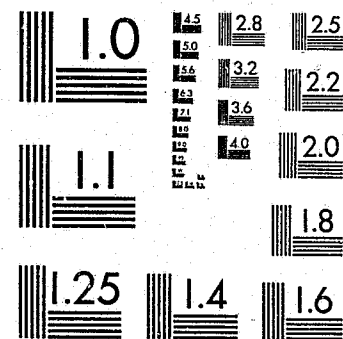


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DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONS
DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

PLACEMENT SURVEY
DECEMBER, 1981

Carol J. Garrett, Researcher
Melody D. Moore, Researcher
Planning and Evaluation Unit

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The major findings of an eight month survey of the characteristics of 184 youth committed to the Department of Institutions and the criteria upon which Division of Youth Services diagnosticians base their placement recommendations are as follows:

1. No disparity was found among detention centers in their use of institutional versus community placement.
2. The number of prior adjudications of a youth was not significantly related to the placement decision.
3. Youth recommended for institutional placement had more prior out-of-home placements than did those recommended for community placement although the difference was not statistically significant.
4. The majority of youth had been committed for property crimes. Those committed for crimes against persons were not necessarily referred to institutional placement.
5. The I-Level classification of a youth was a significant factor in the placement decision.
6. Diagnosticians reported a wide range of variables which influenced the placement decision. Two or more criteria were considered in the majority of cases.
7. The overwhelming majority of placement decisions were thought by diagnosticians to be appropriate. DYS diagnosticians take many factors into consideration when making a placement decision. Among the most often cited factors are treatment needs, offense or runaway history, I-Level, and the impact of prior interventions. There was no evidence that diagnosticians felt limited in placement options or that community placement, if it was available, would be more appropriate than institutional placement for many committed youth.

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ACQUISITIONS

In order to explore the criteria used by Division of Youth Services (DYS) diagnosticians, when making placement decisions for committed youth, a survey was undertaken in September, 1980. Prior research (Kihm, 1980) had suggested that such criteria were "vague," and that "at least 50% of the children committed to DYS could be safely and effectively treated in a well-structured community setting." As suggested by Kihm, the limited time frame and the small number of cases (N=34) in his research precluded definitive conclusions. The present study was conducted to assess the validity of Kihm's conclusions using a much larger sample and a more comprehensive questionnaire. The intent of this report is to address each of the conclusions in the Kihm report.

Beginning in September, 1980, a questionnaire (Appendix A) was completed by the diagnostician for every youth committed after September 21, 1980, for whom a placement decision was made. Questionnaires were completed for 184 committed youth before the end of data collection in May, 1981. Following are the results of analysis of those data.

Table 1 indicates the number of youth placed from each detention center and the placement decision.

 Insert Table 1 about here

The data indicate that 146 (79.3%) of youth were recommended for institutional placement while 31 (16.8%) were recommended to paid placement and 5 (3.8%) were placed at Fort Logan Mental Health Center or paroled. These figures are comparable to those reported by Kihm. The disparity among diagnostic centers in use of paid placement versus institutions reported

TABLE I
 Recommended Placement by Diagnostic Center

Detention Center	Placement		
	Institution	Paid Placement	Total
Adams	10 (62.5%)	6 (37.5%)	16 (9.0%)
Arapahoe	8 (88.9%)	1 (11.1%)	9 (5.1%)
Gilliam	62 (88.6%)	8 (11.4%)	70 (39.5%)
Jeffco	19 (82.6%)	4 (17.4%)	23 (13.0%)
Pueblo	32 (84.2%)	6 (15.8%)	38 (21.5%)
Zeb Pike	15 (71.4%)	6 (28.6%)	21 (11.9%)
TOTAL	146 (79.3%)	31 (16.8%)	177 (96.2%) ¹

¹Five commitments (2.7%) were transferred to FLMHC and two (1.1%) were paroled.

by Kihm was not found when the present data were analyzed. No significant differences were found among detention centers in their use of the two placement alternatives ($\chi^2_{(5)} = 8.32, p = .14$).

Table 2 presents data relating to the number of adjudications prior to the one resulting in commitment for youth referred to institutional and paid placement facilities.

Insert Table 2 about here

Among the committed youth, 19.5% had no prior adjudications. Of those with fewer than two prior adjudications (58.0%), 56.7% were referred to an institutional placement and 64.3% to a paid placement. Results indicated that the number of prior adjudications was not significantly related to placement recommendations.

Data presented in Table 3 indicate that 64.9% of the committed youth had experienced at least one out-of-home residential placement and that 40.4% had been in residential placement two or more times. Further analysis indicated that number of prior residential placements was not directly related to the placement recommendations although higher percentages of those referred to paid placement had either no prior placements (53.3%) or fewer than two such placements (80.0%).

Insert Table 3 about here

Data in Table 4 indicate that the majority of youth referred to both institutions and paid placement were charged with crimes against property (67.6%, institutions; 66.0%, paid placement). The fact of being committed for crimes against persons did not uniformly result in a recommendation for institutionalization as reported by Kihm. Of

TABLE 2
Recommended Placement by Number of Adjudications

Adjudications	Placement		Total ¹
	Institution	Paid Placement	
No Prior Adjudications	29 (20.6%)	4 (14.3%)	33 (19.5%)
Prior Adjudications	112 (79.4%)	24 (85.7%)	136 (80.5%)
TOTAL	141 (100.0%)	28 (100.0%)	169 (100.0%)
Fewer than 2 prior Adjudications	80 (56.7%)	18 (64.3%)	98 (58.0%)
Two or More Adjudications	61 (43.3%)	10 (35.7%)	71 (42.0%)
TOTAL	141 (100.0%)	28 (100.0%)	169 (100.0%)

¹Excludes those for whom the information was unavailable or who were paroled directly or referred to FLMHC.

TABLE 3
Recommended Placement
By Number of Prior Residential Placements

# of Prior Resi- dential Placements	DYS Placement		
	Institutions	Paid Placement	Total ¹
No Placements	44 (31.2%)	16 (53.3%)	60 (35.1%)
One or More Placements	97 (68.8%)	14 (46.7%)	111 (64.9%)
TOTAL	141 (100.0%)	30 (100.0%)	171 (100.0%)
Fewer than 2 Placements	78 (55.3%)	24 (80.0%)	102 (59.6%)
Two or more Placements	63 (44.7%)	6 (20.0%)	69 (40.4%)
TOTAL	141 (100.0%)	30 (100.0%)	171 (100.0%)

¹ Excluding those for whom the information was unavailable and those directly paroled or referred to FLMHC.

those referred to paid placement, 10.0% had been committed for a person offense. Analyses indicated that type of commitment offense was not systematically related to placement decisions.

Insert Table 4 about here

Table 5 presents data on the I-Level classification of youth referred either to an institution or to paid placement. The majority of youth (55.4%) were classified I₃Cfm. Relatively more youth (67.7%) referred to paid placement were Cfm than were those referred to institutions (52.7%). While institutional referrals covered the full range of I-Level subtypes, only I₃Cfm, I₄ unclassified, and I₄Nx youth were recommended to paid placement. This evidence that I-Level is a factor in the diagnosticians placement decision is supported both statistically ($\chi^2(6) = 16.63, p < .01$) and by the fact that I-Level was specifically mentioned by diagnosticians as a placement criteria in 27.1% of the cases.

Insert Table 5 about here

In the present survey, diagnosticians were asked to indicate specifically what criteria were used in making their placement decision. In only three cases (1.6%) were no criteria mentioned. Two or more criteria were cited in 77% of the cases. Table 6 presents those reasons for placement which were mentioned, the number of youth for whom the criterion was applicable, and the percentage that number represented of the 146 institutional or 31 paid placement referrals. The most frequently cited placement criterion for all youth was specific treatment needs. Treatment needs were mentioned for 49.2% of these youth. Other criteria mentioned were, in decreasing order of frequency, offense or runaway history, I-Level, prior interventions, and needs for structure. For paid placement youth

TABLE 4
Recommended Placement by Commitment Offenses¹

Type of Offense	Placement		
	Institutions	Paid Placement	Total
Person	33 (15.3%)	5 (10.0%)	38 (14.3%)
Property	146 (67.6%)	33 (66.0%)	179 (67.3%)
Other	37 (17.1%)	12 (24.0%)	49 (18.4%)
TOTAL	216 (100.0%)	50 (100.0%)	266 (100.0%)

¹ Includes all offenses reported in connection with the present commitment.

TABLE 5
Recommended Placement by I-Level

I-Level	Placement		
	Institutions	Paid Placement	Total
I ₃ —	2 (1.4%)	--	2 (1.1%)
I ₃ Cfm	77 (52.7%)	21 (67.7%)	98 (55.4%)
I ₃ Cfc	7 (4.8%)	--	7 (4.0%)
I ₃ Cta	12 (8.2%)	--	12 (6.8%)
I ₄ —	2 (1.4%)	3 (9.7%)	5 (2.8%)
I ₄ Na	21 (14.4%)	--	21 (11.9%)
I ₄ Nx	25 (17.1%)	7 (22.6%)	32 (18.1%)
TOTAL	146 (100.0%)	31 (100.0%)	177 (100.0%)

only, the prior intervention history of the juvenile was the most frequently mentioned factor in the placement decision. For institutional referrals, the two most often cited factors were treatment needs and offense/runaway history.

These results indicate that diagnosticians consider a wide variety of factors before making a placement decision.

Insert Table 6 about here

A major issue is the proportion of committed youth for whom institutional placement is recommended. The Kihm report suggests, based on prior research and interviews with DYS diagnosticians, that at least 50% of committed youth could be effectively placed in community-based programs. The statement was also made that when not enough community beds were available or the "best" group home was full, a youth might be sent to an institution by default. It is beyond the scope of this report to evaluate the effectiveness of community-based programs. The opinions of DYS diagnosticians were, however, directly addressed as was any disparity between what a diagnostician recommended and where the youth was actually placed.

Actual placement of youth was in agreement with recommended placement for 95.5% of the cases. Only one youth was recommended to community placement but, in fact, placed at GGYC. The other cases represented a youth being referred to one institutional unit but placed in another. It would appear that diagnosticians' recommendations are being very closely followed.

In response to the question "Would another type of placement (e.g., community alternative) be more appropriate if such were available?",

TABLE 6
Placement Criteria Reported by Diagnosticians

Criterion	Number of Cases		
	Placement		
	Institutions	Paid Placement	Total
I-Level	48 (32.9%)	--	48 (27.1%)
Age	9 (6.2%)	1 (3.2%)	10 (5.6%)
Educational Needs	22 (15.1%)	8 (25.8%)	30 (16.9%)
Need for Structure	39 (26.7%)	3 (9.7%)	42 (23.7%)
Treatment Needs	76 (52.1%)	11 (35.5%)	87 (49.2%)
Offense or Runaway History	50 (34.2%)	10 (32.3%)	60 (33.9%)
Danger to Community	15 (10.3%)	--	15 (8.5%)
Emotional Needs	35 (24.0%)	2 (6.5%)	37 (20.9%)
Vocational Needs	8 (5.5%)	9 (29.0%)	17 (9.6%)
Prior Interventions	27 (18.5%)	17 (54.8%)	44 (24.9%)
Health Needs	4 (2.7%)	--	4 (2.3%)
Temporary Placement	1 (0.7%)	--	1 (0.6%)
Other ¹	18 (12.3%)	11 (35.5%)	29 (16.4%)
TOTAL CASES	146	31	177

¹The "other" category consists of specific criteria, defined by diagnosticians, which did not fall clearly into any of the other categories.

diagnosticians replied "no" for 89.5% of the cases for whom an institutional placement had been recommended.

Diagnosticians clearly do not feel that many committed youth are being placed in an institutional setting because of lack of available community placements. Indeed, they report that the institutional placement, where made, is appropriate for the vast majority of diagnosed youth.

In conclusion, it appears that DYS diagnosticians consider many facets of the information available on a youth when making a placement decision and, in the overwhelming majority of cases, feel that the placement recommendation is appropriate for that youth.

APPENDIX A

DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES
YOUTH PLACEMENT SURVEY

(Diagnostic Center)

(Diagnostician)

(Date of Placement Decision)

Instructions

Please complete this form for all youth committed to DYS for whom a placement decision is made. On the 15th and 30th of each month, please send completed forms to Carol Garrett or Melody Moore, Planning and Evaluation Unit, Division of Youth Services, 4255 S. Knox Court, Denver, CO 80236. If you have any questions, please contact Carol Garrett or Melody Moore at (303) 761-3707.

1. Name of youth _____
DOB _____ Ethnicity _____
2. Committing county _____
3. County of juvenile's residence _____
4. Date of current commitment _____
Month / Day / Year
5. Current commitment offense _____
 - a) Charge on petition _____
 - b) Was charge modified _____ Yes _____ No
 - c) Adjudicated charge _____
6. I-Level classification _____
7. Check other outstanding diagnostic features:
 - _____ Suicidal
 - _____ Dangerous/assaultive
 - _____ Substance abuser
 - _____ User of psychotropic medications

- _____ Child abuse victim
- _____ Chronic runaway
- _____ Severe emotional/behavioral disabilities
- _____ Other (please specify) _____

8. Commitment status:

- _____ Nonmandatory
- _____ Mandatory - repeat
- _____ Mandatory - violent

9. Sentencing:

- _____ Indeterminate
- _____ Determinate (length of sentence _____)

10. List all previous DYS commitments:

	Date	Commitment Offense	Placement from Detention (facility and cottage)
a)	Month / Day / Year	_____	_____
b)	Month / Day / Year	_____	_____
c)	Month / Day / Year	_____	_____
d)	Month / Day / Year	_____	_____

11. Most serious offense committed by youth _____

12. List all prior adjudications. For each adjudication, show all offenses (after plea bargaining) for which juvenile was found guilty by the juvenile court. Also, list the final disposition for each adjudication. If the final disposition was placement out of home, list the specific placement and agency (i.e., Brockhurst Group Home, DSS).

- a) Offense(s) _____
Date of adjudication _____
Month / Day / Year
Disposition _____

b) Offense(s) _____

Date of adjudication _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Disposition _____

c) Offense(s) _____

Date of adjudication _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Disposition _____

d) Offense(s) _____

Date of adjudication _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Disposition _____

e) Offense(s) _____

Date of adjudication _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Disposition _____

(use back for additional space)

13. List all prior out-of-home placements including placements with friends/relatives. Indicate agency jurisdiction (if applicable), date of placement, length of stay, and placement upon termination.

a) Placement _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Agency _____

Length of stay _____

Placement upon termination _____

b) Placement _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Agency _____

Length of stay _____

Placement upon termination _____

c) Placement _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Agency _____

Length of stay _____

Placement upon termination _____

d) Placement _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Agency _____

Length of stay _____

Placement upon termination _____

e) Placement _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Agency _____

Length of stay _____

Placement upon termination _____

(use back for additional space)

14. Has the youth previously received any nonresidential intervention (i.e., outpatient mental health services, school counseling, drug treatment services, diversion services)? If so, please indicate the date(s), duration, name, and nature of the intervention.

a) Date _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Duration _____

Name of program _____

Nature of program _____

b) Date _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Duration _____

Name of program _____

Nature of program _____

c) Date / /
 Month Day Year

Duration _____

Name of program _____

Nature of program

(use back for additional space)

15. Indicate your recommended placement decision for the current commitment. Please indicate facility (cottage if applicable).

Placement decision

16. On what criteria did you base your placement decision?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

17. Would another type of placement (e.g., community alternative) be more appropriate if such were available? If so, please indicate what placement(s) you would recommend and why.

[illegible]

END