Juveniles and the Police

CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

On completion of this chapter, students should be able to do the following:

- Discuss the importance of police discretion in juvenile justice
- Compare and contrast unofficial and official police procedures in dealing with juveniles
- Discuss the importance of training police officers to deal with juveniles
- Describe police–school liaison programs
- Discuss the impact of community policing on the relationships among the police, school authorities, and juveniles

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

It was Monday at 2:15 p.m., and Officer Jones stood in front of a group of 11th-grade high-schoolers during a time of the day when most of the youth were focused on school letting out. This was a large high school in an inner-city neighborhood of a major metropolitan area. Officer Jones was there to discuss the potential benefits of joining the municipal police.

There were about 25 students in the class. Most were ethnic minorities, predominately African American and Latino American. Officer Jones was African American.

When he concluded his discussion of the potential incentives to being a police officer with his agency, he closed with the following statement:

“In reality, becoming a police officer should be to become a peace officer, to serve and protect the community as a whole.”

One of the students then asked, “So, since might makes right, I guess that peace is kept by tasing or shooting people if they don’t mind, right?”

Another student chimed in and said, “Yeah, like Chaz’s older cousin who was just walking back from his night classes and the cops got him mixed up with another dude. Chaz’s cousin was afraid and tried to keep walking and they tased his ass so bad he still has nerve problems.”

Officer Jones noted that “there is no doubt about it, there are some embarrassing incidents where officers do not use good judgment.”

One of the students cut in and said, “Well, all I know is that you are a black officer, a sell-out, because you gotta know how our communities get treated, and you go along with it anyway. I bet they just give you crumbs where you work, give you the crappy jobs and all, like talking with us.”

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Officer Jones thought about it . . . he had talked with his wife just the night before about his disappointment over not being promoted recently during an organizational selection process. He also did not always feel that his agency understood the minority community, the means by which they could hire and retain more minorities (which was a goal of the agency), and he also felt that some decisions were sometimes biased.

Sometimes, he felt the same unfairness that these youth expressed. He thought to himself and realized that, in order to remain professional in the remainder of his presentation, he would need to lie about what he thought. To do otherwise would make his agency look bad and would give the kids bogus advice. He looked at the clock . . . there were still 20 minutes left in class. For a few seconds, he wondered what he might say or do.

What Would You Do?

1. In your opinion, do youth of today look favorably on being a police officer?
2. What do you think Officer Jones should tell the kids in the classroom?
3. What do you think might work to improve relationships between minority youth and the police?

One of the first specializations in police departments following World War II was the juvenile bureau. Juvenile bureaus grew in number during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s until virtually all police departments of all sizes had them by the 1970s (Mays & Winfree, 2000, pp. 61–62). Historically, the police are the first representatives of the juvenile justice network to encounter delinquent, dependent, and abused or neglected children. The importance of the police in the juvenile justice system is considerable for this very reason. If the police decide not to take into custody or arrest a particular juvenile, none of the rest of the official legal machinery can go into operation. In fact, although the police often decide not to take official action when dealing with juveniles (22% of all juveniles arrested in 2009 were handled within the police department and then released), roughly 83% of all cases referred to juvenile court in 2009 were referred by the police (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 2012).

Police Discretion in Encounters With Juveniles

Many of the situations law enforcement officers encounter in the field are riddled by conundrums or fall into a gray area. Not every scenario is dictated by a strict policy or follows the rule of law to the letter. . . . In any interaction between police and citizens, there will always be an area where the police are going to exercise discretion. . . . They are not bound by law to arrest everyone they believe may have committed a crime. (Hernandez, 2011)

It is well established that a considerable amount of police discretion (individual judgment concerning the type of action to take) is exercised in handling juveniles. Although the exercise of discretion is a necessary and normal part of police work, the potential for abuse exists because there is no way to routinely review this practice. Police officers are sometimes inconsistent in the decision-making process because of frequent ambiguity with respect to whether any formal rule of law applies in a specific case as well as a variety of other factors.
Myers (2004) pointed out the following:

It is the nature of police work itself that in most cases allows individual patrol officers to decide how they will handle both the incidents brought to their attention, as well as those discovered independently as they work the street. In light of this discretion, one should be concerned with how police make decisions involving juveniles as it is an important decision. (p. 2)

There are, of course, a number of cues to which most police officers respond in making decisions about whether to take official action against a particular juvenile. These cues include the following:

1. The wishes of the complainant
2. The nature of the violation
3. The race, attitude, and gender of the offender
4. Knowledge about prior police contacts with the juvenile in question
5. The perceived ability and willingness of the juvenile’s parents to cooperate in solving the problem
6. The setting or location (private or public) in which the encounter occurs (Black & Reiss, 1970; Mays & Winfree, 2000; Piliavin & Briar, 1964; Regoli & Hewitt, 1994; Werthman & Piliavin, 1967)
7. Adolescents who are out late at night
8. The age of the police officer (Allen, 2005)
In general, the wishes of the complainant and the nature of the offense weigh heavily on police officers’ decisions to arrest. If the offense is serious (e.g., a violent robbery), the police are generally expected by their department and by the public to arrest, and under most circumstances they do so. There is some evidence, however, that the police might not arrest, even for a serious offense, if the complainant does not wish to pursue the matter (Davis, 1975; Kelling, 1999). If the offense is minor and the complainant does not desire to pursue the matter, the police will often handle the case unofficially (Allen, 2005). Again, in the case of a minor offense, the police will often intervene on behalf of the juvenile to persuade the complainant not to take official action. It should be noted, however, that in most jurisdictions the police cannot prevent a complainant from filing a petition if he or she insists.

Historically, research has shown that juveniles who show proper respect for the police have few if any known prior police contacts, and are perceived as having cooperative parents, are more likely to be dealt with unofficially than are those who show little respect, have a long history of encounters with the police, and are perceived as having uncooperative parents (Allen, 2005; Black & Reiss, 1970). Most authorities agree that those juveniles who are most likely to have a “police record of arrest are those who conform to police preconceptions about delinquent types, who are perceived as a threat to others, and who are most visible to the police” (Morash, 1984, p. 110). Morash (1984) indicated that she found a “convincing demonstration of regular tendencies of the police to investigate and arrest males who have delinquent peers regardless of these youths’ involvement in delinquency” (p. 110). Moyer (1981), while indicating that gender and race are not critical factors in the police decision-making process with respect to adults, indicated that the nature of the offense and the demeanor of the offender when confronting the police are important in determining the type of action taken by the police (Allen, 2005; Walker, Spohn, & DeLone, 2004). Biases on behalf of the police may lead to more informal adjustments for certain types of juveniles. This is largely a matter of speculation given that records of such dispositions have not been routinely kept, although there is currently a trend to formalize such dispositions. It is clear, however, that based on their perceptions of a number of cues, police officers make decisions as to whether official action is in order or whether a particular juvenile can be dealt with unofficially (Sutphen, Kurtz, & Giddings, 1993; Walker et al., 2004).

Research on the relationship between the police and juveniles was sparse during the 1970s and 1980s. However, research by Engel, Sobol, and Worden (2000) on 24 police departments in three metropolitan areas indicated that in most situations “officers do not treat hostile adults and juveniles, males and females, and blacks and whites differently” (p. 256), as was speculated by Klinger (1996, p. 76). The authors found that the police are likely to take official action in cases where there are disrespectful suspects who are intoxicated by use of alcohol or other drugs and in circumstances where disrespect is demonstrated in front of other officers. The effects of demeanor, then, were not contingent on suspects’ personal characteristics, at least in this study.

In contrast, Sealock and Simpson (1998), in analyzing data collected from a 1958 Philadelphia birth cohort, found that race, gender, and socioeconomic status significantly affect the arrest decision. They also noted that within gender categories, officers consider the seriousness of the offense and the number of prior police contacts in making arrest decisions. Similarly, Walker and colleagues (2004) contended that age, race, and gender have been found to be significant variables with arrest decisions. However, the authors provided an extensive analysis of public racial perceptions of police officers, showing that Latino Americans have a view less favorable than that of Caucasian Americans but that this is not as negative a view as tends to exist among the African American population. These researchers pointed out that these negative attitudes—and behavior that belies these negative attitudes—can be the actual reason that racial variables appear to be significant. Walker and colleagues (2004) noted that “individuals who are less respectful or more hostile are more likely to be arrested” and that “African Americans were more likely to be arrested” (p. 332). They concluded that the hostility that is transmitted during these encounters results in higher arrest rates. Pollock, Oliver, and
Menard (2012) examined a national sample of individuals with respect to socioeconomic variables, offending behavior, and prior police contact as predictors of self-reported police contact (questioning or arrest) over a period of 24 years and concluded that police contact is predominately predicted by sex, delinquent peers, and offending behavior. These authors also concluded that several of the variables commonly discussed in police contact literature, including race, are not predictors of police contact at the national level in the United States. However, Benekos, Merlo, and Puzzanchera (2011) examined trends in juvenile violent offending over a 20-year period and focused specifically on the race of the offender. They found that aggregate data indicated a disproportionate representation of black youth in the juvenile justice system but noted it is difficult to determine the role that race plays in specific violent offenses. When focusing on murder, aggravated assault, and robbery, the authors believe that a more complete picture of youthful offending and system responses emerges, and they indicate that data clearly demonstrate disproportionate handling of black juvenile offenders (p. 132). Despite some disagreement among researchers concerning the role of race in police juvenile encounters, in minority communities where police–community relations have typically been impaired, it is perhaps to be expected that citizens will have a negative and distrustful view of the police. This is particularly true among juvenile offenders who have been exposed to the effects of negative encounters (Shusta, Levine, Wong, Olson, & Harris, 2015). Further, according to Watkins and Maume (2012), research on juveniles’ attitudes toward the police has indicated that youths generally hold less favorable opinions of the police than do adults. They noted, however, that the concept of police is not explicitly defined in most such research (meaning it’s not clear if they are referring to school resource officers [SROs], patrol or beat officers on the street, or something else)—thus making it difficult to interpret the findings of the research. Whatever the case, it is clear that the police must be sensitive to this issue—when and where feasible—to prevent encounters from escalating (Shusta et al., 2015). This is a particularly relevant point if one is concerned with citizen perceptions of the police agency and if one hopes to build a genuine rapport and/or connection with juveniles from diverse backgrounds (Shusta et al., 2015).

Bazemore and Senjo (1997), looking at the relationship of police and juveniles from the community policing viewpoint, analyzed data collected from field research and ethnographic interviews over a 10-month period. Among the community police officers they studied, they found a distinctive style of interaction with young people, different attitudes toward juveniles, and unique views of the appropriate role of officers in response to youth crime. The authors concluded that the officers’ efforts to enhance prevention, creative diversion, and advocacy provide at least partial support for the belief that community policing can lead to positive outcomes.

Although the exact nature of the relationships among personal characteristics, demeanor, and police decisions remains unclear, it is likely that all of these factors and others continue to play a role in police–juvenile encounters (Hurst, 2007). On numerous occasions, for example, we have seen police officers respond differently to male and female juveniles. As we pointed out in Chapter 3, it appears that male officers seldom search (“pat down”) juvenile females even in circumstances where the juveniles are likely to be carrying drugs and/or weapons for their male companions (Hurst, McDermott, & Thomas, 2005). Wooden and Blazak (2001) discussed the emergence of the “mall rat” as a type of delinquent, noting that petty theft is the most frequent crime committed by these juveniles and that females are as likely to be caught as are males, although the latter are more likely to be arrested (pp. 32–33).

Perhaps Myers (2004) best summarized the complexities involved in police discretion as it relates to juveniles:

More sophisticated analysis shows that when controlling for offense seriousness, evidence strength, suspects’ race, and victim preference, suspects who fail the attitude test are more likely to be arrested; thus it is suspect demeanor driving police outcomes, not suspect race. Even when controlling for
demeanor, race effects are sometimes still significant (i.e., they reach statistical significance) and minorities are more likely to be arrested, but it is more often the case that the race effects drop out. (p. 6; see also Pope & Snyder, 2003)

Although there has been increased attention during recent years to juvenile perceptions of the police, few studies have focused specifically on the attitudes of young girls (Hurst et al., 2005). In response to the lack of research that examines the perceptions of police held by juvenile girls, Hurst and colleagues (2005) conducted a study in Ohio and examined one key determinant that tends to be relevant to many young females—the fear of victimization. Their research found generally low support for police—particularly when respondents expressed more concern with potential victimization (Hurst et al., 2005). It is interesting to point out that although girls in this survey did find police to be helpful in service roles (e.g., providing aid when a car breaks down, helping persons who are sick or disabled), they did not view the police as effective in general law enforcement functions (e.g., curbing drug activity, preventing violence). Overall, therefore, it was determined that girls tended to have little trust or support for the police (Hurst et al., 2005). Girls may actually benefit more from other agencies such as transitional-living programs and counseling programs (see In Practice 8.1).

On April 27–28, 2016, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) convened a police and youth engagement roundtable that brought together 15 youth and 14 law enforcement executives to discuss the current climate of police-youth relations. The purpose of the roundtable, titled “Supporting the Role of Law Enforcement in Juvenile Justice Reform,” was to identify ways to support, sustain, and expand youth and law enforcement engagement.

Lessons from the roundtable will be used to develop a Juvenile Justice Leadership Institute planned as part of a cooperative agreement with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the OJJDP.

IACP partnered with the Coalition for Juvenile Justice to make sure that a diverse group of youth advisors were part of the discussion. The roundtable was preceded by a full day of police- and youth-focused training to allow for a better understanding of resources and programs related to the audience. Sessions provided an overview of—

- The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act
- The developmental approach
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Trauma-informed responses
- Children exposed to violence

The roundtable provided an opportunity for youth to share their personal experiences, offering a unique perspective from those who have been directly impacted by the justice system and highlighting their opinions about how to improve interactions with law enforcement. Listening to youth’s experiences across multiple juvenile justice systems can help law enforcement improve its ability to address juvenile victimization, delinquency, and crime, and build trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve.

Assistant Attorney General of the Office of Justice Programs Karol V. Mason provided opening remarks. “It’s wonderful that we have all of you in this room to talk about ways we
can work together to improve the safety of our communities,” she said. “If we can give our young people the services and support they need; intervene early in situations where they are exposed to violence and trauma; and keep them in school and connected to their families, communities, and faith-based and neighborhood organizations, we are far more likely to keep them out of the justice system and on the path to healthy, productive lives—and we’ll be better able to ensure public safety.”

OJJDP has worked diligently to strengthen the voice of America’s youth so it can be heard by the law enforcement community. OJJDP will continue to work with law enforcement to ensure that the youth perspective is a part of its decision making as well as an integral part of the solutions law enforcement embraces to build trust within communities and effectively realize juvenile justice reform.

**Source:** Listenbee (2016).

A variety of researchers have found significantly different attitudes toward police when examined by race (Hurst et al., 2005; Penn, 2016). As in previously discussed research, researchers have found that African American girls expressed much more negative perceptions of the police than did Caucasian girls. In fact, African American youth consistently had poorer outlooks than did Caucasian youth on measures related to attitude for liking the police, trusting the police, or being satisfied with the police (Hurst et al., 2005; Penn, 2016). Researchers have consistently found that race is a significant predictor of attitudes toward the police (Hurst et al., 2005; Penn, 2016). Researchers have pointed toward differences in racial socialization, the analysis of social situations in terms of relationship power between African Americans and Caucasians, and other psychological and sociological factors. From this and similar to what was observed in the What Would You Do? opening for this chapter, it is clear that many of the attitudes toward police are part and parcel of racial socialization, particularly in communities that already have poor police–community relations (Hurst et al., 2005; Penn, 2016). This, again, points to the need for police training in diversity and cultural differences with juveniles, just as would be expected with the adult population (Broaddus et al., 2013; Hurst et al., 2005; Shusta et al., 2015).

In inner-city neighborhoods, police beat officers often arrive at a kind of “working peace” with groups of young black males hanging out on street corners (Anderson, 1990). They may allow juveniles to get away with certain minor violations for which they could take official action so as to “keep the peace.” The police face a dilemma in such neighborhoods. On the one hand, the police are accused of overpolicing in black neighborhoods; on the other hand, they are accused of failing to provide sufficient protection (Shusta et al., 2015; Walker et al., 2004). Complaints concerning the former are typically voiced by young black males who are often stopped, frisked, and questioned on the streets; complaints concerning the latter often arise when the police fail to act against street corner juveniles or in domestic violence situations where the police do not make arrests (Walker et al., 2004).

**Questions to Consider**

1. True or False: By listening to youth on the roundtable, it is hoped that the process will help law enforcement to build trust with youth and improve its ability to address juvenile victimization, delinquency, and crime.

2. Multiple Choice: During the meeting between the IACP and the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, which of the following topics were discussed?
   a. The developmental approach
   b. Collaborative problem solving
   c. Trauma-informed responses
   d. All of the above

3. In your opinion, explain why trauma-informed response was included as one of the areas of focus for law enforcement who deal with juveniles.
According to Joiner (2005), race makes a difference at all stages of the juvenile justice process but may be most important at the initial point of contact with the police. He maintained that minority representation throughout the juvenile justice network would drop if the police used arrest as a last rather than as a first resort. This is also the contention of other experts who study minority citizens’ perceptions of the police and/or cross-cultural training needs for police officers (Hanser & Gomila, 2015; Shusta et al., 2015; Walker et al., 2004).

**Unofficial Procedures**

As Piliavin and Briar (1964) pointed out, police officers who encounter juveniles involved in delinquent activities have a number of alternatives available for handling such juveniles. Basically, police officers may simply release the juvenile in question, release the juvenile and submit to the juvenile probation office or the police department a “juvenile card” briefly describing the encounter, reprimand the juvenile and release him or her, take the juvenile into custody to make a stationhouse adjustment, or arrest the juvenile and request that the state attorney file a petition in juvenile court. Only the last two alternatives involve official action. Each of the other alternatives may occur either on the street or in a police facility. The informal adjustment is commonly referred to as street corner adjustment or stationhouse adjustment. A typical street corner adjustment might occur when the police have been notified by a homeowner that a group of juveniles have congregated on his or her property and have refused to leave when asked to do so. Because the offense is not serious, and because the homeowner is likely to be satisfied once the juveniles have left, the officer may simply tell the juveniles to leave and not return. If, for some reason, the police officer is not satisfied that the orders to move on and not return will be obeyed, the officer may take the juveniles to the police station and request that the juveniles’ parents meet with them there. If an agreement can be reached among the juveniles and their parents that the event leading to the complaint will not recur, the officer may release the juveniles to the custody of the parents. In Illinois, for example, this may be considered a formal stationhouse adjustment, and the minor and parent, guardian, or legal custodian must agree in writing to the adjustment and must be advised of the consequences of violation of any term of the agreement (Illinois Compiled Statutes [ILCS], ch. 705, sec. 405/5-301 [2]a, 2013). Further, a minor arrested for any offense or a violation of a condition of previous station adjustment may receive an informal station adjustment for that arrest (ILCS, ch. 705, sec. 405/5-301 [1], 2013). A stationhouse adjustment in Illinois results in a record being kept either by the police department or with the juvenile probation office for offenses that would be a felony if committed by an adult and may be maintained if the offense would be a misdemeanor.

Informal adjustments such as these usually cause little controversy so long as all parties (complainant, police, parents, and juveniles) are reasonably satisfied. In fact, some states have attempted to formalize the stationhouse adjustment process by spelling out exactly what the police officer’s alternatives are in such adjustments (ILCS, 705, 405/5-301, 2013; New Jersey Office of the Attorney General, 2005). For example, in Illinois a police officer may, with the consent of the minor and his or her guardian, require the minor to perform public or community service or make restitution for damages. Although police officers often see solutions of this type as being better for the juvenile than official processing, some serious objections have been raised by parents, the courts, and sometimes the juveniles involved.

Suppose that a juvenile was allegedly involved in vandalism where he or she spray painted some derogatory comments on the front of a school building. Also suppose that, as a condition of not taking official action, a police officer instructs the juvenile to spend every night after school cleaning the paint off the school building with paint remover and brushes that are provided at the expense of the juvenile or his or her parents.
Contacts between the police and juveniles occur frequently and help to shape the perceptions each group has of the other.

Finally, suppose that the juvenile persists in maintaining his or her innocence. The implications of this type of “treatment without trial” should be relatively clear. First, it has not been demonstrated that the juvenile did commit the delinquent act in question; that is, the juvenile has not been adjudicated delinquent in a court of law. Second, because it has not been demonstrated that the juvenile committed the vandalism, there is no legal basis for punishment. Third, even if the juvenile did, in fact, commit the offense, the police generally have no legal authority to impose punishment on alleged offenders unless, of course, such offenders voluntarily agree to the punishment. But how voluntary is such agreement?

Although many police officers who employ informal adjustments realize that their actions might not be strictly legal, they justify the use of informal adjustments on the basis that the juvenile and/or parent (guardian) entered into it voluntarily. These officers reason that because the treatment or punishment is not mandatory and is in the juvenile’s best interests, there does not need to be prior adjudication of delinquency or finding of guilt. Many of these officers fail to recognize that the extent to which their “suggested” treatment or punishment programs are voluntary is highly questionable. The threat of taking official action, if unofficial suggestions are not acceptable to the offenders involved, largely removes any element of voluntarism and is coercive. In cases of this type (which are not atypical), the juvenile may be upset about being punished for an act that he or she did not commit, the parents may be upset because their child did not receive a fair trial, and the juvenile court judge may be upset because the functions of the court have been usurped (taken over) by the police. Of course, not all stationhouse adjustments are negative. Some can be very successful in resolving minor instances of delinquency through proper referral to competent counselors by officers skilled in accurately assessing the needs of the juveniles (see, e.g., In Practice 8.2).
The Miami-Dade, Florida, Schools Police Department (MDSPD) has participated in dozens of diversion models over the past decade in an attempt to reduce juvenile arrests and provide needed services. The department was determined to create an effective program and to change the process for handling youth challenges. In order to accomplish this change, a partnership which included the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, the Miami-Dade County Juvenile Services Department, the Miami-Dade Criminal Mental Health Project, the Miami-Dade School Board, and the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department was formed.

Utilizing appropriate tools and interventions, psychosocial issues of at-risk youth were identified so that suitable treatment plans and referrals could be developed in order to reduce the number of juvenile arrests. The model begins with a law enforcement contact with a juvenile and includes the following steps.

**Step 1.** The officer assesses regular police issues such as the safety of the area and the medical status of the youth.

**Step 2.** The officer completes a mental health assessment preferably based upon training and certification in Crisis Intervention Team training.

**Step 3.** If the youth is in crisis or is under the influence of illegal alcohol or drugs, the youth is treated under the Baker Act or taken into protective custody per the Marchman Act in lieu of arrest unless the case involves a violent act with injuries or a sexual act.

**Step 4.** Mobile Crisis Units are called to handle issues that cannot be addressed by the police due to time constraints or policy.

**Step 5.** If the incident involves an arrestable offense, the officers are instructed on alternatives to this arrest pursuant to state law and through local juvenile state attorney's office agreements, or the youth is civil cited. The Civil Citation Program allows for the diversion of misdemeanor arrests, and, once an assigned program is completed, the arrest is nullified, giving the youth a chance at a fresh start without a criminal record.

**Step 6.** The officer takes steps to access pertinent information on the youth so that decision making is meeting the best interests of the youth and community.

**Step 7.** A prevention referral form is completed and faxed to the Juvenile Services Department’s Prevention Initiative, which is designed for any youth 17 years of age and younger who may be experiencing behavior and family difficulties, as well as those at risk of being arrested. “The program includes referrals that address issues such as anger management, disruptive behavior, family issues, drug experimentation, substance abuse, poor academic performance, school attendance and truancy, disciplinary problems, runaways, mental health issues, and negative peer association.”

**Step 8.** The school district and school police take steps to ensure that all gaps in possible services are filled and that the youth and family receive what is needed to avoid negative future contact with law enforcement.

Use of the model is intended to:

- create partnerships within the community, school, and corrections functions of a county;
- train police officers in the full assessment of juveniles before making arrest decisions; and
- reduce arrests, lower recidivism, and provide much-needed quality services to youths and families.

**Source:** Adapted from Gerald Kitchell, “Youth Assessment Model: Assessment, Referral, and Diversion,” *The Police Chief* 80 (March 2013): 46–47.
Questions to Consider

1. True or False: The program described is designed to reduce the number of juvenile arrests.

2. Multiple Choice: The Miami-Dade diversion model just discussed is intended to do which of the following?
   - a. Create partnerships within the community, school, and corrections functions of a county
   - b. Ensure that hardcore juvenile offenders are held accountable and appropriately monitored
   - c. Train police officers in the full assessment of juveniles before making arrest decisions
   - d. A & B, but not C
   - e. A & C, but not B
   - f. C & B, but not A

3. Provide a brief synopsis of what this Youth Assessment Model is intended to accomplish. Next, explain whether, in your opinion, this program has features of intervention that have been overlooked or features that should be added.

With respect to abused or neglected children, police options are technically more restricted and require more training and expertise (see Figure 8.1). As mandated reporters (those required to report suspected cases of abuse to the state), police are often required to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to the state department of children and family services even though they might not have enough evidence to arrest the suspected abusers. Investigators from the children and family services unit are typically required to contact the parties involved within 72 hours of the time of notification. If the investigators are convinced that neglect or abuse is occurring, or if the original investigating officer is convinced it is occurring, the child may be taken into protective custody until further hearings can be held. It is the responsibility of the local law enforcement department to develop the procedures to handle abuse and neglect situations, to ensure that law enforcement officials are properly trained in identifying cases of abuse or neglect, to objectively investigate abuse or neglect cases, and to interview victims and perpetrators of abuse or neglect. Many major law enforcement agencies have staff specifically assigned to investigate crimes against children. Separation of the investigative and protective services allows law enforcement officers to address enforcement aspects pertaining to the alleged crime, and child protective investigators have the responsibility for interviewing, investigating, and managing abuse or neglect cases (Reaume, 2009). Finkelhor and Ormrod (2001a) noted the following:

When parents assault or molest their children, it is conventionally thought of as child abuse and, therefore, a child welfare problem. However, these acts are also crimes, and a substantial portion of child abuse cases are investigated and adjudicated by the criminal justice system. Some cases are referred to law enforcement agencies by child welfare investigators, while others are reported directly to law enforcement by victims, families, and other concerned individuals. (p. 1)

As noted in Chapter 5, caregivers are often the perpetrators of abuse and neglect and other violent crimes.

The major concerns of police officers when dealing with abused or neglected children are, of course, the safety and well-being of the minors involved. Still, there are officers who, for a variety of reasons, prefer not to take formal action in cases that they conclude do not involve serious abuse or neglect.
**Figure 8.1 Considerations for Child Abuse Investigations**

**When you receive the referral**
- Identify personal or professional biases with child abuse cases. Develop the ability to desensitize yourself to those issues and maintain an objective stance.
- Know the department guidelines and state statutes.
- Know what resources are available in the community (e.g., therapy, victim compensation), and provide this information to the child's family.
- Introduce yourself, your role, and the focus and objective of the investigation.
- Ensure that the best treatment will be provided for the protection of the child.
- Interview the child alone, focusing on corroborative evidence.
- Do not rule out the possibility of child abuse with a domestic dispute complaint. Talk with the children at the scene.

**Getting information for the preliminary report**
- Inquire about the history of the abusive situation. Dates are important to set the time line for when the abuse may have occurred.
- Cover the elements of the crime necessary for the report. Inquire about the instrument of abuse or other items on the scene.
- Do not discount children's statements about who is abusing them, where and how the abuse is occurring, or what types of acts occurred.
- Save opinions for the end of the report, and provide supportive facts. Highlight the atmosphere of disclosure and the mood and demeanor of participants in the complaint.

**Preserving the crime scene**
- Treat the scene as a crime scene (even if abuse has occurred in the past) and not as the site of a social problem.
- Secure the instrument of abuse or other corroborative evidence that the child identifies at the scene.
- Photograph the scene, and, when appropriate, include any injuries to the child.
- Rephotograph injuries needed to capture any changes in appearance.

**Follow-up investigation**
- Be supportive and optimistic to the child and the family.
- Arrange for a medical examination and transportation to the hospital. Collect items for a change of clothes if needed.
- Make use of appropriate investigative techniques.
- Be sure that the child and family have been linked to support services or therapy.
- Be sure that the family knows how to reach a detective to disclose further information.

**During the court phase**
- Visit the court with the child to familiarize him or her with the courtroom setting and atmosphere before the first hearing. This role may be assumed by the prosecutor or, in some jurisdictions, by victim/witness services.
- Prepare courtroom exhibits (e.g., pictures, displays, sketches) to support the child's testimony.
- File all evidence in accordance with state and court policy.
- Unless they are suspects, update the family about the status and progress of the investigation and stay in touch with them throughout the court process. Depending on the case, officers should be cautious about the type and amount of information provided to the family because they may share the information with others.
- Provide court results and case closure information to the child and the family.
- Follow up with the probation department for preparation of the presentence report and victim impact statement(s).


Rarely are abusive and neglectful parents arrested. Exceptions exist when the injury to the child is extremely severe or obviously sadistically inflicted, when a crime has been committed, when the parents present a danger to others, or when arrest is the only way to preserve the peace. (Tower, 1993, p. 275)

Official action is more likely to occur today because of mandated reporting laws. Still, even though they are mandated reporters, officers sometimes hesitate to take official action. This is sometimes the case because police officers are concerned about the possibility of false allegations or of being used by one party involved in a hostile divorce or separation to cause trouble for the other party through implanting false allegations in the mind of the child or by falsely reporting abuse or neglect (Goldstein & Tyler, 1998; OJJDP, 2001).

As noted in Chapter 2, it is estimated that a substantial amount of all police–juvenile contacts are resolved informally (Black & Reiss, 1970; Mays & Winfree, 2000; Myers, 2004). The proportion of child abuse or neglect cases handled unofficially is unknown but is probably considerable. Here is an example:

Columbus [Ohio] police investigated 2,295 reports of rape (a crime that requires penetration) or gross sexual imposition (fondling) with children as victims in 2010 and 2011. Of the 1,285 cases in which detectives think that a crime occurred, 19 percent resulted in an arrest or a referral to a grand jury. After eight years of supervising child-sexual-abuse investigations, [Sgt] Kaepner still finds the number and nature of the cases alarming. "It’s distasteful and it’s prevalent," he said. “And for the kids who are victimized, it stays with them their entire lives.” (Futty, 2012)

Police officers who use informal dispositions often see such dispositions as more desirable than official processing, which is certain to leave the offender with a record and may lead to detention for some time. Most police officers agree that neither juvenile records nor attempts to rehabilitate juveniles who are detained are beneficial to juveniles. The latter holds true for child abusers as well, although when the abuse is severe, officers are typically more than willing to take official action (Willis & Welles, 1988). When police officers act informally, they often sincerely believe they are doing so in the best interests of the parties involved. This may be the case if we assume that all of the persons apprehended did commit a delinquent or criminal act and if we assume that treatment and rehabilitation are of little or no value. However, if we recognize that sometimes the police do make mistakes, that some juveniles and some parents do need and might benefit from treatment of some type, that the police have no mandate to impose punishment or treatment, and that the juvenile court judge often has no way of knowing how many times a particular juvenile or abusive parent has been dealt with informally, the problems inherent in informal adjustments become very apparent (Portwood, Grady, & Dutton, 2000; Walker, 2007).
Official Procedures

The official procedures to be followed when processing juveniles are clearly spelled out in juvenile court acts. It is important to note that police procedures for juvenile offenders differ from adult procedures in most jurisdictions. As a rule, these procedures are tailored specifically toward implementing the juvenile court philosophy of treatment, protection, and rehabilitation rather than punishment. As a result, to carry out proper procedures, specialized training is necessary. It has been our observation that many officers in most jurisdictions believe that being assigned as a juvenile officer is not particularly desirable. We have heard juvenile officers referred to as “kiddie cops” and seen distinctions made between “real” police officers and “juvenile” officers. These traditional police attitudes have slowed the development of a professional corps of juvenile officers. Nonetheless, being an effective juvenile police officer requires more skill than being a good patrol officer. In addition to learning the basics of policing, the juvenile officer is required to learn a great deal about the special requirements of juvenile law, about the nature of adolescence, about the nature of parent–child relationships, and about the social service agencies (public and private) to which juveniles may be referred for assistance (National Children’s Advocacy Center, 2010; OJJDP, 2001; Tower, 1993, p. 275). These skills are not easy to acquire, and those who have mastered them should take pride in their accomplishments. In addition, police organizations should reward those who possess and actively employ these skills in terms of both salary and promotional opportunities.

Although the development of effective juvenile officers and juvenile bureaus is highly desirable, most initial contacts between juveniles and the police involve patrol officers. It would appear logical to provide at least minimal training in the area of juvenile law for all patrol personnel to safeguard the rights of juveniles and to ensure proper legal processing by the police. It does little good, either for the juvenile or for the prosecutor’s case, to have a competent juvenile officer if the initial encounter between the juvenile or abusive parent and the police has been mishandled (Listenbee et al., 2012; National Children’s Advocacy Center, 2010; OJJDP, 2001).

Police officers who are involved in the official processing of juveniles need to be aware that all of the guarantees in terms of self-incrimination and searches and seizures characteristic of adult proceedings also hold for juveniles. In addition, juveniles are, in most jurisdictions, extended even further protection by law. Thus, the police are required to notify a juvenile’s parents about their child’s whereabouts and are required to release the juvenile to his or her parents unless good cause exists for detention. Detention in a lockup routinely used for adult offenders is often illegal, and the police must, in these cases, make special arrangements to transport and detain juveniles if further detention is necessary. In Texas, for example, juveniles must be separated by sight and sound from adults detained in the same building (Texas Family Code, sec. 51.12, 2012). Similarly, police records concerning juveniles must, in most jurisdictions, be kept separate from adult records and are more or less confidential (see Chapter 7). Although fingerprints and photographs of juvenile offenders may be taken, there are often restrictions placed on their use; that is, they may not be transmitted to other law enforcement agencies without a court order in many jurisdictions. However, some states permit individuals with a legitimate interest in the workings of the court (such as researchers), or a particular case, to gain access to juvenile records (see, e.g., Missouri Revised Statutes, ch. 211, sec. 211.321, 2012). At least some courts have held that a juvenile charged with a delinquent act has a right to counsel prior to placement in a police lineup—at least under certain circumstances (see, e.g., 1 No. 18, The People & C., Respondent, v. Ricky Mitchell, Appellant, 2004, NY Int. 49). There is also some concern that a juvenile’s waiver of his or her right to remain silent during interrogation without a parent or lawyer present is of questionable value (Dorne & Gewerth, 1998, p. 34; Feld, 2006; Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, 2012). As a result, police officers may delay interrogation until either a parent and/or an attorney is present. Should they decide to conduct an interrogation absent the parents, Feld (2006) has pointed out that “the Supreme Court does not require any special procedural safeguards when police
interrogate youths and use the adult standard—‘knowing, intelligent, and voluntary under the totality of the circumstances’—to gauge the validity of juveniles’ waivers of Miranda rights” (p. 219).

In many jurisdictions, police officers who have been designated juvenile officers have the task of ensuring that juveniles are properly handled. These juvenile officers are, presumably, specially trained in juvenile law and procedures.

**Training and Competence of Juvenile Officers**

For roughly the past 75 years, there have been repeated calls for professionalization of the police through increased education and training (Shusta et al., 2015). The number of 2- and 4-year college programs in criminal justice and law enforcement has increased dramatically during the past four decades, as has the number of special institutes, seminars, and workshops dealing with special police problems. Because juvenile cases present special problems for the police, one might expect considerable emphasis on training for juvenile officers. Indeed, the number of police officers qualified by training to serve in juvenile bureaus has increased dramatically over the years—especially in large metropolitan departments. In these departments, promotion within the juvenile bureau is possible, and both male and female officers deal with juvenile offenders and victims. The possibilities of promotion and recognition for a job well done provide incentive and rewards for those choosing to pursue a career in juvenile law enforcement.

The situation of juvenile officers in smaller cities has also improved. More jurisdictions require compliance with laws mandating special training for juvenile officers, although personnel shortages and reduced financial resources sometimes make both training and specific assignment to purely juvenile matters difficult. There are still many smaller police departments with no female officers, so male officers must deal with juveniles of both genders (Shusta et al., 2015). Some rural departments have no officers specifically trained to deal with juveniles, and others, to conform to statutory requirements, simply select and designate an officer—often one who has no prior training in juvenile matters, as juvenile officer. Considering the fact that juvenile officers are frequently expected to speak to civic-action groups about juvenile problems, run junior police programs, visit schools and preschools, form working relationships with personnel of other agencies, and investigate cases of abused and missing children, this lack of training is a very serious matter. Police departments with 10 or fewer sworn officers still face difficulties in providing adequately trained officers for 24-hour-a-day service. When these departments do train and appoint officers to handle juvenile offenders, they can seldom afford to relieve these officers of other duties. This, in effect, makes it impossible for the appointed officers to become specialized in juvenile matters. This also eliminates the possibility of developing a stable juvenile bureau and of advancing one’s career as a juvenile officer. One result of these difficulties is that officers have little incentive to volunteer for service in juvenile bureaus. Consequently, juvenile officers are frequently appointed on the basis of a perceived affinity for “getting along” with juveniles. Unfortunately, this affinity is not a substitute for proper training, although it may appear to be to police administrators who regard handling juvenile offenses as something less than real police work.

It is essential that police departments train officers to handle juvenile cases. In Illinois, for example, a juvenile police officer is defined by statute as the following:

A sworn police officer who has completed a Basic Recruit Training Course, has been assigned to the position of juvenile officer by his or her chief law enforcement officer, and has completed the necessary juvenile officers training as described by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board or, in the case of a State police officer, juvenile officer training approved by the Director of the Department of State Police. (ILCS, ch. 705, sec. 405/1-3 [17], 2013)
Professional associations of juvenile police dedicated to training, information sharing, and developing relationships with others in the juvenile justice network exist in a number of states including New York, Ohio, Louisiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, North Carolina, Illinois, and Missouri.

It is worth noting here that the training of juvenile police officers (and other police officers in juvenile matters) is an ongoing process because the demands they face are constantly changing. For example, the use of social media on the Internet by both juveniles and adults for illegitimate purposes has become a major issue in recent years. Here is an example:

Juvenile sexting is increasing in frequency. A recent study found that 20 percent of teenagers (22 percent of girls and 18 percent of boys) sent naked or seminude images of themselves or posted them online. Another survey indicated that nearly one in six teens between the ages of 12 and 17 who own cell phones have received naked or nearly nude pictures via text message from someone they know. Law enforcement officers and prosecutors face increased pressure to handle these cases as effectively as possible. (Bowker & Sullivan, 2010, p. 1)

Further, cyberbullying has received increasing attention as a result of highly publicized suicides related to this form of bullying. Cyberbullying is a distinct type of bullying in which the victim is targeted online or through the use of text messages using cell phones (BullyingStatistics.com, 2009, p. 1; OJJDP, 2011b, p. 1). According to BullyingStatistics.com (2009), “There have been cases where cyber bullying has led to severe depression, self harm and even suicide.” One such case receiving national attention involved Megan Taylor Meier, a teenager who committed suicide by hanging 3 weeks before her 14th birthday. A year later, an investigation into her suicide attributed the act to cyberbullying through a social networking website. An indictment of the mother of the alleged bully followed, but she was acquitted (Zetter, 2009). Police investigators and juvenile officers conduct undercover investigations on the Internet in an attempt to prevent such bullying and to arrest those who prey on victims through cyberspace. Common types of undercover investigations involve police officers posing online as minors and undercover investigations of child pornography. Investigators also pose as adults having access to minors to sell or wanting to purchase sex with a minor. The efficacy of various types of investigations remains to be determined (Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, & Jones, 2012). Wells, Mitchell, and Ji (2012) examined the role of the Internet in juvenile prostitution cases using information from a national sample of law enforcement agencies. They found that in comparison to non-Internet juvenile prostitution cases, Internet juvenile prostitution cases involved younger juveniles, and police were more likely to treat juveniles as victims rather than offenders. If police officers are to keep up with the variety of ever-changing types of crime occurring on the Internet, continued education and training will be required.

Police–School Resource Officer and Liaison Programs

Over the past four decades, police departments and schools have worked together to develop programs to help prevent delinquency and improve relationships between juveniles and the police (Brown, 2006; Ervin & Swilaski, 2004; OJJDP, 2006). These programs involve more than simply providing security through police presence in the schools. Rather, the programs attempt to foster a more personal relationship between juveniles and the police by using police officers in counseling settings, by improving communications between the police and school officials, and by increasing student knowledge of the law and the consequences of violations (Brown, 2006; Ervin & Swilaski, 2004; OJJDP, 2006).

One early police–school consultant program was developed in Flint, Michigan, in 1958. Police–school liaison officers (PSLOs; often referred to as resource officers) are located in schools and serve as sources of information and counselors for students. They are often funded, at least in part, by school districts.
even though they work for police agencies. Evaluations of these programs have consistently concluded
that police officers assigned have difficulty in being both an authority figure as well as a counselor or
confidant. Multiple program evaluations have shown similar results in Tucson, Arizona; Montgomery,
Alabama; Woodburn, Oregon; and Tampa, Florida, to mention just a few. As a result of recent school
shootings in various locales across the United States, there has been a call for more armed police officers
in schools for security reasons. Although armed officers do provide protection for students, recent research
by the Justice Policy Institute (JPI) (2012) suggests that SROs have little impact on reducing school-based
crime. Still, there is little doubt that school-based officers can and do provide valuable services. For
instance, SROs or D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officers become familiar with the layout
of the campus and can thus respond immediately to the area in which a critical situation exists. They can
also be involved in training school staff concerning appropriate responses during crises, and they serve as
visible evidence of police presence to those contemplating violence in the school (Quinn, 2012).

Assigned officers, acting as additional resource persons in the school setting, have generally been evaluated
positively by school officials, although not always by students (Brown, 2006). These programs have proliferated
based on these evaluations and the belief that the closer the relationship between police and juveniles in
nonthreatening situations (those other than investigatory or crime intervention), the better in terms of improving
the image of the police, uncovering information concerning abuse and neglect, and decreasing delinquency
(Brown, 2006; Gandhi, Murphy-Graham, Anthony, Chrismer, & Weiss, 2007).

In some cases, PSLOs assist with classroom lessons on topics such as bullying, Internet safety, laws involving
dating and relationships, and drug and alcohol use consistent with the D.A.R.E. program (City of Wichita Police
Department, 2010; Michigan State Police, 2009; Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Police Department, 2010).

D.A.R.E. programs, in which police officers teach children how to avoid use of illicit drugs, are widespread in the
United States and abroad (Gandhi et al., 2007). A number of schools and police agencies throughout the country
are now involved with such programs, and they appear to have at least some positive effects on officers, juveniles,
and school authorities—particularly when the officers involved have received special training to prepare them for
their assignments (Brown, 2006; Martin, Schulze, & Valdez, 1988). Even though some research shows that D.A.R.E.
is ineffective at preventing drug use among those who have gone through the program (Aniskievicz & Wysong,
1990; Berman & Fox, 2009; Drug Policy Alliance, 2010; Ennett, Tobler, Ringwalt, & Flewelling, 1994; Gandhi
et al., 2007), the program may still improve understanding and relationships between juveniles and the police
officers involved. This alone is thought to be a beneficial outcome given that such positive experiences can reduce
the likelihood that juveniles will engage in delinquent behavior. This is much more likely to be true if educators
ensure that the material is developmentally appropriate so as to be positively received by peer groups at various
age ranges. In addition, it has been found that juveniles are more receptive to an emphasis on short-term negative
social consequences as opposed to physiological consequences. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is important
to consider race, gender, and cross-cultural effects when educating on the topic of drugs, thereby necessitating
that programs or curricula be culturally sensitive (Goldberg, 2003). In response to research reports indicating that
D.A.R.E. failed to achieve many of its goals, a new D.A.R.E. program has been developed.

An independent, federally-funded cost effectiveness study evaluating prevention programs reported that
“keepin’ it REAL” was ranked among the top 3 overall with a cost benefit of $28 in benefits for every $1
spent... The multicultural keepin’ it REAL curriculum has proven effective in reducing adolescent
alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco use in 7th and 8th grade students... The core of the program is the
REAL strategies for resisting drug offers: Refuse, Explain, Avoid, and Leave. By highlighting these four
methods of communicating, the program helps kids understand the risks of drugs, teaches them to make
good decisions and resist the temptation to use drugs. (D.A.R.E., 2012, p. 1)
Another program, GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Awareness Training), is described as the following:

An evidence-based and effective gang and violence prevention program built around school-based, law enforcement officer-instructed classroom curricula . . . intended as an immunization against delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership for children in the years immediately before the prime ages for introduction into gangs and delinquent behavior. (GREAT, 2013, p. 1)

Not surprisingly, it has been subject to criticisms similar to those concerning the D.A.R.E. program (Palumbo & Ferguson, 1995). There is little doubt that GREAT programs are very popular throughout the United States (Hanser & Gomila, 2015; Valdez, 2005). Similar to D.A.R.E. programs, these gang resistance programs train police officers to conduct comprehensive antigang education programs for children who are not yet in high school (Hanser & Gomila, 2015; Valdez, 2005). Since its inception in 1991, over 10,000 law enforcement officers have been certified as GREAT instructors and more than 5 million students have graduated from the GREAT program (National Institute of Justice, 2010). As with D.A.R.E. programs, there is a need for such programs to be appropriate for the age range of the peer group. Valdez (2005) noted that one way to overcome this challenge is to provide student training and allow the students to share in the formal leadership roles that the educator and/or police presenter might have. This empowers the students and likewise provides for more internalization of the anti-gang (and anti-drug) values that are being transmitted (Valdez, 2005). According to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) (2010), a 5-year longitudinal evaluation of the GREAT program showed that students who had completed the training had lower levels of victimization, more negative views about gangs, more favorable attitudes about police, a reduction in risk-seeking behaviors, and increased association with peers involved in prosocial activities. Currently the program is used in North America, including the United States, Canada, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama (GREAT, 2013).
“After a bullying attack left a 13-year-old student bruised and battered this week, a local civil rights group is demanding that the Socorro Independent School District improve its bullying awareness and prevention programs.”

According to sources a female student was attacked at school and the beating she suffered was so violent that she became unconscious and needed medical attention.

In a letter to the Socorro district, the Paso Del Norte Civil Rights Project says it wants a full and open investigation, implementation of measures to prevent future bullying incidents, and training with students and staff to promote awareness of bullying.

“We decided to become involved because the violence and brutality of it (the beating) was so jarring,” said lawyer Jed Untereker, who represents the Paso Del Norte Civil Rights Project. “And the fact that someone could be put in the hospital from an attack that occurs on school grounds is very disturbing.”

Untereker said bullying appears to be an ongoing problem at the middle school.

On Thursday, another student in the El Paso Independent School District was injured in a fight while walking home from school.

The district does have an anti-bullying program, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, in which students can report bullying online.

The school district is working to be proactive and not reactive and is working with the El Paso Police Department on bullying cases. School officials said they were taking measures to prevent further bullying incidents.

Source: Adapted from Hinojosa (2013).

Questions to Consider

1. True or False: In the bullying example provided, the person harmed was female.
2. Multiple Choice: In response to bullying, the El Paso Independent School District has taken measures to be which of the following?
   a. Proactive
   b. Reactive
   c. Better aligned to partner with the El Paso Police Department on bullying cases
   d. All of the above
3. List some ideas that could help prevent bullying in the future.

Although they may or may not directly involve police officers, antibullying programs (also discussed in Chapter 3) deserve at least a brief mention here in conjunction with school-oriented programs. An evaluation of 44 antibullying programs showed that school-based antibullying programs are effective in reducing bullying perpetration and victimization (being bullied) by 17% to 20% (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program appears to be effective in reducing the incidence of bullying and improving attitudes toward school and academic achievement in middle- and upper-class areas, but the effectiveness of the program has not yet been tested in low-income schools (Hong, 2009). (See In Practice 8.3.)

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (pronounced Ol-VEY-us; the E sounds like a long A) is a comprehensive, schoolwide program designed and evaluated for use in elementary, middle, or junior high schools. The program’s goals are to reduce and prevent bullying problems among schoolchildren and to improve peer relations at school. The program has been found to reduce bullying among children, improve the social climate of classrooms, and reduce related antisocial behaviors, such as vandalism and truancy. Schools
are also gathering data about the program’s implementation at the high school level. The program has been implemented in more than a dozen countries around the world and in thousands of schools in the United States (Clemson University, 2013).

From the examples just discussed, it is clear that there are various, more or less successful, means of addressing drugs, gangs, and other issues that might face juveniles while in and out of public schools. For an interesting evaluation of a police–school resource or liaison program, see In Practice 8.4.

IN PRACTICE 8.4

AN EVALUATION OF CAPE BRETON REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE’S COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER PROGRAM IN CAPE BRETON VICTORIA REGION SCHOOLS

Overall, the interview and survey results indicate that the CLOP [community liaison officer program] has as yet unrealized potential. On the positive side, the officers and the police chief demonstrated an acute awareness of the difficulties facing young people; they were empathetic, enthusiastic about the opportunities the program provides for helping youth; they received satisfaction from their interactions with youth; and they perceived significant support from all stakeholders. There were also some challenges noted. Officers felt some role strain from conflicting demands and lack of peer interaction, and from insufficient resources. And importantly, there were concerns from both the officers and the police chief that the CLOP remained somewhat misunderstood and that schools with officers present tended to be stigmatized. However, there were significant satisfaction and improved relationships with youth.

On the negative side, the concern expressed that the CLOP may be devolving into a disciplinary, rather than proactive, program may be well-founded. Students perceived the major role of their on-site officer to be that of a kind disciplinarian who would go where the problems necessitated police intervention. In essence, the students viewed their officers as friendly and significantly more respectful to them than other (off-site) officers, but as police officers nonetheless. This perception was reflected in the survey findings that help was most frequently sought from friends or teachers.

The survey data indicated that the presence of an officer at the school may not be as predictive of student behaviors and sense of safety as other school variables. If the CLOP was itself making a significant difference, then we would expect the pattern of findings to be similar at the two schools with the program, and different from the schools without it. Further research is needed here to examine the contributions of structural factors such as school size and location, and functioning factors such as disciplinary policies, student involvement, and overall ethos. It is interesting to note here that school D (no CLO) students reported a significantly higher sense of community than the other schools as well as the lowest use of situational control strategies.

Students’ concerns may be of use in guiding further interventions. Students emphasized the need for more caring and involved teachers, and for more fair school rules that are consistently enforced. Students also emphasized the need to feel respected, to be listened to, and to have a voice in the school. The community liaison officers appear to be filling this need to some extent, but students need to feel respected by educators as well. Students identified their greatest vulnerability to victimization as being during lunch hour on school grounds. Their response is to try to stay in groups of friends. School staff and CLOs may be able to target their intervention efforts to this issue.
The evaluation data described in this report indicate the CLOP suffers similar difficulties to other school police liaison programs in three areas. First, the officers, although enjoying the school placement overall, did have some challenges posed by role conflict. Second, there was evidence of the perennial problem of insufficient resources.

Third, the students in this study, as reported in earlier evaluation data, see their officer as atypical. It is important to emphasize here, however, that unlike students in other studies, there was no derision behind this perception. Students in this study unambiguously perceived their officer to be much friendlier and respectful to young people than other officers and in no way inferior to “real cops.”

Finally, it is particularly noteworthy that, unlike in previous evaluation studies, there was evidence here of a very successful and viable relationship among the school board, school personnel and the officers and police department. There was no evidence of the commonly reported power struggles and no evidence of credibility problems. The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School District and the Cape Breton Regional Police provide an excellent model of a successful partnership.


Questions to Consider

1. True or False: In the CLOP study, officers reported challenges posed by role conflicts in their duties.
2. Multiple Choice: According to the information provided, the primary factor in predicting student behavior was which of the following?
   a. The presence of an officer at school
   b. The school size and location
   c. Disciplinary policies, student involvement, and overall ethos
   d. All of the above
   e. None of the above
3. Identify and discuss some of the findings from the evaluation data of this report.

Community-Oriented Policing and Juveniles

Community-oriented policing refers to a strategy that relies on identification of problems by police and members of the community they serve and shared ownership of law enforcement and order-maintenance duties (Hanser & Gomila, 2015; Glensor, Correia, & Peak, 2000; Shusta et al., 2015; Walters, 1993; Webber, 1991). Although community-oriented policing is a general police strategy, it certainly has applications in police work with juveniles given that it requires joint community–police identification of, and efforts to solve, problems (Shusta et al., 2015). Thus, police officers and school, probation, civic action, neighborhood, and political groups work together to find solutions to problems rather than asking the police to handle incidents as and after they occur (Brown, 2006; Hanser & Gomila, 2015). One example of programs of this type, sponsored by the Department of Justice, is Youth-Focused Community Policing (YFCP). These programs provide information-sharing activities that promote proactive partnerships among the police, juveniles, and community agencies cooperating to identify and address juvenile problems in a manner consistent with community policing philosophy. In 2011, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) (2011) launched a website providing information and resources for YFCP programs. One example of the types of programs included is the Tallahassee Police Athletic League, Inc. (TAL PAL), which is a juvenile crime
Still other programs have been introduced to improve the relationship between schools and the police concerning juvenile offenders. One example is SHOCAP (Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program). SHOCAP does the following—at least in Alachua County, Florida:

[It] is designed to help monitor juveniles in Alachua County that have been charged and convicted of any law violations that meet the program criteria. Juveniles who qualify for this program are selected by a panel of people in law enforcement, juvenile justice, counseling agencies, public housing, state attorney’s office, and the public defender’s office. This program monitors 30 juveniles at a time, and works on deterring them from committing a law violation as well as maintaining attendance in school. Juveniles in this program that violate probation sanctions can be arrested at the time of the violation whereas juveniles not on SHOCAP but on probation can only have a violation of probation filed with the court and the juvenile’s probation officer. (Alachua County Sheriff’s Office, 2012, p. 1)

Using multidisciplinary interagency case management and information sharing, the SHOCAP model is intended to help the agencies involved make informed decisions about juveniles who repeatedly engage in delinquent acts. It is hoped that the sharing of such information on a need-to-know basis will result in better coordination of efforts to intervene and deal appropriately with repeat offenders.

**Police and Juvenile Court**

The police are the primary source of referral to juvenile court, and juvenile court judges rely heavily on the police for background information concerning juveniles who come before them. Because the police and the court may have different goals with respect to juveniles (e.g., control vs. treatment), this might not always be in the best interests of juveniles. On the one hand, the juvenile court may become overly concerned with control; on the other hand, the police officer who believes that the court is unfair to the police or too lenient with offenders may fail to report cases to the court because, in his or her opinion, nothing will be gained by official referral. Further, there is at least some evidence that “heavy-handed tactics” during interviews and interrogations by the police may produce false evidence, especially when the individuals being questioned are particularly vulnerable, such as juveniles or those who are intellectually disabled or mentally ill (Thompson, 2012). In some cases, the police may attempt to resolve the case at hand by themselves, and this, as we pointed out earlier, may or may not be in the best interests of the juvenile involved. In short, whether a particular juvenile is referred to juvenile court depends in part on the police officer’s attitude toward the court. Finally, it is important to note that theories of causation play a role in the nature of police–juvenile encounters. To the extent that race and ethnicity play a role in such encounters, one may consider the biological and genetic theories that suggest they influence police behavior in a latent fashion. As the police attempt to intervene early in juvenile misbehavior, learning theories, deterrence theories, and behavior modification theories may play a role (e.g., if the behavior can be modified early, it may not lead to continuing careers in crime). To the extent that certain youth become labeled (e.g., gang members, bullies, drug addicts), police officers may react differently in encounters with them. And theories based on social class and differential association may also be tied to police encounters with juveniles in terms of allocation of police resources and decisions concerning whether to take official action. The exact nature and extent of the
influence of each theory on police–juvenile encounters is difficult, if not impossible, to determine, but actions are most often based on the way in which we understand the world around us and theories play an important role in organizing perceptions.

**CAREER OPPORTUNITY: MUNICIPAL POLICE OFFICER**

**Job description:** Enforce laws and maintain order. Patrol the community, control traffic, make arrests, prevent crime, investigate criminal activity, and work with the public and representatives of other agencies to improve the quality of life in the community.

**Employment requirements:** Must be a U.S. citizen, have a valid driver’s license, and be at least 20 years old at the time of application. Must not have any felony convictions. Must be able to pass physical, written, medical, polygraph, psychological, and background investigations. Must possess good communication skills. Must be a high school graduate, but preference is frequently given to those with 2- or 4-year degrees. Appointment contingent on completion of basic training.

**Beginning salary:** Salary typically ranges between $25,000 and $55,000 depending on jurisdiction; average is roughly $52,000. Additional benefits package (insurance, vacation, sick leave, and pension).

**Note:** To become a juvenile police officer, an applicant typically needs to serve as a patrol officer first and then may be required to participate in special training to be certified as a juvenile officer.

**Future:** Employment of police officers and detectives is expected to increase about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2018.


**Summary**

To implement proper juvenile procedures and benefit from theoretical notions concerning prevention, causes, and correction of delinquent behavior and child abuse and neglect, juvenile officers must first know proper procedures and understand theories of causation. Because both types of knowledge are specialized, it is imperative that juvenile officers receive special training in these areas. This specialized training is advantageous for the police department, juveniles, the justice network, the social service network, and the community. The police department benefits in terms of creating a more professional image and in terms of efficiency because mistakes in processing should be reduced. Juveniles benefit in that trained personnel can better carry out the intent of juvenile court acts that were developed to protect the best interests of juveniles. The justice system benefits from the proper initial processing of juveniles and abusive adults who are to be processed further (e.g., prosecuted) in that system. Finally, the community and social service network benefit from decisions made by police officers who are properly trained. In return for these benefits, it is essential to reward juvenile officers who perform well through recognition and promotional opportunities.

The majority of police–juvenile contacts result in unofficial dispositions in the form of street corner or stationhouse adjustments. It is important that decisions concerning proper disposition of juvenile cases by police officers be based on a thorough knowledge of procedural requirements and the problems of juveniles and abusive or neglectful adults. When trained, competent officers make such decisions, the imposition of punishment by the officers handling cases unofficially is reduced, and the rights of all parties are
better protected. In cases that require official disposition, further processing is facilitated by proper initial processing. To ensure that police officers handle juvenile cases properly, specialized training programs need to be developed and used, and incentives for good performance by juvenile officers need to be provided. Technological advances, such as the development of social media and the Internet, demand that police personnel view training as an ongoing process if they are to prevent and apprehend predators who approach victims through cyberspace. Finally, the more we understand about the theories providing the foundations for police actions when dealing with juveniles, the better we will be able to understand such actions.

KEY TERMS

D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)  223
GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Awareness Training)  224
mandated reporters  217
official procedures  220
Olweus Bullying Prevention Program  225
overpolicing  213
police discretion  208
police–school liaison officers (PSLOs)  222
SHOCAP (Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program)  228
street corner adjustment  214
Youth-Focused Community Policing (YFCP)  227

Critical Thinking Questions

1. List and discuss some of the cues frequently used by police officers in deciding whether to handle a case officially or unofficially. What are some of the dangers in relying on these cues from the point of view of the juvenile offender? From the point of view of the victim of abuse or neglect?

2. Joe, a 13-year-old white male, has just been apprehended by a police officer for stealing a bicycle. Joe admits taking the bicycle but says that he only intended to go for a joyride and was going to return the bicycle later in the day. Joe has no prior police contacts of which the officer is aware. The bicycle has been missing for only an hour and is unharmed. The owner of the bicycle is undecided about whether to proceed officially. Discuss the various options available to the police officer in handling this case. What options do you consider to be most appropriate and why?

3. Why do you think that juvenile officers handle the majority of contacts with juveniles unofficially even when they could clearly proceed officially? Why are police officers often hesitant to take official action in cases involving abuse or neglect even though they are mandated reporters? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of unofficial dispositions to both juveniles and society?

4. Locate the website for the Department of Justice and see what information you can obtain on the YFCP program. Is there a recent evaluation of the program? If so, what conclusions can you draw about the program based on the evaluation?

5. In your opinion, how can bullying in person and over the Internet best be handled? How effective are the police in dealing with these issues as they relate to juveniles?

Suggested Readings


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