76% are mothers now.

<b>Table 3-7: Women's Demographics</b>	
	<b>Incarcerated Adult Women (n=34)</b>
Age Range (in years):	18-53
Average Age (in years):	26.5
Race: White Non-white	36% 64%
Highest Education Level Before Age 18: <8 <sup>th</sup> grade 9-10 <sup>th</sup> grade 11-12 <sup>th</sup> grade	24% 38% 38%
Educational Achievement Since Age 18: None High school diploma or GED Some college/vocational certificate Associates degree Other	56% 12% 24% 6% 29%
Average Age at 1 <sup>st</sup> Arrest (in years):	13.8
Parent's Marital Status: Never Married Married Divorced	27% 41% 32%
Has Family Members Who Have Been Incarcerated:	71%
Had a Child Before Age 18:	21%
Has Had at Least One Child Since Age 18:	76%

*Getting arrested now versus then.* Adult women were asked what types of things get girls into trouble and whether they thought girls are arrested for the same things today that they were arrested for when they themselves were girls. When it came to discussing the things that lead girls into trouble, the answers the women provided were identical to those offered by the girls. The women stated that the influence of boyfriends could be great on young women and that many girls would participate in activities that would get them into trouble to “*keep their man.*” Early participation in sex, drug and alcohol use, having delinquent peers, running away from home, fighting with their parents, and experiencing physical and sexual abuse were things that the women thought led girls astray.

When the women were asked why girls are arrested, the answers they provided were also fairly similar to those provided by the girls. Participants responded that girls (both when they were young and today) are most often arrested for drugs (i.e., use, possession and sales), theft, fighting, incorrigibility, and running away. They did feel, however, that there were some trends that differentiated themselves from girls today. For example, they felt that girls are being arrested far more often for running away than ever before. They also believe that girls are fighting more today increasing the likelihood that they will be arrested for battery. Moreover, adult women stated that girls are not just battering each other like when they were young, but that they are now battering their parents (which often leads to arrest). All four adult female focus groups concluded that girls today seem more violent than in the past. Another interesting trend that many women identified during this discussion was that they believe more and more girls are being arrested for robbery and drug sales because they are taking the “rap” for their boyfriends. And finally, the women believe that more girls are getting involved in and are arrested more today for prostitution, check fraud, credit card fraud, and cell phone fraud.

After discussing what gets girls into trouble and what gets them arrested, the women kept coming to the conclusion that there were two main things that led girls into delinquency—poor family lives and sexual abuse. These women argued that if girls had structure, supervision, and discipline from both parents (expressing their belief that a strong father figure was very important to young girls) and were protected from abuse (particularly sexual abuse), they would be able to more easily ward off the bad influences of delinquent peers and boyfriends and would not be so compelled to use drugs, fight with their parents, or run away.

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*“...a lot of girls have to deal with sexual abuse at an early age. And even if it started off as abuse, after you have sex or you’ve been with a person like that it’s easy for you to have sex again.”*

*“Um, I think people who grow up in homes where people use drugs and everything, they have a tendency to fall into negative relationships, and they fall into drugs, and they fall into these things because they are addicted to chaos.”*

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*What the system should do.* Women who participated in a focus group had had substantial experience with both the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems and had very clear ideas about what they juvenile justice system should offer girls. In addition to more money for more programs, the women believed that young girls need the following from the system:

1. Strict but reasonable discipline and structure along with treatment opportunities,
2. Mandatory participation by parents and/or guardians in their daughter's treatment,
3. People to work with them with whom they can develop bonds and trust,
4. To be taught "real life skills" and shown "real career opportunities," and
5. Follow-up upon their release from the system.

Adult women in the study stated that they wished that the system had addressed their bad behavior earlier in their delinquent careers, not necessarily through punishment, but by acknowledging that they needed help. Similar to the girls with whom we spoke, these women felt that early on in their delinquency nothing happened to them, and then one day the judge "*threw the book*" at them. In other words, the women felt that girls need to be held more accountable earlier on, but the responses should be caring, fair, proportionate, and consistent.

Adult women also identified the need to get parents and/or guardians involved in their daughters' treatment. Specifically, participants stated that parents should have to not only go to court with their daughters and meet with probation with their daughters, but also attend counseling with them and participate in other programming as well. They seemed to feel that the behavior that brought the girls to the attention of the authorities did not develop in a vacuum and that all aspects of the family structure needed to be addressed.

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*"...what I am saying is, you should work within the family, you know what I am saying? Get to the heart of the problem instead 'a just, you know, this one, you talk to the mother, and the mother says no that didn't happen. But if you get them all together into this room like they did us, I'm telling you even the dog, that would help, 'cause everyone's got something to say."*

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Another issue at the forefront of this discussion was that the girls need to be able to bond with and trust the people who are working with them and speaking on their behalf. The women argued that it was no good to have probation officers, social workers, and counselors work with the girls if there was no trust or understanding between front-line staff and the girls. Respect also played a major role in this discussion. The women explained that the girls are supposed to show respect for the law, the system, and the people who work in it, yet almost no one shows respect to the girls.

Women we spoke with also believed it is crucial that girls be taught life skills which translate into the real world. In particular, they want girls to receive more parenting classes so that they do not perpetuate the same mistakes the girls' parents made. The women (and front-line staff in later discussions) strongly believed that girls should learn how to recognize the difference between healthy relationships and unhealthy relationships. The women were adamant that somewhere in the system, the girls should be taught that boys are not the answer to everything and that they should never jeopardize their futures to protect a man.

Finally, the women thought it was imperative that girls be "followed-up" once they get out of detention or state correctional facilities. They explained that it doesn't matter how good programming is when you are locked up, if you aren't given a lot of support to maintain good behavior once you get out. Participants were emphatic about reminding the facilitator that these girls would most often be going back to the same families, homes, and neighborhoods that

helped to get them into trouble in the first place, and if the system ignored them once they returned to the community, they would quickly end up back behind bars.

*Tales from the Field: The Experience of Front-line Workers*

**Demographics.** Fifty two front-line shelter care, detention, and probation workers agreed to participate in focus groups. Approximately two-thirds were shelter care or detention staff; the other third were probation officers and probation programming staff. Demographic comparisons among front-line workers are provided in Table 3-8.

<b>Table 3-8: Front-Line Workers' Demographics</b>		
	<b>Shelter Care and Detention Center Staff (n=34)</b>	<b>Probation Staff (n=18)</b>
Age Range (in years):	23-63	24-57
Average Age (in years):	37.7	36.7
Sex: Female Male	71% 29%	56% 44%
Race: White Non-white	71% 29%	94% 6%
Highest education level: HS/GED Some college Associate's degree Bachelor's degree Master's degree	35% 12% 18% 32% 3%	11% 0% 0% 61% 28%
Average Number of Years Working with Youth:	9.08	9.38
Has Worked with Girls:	100%	100%
Has Worked with Boys:	100%	100%

The average age of front-line workers in the study was 36 years, although the shelter care and detention center staff was slightly older than the probation staff. Most focus group participants

were female, with an even larger majority of women in the shelter care and detention staff focus groups (71%) compared to the proportion of women in the probation groups (56%). Most staff focus group participants self-identified as White. The average number of years working with youth was the same for both groups and everyone who participated in a focus group had worked with both boys and girls. The only major demographic difference between the shelter care/detention and probation staff groups was their level of education. Eighty-nine percent of the probation staff had either a bachelor's or master's degree compared to only 35% of the shelter care and detention staff.

*A profile in problems.* Remarkably consistent themes ran through all of the front-line worker focus group sessions. In every group, staff described the very serious emotional problems at-risk and delinquent girls battle. Staff felt it was somewhat common for these girls to face acute psychiatric issues and referenced severe depression (general and bipolar), borderline personality, post traumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse addictions as diagnoses seen on a regular basis. Other important factors that the staff thought the research team should understand were that many of these girls are highly aggressive, have body image issues, are very distrustful of adults, desire respect, and participate in a lot of relational aggression. One female detention staff member seemed to sum it up for the rest of her group when she remarked *"Working with girls is all drama all of the time."*

Staff responses were very similar to those of the girls and incarcerated women when asked, "What gets girls into trouble?" The consensus was that boyfriends (particularly older boyfriends), single-parent households with little supervision, lack of positive male and female role models, absent fathers, physical and sexual victimization, drug use (by the girls and their families), and having criminal families all led girls into trouble.

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*"Some of them (the girls) are too influenced by their boyfriends."*

*"I was surprised by, it seems to me that they want to be older so they go and, they perceive themselves to be older with their looks and their dress and the clothes. So it attracts older men. I was surprised that some of these 14, 15 year-old girls could attract somebody, a 29 year old man."*

*"They seem to think these men give them what they aren't getting at home."*

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Once again, staff provided virtually the same list as the girls and incarcerated women when asked why girls get arrested. The only difference was that the staff groups added disorderly conduct to the list and emphasized the fact that drug sales are a common charge.

*Gender-relevant training needs.* Before a discussion about gender-relevant training needs took place, the various staff groups were asked if they had ever heard of "gender-specific or gender-relevant programming." The answer was a resounding no. Only a handful of the 52 participants had ever heard of the term and a large proportion of the group had some difficulty fully understanding the concept once it was explained to them.

After the concepts of "gender-relevant programming" for juveniles and "gender-relevant training" for front-line workers was defined and examples were provided for why both might be useful in

juvenile justice settings, staff were asked if they would be interested in participating in gender-relevant training. A number of the participants were less than enthusiastic about the idea. Many of the detention staff claimed that they did not need gender-relevant training because they worked with kids for a long time or they had children of their own, thus were very familiar with the differences between boys and girls.

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*“Well you know what? I think if you been around kids, if you’ve dealt with kids a long time, you know the difference. I mean it’s like you know. It’s like when you raise a child, you raise a son, you raise a daughter, you know the difference. For me, I had my training.”*

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The above quote summed-up many staff participant’s feelings about the need for gender-relevant training for front-line workers, especially among shelter care and detention staff. However, in most instances, when conversations proceeded from the abstract notion of gender differences into concrete discussions about how boys and girls are different in terms of cognition, psychosocial development, and behaviors, few staff members could provide specific examples beyond “*girls are more emotional than boys*” and “*...girls hold grudges longer than boys.*”

There were, however, a number of individual members of each group (particularly the probation officers) who believed that gender-relevant training was a good idea for any person working with youth in the system. Several individuals stated that they would be interested in gender-relevant training as long as it was not “fluff” and focused heavily on practical information.

*Gender-relevant programming needs.* When asked if they believed that programs and services provided for youth should be gender-relevant, answers depended on whether the respondents really understood the gender-relevant concept. Many mistakenly believed that this type of programming meant that women would work with girls and men would work with boys. Even when the focus group facilitator explained this was not the case and reiterated the definition of gender-relevant programming, some staff remained leery of gender-relevant programming. Group type (i.e., shelter care and detention staff versus probation staff) seemed to determine the level of understanding of the concept and support for gender-relevant programming and services. In general, probation staff seemed to more fully understand the concept and also seemed more supportive of incorporating gender-relevant programming into how youth are served by the juvenile justice system in Indiana. One major concern echoed by probation staff was about “equity of treatment.” Understandably, participants wanted to make sure that under a system that provided for gender-relevant programming, girls would not be “singled out for special treatment,” but that both girls and boys would receive the appropriate treatment. Near the end of the discussions about gender-relevant programming, and after a number of examples were provided about how these programs are tailored to meet the specific needs of girls and boys, most participants thought that gender-relevant programs would be good for the youth they serve.

*What the system should do.* Participants in front-line worker focus groups were very clear about what the girls they serve need and what they believe the system should provide for girls. Services cited most often by front-line staff include:

1. Consistency in discipline, punishment, programs and services;
2. Education;

3. Mentors;
4. Practical programming;
5. Coordination of services; and
6. Family-based programming and reintegration services.

First, staff members were insistent that girls involved in the justice system need consistent discipline and punishment, but also need wrap-around programs and services. Not surprisingly, the key concerns of staff in this area were: (a) there are not enough good programs and services available; and (b) staffing, resources, and money are not adequate to do all of the things that should be done to really help kids.

Second, participants believed that individuals working in the system need to make a concerted effort to emphasize the importance of education to the girls with whom they work. Many of staff members reported that the girls they work with do not care about education and do not formulate long range plans for their future. Instead, front-line workers claimed there are a number of girls who intend to “*find a man to take care of them,*” making education an unnecessary endeavor. To change girls’ perceptions about education, several probation staff members suggested that the system find a way to teach goal-setting to girls, to identify a means for making school seem more attractive, and to make college seem possible for the vast number of girls who have never even considered a college career.

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*“We don’t see very many girls that have mothers or female role models in their lives that are educated, that are, that have careers, that are, can be um, able to support themselves you know without looking towards that something with a man. You know?”*

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Third, the importance of positive role models and mentoring was brought up by staff members in every one of the focus group sessions. There was a belief among staff members (and incarcerated women as well) that girls become what they know and what they know is dysfunction and chaos. They have not witnessed successful women in their families and personal lives, thus do not have standard bearers to whom they can aspire. Noting that most of the current mentoring programs serve boys, staff members suggested that more mentoring programs be established for girls. Staff further believed that career counseling programs involving job shadowing and highlighting women who work in non-traditional careers (e.g., medicine and the law versus cosmetology and cleaning services) would be very beneficial.

Fourth, focus group staff participants indicated a need for the expansion of programs focusing on very practical aspects of life. For instance, they believe programs concentrating on independent living skills which teach girls how to be good parents and demonstrate useful conflict resolution skills are critical for the successful development of these young women. Moreover, all staff focus groups explained that girls involved in the system need to be taught about health, hygiene, and nutrition. There was a belief among the front-line workers that the girls they serve are not receiving an education about how to have a positive self-image, how to live healthy lives, or how to have healthy relationships. Finally, participants steadfastly maintained that programs serving girls must include aspects that model or teach independence, self-empowerment, and self-worth.

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*“Girls need to learn how to be self sufficient, how to, job training skills, how to interview, um how to keep a job, what you need to do, be on time...real simplistic things from the bottom up.”*

*“Yep. A lot of the families, um you know their moms have been on AFDC, food stamps, you know, it’s hard to really learn how to do a lot of budgeting when you know, you don’t see that.”*

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Fifth, focus group participants highlighted the need for the various principals in the system to more effectively communicate and coordinate services. Staff felt that the courts, probation, social workers, mental health professionals, and educators need to come together and develop comprehensive case management and treatment plans for youth. They explained that this level of coordination would not only improve contact with the youth and their families and enhance service delivery, but also would reduce the duplication of services.

Sixth, more family-based programming is needed. In every focus group discussion, the concern that parents are often a part of the problem was a theme. Staff participants strongly believed that the system needs to serve the whole family because the kids they supervise did not become delinquent in a vacuum. In fact, the number one wish the staff had for the girls was for them to have competent, caring parents. Without family-centered services, however, this wish will likely remain outside the purview of the system. Finally, most of the participants (particularly probation staff) explained that providing good, comprehensive reintegration services is imperative if these girls are to turn their lives around.

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*“I think the aftercare thing is a concern. And we don’t have a society as a whole, uh nationwide uh, we don’t have adequate aftercare in my opinion. We can get kids in for certain length of time and do our best to try to get them on the right track, but then we’re puttin’ them right back into the same environment. Then we see them again!”*

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*Wrap up.* It is important to note that the majority of staff participating in this study preferred to work with boys, which the girls involved in this research project seemed to know. A number of girls remarked that they wanted help from people whom they could trust, people who would listen to them and try to understand them, and who cared about more than a paycheck. During this study, the research team met a number of caring front-line workers committed to the girls they serve. On the other hand, the research team encountered as many staff members who truly disliked working with girls and preferred to work with boys as evidenced in the quotes below.



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Female Detention Staff Member: *"I guess 'cause I am a woman myself and I'd just really rather work with the boys because of the bickering and like she said, the pettiness that the girls throw out more so than the boys would."*

Male Probation Staff Member: *"...I was able to deal with all kinds when I had caseloads and I would have taken ten uh boys over one girl any day. Um, the boys, they told you where they were, where they are. I mean they were very upfront. If they were delinquent, they were delinquent. Girls on the other hand, they were very catty. They had, um you know, went behind your back, were never upfront with you, manipulative as all get out, uh pretty prissy, um and you know they just did not want your help regardless of what you tried to do."*

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In light of the valuable lessons learned by providing offenders and those who directly service them a forum in which to discuss their ideas about juvenile girls and boys, it may not be overreaching to suggest that more effort should be focused on employing staff who want to work with girls. Part of the purpose of gender-relevant training is to educate people about differences in the psychosocial development, cognition, and behavior of girls and boys. Perhaps participation of front-line workers in this type training would lead to more accepting attitudes towards working with girls—making the experience more gratifying for girls and staff alike.

## GENDER-RELEVANT NEEDS OF YOUTH FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS AND YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS: AN ANALYSIS OF STATEWIDE SURVEY DATA

The final component of our multifaceted approach to understanding gender-relevant program and service needs was a statewide survey of juvenile justice professionals and youth service providers titled *Professional Perspectives on the Gender-Relevant Program and Service Needs of Youth*. The survey was conducted to acquire insight into the needs of juvenile females and males and the extent to which existing programs and services meet those needs from the perspective of individuals who work with youth every day.

### *Method*

#### *Sample*

Seven types of juvenile justice professionals and seven groups of youth service providers were sampled (see Table 4-1).<sup>2</sup> These groups were targeted for participation based on their experience with youth at-risk for or involved in Indiana's juvenile justice system. Our goal was to obtain the voluntary participation of individuals with leadership or, in some cases, front-line service roles in each group (e.g., detention center directors) but not all personnel in a particular group.

Seventy percent (856) of the 1,216 people contacted completed the survey, including 76% of all juvenile justice professionals and 68% of all youth service providers asked to participate. Completion rates ranged from a low of 54% among Directors of County Divisions of Family and Children Services/Case Workers/Child Protective Services Workers to a high of 93% among Program Specialists at State Juvenile Correctional Facilities. The high rate of participation in our survey suggests that, as intended, our findings are representative of individuals with leadership or front-line service roles in professions dealing with youth involved in or at-risk for involvement in Indiana's juvenile justice system. It cannot be assumed, however, that the perspectives of all members of a particular group are represented by the responses of individuals selected for participation. Finally, it is of interest to note that 64% of respondents elected to complete the survey electronically on the Web whereas 36% did so in hard copy form.

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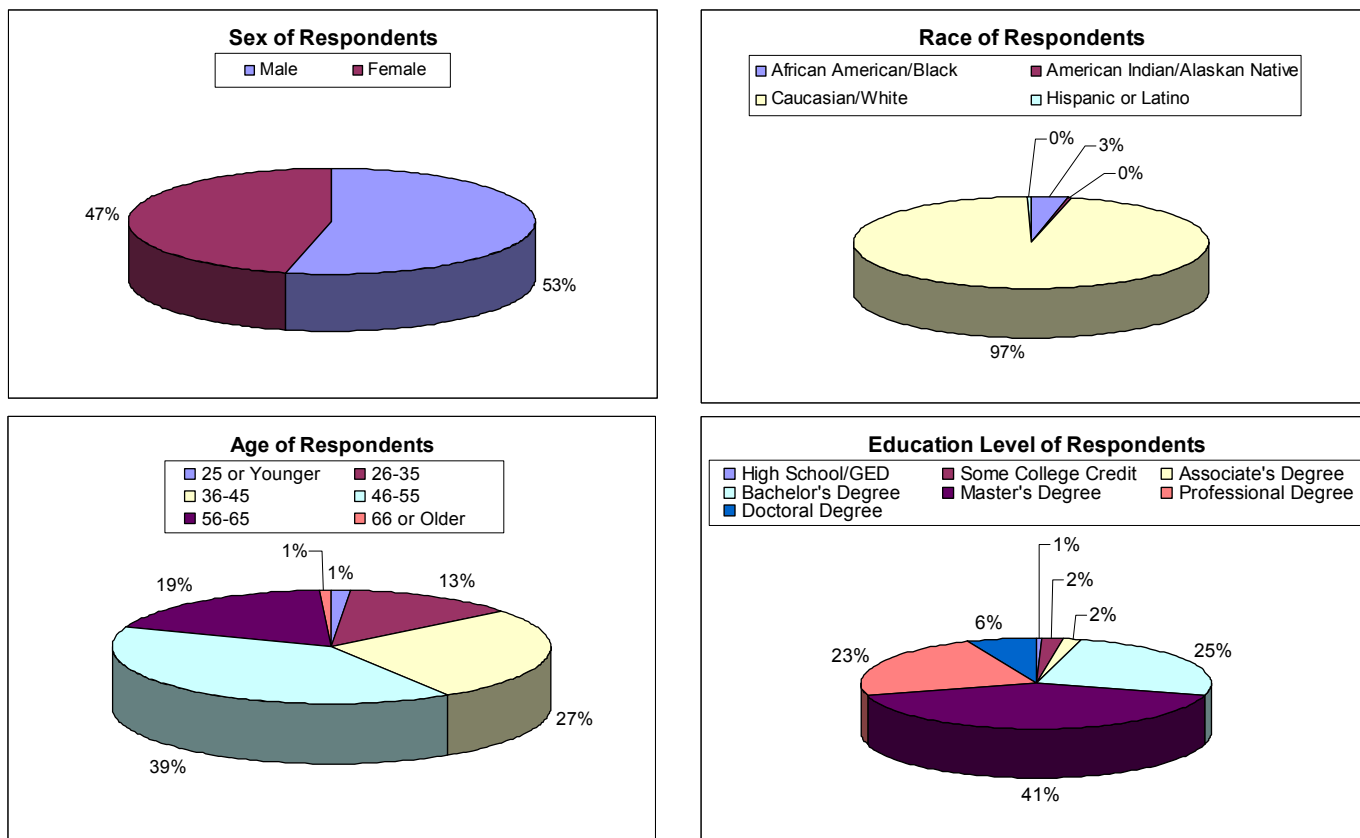
<sup>2</sup> Individuals originally sampled as 'Program Specialists at a United Way Sponsored Program or Organization' and 'Program Specialists at an IARCCA Site' had to be excluded from the final dataset because it could not be determined that targeted participants completed the survey. (IARCCA stands for Indiana Association of Residential Child Care Agencies.)

**Table 4-1: Groups Sampled and Participation Rates**

	No. Asked to Participate	Percent Who Participated	% Asked to Participate Who Completed Online	% Asked to Participate Who Completed on Paper
<b>JUVENILE JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS</b>				
Detention Center Directors	29	89.7%	73.1%	26.9%
Chief Prosecutors/Prosecutors with Juvenile Specialization	90	74.4%	55.2%	44.8%
Juvenile Court Judges, Magistrates, and Referees	136	58.8%	57.5%	42.5%
Chief Juvenile Probation Officers/CPOs with Juvenile Specialization	80	90.0%	72.2%	27.8%
Juvenile Community Corrections Program Directors	43	88.4%	92.1%	7.9%
Program Specialists at State Juvenile Correctional Facilities	15	93.3%	85.7%	14.3%
Heads of Juvenile Parole Districts/ Youth Service Transition Coordinators	17	88.2%	66.7%	33.3%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>76.1%</b>	<b>67.6%</b>	<b>32.4%</b>
<b>YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS</b>				
Directors of Youth Service Bureaus	33	78.8%	53.8%	46.2%
Directors of County Divisions of Family and Children Services/Case Workers/Child Protective Services Workers	91	53.8%	57.1%	42.9%
Guardian Ad Litem/Court Appointed Special Advocates	65	66.2%	67.4%	32.6%
Safe and Drug Free School Administrators/Coordinators	294	74.8%	63.6%	36.4%
Alternative School Administrators/Directors	180	54.4%	50.0%	50.0%
Directors/Program Specialists at Boys & Girls Clubs	33	69.7%	82.6%	17.4%
4-H/Youth Extension Educators at Cooperative Extension Service Agencies	110	77.3%	63.5%	36.5%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>61.2%</b>	<b>38.8%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1216</b>	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>63.6%</b>	<b>36.4%</b>

As shown in Figure 4-1, most respondents were male, white, between the ages of 46-55, and highly educated. More than four out of every 10 held a Master's or Doctoral degree.

Figure 4-1: Respondent Demographics



Eighty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they *currently* work with 10 to 17 year-old girls and boys involved in or are at-risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Respondents had worked with girls an average of eight years (median of 6 and range of 0 to 40 years) in their current positions, and had worked with boys an average of eight and a half years (median of 6.8 and a range of 0 to 40 years).

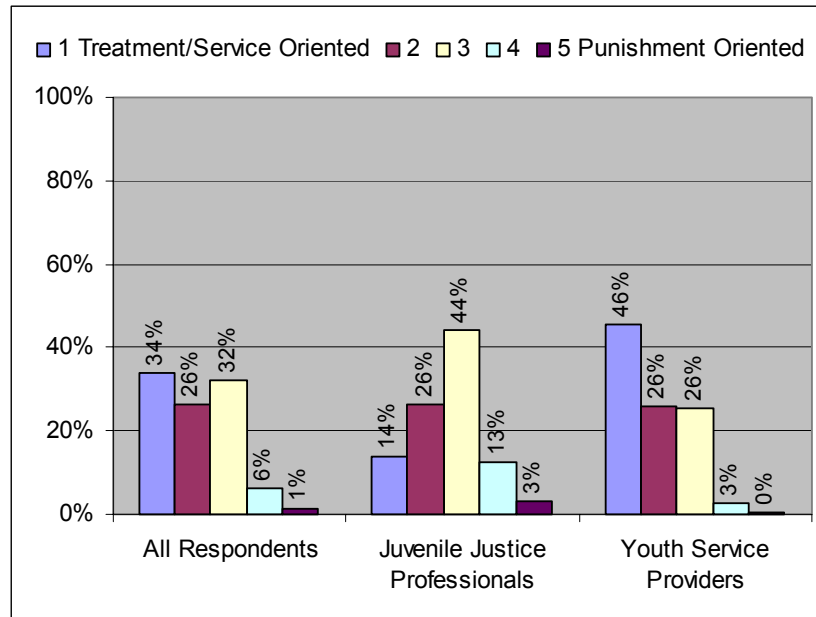
Respondents' *lifetime* work experience with 10 to 17 year-old girls averaged 16 years (median of 15 and a range of 0 to 45 years). Lifetime work experience with boys of this age was 17 years (median of 16 and a range of 0 to 45 years). Over the course of their professional careers, 36% of participants had 10 years of experience or less working with youth, 31% had 11 to 20 years of experience, and 32% had 20 years of experience or more.

Respondents were asked to circle one number on a five-point Likert scale to indicate whether they consider themselves more treatment/services oriented, more punishment oriented, or somewhere in between. Responses to this question are presented in Figure 4-2.

Strong punishment orientation (points 4 and 5 on the scale) was relatively rare among juvenile justice professionals and youth service providers alike. More juvenile justice respondents (44%)

circled the midpoint on the scale, whereas more youth service providers (46%) indicated that they consider themselves to be treatment/services oriented.

Figure 4-2: Respondents' Orientation Toward Treatment and Punishment Orientation



### Survey Instrument

Survey development was informed by (a) input from the juvenile justice, mental health, academic, and prevention professionals who attended the planning workshop held at the outset of Indiana's Gender-Relevant Programming Initiative; (b) knowledge acquired during our focus group research with girls, adult women, and front-line staff members who work with youth (see previous section of this report); and (c) a review of the criminological and psychological literature on the distinct experiences of adolescent girls and boys.

The survey instrument consisted of twenty-two questions addressing the following topics:

- General background demographics of respondents including length of current and lifetime professional work experience with female and male youth and adults, and whether respondents currently and ever have worked with youth involved in or at-risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system;
- Personal orientations toward treatment and punishment;
- Perceived prevalence in girls and boys of 28 specific behaviors from seven domains (i.e., self-image, triggers for delinquent behavior, sexual behaviors, conflict behaviors, willingness to discuss sensitive issues, substance drug abuse, and mental health problems);

- Availability of programs dedicated to 28 different topics of importance to youth who are involved in or at-risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system;
- Use of gender-relevant program models;
- Whether those programs are administered by respondents' agencies;
- Interest in gender-relevant training in the 28 program areas;
- Effectiveness of 12 treatment/intervention approaches commonly used with at-risk and delinquent youth;
- Extent of agreement/disagreement with the idea that it is easier to work with at-risk and delinquent boys than with similarly situated girls and reason for agreeing or disagreeing with this notion;
- Extent of agreement/disagreement with the idea that programs designed to meet the gender-relevant needs of at-risk and delinquent girls and boys will be more effective than programs that do not take gender into account;
- Extent of agreement/disagreement with the idea that staff should be trained in the gender-relevant needs of girls and boys to maximize the effectiveness of their work;
- Extent of agreement/disagreement with the idea that differences in the (a) physical, (b) emotional, and (c) social development of girls and boys should be considered when programs are developed for youth; and
- Nomination of programs respondents believe "work" for at-risk and/or delinquent girls and boys.

Most questions were posed in a closed-ended or fixed-choice format, but three provided room for an open-ended response.<sup>3</sup>

The survey questionnaire was prepared for primary distribution on the Web by a professional web-based design company, with an emphasis on ease of use (ability to navigate back and forth throughout the questionnaire, appropriate skip patterns, etc.) and the attractiveness and clarity of instruction and question placement on each page. Careful attention also was given to the preparation of the hard copy/paper version of the survey instrument with ease of use in mind.

The online questionnaire was developed to allow respondents to complete the survey at multiple sittings. Respondents could enter, exit, and re-enter their online survey form by entering a unique Respondent ID. Upon completion (signaled by selecting "I'm Done" on the last page), survey forms were locked and no additional modifications could be made.

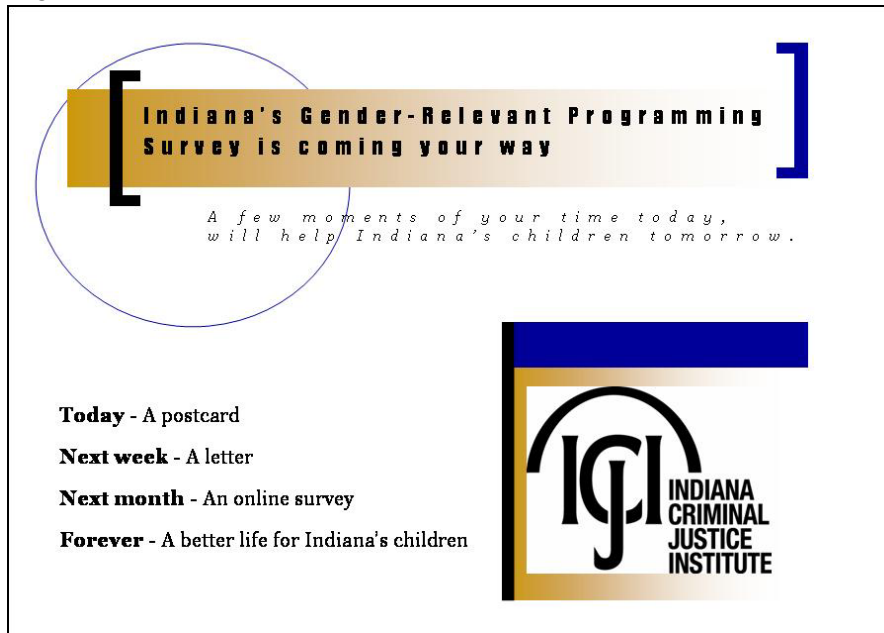
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<sup>3</sup> Information for two of the three open-ended questions (nominations of programs that work for girls and for boys) was limited to responses of 50 characters in length due to a design error during the development of the questionnaire and backend database for presentation on the Web. Hard copy responses to these questions were not affected.

## Procedure

Notification postcards announcing the forthcoming survey were mailed on August 22, 2003 to all individuals targeted for participation in the study (see Figure 4-3). The 4 x 5 postcards were thematically matched in color and style to the survey instrument on the Web.

Figure 4-3: Notification Postcard



A letter signed by the Chair of the Institute's Board of Trustees explaining the purpose of the survey, why recipients had been selected for participation,<sup>4</sup> and that individual responses will remain strictly confidential was mailed on August 27, 2003. The letter, informed recipients that the web-based version of the survey questionnaire could be accessed online at [www.ICJIGenderSurvey.com](http://www.ICJIGenderSurvey.com) and that the instrument also was available in paper form. Completion of the survey was requested by September 12, 2003.

The first of two follow-up efforts with late and non-respondents (via e-mail, telephone, and U.S Post) commenced on September 12, 2003. The purpose and importance of the survey was explained and completion was encouraged and requested by October 3, 2003. A second follow-up effort with remaining non-respondents beginning on October 10, 2003 consisted of mailing a paper copy of the questionnaire (along with a pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope for its return), covered by a bulletin indicating the proportion of people in their professional group who had already completed the questionnaire. Recipients were asked to complete the survey "today." At the same time, the research team engaged the assistance of Institute field representatives to personally contact individuals in their communities who had not yet completed the questionnaire.

The participation rate after the instrument had been in the field approximately two-weeks was 18%. Participation increased to 30% after first wave follow-up efforts and 70% after wave two.

<sup>4</sup> Recipients were asked to let us know if they did not represent a targeted profession.

## Data Analysis

The Institute's Research Associate managed data entry, verification, and analysis under the supervision of the Research Director. Survey data were maintained in a Microsoft Access database and exported to SPSS for statistical analysis. Univariate descriptive analyses of Indiana's statewide survey data are presented in this initial findings report. In-depth multivariate relationships testing for significant moderating effects will be examined in future publications.

## Findings

### Comparisons of 28 Specific Behaviors Among Girls and Boys

Respondents were asked to indicate the prevalence of 28 specific behaviors separately for girls and boys. The question posed was: "Considering 10 to 17 year-old youth who are involved in or are at-risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system, please use the following scale to indicate how many girls and boys experience each of the following behaviors. We are not looking for a precise estimate, rather your overall impression based on your professional experiences."

Prevalence estimates selected by the largest proportion of respondents for each behavior is indicated by gray-shading in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2: Estimated Prevalence of Risk and Protective Factors										
	ESTIMATED PREVALENCE AMONG GIRLS					ESTIMATED PREVALENCE AMONG BOYS				
	None	Some	About Half	Most	All	None	Some	About Half	Most	All
<b>SELF-IMAGE</b>										
Not feeling good about themselves or feeling inadequate (low self-esteem)	0%	18%	20%	55%	6%	0%	30%	27%	40%	4%
Being concerned about whether others like them	0%	9%	14%	64%	13%	0%	22%	25%	45%	8%
Being concerned about whether others think they are smart	2%	42%	30%	24%	2%	4%	50%	26%	18%	1%
Being concerned about their height	24%	64%	9%	3%	1%	13%	52%	15%	17%	2%
Being concerned about their weight	2%	29%	20%	39%	9%	8%	68%	17%	7%	1%
Being concerned about whether others are physically attracted to them	1%	12%	16%	57%	13%	1%	25%	27%	39%	8%
Getting involved in unhealthy relationships (for status, popularity, financial stability)	0%	25%	26%	42%	6%	2%	40%	22%	32%	4%



**Table 4-2: Estimated Prevalence of Risk and Protective Factors--continued**

	ESTIMATED PREVALENCE AMONG GIRLS					ESTIMATED PREVALENCE AMONG BOYS				
	<i>None</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>About Half</i>	<i>Most</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>About Half</i>	<i>Most</i>	<i>All</i>
<b>TRIGGERS FOR DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR</b>										
Getting involved in delinquent behavior or crime due to peer pressure	1%	43%	26%	29%	2%	0%	29%	26%	42%	3%
Getting involved in delinquent behavior or crime because of a need for acceptance from members of the opposite sex	4%	60%	21%	15%	1%	5%	67%	18%	9%	1%
Getting involved in delinquent behavior or crime because of a need for acceptance from members of the same sex	3%	63%	21%	12%	1%	2%	38%	24%	34%	2%
Getting involved in delinquent behavior or crime due to rebelling against one's parents or guardians	1%	51%	25%	21%	2%	1%	50%	26%	21%	2%
Gang involvement	33%	62%	4%	1%	0%	22%	63%	11%	4%	0%
<b>SEXUAL BEHAVIORS</b>										
Engaging in prostitution	47%	49%	3%	1%	0%	77%	22%	1%	0%	0%
Engaging in high-risk sexual behaviors, such as not protecting oneself from STDs or unintentional conception	2%	40%	27%	28%	3%	2%	40%	24%	31%	3%
Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)	11%	71%	12%	5%	0%	13%	70%	12%	5%	0%
Intentionally conceiving a child	13%	78%	6%	2%	0%	56%	40%	3%	1%	0%
<b>CONFLICT BEHAVIORS</b>										
Generally distrusting youth of the same sex	6%	66%	18%	10%	1%	10%	68%	16%	5%	1%
Generally distrusting youth of the opposite sex	5%	68%	21%	6%	0%	7%	71%	16%	5%	0%
Using insults or demeaning others to inflict intentional harm	1%	41%	24%	31%	3%	1%	39%	28%	28%	3%
Engaging in physical fights (with or without weapons)	3%	70%	19%	8%	0%	2%	46%	31%	20%	1%

**Table 4-2: Estimated Prevalence of Risk and Protective Factors--continued**

	ESTIMATED PREVALENCE AMONG GIRLS					ESTIMATED PREVALENCE AMONG BOYS				
	<i>None</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>About Half</i>	<i>Most</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>About Half</i>	<i>Most</i>	<i>All</i>
<b>WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS SENSITIVE ISSUES</b>										
Willingness to discuss physical or emotional abuse	4%	65%	19%	11%	0%	14%	72%	9%	4%	0%
Willingness to discuss sexual abuse	10%	69%	14%	7%	0%	31%	63%	4%	2%	0%
<b>SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS</b>	<i>None</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>About Half</i>	<i>Most</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>About Half</i>	<i>Most</i>	<i>All</i>
Abuse of alcohol and drugs	1%	35%	26%	35%	3%	1%	31%	24%	40%	4%
Depression	1%	48%	27%	21%	2%	2%	58%	23%	15%	2%
High anxiety (obsessive- compulsive behaviors, panic attacks, etc.)	5%	67%	18%	10%	0%	8%	72%	14%	5%	0%
Psychosis (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, dementia)	17%	77%	5%	2%	0%	17%	77%	6%	1%	0%
Harming oneself by withholding or purging food, cutting one's skin, etc.	9%	78%	10%	2%	0%	25%	71%	4%	0%	0%
Thinking about or attempting suicide	6%	81%	10%	3%	0%	10%	80%	8%	1%	0%

Note. Survey participants who selected the response option "Don't Know" were excluded from analyses for Table 4-2. The proportion selecting Don't Know ranged from a low of 1% for the estimated prevalence of girls not feeling good about themselves or feeling inadequate (low self-esteem) to a high of 18% for the estimated prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases among boys.

*Self-image.* The majority of respondents believed that not feeling good about oneself and concerns about whether others like you are typical for most girls and boys involved in or are at-risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system, although these behaviors generally were considered to be more characteristic among girls. Concern about whether others are physically attracted to you was rated as more common among girls. Weight concerns and getting involved in unhealthy relationships for status, popularity, or financial stability were thought to be prevalent among *most girls* but only *some boys*.

*Triggers for delinquent behavior.* The largest proportions of respondents rated peer pressure as a trigger for delinquency for most boys (42%) but only some girls (43%). However, 57% thought that peer pressure leads to delinquency in half or more of all girls and 71% viewed

peer pressure as influential for half or more of all boys. A majority of respondents rated rebelling against parents, a need for acceptance from members of the opposite and same sex, and gang influences as influential for half or fewer of at-risk and delinquent girls and boys alike.

*Sexual behaviors.* None of the sexual behaviors listed on the survey questionnaire were considered to be highly prevalent among either girls or boys. However, most respondents thought that prostitution and intentional conception of a child are not at all prevalent among at-risk and delinquent boys but are typical among some girls.

*Conflict behaviors.* Nearly 60% of respondents indicated that half or more of all at-risk and delinquent girls *and* boys use insults or demean others to inflict intentional harm. Fifty-two percent believed that physical fighting is characteristic of half or more of all boys, but only 27% rated this behavior as characteristic of half or more of all girls. Distrusting youth of the same sex and youth of the opposite sex were not considered to be prevalent among either girls or boys.

*Willingness to discuss sensitive issues:* The vast majority of respondents believed that fewer than half of all girls and boys are willing to discuss physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and unwillingness to speak about such concerns is especially typical of boys.

*Substance abuse and mental health problems.* Sixty-four percent of respondents rated abuse of alcohol and drugs as prevalent in half or more of at-risk or delinquent girls, and 68% rated substance abuse as prevalent among half or more of all boys. The vast majority believed that depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis, self destructive behaviors such as purging food and cutting oneself, and suicidal ideation or attempts are not especially prevalent among youth involved in or are at-risk of becoming involved in the justice system, although each is seen as somewhat more typical among girls.

While individualized assessment of each of these behaviors would be necessary for treatment, most of the behaviors can be more generally construed as risk or protective factors for delinquency depending on their actual prevalence among girls and boys. Prevalence estimates based on professional experience with at-risk and delinquent youth can enhance understanding of obstacles faced by young girls in Indiana and how those obstacles might be similar to or different from challenges faced by young boys.

#### *Availability of Youth Programs, Use of Gender-Relevant Models, and Training Needs*

Indiana's statewide survey included a multipart question designed to help identify gaps in the availability of key programs and services for Indiana youth (see Table 4-3). Respondents were presented with a list of 28 different program topics and asked to indicate whether a program exclusively or primarily dedicated to the topic is (1) available for girls only, (2) available for boys only, (3) available for both girls and boys, or (4) not available to the youth they serve. For each program available to youth they serve, respondents were asked to indicate whether it employs a gender-relevant model.<sup>5</sup> Respondents also were asked to indicate whether they or others in their agency would be interested in gender-relevant program training in each area.

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<sup>5</sup> Gender-relevant models were defined as programs and services that take the unique needs (such as differences in social and emotional development) of girls and boys into account.

**Table 4-3: Availability of Programs, Use of Gender-Relevant Models, and Interest in Gender-Relevant Program Training**

Program	% Saying Available to Youth They Serve: Girls Only	% Saying Available to Youth They Serve: Boys Only	% Saying Available to Youth They Serve: Girls & Boys	% Saying Not Available to Youth They Serve	% Saying a Gender-Relevant Model is Used	% Interested in Gender-Relevant Program Training
Basic education and vocational training	0	1	97	2	29	36
Special education	0	1	95	4	29	28
Independent living (budgeting, job interviews, etc.)	1	0	83	16	34	48
Career development	0	0	90	9	35	49
Health (nutrition, fitness, etc.)	1	1	91	7	42	40
Recreation (arts-based or other non-fitness based programs)	0	1	86	13	34	35
Mental health	0	1	89	10	34	43
Changing negative thinking patterns (i.e., cognitive behavioral programs)	0	1	80	19	34	61
Self-esteem	1	1	89	9	40	58
Substance abuse	0	1	92	7	25	50
Anger management	0	1	89	10	29	54
Grief and Loss	0	1	80	19	27	42
Character building	0	1	85	14	32	54
Spirituality/faith/religion	0	1	70	29	19	24
Family relationships	0	1	87	11	33	52
Mentoring	1	1	77	21	43	49
Healthy relationships (i.e., respect, communication, trust in relationships)	1	1	84	13	37	55
Sex education	0	1	88	11	57	34

**Table 4-3: Availability of Programs, Use of Gender-Relevant Models, and Interest in Gender-Relevant Program Training--continued**

Program	% Saying Available to Youth They Serve: Girls Only	% Saying Available to Youth They Serve: Boys Only	% Saying Available to Youth They Serve: Girls & Boys	% Saying Not Available to Youth They Serve	% Saying a Gender-Relevant Model is Used	% Interested in Gender-Relevant Program Training
Positive gender identity (i.e., overcoming gender stereotypes)	2	1	61	36	53	45
Pregnancy	18	1	67	14	63	36
Parenthood	6	1	77	16	53	41
Domestic violence	3	0	74	23	43	46
Physical and emotional Abuse	1	1	82	17	34	47
Sexual abuse	2	1	80	17	47	46
Crime victimization	1	1	63	35	31	42
Wilderness or outward bound programs	1	2	30	68	31	27
Shock incarceration/boot camps	0	9	21	70	39	19
Sex offender programs	0	9	48	43	47	30

Note. Survey participants who selected the response option “Don’t Know” in response to the question about the availability of programs for youth they serve were excluded from analyses for Table 4-3. The proportion selecting Don’t Know ranged from a low of 2% for basic educational and vocational training to a high of 32% for positive gender identity (i.e., overcoming gender stereotypes).

Only respondents who indicated that a particular program is available to the youth they serve responded to the question about whether the program uses a gender-relevant model. Percentages are based on all valid responses to the question (i.e., yes, no, and don’t know). For each program listed, one-fourth to one-third of respondents did not know whether it uses a gender-relevant model.

All respondents, whether or not a particular program is available to the youth they serve, responded to the question asking if they or others in their agency would be interested in training on gender-relevant programs in each area. Percentages are based on all valid responses to the question (i.e., yes and no).

As shown in the third column of Table 4-3, nearly all respondents reported that each of the programs and services listed are available to both the girls and the boys whom they serve. Exceptions include positive gender identity, crime victimization, outward bound, shock incarceration, and sex offender programs—one-third to nearly three-fourths of all respondents reported that these programs are not available to the youth they serve (see column four). The majority of programs and services (except for pregnancy-related programs) are not uniquely available to girls or boys only.

Respondents who said that a program is available for the youth they serve were asked to indicate whether the program uses a gender-relevant model. It is relevant to note that for each program listed one-fourth to one-third of respondents did not know. Relatively few of those who *did know* responded affirmatively to this question (see column five). Interestingly, the six programs for which one-half or more of all respondents reported that gender-relevant models are used address topics inherently linked to sex and gender, namely sex education, positive gender identity, pregnancy, parenthood, sexual abuse, and sex offender programs.

The last column in Table 4-3 shows the percentage reporting that they or others in their agency would be interested in training on gender-relevant programs in each area. Half or more of all respondents were interested in this type of training for 12 of the 28 program areas as follows: independent living, career development, cognitive behavioral programs, self-esteem, substance abuse, anger management, character building, family relationships, mentoring, healthy relationships, physical and emotional abuse, and sexual abuse.

#### *Effectiveness of Common Approaches to Program Implementation*

Another section of the questionnaire included a list of 12 common treatment/intervention approaches used with at-risk and delinquent youth and asked respondents to rate how effective they believe each approach is for girls and for boys (see Table 4-4).

With the exception of deterrence and authoritarian/disciplinary approaches, respondents believed that all of the identified treatment/intervention approaches were at least somewhat effective. Close to 80% or more of all respondents rated skill building, egalitarian/participatory, one-on-one instruction/counseling, use of adult mentors and positive role models, positive peer culture, and multimodal approaches as effective or very effective (see gray shaded cells). A third of respondents rated these six approaches as *very effective*.

**Table 4-4: Perceived Effectiveness of Common Treatment/Intervention Approaches Used With At-Risk and Delinquent Youth**

Approach	Percent Choosing Effectiveness Ratings For Girls				Percent Choosing Effectiveness Ratings For Boys			
	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective
Cognitive behavioral (i.e., undoing negative thinking patterns)	1	30	45	24	4	33	41	22
Social learning (i.e., modeling the behavior of others)	2	24	46	28	4	28	44	24
Skill building	1	19	49	31	1	20	46	33
Deterrence (e.g., shock incarceration, boot camp, scared straight)	27	36	27	10	25	37	25	13
Authoritarian/disciplinary	21	46	26	7	21	45	25	9
Egalitarian/participatory (i.e., youth are active participants in their treatment)	2	18	49	32	2	19	49	29
One-on-one instruction/counseling	2	15	49	34	2	17	50	31
Group instruction/counseling	2	26	51	21	2	30	50	18
Approaches using adult mentors and positive role models	1	17	45	37	1	19	44	36
Positive peer culture (i.e., positive peer pressure)	2	19	45	34	2	21	45	31
Problem solving	1	26	48	25	1	28	47	23
Multimodal (i.e., addressing several needs with two or more approaches)	2	18	40	40	2	19	39	39

Note. Survey participants who selected the response option “Don’t Know” were excluded from analyses for Table 4-4. The proportion selecting Don’t Know ranged from a low of 9% for the effectiveness of group instruction/counseling approaches for boys to a high of 29% for the effectiveness of deterrence approaches (e.g., shock incarceration, boot camp, scared straight) for girls.

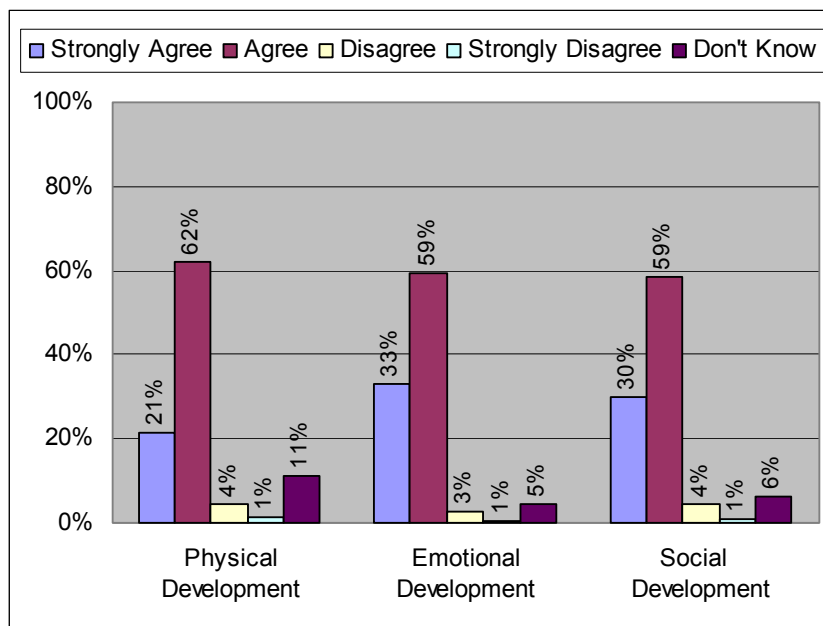
### *Gender-Relevant Programs*

**Effectiveness.** Juvenile justice professionals and youth service providers responding to Indiana’s survey were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that programs designed to meet the gender-relevant needs of 10 to 17 year-old girls and boys involved in the juvenile justice system are more effective than programs that do not take gender into account. Seventy-two

percent of respondents agreed (53%) or strongly agreed (19%) that programs designed to meet gender-relevant needs are more effective than those that do not.<sup>6</sup> Eighteen percent said they didn't know.

*Importance of Developmental Differences.* As show in Figure 4-4, there was strong consensus among survey respondents that differences in the (a) physical, (b) emotional, and (c) social development of girls and boys should be considered when programs are developed for at-risk and delinquent youth (see footnote 6).

Figure 4-4: Extent of Agreement that Developmental Gender Differences Should Be Taken Into Account



*Importance of Staff Training.* Eighty-three percent of survey respondents agreed (56%) or strongly agreed (27%) that staff should be trained in the gender-relevant needs of girls and boys to work most effectively with youth (see footnote 6). Twelve percent responded that they did not know.

*Effective Programs.* Survey participants were given an opportunity to provide information (program name, administering agency, and location) of up to two programs they believe “work” for at-risk and/or delinquent girls and two programs that work for boys. As previously noted, an error in the design of our online survey instrument limited responses to these questions to 50 characters in length (see footnote 3). Although detailed information cannot be presented here, it is interesting to note that 53% of respondents checked the response option indicating that they are not aware of *any* programs that work for girls. Fifty-two percent similarly checked this option for boys.

<sup>6</sup> Percentages are based on all valid responses to the five-point scale, including strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and don't know.



*Ease of Working with Girls and Boys.* Survey respondents were asked to agree or disagree with following statement: “People sometimes say it is easier to work with boys who are involved in or are at-risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system than with similarly situated girls.” Equal proportions agreed (31%) and disagreed (27%) with this notion, with few indicating that they strongly agreed (8%) or strongly disagreed (5%). Twenty-nine percent, on the other hand, said they did not know (see footnote 6). Typical responses to a follow-up question asking respondents why they agreed or disagreed with this idea are presented below.

**Table 4-5: Reasons Given for Ease of Working With Girls and Boys**

Why It <u>Is</u> Easier to Work with At-Risk and Delinquent Boys than Similarly Situated Girls	Why It <u>Is Not</u> Easier to Work with At-Risk and Delinquent Boys than Similarly Situated Girls
<p>“Many times girls have anger problems with adults (teachers) of the same sex. Girls seem to internalize these problems and hold grudges. We have found that the boys we serve seem to get along with us better and don’t seem to keep harboring negative feelings.” <i>Alternative School Administrator/Director</i></p> <p>“Comparing delinquents to delinquents, the females seem to have higher levels of obstinance and defiance. Sometimes it seems that it takes more discussion, etc., to get a point across to the girls who tend to see things in an infinite number of shades of gray rather than as black and white.” <i>Chief Prosecutor/Prosecutor with Juvenile Specialization</i></p> <p>“Girls’ offenses are generally rooted in strong emotional issues (i.e., boyfriends, poor family relationships, fighting w/ex-girlfriends, etc.) and are tougher to address because of the intense feelings. Boys’ offenses are usually more for self-gain than any other reason. These “surface issues” are easier to deal with.” <i>Chief Juvenile Probation Officers/CPO with Juvenile Specialization</i></p> <p>“Girls are much more emotional and resistant to help. Boys seem to “fall in line” easier. I believe that there is also a tendency to be harder on boys immediately.” <i>Chief Juvenile Probation Officers/CPO with Juvenile Specialization</i></p> <p>“Males seem to have fewer acceptance needs issues that often cause illogical and irrational behavior in females.” <i>Detention Center Director</i></p> <p>“Girls are more involved with personally destructive behavior.” <i>Juvenile Court Judge/Magistrate/Referee</i></p> <p>“I’m male.” <i>Safe and Drug Free School Administrator/Coordinator</i></p>	<p>“Today’s youth are involved in equal opportunity in terms of delinquent behavior. The impact of TV, music, disrespect for authority and society’s institutions is found in males and females. The statement may have been somewhat true ten (10) years ago, but not anymore.” <i>Juvenile Court Judge/Magistrate/Referee</i></p> <p>“The girls and boys are about equally difficult. Girls seem to have honed their delinquency skills by the time I see them better than the young boys.” <i>Juvenile Court Judge/Magistrate/Referee</i></p> <p>“I don’t feel there is a gender gap. It takes the right person to keep the boys and girls focused. Neither gender is smarter, listens better, gives more respect or learns faster. Effective approaches will work with both sexes.” <i>Alternative School Administrator/Director</i></p> <p>“That has not been my experience. Girls can be eager to please and therefore receptive to treatment.” <i>Chief Prosecutor/Prosecutor with Juvenile Specialization</i></p> <p>“In my experience, the girls tend to be more willing to participate in services/programming than the boys. The problem is that there are not a lot of programs available for girls who are involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.” <i>Juvenile Court Judge/Magistrate/Referee</i></p> <p>“Neither is easier—they are just different.” <i>Director of Youth Service Bureau</i></p> <p>“Gender has nothing to do with the level of difficulty.” <i>Guardian Ad Litem/Court Appointed Special Advocate</i></p> <p>“I believe girls are easier to work with. They seem to pay more attention and absorb more information.” <i>Chief Prosecutor/Prosecutor with Juvenile Specialization</i></p>

## DISCUSSION

In the book *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* Gilligan of Harvard University (1993) stated:

...my questions are about our perceptions of reality and truth: how we know, how we hear, how we speak. My questions are about voice and relationship. And, my questions are about the psychological processes and theory, particularly theories in which men's experience stands for all of human experience—theories which eclipse the lives of women and shut out women's voices. I saw that by maintaining these ways of seeing and speaking about human lives, men were leaving out women, but women were leaving out themselves. (p. xiii)

Whether behavioral and personality differences between women and men, girls and boys, are biologically determined or socially constructed has been deliberated by writers, theorists, scientists, philosophers, theologians, and practitioners—even in the living rooms of our homes—for many, many years. As Gilligan (1993) and others have observed, by implying that behavior is *either* genetically *or* socially determined, the interesting dichotomy of nature vs. nurture can eclipse creative change if it is believed that we 'deterministically' have no choice...if we believe that the way things are simply cannot be altered in any meaningful way.

National interest in providing juvenile justice programs and services which take the unique natures of girls and boys into account has been driven by evidence-based opposition to "theories in which men's experience stands for all of human experience," and a courageous call for creative change. Indiana's Gender Relevant Programming Initiative (IGRPI) is no exception to this national voice.

Indiana's initiative employed a multifaceted research design to identify the unique program and service needs of 10 to 17 year-old girls involved in or at-risk of becoming involved in the state's juvenile justice system to help answer the question "What About Girls in Indiana's Juvenile Justice System?" Indiana's work began with a planning workshop and culminated in a statewide survey of juvenile justice professionals and youth service providers.

### *Gender Differences in Delinquency and Factors Predisposing Youth to Delinquency: An Analysis of State and National Data*

As noted earlier, to be effective, delinquency prevention and intervention efforts must target those areas of young person's life that are most related to the genesis of delinquent behavior itself. The first component of the current research project included an examination of indicators of delinquency (such as arrests and court filings) to provide a context in which to understand the nature and scope of adolescent female offending in Indiana.

With respect to arrests, the predominant trend between 1995 and 2001 was a decrease in violent crime arrests among boys in Indiana and girls nationally, whereas violent crime arrests tended to increase among Indiana girls. Between 2000 and 2001, Indiana experienced an 11% increase in violent crime arrests among girls compared to a relatively small increase among girls nationally. In particular, arrests for aggravated assault increased by 12% among Indiana girls compared to a 2% increase among girls nationwide.

Growth in the number of Indiana girls *detained* in residential facilities between 1997 and 2001 significantly outpaced growth among girls in the nation at large, and often outpaced

growth rates among Indiana boys. The largest increases in juveniles detained in residential facilities were seen in the number of Indiana girls detained for offenses against people (129% increase), public order offenses (167% increase), and technical violations (100% increase). In addition, the number of Indiana girls *committed* to residential facilities between 1997 and 2001 increased by 65% compared to a 9% increase among girls nationwide and a 21% increase among Indiana boys.

Finally, it is important to note that increases in residential *commitments* for status offenses between 1997 and 2001 only occurred among Indiana girls, not girls nationally or Indiana boys (for whom status offense commitments decreased). However, *detentions* in residential facilities for status offenses during this time period declined for all three groups, most of all for Indiana girls. At the same time, the proportion of Indiana girls detained for all other types of offenses (person offenses, property offenses, drug offenses, etc.) increased at a much greater rate than for all girls in the United States. In essence, although Indiana girls are not being detained for status offenses, they are being committed for status offenses more than anything else.

*Girls, Women, and Front-Line Workers Speak:  
An Analysis of Focus Group Data*

The focus group component of IGRPI was designed to provide at-risk and adjudicated girls, incarcerated women who had been involved with the justice system as young girls, and front-line juvenile service providers a forum to discuss their ideas about what brings girls to the attention of justice authorities, what they believe girls need from the system, and what needs to be changed in the system. In addition to adding value to the overall initiative in terms of identifying gaps in services, training needs, policy recommendations, and planning strategies, focus group findings helped inform the final phase of the research plan, a statewide survey of juvenile justice professionals and youth service providers.

One-hundred and twelve girls, 34 adult females, and 52 front-line staff members took part in 27 focus groups. While a number of questions and findings were unique to each of the three types of focus groups, three questions were common among the groups: (a) what gets girls into trouble, (b) what gets girls arrested, and (c) what do girls need from the juvenile justice system? As shown in Tables 5-1 and 5-2, information offered by girls in the study was very similar to what incarcerated women and front-line workers had to say in response to the same questions.

<b>Table 5-1: What Gets Girls Into Trouble and What Gets Girls Arrested</b>			
	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Workers</b>
Alcohol	√	√	√
Battery/Fighting	√	√	√
Boyfriends	√	√	√
Dating much older men	√	√	√
Delinquent friends	√	√	
Disorderly conduct			√
Driving without a license	√		√
Drugs	√	√	√
Familial instigation	√		√
Fraud (check, credit card, cell phone, etc.)		√	√
Gang involvement	√		√

**Table 5-1: What Gets Girls Into Trouble and What Gets Girls Arrested--continued**

Incorrigibility	√	√	√
Lack of positive female and male role models			√
Peer pressure	√	√	
Physical abuse	√	√	√
Prostitution		√	√
Relational aggression	√		
Robbery		√	√
Running away	√	√	√
Single parent households lacking supervision			√
Sex	√	√	
Sexual abuse	√	√	√
Theft	√	√	√
Auto theft	√		√
Truancy	√		√

**Table 5-2: What Girls Need from the Juvenile Justice System**

	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Workers</b>
People to explain what is happening to them and why it is happening.	√		
A voice in their proceedings and to be heard	√		
Consistent discipline and structure along with treatment opportunities, not just punishment	√	√	√
Parental/guardian participation in their treatment and programs	√	√	√
Programs teaching them how to have healthy, self-empowering relationships without being dependent on boyfriends who may mislead them		√	√
Programs teaching practical living skills and career development	√	√	√
Education including practical information on college preparation	√		√
Mentoring programs/mentors and role models who “made it” after being in the system	√		√
Programs addressing physical and sexual abuse and their long term consequences	√		
People to work with, with whom they can develop bonds and trust	√	√	
Respect	√	√	
Staff that care and are not there just for a paycheck	√		
Aftercare upon release		√	√
Coordinated/wrap-around services			√

The consistency in comments from juvenile girls, adult women, and front-line workers in response to questions about what gets young girls into trouble and why girls get arrested was remarkable. Boyfriends (particularly older boyfriends), drugs and alcohol, troubled home lives, delinquent peers and relational aggression, lack of positive male and female role models, and physical and sexual abuse were referred to (at least in some form) in all of the focus groups conducted as the key issues that lead girls into delinquency.

There also was notable consistency among girls, women, and staff in their responses to the question “What do girls need from the justice system?” Consistent discipline and structure along with treatment opportunities; proportional punishment; graduated responses to wrong doing; consistency in punishment and treatment; inclusion of family in the treatment process; mentoring; and programming which focuses on practical skills, the importance of education, and career development were discussed by all of the focus groups.

The uniformity in information obtained through focus group sessions should not be ignored. Clearly, if there is so much agreement among girls involved in the justice system now, incarcerated adult women involved with the system when they were young, and front-line staff members who work with youth, the issues and concerns highlighted by these groups should be considered when revising current practices and developing new programming for at-risk and delinquent girls in Indiana.

An additional observation from focus group findings deserves mention. When asked “Has the justice system treated you fairly,” many of the girls said they believe that the system has treated them fairly. There was little denial of personal responsibility among juvenile girls who noted that they had been given several chances by their parents, probation officers, and judges, but that they themselves had “*screwed up*.” Girls in shelter care represented an exception in that they felt they had been doubly victimized, first by their parents and guardians and then again upon being removed from their homes.

When girls did feel like they had been treated unfairly, most often their comments reflected regret that they had not had more structure in their lives. These girls believed they would have benefited from facing more consequences along the way, rather than having the court impose stiff penalties, as they called it, “*out of the blue*.” Interestingly, adult women interviewed for this study also said that they wished that the system had addressed their bad behavior earlier in their delinquent careers, not necessarily through punishment, but by acknowledging they needed help. Similar to the girls with whom we spoke, adult women felt that early on in their delinquency nothing happened to them, and then one day the judge “*threw the book*” at them.

Other girls, perhaps somewhat more cynically, remarked that girls with the same or similar charges were dealt with more leniently and that punishment depended on what probation officer

**“To have a voice is to be human. To have something to say is to be a person. But speaking depends on listening and being heard; it is an intensely relational act” (Gilligan, 1993, p. xvi).**

Girls in all three types of focus groups—especially those in state correctional facilities—took the opportunity to talk about “cutting” or self mutilation. When asked why girls cut themselves, girls explained that it helps them cope with their problems and gives them a sense of control over their situation.

Attempting to escape from undesirable family situations, whether they were literal attempts like running away or figurative attempts such as escaping with drugs, also dominated this line of discussion. Participants voiced the belief that some girls go to extremes to escape—going so far as to get pregnant as a means of obtaining legal independence.

or judge a girl “*got stuck with.*” Most girls believed that boys and girls received similar punishments for serious offenses. When it came to less serious charges, however, girls strongly believed the system dealt with girls far more harshly for status offenses, especially running away. The girls believed that once behind bars, however, boys receive preferential treatment and disproportionate attention from the correctional system.

*Gender-Relevant Needs of Youth from the Perspective of Juvenile Justice  
Professionals and Youth Service Providers: An Analysis of Statewide Survey Data*

The final component of Indiana’s initiative was a statewide survey of juvenile justice professionals and youth service providers. Individuals with leadership and front-line service roles were surveyed to acquire insight into the needs of juvenile females and males and the extent to which existing programs and services meet those needs. Seventy percent of the 1,216 professionals contacted completed the survey—increasing the likelihood that the findings reliably represent the perspectives and experiences of professionals working with Indiana’s at-risk and delinquent youth.

*Estimated Prevalence of Risk Factors for Delinquency*

Respondents were asked to indicate the prevalence among girls and boys of 28 specific behaviors found in the literature to be related to delinquency. Sixty-five to 70% of respondents rated abuse of alcohol and drugs as prevalent among half or more of all at-risk or delinquent girls and boys. However, the vast majority believed that depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis, self-destructive behaviors such as purging food and cutting oneself, and suicidal ideation are not particularly prevalent among either girls or boys, though each is seen as somewhat more typical among girls.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they believe peer pressure plays an important role in delinquency among half or more of all girls and even more respondents rated peer pressure as a significant influence on boys. Fifty-two percent of respondents believed that physical fighting is characteristic of half or more of all boys, but only 27% rated this behavior as characteristic of half or more of all girls. Rebelling against parents, a need for acceptance from members of the opposite and same sex, and gang influences were thought to lead to delinquency for half or less of all girls and boys.

The majority of respondents believed that not feeling good about oneself and concerns about whether others like you are especially common among girls (but are also characteristic of boys). However, whether others are physically attracted to you, weight issues, and getting involved in unhealthy relationships for status, popularity, or financial stability were thought to be far more prevalent among girls than boys.

Clearly, it is important for young people to open up to those who might be able to help them yet a majority of respondents estimated that fewer than half of all girls and boys are willing to discuss sensitive issues such as physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

While prevalence estimates are far from exact, they can be extremely useful for enhancing understanding of the challenges faced by young girls in Indiana and how girls’ challenges might be similar to and/or different from obstacles faced by boys. Thus, these estimates can be used to illustrate the need for gender-relevant programs and services for Indiana youth.

### *Availability of Programs*

Another survey question was designed to determine the availability of 28 different programs for Indiana youth who are involved in or at-risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system. Respondents were asked if such programs are available to the youth they serve, and if so whether the program employs a gender-relevant model, and whether they or others in their agency would be interested in gender-relevant program training in each area.

With the exception of five program areas, nearly all respondents reported that each of the programs and services listed are available to both the girls and the boys whom they serve. Except for pregnancy-related programs, virtually none of the programs were only available for girls or only available for boys. On average, only a third of respondents reported that gender-relevant program models are used. As many as one-quarter to one-third of all respondents did not know if programs use gender-relevant models. The six programs for which one-half or more of all respondents reported that gender-relevant models *are* used address topics inherently linked to sex and gender—sex education, positive gender identity, pregnancy, parenthood, sexual abuse, and sex offender programs. Interest in training about gender-relevant program models was most pronounced for programs addressing independent living, career development, cognitive behavioral programs, self-esteem, substance abuse, anger management, character building, family relationships, mentoring, healthy relationships, physical and emotional abuse, and sexual abuse.

### *Gender-Relevant Program Development and Training*

There was strong consensus among juvenile justice professionals and youth service providers that:

1. Differences in the physical, emotional, and social development of girls and boys should be considered when programs are developed for at-risk and delinquent youth (more than 80% all respondents agreed);
2. Programs designed to meet the gender-relevant needs of girls and boys involved in the juvenile justice system are more effective than programs which do not take gender into account. More than 70% of all respondents agreed, although it should be noted that 18% of respondents responded that they did not know; and
3. Program staff should be trained in the gender-relevant needs of girls and boys to maximize the effectiveness of their work with youth. Again, more than 80% of respondents agreed with 12% saying they didn't know.

Survey respondents did not seem to think that there are any gender-related differences in the effectiveness of 12 common treatment/intervention approaches used with at-risk and delinquent youth (e.g., one-on-one instruction/counseling, group counseling, problem solving approaches, etc.). Ten of the 12 approaches were rated as effective, (equally so for females and males). However, when given the opportunity to nominate programs which they believe “work” for at-risk and/or delinquent youth, 53% of respondents said they are not aware of *any* programs that work for girls, and 52% said they are not aware of any programs that work for boys.

In light of these survey findings it is interesting to note a few additional observations from the research team’s focus group sessions with front-line service providers for at-risk and delinquent youth. Staff focus groups were first asked if they had ever heard of “gender-specific or gender-relevant programming.” Only a handful of the 52 staff participants had heard of the term, and many of them struggled with the concept even after it was explained. Most often, focus group participants thought that gender-relevant programming referred to women working with girls and men working with boys. In general, focus group type (i.e., shelter care and detention staff versus probation staff) seemed to determine the level of understanding of the concept and support for gender-relevant programming and services. Probation staff seemed to more fully understand the concept and also seemed more supportive of incorporating gender-relevant programming into how youth are served. However, after extensive discussion and many examples of how gender-relevant programs are tailored to meet the specific needs of girls and boys, most staff participants agreed that gender-relevant programs would be good for the youth they serve.

Interest in training on the concept of gender-relevant programs for youth also was discussed in focus group sessions with front-line staff members. Participants did not generally favor the idea because, as shelter care and detention staff in particular explained, gender-relevant training is not necessary since they had worked with kids for a long time or had children of their own, and thus were familiar with the differences between boys and girls. Nonetheless, a number of individual members of each group (particularly the probation officers) believed that gender-relevant training was a good idea for any person working with youth in the system.

## AND THE SURVEY SAYS...

People sometimes say it is easier to work with boys who are involved in or are at-risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system than with similarly situated girls. Do you agree or disagree and why?

**31% AGREED**

**8% STRONGLY AGREED**

“At risk girls seem to have far less family support.”

“Sometimes it seems that it takes more discussion, etc., to get a point across to the girls who tend to see things in an infinite number of shades of gray rather than as black and white.”

“Males seem to have fewer acceptance needs issues that often cause illogical and irrational behavior in females.”

**27% DISAGREED**

**5% STRONGLY DISAGREED**

“Neither is easier—they are just different.”

“I don’t feel there is a gender gap. It takes the right person to keep the boys and girls focused. Neither gender is smarter, listens better, gives more respect or learns faster. Effective approaches will work with both sexes.”

“In my experience, the girls tend to be more willing to participate in services/programming than the boys. The problem is that there are not a lot of programs available for girls who are involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.”

**29% DID NOT KNOW**



### *Planning for Gender-Relevant Programs and Services in Indiana*

As noted at the outset of this report, the specific goals of IGRPI were to (a) assess what is known about the gender-relevant needs of Indiana youth and (b) identify the availability of gender-relevant programs for youth in Indiana. Indiana was fortunate to additionally uncover some of the more subtle influences—attitudes and dispositions—which can impede planned changes to the ‘way business is done.’ The broad goal of this effort was to gather findings with which to facilitate the development and/or expansion of effective gender-relevant programs in Indiana. As a result of this research, it is now known that next steps must focus on the development of gender-relevant programs, rather than the expansion of existing programs per se, because for the most part it appears that gender-relevant program models are not prevalent in our state.

Findings in this report suggest that meaningful communication and thoughtful training initiatives must be undertaken before program development and implementation projects can occur. Program evaluation plans should be considered vital and necessary features of future program development and implementation plans (Justice Research and Statistics Association, 2003).

#### *The Need for Greater Communication*

Girls, incarcerated adult women, and front-line service providers independently concurred about the behaviors which bring girls to the attention of the juvenile justice system and what girls need from the system. However, girls described some important relational needs that staff members may not realize they have:

- For someone to explain what is happening to them as they move through the system and why;
- To have a voice in their proceedings and to be heard;
- People to work with, with whom they can develop bonds and trust; and
- Staff that care about their progress and are not there just for a paycheck.

It also was the case, however, that staff members (and adult women) recognized needs not recognized by girls themselves:

- Programs teaching girls how to have healthy, self-empowering relationships without being dependent on boyfriends who may keep them on a delinquent path;
- Aftercare and follow-up upon release; and
- Coordinated (i.e., “wrap-around”) services reflecting girls health, education, and social service needs.

Gaps in communication also are indicated by comparing information obtained on the statewide survey to information obtained in focus groups. In stark contrast to front-line staff members, adult women, and girls themselves, survey respondents did not consider the following behaviors to be especially common among girls:

- Rebellious against parents as an underlying “cause” of delinquent behavior in girls;
- Fighting as a major cause of delinquent troubles among girls;
- Self destructive behaviors such as “cutting;” and
- Depression.

Importantly, survey respondents, front-line staff, and adult women did concur that unhealthy relationships for status, popularity, or financial well-being were characteristic of many at-risk and delinquent girls, and that these relationships often perpetuated or exacerbated delinquency.

These observations suggest that an important first step in the continuation of Indiana's Initiative will be to facilitate communication and the exchange of knowledge and insight gained from experience among people dealing with at-risk and delinquent youth. It is imperative that enhanced communication efforts include girls themselves. The importance of relationships with others—being heard, respected, and understood—has been clearly established as crucial to preventing delinquency in girls. The current report further attests to the relevance and validity of feedback from girls.

### *The Need for Education and Training*

Front-line staff members did not readily or unequivocally agree that training on gender-relevant program models makes sense. Extended discussions revealed that many staff members had little or no substantive understanding of girls' concerns. In fact, it is fair to say that many of them at least initially objected to the idea of gender-relevant programming for "superficial" reasons, believing they knew all there was to know about gender-specific concerns simply because they had worked with or raised girls and boys. Survey respondents, on the other hand, strongly believed that gender-relevant training for program staff was necessary to maximize the effectiveness of services for youth. However, the fact that equal proportions of survey participants agreed *and* disagreed with the widespread idea that it "easier" to work with delinquent boys than delinquent girls should be explored. Reasons given for agreement and disagreement with this idea promise to be informative in terms of prevailing stereotypes, attitudes, and training needs.

### *Support and Need for Gender-Relevant Programs*

Survey findings indicated that a comprehensive range of programs and services are available for at-risk and delinquent youth in Indiana and that these programs are not exclusively available for boys at the expense of girls or vice versa. Survey findings also revealed, however, that gender-relevant program models are not typically used. The observation that one-quarter to one-third of respondents did not know if a gender-relevant model was used may reflect a need for more familiarity with the nature and scope of the programs currently used.

Survey respondents strongly agreed that differences in the physical, emotional, and social development of girls and boys should be considered when programs are developed for at-risk and delinquent youth. They further agreed that programs that take gender-relevant needs into account will be more effective than programs which do not. (The fact that 10% of respondents disagreed and 18% of respondents did not know reinforces the need for continued education and training on this topic.) As noted above, however, focus group staff members initially were opposed to the development of gender-relevant programs. Further discussion and examples of the relevance and effectiveness of gender-relevant programming concepts resulted in greater agreement among some that such programs would be helpful to the youth they serve.

### *Final Thoughts*

Questions and inquiries received by the research team in the initial phases of this work—from workshop planning participants to statewide survey respondents—suggest that many people were only vaguely, if at all, familiar with the concept of gender-relevant or gender-specific

programming. In this context, it is promising that, overall, strong support for gender-relevant programming emerged as a significant study finding. In the end, the study effort itself may have dually served as an educational tool.

It also may be instructive to note that Indiana's findings support and confirm the essential elements of effective gender-relevant programming for adolescent girls (see Appendix) as identified in *Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming: An Inventory of Best Practices* (1998) and other sources (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention & Justice Research and Statistics Association, 2004; Loper, 2000; National Juvenile Detention Association, 2004; Valentine Foundation, 1990 cited in *Guiding Principles*, 1998).

Taken together, study observations highlight support and need for Indiana programs tailored to the unique needs of adolescent girls and boys. The findings also underscore a fundamental need for better communication, and a critical need for education and training regarding which of Indiana's current practices, approaches, and assumptions work best for girls (and conversely which work best for boys). If expressive (e.g., accepting, respectful, conflict-free) and instrumental (e.g., monitoring, supervision, direction) *parenting styles* have been linked to effective delinquency prevention for females and males (Loper, 2000), isn't it plausible to assume that "justice programming styles" will make a difference too?

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## APPENDIX

### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE GENDER-RELEVANT PROGRAMMING FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

- Involving family members in a girl's treatment/intervention plan;
- Providing academic support services and encouraging school, church, and community participation in intervention efforts with girls;
- Having appropriate programming in place to address conflicts concerning boyfriends or peer status;
- Providing opportunities for girls to develop trusting and healthy relationships with other women in their lives (such as friends, relatives, neighbors, church members);
- Engaging mentors who share common experiences with at-risk and delinquent girls but have succeeded in turning their lives around;
- Providing opportunities for girls to make changes and contributions which positively affect themselves, others, and their communities;
- Taking girls' racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds into account and building upon their strengths;
- Providing programs which teach girls on how to live independently, enhance their education, establish a career, etc.;
- Providing education about women's health, including female development, pregnancy, contraception, diseases and prevention, along with opportunities for girls to understand and define healthy sexuality for themselves;
- Addressing the needs of pregnant and/or parenting girls;
- Providing a forum for girls to openly and safely discuss issues of personal safety, abuse, and victimization (having follow-up, treatment, and referral mechanisms in place if needed);
- Addressing mental health and substance abuse issues, including looking beyond violence and self-destructive behavior to underlying issues such as victimization and abuse;
- Providing program space that is physically and emotionally safe for girls and removed from competing demands for its use;
- Engaging the participation of girls in program design and implementation;
- Training staff who work with girls on gender relevant programming models;
- Ensuring appropriate representation of female staff members;
- Ensuring adequate financing for sustained, comprehensive programming; and
- Using local data to develop gender-relevant programming approaches and to define what is meant by gender-relevant programming in your jurisdiction