

DEPARTMENT OF OFFENDER REHABILITATION

67769

REASSESSING PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING  
GEORGIA'S YOUTHFUL OFFENDER ACT:1978



✓ REASSESSING PROGRESS IN IMPELEMNTING  
GEORGIA'S YOUTHFUL OFFENDER ACT:1978

PREPARED BY:

GEORGE H. COX, DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

and

ELAINE T. DECOSTANZO, RESEARCH CONSULTANT  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

✓ GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF OFFENDER REHABILITATION  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION  
800 PEACHTREE STREET, NE, SUITE 605  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30308

JANUARY, 1978

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The preparation of this evaluation report was facilitated by the complete and timely cooperation of the staff of the Offender Administration and Institutional Operations Divisions of the Department of Offender Rehabilitation. Within the Offender Administration Division, Mr. David Strauss directs the Youthful Offender Program. David has given unselfishly of his time and energy in providing the evaluators with essential information concerning program policies and operations. Within the Institutional Operations Division, Superintendents Bob Francis, Paul DeFrancis, and Gerald Willis have given of their time and their staffs' time on several occasions during the evaluation. Particular appreciation should be expressed to the staff of the Georgia Earned Release Center and the then Assistant Superintendent for Care and Treatment, Mr. Jack Fair, for the many hours of assistance provided as we gathered information and impressions of the program. With the assistance of these staff members, the agency can expect to continually improve its services for young offenders.

Although several persons helped in gathering information for the evaluation, the authors retain responsibility for the accuracy of items that appear in this report. The report is produced under the auspices of the Office of Research and Evaluation, Georgia Department of Offender Rehabilitation, 800 Peachtree Street N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30308, with funds provided by the State of Georgia for such purposes. The Georgia Department of Offender Rehabilitation reserves the right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to publish and use, all or any part of the material contained in this publication.

## PREFACE

This report was prepared by the Office of Research and Evaluation of the Georgia Department of Offender Rehabilitation at the direction of the Commissioner of the agency. The report contains information and analysis designed to support agency administrators and policy-makers as they make considered judgments concerning the effectiveness of Georgia's Youthful Offender Program.

In evaluating the program, we have focused on those elements of operations which we perceive to be fundamental to the implementation of the Youthful Offender Act of 1972 (as amended). We have therefore tried to pay particular attention to the fundamental policies, operating procedures, and outcomes of the program and have not attempted to assess staff and management practice at the institutions which have operated and do operate the program. (This later evaluative function is reserved for our institutional rather than programmatic evaluations.) It would, therefore, be beyond the scope of this report to infer from our programmatic remarks any comment reflecting upon the staff and managers of the current Youthful Offender Program.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments . . . . .	i
Preface . . . . .	ii
AGENCY AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT . . . . .	1
General . . . . .	1
The Decision to Incarcerate . . . . .	2
Institutional Assignment . . . . .	4
Providing Appropriate Programs . . . . .	5
Setting the Term of Incarceration . . . . .	7
General Conclusions . . . . .	9
OFFENDER SERVICES . . . . .	10
Motivating the Individual . . . . .	10
Determining Individual Needs . . . . .	14
Drawing Up the Offender's Contract . . . . .	17
Rehabilitation Programs and Services . . . . .	19
Case Management Procedures . . . . .	25
General . . . . .	25
Diagnostic/Verification Process . . . . .	26
Performance Reporting/Recording . . . . .	27
Pre-Release Services . . . . .	30
Purpose . . . . .	30
Selection Criteria: Institutional Pre-Release . . . . .	31
Selection Procedure: Pre-Release Centers . . . . .	31
Contract Re-negotiation . . . . .	32
Program Availability/Deficits . . . . .	33
Summary and Conclusions . . . . .	34
YOUTHFUL OFFENDER OUTCOMES . . . . .	36
General . . . . .	36
Basic Data on Recidivism . . . . .	37
Recidivism Over Time . . . . .	40
Variations in Recidivism . . . . .	41
Supervision and Recidivism . . . . .	45
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	47

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 2.1.	ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS' SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION RATES . . . . .	20
TABLE 2.2.	RATE OF DISCIPLINARY REPORTS (Per 1,000 INMATE POPULATION) BY INSTITUTION DURING 1977 . . . . .	22
TABLE 2.3.	USE OF FORCE REPORT RATES FOR SEVERAL YOUNGER OFFENDER INSTITUTIONS, ANNUAL DATA FOR FY76 and FY77 . . . .	24
TABLE 3.1.	GROSS RETURN-TO-PRISON RATES FOR OFFENDERS RELEASED DURING FISCAL YEARS 74, 75, & 76 . . . . .	38
✓ TABLE 3.2.	RETURN-TO-PRISON RATES FOR SIX INSTITUTIONS. . . . .	44
TABLE 3.3.	PAROLEE RETURN-TO-PRISON RATES FOR THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE BY FISCAL YEAR . . . . .	46

SECTION 1.0

AGENCY AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT

## AGENCY AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT

### General

The Youthful Offender Act of 1972 (as amended) provides for the use of an "alternative penalty" for younger offenders ages seventeen through twenty-four. Public offenders eligible for and sentenced under the Act are to be provided "a complete study and diagnosis" and appropriate "treatment" by the Youthful Offender Division of the Georgia Board of Corrections. The rehabilitative services specified in the law are "corrective and preventive incarceration, guidance and training designed to protect the public by correcting the anti-social tendencies of youthful offenders, which may include but is not limited to vocational, educational and other training deemed fit and necessary by the division." The Youthful Offender Division may, upon determination of individual needs, recommend the conditional release of the youthful offender, and this recommendation may either precede or follow a period of institutional treatment. The Georgia Board of Pardons and Parole is designated as the release authority in the Act, and subsequent events have placed conditional releasee supervision responsibilities under that board as well.

The Department of Offender Rehabilitation sponsored the original and amended legislation. The agency is also responsible for the administration of the Act. The "Operational Guidelines and Procedures



of the Youthful Offender Division" elaborate the manner in which the Act has been interpreted and implemented. These guidelines focus on key aspects of the agency's use of the Act including the indeterminate period of institutional supervision, the use of a contracting system to plan and schedule a "rational program" of services, and the consequences to be expected of rule violations while in the Youthful Offender Program.

#### The Decision to Incarcerate

The Youthful Offender Act does not require that each individual sentenced under the Act be imprisoned. In fact, the system of "release categories" utilized by the Board of Pardons and Parole and the Youthful Offender Division suggests a continuum of supervision options within which individual offender needs may be addressed. The first three of six possible "categories" call for no term of imprisonment at all: (I) conditional release upon completion of the diagnostic process, (II) conditional release to a community center upon completion of the diagnostic process, and (III) the use of a short-term contract for the direct placement in a community facility of offenders still on "inmate status". Categories IV through VI provide for conditional release following various lengths of institutional program performance.

The decision to incarcerate an individual is a major application of the diagnostic processes outlined in the Act to operations within the Youthful Offender Program. However, an effort to keep

intake processing to the required thirty days and a separate but complementary effort to improve upon the accuracy of vocational assessments has resulted in the establishment of a secondary diagnostic unit at the principal male Youthful Offender institution. It is therefore the case that diagnostics are performed at the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Center (GDCC) and at the Georgia Earned Release Center (GERC). The addition of a supplemental diagnostic function at GERC has had the effect of extending the diagnostic period and doubtlessly opens up many desirable institutional program planning and placement options. However, the action has certainly resulted in "lost opportunity" costs for the Youthful Offender Program.

The Coordinator of the Youthful Offender Program at GDCC is a key staff member in any effort to divert Youthful Offenders from imprisonment. If the Program is to utilize the three non-incarceration categories offered by the Parole Board, then the decision-making processes of diagnostics and assignment would be most effective as a "front end" program component. Under the present system of only cursory individual assessment at GDCC and with the current expectation of continued diagnostics at GERC, the use of the diversion potential of the Program goes unutilized. In fact, the guidelines of the Youthful Offender Program describe the Coordinator's function as essentially that of an orientation coordinator rather than a meaningful decision-making participant.

The requirement that offenders stay only up to thirty days at GDCC is an agency policy and is no longer required under the Youthful

Offender Act. The Act specifies that "...In the absence of exceptional circumstances, each study and diagnosis shall be completed within a period of sixty days from the date of commitment." (Originally the act read "30 days".)

The shorter 30-day period of intake processing is doubtless a helpful practical goal for assisting in smoothing the general flow of incoming offenders. It is also no doubt important to minimize the contact between the youthful and older offenders as envisioned in the Act. Nevertheless, the potential to keep a seventeen to twenty-four year old out of prison with the resulting human and fiscal savings suggests a reappraisal of the current YOA intake procedure. A revitalized intake procedure with more diagnostically oriented criteria for category designation and more conscious decision-making more generally could have a very beneficial impact on the Program. It would certainly bring it more in line with what were apparently agency expectations and legislative intent in passing a special youthful offender act.

### Institutional Assignment

The institutions to which the prospective Youthful Offenders would be assigned under the legislation itself were not maximum security prisons like GERC. In fact, the law cites several examples of institutions consistent with the "alternative penalty" goals of the Act: "...minimum security institutions including training schools, hospitals, farms, forestry and other camps, including vocational training facilities and other institutions...." The program guidelines for the Youthful Offender Division assume but do not specify that the institution of assignment is a traditional prison facility.

Environments which are supportive of heavily "rehabilitative" systems like the Youthful Offender Program envisioned in the Act need not exclusively involve arduous inter-agency arrangements or radically unfamiliar frames of reference like those cited above. The Department of Offender Rehabilitation currently operates community centers whose experience could serve the Youthful Offender Division well in a concentrated planning effort geared to providing alternative institutions to the traditional prison. The often heard observation that some of the current clients being housed at GERC need that type of intensive supervision and restraint does not diminish the need for appropriate locales for those individuals with other types of needs. It would seem to be consistent with agency and legislative intent if a wider range of institutional assignments were used for those Youthful Offenders who indeed need to be institutionalized.

#### Providing Appropriate Programs

The agency and the Parole Board have determined that a form of contracting-for-release provides the structure and motivation needed for effective self-rehabilitation on the part of the Youthful Offender. (See "Motivating the Individual" comments in "Offender Services" section which follows.) The Act itself simply itemizes possible vocational and educational offerings and leaves the mechanism for appropriately delivering services to the Division:

... The Director shall forward to the Division a report of the results of the study and diagnosis with respect to each such youthful offender and, his recommendations as to the treatment (to) be afforded such offender. At least one member of the Division, other than the Director, shall as soon as practical after commitment, interview the youthful offender, review all reports concerning him, and make such recommendations to the Division as may be indicated.

Other than this general provision of the law itself, few comments on programs are found in the basic document structure of the Youthful Offender Program. The "Operational Guidelines" interpret the second thirty-day assessment period to be the time at which "... training and treatment objectives are prescribed, the inmate prepares a plan for himself, and a contract is negotiated involving the inmate, the institutional staff, and the Board of the Youthful Offender Division."

It is at this point that an analysis of agency and legislative "intent" becomes more difficult because many "new" terms and parties to the program are introduced in the guidelines. The institutional/Divisional staff distinction is, for example, far more clearly drawn in the guidelines than it is in the law itself. The Classification Committee of the prison to which the youthful offender is assigned is said to "prescribe" needed programs, whereas the law envisions a procedure in which: "... At least one member of the Division, other than the Director, shall as soon as practical after commitment, interview the youthful offender, review all reports concerning him, and make such recommendations

to the Division as may be indicated." Although actual operations may vary little or not at all depending on whether the prison or the Division employs the "member" or "committee member" doing the rehabilitation program planning, the apparent contradiction represents what will later be developed as a major observation concerning the Youthful Offender Program. This evaluator's impression of the program is that the routinization of YOA practice has solidified around the traditional prison model of rehabilitation programs and prescribed "treatment" more generally. At this point in the analysis, it may be sufficient to note that the documents which define and interpret the agency and legislative intent are vague and offer little guidance concerning rehabilitation program planning and operations.

### Setting the Term of Incarceration

The Youthful Offender Program originally operated with an indeterminant sentence. Contracted releases were approved in advance by the Division and actual release was finalized by a Youthful Offender "Board". (The only board directly referenced in the law is the State Board of Corrections. The term "Youthful Offender Board" appears to have been used to refer to the membership of the Youthful Offender Division sitting as a deliberative body.) The original act makes the term of incarceration dependent upon the assessment of the correctional staff:

When, in the judgment of the Director, a committed youthful offender should be released conditionally upon supervision, he shall so report and recommend to the Division. Upon receipt of such recommendation or, if no such recommendation is received, upon its own recommendation after receipt of the reports and recommendations provided by Section 9(a) of this Act, the Division may after reasonable notice to the Director, release such youthful offender conditionally upon supervision provided that all such conditional releases shall be subject to final approval or disapproval by the Director.

The law does not elaborate the reference to the "treatment" section 9(a) into any narrative about the contracting mechanism. All such references are contained in the "Operational Guidelines and Procedures of the Youthful Offender Division".

The type of "Board" envisioned here as a release authority provides some insight into the issue of the "member" who was recommending specific needs to the group as a whole in the preceding section of this report. It would seem to be the case that the Act envisions a highly involved "citizen" styled Division modeled more after the traditional composition of Boards of Pardon and Parole rather than after the administrative boards and committees common to correctional agencies. Although it is only speculation at this point in time, the vacuum created by the administrative composition of the original Youthful Offender Division ("Board") may have contributed to the assertion of release authority by the Georgia Board of Pardons and Parole. It was that group which came to view the administrative release of youthful offenders upon completion of a correctional

contract to be inconsistent with accepted state offender release practice.

In October of 1975, the Board of Pardons and Parole initiated the system of six release categories noted in the "The Decision to Incarcerate" section included earlier in this report. The six categories specify the length of contracts allowed for each offender in the category and itemize the criteria by which individuals are assigned to each category. In effect, the criteria -- which are entirely criminal history based -- determine the time that each offender will be incarcerated. The only "margin of error" in this determination would be the options of special early release or an "extension" of the contract time for positive and negative behavior, respectively. In this manner, the indeterminant sentence has been converted into a determinant, contract-specified sentence. These changes were codified in the 1975 amendments to the Act, at least to the extent that release authority residing with the Parole Board was specified.

#### General Conclusions

Compared to the apparent agency purpose and legislative intent of the program, the Youthful Offender Program appears to lack the envisioned reforms in correctional practice. More particularly, the individually oriented indeterminant sentence based on a creative contracting process is lacking, and the program has become a set of administrative procedures geared to traditional prison concepts.



SECTION 2.0

OFFENDER SERVICES

## OFFENDER SERVICES

## Motivating the Individual

The overall purpose for the agency having a special program for the younger offender certainly appears to be "rehabilitative" in nature. The emphasis of the program on basic academic skills and vocational capabilities suggests that the rehabilitative philosophy at work is that which views the acquisition of competitive skills and conventional work attitudes as conducive to an alternative life style to the criminal career. To the extent to which any specific set of services provided within the Youthful Offender Program offers promise of transmitting conventional skills and values, it may be viewed as consistent with the agency's basic programmatic purposes subsumed under the policy decision to establish and maintain a special rehabilitation program for younger offenders.

The individual offender is not viewed as passive in the processes of acquiring skills and attitudes conducive to achieving conventional abilities and awards. The system of service delivery and the program of services are ostensibly designed to maximize basic motivators in the individual rather than using coercive techniques. The Youthful Offender Program attempts to channel the principal motivating factor of incarceration, the desire to be released from prison, in the effort to provide effective programs and services. This is done by making release contingent upon completion of a specific set of programs and services.

The issues involved in the use of a "contracting" process have been discussed in a previous evaluation of the Youthful Offender Program. (See Elizabeth Knott and John Doughtie, Evaluation of Georgia's Youthful Offender Program, DOR, November 1, 1975, pp. 22-25, "Contracting Incentives.") Observing that the contracts were "rather one-sided documents," this earlier report questioned whether the professed goal of responsibility-taking voiced among program managers was being pursued by the contracting process' use as a behavior control/negative sanction device in the institutions (pp. 22-23). In fact, the report suggests that then current contracting practice might prove counter-productive in terms of the "messages" conveyed to young inmates:

Given the skepticism and apprehension with which many youthful offenders probably view the system already, and given their frequently unrealistic (positive) expectations about the program, it seems possible that they will view a contract, which is really not a contract but a statement of goals, as an attempt to 'con' them. Facing the alternative of serving two to four years may reinforce this impression. (p. 25)

Given that the overall goal of the program is the structuring of positive experiences with conventional rewards, the contracting processes of 1975 and 1977 may each reinforce either highly adaptive behavior or highly manipulative behavior, two features often associated with the youthful "hangers-on" and clique leaders who seek gratification through criminal pursuits. (See Roger Hood and

Richard Sparks, "Subcultural and Gang Delinquency" in Leon Radzinowicz and Marvin E. Wolfgang (Eds.), Crime and Justice: The Criminal and Society, 1971, pp. 477-501.)

The motivational theory which apparently "stands behind" the use of a contracting-for-release process in the Youthful Offender Program is a theme familiar to those who have followed the agency's public pronouncements in the years 1972-1976: performance-based release. The particular application of this theme to the younger offenders perceives the offender (ideally) participating in the identification of those obstacles to his success in the free world and working with staff in understanding his (socially defined) failures on some psychologically meaningful level. He or she would then work with the correctional counselor in selecting programs and services which would enable him or her to compete and succeed in the conventional economy amid conventional social and legal expectations. Upon mastering the needed skills and demonstrating (at least initially) the socially desirable inter-personal skills, work attitudes, and group related behaviors, the offender would be conditionally released to a residential or non-residential program in the community. The community-based correctional staff could then evaluate the individual's progress and could work with him or her in refining and applying the new or revitalized skills and attitudes acquired as a result of the prison experience.

In theory, at least, the contract would represent the "meeting" of the inmate's motives, chiefly release, and the agency motives, namely the exhibition of "corrected" and socially acceptable behaviors.

In theory, the performance contingent release policy represents a personal challenge for the offender with the valued payoff of release, and this experience is ideally only the first of a continuing set of conventional success experiences. In theory, any element of staff prescription of needed programs or experiences would represent a "mild" and professional intervention on behalf of the client. In theory, the process itself would serve as a model of how conventional rewards "work" in the ideal social system. The ultimate rewards would be those cherished by conventional society, namely "winning."

The practice of contracting is, in fact, very different from the model referenced above. In fact, the Youthful Offender Program's contracting process is highly directive and oriented to available prison programs. In fact, the identification of offenders' needs is restricted to those areas in which the prisons currently conduct programs. Not only does the "diagnostic" process address a limited spectrum of needs, but the low level of participation of the individual offender in the needs assessment phase presents few opportunities for him or her to object to their "institutionalization" under the Youthful Offender Program. Those few general phrases potentially addressing the "whole person" needs of the individual which are found in current contracts are carefully worded in terms of the institution's needs (e.g., "satisfactory institutional adjustment").

Rather than being prepared as individuals in a competitive world, youthful offenders are taught docility. Rather than being shown how to appreciate their own creativity, they are taught uniformity. Rather than being reconciled to community expectations, they are insulated from them in traditional prison environments. They are continuing to learn to be "losers".

### Determining Individual Needs

The Youthful Offender Act specifies that needs be analyzed and recommendations developed for the individuals sentenced under the Act. (See "Providing Appropriate Programs", especially p.6 above.) The initial phase of the youthful offenders' diagnostic process is almost identical to that provided for all incoming inmates: medical needs screening, orientation briefings, initial counseling interview, vocational and aptitude testing, psychological testing, criminal history documentation, occupational interview, and initial classification and assignment. Other than the perhaps too obvious fact that this is the process provided inmates (and not potential diverttees), there is little that is unique in the first phase of the youthful offenders' diagnostic process.

The findings from the initial diagnostic "work up" are reviewed by the correctional counselor and highlights are reviewed with a preliminary classification/assignment committee at GDCC. Two of the tasks of this committee are the determination of an initial security classification and the recommendation of an initial institutional assignment. Since the youthful offenders are assigned to a specific institution, the latter of these two initial tasks is rather redundant for individuals sentenced under the Act. Assignment recommendation would assume new meaning if, in fact, the recommendation was ever a non-institutional one: that has not been the case during the Program's five-year existence.

Security classification decisions are predicated upon a policy memorandum dated February 15, 1977 from the Deputy Commissioner of

Offender Administration. According to criteria spelled out in this directive, any inmate having a sentence of five years or more must serve at least six months before receiving a security reduction from "close" to "medium" or from "medium" to "minimum." Newly assigned inmates are traditionally classified as "close" at their receiving institution and must then serve the requisite period of time in this category before being reduced.

Departmental Rules (Chapter 125-2-4-.02) define close security as follows:

Inmates assigned to this category are suspected escape risks, alcohol or drug addicts, nonconformists, habitual rule violators, sex offenders, unreliaables and those against whom detainers for serious crimes are on file. These inmates require constant supervision by an armed correctional officer while outside the security boundaries and regular supervision when inside the security boundaries.

For purposes of this initial classification Youthful Offenders are considered to have a sentence of six years. The result of this policy decision is that a typical Youthful Offender who spends an average 14 months incarcerated serves nearly half that time in close security. Even a cursory file review turns up inmates who are not adjudged a security risk after a formal psychological assessment and yet are assigned a close security classification. Repeated efforts on the part of institutional staff to have these individuals re-classified are denied by Central Office staff because of existing policy. From this perspective it would seem that current classification policy requires some review at least as it relates to the Youthful Offender.

An additional task of the preliminary classification/assignment committee is the completion and approval of (what the Earned Time System terms) the "intake assessment" component of each individual's performance

plan." Specific needs are itemized in a series of very brief comments in the areas of work, vocational training, education, problem behaviors, leisure time activities, pre-release programming, medical, and "other" needs. These comments potentially serve as a basis for correctional counselor follow-up once the individual youthful offender is institutionalized. Detailed and somewhat more clinical remarks are also available from the interviews conducted at GDCC, but these remarks are simply attached with test scores and other diagnostic information in the packet which accompanies the offender to the institution of assignment.

A second phase of the 60-day diagnostic program is conducted at the prison to which the youthful offender is assigned. Although institutional testing was noted in the 1975 evaluation, this practice has steadily expanded during the past two years. Intensive vocational assessments, for example, are now conducted at GERC, and various types of tests are used to "refine" the needs of the offender. This second phase -- which only roughly corresponds to what in ETS terms is an "extended assessment" -- is an essentially diagnostic time during which little practical confirming observation takes place outside of the testing and interview framework.

The procedure as now defined, for example, offers little opportunity for the staff to observe the youthful offender on the job to insure proper assignment. Similarly, individual staff members have observed that vocational assignments based heavily on the test scores lack the accuracy and dependability of trial assignment and feedback from the individual offender on his initial interest in the trade. In this regard, the "extended assessment" is more an "extended diagnostic"



period, and the offender is drawn deeper into the assumption that he or she will be imprisoned for a considerable period of time. The programs available at the institution constitute the frame of reference for the definition of needs.

Diagnostics as a methodology for determining individual needs is, moreover, a complex issue in the case of the Youthful Offender Program. An operational "solution" which would allow for maximum post-sentence diversion to community programs and which would also provide refined input for prison program decision-making will require a great deal of diagnostic program planning. The 60-day mandate in the Act prescribed for the prompt development of suitable "recommendations" certainly has proven to be a logistical factor as have backlogs in jails and at GDCC resulting from prison overcrowding. Nevertheless, the diagnostic process used in the program needs a thorough reevaluation, especially in terms of gearing community and prison services to offender needs rather than vice versa. As now constituted, the process routinely addresses the legal and policy need for some data collection and rationality in classification and assignment decision-making but does not really provide for the thorough analysis of individual cases suggested by the community oriented and "treatment" themes of the Act.

#### Drawing Up the Offender's Contract

The Youthful Offender Contract and the ETS Performance Plan are each program and service planning tools which offer structure and continuity to the offender and his or her case manager when used properly.

The Contract is often taken from the more detailed, "worksheet" format of information on the Performance Plan. Along with the release category assigned in concert with the Board of Pardons and Parole, these documents represent the framework of almost all actions related to the youthful offender.

Contracts are drafted by the correctional counselors at the youthful offender institutions. The categories are applied through the use of criminal history criteria, and a representative of the Parole Board interacts with the Director of the Youthful Offender Division on ambiguous cases. Draft contracts are reviewed and approved by the Director and the Parole Board representative, but the volume of such documents makes this a largely exception-oriented process.

The stipulations noted in the Contract are stated in terms of program performance goals and general adjustment behaviors to be exhibited by the individual offender. These specifics follow the form of the goals "to successfully complete the welding trade course, improve reading ability by two grade levels, participate in the alcoholic counseling group, and avoid major disciplinary reports." Occasionally, a component is included that specifies "successful completion of the pre-release program" at a designated pre-release center. Upon completion of the terms of the Contract, the individual's file is forwarded to the Parole Board with the recommendation for the conditional release of the offender.

Inability to meet the terms of the Contract results in an extension of the period of time to be served in prison. This may take the form of more time to meet the positive goals or may be a punishment for exhibiting prohibited behaviors. Three-month extensions are common in either case.

## Rehabilitation Programs and Services

We have examined program performance by looking at the processes and outcomes of those daily activities which characterize the lives of inmates serving time under the Youthful Offender Act. Data on program performance and the "spin offs" of an active and positive prison routine are important, in our judgment, because they estimate the degree to which the program has been able to meet general system norms and expectations. We would term this dimension of a program's evaluation the assessment of its "operating effectiveness."

An initial program performance indicator is the successful completion rate of academic education and vocational training programs which operate as a component of the Youthful Offender Program. One of the benefits of a contracting process should be the appropriate and agreeable placement of offenders in needed institutional programs. Additionally, basing release upon contract completion should maximize individual student motivation to perform well in the programs.

Table 2.1 contains information on the rate of successful program completions, i.e., the percentage of all program terminations that are designated successes by individual classroom criteria. Analysis of these data suggests that the successful completion rates for current and former YOA institutions exceed those for other prisons which operate well organized educational programs. For example, one-half of all academic terminations are successes at GTDC while only 31% are successes at GII. Vocationally, these two institutions show 47% and 9%, respectively.

Table 2.1. Academic and Vocational  
Programs' Successful Completion Rates

	<u>Percent of ALL ACADEMIC Terminations That Were Successes in State FY77</u>	<u>Percent of ALL VOCATIONAL Terminations That Were Successes in State FY77</u>
GERC	58.4%	-----*
GTDC	50.0%	47.4%**
Walker CI	44.5%	40.0%
Montgomery CI	36.2%	-----
Lee CI	30.9%	28.6%
GII	31.2%	9.1%**

SOURCE: Data Provided by the Educational Services Section, Offender Administration Division, and compiled by the Office of Research and Evaluation on September 22, 1977.

NOTE(\*): Inadequate Cell Size for Analysis of FY77 Vocational Completions.

NOTE(\*\*): Rather than the percent of all terminations which are successes -- data not available from these sources -- these figures represent the percent of all enrolled who successfully completed the program.

One reason for these higher rates may be the definitions used in determining "successful" cases. Individualized criteria and progress reporting are, however, being encouraged system-wide, and there are no apparent structural or administrative barriers to more clearly standard reporting.

Counseling services in the Youthful Offender Program are not as easy to document in terms of "performance" as are the more structured and cognitively oriented educational programs. Over the life of the YO Program, offenders have been offered both individual and group counseling based on the needs outlined during the diagnostic process. A distinct feature of this program's counseling component has been a greater use of group

counseling compared with other prisons. Actual "therapeutic communities" have operated at times in the dormitories of the YOA institutions, especially during times of emphasis in meeting alcohol and drug abuse needs of the young offenders. Individual counseling has focused more on personal needs and motivational or guidance counseling due to the pressure to perform experienced under the contracting-for-release process. Counselors spend less time in program scheduling since this is done "up front" as the contracts are developed, and they are able to spend more time dealing with the offender's emotional and intellectual response to the relatively intense conventional demand structure of the YO Program.

The effects within the YO prison(s) of these structured and individualized program experiences -- the "spin-off" effects mentioned earlier -- are represented by the relative rates of disruptive acts or the "social climate" of these institutions. Effective overall performance of programs, for example, may be reflected in a secure and positive climate within the prison community. One way to gauge the quality of the interaction between staff and inmates is to review the issuance of disciplinary reports and the use of force reports from YOA and other younger offender institutions.

Table 2.2 reports the rate of disciplinary reports for institutions which serve younger offenders. Among the five institutions which had a rate at or above 100 reports per 1,000 inmate population, the predominantly YOA prison scored in the medium range. Data for the two institutions which lost YOA's in FY77 are ambiguous; one rate increased and the other decreased over FY76.

Similar findings are apparent in the review of the use of force

Table 2.2 Rate of Disciplinary Reports  
(Per 1,000 Inmate Population)  
By Institution During 1977.

<u>FY77 Range</u>	<u>Institution</u>	<u>Actual Rate</u>	<u>Change Over FY76</u>
100+	Walker C.I.	120.2	+10.3%
	GTDC	113.4	-33.7%
	GERC	109.3	+38.0%
	Lee C.I.	105.5	+11.3%
	GII	102.4	+34.4%
75-99	GWCI	83.1	+24.0%
	Chatham C.I.	81.5	+11.0%
	Montgomery C.I.	77.1	+46.0%
50-74	Ware C.I.	71.6	- 9.0%
	Lowndes C.I.	69.9	+23.9%
	West Ga.	60.0	NA
	Wayne C.I.	52.0	+45.3%
LT50	Stone Mtn. C.I.	44.8	+ 9.5%
	GSP	29.9	+28.3%
	GDCC	17.5	-20.5%
	Putnam C.I.	14.5	+16.0%
	Colony Farm C.I.	7.3	- 5.2%

SOURCE: Data provided by the Offender Administration  
Division compiled by the Office of Research  
and Evaluation (September, 1977).

reports capsuled in Table 2.3. YOA's have neither the highest nor the lowest rate for the indicator. Little if any change is reflected in the prisons which phased out YOA's in favor of other younger offenders.

Overall, offenders sentenced under the Youthful Offender Act display far higher program completion rates in the academic education and vocational training activities at their institutions. Although this feature of program performance may be partially the effect of limited transfer options, particularly well funded and administered programs, or other factors, the role of the contract as an agency planning document and process and the role of the contract as an individual inmate motivator may be at work. At a minimum, the contracting process succeeds in structuring limited success criteria and performance indicators in a manner poorly approximated by the procedures and practice of the Earned Time System.

The climate in which these "rehabilitation" activities take place seems to be a typical one for younger offenders based on the experience of other "similar" institutions. Neither disciplinary reports nor use of force reports suggest that YOA's "act out" or "cause problems" at a rate different from other younger offenders. These findings would seem to suggest that the daily scheduling and routine of the YO Program operate within the norms and expectations of the agency for younger offender programs.

Table 2.3 Use Of Force Report Rates  
for  
Several Younger Offender Institutions,  
Annual Data for FY76 and FY77

<u>Institution</u>	FY76		FY77	
	<u>Number of Reports During The Year</u>	<u>Rate Based On Average Monthly Pop.</u>	<u>Number of Reports During The Year</u>	<u>Rate Based On Average Monthly Pop.</u>
GII	60	.044	61	.050
GERC	6*	.026	17	.041
Walker CI	7	.023	7	.022
GTDC	4	.018	3	.014
Montgomery CI	3	.009	5	.015
Lee CI	1	.005	16	.080

SOURCE: Data from the Internal Affairs Office and the Offender  
Administration Division compiled by the Office of Research  
and Evaluation.

NOTE(\*): Based on 6 months data X2; figure is only an estimate of the  
actual rate.



## Case Management Procedures

### General.

The Youthful Offender Act specifies only one item of documentation that is required for this particular population:

a report of the results of the study and diagnosis with respect to each such youthful offender and, [the Director's] recommendations as to the treatment to be afforded such offender.

The Youthful Offender Division has developed its own "contract" to be used as a mutual agreement between the offender and the Department concerning his rehabilitative program plans. With this one exception, the remaining elements to complete the case management and performance reporting process are drawn directly from the Earned Time System.

Basically, these documents include:

1. Intake and Extended Assessment which comprise the diagnostic component and confirming staff observations, respectively;
2. the Supervisor's Evaluation, a quarterly assessment of the inmate's "activity" performance, submitted by that activity's supervisor;
3. the Performance Exception Report, an optional monthly document for noting especially good or especially poor performance; and.
4. the Quarterly Review Summary, on which the inmate's program involvement and performance are tracked.

The case management process, ideally, provides an element of continuity to the periodic observations of the counselor and other staff concerning the inmate's program participation. It furnishes the necessary structure for a systematic assessment of the offender's needs as well as routinized channels for reporting how well those needs are being met.

### Diagnostic/Verification Process

The diagnostic/verification process that generates the documents known as Intake and Extended Assessment is discussed on pages 14 and 15 of this report.

At present, staff at Youthful Offender institutions must comply both with legal requirements, as specified in the Youthful Offender Act, that the intake "diagnosis" be completed within 60 days "from the date of commitment"; and with ETS procedures specifying that the Extended Assessment and Performance Plan be completed within 60 days from the date of permanent institutional assignment. These two 60-day time periods are currently interpreted as occurring simultaneously, with the result that counselors for the Youthful Offender Program are required to complete the same paperwork in approximately 2/3 of the time allotted to their counterparts in other institutions.

The implications for the offender may be in terms of lost program involvement time. Staff interpretation of Extended Assessment as a diagnostic period (see p.15) has created a time constraint that greatly impedes any timely completion of the Extended Assessment. Consequently, 22% of Youthful Offenders presently eligible for this practical observation period are, instead, in a holding pattern at the assigned institution awaiting additional testing. Put another way, only 78% of Youthful Offenders eligible for Extended Assessment under even the more liberal ETS allowance of "60 days from permanent assignment" have, in fact, received such assessment.

The lack of requisite diagnostic data is particularly evident in the files of the 14 female Youthful Offenders housed at Georgia Women's

Correctional Institute. Six of these women have been incarcerated for more than six months each with no Intake or Extended Assessment in their files, although two of them do have a one and one-half page "psychological evaluation." Two other offenders have been at the institution for more than three months each with only an Intake Assessment. Still one other inmate was received seven months ago and has no diagnostic data in her file at all.

The basic questions about this particular documentation as it relates to the female Youthful Offender seem to be whether they are to receive the same diagnostic assessment as the remainder of the population, and whether ETS case management requirements apply equally to this group.

#### Performance Reporting/Recording.

The Earned Time System provides the Youthful Offender Program with a formal reporting structure designed to encourage systematic communication between various levels of administrative and line staff.

The Supervisor's Evaluation (SE) is a quarterly transaction document that is the primary source of first-hand information concerning the inmate's sustained level of performance in institutional activities. At GERC the SE has served to routinize an already established linkage between treatment and security personnel. Information concerning an individual's performance that traditionally was "gathered" on an informal basis, as necessary is now forthcoming in a predictable, periodic manner. These SE's seem to exhibit a similar quality problem to those reviewed at other institutions: with several notable exceptions the entries are one-liners that do not convey a great deal about the inmate in a behaviorally objective manner. Several staff members suggested that this is not a liability

at this institution, however, due to the level of interaction among staff: any problem of interpretation is solved quickly through a phone call.

The Performance Exception Report, in theory, provides this same kind of feedback to the inmate concerning his performance. The report is to be generated on an as-needed basis by the Activity Supervisor and to be written in behavioral terms, consistent with the criteria listed in that activity's formal description.

At GERC as at many other institutions staff members question the value of a motivator so dependent upon the personality of the individual supervisor; i.e., some "believe in" rating performance while others do not. The question achieves a new dimension at a Youthful Offender institution, however, due to programmatic use of the ultimate motivator; release. Earning a phone call or an extra visit thus assumes the quality of a game: students badger teachers to "give" them a privilege or they exhibit a burst of enthusiasm long enough to "get" a phone call and then revert to more customary behaviors.

It would seem that with this age group the perennial questions of internal vs. external motivators acquire substantial validity. The Y.O. program provides management and staff with a powerful control mechanism in the form of the contract, and ETS provides the inmate with a way to manipulate that program... perhaps in a positive way. The point, however, is that finally each system motivates from the outside and little time remains for teaching or encouraging the individual to develop his own internal motivation.

One last document remains in the performance tracking process: the Quarterly Review Summary. As its name indicates, this report serves as a

three-month progress note on the inmate's performance in each of the eight assessment categories on the Performance Plan. Once again, the Summaries that were reviewed at the Youthful Offender institution evidenced many of the same characteristics as those reviewed during previous on-site visits to other institutions. That is, while the Summary undoubtedly provides some ongoing information about the inmate's program involvement, the detailed account of activities envisioned in Earned Time procedures does not seem to be present.

Insofar as the Summary collects in one place information items about the inmate from various sources, it serves a valuable function in the total case management process. Its importance in the treatment process, however, would seem to lie in those items being somewhat more detailed than they are at present. Such an expansion would provide a more complete picture of the inmate's involvement in prescribed activities and perhaps suggest areas where those activities are not sufficiently meeting his needs.

### Conclusions.

The Youthful Offender Program brings into focus one recurring concern voiced by counselors at other institutions: too much paperwork, too little time for the client. With documentation responsibilities laid upon them by two service delivery systems, case managers and program staff must channel much of their energy to meeting legal and procedural deadlines. The result is that the very process--case management--that was designed to track the services being provided to an inmate is itself obstructing that provision.

With a population that is in need of intensive one-on-one vocational and personal counseling, repetitive case management requirements make it necessary for key program people to focus instead on the methodology for delivering those services.

## Pre-Release Services

### Purpose.

The Y.O. prison experience, however mild it may be when compared with that of the general population creates a time disjunct during which the offender is alienated from the daily activities of the free world. He lives, studies and works for at least a year in a controlled environment where his every action is subject to the scrutiny of some authoritative body. The consequences of his actions, whether positive or negative are constantly reinforced: program participation is tied to release; negative behavior results in disciplinary action. At every point the Youthful Offender Program is designed to encourage skills acquisition that will enable the individual to compete more successfully in the working world after his release.

The pre-release component, in theory, extends the definition of "skills" into the arena of practical, daily concerns, while also serving as a transitional testing ground to determine to what extent the offender has actually internalized the more conventional attitudes. A pre-release environment enables the offender both to focus on his immediate concerns and to develop more fully his own long-range goals. In theory, such a program would provide intensive consumer education as well as personal and vocational counseling. The individual would learn, for example, how to manage his money while seeking a job that fits in with his vocational objectives. The pre-release experience would thus build upon the positive learning experiences of the institution while emphasizing more clearly the individual's autonomy.

### Selection Criteria: Institutional Pre-Release.

The pre-release concept is, in fact, rather different as operationalized in the Youthful Offender program. When the correctional counselor is in the process of drawing up a Y.O. contract, one of the variables that he considers is the offender's post-release plans. The most favorable choice is interpreted to be the inmate's return to his family environment. If evidence exists that the family intends to provide him with a place of residence, the contract does not include a condition that he complete the program offered by a pre-release center. If, however, such residence is not made available to him, successful program completion at a pre-release center is specified.

The offender who falls into the first category (i.e., post-release residence with his family) is required in his contract to complete a pre-release curriculum of consumer education at the institution. This program typically includes personal finance matters such as budgeting, check-writing and establishing credit. After successfully completing this last component of his contract and receiving the Parole Board's approval, the offender is released directly from the institution.

### Selection Procedure: Pre-release Centers.

If the offender is to participate in a pre-release program, the Central Office staff person responsible for making such assignments is notified and the inmate is screened by various eligibility criteria such as nature of offense and criminal history. The names of eligible inmates are then placed on a waiting list. Since current practice is to manage the population of any one center so that Youthful Offenders are proportionately

represented, the inmate may wait at the institution for as long as two months before an opening occurs at a pre-release center.

Managers and staff both perceive the Youthful Offender population as being considerably more rambunctious and, consequently, more in need of discipline than other inmates. These special personal needs, when coupled with additional paperwork requirements peculiar to the Y.O. program have created a reluctance on the part of center managers to accept more than a minimal number of Youthful Offenders.

#### Contract Re-negotiation.

Once the inmate arrives at the center, his Youthful Offender contract usually must be re-negotiated in order to reflect his minimum stay at the center. In most cases this is the first time that the inmate has been apprised of the need for this transaction. Anticipating a proximate release, he is suddenly informed that three or four more months are now to be added to his time. The implications in terms of morale are easy to discern; less apparent, perhaps, is the loss of credibility that the "system" sustains. Several staff at pre-release centers report that offenders perceive this as one more example of the system renegging on the terms of its own agreement and "running a game" on them again.

One pre-release manager suggests that Departmental policy may simply be unclear on this matter. At that center contracts are only re-negotiated when the inmate does not fulfill the requirements of the center's own contract. Still another manager reported that the Y.O. contract could be re-negotiated locally without the Parole Board's participation. (It is interesting to note that staff at this particular center routinely submit



Y.O. contracts for processing through conventional channels, an indication that policy may indeed be unclear.)

One exception to this entire situation is the admission procedure at the state's pre-release center for drug rehabilitation, Andromeda. After a potential client has been cleared for participation by Central Office, a representative of the center visits the inmate at his institution. The staff member explains to the offender at this time all of the implications of his participation--including the re-negotiated contract. In this way any potential for misunderstanding is mitigated, if not totally eliminated.

#### Program Availability/Deficits.

The new Y.O. contract is drawn up to reflect a minimum stay at the pre-release center, generally four to six months, depending on the type of program. Contract stipulations vary in their specificity from one center to another, but all include a condition that the offender have a job before being released from the center.

Youthful Offenders are not segregated in any way from the general population at pre-release centers. The services and programs available to them are identical with those available to other residents. Again, the nature and variety of these services vary from center to center. Generally, those centers with the more structured environment seem also to offer more in the way of pre-release services. Several centers, for example, have multi-step programs that are predicated on an earning philosophy: before the offender may progress from one level to the next, he or she must fulfill certain additional requirements and earn the advancement. The program typically consists of four phases; specific objectives for achieving each phase are itemized in a handbook given to each new resident.

A typical multi-step program is the one offered by Columbia House. Phase I is a period of intensive group counseling emphasizing self-reliance. Phase II continues group counseling but adds a "pre-employment workshop" which includes consumer education and job-seeking skills; this phase lasts a minimum of 14 days. Phase III is a 14-day probationary period to assess the resident's fulfillment of job expectations; definitive post-release plans are encouraged during this period. Phase IV is basically a 14-day observation period during which the resident continues in a "holding pattern" until her release.

#### Summary and Conclusions.

The services offered at most of the centers seem to fall into three major categories: counseling, individual and/or group; consumer education; and GED.

The type of counseling is dictated by the mission of the center, with Andromeda, for example, specializing in drug counseling. Any vocational counseling seems to be oriented toward helping the offender to fulfill his contract stipulation about obtaining a job rather than assisting him in identifying his long-term career goals.

Academic programs are restricted to GED participation or, occasionally, attendance at one of the area vocational/technical schools. None of the facilities includes even a learning center for individualized program instruction. At best a Literacy Action volunteer is brought in to tutor remedial reading; at worst the individual's academic needs are ignored or translated to accommodate available "programs."

Only one of the centers provides any "follow-up" services and those are

offered only to ex-offenders in the metro Atlanta area.

Several factors no doubt contribute to this apparent lack of services. A number of staff persons suggest that four or six months is simply too short a time to establish an offender in a treatment program. In the case of the Youthful Offender his various personal and vocational counseling needs are often so great as to require twice the staff time as other residents. Even the gross characteristics of this population indicate the difficulties that a work-release type center will have with him: young, male, single, typically a drug abuser with a reported 10th grade education and no previous employment.

The overall problem, however, seems to be less concerned with the particular services offered by individual centers. Rather, there seems to be no cohesive Departmental philosophy of pre-release services. Any innovations happen locally at the instigation of local management or staff. Where even this interest level is not present, services are minimal. As it presently exists, the pre-release service delivery "system" is fragmented as it relates to the needs of the general offender population; with few exceptions it is non-responsive as it relates to the needs of the Youthful Offender.

It would seem that the same motivation that inspired the legislative stipulation that this population be kept separate from the general populace in an institutional environment would also require separation at the pre-release level. It may well be the case that such a unique population with such specialized counseling needs would be more effectively served at a separate pre-release facility reserved specifically for Youthful Offenders.

SECTION 3.0

YOUTHFUL OFFENDER OUTCOMES

## YOUTHFUL OFFENDER OUTCOMES

### General

As noted in the initial section of this report, the agency and legislative intent in passing the Youthful Offender Act is to provide an alternative penalty for younger individuals which is corrective in terms of changing the anti-social tendencies of the youth in the program. This section of the evaluation report represents an effort to assess the effectiveness of the program in terms of any differential effect it may have on the post-release behavior of those individuals who have completed their term of correction. This impact effectiveness criterion will be used in three rather distinct ways: (1) Is the program as effective in correcting anti-social behavior as other contemporary programs in the state? (2) Has the effect of the program been to improve the recidivism pattern of younger inmates since adoption of the Act? (3) Does the effectiveness of the program vary measurably with the institution at which it is administered, suggesting influential factors associated with program services and management?

There is, of course, an issue of proper inference in analyses of this sort. A difference in the post-release behavior of groups of individuals who were in the program from those who were not may be the "result" of many known and unknown factors. Screening by the judiciary may select the most or (inadvertently) the least "amenable" individuals in terms of correctional programs and services. Program decisions such as the placing of individuals into release categories may either maximize or negate correctional program factors. The presence or absence or adequacy

of transitional services and conditional release services may contribute to the "fading" of program effectiveness after a period of time "back on the street." There are, moreover, a number of factors which impact a program like the Youthful Offender Program which are beyond its control and even our evaluative and managerial knowledge.

A second preliminary remark may be in order concerning the interpretation of these data. Any comparison of the recidivism rates of younger offenders with those of inmates more generally should respect the well documented finding that younger offenders are a "higher risk" group than are older, more mature (or "punished") individuals. This finding is very common in studies conducted throughout the country and has been confirmed in the case of Georgia offenders in our evaluation report entitled "The Relative Impact of Georgia's Institutional Training Programs on the Post-Release Behavior of Adult Male Offenders" (July, 1977), p.39.

#### Basic Data on Recidivism

The definition of recidivism used in this report is the return-to-prison rate for specified time periods following release from incarceration. This measure captures data for Georgia reincarcerations only, but it has the virtue of being more complete and accurate than either arrest or conviction data available for evaluative research at this time. In addition, the use of return-to-prison rates helps the agency to assess the effect of its actions on itself as well as on the offender. In this regard, it may be the most policy-relevant measure as well as the most reliable of those available to the current evaluation effort.

Less than one fourth of the Youthful Offenders released during fiscal

years 74 and 75 were back in Georgia prisons after two years "on the street." The three-year rate was 27.5%. The figures for return-to-prison within two years is slightly higher than that for other young offenders, but the three-year rate is close to or even "better than" comparison figures. (See Table One below.)

Short timeframe rates -- like those for one year or less -- would be expected to show the effects of deterrence on subsequent criminal behavior. Examination of the data in Table 3.1 suggests that inmates leaving the larger, more security oriented prison with longer term offenders, Georgia Industrial Institute, have a relatively small one year rate but more than "catch up" by the end of a three year tracking period. Individuals who are located at neither GII nor GERC follow a roughly similar pattern but never reach the almost 30% figure for GII overall. This probably reflects a selective process whereby offenders who perform acceptably at GII are allowed to transfer to less secure institutions.

Table 3.1, Gross Return-to-Prison  
Rates for Offenders Released During  
Fiscal Years 74, 75, & 76

	<u>One Year Rate</u>	<u>Two Year Rate</u>	<u>Three Year Rate</u>
YOA	12.0%	23.4%	27.5%
GII Overall	9.6%	20.0%	29.6%
(GII VR)	(12.5%)	(22.1%)	(27.3%)
Other LT 25	10.9%	18.3%	21.5%

Source: Computer runs conducted in August, 1977, by the evaluators and the Statistics Unit, GSA, with data current through 6-30-77.

Another factor related to short timeframes for tracking is that of parole (or conditional release) supervision. All Youthful Offenders

are placed on conditional release after serving their term of incarceration; only selected "regular" inmates are paroled. Since one aspect of parole supervision is surveillance, the conditional releasees are watched far more universally than are other offenders leaving the system. Many of the YOA's returning to prison do so as the result of the revocation of their conditional release. (See more on this point in the section entitled "Supervision and Recidivism" which follows.)

Table 3.1 includes a subgroup of the GII comparison population, those offenders who were screened into the Vocational Rehabilitation program at that institution. These individuals are of roughly the same age as the Youthful Offenders at GERC and exhibit many of the same program and service needs as the YOA's. In addition, they are provided a rather intensive diagnostic, counseling, and program experience as a special subpopulation within GII.

The VR clients at GII have almost identical post-release outcomes when compared with the YOA's. Their return-to-prison rate seems to level off near but below the 30% figure. (That these figures may show a leveling off not previously ascribed to Georgia's overall exiting population is evidenced by the change in the rate of 10 points between the first and second years and only 5 points between the second and third years.) In the case of both programs, a higher percentage come back in the first year than for the system more generally, suggesting more universal and intensive supervision upon release.



### Recidivism Over Time

Looking at the return-to-prison rates for younger offenders in each of the years FY74, FY75, and FY76 (exit cohorts), the specialized YOA and VR programs seem to be "losing ground" relative to the remainder of the prison population in this age group. One year rates for the three exit years for the YOA's were roughly 7½%, 12%, and 13%, respectively. The rate for GII overall hovered around the 10% figure each year, and the rate for younger inmates leaving neither GERC nor GII increased from roughly 8½% to 10½% to 11½% for the three exit groups. Perhaps the most "alarming" change was exhibited by those offenders leaving the VR program at GII: 10% to 13% to 20½% for the three years, respectively.

Two-year rates for all groups show YOA's and VR clients up two points, GII overall down 3½ points and younger offenders elsewhere in the system up 1½ points. It would therefore seem to be plausible to speculate that the specialized programs' initial effects may have worn off over time. The rates seem to have stabilized at levels several points higher than those for conventionally "treated" young offenders.

However, these data represent relatively few points in time and are subject to many possible sources of data error. Although these errors should be reasonably consistent or stable for various groups within a given year of exit, comparisons across time represent many potential hazards in reliability and interpretation that may outweigh other potential utilities. We recommend considerable caution in the use of these "recidivism over time" findings.

## Variations in Recidivism

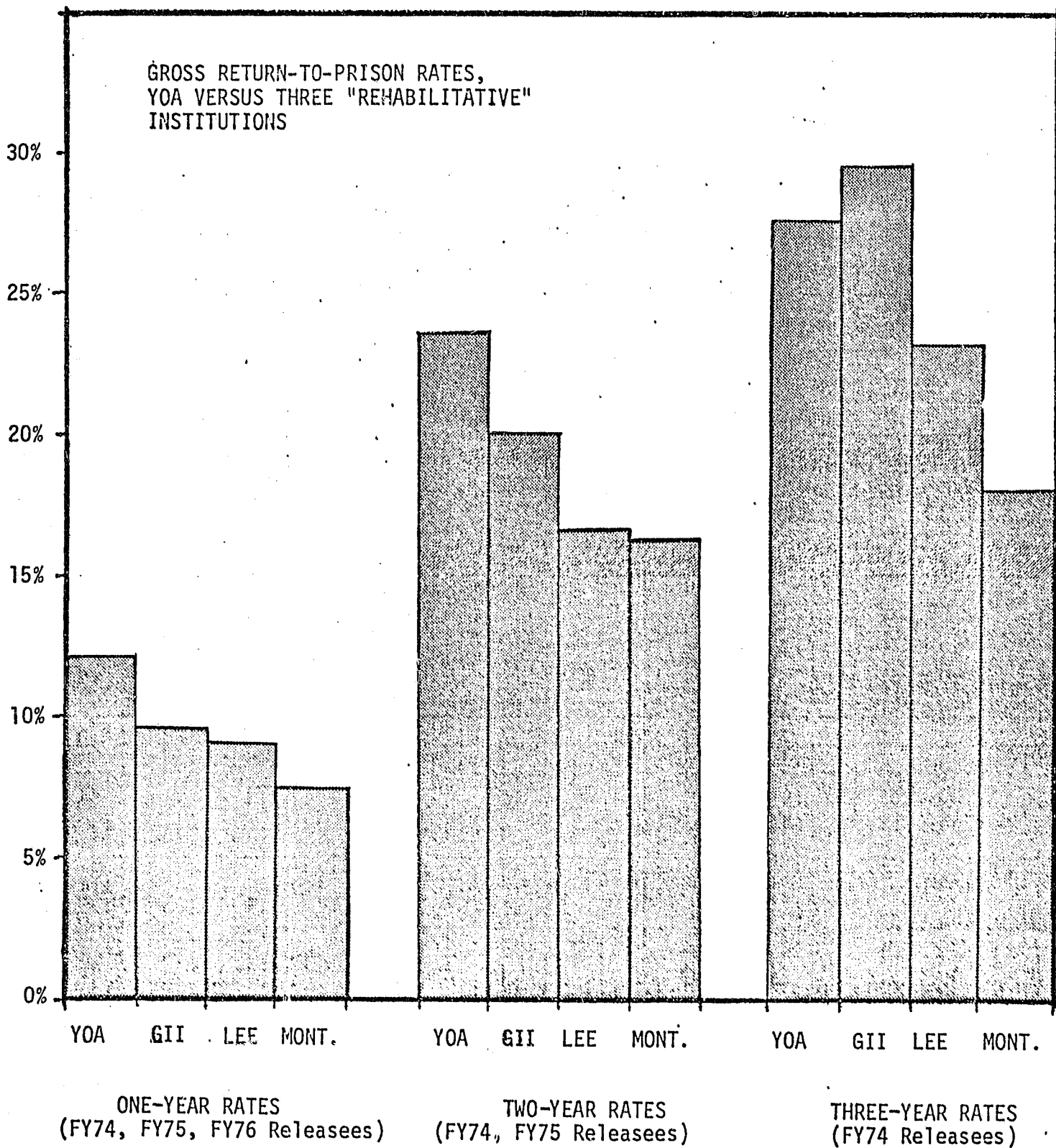
Comparisons of return-to-prison statistics for various institutions are helpful because several factors may be "discovered" which "explain" different rates, and programs are factors of this kind. For example, three institutions, each with considerable offerings of accepted high quality are seen to vary in their return rates in Figure A on the page which follows.

Averages in the one year rates show the prison with the youngest inmates, GII, to be only slightly above the figures for Lee Correctional Institution and Montgomery Correctional Institution where offenders in their mid-to-late twenties are in residence. However, the gap widens in the averaged two-year rates and remains fairly distinct in the third year of tracking. Offenders at GII where the average age is the youngest, 20 to 21 years, show the highest return rate when three-year figures are examined.

Figures for the three institutions at which the Youthful Offender Program has been administered offer additional insights. Examining the first year figures for GERC -- actually the last three quarters' exits for FY76 -- reveals a one-year rate of 15½%. The two institutions which had phased out the Youthful Offender Program in FY76, Walker Correctional Institution and the Georgia Training and Development Center (GTDC), were each at the 13% level of one-year returns. Although these data are fragmentary on GERC, the one-year rate for that institution seems to be extraordinarily high; the other two prisons have varied historically between 5% and 14% at GTDC and 7% and 9% at Walker C.I. during their YOA years.

"Reasons" for the higher return rate probably do not include the daily operating quality of the rehabilitation programs. A report entitled

FIGURE A.



"On-Site Evaluation of Education Program at GERCC" which was compiled in October of 1976 by a team headed by William Crump and educational program professionals noted that students were not making as rapid progress as expected in their academic education classes. The report also noted that there were no active vocational programs at GERC at that time. However, Dr. Crump's evaluation team gave the staff and management of the institution "high marks" in terms of their professionalism, morale, and leadership.

We certainly have no basis for questioning either the competence or the professional activities of the staff who operate the program. We have a major concern, however, in the area of implementation planning across the life of the Youthful Offender Program, especially since the program has been moved to the renovated GERC facility.

Even as this report is being written, there remain few stable vocational training opportunities for the youthful offenders at GERC. Although the institution may have "... impressive, innovative, and progressive plans which when implemented should have dramatic results ..." ("On-Site Evaluation," p.7), the agency and not the local unit should bear the responsibility for systematic and stable program planning and implementation. It is entirely possible, in our opinion, that the shortage of programs and the many distractions to staff and inmates of the chaotic "opening" that continues at GERC may have contributed to the disproportionately high return rate of that institution. (See more on program planning needs in the "Conclusions and Recommendations" Section of this report.)

There are, moreover, variations in the return-to-prison rates within the group of prisons which have served and do serve youthful offenders, and there are variations between the rate for the YOA institutions as

a group and the rates of other, otherwise similar correctional institutions. The differences within YOA institutions are relatively small in magnitude with the possible exception of the one partial figure for GERC. (See Table 3.2 below for data on the most recent years' data.) Data from FY76 show return rates for YOA prisons to range from 13% to 15½% while those for roughly similar institutions range from 9% to 11%.

Table 3.2. Return-to-Prison  
Rates for Six Institutions.

	One Year Rate Based on FY76 Exits	Three Year Rate Based on FY74 Exits
GERC	15.5%	--
GTDC	12.9%	24.6%
Walker	13.1%	17.8%
Lee	10.7%	23.2%
Montgomery	8.9%	18.1%
GII (Overall)	9.9%	29.6%

Source: Data run by the Systems Development  
Section, GSA, and analyzed by the  
Office of Research and Evaluation.

However, this seems to be largely a result of the universal parole surveillance provided for YOA's which is not provided for all other younger offenders leaving the system. Evidence for this conclusion is found in Table 3.2: the higher pattern for YOA's "washes out" when three-year tracking figures are used.

## Supervision and Recidivism

The issue of the effects of transitional (parole) supervision on recidivism is a recurring problem in discussions of the Youthful Offender Program. Since all YOA's are placed on conditional release, they constitute a disproportionate number of parole violators and are more frequently before the Board of Pardons and Parole for revocation hearings. Our observation that the long-term return rates are very similar for younger offenders regardless of YOA status or other designation will hopefully assist in clarifying the (informal) negative evaluation judgments often made about the program.

In fact, our evaluation may inadvertently make the case for a universal parole policy. Although youthful offenders have their conditional release revoked and come back into the system earlier than other offenders, they do not ultimately fail at any higher rate than young inmates elsewhere in the system.. As many as 70% appear to be coping and avoiding return to prison after three years! The fact that they come back for failure to adjust early after release may operate to protect the public and the offender if his behavior is leading to a serious problem with the law.

We assume that the rationale for not offering all inmates parole is based on the assumption that selectivity will protect the public and retain the threatening offender in an incapacitated state. Yet the inmate will eventually be released with or without the supervision and surveillance of the parole officer.

In FY72, over half (55.5%) of those considered for parole were awarded this form of release. The three-year return-to-prison rate for

parole leaving that year was 12.8%. In FY74, paroles had fallen to 45% and the return rate had climbed to 17%. (See Table 3.3 below.)

Table 3.3. Parolee Return-to-Prison  
Rates For The System As A Whole By  
Fiscal Year

	Parole Rate*	Return-to-Prison Rates		
		One Year	Two Years	Three Years
FY72	55.5%	3.5%	9.1%	12.8%
FY73	48.2%	3.6%	10.3%	15.5%
FY74	45.4%	4.6%	12.2%	17.3%
FY75	40.4%	5.8%	12.7%	
FY76	30.0%	5.3%		

SOURCE: Data on paroles from the Board of Pardons and Paroles monthly activity report compiled by the Office of Research and Evaluation. System return-to-prison rates were calculated from quarterly data and rates produced by the Statistics Unit, GSA, on 7/14/77.

NOTE(\*): "Parole Rate" is defined as the percentage of all inmates considered for parole each month who are awarded parole on that consideration. Aggregate data for each fiscal year was compiled from twelve monthly figures.

Examination of the shorter tracking period data for FY75 and FY76 suggests that this trend continues, bringing into serious question the efficiency of continually more restrictive parole practice.

SECTION 4.0

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Youthful Offender Program seems to us to have become routinized in a traditional prison mold which significantly limits the effectiveness of the program. Diagnostic processes, for example, do not operate to enhance the diversion potential of the program. Creative solutions to individual needs are not attempted, even though "shock incarceration", citizen involvement, educational release, diversion centers, and other programming "innovations" are familiar concepts to seasoned DOR staff. Case management and program assignment procedures are also typical of the traditional prison concepts; modernized case recording and program performance methodologies have not overcome the tendency to adapt the offenders' needs to staff needs and professional preferences. Pre-release services for the general adult population are fragmented and limited, but these programs are virtually non-existent for the Youthful Offenders in the state.

Central administration and planning for fully developing the programmatic aspects of the Youthful Offender Program are severely limited. High echelon staff consume inordinately large amounts of time reviewing and negotiating contracts with other staff at GERC and the Board of Pardons and Parole. This overemphasis on the methodology of adjusting release dates leaves little or no time for dealing with the important policy issues concerning young offenders and their needs.

The coordination and planning which does exist does not seem to affect the young women sentenced under the Act. The lines of authority and

accountability have become unclear as the agency has begun an effort to revise its approach to the needs of the woman offender. The needs of women Youthful Offenders are not addressed by either the current women's program or the current YO Program. Until diagnostic information is developed and synthesized for this group of younger women, their needs will likely continue to go unnoticed and unmet. Considering the rising crime rate among young women, the agency's response to this group of offenders appears to us to be totally inadequate.

From time to time, staff within the agency recommend that the Youthful Offender Act be repealed. We recommend that it be implemented. To date, actions taken in the name of implementation have had very beneficial effects on the correctional system: case management procedures have been improved, education programs have been expanded, and cooperation with the Parole Board has greatly improved. Yet the unique "alternative penalty" potential of the Law goes largely undeveloped.

The key to the issue of special services for younger offenders seems to us to be the separation of these younger offenders from the general adult population during the entire course of their corrective experience. Once they are separated, their unique needs as young people living outside of conventional society can be analyzed and dealt with by staff and programs geared to youth. We therefore recommend that DOR and the Parole Board institute a methodology for Board transfer of selected, volunteer young offenders into the YO Program. This would supplement the population which the judiciary is sentencing under the Act at this time.

We would also recommend that responsibility for all of these Youthful

Offenders, their program and program development needs, be vested in the Director of the Youthful Offender Program, and that this individual enjoy a special relationship within the agency similar to that of the Director of Women's Services. All staff and programs that function for the Youthful Offender would be directed by this person, and the special needs of young offenders would be addressed by a vigorous diagnostic and planning process.

A continuum of assignment options should be made available to the YO staff stationed at GDCC. At least one diversion center, appropriate Youthful Offender institutions of the traditional and community models, and special transitional services would be developed in this planning process. Contracting as now practiced would be eliminated altogether, and the Parole Board and the Youthful Offender Program would continue to assign release categories and amend release dates as formal criteria and their judgment dictate.

Principal additions to programs and services should include far more involvement of citizens in the community, far greater use of community training resources, increased career development counseling, more vigorous and service oriented follow-up during the transitional period following confinement, and sustained support for drug and alcohol abuse therapy programs. Every Youthful Offender should be pre-released through a community center program designed for that population and designed to "fit with" other elements of the Youthful Offender Program.

**END**