



# What Do You See?

**REPORT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TASK FORCE  
ON SERIOUS, VIOLENT AND CHRONIC JUVENILE OFFENDERS**

Jacksonville, Florida

MAY 1998

# Test Your Knowledge of the Facts About Violence

1. Over two-thirds of arrests for violence involve persons under 18 years of age.  
True or False?
2. Rates of violent victimizations are much higher today than they were 20 years ago.  
True or False?
3. More children are killed by their parents or guardians than by other young people.  
True or False?
4. Violent offenders are more likely to be convicted in criminal courts than in juvenile courts.  
True or False?
5. Most persons under age 18 who go to prison are sentenced for violent crimes.  
True or False?
6. Most murders are perpetrated by persons who are known to the victim.  
True or False?

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## Attached Exhibits

1. Community Advocates
2. Task Force
3. Comprehensive Strategy Board



# Executive Summary

This is a summary of a report issued in May 1998, by the **Comprehensive Strategy Task Force** of Jacksonville, Florida.

In 1993, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the United States Department of Justice issued the **Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders**, which set out key research findings and specified a number of critical policy assumptions to guide effective programming. The strategy is guided by five general imperatives:

- **Strengthen the family** in its role to instill moral principles, and provide guidance and support to children;
- **Support core social institutions** in their roles to develop capable, mature, and responsible youths;
- **Prevent delinquency** because prevention is the most cost effective approach to combating youth crime;
- **Intervene immediately and effectively** when delinquent behavior is first manifested; and
- **Control and identify** the small group of serious, violent, and chronic offenders through a range of graduated sanctions, including placement in secure facilities.

The strategy rests on a risk-focused prevention model which is based on known risk factors existing in a community. Complementing the prevention component is a risk-focused continuum of sanctions for juvenile offenders covering immediate responses for minor misconduct, an array of intermediate sanctions for serious habitual offenders, and effective, secure treatment programs for the violent few.

Under the sponsorship of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, Jacksonville has sought to involve a wide array of officials and community leaders in the implementation process, seeking collaboration and community consensus from both sanctions and prevention perspectives. In June 1996, the duPont Fund invited over 100 community leaders to explore the possibility of implementing the strategy in Jacksonville. After presentations and discussion, participants voted unanimously to begin the implementation of the strategy. During the summer and fall of 1996, a **Community Advocates Board** was formed consisting of approximately 40 community leaders who were charged with responding to suggestions made by strategy volunteers, and ultimately with advocating strategy recommendations.

A **Comprehensive Strategy Task Force** was formed and charged with strategy implementation. Work began in November 1996, with a two-day training session after which the task force divided into a Prevention Team and a Graduated Sanctions Team. The teams began the work of gathering and assessing data, studying and prioritizing risk factors and risk indicators, identifying and assessing effective programs, and exploring promising approaches.

One intent of this group was to discover and analyze emerging local and national research in the area of juvenile crime, and to apply that research to the local situation in a forthright and open process, utilizing as many resources as possible. The number of participants speaks loudly to the openness of the process, and the conclusions themselves speak directly to the dedication and effort of everyone involved.

Jacksonville's effort on the prevention side has largely consisted of prioritizing the most prevalent risk factors facing Jacksonville youth, analyzing how those factors compare to state and national statistics, and identifying specific local programs and strategies which address the priority risk factors. The sanctions team gathered and analyzed local, state, and national data about crime in general, and about juvenile crime in particular, assessed the decision-making process in the juvenile system, and studied programs available to local juvenile authorities.

The task force reported its initial findings to the community in July 1997. This report was followed by a series of smaller community outreach activities designed to collect feedback and gain local support. The implementation of the strategy in Jacksonville will continue to be a joint effort of the City of Jacksonville, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the State Attorney's Office, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and other local agencies.

The strategy is based upon the identification of a community's priority risk factors from the 19 national research-based risk factors shown below. It assumes that resources will be directed to those programs which deal either directly with these risk factors, or with protective factors, which buffer the risks. Thirty years of national research has revealed that reducing these risk factors, and/or increasing these protective factors, reduces the incidence and severity of juvenile crime.

## **National Risk Factors**

### **Community Domain**

- Availability and use of drugs
- Availability of firearms
- Laws and norms favorable toward drug use
- Media portrayal of violence
- Transitions and mobility
- Low neighborhood attachment
- Extreme economic deprivation

### **Family Domain**

- Family history of problem behavior
- Family management problems
- Family conflict
- Favorable parental attitudes regarding involvement in problem behaviors

### **Individual Domain**

- Alienation and rebelliousness
- Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior
- Early initiation of the problem behavior
- Constitutional factors

### **School Domain**

- Early and persistent antisocial behavior
- Academic failure beginning in late elementary school
- Lack of commitment to school

Based upon available data related to Jacksonville, the task force selected five priority risk factors upon which the strategy's prevention efforts would focus. This report presents rationales for each, along with indicators, comments, and promising approaches.

### **Jacksonville's Priority Risk Factors**

- Economic deprivation
- Family management problems
- Early academic failure
- Lack of commitment to school
- Availability and use of drugs

As a basis for the task force's sanctions work, data was collected and an inventory of sanctions and structured decision-making instruments was made. These findings were explored and evaluated by the three sanctions subcommittees: data collection, structured decision-making, and programs. More than 50 sanctions presently exist, and structured decision-making instruments, developed at the state level, have been developed and are in current use. The task force supplemented the data and inventory with presentations by local judges, at-risk youth, and staff from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. More than 15 pre-existing studies and reports were reviewed along with current research. Additionally, a survey of juveniles serving time in jail was conducted, along with a state-wide survey of state attorneys concerning procedures for filing delinquency petitions.

### **Summary of Major Recommendations**

After 18 months, much work remains to be done. The task force's goal of reducing delinquency by 40 percent, by the year 2015, recognizes the need for joint community efforts and a comprehensive strategy to reduce priority risk factors, and to increase protective factors for children. The risk factors must penetrate the implementation of the plan on both sides; the prevention component of this strategy is integral to success in sanctions. Programs and services must be designed to implement and improve protective factors, in order to reduce the risk factors.

Under the task force's plan, the Mayor, State Attorney, and Sheriff should establish and co-chair a Comprehensive Strategy Board as a collaborative effort to identify, monitor, and promote juvenile prevention and rehabilitative services, and to advocate for children. The board would include the president of the City Council, the chief judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit, the Public Defender, the chair of the Duval County School Board, and representatives from other relevant agencies and community institutions. The board will be staffed by a team lodged in the City of Jacksonville's

Department of Community Services, which builds upon and collaborates with existing agencies through the Human Services Council.

The board will organize interested agency and community volunteers into working committees which should address the needs for community dialogue, prevention, sanctions, legislation, monitoring, evaluation, and updating. These committees will provide ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and information sharing among public and not-for-profit agencies. They will:

- Set goals and priorities;
- Provide thematic direction;
- Seek technical assistance from national technical resources;
- Seek legislative changes where appropriate;
- Direct continued research;
- Assess resources and programs;
- Facilitate training and community information;
- Make connection with funding sources and enforcement agencies;
- Review processes for structured decision-making;
- Encourage programs which provide prevention and rehabilitation services to juveniles;
- Build on the promising approaches which address multiple priority risk factors and protective factors already begun locally;
- Work to update the priority risk factors and protective factors;
- Develop an effective working relationship with the Duval County Public Schools;
- Coordinate with the WAGES Coalition to foster positive youth employment programs;
- Give recognition and priority to the communities and neighborhoods in which poverty is a prevalent condition, in order to establish teams and programs to deal with the five priority risk factors;
- Prioritize the enforcement of existing laws and regulations affecting the sale, distribution and taxation of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs;
- Assess the 300 children's programs providing local prevention services which have been identified by the strategy; and
- Examine the establishment of truancy processing centers to receive and interview truants and involve their parents.



# The Comprehensive Strategy – A National Context

In 1993, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the United States Department of Justice (OJJDP) issued an important policy paper that synthesized the best national-level thinking about comprehensive approaches to prevent, and control, serious and violent youth crime. This **Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders** sets out key research findings and specified a number of critical policy assumptions to guide effective programming. The strategy is guided by five general principles:

- **Strengthen the family** in its role to instill moral principles and provide guidance and support to children;
- **Support core social institutions** in their roles to develop capable, mature and responsible youths;
- **Prevent delinquency** because prevention is the most cost effective approach to combating youth crime;
- **Intervene immediately and effectively** when delinquent behavior is first manifested; and
- **Control and identify** the small group of serious, violent and chronic offenders through a range of graduated sanctions, including placement in secure facilities.

## Overview of Social Development Strategy

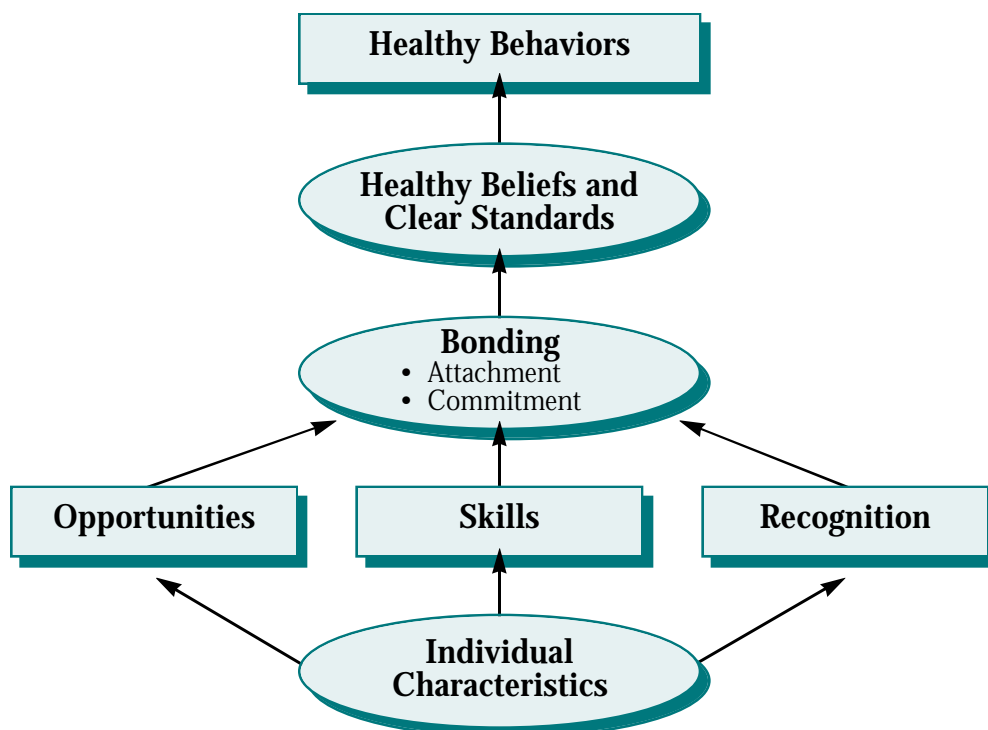


Figure 1



The strategy rests on a risk-focused prevention model which is based on known risk factors existing in a community. Using the community planning mobilization methods of Communities That Care, the strategy leads community leaders to identify priorities for reducing risk factors and increasing protective or buffering factors for at-risk youth. The risk factors are grouped in the four general areas, or domains, in which youth experience them: individual, community, family, and school.

Protective factors buffer children from the dangers associated with the risk factors. These include personal characteristics of the individual, social bonding, a system of healthy beliefs, clear standards for behavior, and involvement with community assets. It is crucial that protective factors be identified in programs serving children. This focus improves the community's effort to protect children against the effects of exposure to risk factors and helps community leaders assess the effectiveness of programs for children.

Complementing the risk-focused prevention approach is a risk-focused continuum of sanctions for juvenile offenders. The graduated sanctions component of the strategy employs the same risk and protective factors as the Communities That Care model, in establishing effective juvenile justice sanctioning programs. The continuum of sanctions covers immediate responses for minor misconduct, an array of intermediate sanctions for serious habitual offenders, as well as effective, secure treatment programs for the violent few.

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) and Developmental Research and Programs, Inc. (DRP) have been working with the support of OJJDP, over the last several years, in the development of a model for implementation of the strategy.

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund assisted the cities of Ft. Myers, Florida, and Jacksonville, Florida, in designing and planning the implementation of the strategy in their respective communities. Ft. Myers took a very focused approach involving a small group of administrators and officials involved in the juvenile justice system, and worked primarily on the sanctions side of the strategy. Jacksonville, on the other hand, sought to involve a wide array of officials and community leaders in the implementation process, seeking collaboration and community consensus from both sanctions and prevention perspectives.



# Jacksonville and the Comprehensive Strategy

By most appearances, Jacksonville looks like a dynamic southern city on the move. With its beautiful riverfront and nearby beaches, low unemployment, a new NFL football team, a grand new symphony hall, and the arrival of many new businesses, Jacksonville boasts a special quality of life and economic prosperity for its citizens.

But Jacksonville faces a serious challenge to the future of its most precious resource: its children. The status of our children, while improving in some areas, is alarming. Of the nearly 200,000 children in our county, one in four is growing up in poverty. Our teen birth rate, while improving, is higher than that of the state and the nation - suggesting that too many mothers are unprepared to provide an environment that encourages healthy development, literacy, and school success for their children. Jacksonville's divorce rate is higher than the state average. Our schools - like most across the country - are facing challenges: high school graduation rates are lower than the state average and declining, test scores are lower than the national median, truancy is increasing, and the average student mobility rate is far higher than the state average.

On the positive side, recent investments in prevention appear to be paying off with improvements in early childhood indicators, such as on-time prenatal care. In addition, community policing and tough law enforcement measures appear to have helped curb serious juvenile crime. Nonetheless, misdemeanors are on the rise and there is a significant increase in the number of girls involved in them. Of further concern, population projections showing a 25 percent surge in young adults by the year 2010, heighten our concern about how we as a city can effectively and expediently address the issues challenging our children and our future.

Key Indicators	Jacksonville	Florida Average	National Average
Child Poverty (1995-1996)	24%	20.3%	20.2%
Births to Teens/1,000 Live Births (1995)	58.5	56.6	58.9
Divorces per 1,000 (1996)	6.2	5.5	5.7
On-time Prenatal Care (1995-1995)	78%	81.3%	80.2%
CTBS Reading Median (1995-1995)	53	67	71
CTBS Math Median (1995-1995)	60	66	70
Students Absent 20+ Days (1997)	31.6	28.6	(not available)
On-time High School Graduation (1997)	68.7%	73.2%	(not available)
Projected Population Increase of 15-17 Year Olds by 2005	25%	26%	(not available)

**Note:** Data Sources include Florida Kids Count Data Book, Profile of Florida's Children, Duval County School Board School Accountability Report Card, Florida Times-Union articles, The State of America's Children (Children's Defense Fund), Office of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, Duval County Sheriff, and the Florida Benchmarks Report.

	April 1, 1995 Actual	April 1, 2000 Estimate	% Change from 1995	April 1, 2005	% Change from 2,000
Ages 0-4	61,435	61,742	0.5%	64,088	3.8 %
Ages 5-9	52,557	58,811	11.9%	58,811	0.0 %
Ages 10-14	47,945	94,465	13.6 %	59,802	9.8 %
Ages 15-19	25,372	29,791	17.3 %	33,064	11.1 %
Totals	192,309	204,779	6.5 %	215,765	5.4 %

Note: Data Sources include Florida Center for Children and Youth - 3/96, City of Jacksonville Internet Home Page, Florida Office of Vital Statistics

## History of Collaboration and Investment in Children

Fortunately, Jacksonville's city leaders have already recognized the importance of investing in children. In 1994, the Mayor and the Jacksonville City Council created the Jacksonville Children's Commission, an independent city agency, to focus more resources on primary prevention programs. The commission has established a long-term developmental strategy to support children and their families, prenatally to age 18, through prevention initiatives such as Healthy Families Jacksonville, quality child care and after-school programs, and workforce preparation programs. It is already seeing measurable improvements among children served. The city also benefits from the collaborative leadership of the heads of its public agencies serving children and families. The Human Services Council, active since 1983, has worked diligently to improve coordination and effectiveness and to fill gaps in services. Full-service schools, a common application for funding, a joint funding review process, and the identification of common indicators of focus are some of the efforts produced by this collaboration.

In the juvenile justice arena, the creation of the new Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has resulted in more citizen involvement, strategic planning, and an emphasis on community-based early intervention efforts in its allocation of resources to reduce juvenile crime. Our State Attorney has been aggressive in the enforcement of strict measures for serious juvenile offenders as well as in implementing and creating early intervention and diversion initiatives. In the schools, the New Century Commission, a citizen committee appointed by the Mayor and the Duval County School Board, has been empowered to set standards for student achievement through a community action plan. And in Jacksonville's most needy neighborhoods, Mayor John Delaney has deployed the Neighborhood Intensive Care Program to rebuild community infrastructure and connect volunteers, businesses, and other resources to improve student achievement at low performing schools.

## Initiation of the Comprehensive Strategy

For Jacksonville, the Comprehensive Strategy offers an opportunity to build and strengthen its foundation of community initiatives for children. While the city clearly recognizes the importance of prevention, the Comprehensive Strategy's emphasis on a balanced approach to prevention and sanctions

allows all professionals in the juvenile justice system and in youth service organizations to plan jointly a comprehensive approach using a single framework. As a city determined to invest its resources effectively and efficiently, the strategy's research-based, outcome-focused, and action-oriented planning process fit well with our values. The strategy's identification of promising approaches also offers us the ability to justify new initiatives and take current initiatives to scale. Finally, the broad community participation required by the strategy provides the opportunity to build community and political will necessary to sustain a long-term plan of action for children.

In June 1996, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund invited more than 100 community leaders to a luncheon to explore the possibility of the implementation of the strategy in Jacksonville. Presentations were made to those leaders by NCCD and DRP representatives. After the presentations and the ensuing discussion, the participants voted unanimously to begin a program of implementation of the strategy in Jacksonville.

During the summer and fall of 1996, a **Community Advocates Board** was formed consisting of approximately 40 community leaders who were charged with responding to suggestions made by strategy volunteers, and ultimately advocating strategy recommendations. It was intended that the board meet quarterly to hear status reports from task force volunteers, and that it provide a means to keep the attention of community leaders on the strategy's work. The **Community Advocates Board** was chaired by William E. Scheu and Pamela Y. Paul.

At the same time, a **Comprehensive Strategy Task Force** was formed and charged with the actual implementation of the strategy. The work of the task force began in earnest in November 1996, with a two-day training session. The task force then divided into a **Prevention Team**, chaired by Nathan H. Wilson and Vera Davis, and a **Graduated Sanctions Team**, chaired by Dorothy Pate. Each began the exhaustive work of gathering and assessing data, studying and prioritizing risk factors and risk indicators, identifying and assessing effective programs, and exploring promising approaches. Members of the **Community Advocates Board** and the **Comprehensive Strategy Task Force** are identified in Exhibit 1.

Jacksonville's effort on the prevention side has largely consisted of prioritizing the most prevalent risk factors facing Jacksonville youth, analyzing how those factors compare to state and national statistics, and identifying specific local programs and strategies which address the priority risk factors.

During the development of the strategy, task force members obtained new research which helped further enhance certain aspects of the strategy. The protective factor was informed by recent research conducted by Search Institute and the Center for Youth Development on positive youth development. The research posits that children and youth exposed to prevention programs are not necessarily fully prepared to lead healthy, productive lives. A supplement to the protective factor theory, the Search Institute's asset development research outlines 40 positive development assets which need to be present in children and youth for them to become healthy, well-adjusted, and problem-free. The Jacksonville task force will include the positive youth development and asset development models, as well as any additional new studies, to enhance its recommendations for the Comprehensive Strategy.

The sanctions side of the effort gathered and analyzed local, state, and national data about crime in general and about juvenile crime in particular, assessed the decision-making process in the juvenile system, and studied programs available to local juvenile authorities.

Strategy volunteers, serving on either or both teams, met bi-weekly to learn more about prevention and sanctions programs, the youth enrolled in these programs, and where service delivery gaps or duplications exist. From these meetings, and through voluminous outside data collection by strategy volunteers, the task force reported its initial findings to the community in July 1997.

The July community report was followed by a series of smaller community outreach activities designed to collect feedback and gain local support. The implementation of the strategy in Jacksonville will continue to be a joint effort of the City of Jacksonville, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the State Attorney's Office, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, and other local agencies. These partners are committed to working together to achieve the strategy's recommendations and are hopeful that their efforts can be replicated nationally.

The task force has completed the initial implementation of the strategy. This report is intended to outline to the **Community Advocates Board**, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, and the Jacksonville community at-large, the results of that initial implementation. The report generally focuses on the work of the task force to date and its recommendations for the future.

Citizens should note that juvenile justice agencies and programs are one part of a larger picture that involves many other local agencies and programs that work with at-risk youth and their families. It is important that juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs be integrated with local police, social service, child welfare, school, and family preservation programs. These programs must reflect the community's determinations of its most pressing problems and priorities.

Establishing community planning teams that include a broad base of participants fosters consensus on priorities and services to be provided, while building support for a comprehensive approach to programming that draws on all sectors of the community for participation.

Comprehensive approaches to delinquency prevention and intervention will require collaboration between the juvenile justice system and other service provision systems, including mental health, child welfare, education, the faith community, and community asset-based, grass-roots organizations. The development of mechanisms that effectively link these different service providers at the program level is an important component of any community's comprehensive plan.



# Prevention Issues

The strategy is based upon the identification of a community's priority risk factors from the 19 national research-based risk factors shown below. It assumes that resources will be directed to those programs which deal either directly with these risk factors, or with protective factors which buffer the risks. Reducing these risk factors, and/or increasing these protective factors, reduces the incidence and severity of juvenile crime. Each risk factor will be evaluated on the further identified measurable indicators which can be tracked over a period of years to determine the effectiveness of the programs.

In order to determine the most significant risk factors for Jacksonville's children and youth, the task force performed extensive work in selecting the five key risk factors, reviewing 187 indicators, and assessing their relation to state and national data and to historical trends

The 19 national-based risk factors established by the Comprehensive Strategy research are:

## **Community Domain**

- Availability and use of drugs
- Availability of firearms
- Laws and norms favorable toward drug use
- Media portrayal of violence
- Transitions and mobility
- Low neighborhood attachment
- Extreme economic deprivation

## **Individual Domain**

- Alienation and rebelliousness
- Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior
- Early initiation of the problem behavior
- Constitutional factors

## **Family Domain**

- Family history of problem behavior
- Family management problems
- Family conflict
- Favorable parental attitudes regarding involvement in problem behaviors

## **School Domain**

- Early and persistent antisocial behavior
- Academic failure beginning in late elementary school
- Lack of commitment to school

Based upon available data, the task force selected five priority risk factors upon which the strategy's efforts would focus. A discussion follows of each of the five. In addition, the prevention team identified more than 300 programs dealing with these risk factors. While the prevention team did not have the staff resources to assess these programs individually, an assessment effort is included in the further implementation of the strategy. The prevention team was, however, able to draw upon concurrent planning, program, and evaluation efforts to offer local examples of promising approaches as well as to recommend expansion and/or enhancement of these efforts.

# Jacksonville's Priority Risk Factors

## I. Economic Deprivation (Poverty)

### A. Rationale

Poverty is linked to school failure, health problems, delinquency, teen pregnancy and violence toward others. Poverty increases stress and raises the statistical likelihood of premature sex, teen parenthood and early death. Poverty plays a significant negative role in the development of healthy, educated and well-adjusted youth.

### B. Indicators

- (1) Percent of Jacksonville children living at or below the poverty level
- (2) Percent of Jacksonville children by zip code living at or below poverty level

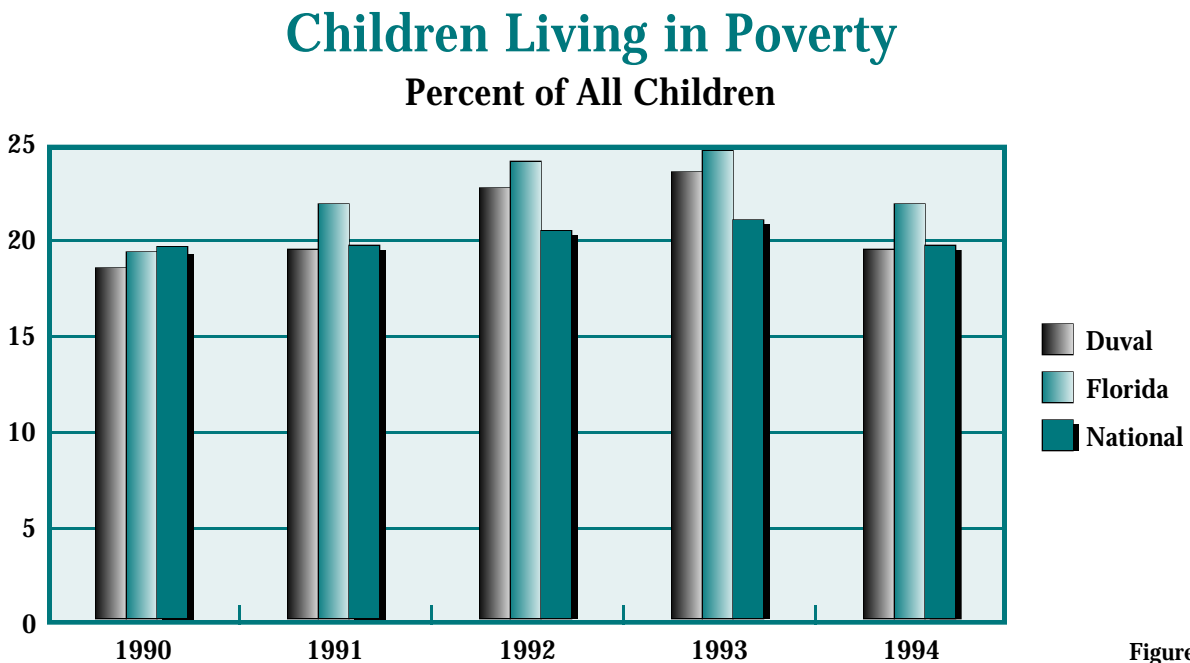


Figure 2

### C. Observations Concerning Indicators

- (1) The U.S. has the highest child poverty rate of the 18 industrialized nations (one in five).
- (2) Approximately 24 percent (50,000 or one in four) children in Jacksonville are at or below the poverty level, and the rate of children living in poverty in Jacksonville is increasing.
- (3) There is a 90 percent correlation between the highest poverty rate zip codes in Duval County and the zip codes having the highest number of teen parents. A similar 90 percent correlation exists between poverty and infant deaths in Jacksonville and between the incidence of low birth-weight babies and poverty. The highest poverty rates in Jacksonville are found in zip codes 32202, 04, 06, 07, 08, 09, 19, 20, 34, and 54.

- (4) The 1996 Benchmark Study recently issued by the Florida Commission on the Status of Women reports: “Of children under the age of six who live with married parents, 12 percent live in poverty. For all children who live with only their mother, 66 percent live in poverty.”
- (5) Six out of seven teen mothers were living in poverty at the time of conception (national).
- (6) Child abuse and neglect is 4.5 times more likely in families living in poverty.

#### D. Promising Approaches

The following are some specific program strategies which can be implemented to address economic deprivation:

1. Prenatal and Infancy Programs: Prenatal and infancy programs offer support and guidance to parents and their newborns at a critical time of physical growth and psychological development. The most effective approaches during the prenatal and infancy period are comprehensive in scope and include:
  - routine prenatal and perinatal medical care;
  - family support intervention using home visitations;
  - programs to enhance parent-child interactions;
  - cognitive child development activities; and
  - parent training.

In Jacksonville, a significant effort to address this program area began in 1995 with the creation of Healthy Families Jacksonville. A partnership of the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, the Duval County Public Health Department, and the Jacksonville Children’s Commission, Healthy Families Jacksonville provides intensive home visitation and referral services to expectant and new parents to support them in their critical role of providing for the early childhood development of their newborns.

The programs target all families living in high risk and high birth zip codes (02, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 16, 18, 20, 26, and 54) with the goals of increasing early and adequate prenatal care, increasing healthy births, reducing teen births, improving parent-child bonding and parenting skills, improving early childhood development milestones, and reducing child abuse and neglect. This program helps parents develop the capacity to provide the protective factors and build the assets their children need as buffers at the earliest stages of childhood.

In addition, new brain research shows that birth-to-three is the most critical period for brain development. Healthy Families Jacksonville teaches parents how to nurture, stimulate, and set boundaries for their children in order to establish positive lifelong patterns of learning and getting along with others. Two thousand families are currently enrolled in the program and a comprehensive evaluation is underway.



2. Youth Employment with Education: Vocational training and employment programs are primarily intended to increase youth employment and earnings. It is important to note that research has shown that long-term impact on risk and delinquency outcomes appear only when the program includes a significant educational component and an array of support services. JOBSTART is a youth employment and education program model which targets urban, low income, 17- to 20-year-old school dropouts, provides self-paced and competency-based instruction in basic academic skills, occupation skills training for specific jobs, training-related support services, and job placement assistance.
3. Workforce Development Board/WAGES Coalition: Funding for the regional Workforce Development Board and WAGES Coalition in Jacksonville is in excess of \$11 million for the coming year. With these important strategies already in place, funded, and under local governance, the status of our citizens living in the poverty zones will certainly improve. The strategy can “piggy-back” on these efforts and thereby avoid duplication of effort. Extensive collaborative planning has gone into the new Florida Workforce Development System. (Note: Some members of the task force caution that attention needs to be paid to the awareness of efforts that focus on the need for all citizens to strive for self-sufficiency in their generation).

The system is designed around four critical strategies:

- a. One-Stop Career Centers: Florida’s initial customer-service contact strategy for offering every Floridian access, through service sites, telephone or computer networks, to the following services:
  - Job search, referral, and placement assistance;
  - Career counseling and education planning;
  - Consumer reports on service providers;
  - Recruitment and eligibility determination;
  - Support services, including child care and transportation;
  - Employability skills training;
  - Adult education and basic skills training;
  - Technical training leading to certification and degree;
  - Claim filing for unemployment compensation services;
  - Temporary income, health, nutritional, and housing assistance;
  - Child care and transportation assistance to gain employment; and
  - Other appropriate and available workforce development services.
- b. School-to-Work: Florida’s youth and adult workforce education strategy for coordinating business, education, and the community to support students in achieving long-term career goals, and for ensuring the workforce is prepared with the academic and occupational skills required for success.

- c. Welfare-to-Work: Florida's strategy for encouraging self-sufficiency and minimizing dependence upon public assistance by emphasizing job placement and transition support services and referral to appropriate community resources for welfare recipients.
- d. High Skills/High Wage Jobs: Florida's strategy for aligning education and training programs with the Occupational Forecasting Conference under Section 216.136, Florida Statutes, "for meeting the job demands of the state's existing business, and for providing a ready workforce which is integral to the state's economic development goal of attracting new and expanding businesses."

## II. Family Management Problems

### A. Rationale

The family into which a child is born has the first opportunity to build a web of protection for the child. That web can buffer a child against risks for problem behaviors. Throughout a person's life, commitment to healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior learned in the family remains a powerful source for healthy development.

Children who do not receive clear expectations from their parents as to what is and is not acceptable behavior or who are recipients of severe or harsh disciplinary practices, neglect and/or abuse are at higher risk of developing problem behaviors.

Babies of teen mothers are at high risk of school failure, poverty, abuse, committing crimes, and reduced brain development. Families maintained by women had the lowest median income of all family types in 1991 — \$16,992, when compared to \$40,955 for married-couple families, and \$28,351 for families maintained by men.

In the last three decades, the percentage of children living in single parent homes has more than tripled. The number of divorces in America has increased nearly 200 percent in the last 30 years, while today the percentage of people marrying is at an all-time low.

Fathers must also take a responsible role in establishing healthy behaviors for their children. Programs such as Responsible Manhood and WAGES provide fathers with the parenting skills necessary to foster healthy father-child relationship building.

The education level of the mother at the time of a child's birth may be the single most important factor in determining the lifelong success/adaptation of that child.

Domestic violence is the single most reported violent crime by volume reported to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. Children who witness abuse are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, engage in teenage prostitution, commit sexual assault crimes, and engage in delinquent behavior.

## B. Indicators

- (1) Jacksonville's birth rate for teenagers aged 10-14
- (2) Number of births to Jacksonville teens
- (3) Jacksonville's divorce rate
- (4) Number of Jacksonville's runaway youth per year
- (5) Jacksonville's incidence of re-abuse
- (6) Jacksonville's domestic violence rate
- (7) Jacksonville's juvenile crime rate

## C. Observations Concerning Indicators

- (1) The birth rate for girls ages 10 to 14 is on the rise and is higher than state and national rates.
- (2) The birth rate for girls ages 15 to 17 is on the rise and consistent with state and national trends.
- (3) Jacksonville has the 11th highest divorce rate in the state at 8.2 percent 1,000 population and is twice the national divorce rate.
- (4) Duval County ranks 7th in the state in the number of juveniles reported as runaways.
- (5) Twenty-six percent of all children in Jacksonville live with a divorced parent, step parent, or separated parent.

## D. Promising Approaches

Some of the specific program strategies which can be employed to address family management problems are:

- Marital therapy;
- Prenatal and infancy programs;
- Early childhood education;
- Parent training; and
- Family therapy.

Healthy Families Jacksonville provides the prenatal and infancy programs needed to decrease family management problems.

Due to savings from welfare reform and additional funding from the Jacksonville Children's Commission, the waiting list for low income working families seeking subsidized child care was eliminated for the first time in several years in Jacksonville. In addition to a commitment to continue to ensure that all eligible families receive subsidized care, early childhood education advocates are also committed to improving the quality of care in order to capitalize on the crucial brain development occurring among children during their first few years of life. A task force is currently initiating a training and compensation pilot program to increase the skills and pay of child care workers.

Further, a recent ground-breaking public school system and community retreat resulted in several priorities, including improving the school-readiness of children entering kindergarten. Its recommendations include improving standards and coordination of early care and education programs and increasing the number of children prepared to enter school ready to learn.

Another new program, the Jacksonville Child Care/Family Initiative, funded by the Centers for Disease Control, encourages partnerships between parents and child care providers in order to promote pro-social child behavior by teaching parents how to nurture, communicate, and stay involved with their children by establishing the parent as the child's first and best teacher. A comprehensive evaluation is underway.

Social service agencies such as the Children's Home Society are piloting new techniques for parent training. Identifying families in need of parent training at school, conducting simultaneous parent and child workshops, offering in-home training and role modeling, and on-site child care at parent workshops are some of the strategies being used.

As task force members studied the risk factors, several members noted that they were involved with agencies in a coalition or alliance working collaboratively to address issues surrounding adolescence and aimed at reducing the adolescent birth rate in Duval County. That group is called the Jacksonville Alliance for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy. As one of 13 U.S. cities chosen to participate in the Center for Disease Control's Community Coalition Partnership Program (CCPP), Jacksonville has been charged with the development and implementation of a five-year Community Action Plan (CAP). The plan was issued in July 1997.

The Duval County Health Department is the coordinator for the alliance during Phase I and is the link between the alliance and the funding sources. The alliance will work with Success By Eighteen to coordinate, evaluate, and identify successful programs in adolescent pregnancy prevention and development.

There are numerous needs of young mothers to be addressed. In addition to education about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, the mothers' prenatal and perinatal needs (including nutrition and care during the pregnancy) must be addressed. They must have parenting training and, since their average education level is 9th grade, they need further education and child care. Since two-thirds of teen mothers will endure long spells of poverty, they will need various elements of support.

While the likelihood that the teen mother will be a candidate for the deep end of juvenile delinquency is remote (of a large cohort of serious habitual offenders tracked by Duval County, only 6.5 percent were female, while 93.5 percent were male), her children are at very high risk.

There are existing programs and strategies within Duval County including public agencies and nonprofit community agencies which utilize some or all of the promising approaches. More integration and coordination of community-based programs is needed to ensure more effective service delivery to families in need. In addition, it is necessary to incorporate these components of the promising approaches (which have demonstrated effectiveness) into existing local programs and strategies.

### III. Early Academic Failure

#### A. Rationale

Beginning in late elementary grades, academic failure significantly increases the risk of children developing one or more problem behaviors, such as substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school drop-out, and violence. Children fail for many reasons, but it appears that the experience of failure itself, not necessarily a lack of ability, increases the risk of the problem behavior.

#### B. Indicators

- (1) Jacksonville's student CTBS scores
- (2) Jacksonville's student Florida Writing Assessment Scores

## Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills Reading and Math

Median Percentiles – 1995 - 1996

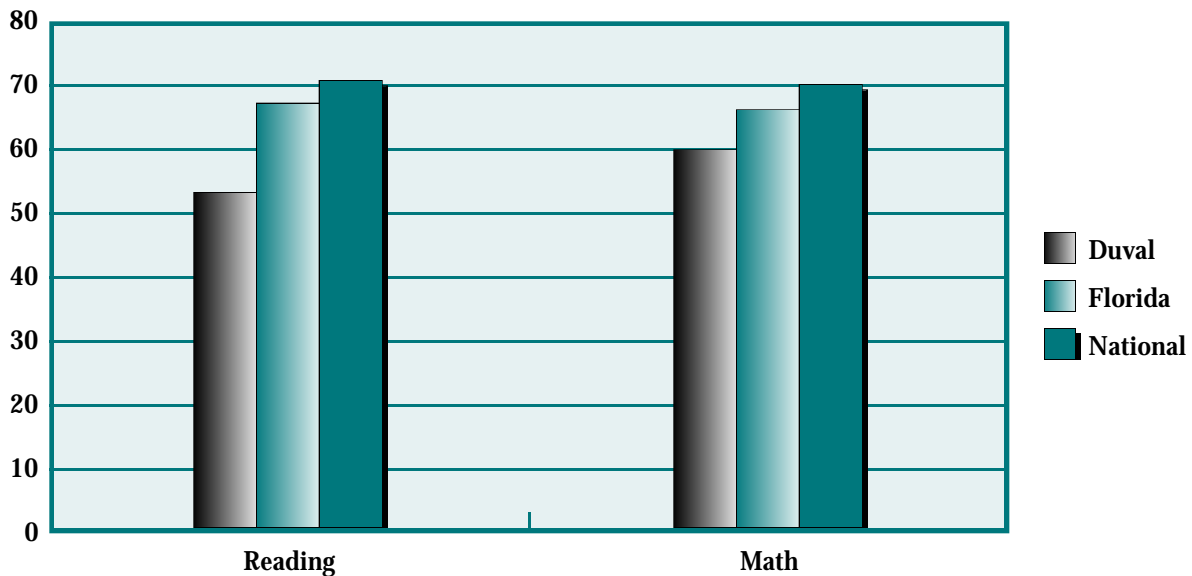


Figure 3

### C. Observations Concerning Indicators

- (1) Jacksonville's 1995-96 CTBS Reading median percentile score is lower than the national median score (Jacksonville = 53; national = 71)
- (2) Jacksonville's 1995-96 CTBS Math median score is lower than the national median percentile score (Jacksonville = 60; national = 70)
- (3) Jacksonville's 1995-96 Fourth Grade Writing Assessment average scores are lower than the state's average scores (Jacksonville = 2.4; state = 2.5)

### D. Promising Approaches

The following are some specific program strategies which can be implemented to address early academic failure and lack of commitment to school:

- Reduction in class size for kindergarten through third grade;
- Intensive Care Neighborhoods;
- Alternative educational/instructional strategies;
- After-school academic assistance;
- Cooperative learning;
- One-to-One mentoring with behavior management emphasis;
- Tutoring;
- Computer-assisted instruction;
- Ability grouping within classes in elementary school;
- Classroom behavior management techniques and interventions; and
- Elective-credit courses which focus on study skills, work habits, critical thinking skills, goal setting, decision-making skills, and life skills management.

Learn to Read is working with two public elementary schools to reduce the likelihood of early academic failure among at-risk students entering kindergarten and first grade. The program offers a special class three times weekly which operates in a small group format, teaches children to read, and provides home visitation and referral services for families. The program's goals are to improve grade promotion and parent involvement in children's learning and at school.

SAFE/TEAMS is an after-school program available at 18 public middle schools to provide comprehensive educational and recreational enrichment activities. A partnership of the public schools and the Department of Parks and Recreation, the program uses innovative computer programs and projects to help students apply math and science in the real world. Goals of the program include improved academic and behavioral performance in school.

The Jacksonville Children's Commission funds more than 20 after-school programs, all of which have a homework assistance component. Homework assistance and completion are used

to set high expectations for students' academic achievement as well as to provide an incentive for students to participate in special activities and recognition programs. Full-service schools also provide funding for after-school tutoring at several schools.

Big Brothers Big Sisters provides one-to-one mentoring of at-risk students by caring, well-trained adults who emphasize improving behavior in school as well as improving academic performance. Countless volunteers providing tutoring to children through the Mayor's Intensive Care Neighborhood Program which targets high risk schools. A recent grant awarded to the United Way by the DeWitt Wallace – Reader's Digest Fund will increase tutors and mentors in schools by paying stipends to high school students to work with elementary school children.

Communities in Schools is one example of an elective credit course which targets middle and high school students at risk of dropping out of school. A special class is offered to students once per day to provide skill building in case management and exposure to the business and cultural community. Students receive home visitation once per quarter and are involved in community service projects as additional strategies to improve their academic and behavioral performance.

The recent School Match Report, which evaluated Duval County public schools, made several recommendations pertaining to early academic failure beginning in elementary school:

- The data clearly indicate a need to improve reading instruction at early grades, and both reading and mathematics instruction at middle school grades.
- Promotion/detention practices from 7th to 8th grade, and especially from 8th to 9th grade, have been tightened over the last few years, causing more retentions. Those students being retained are over-age for middle school, and if and when they are promoted to high school they are over-age when entering the 9th grade. Early identification of the at-risk student should take place at the elementary level and programs should be designed specifically for the at-risk retention population.
- Additional academic success-based programs at the middle school level need to be developed to get the over-aged student back on track.
- All children should be taught to read in the first three grades.
- Dropout prevention programs should be strengthened.
- Grade inflation should be avoided.

## IV. Lack of Commitment to School

### A. Rationale

Children with a lack of commitment to school have ceased to see the role of student as a viable one and are at higher risk of developing one or more of problem behaviors, such as substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, or dropping out. National research indicates that teen girls with poor

basic math skills have a five times greater chance of becoming teen parents by the age of 16. Teen boys with weak basic education skills in math and reading are three times more likely to become teen parents by the age of 20.

**B. Indicators**

- (1) Jacksonville’s school mobility rate
- (2) Jacksonville’s high school graduation rate
- (3) Jacksonville’s high school drop-out rate

## Duval County Public High School Graduation Rate

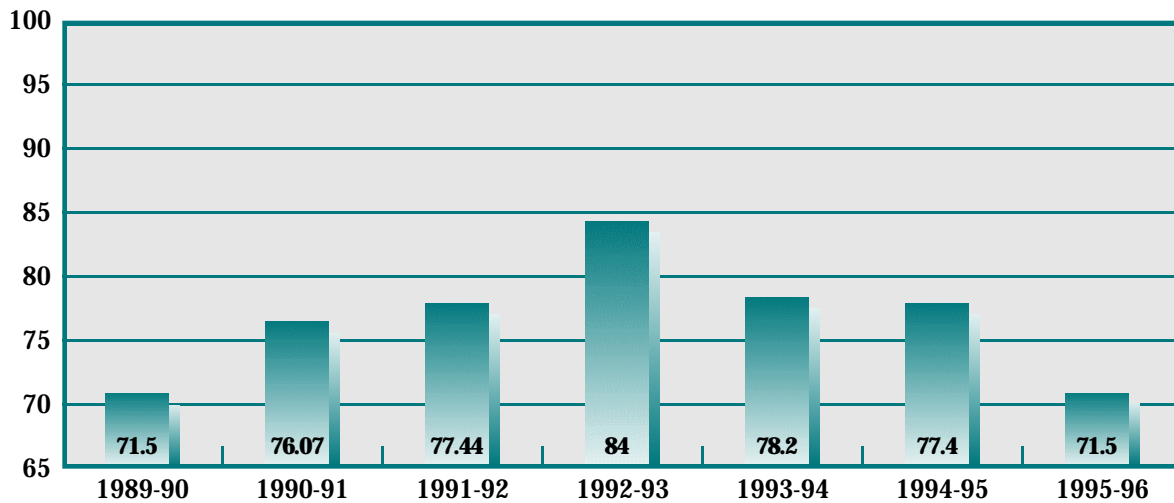


Figure 4

**C. Observations Concerning Indicators**

- (1) Over 38.6 percent or 46,300 students in Duval County schools enter, re-enter or withdraw from school each year. Many schools have a 50 percent mobility rate with a few schools having a mobility rate over 70 percent. The average mobility rate for Florida is 31 percent.
- (2) Jacksonville’s public high school graduation rate is lower than the state and national rates and is declining. The graduation rate for 1995-96 was 71.5 percent.
- (3) The high school dropout rate for 1994-95 was 6.45 percent compared with the state rate of 5.24 percent and a national rate of 5.21 percent. The high school dropout rate does not include students who drop out of school prior to entering the 9th grade and does not include students under the age of 16 years who drop out of school. Those students are referred to as habitual truants.
- (4) From 1991 to 1994 the rate of retained students (per 1,000) increased significantly from 30.2 to 39.8.



(5) Jacksonville's truancy rate is increasing. In 1996, there were 8.8 truant students per 1,000 which placed Jacksonville 14th out of 67 school districts in the percentage of truant students. During the 1995-96 school year, there were 18,222 Duval County students suspended from school with 41,488 suspensions. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office confirms the common belief that students who are truant from school or out of school due to suspension are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior during school hours.

#### D. Promising Approaches

Some specific program strategies which address lack of commitment are:

- Educational alternative programs for at-risk students, either within a traditional school setting (e.g., one period per day or school-within-a-school) or an alternative school facility;
- Behavior monitoring and reinforcement of attendance, academic progress and appropriate school behavior;
- One-on-one mentoring with a behavior management emphasis;
- Case management services for at-risk students and families;
- Parent training and support;
- Before and after-school programs; and
- Youth employment and vocational training programs with an intensive education component.

In addition to the offerings of Communities in Schools, PACE Center for Girls targets girls at risk of truancy, drop out, and other problem behaviors with a special alternative school facility which incorporates small class size, computer-assisted instruction to catch-up students who are behind grade-level, a system of incentives based upon meeting behavioral expectations, and community service projects.

Promising approaches suggested by NCCD and DRP include two main approaches to addressing academic failure and lack of commitment to schools: (a) organizational change in schools and (b) classroom organization, management, and instructional strategies. Some promising programs include:

- School Development Programs: The program consists of three key components – Governance and Management Team, Mental Health Team, and Parent Program. It has been tested successfully in two inner-city public schools in New Haven, Connecticut.
- Program Development Evaluation (AEL) Method: This middle-school program has four main organization and management system and behavioral modification techniques. The program is implemented by school improvement teams, consisting of teachers, school administrators and district-level staff.
- School Transitional Environment Project (STEP): The STEP model is a school organization model that is designed to facilitate successful adaptation to large middle and high schools, particularly for low-income minority and disadvantaged students. Incoming students are assigned to units of approximately 65 to 100 students, or “schools within a school.”

Robert Slavin & Associates has identified and evaluated a number of effective classroom organization, management, and instructional strategies:

- Reduction in class size for kindergarten and first grade shows positive effects on students' reading and math scores in the elementary grades.
- Ability grouping in reading across classes and grades has been shown to increase students' reading scores.
- Non-graded elementary schools, a classroom arrangement in which students are grouped according to their level of academic performance rather than their ages, have been shown to increase students' academic achievement.
- Diagnostic-prescriptive pullout strategies in which students identified as being in need of additional learning support are given individual or small group instruction, show positive effects on academic achievement in reading and math.

There are existing programs and strategies within the Duval County public school system and within nonprofit community agencies which utilize some or all of the promising approaches. There is a need for more integration and coordination of community-based programs with the schools and more effective delivery of education services to the population of at-risk students and their families. In addition, incorporating the components of the promising approaches (which have demonstrated effectiveness) into existing local programs and strategies is needed.

## V. Availability and Use of Drugs

### A. Rationale

The more available drugs and alcohol are in a community, the greater the risk that drug abuse will occur in that community. Young people who associate with peers who engage in a problem behavior (experimentation and use of drugs) are much more likely to engage in the same problem behavior.

### B. Indicators

- (1) Number and percentage of Jacksonville's middle and high school students reporting drug use
- (2) Number and percentage of Jacksonville's middle and high school students reporting previous drug use

### C. Observations Concerning Indicators

A 1996 survey of Duval County students' attitudes on substance abuse revealed:

- Twenty-five percent of Jacksonville's middle and high school students agree drugs help overcome boredom;
- Forty-two percent agree drug experimentation is normal;
- Twenty-seven percent agree smoking marijuana is a good way to relax;

- Twenty-two percent say they would conform to drug use at a party;
- The number one reason for using drugs was “pressure from friends”; and
- The number one source of their drugs was “friends/peers”.

The drug distribution network is intact. Kids can get what they want when they want it. Alcohol and cigarettes are available at liquor stores, grocery stores, convenience stores, gas stations, sundry stores and homes of the children. Studies show that peers represent the highest percent of distributors:

- Sixty-eight percent stated they do not use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.
- Females show higher percentage of use for over-the-counter drugs, wine coolers, inhalants, amphetamines, barbiturates and tranquilizers. All other categories except cigarettes were higher for males than females. Cigarette use was the same for both males and females.
- For children 12 and under, over-the-counter drugs was the number one, followed by alcohol, inhalants, wine coolers, cigarettes and marijuana.
- The youngest age group has as its third highest use inhalants, which can cause permanent brain damage.
- Alcohol is the number one drug of choice in the 17 - 19 and older group.
- The percentage of children using alcohol increases with age:
  - 7.8 percent, 12 yrs and under group;
  - 20.1 percent, 13 yrs - 14 yrs;
  - 33.2 percent, 15 yrs - 16 yrs;
  - 40.2 percent, 17 yrs - 18 yrs; and
  - 43.1 percent, 19 yrs and older.

The most striking finding regarding drug use when analyzed by grade point average (GPA) was the consistent increase in lifetime use of drugs as GPA's decreased. In every category, with the exception of over-the-counter drugs, there was a strong inverse relationship between GPA and percent of use (i.e., as GPA got lower, drug use rates increased)

One must be cautious about interpreting this relationship. This strong correlation does not necessarily imply cause and effect. Whether the drug use causes a drop in grades, or whether low grades make one more at-risk to use drugs, cannot be determined from this survey. However, it is likely that both scenarios are involved and probably represents a vicious cycle.

As with lifetime use, there is a strong correlation between GPA and percentage of current users, with the higher GPA's reporting less use and the lower GPA's more use. Occupying the sixth highest percent of current use for A, B, and C students is marijuana. More discouraging is the picture for the F student. These students report current use rates for many illicit substances that are four to seven times higher than successful students.

The national data is also alarming:

- More children ages 9 - 12 are experimenting with drugs. Fewer of them believe drugs are harmful.
- Twenty-four percent of children 9-12 were offered drugs in 1996 vs. 19 percent in 1993.
- Experimenting with marijuana doubled from 2 percent of this 9-12 age group to 4 percent.
- The number of 11- and 12-year-olds who say they have friends using marijuana rose from 7 percent in 1993 to 13 percent in 1996.
- Younger children were less likely to believe “people on drugs are stupid” (71 percent in 1995 vs. 65 percent in 1996).
- More white children than black children believe drugs are less harmful.
- Only seven percent of parents believe their own children have been offered drugs vs. 24 percent of kids who say they have.
- Among teens, 44 percent from middle and upper income homes reported trying marijuana vs. 34 percent from low income homes.

#### D. Promising Approaches

Some of the specific program strategies which can be employed to address the availability and use of drugs include:

- Community and School Policies. Community and school policies have the power to shape social, political, cultural, economic, and physical influences which affect the behavior of individuals and, consequently, the entire community.
- Correlation with Other Risk Factors. For other risk factors correlated with problem behavior substance abuse, the following program strategies may be employed:

##### (1) Friends Who Engage in Problem Behavior

- Parent training
- Classroom curricula for social competence promotion
- After-school recreation
- Mentoring with contingent reinforcement
- Youth employment with education

##### (2) Community Laws and Norms

- Classroom curricula for social competence
- Community mobilization
- Community/school policies
- Policing strategies

##### (3) Family History of Problem Behavior

- Prenatal/infancy programs

## Summary of Prevention Initiatives Which Represent Promising Approaches That Address Jacksonville's Risk Factors

		Risk Factors				
		Economic Deprivation	Family Management	Early Academic Failure	Lack of Commitment To School	Drugs
Initiatives	Prenatal/Infancy	x	x			x
	Early Child. Ed.	x	x	x		
	Parent Training	x	x			x
	Family Therapy	x	x			
	Alt. Education			x	x	
	Class Techniques			x	x	x
	After School Progs.			x	x	x
	Mentoring			x	x	x
	Tutoring			x		
	Behav. Monitoring			x	x	
	Case Management				x	
	Youth Emp/Ed.	x			x	x
	Comm./School Policies					x

## Summary Statement (Priorities)

The Comprehensive Strategy Task Force selected the five risk factors (economic deprivation, family management, early academic failure, lack of commitment to school, and drugs) and the associated risk indicators as those which are most directly related to escalating serious and violent crime among the youth of Jacksonville. Other cities using a similar method of evaluation may decide that other risk factors are more important. However, all communities, regardless of specific differences, face an urgent mandate to forestall the continuing and increasing involvement of community youth in the commission of crime.

The Jacksonville effort found that the key to accomplishing this urgent mandate is to identify the specific community risk factors and to form a collaborative effort among as many parts of the community as possible. The joint effort should be targeted at significantly reducing these risk factors while simultaneously enhancing community assets which build a network of protective factors.

The collaborative effort needs to embrace - to a significant degree - faith-based programs and grass-roots organizations which are viable and measurable. Admittedly, this all-inclusive approach requires the community to think differently about its traditional approaches to addressing juvenile crime. Within this approach there exists a need to identify, assess, and evaluate programs which have their origins within the faith-based and grass-roots services providers.

This strategy intentionally emphasizes prevention of juvenile crime and delinquency. Prevention is the most cost-effective approach to resolving the issue of juvenile crime. Sanctions are necessary to provide the community with safety and protection, and juveniles must know that there are consequences for criminal behavior. However, addressing juvenile crime strictly through sanctions is neither practical nor effective.

The dilemma is that sanctions provide us with a heavy body of documentation that lends itself to quantifying the dynamics of sanctions and validating the need for these measures. Prevention does not lend itself so easily to the same system of documenting, quantifying, and validating.