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THE LINK BETWEEN LEARNING DISABILITIES AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY:
Interview Guide

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The interview guide that follows was administered to approximately 2,000 consenting 12-to-16-year old boys and girls as part of the diagnostic assessment procedures of the learning disabilities-juvenile delinquency research and demonstration program. The sample included both youths who had been adjudicated delinquent, and youths who had no official records of delinquency. The assessments were conducted from April through September, 1977, at various locations in Arizona, Indiana, and Maryland. Portions of the interview will be re-administered as part of the posttest that will be given to participants in the remediation-program portion of the study.

The interviews were administered individually by members of the assessment team supervised by Educational Testing Service (ETS). Each question and response alternative was read aloud to the respondents, whose answers were recorded on the guide. The average interview took approximately 25 minutes to complete. In order to protect the anonymity of their answers, respondents' names were not recorded on the interview guides.

Many of the items in the interview guide were adapted from previous research. Item 4 was adapted from a report of the Research Triangle Institute (Correlates of Socio-Educational Status: CAPE Pilot Study, Report No. SU-450, July, 1969). These simple household articles, particularly in conjunction with parent's educational and occupational status, have been shown to be predictive of socio-economic status. The school attitude scale (Item 9) was adapted from a scale prepared by Jules Goodison and Jerome Weisbrodt for research conducted by ETS among seventh grade boys and girls in an industrialized midwestern state.

The scale, which was shown to be reliable, is a blend of items directed towards school in general, as well as towards specific aspects of school. Items 11 through 17 were adapted by Educational Testing Service from the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (1960, Revised), which was used in another study that was conducted by ETS. These items are intended to gauge the veracity of the youths' answers to the interview questions. Items 18a and 18b were added as a measure of respondents' self-reported police contacts.

At the heart of the interview guide are the questions concerning self-reported delinquent activity (Item 10). The self-report measures were adapted from research of the Institute for Juvenile Research (J.W.C. Johnstone, The Family and Delinquency: A Reappraisal, 1976, unpublished draft, cited with permission of the author). The 28 items of the self-report scale may be viewed as seven groups of four items each, each group representing a category of offenses. The groups were formed by judgmentally combining the results of the cluster analyses of the IJR study with categories suggested by the results of a survey of juvenile court personnel (L.E. Cohen, Pre-adjudicatory Detention in Three Juvenile Courts: An Empirical Analysis of the Factors Related to Detention Decision Outcome, Analytic Report SD-AR-8, U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, National Criminal Justice Information Statistics Service, 1975). The results of the two studies were fairly consistent; however, when conflicts existed, the results of the IJR analyses were given preference. The items were not selected to include all behavior that would be judged delinquent, but rather to include a wide range of delinquent behavior.

For each of the 28 items, respondents were asked how many times they had ever engaged in the behavior, and how many times they had engaged in the behavior within the past year. Reported frequencies were recorded exactly as given, up to a maximum frequency of 99. The items, grouped by category, are shown on the following page.

SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENCY SCALE

Status Acts

1. (How many times have you ever) cheated on an exam in school or turned in work that was not your own?
2. Stayed away from school for at least part of the day because you wanted to?
3. Been suspended from school?
4. Been thrown out of class by a teacher?

Miscellaneous Acts

5. Taken things that don't cost too much from home or school without permission?
6. Taken something small from a store?
7. Kept or used something that you knew had been stolen?
8. Deliberately damaged private or public property?

Alcohol-related Acts

9. Drank beer, wine, or liquor with parent's permission?
10. Drank beer, wine, or liquor without parent's permission?
11. Been drunk?
12. Bought beer, wine, or liquor?

Drug-related Acts

13. Used marijuana or hashish (grass, pot, hash)?
14. Used LSD, mescaline, or other psychedelics?
15. Used downers or barbituates (without a prescription)?
16. Used methedrine (speed) or other uppers or amphetamines (without a prescription)?

Automobile Acts

17. Driven a car on the streets by yourself?
18. Driven a car too fast or recklessly?
19. Ridden around in a car that was stolen for the ride?
20. Stripped someone else's car of parts to use or sell?

Criminal Delinquency

21. Taken at least \$20 or something worth \$20 that did not belong to you?
22. Broken into someone's home, or a store, or some other place in order to steal something?
23. Used force or threatened to use force to get money from another person?
24. Stolen a car?

Violent Delinquency

25. Had a fist fight in which someone got hurt badly enough to go to a doctor or hospital?
26. Carried a weapon like a gun, knife, or razor in case you had to use it against another person?
27. Taken part in a gang fight?
28. Used a weapon like a brick, knife, or razor in a fight?

INTERVIEW GUIDE

I am trying to understand better how kids your age think and act. I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself, school, and other things that kids do. I hope that you'll be straight with me, and I promise to keep what you tell me between the two of us and others like myself involved in the study. I'm going to write down what you tell me. Then after I've read all your answers, I'll fix the papers so that no one knows whose answers they are. You don't have to answer the questions, but if you will, it will really help me find out about the different things that can get kids into trouble. Okay?

One of the things I am doing is trying to find out about families in Phoenix, Arizona; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Baltimore, Maryland. So let's start by talking a little about your family.

1. Do you have any older brothers or sisters? _____ How many? _____
How about younger brothers or sisters? _____ How many? _____
2. Who runs your house? Your father? _____ Your mother? _____ Another Adult? _____
Is there more than one adult living with you? Yes _____ No _____
3. How far in school did the head of your house go?
 1. None, or some grade school.
 2. Graduated from grade school.
 3. Some high school.
 4. Graduated from high school.
 5. Some college.
 6. Graduated from college (a four year college).
 7. Attended graduate or professional school (such as law school or medical school).
 8. I don't know.
4. Does your family have a telephone in your home? _____
How about a dictionary? _____
Do you have an encyclopedia at home? _____
Does someone who lives with you own a car? _____
Do you get a newspaper nearly every day? _____
Do you get magazines at least once a month? _____
Do you have many books at home; say thirty or forty or more? _____
5. Which would you say you are? _____
 1. Native American (such as Navajo, Seminole, Sioux)
 2. Latin American (Chicano, Mexican, Puerto Rican)

10. All right, tell me how often you have done any of the following things. Tell me if you've never done them, or if you have, how many times.

(Note for diagnostic assessor: also ask for each question, "How many times in the past year have you done this?" Record in the second column)

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Frequency In Past Year</u>
A. Cheated on an exam in school or turned in work that was not your own?	_____	_____
B. Drank beer, wine, or liquor <u>with</u> parent's permission?	_____	_____
C. Drank beer, wine, or liquor <u>without</u> parent's permission?	_____	_____
D. Taken things that don't cost much from home or school without permission?	_____	_____
E. Taken something small from a store?	_____	_____
F. Had a fist fight in which someone got hurt badly enough to go to a doctor or a hospital?	_____	_____
G. Stayed away from school for at least part of the day just because you wanted to?	_____	_____
H. Been suspended from school?	_____	_____
I. Been drunk?	_____	_____
J. Driven a car on the street by yourself?	_____	_____
K. Kept or used something that you knew had been stolen?	_____	_____
L. Driven a car too fast or recklessly?	_____	_____
M. Deliberately damaged private or public property?	_____	_____
N. Been thrown out of class by a teacher?	_____	_____
O. Carried a weapon like a gun, knife, or razor in case you had to use it against another person?	_____	_____

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Frequency In Past Year</u>
P. Bought beer, wine, or liquor?	_____	_____
Q. Used marijuana or hashish (grass, pot, hash)?	_____	_____
R. Taken part in a gang fight?	_____	_____
S. Taken at least \$20 or something worth \$20 that did not belong to you?	_____	_____
T. Used a weapon like a brick, knife, or razor in a fight?	_____	_____
U. Broken into someone's home, or a store, or some other place in order to steal something?	_____	_____
V. Used force or threatened to use force to get money from another person?	_____	_____
W. Ridden around in a car that was stolen for the ride?	_____	_____
X. Stripped someone else's car of parts to use or sell?	_____	_____
Y. Stolen a car?	_____	_____
Z. Used LSD, mescaline, or other psychodelics?	_____	_____
a. Used downers or barbituates (without a prescription)?	_____	_____
b. Used methedrine (speed) or other uppers or amphetamines (without a prescription)?	_____	_____

Now I am going to read a few statements that people sometimes make when they describe themselves. Would you tell me whether they describe you? The first statement is:

- *11. I always try to practice what I preach. Is that true of you or not? _____
- *12. Sometimes it's hard for me to go on with my work if I'm not encouraged. Is that true of you or not? _____
- *13. There have been times when I was jealous of other people's good luck. Is that true of you or not? _____

*14. I have never hurt someone's feelings on purpose.
Is that true of you or not? _____

*15. I never mind being asked to return a favor. Is that
true of you or not? _____

*16. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and
forget. Is that true of you or not? _____

*17. Have you ever been found guilty in a juvenile court? _____

18a. Have you ever been picked up by the police? _____

18b. If yes, for what? _____

END